

HERIZONS

WOMEN'S NEWS AND FEMINIST VIEWS

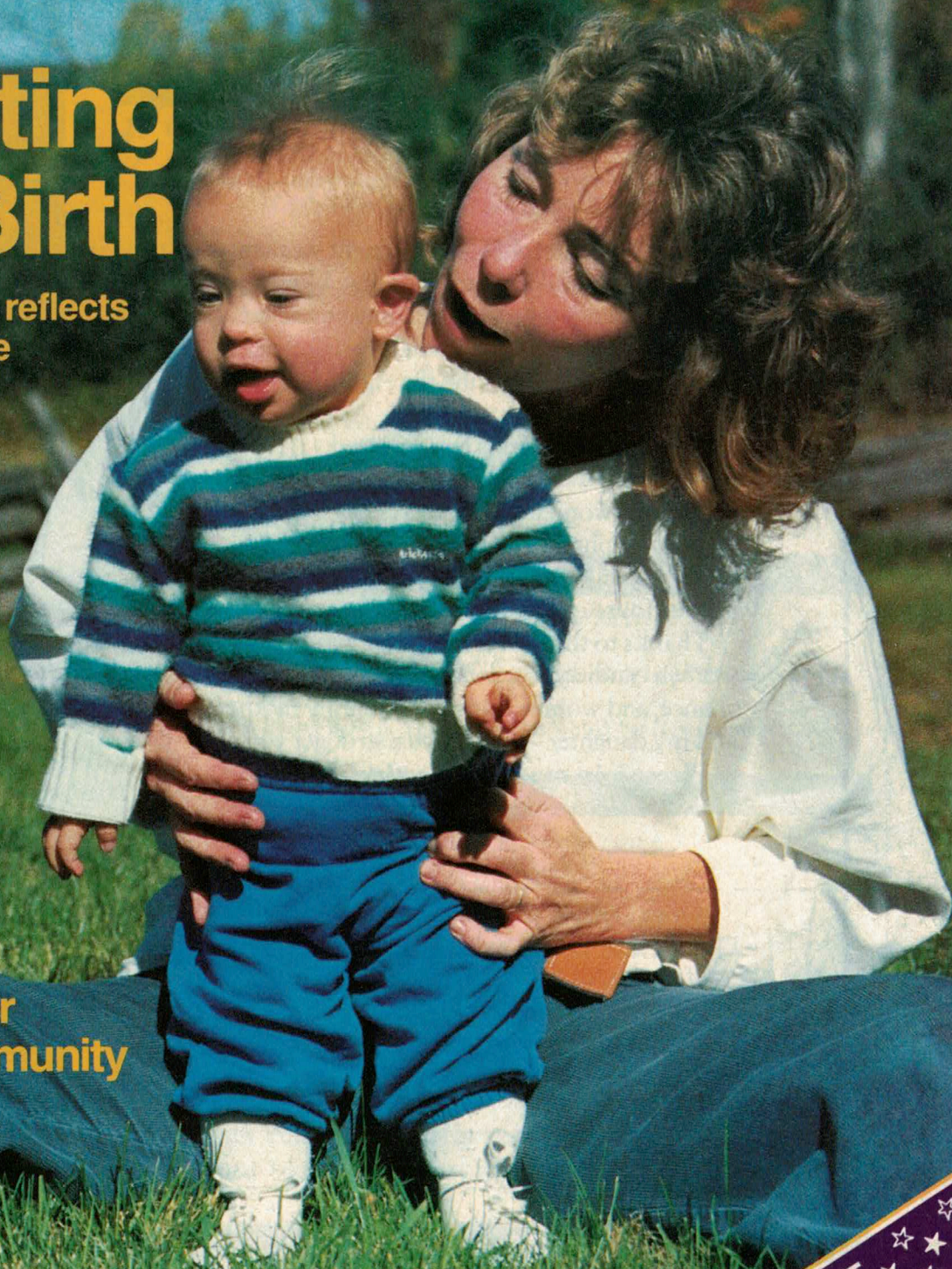
Celebrating Sam's Birth

Playwright Wendy Lill reflects on her first year as the mother of a son with Down's Syndrome

► In Search of Pope Joan: Uncovering the Vatican's Best-kept Secret

► Blessed Unrest: A Feminist Minister Searches for Community

► Planetary Visions: Sacred Images of the Earth



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Raising a point of privilege

P E N N I M I T C H E L L



Quick. Which of the following is the middle class woman?

a) the part-time writer who earns \$850 per month, lives in a co-op house and volunteers, in her spare time, at the local

woman's bookstore;

b) the university professor who gets paid less than her male counterparts, receives Canada Council grants to travel on speaking tours and shops at second hand stores;

c) the sales rep for a stationery firm, who lives on her own and firmly believes that the only thing holding women back from equal pay is their own determination to work hard;

c) none of the above.

The part-time writer considers herself to be a working class woman. After all, her income alone excludes her from middle-class privilege. And, although she has a university degree and a strong feminist analysis about the inadequate wage she earns as a writer, she is, after all, chronically poor.

The university professor comes from three generations of university professors. And she too, if asked, would say she is not a member of the middle-class because she can identify with the oppression of working people, and has a tight political analysis to prove it. To her, the middle class is the bourgeoisie, the factory owners, the heads of corporations, those who aspire to an affluent lifestyle and have no political conscience.

The middle class woman, the writer and professor would agree, is the woman who works for a large stationery firm and spends a lot of money on clothing. She is a victim of our consumer-culture and believes that lowering the deficit is the biggest challenge facing the country. She has at least one R.R.S.P. and hopes that her boyfriend, who works for a competing stationery firm, will buy her a diamond for her birthday.

She doesn't like selling stationery on straight commission, but considers herself lucky to have a job at all. Her boss has asked her to accompany him to a sales convention in Chicago in the spring, but she has a feeling that unless she sleeps with him this time, she'll lose her job. In an average month, she earns about \$900-\$1000, and is determined to have some-

thing better for herself than the grade 10 education she had when she came to the firm.

The part-time writer, who earns slightly less than the stationery rep, insists the two of them occupy different classes, even though she uses her university-gained knowledge to analyse their class differences. In the turn of the century co-op house where she lives, she pays \$150 for rent and another \$45 for utilities, while the stationery rep pays \$350 plus utilities and parking for a one-bedroom apartment with a balcony.

The professor will tell you that the fact that the stationery rep works for a large corporation and contributes to its profits, taints her with bourgeois ideals. After all, she doesn't support unions, even though her father belonged to one when he worked for CN, nor does she believe in mandatory affirmative action or native land claims. If she were offered a higher paying job in the company, she would gladly take it.

If we ask who has the least privilege among these three women, the scenario of the traditional class structure becomes a less lucid distinction than it was at the beginning of the industrial age, when the analysis of Karl Marx more closely fit the economic mold. Men who worked in factories were the oppressed working class and the men who owned the factories (and their wives and children) were to blame for not giving workers a living wage. Women's class was defined by their association with husbands or fathers, and problems such as violence against women began to be rationalised as symptoms of the workers' lack of control over their lives; i.e. if they owned the factories, they wouldn't beat their wives.

Today, it is important to consider privilege, as well as taxable income, when sizing up our position on the class continuum. Class isn't a matter of choice, where the person with the most compelling argument gets the most points as a working class feminist. The part-time writer has a tremendous amount of privilege, even though she has chosen not to take full advantage of it. With a university education and the resources to live cheaply, she can afford to work only part-time because she knows that if she had to earn more money, she could probably solicit more freelance writing work. Instead, she volunteers her time at a women's bookstore, where, in return for her labour, she has unlimited access to information in the form of books, and enjoys the privilege of being able to buy books at wholesale prices.

The university professor, even though she is unlikely to receive tenure, utilises her power in the classroom to influence the learning of hundreds of students, in the hope that there will be more people one day who see economics as the study of people as well as deficits and profit margins. Although she is an influential advocate for the most powerless in society, she is not one of them. Her privilege, relative to her male counterparts, is small in terms of job security, but she will never have to take a job as a typist in order to survive. Even though she doesn't use her power to oppress others, she is in a privileged situation.

The problem with linking class identity to 'correct' analysis is that it is really only a class-consciousness and not a class identity that develops. It leaves many working class people (who likely don't call themselves working class) still aspiring to middle class values and in pursuit of middle class material gain — which those privileged enough to realise it, know the working class will never achieve. It also places more privileged people in judgement of working class people who don't have the 'right' ideas about how they should think and behave.

The danger is that even though we achieve a level of class consciousness that is politically desirable, we risk silencing those who are disadvantaged and truly working class by pretending to speak on their behalf.

As women, we already constitute a class of undervalued human beings in a male-run world, but acknowledging the kinds of privilege some of us have doesn't mean that we aren't oppressed as women, even though we may still feel we can only afford the low income rate at a women's event.

If we are poor, we need to know that we will not be patronised by more privileged women who unintentionally intimidate others with jargon and the privilege of confidence, as they tell us that they are poor, too.

This leaves us with the challenge of finding the most effective way to give voice to the women with the least privilege, which is to listen and share experiences, and help them be heard. In the same way that we listen to native women's concerns if we are not native; immigrant women if we are not immigrants, and battered women if we are not battered.

If we can admit to the privileges that many of us have, we can be more honest about some of the choices we have been privileged enough to make. ▼

R.E.A.L. Women insights welcomed

Your editorial for the July/August *Herizons* is a timely piece of work, full of common sense and good manners. Knowing precious little about the group R.E.A.L. Women I was grateful for your comments. Previously my information had come from the daily press, which all too often offers hype instead of reality, so that your refreshingly unbiased remarks were a welcome change. Your closing paragraph is a gem revealing the feminist movement as the source of the essence, the meaning, and the significance of life-control for both sides of the distaff. (that other expression revolts me!)

Following retirement I was given a sweat-shirt bearing the inscription "Old Age Isn't For Sissies", and looking back on it all I realise that something of the sort may be said about control over one's life. It is my fervent hope that each of my grandchildren is hearing and heeding the message.

Gerald Metcalfe
Ottawa, Ontario

Girl guides foster sisterhood

This is in response to the article in the September '86 issue, "In Defense of Girl Guides," by Nancy Worsfold.

I was delighted to see in an intelligent, credible publication, a recognition of the importance and influence of Girl Guides. I have been involved with the Guiding movement for most of my life it seems. I, too, experience moments of embarrassment over my association with Guides, but for the most part, I've been proud of the movement and its importance in the world today. I am now in my mid-twenties, a feminist, a sociologist, and working on a Masters degree.

Today, the Guiding movement is a highly organised and motivated association. It is run by competent and professional women who range from homemakers to women in very non-traditional occupations. These are women who take time out of their busy lives to offer service to the community.

The aim of the Girl Guides of Canada is "to help girls and young women become responsible citizens, able to give leadership and service to their community, whether local, national or global." The programme is designed (among other things) to develop personal values and respect for self and others, to be challenged through new experiences, to learn decision-making,

practical and leadership skills, to develop a knowledge and understanding of other people and their cultures, and to make new friends through the sisterhood of Guiding.

It is a movement run by women for women. It teaches both "traditional" and "non-traditional" practical skills. By so doing, it does not limit the choices and options of the young women it teaches; it does not perpetuate women's traditional roles of passivity and submissiveness. The practical and leadership skills I acquired from Guiding have been invaluable to me — both personally and career-wise. The more women who offer their time and skills to the Guiding movement, the stronger and more valuable it will become.

Thank-you for printing a positive, feminist outlook on Girl Guides!

Suzanne Bourgeois
Gloucester, Ontario

Bringing back Tristan

Congratulations to Tsigane for her splendid review/article on Flora Tristan. Her language is bright, fresh and assertive, and she's brought Tristan back into our ken. *Very* well written.

Pauline Jiles
Nelson, British Columbia

Nigerian centre appeals for aid

We are a Christian feminist centre founded by the women of the Christian Assembly of Nigeria to provide food and shelter for orphans, abandoned children, battered women and destitute women over forty. The centre was founded and aided by the church women and other generous women, but with the present economic disaster into which the country has been plunged, our people have become unable to help the poor.

Our military government has imposed measures on the importation of food from other countries so that many basic goods are not available to the people. Also, inflation is rampant. For example, a 50 kilo bag of rice cost \$30 in 1982 and now costs \$400. Our country's attempt to secure an external loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has contributed to the horrible situation. In order to satisfy the conditions for such a loan, the government had to withdraw subsidies on fertilizers and petroleum products. Thus, the cost of agricultural products has drastically increased beyond the

reach of the poor.

Our centre has been severely hit by the present circumstances. Our orphans and destitutes now solely depend on one type of foodstuff, cassava, which provides only carbohydrates for the body. As a result, even those we try to help are malnourished.

We appeal to your readers to come to our aid. As a nongovernmental voluntary organization we depend on donations to continue our efforts. We shall be very grateful if you can help us in our task of assisting the less fortunate. We shall accept gifts made by personal checks, bankdrafts, or international money orders. Those wishing to send us material aid such as clothing, footwear, books, etc. can do so, but the package containing material goods must be clearly marked: "CHARITY GOODS/CHURCH PROPERTY/NOT FOR SALE/FOR CHURCH USE ONLY" so that we may not be heavily taxed.

Send to:

Hannah Edemikpong, Christian Assembly
of Nigeria Women's Centre,
P.O. Box 185,
Eket, Cross River State, Nigeria

Fight the Right

The quilts in Sept. issue are beautiful — Wendy Lewington is a true artist.

Re: Adrian Gec's letter, 'Stop the fundamentalists' — there is a book called *Holy Terror*, written by Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman, Dell Publishing, New York, 1982 (updated 1984) which documents the methods used by the "fundamentalist right" — "a broad program of intimidation, manipulation and control in the name of religion" to gain political power in America.

The August 1986 newsletter from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women has an article 'Dealing with the Right' which gives the address of *The Monitor*, a publication of the Center for Democratic Renewal, P.O. Box 10500, Atlanta, GA, 30310, USA., which is available for \$15 year American. The NAC newsletter, *Feminist Action* address is 344 Bloor St. W., Suite 505, Toronto, Ont. M5S 1W9.

I agree with Adrian Gec that we must try to reverse this trend and I hope this information will help.

Mary Maron
Willowdale, Ontario



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Women's role in AIDS questioned

I read "Politics, Women and Aids" and "Frontline Aids Workers" (Sept. 1986) with mixed emotions. Certainly it's true that the "right" has seized upon AIDS as a vehicle to focus and legitimize the hate and mistrust that mainstream society feels toward the "fringe elements". And as feminists, whether straight or lesbian, we can be perceived as part of the "fringe" and should therefore join the fight and help our gay brothers.

On the other hand, here we go again — women as the caregivers, the nurturers, looking after the boys. Why can't the boys look after themselves? Why should we step in and separate the straight boys (who are the right) from the gay boys when they fight with one another?

Certainly women, and particularly lesbians, can understand the oppression gay men endure, but I do, at times have difficulty with the notion that lesbians & gay men should always stand united on all issues. What lesbians & gay men have in common is an "aberrant" sexuality, as defined by society. But that's where it ends for me — in terms of politics, life view, thoughts on relationships, etc., I have nothing more in common with any gay man than I do with straight men. They are still men, and my community lies with women. *Women's* issues are my issues, they are where I choose to expend my energy. Why are we letting the boys distract us again, as they have for centuries? Why are we letting them scatter our energies, supposedly for the "greater good"? This is their fight, let's let them deal with it.

Elaine Burgess
Ancaster, Ontario

Feminist principles and AIDS

I'm writing to thank you for your September 1986 cover story, "Plagued by the New Right: Women, Politics and AIDS." It acknowledges in detail the debt owed by AIDS committees across North America to feminist principles in general and those of feminist health care in particular. Where power resides in the health care industry, medical scepticism, group response instead of individual response, advice about prevention instead of reliance upon treatment — these are givens for how communities across the continent have organised to confront AIDS.

The AIDS Committee of Toronto is justifiably proud of the role women have played in its organisation from the word go. Women continue to be on the cutting edge of staff, amongst volunteers, and on its Board of Directors.

Phil Shaw
Media Relations Officer
AIDS Committee of Toronto

HERIZONS

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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.

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WESTERN REGION

MELD FOR NEW PARENTS offers information and support to first-time parents with babies up to 18 months old. The Winnipeg groups discuss the joys, concerns and issues confronting new parents. Registrations accepted at (204) 452-2118, Fort Garry Family Life Information Center, 16-888 Crane Ave., Wpg., Man., R3T 1T9 throughout January 1987.

THE EFFECTS OF FEMINIST APPROACHES ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES conference will take place **January 22-24, 1987** at the Univ. of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta. Contact: The Calgary Institute for the Humanities, 2500 University Dr. N.W., Calgary, Alberta, T2N 1N4 or phone (403) 220-7238.

WOMEN AND MUSIC presented **February 9, 1987** by Aurora Musicale in the Muriel Richardson Auditorium of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Enjoy chamber music composed by Lili Boulanger, Marcelle de Manziarly, Amy Beach and Sophie-Carman Eckhardt-Gramatte. Tickets are \$18.00 - \$20.00 and are available from J.J.H. McLean, 263 Edmonton Street, Winnipeg, Man. R3C 1S1.

TALENT BANK OF YUKON WOMEN is being established by the Yukon Women's Directorate. If you are interested in serving on any of the many boards, councils and committees appointed by the Yukon gov't, submit your resume to the Yukon Women's Directorate, Main Flr., Second Avenue, Whitehorse or call 667-3030. Residents outside Whitehorse call (403) 667-5955 toll free.

EASTERN REGION

THE USE OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS is a UNESCO experts' meeting in Quebec City on **December 8-12, 1986** which will focus on specific groups such as the economically disadvantaged, women, the elderly and the differently-abled. Contact: Women's Program, Secretary of State, 15 Eddy St., Hull, Quebec K1A 0M5 (819) 994-3190.

INTERNATIONAL

COURSE ON WOMEN/DEVELOPMENT given by the Institute of Planning Studies, Paton House, Univ. of Nottingham will cover land, labour, technology and aid with case studies from the third world. **January 6 - March 28, 1987**. Contact: Institute of Planning Studies, Paton House, Univ. of Nottingham, Univ. Park, Nottingham, 2G7 2RD, U.K.

SUBMISSIONS

RETORTS, QUIPS AND ONE-LINERS FOR WOMEN is the working title of a book in the planning stages. Send your own, anonymous or creditable quotes. The best comebacks for the street, the office, the bar or the board room you've ever heard or said. Send them to Retorts, #167, 253 College St., Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R5.

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 Communiqu'Elles, 3585 St. Urbain St., Montreal, PQ, H2X 2N6.

COMING OUT TO MOTHERS We are Lesbians collecting stories of how womyn came out to their mothers. We also want to encourage lesbians who have not come out to their mothers to send in their stories so that we can have an anthology that incorporates the continuum of the coming out process. Send stories, poetry and photographs to Carr/Yates, P.O. Box 6031, Minneapolis, MN, 55406.

LOOKING FOR NON-SEXIST FITNESS PROGRAMS AND ADVERTISEMENTS This national search is being organised by Mediawatch to target the unrealistic portrayals of women and girls. Contact: Mediawatch, 209-636 West Broadway, Vancouver B.C. V5Z 1G2 (604) 873-8511.

DYKE DIARIES wants submissions of up to 5000 words, for an anthology of lesbian personal writings — diaries, journals, letters, thoughts. May be published anonymously if desired. Include year of writing and the age of writer at that time. For current

information: Frances Rooney, P.O. Box 868, Stn. P, Toronto, Ont. M5S 2Z2.

PICTORIAL HISTORY OF WESTERN CANADIAN WOMEN is being organised by The Western Canada Pictorial Index (W.C.P.I.) located at the University of Winnipeg. W.C.P.I. would like to add to their collection of over 50,000 images to include those from Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories in conjunction with the proposed Prairie Chair in Women's Studies. They are soliciting photographs portraying women in agriculture, politics, community groups, domestic service, office and factory work. Of particular interest are previously unpublished pictures from private collections. Contact: W.C.P.I., University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg R3B 2E9 (204) 786-9830.

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Northern women branch out to form action group

(THOMPSON) — The irony was unmistakable. On an early March day this year, Jean Graveline was presenting a workshop on "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Feminist" at a Northern Options for Women (NOW) annual conference in Thompson. Yet within the organisation itself, she and a host of other women were feeling isolated and unheard. Complaints were mounting that the NOW leadership was setting priorities and moving in directions that were at odds with what the majority of the members wanted.

The NOW board was struggling to preserve its safe, non-threatening image in the community, limiting its activities to providing information, always careful to present all sides of every issue. In the meantime, the grassroots membership had begun to demand that NOW start adopting clear positions on issues, and follow through with action to bring about social change.

After six months and hardly a budge by the NOW board, several frustrated members turned their backs on NOW and formed a new group — the Thompson chapter of the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women.

The upheaval over the last year says much about where feminism has been and where it is going in the North of Manitoba.

Most feminist women living amid the vast expanse of rocks, lakes and wilderness in the upper two-thirds of the province readily agree on one thing: the isolation that they feel is at times crushing.

It's the product of living in small communities miles from



photo Cathy Kozak

Eunadie Johnson says feminists in northern Manitoba are ready for an action-oriented group that can tackle issues in their communities.

any other place, where the most up to date information is often difficult to get hold of, where it's tempting to draw inward just to protect yourself from the censure of conservative neighbours, and where there are fewer people to choose from in forming friendships and associations.

The result is that often women are afraid to expose themselves to scorn and ridicule from their neighbours by actively trying to change the status quo. It's more difficult for feminist women to connect with one another. After all, the person condemning you as a "man-hating misfit" could be your boss, your child's teacher, or your soft-ball teammate.

It may be hard to lobby for, say, a city by-law that would restrict the display of pornography or violent sex videos at a local store, because the next day you may have to

go back to that same store and try to convince the merchant to carry your product.

Of course, the situations vary from place to place. Manitoba north of the 53rd parallel is a loosely connected network of larger, industrialised communities based on mining or forestry, a smattering of smaller resource communities with populations of one or two thousand, and about two dozen native communities varying in size from a few hundred to a few thousand. Of these, some are within a relatively short driving distance from the major centres. Others are remote, fly-in communities. The result is a kind of psychic isolation that parallels the geographical isolation.

Since the founding of the Thompson Crisis Centre in 1977, the women involved have been labelled by antagonistic Thompsonites as "those lesbian women." Eunadie Johnson, executive director of the Centre, describes the treatment of feminist women at the Centre and in the community: "Anytime you did anything like that you got singled out as manhaters. 'It's because you don't like men that you do that or work at that.'"

Johnson says the transient nature of the population can often create another barrier to forming strong feminist bonds. Strong, leading women move on, leaving groups to falter or languish. New arrivals hang back while they feel out the attitudes of new acquaintances.

On the other hand, Jean Graveline believes that the high population turnover can mean a lot more openness to new faces. So there is room for feminism to take root in the North, but Graveline says it traditionally takes a liberal form as opposed to the relative

radicalism of large urban centres.

Historically, the women's groups that have come about have been formed to tackle one particular issue, and then tend to expand into a broader network. Knowledge is power, as they say, and in the North, there is a relative scarcity of both for women. Without sufficient information, northern women are not in a position to make the best possible choices for themselves. And without an understanding of feminist issues, northern women are less able to imagine how things could be for them.

Even with an organisation in place that links native women scattered across the North together, it's still very hard to get the message out. With little funding to speak of, the northern aboriginal women's organisation can't even afford to send out newsletters regularly.

It was this need for more information and contact with other women that first led to the formation of Northern Options for Women, the only independent women's organisation in the North to focus on a broad spectrum of women's issues.

And while NOW had the potential of being the political wing of the Thompson Crisis Centre, where the plan to form NOW was formed, the concept of a political action group wasn't what the group of women who got it going had in mind. Peggy Martin, one of the founders, and NOW's president, says there were two main thrusts. One was to provide information. The other was to avoid either threatening or alienating potential members, other groups and agencies providing information to women — and the

community at large.

"One of the things we decided to do initially to establish credibility was to stick to middle-of-the-road issues or middle-of-the-road stances rather than taking one side or another of an issue."

But what appears to have happened instead, according to several disgruntled NOW members, is that the organisation ended up preaching largely to the converted — women who were already committed to a feminist point of view before they joined NOW and were ready to start making changes in the community.

Says Eunadie Johnson: "One of the things wrong with the (NOW) conference was that women got all hyped up about wanting to do something when they heard speaker after speaker . . . But it fell flat soon after because there was no follow-up from the organisation."

Eventually, women began to drop out of NOW and NOW appeared to quickly lose one of its major target groups — native women. Rita Lundmark tells of the disappointment some native women felt towards the organisation.

"We went to one conference for Northern Options for Women about two years ago, and when it came to bringing out the (native women's) concerns, those women were continually saying 'Well, that's not really a concern.' It was being blocked off, so we said 'What's the use of looking to them for help?'"

The lack of ongoing contact between NOW and women in other communities across the North became another contentious issue. "There was no real effort in terms of their negotiations for funding to look at northern women," Johnson says.

But Martin says, it was neither that simple, nor that easy. Some travel money was available, she says, but not on a regular basis. NOW relied on members who travelled around the North on business connected with their jobs to establish an "informal network" among women across

the region.

Over the past year, it became more and more apparent that the two differing approaches were irreconcilable. The women who wanted to see change within NOW spoke up, and resolutions calling for a more action-oriented direction were passed. But nothing much seemed to happen, partly because the board was bogged down with special events, funding concerns and staff and board changes, Martin says.

Last June, some 20 women gathered to form the Thompson chapter of the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women.

The focus is unequivocally action-oriented. Women attending the first two meetings expressed their desire to campaign for the formation of a therapeutic abortion committee at the local hospital, tackle the pornography issue, investigate the effects of the Limestone hydro project on northern women, and work to gain better child care.

With MACSW now on the scene, many are questioning NOW's future role. NOW's role as an information resource centre could still be valuable — if it succeeds in reaching groups that it has so far failed to reach.

The clash between those favoring a cautious approach to the issues and those demanding more radical measures has caused a lot of pain. Long-term friendships were torn asunder, resentment brewed, and for a time, the biggest controversy in Thompson concerning feminism was whether NOW could fit the role of a feminist organisation, and how.

But what happened holds some deeper significance. The division among NOW members and the subsequent formation of MACSW showed that feminists in the North have not only learned to read the score, they have found their own voices and many of them are now determined to be heard — whether or not their message is instantly welcomed.

—Katherine Fitzpatrick

Kathy Fitzpatrick is a former newspaper editor, who works as a writer and consultant.

Groundwork laid for policy on farm women and agriculture

The Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women has laid the groundwork for the formulation of an agriculture policy with specific reference to farm women's concerns.

Concerns of Farm Women, an information paper prepared for the organisation by Maureen Schwanke, is based on information gathered during interviews with 125 farm women in western Manitoba.

The state of the farm economy and the invisibility of farm women are the two issues most frequently cited. Farm women repeatedly expressed frustration at not being recognised or understood by urban dwellers and even by the businesses they deal with regularly from their farms.

Chemical companies, for example, hold demonstrations addressed to "Mr. Farmer" and offer shopping trips or local tours for farm women at the same time.

One farm woman said that her new banker followed her home to check with her husband before following her instructions concerning their multi-family corporate farm's accounts.

The farm economy's plummeting returns and rising input costs were a major concern, and many expressed frustration that consumers don't realise how Canada's cheap food policy hurts farmers.

Other concerns raised in the study paper were the lack of educational and cultural opportunities in many communities, a sense of isolation compounded by long distance telephone charges and the lack of outside understanding, as well as the lack of legal and financial protection (including lack of pensions), lack of employment opportunities and lack of day care facilities.

A series of one-day workshops held in Birtle,

Erickson and Portage la Prairie echoed many of the same concerns, and many participants were motivated to learn more about the issues discussed, from chemical safety to the effects of free trade on agriculture.

Although MACSW isn't ready yet to establish a firm farm policy, Schwanke is optimistic. "I don't know if we can organise farm women," she says, "but I feel it works better if we have a forum here and there that gives information and ideas, an opportunity to exchange them, and to offer support and inspiration to women to go out to regular (farm) organisations and speak up."

The challenge that remains is how to reach farm women who aren't visibly concerned about the many issues that affect them, and still allow room for the more active women to grow.

Cindy Murray, who farms 480 acres near Erickson, describes the dilemma. "Those of us who are more active have a need for something more than workshops," she says. "But it was good for the majority there, the ones who usually go about their business (without questioning). They had little or no idea about the laws concerning themselves and their farm. They were made more aware of their positions on the farm, and their response was really good." Murray has been active in general farm organisations and at present is a director on both the local and district boards of Manitoba Pool Elevators.

Participant Margaret Munro of Portage la Prairie summed up farm women's untapped potential. "There are a lot of good brains out there that haven't been used," she said.

— Nancy Painter

Nancy Painter is a farmer and writer living in Treherne, Manitoba.

Women and AIDS update

Did you know that in San Francisco in August of this year more women than men were diagnosed with AIDS and that the first lesbian with AIDS was identified? Do you know that any woman who is antibody positive should not get pregnant . . . perhaps ever?

Elaine Smith of AIDS VANCOUVER is concerned that this kind of information isn't getting out to Canadian women. Funds have run out for her position as AIDS VANCOUVER's co-ordinator of support programs, (see September's *Herizons*) but Smith continues to work as a volunteer.

The inquiries from women she receives are mainly from young, sexually active women who worry that their sexual partners may be gay or bisexual men. After talking to the women, Smith assesses the caller's risk and whether she should have the antibody test. Approximately 20 per cent of adults who are antibody positive will convert to the disease; an astounding 80 per cent of children will. Smith emphasises that counselling is imperative before and after taking the test and she uses the opportunity to discuss safe sex practices with women.

AIDS is a women's health issue. The following excerpts are from two pamphlets — WOMEN AND AIDS and LESBIANS AND AIDS, What's The Connection — written by the WOMEN'S AID NETWORK in San Francisco: — Aids can affect all communities. So far, of the

women in the U.S. who have had AIDS, 50 per cent are Black, 23 per cent Latina, and 26 per cent white. A small number are Asian, Native American, or from other backgrounds.

— Of the women who have AIDS, over half have been I.V. drug users. Others contracted it through sex with male partners. A small number were infected from blood transfusions received before 1985.

— A woman is most at risk for AIDS if she has shared I.V. needles, or had sex without a condom with someone who was infected with the AIDS virus. Women who have used I.V. drugs or had sex with I.V. drug users, gay or bisexual men, or hemophiliacs since 1977 may have been exposed to the AIDS virus.

— A woman may be at risk if her sex partner has had sex without a condom with someone at high risk.

— The single most important risk category for lesbians is sharing needles or any other paraphernalia if using I.V. drugs.

— Lesbians who are at risk have had sexual contact with people who use I.V. drugs, men who have had gay sex since 1979, people of either sex whose sexual histories are unknown, people who are hemophiliacs, or who have received blood transfusions or blood products between 1979 - 1985, have used semen for donor insemination from a donor in a high risk group who is known to be antibody positive, or whose risk status is

unknown.

— Use condoms for vaginal and anal sex. The spermicide nonoxynol 9, in contraceptive foams, jellies and creams, helps

kill the virus.

— If you have a new sexual partner, learn about her/his history and share your own.

—C. T. Sand

AIDS linked to genital mutilation

Information published by Fran Hosken in *Women's International Network News*, suggests that when the genital area of a woman is torn during intercourse, which is often the case for women who have been genitally mutilated, semen comes in contact with the bloodstream and the AIDS virus can thereby infect the woman.

Hosken notes that since AIDS reports both in Africa and North America are written by men, the situation of African women is ignored while the results of male sexual practices such as genital mutilation are not discussed.

Since the AIDS virus has been detected in semen but not in vaginal secretions, it appears as though the virus is more easily transmitted from men to women than it is transmitted from women to men.

The spread of AIDS in Africa continues to pose significant threats to women and their

children. Of 143 women who gave birth at a university teaching hospital studied in Zambia, 12 per cent had antibodies to the AIDS virus, an indication of prior infection. Nearly 90 per cent of the infected mothers' babies were born with antibodies, whereas none of the babies born to the non-infected mothers showed signs of infection.

Because many people may be carriers of the AIDS virus without becoming ill and others may not develop symptoms until years after blood tests show evidence of the AIDS virus, it is not known how many of these women and babies will develop AIDS.

The central area of Africa where the largest number of AIDS cases are reported overlaps with the geographic regions where genital mutilation is documented. It is estimated that 84 million women and girls are mutilated in continental Africa.

Mandatory retirement has adverse effect on women

(TORONTO) — The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) has launched a constitutional challenge to the mandatory retirement policy of an Ontario hospital, on behalf of Velma Windus, a hospital employee. LEAF, a national women's test case organisation, argues that mandatory retirement violates the sex and age equality guarantees of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"Mandatory retirement at age 65 has a discriminatory effect on women, in that women who have left the paid workforce to raise a family or to work as full time homemakers have had fewer years to

contribute to pension plans, resulting in inadequate pensions at retirement age," says Gwen Brodsky, Litigation Director of LEAF. The situation is made worse by the fact that women often work in low paying jobs and have lower pensionable earnings and less money saved for retirement.

In keeping with the standard employment practices of the time, in 1939, Windus was forced to give up a secretarial position upon the announcement of her first pregnancy. She subsequently remained at home to raise her five children and assist her husband in managing the family business.

Peru Shanghai Urumqi
Lhasa Magao Grottoes
Colorado River Hohhot
Kashmir Milford Sound
Yungang Caves Nepal
Datong Lima Calcutta
Mongolia Tashkent
Wanaka Peking Zurich
Peru Shanghai Urumqi
Lhasa Magao Grottoes
Katmandu Wellington
Colorado River Hohhot
Kashmir Milford Sound
Yungang Caves Nepal
Inner Mongolia Cairo
Peru Shanghai Urumqi
Dator Mongolia
Mongolia Tashkent
Wanaka Peking Zurich

womantrek

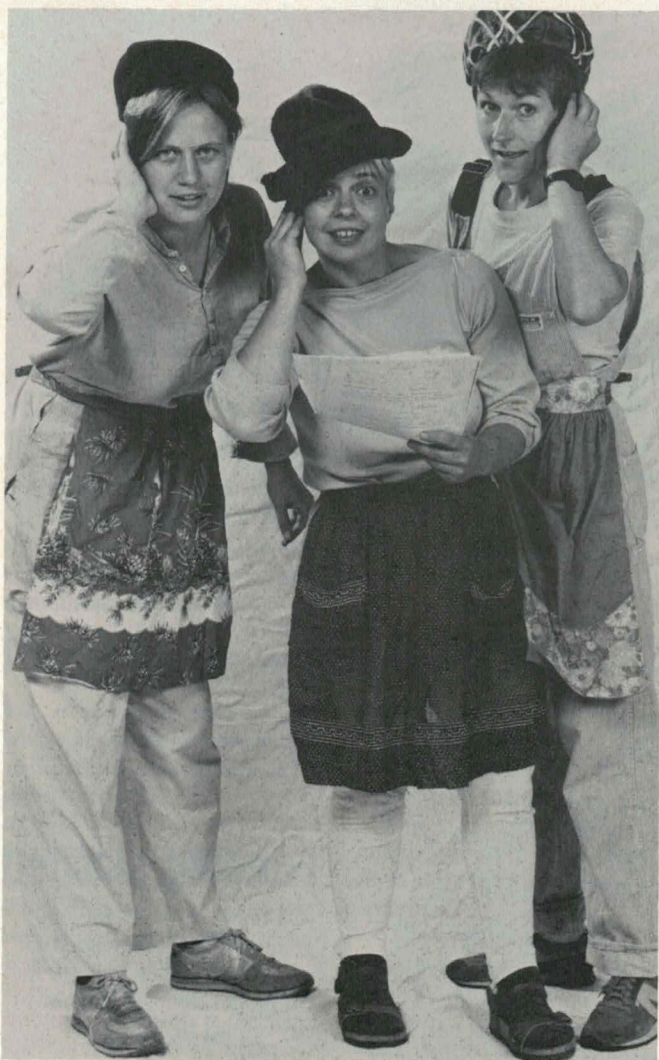


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Company of Sirens entices audiences with wicked wit



Company of Sirens members left to right are: Cynthia Grant, Lina Chartrand and Amanda Hale.

(TORONTO) — Across Canada, small feminist theatre groups are flourishing. Through the expanding feminist network, they are creating new audiences for theatre by bringing their theatrical productions to unconventional venues — feminist conferences, conventions, symposiums and celebrations.

The Company of Sirens is one such theatre group and is made up of a nucleus of six local Toronto feminists: Lina Chartrand, Shawna Dempsey, Cynthia Grant, Amanda Hale, Peggy Sample and Lib Spry.

The company was launched at a relaxed, informal gala opening a few months ago at Toronto's Poor Alex Theatre, where an overflow crowd of

friends, family and theatre people came to wish the new company well and enjoy a sample of Sirens fare.

Penelope, a theatrical, imagistic, and occasionally wickedly funny performance, was presented by Cynthia Grant and Peggy Sample. The piece is derived from Margaret Atwood's "Circe/Mud Poems", published in her 1974 book *You are happy*. The audience was also treated to comedian Shawna Dempsey's *Layers of Feminism in Saran*, a piece which required Dempsey to emerge clothed only in multiple drapings of saran wrap; "like most feminists, wrapped in layers and layers of theory." Painters and Decorators was a highly-

dramatic, rather abstract performance piece on sexuality from Amanda Hale and Lina Chartrand.

While Sirens' members have varied backgrounds and a range of theatrical interests, their emphasis at present is on union-oriented work. One of their major projects for the coming year is *The Working People's Picture Show*, a spectacle of song, dance and satirical skits on the role of women in labour, both current and historical.

"What is exciting about working with the unions these days is that the material we are presenting on key concerns for women — sexual harassment, day care, equal pay — these are no longer identified by the unions as women's issues; they are THE issues," says Sirens collective member Cynthia Grant.

Sirens, like most feminist groups, does not have a large or secure funding base and the support they receive from the union and women's groups is essential. The company members at present have to find their major source of income elsewhere; some fortunate enough to be on Canada Council grants, many working in various capacities for other theatre companies.

The members bring an eclectic set of skills to the company. Shawna Dempsey is the Sirens youngest member, and she has impressive technical credentials, having worked as a production assistant for the highly-regarded Meredith Monk company in New York City. While Dempsey is happy to share her technical know-how, which is still rare among women theatre workers, performance art is still her first love.

Collective member Lina Chartrand studied theatre at university. Both her political interests and her impressive administrative skills led her into community work for many years. In 1982 she was hired as administrator by Pelican Players, a multi-racial

neighborhood professional theatre just forming at that time in Toronto.

When they began collaborating on politically-based productions, Sirens member Cynthia Grant was grateful for Chartrand's experience with community groups. Grant had long been working as artistic director of Nightwood Theatre, an all-woman company formed in Toronto back in 1978 which is still going strong.

Nightwood was also Peggy Sample's entrance into the Sirens coterie. She had worked on several Nightwood productions with Grant. Sample began working in theatre in Ottawa with the Great Canadian Theatre Company.

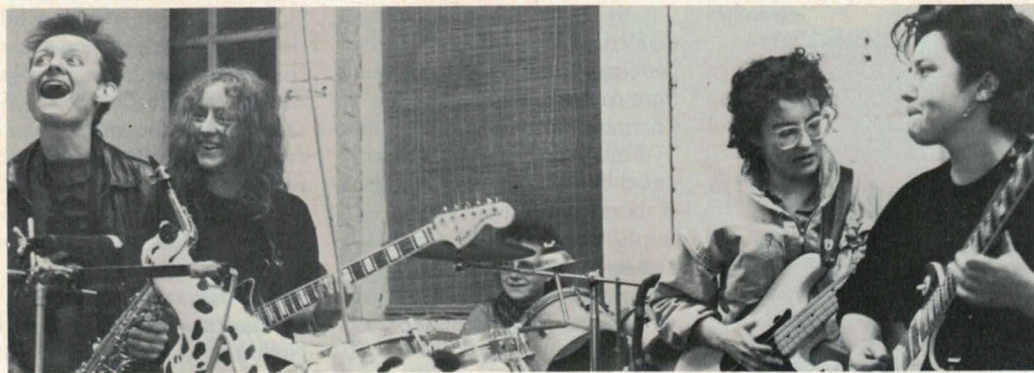
Lib Spry has been working with Sample on the two children's theatre scripts. Spry is originally from Montreal, where she worked with Theatre Direct Canada. She came to Toronto from Paris, where she had been with Augusto Boal studying 'theatre of the oppressed', which originated in South America and is concerned with literacy and adult education.

Amanda Hale had worked with repertory theatre in England. She began her career as a visual artist and incorporates her continuing interest in visual art and her poetry into her performances. Hale, with a degree in playwriting from Concordia University, began her writing for theatre through the Toronto women's cultural festivals.

As well as showcasing members' own works, the Company is planning to nurture other women theatre artists through their Siren Soirees, evening workshop celebrations which will feature new performances by non-members. It is heartening to see women who owe much to the feminist organizations with whom they trained ready to share their skills with newcomers.

—Rhea Tregebov

Demi-Monde strikes a chord with festival audience



Demi-Monde members, left to right: Marian Lydbrooke, Elaine Stef, Rita McKeough, Gabrielle van der Velde, Susan Sturman.

Demi-Monde: 1. A class of women on the fringes of respectable society supported by wealthy lovers; 2. A group engaged in activity of doubtful legality or propriety (Webster).

Demi-Monde, a group of five women as energetic and eclectic as their music, contributed to the excitement at this year's pared-down Canadian Women's Festival. Held indoors at the Centre Cultural Franco-Manitoban in St. Boniface, the 1986 Festival offered an intimate atmosphere in which to celebrate women's contribution to Canadian culture.

Vocalist Marian Lydbrooke and guitarist Elaine Stef were formerly with Vancouver's Moral Lepers; Susan Sturman, guitarist/songwriter was with Mama Quilla II, and drummer Rita McKeough and bassist Gabrielle van der Velde are from Calgary's Mode d'emploi. Demi-Monde's music is described in *Fuse* magazine as "multi-tempoed and polyrhythmic." They talked to *Herizons* writer Charlynn Toews before their Saturday evening performance.

CHAR: How do audiences respond to an "all-girl" band?

GABRIELLE: I like the support we get as a women's band at festivals like this, but I like a mixed audience, too.

ELAINE: Some people could be at our gigs because there's ten tits on the stage at the same time. (LAUGHTER)

SUSAN: Like a freak show.

MARIAN: But really, there are certain expectations of an "all-girl" band. It's fun to break

down those stereotypes.

RITA: I like the alternative role models an all-woman band presents. I would have benefited from that as a young girl. The musicianship is also good.

ELAINE: It's also out of the mainstream. You can feel more comfortable even if your vision is weird. It encourages creativity and talent. You can get ghettoised. You need a variety of venues. Some musicians only play women's events. Is that enough of a challenge?

SUSAN: Opposition is more of a challenge than agreement

MARIAN: The "Real World" provides an edge, a tension necessary to produce music.

GABRIELLE: We're using our own ears as the standard.

RITA: And we believe in what we're doing.

SUSAN: Because we're firmly grounded in the women's community.

GABRIELLE: Even though some say we're too aggressive. They think we should be more folksy. You know, the Winnipeg Women's Festival has guts to go for the diversity they have here, from punk to acoustic.

MARIAN: And they're really hooked into women's needs as performers — the space, the stage management, the message! Excellent treatment for performers.

SUSAN: The women's scene is so much more than just getting an album out. Some bands put artificial limitations on themselves by trying to part of a particular "scene", but

playing Queen Street (in Toronto) is not the be-all and end-all.

ELAINE: The alternative music movement has grown and there's a real network set up. The mainstream is more limiting; it can mean merely becoming obscure in more and more places.

CHAR: I wrote down some questions here I wanted to ask you . . .

RITA: How about, "What do you see your music doing?"

CHAR: Sure.

MARIAN: The lyrics are important. They're political, with issues such as Bill C-49 (the federal government's new anti-prostitution legislation), the nuclear arms race, nervous breakdowns. And I believe it's more inspiring for the audience to relate to art or music, rather than speeches.

I've worked as an activist and I know the problems: the rhetoric, preaching to the converted, the burn-out — it's outdated. I'd rather play in a band than go to a meeting! It's a more positive energy.

GABRIELLE: I see two functions in our music: first, the women's community wants music that isn't sexist and insulting, and music that reflects their social vision. Second, to bring the community together, such as the performance will tonight.

RITA: The music is stronger than most words because it's externalised. A person can relate to the performers as people. It's inspiring, it brings issues to a public forum, and it's personal because the

dedication of the individual musicians is obvious.

ELAINE: Lots of people who are dedicated are also burnt out. They want to have fun. I mean, you go to a women's dance, and what do they play? Diana Ross and the Supremes, not alternative music. But we are part of the women's community and this is how we contribute to it. However, the audience is becoming more accepting of our music, and our band is part of the process of change.

SUSAN: The music complements the other work happening concurrently, the personal/political issues. But through music we can express them more artfully, with more subtlety, in a multi-faceted way — not in monolithic statements. To refine these issues is a process that is challenging to both the musician and her audience.

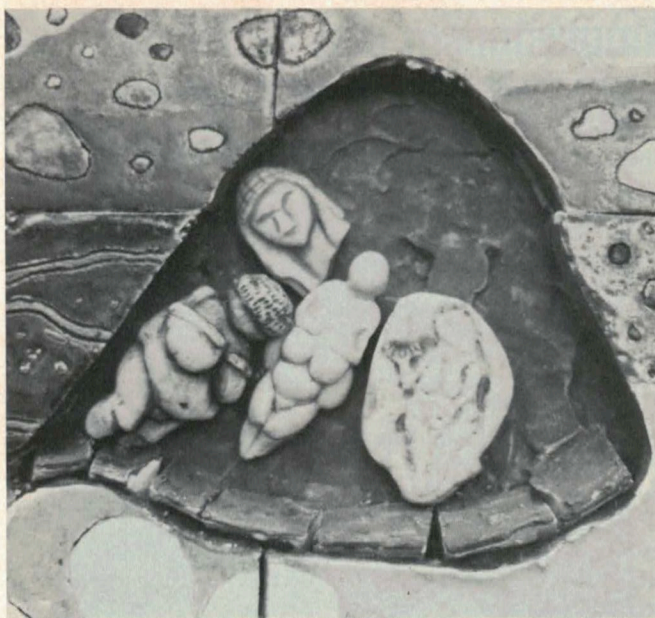
— Charlynn Toews

Funding slashed

(OTTAWA) — An \$80,000 grant being recommended for an Ottawa women's centre was cut in half, following a lobby to city council by R.E.A.L. Women.

Women's Place, a centre providing counselling, information and referrals for women in need, was targeted by R.E.A.L. Women because it is feminist run, supports reproductive choice for women and believes that lesbians are unfairly discriminated against.

Aldermen arguing against the funding for Women's Place didn't credit R.E.A.L. Women when they slashed funding, but said the money could be put towards better use, such as financing soup kitchens for the hungry. Ald. Darrel Kent, who voted to slash the centre's funding, said that too much taxpayers money was being given to programs for special needs groups. The city's policy committee, which overruled a city staff decision to award the full amount, voted 9-7 to reduce the grant.



Springer's art is a compendium of women's spiritual imagery, laced horizontally and vertically by historic events and metaphoric femaleness

Mural traces women's history

The unveiling of Goddesses Unite, a mural by Brandon artist Judy Springer, was an occasion marked by a strong sense of community and celebration. Consisting of 200 earthenware and porcelain tiles, the 10 foot by 5 foot mural is a visually and emotionally engaging compendium of woman-centered imagery. It is currently on exhibit at the Manitoba Women's Directorate in Winnipeg.

Springer structured the mural both horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, the movement is through time: from the past, through a middle section depicting oral history, to a righthand area representing the present and the possible future. Vertically, the images move from the underground, a burial place and metaphor for what is repressed and feared, to the earth's surface, and then to a realm beyond it that includes sea and sky. This structuring is unobtrusive, as images occurring in one section are echoed in another. A group of mythic Amazons astride marvelously patterned mounts is transformed in another section into a present day parade complete with female motorcade and a nude, placard-

carrying goddess. The mural is veined with rivers that connect below and above, past and present. Different eras, different locations flow into one another as easily as the viewer's eyes move from one image to another.

The mural teems with femaleness: a buried Venus of Willendorf, an Inuit spirit woman, a falling angel, the ancient triad of virgin/mother/crone, lovers whose embraces transcend time and the dictates of an aggressively heterosexual culture. The mythic and the everyday merge in the oral history section where all beings, animal and human, child and adult, lick, pant, suckle, talk, eat, kiss, and where huge disembodied mouths speak of all that has ever suffered silencing.

Goddesses Unite is a testimony to Springer's perseverance and artistry. Although the initial idea for the mural came to Springer in 1982, it wasn't until 1985 that she received a materials grant from the Manitoba Arts Council. An honourarium from the Manitoba Women's Directorate later covered the cost of framing.

— Heidi Muench

Evolve takes on counselling

(WINNIPEG) — A new Winnipeg program aimed at long-term counselling for victims and perpetrators of wife abuse is the only one of its kind in the province.

Evolve, a program of Klinik, a community-based clinic, has developed programs which provide an environment where women can gain support from other women and learn to replace fear with strength and self-respect.

Group counselling for men aims to teach skills and techniques that will help men

replace violent behavior with non-violent alternatives, understand their feelings and emotions, and learn to appreciate new role models for masculinity.

Evolve has also received financial support from the provincial department of Community Services and The United Way. Evolve representatives are available for workshops, conference presentations and speaking engagements. Call (204) 788-4402.

W.I.N. challenges organisations

Women's International Network News, a research and news agency based in the United States, is trying to put pressure on The World Health Organisation and UNICEF to offer assistance to community groups working to eradicate or prevent the practice of genital mutilation.

WIN News' editor Fran Hosken says that although The World Health Organisation (WHO) sponsored a seminar in Sudan eight years ago where the health damage was discussed in detail by numerous

physicians, the organisation has not made a concerted effort to work at eradicating genital mutilation.

"... Perhaps the time has come to remind especially UNICEF that they depend on donations of women and that without the time, effort and contributions by women worldwide their support would diminish," says Hosken.

Hosken urges those concerned to write to James Grant, Director of UNICEF, 866 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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Meese report on pornography released

(WASHINGTON) — The 1,960-page report released by the Meese Commission on Pornography, has been criticised by feminists for its inconsistent approach to pornography.

The report says that pornography leads to violence against women and it lists wide-ranging recommendations, including stricter enforcement of existing obscenity laws, the formation of citizen groups to boycott stores selling offensive material, and the enactment of laws allowing women to bring suits against pornographers on the grounds that pornography is a violation of their civil rights.

Two of the four women on the 11-member panel, Judith Becker, professor of clinical psychology at Columbia University, and Ellen Levine, editor of *Woman's Day* magazine, dissented from the report, saying that "no self-

respecting investigator would accept conclusions" making a link between porn and violence without doing original research.

Retail chains such as 7-11 stores, removed *Playboy* and *Penthouse* after they were warned that they would be named in the commission's report as sellers of pornography. *Playboy* and *Penthouse* magazines, those notorious defenders of freedom of expression, applied to and succeeded in having a judge muzzle the commission when it tried to release a list of stores selling pornography. The judge also forced the commission to retract a letter which specifically included *Playboy* in reference to pornography.

The commission was unable to agree on a definition of pornography. The report says it therefore uses the term "pornography" to refer to

anything that is predominantly sexually explicit and aimed at the purpose of sexual arousal. It does not, however, say whether everything that falls within this broad area should be illegal.

The report says that most of the materials the commission saw were primarily aids to masturbation, not part of an exchange of ideas. It said that pornography is not a discussion of sex, but is sex itself. It says that it is questionable whether sex itself, such as masturbation, is protected under the constitution; but if it is so protected, it is not protected by the First Amendment, which theoretically protects freedom of speech.

After looking at violent pornography and hearing reports on studies such as Ed Donnerstein's, which says that men who have seen violent or degrading films say they

would be more likely to consider rape, and listening to the testimony of women who had been abused, the commission concluded that at least some pornography promotes violence.

Since the commission report is a jumble of ideas, many feminist reactions to it are qualified.

A statement from Katherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, who drafted the model civil rights approach law, said, "For the first time in history, women have succeeded in convincing a national government body of a truth women have long known: pornography harms women and children." They backed the report's recommendation for civil rights legislation, but said, "the Commission's report is flawed, however, by recommending extension and escalated enforcement of obscenity laws."

— off our backs

belliegram

HIGH TECH BABY-MAKING — Women recruited by doctors at UCLA are paid approximately \$250 per attempt to allow themselves to be impregnated, and to have the resulting embryo washed out. These and other facts were recently reported at a U.S. conference on the social, ethical and legal implications of new reproductive technologies (NRT's).

Gena Corea, author of *The Mother Machine* called the new reproductive technologies "the reproductive Manhattan Project," complete with misguided researchers and a misinformed, naively enthusiastic public response. She also delivered the news of the first two deaths of women (in Brazil and Israel) during in-vitro fertilisation surgery.

Norma Swenson, co-author of *Our Bodies Ourselves* challenged the idea that the new reproductive technologies are primarily helpers of infertile women by pointing out that

very little time or money is spent on the prevention of infertility.

Using NRT's as a sex-selection means to eliminate 'undesirable' fetuses was criticised by Caroline Whitbeck, of MIT, who told the conference that the difficulty is not whether people should have control over the sex of their offspring, rather, she said "the problem is woman-hating."

Tabitha Powledge, editor of *The Scientist*, pointed out that sociological studies over the last 20 years have shown that women and men, given the hypothetical opportunity to select the sex of their offspring, prefer boys. Powledge said she would oppose sex selection even if that were not the case, on the grounds that it violates the most basic premise of sexual equality.

Rebecca Dresser, a lawyer at the Center for Ethics, Medicine and Public Issues at the Baylor College of Medicine, addressed

the issue of who gets access to the NRT's. She concluded that since current decisions regarding the NRT's are 'largely discretionary and political, those unhappy with present practices should lobby policy makers, including governmental bodies.

belliegram

PROGRAM GETS TEETH — Affirmative action programs in Quebec have finally been given some substance, after a four year delay.

The new regulations require that an affirmative action program must contain:

- precise objectives and concrete measures to correct the effects of discrimination;
- a time-table and control mechanisms;
- assignment of a person in authority to implement the plan;
- the stipulation that an annual report must be sent to the Quebec Human

Rights Commission; — provisions for committees made up of representatives of the employer, employees and the target group to be set up to give advice on the implementation of the plan.

The Quebec Charter was amended in 1982 to allow for affirmative action programs, but the government held up the required regulations, which have been the subject of a parliamentary commission. Although the regulations do not require all companies to undertake affirmative action programs, they do state that a program may be recommended by the Human Rights Commission if an investigation shows a group is being discriminated against.

Ironically, the provincial government has exempted itself from the regulations, stating that the Public Service Act to which it is bound, includes provisions for affirmative action.

— Human Rights Advocate

Safe sex meets safe manufacturers



This ad from The Hot Rubber Company suggests that if you're staying overnight all you need is a toothbrush and a condom

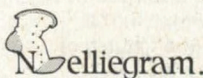
Safe sex means, among other things, wearing condoms, but so far Canadian advertising of condoms hasn't been geared to Canada's gay population.

Phil Shaw, a spokesperson for the AIDS Committee of Toronto has been working to change the heterosexual-oriented, romantic packaging of condoms by trying to convince Canadian condom manufacturers to include the gay men's audience in their marketing plans.

Marketing, an advertising trade publication, Julius Schmid and Ortho Pharmaceutical Canada say they have no idea how long it will be before they specifically

target the gay market, if at all.

Meanwhile in Europe, condom makers like The Hot Rubber Company market specifically to gay men with great success, and develop condoms specifically for that market. Canada's Julius Schmid President Murray Black, noting that the Holland-based firm has begun marketing a thicker condom to gays in that country, says the company won't rule out the possibility of introducing a product specifically for Canadian gay men if they figure out the right way to approach the market.



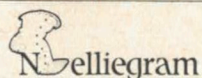
A FIGHTING CHANCE — Kevin Brown and Warren Jensen, of the Vancouver People With Aids (PWA) Coalition presented federal Health Minister Jake Epp with a petition signed by about 5,000 people from across Canada demanding that his department expedite the release of experimental drugs for the treatment of AIDS.

The People With Aids and their doctors are caught in a Catch-22 situation involving the release of drugs. The government has said that any drug tests they authorise have to involve the lab testing of

patients' blood during treatment.

There are only four viral labs in Canada capable of performing the tests, three in Montreal and one in Ottawa and they were told they were all too busy to handle AIDS patients.

Jensen says there are three promising drugs the coalition would like to see released in Canada: Ribavirin, Cyclosporin and Azidothymidine (or Compound S). All three are currently being tested in the U.S. but none have been available to Canadian AIDS patients. —Rites



CALDICOTT TAKES LEAVE

— Anti-nuclear activist and renowned spokesperson for Physicians for Social Responsibility Helen Caldicott told a meeting of the American National Women's Studies Association that she felt as though she had been raped by the men who rule the international disarmament organisation which received a Nobel Prize.

Before her official retirement from public life, Caldicott expressed bitter disappointment about the lack of success reached on disarmament and had harsh words for both men and women before she departed. She said women are pathetic wimps and even though most women are

smarter than men, she asked: "why haven't women got the guts to take over?"

She added that the men at Physicians for Social Responsibility did her in by staging a coup against her and lying to her, and then taking the Nobel Prize for the work she did.

Now, she said, "I have to go away and grieve and heal." She urged American women to run for office and go to Washington and swamp every Congressional committee hearing to demand action on disarmament.

Caldicott now plans to write a book for women about how to save the earth.

off our backs

Company invests in program

The Du Pont Co. spent more than half a million dollars in the last two years on a corporate program to protect workers from violent crime, especially rape.

The program is aimed at making women less submissive, more assertive and better prepared to defend themselves, and will consist of an eight-hour rape prevention workshop.

One video training tape shows a woman accosted in a parking lot jabbing her

assailant's eyes with a fistfull of car keys protruding between her fingers. Another shows a knee to the groin as an effective self-defense method. The program appears to stem from an increase in the numbers of women travelling with the company, as it includes specific advice such as getting off a hotel elevator early if you are uncomfortable. Du Pont provides full disability benefits, up to six months with pay, to rape victims.

In case you haven't heard . . .

Major changes in the federal Cabinet include:

Status of Women: Walter McLean has been replaced by Barbara McDougall, who was formerly Minister of State for Finance. Born in Toronto in 1937, the new minister is a financial analyst and a one-time business journalist and writer for newspapers and television. She has also been made Minister of State Responsible for Privatisation.

Secretary of State: The new holder of this portfolio is David Crombie, formerly Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern

Development.

Other interesting changes include: former Secretary of State Benoit Bouchard is now Minister of Employment and Immigration; Flora MacDonald is in charge of Communications; Youth Minister Andrée Champagne has been dropped from the Cabinet; former backbencher Monique Landry becomes Minister for External Relations; Pat Carney is now Minister for International Trade; Monique Vézina, Minister of Supply and Services; and Ray Hnatyshyn is the new Minister of Justice.

MATERNAL MORTALITY SHOCKING — An international conference on obstetrics and gynecology held recently in Sri Lanka was told that many maternal and child health programs focus only on infant death and illness and don't place enough emphasis on maternal health.

For example, in Pakistan, maternal deaths in one month are equal to the number of maternal deaths in one year in North America, Europe, Australia and Japan combined. Bangladesh also suffers a very high rate of maternal mortality, 25 to 30 per cent of which are due to the results of illegal abortion.

Professor Khattak, of the Khyber Medical College in the northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan, dramatically illustrated the extent of the problem in Pakistan. Two hundred obstetric beds associated with the medical college serve a population of 13 million and death rates of one in every 20 pregnancies are common.

In parts of Africa where the maternal mortality rate is as high as 1,000 deaths for every 100,000 births, women have an

average of 10 pregnancies; this means that about 10 per cent of these women die of maternal-related causes.

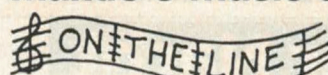
—WIN News

BRITAIN: BOOKSTORE'S TRIALS OVER — British Customs has dropped all charges against London bookstore Gay's The Word and its nine directors. This brought to an end the ordeal which began in April, 1984 when Customs raided the store and the homes of several of the volunteer directors. On that occasion Customs officials seized 800 books and many business documents.

Customs also agreed to end the arbitrary seizure of banned materials. The committal hearing in June, 1985, revealed the existence of a secret list of banned publications. Customs officials stated that in future they will review sexually explicit publications on a book-by-book basis. The importer can challenge Customs' decision without risking criminal charges or the loss of valuable stock.

Off Our Backs

Mantle's music a Class Act





Arlene Mantle's work as a singer/songwriter and educator is known to women across Canada involved in movements for social justice.

A few years back, Mantle teamed up with Jayne Walker and they started On The Line Music Collective, with the initial objective of getting Mantle's music out to the women they were meeting in their travels. So, Arlene Mantle 'On The Line', songbook and cassette came to be. This was followed a year after by 'Voices of Struggle' a second cassette. The collective also busied itself producing a slide show on Mantle's trip to Chile.

Now the group has moved from low-budget cassette tape production to producing a major album, 'Class Act'. The album has a bluesy feel to it but a reggae tune slips in, a rock number too, and some

hand-clapping rhythms in "Candles In The Wind," a song written for Positive Images, an Edmonton based women's photography collective.

Mantle is accompanied on the album by The Social List, a five piece group featuring Marilyn Lerner on keyboards and Jane Ellenton on tenor sax. They are joined by a guest brass section and back-up vocalists with Mantle's daughter, Lynn sharing vocals on 'Motivate Yourself' a tune Lynn composed.

'Class Act,' like all of Arlene's music, speaks to women's experience and the need to nurture in order to build a better world.

To order your copy of 'Class Act' a cheque or money order for \$11.00 (\$10.28 + .72 tax) to

ON THE LINE MUSIC COLLECTIVE

692 Coxwell Avenue, Toronto, Ont. M4C 3B6
(416) 469-3405, 463-0192

Specify album or cassette and include \$1.00 postage for first item ordered and 50 cents for each additional item.

Ms. Purdy's Calendar of Events



Nov. 21, 1986

PRAIRIE SPIRITS ALBUM LAUNCHING

Featuring Karen Howe, Deborah Romeyn, Barbara Spence. Members: \$5.00 Guests: \$7.00

Dec. 20, 1986

XMAS PARTY 2-4 p.m. Children. 7:30 - 1:30 a.m.

Adults. Skits, Musicians, Xmas Carols, Tree Decorating, Egg Nog.

Dec. 31, 1986

NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION

Full course meal. Free champagne at midnight. Contact Bev for tickets and for more information.

Jan. 17, 1987

MS. PURDY'S 3RD BIRTHDAY

Punch and cake. Entertainment. Open to members only. Contact Bev for more information.

Feb. 14, 1987

MS. PURDY'S AND BOLD PRINT

Presents a Valentine Dance at the Ski Club. Members \$6.00 Guests \$8.00. Tickets available at Ms. Purdy's and Bold Print Women's Bookstore.

Call Bev: 942-8212 for more info.
226 Main St., Winnipeg, Manitoba

Woman priest challenges authority

(LONDON) — A woman priest recently challenged the Church of England's ban on allowing women who have been ordained abroad to celebrate communion in England.

The Rev. Joyce Bennett celebrated Holy Communion at Church headquarters in Westminster, London in October, angering those campaigning to prevent the ordination of women. In July, the Church refused to reconsider its ban.

Rev. Bennett, who was ordained in Hong Kong, performed the service at the request of the Movement for the Ordination of Women before its annual general meeting.

The Right Rev. Graham Leonard, a vocal opponent of

the Movement, was quoted in *The Observer*, as saying he was very surprised by the service. "It is a challenge to the authority of the Church of England," he declared.

Margaret Hood, member of Women Against the Ordination of Women was also quoted as saying, "Every one of our members will be dismayed and saddened by this."

But the Rev. Chris Baird of Priests for the Ordination of Women said there is no problem since Bennett did not perform the service in the headquarters chapel.

Church of England bishops are currently considering proposals to allow the ordination of women although no decision is expected before 1990.

—Julie Wheelwright

Réalités africaines

NICOLE MORIN



Transportons-nous au deuxième Salon du livre féministe, à Oslo, où une de nos représentantes canadiennes pour le Manitoba, Jacqueline Barral, a assisté à cet événement.

Le but de cette seconde initiative d'une foire internationale du livre féministe est d'aider les femmes dans l'édition, écrivaines, libraires, à créer des liens. Organisée cette année par les Norvégiennes, la prochaine foire aura lieu dans deux ans, à New Delhi; ça se passe donc dans des pays différents pour que tout le monde puisse y participer et l'organiser à tour de rôle. L'avantage de cette foire: elle n'avait pas été annoncée par les médias, d'où plusieurs petites et moyennes maisons qui sont en dehors des circuits étaient représentées. Les éditions parallèles et ethniques avaient leurs places d'être là, de rencontrer les autres sans les grosses boîtes d'édition qui habituellement absorbent le marché. Le système d'ateliers a permis à tous de participer ainsi davantage, suivis de discussions, ce qui a beaucoup plu à Jacqueline Barral.

Chaque journée a un thème particulier. Le 21 juin, la critique littéraire, auteures et lecteurs concernés; les écrivaines du Tiers-Monde, les Africaines noires. Théorie féministe, développement et stratégies. Le 23 juin, science-fiction et littérature pour enfants. Le jour suivant, le 24, une journée mondiale, de tous les coins du monde et d'autres ateliers parallèles sur l'écriture lesbienne. Divisés en demi-journée, les ateliers du jeudi sont en fonction des spécialités: le rassemblement des écrivains, des libraires, des vendeurs. On y discute aussi du langage dans le monde patriarcal, les perspectives des femmes dans la littérature, les femmes en milieu minoritaire. Le vendredi, les adieux, des ateliers traitant d'identification et écriture, on parle du contrôle des moyens de communication des médias japonais, les femmes et la créativité.

Après l'interview j'ai décidé de vous présenter le matériel suivant: la critique littéraire avec Nicole Brossard, Canada, et Lauretta Ngobho, Afrique du Sud; un panel sur le féminisme et l'anti-racisme dont Truid Heiberg et Sonia Sanchez USA. Une deuxième partie sera couverte avec Anna G. Jonasdottir, Suède, Nina Likke, les sciences, Birgit Broch-Utne de Norvège et bien d'autres. Il faut glaner les nou-

velles, créer notre espace, publier ce que les femmes écrivent avec une autre perspective des femmes dans la littérature, comme le témoigne ici l'émergence du livre féministe.

"la formule ici la lettre en son nom signe mot brut t'épaves en douceur sur ce blanc percevant du domaine textuel l'engageante surface est-ce transparence ou plutôt écran et trace de mauve et d'humide désir jouxtant là au centre et cerne de moi Etreindre alors que



Jacqueline Barral

ture en la démenche ce connaître éprouvé vacillant avance et s'étend presque comme jailli le blanc de toi"

Masculin grammaticale, Nicole Brossard, l'Hexagone 1974.

Nicole Brossard, Canada: Redéfinir la critique littéraire — une question des années 80?

La critique littéraire s'est développée selon un point de vue patriarcal et sa symbolique. Nous en avons cependant besoin aussi bien pour apprendre à mieux lire qu'à développer la créativité littéraire. Qu'est-ce qui pousse l'écrivain à écrire, si ce n'est qu'une quête perpétuelle: on continue parce qu'on ne com-

prend pas tout ce qu'on écrit, qu'on doit toujours approfondir plus loin. Il faut donc redéfinir la critique littéraire en fonction de notre conscience de femmes, de notre identité, de notre créativité. Nous devons pour ce faire d'une part changer la perspective actuelle, c'est-à-dire notre regard sur le monde et sur ce qu'on en fait, d'autre part changer notre attitude mentale. L'écriture des femmes ramène d'une façon ou d'une autre à une prise de conscience féministe, car elle est fonction d'un corps et d'une expérience mentale de femme, qu'elle soit féminine, lesbienne, personnelle ou féministe. De ce fait, elle devient politique, à cause du manque d'un "langage autre", de mots différents de ceux qui traduisent le point de vue patriarcal et sa symbolique. Par conséquent on ne peut pas analyser des textes de femmes en suivant les techniques de la critique traditionnelle, il faut partir du fait que notre langage exprime la réaction à l'expérience patriarcale et notre point de vue sur cette expérience, ce qui nous conduit à une 'récréation' de la langue au niveau métaphorique et sa symbolique. Ceci ne doit pas mener cependant à écrire n'importe quoi, n'importe comment: la critique ne peut pas faire plus pour un texte qu'il n'offre dans son contenu: un bon texte force une certaine lecture de par sa forme. Nicole Brossard a écrit La lettre aérienne aux Editions du Remue-Ménage, 1985.

Lauretta Ngobho — Afrique du Sud, Grande-Bretagne:

La critique littéraire s'est développée en Occident et est avant tout une critique du point de vue culture occidentale qui a peu à voir avec la tradition culturelle africaine. Celle-ci est d'abord une tradition orale: elle est orientée vers et par la communauté; le conteur ou la conteuse exprime les idées, pensées et sentiments de la communauté alors que l'écriture transmet une expression individuelle. La création orale la fait participer aux joies, peines et aux sentiments de chacun alors que la création écrite reflète l'amour intime. De ce fait, les critères de la critique ne peuvent pas être les mêmes. Les Africaines lisent et étudient les oeuvres du monde occidental, elles apprennent à les apprécier. Est-ce que les Blanches comprennent l'écriture africaine dont la source est la tradition orale? L'Africaine veut être comprise sans se faire dire "here she goes again!". La curiosité de l'Occident pour l'Afrique, et son intérêt, se tourne plutôt vers les journalistes que les écrivains. Par exemple, dans le cas de l'Apartheid, ce sont surtout des Blancs qui écri-

vent sur le problème pour "informer" le monde occidental. Dans la tradition, le poète réveille le roi tous les matins et lui récite en public ce qu'il a fait la veille, ensuite il y a discussion jusqu'à ce qu'on arrive à un consensus pour la suite des événements. En Afrique, les femmes sont en première ligne dans la création littéraire dans la mesure où ce sont elles qui traditionnellement transmettent les légendes: cependant elles ont transmis une culture masculine. Tout enfant et toute mère composaient alors son petit poème uniquement à l'usage de la famille. La vie des femmes et celle des hommes sont séparées dans la tradition, et vu leurs conditions de vie, les femmes n'ont pas développé de personnalité propre. Lauretta Ngobobo a publié *Cross of Gold* en 1981.

Karin Moe, de Norvège, nous parle de la situation dans son pays en qualifiant la critique littéraire: "The Mess". Qu'est-il arrivé dans la littérature depuis les drames d'Ibsen? De nouveaux auteurs. Déjà en 1880 des femmes signaient seulement de leurs initiales. Les féministes ont eu un lien direct avec la critique; la définition de l'écriture est tout un travail. Les hommes créèrent des écoles, une école littéraire à la fois. Karin Moe veut renverser le système linéaire par un matériel de travail féministe et donner plusieurs directions à l'écriture, plus d'une école à la fois. Les livres publiés selon des catégories isolaient donc les femmes en tant que lectrices, étant organisés en fonction d'une logique dite parfaite. Dans les années 1970, les femmes commencèrent la création en littérature. L'information est importante. Il existe là-bas un groupe de femmes qui mettent actuellement en lumière des livres de femmes du passé. Nous devons regarder le livre d'une auteure de plusieurs points de vue. Essayer de traiter aussi des petits détails: une nouvelle conceptualisation qui permettrait de voir plusieurs choses en même temps et une analyse en profondeur plutôt que de mettre dans une série, de morceler ainsi. La pragmatique de la critique littéraire en Norvège est un essai pour pénétrer les stratégies de mensonges en montrant des livres où trois personnes sur quatre seraient des femmes. De façon très indirecte, l'acteur principal est trop souvent un mâle ou celui qui fait avancer l'action du livre. Il faut renverser volontairement cette situation pour contre-balancer; je suis conditionnée par la société à donner moins de temps, à consacrer moins d'espace aux femmes. Ce qu'il manque c'est un concept de la création orale. Comment le texte pass-t-il de l'esprit à la main qui l'écrit? On donne trop d'importance au contenu et non au message et le message qui peut dévier du contenu. Donc on a besoin d'une nouvelle forme d'esthétisme, reprendre le même domaine tout en donnant le point de vue des femmes. Analyser, pénétrer l'institution littéraire et faire attention à la perpétuation de clichés, de préjugés.

Du panel sur le féminisme et l'anti-racisme, commençons par la présentation de **Truid Heiberg**, Norvège: Il est plus facile d'être anti-

raciste surtout quand on est peu concerné par les femmes noires autour de soi et puis on peut éprouver un choc culturel par une façon de vivre qu'on ne comprend pas toujours, nous les blanches d'une ethnie dominatrice. Chez nous, les Africaines qui y vivent sont considérées "occidentalisées" et donc non représentantes de la femme noire en Afrique dans notre attitude patronisante. Tant que ces femmes aussi se soumettront à cette attitude, elles ne pourront pas évoluer. Il faut qu'en tant que blanches nous leur laissions la parole et qu'elles fassent aussi l'effort d'être conscientes ou de prendre ce risque; les problèmes du racisme ne sont pas féminins, cependant il y en a encore qui sont aggravés par le racisme. La discrimination contre les femmes en général est d'autant plus forte sur les immigrantes et les noires qui souffrent d'une double discrimination: femme et noire ou de couleur. Très peu de support se trouve en Norvège. Il y a eu même des cas de déportation où les féministes n'ont pas été mis au courant; la raison s'explique par la différence de culture créant une isolation, les femmes blanches ne voyant pas toujours l'isolement par le mari de ces femmes souvent illettrées et soumises. Le manque d'analyse du racisme chez les féministes, trop partielle et mal intégrée s'étalait souvent à cause du système de classe des blanches. Le pouvoir en place permet cette situation. Le féminisme anti-racisme ne doit pas être de la "bénévolence". Il faut comprendre qu'il y a un défi que nous devons faire face: l'exploitation extrême du Tiers-Monde.

Sonia Sanchez des Etats-Unis s'introduit avec son livre *Native Son*, sujet de l'homme qui a besoin de tuer ceux qu'il aime et de la femme qui se fait mal à elle-même. Le livre parle de l'Amérique, du mythe de l'impérialisme, du déchirement des années '60 avec la guerre du Viet-Nam, la trahison par la propagande, le pouvoir. Parallèlement, les Noirs Américains se font imposer une autre culture, dans un monde étranger, on leur a enlevé la leur; le même problème féminin se présente. Le héros du livre a la peur comme les femmes. La conscience seconde d'une personne est écrite dans *The Bluest Eye*: hiérarchie blanche sur l'homme noir, la femme noire doit y être asexuelle, et par compensation, devient super-sexuelle. Elle voudrait se conformer au modèle de la banlieusarde blanche, un faux idéal de dépendance. **Nawal El Sadaawi** explique que la discrimination a lieu à tous les niveaux, surtout la couleur, puis la religion et le sexe. Elle nous incite à prendre une action politique et économique parce que la discrimination est une punition contre une personne et n'a rien à voir avec sa valeur. L'usage de DIEU dans la religion prouve le racisme. On a le Dieu-mâle, et en dessous la hiérarchie basée sur l'argent, sur la couleur, sur l'esclavage, sur le pouvoir. Le racisme a chassé les femmes de l'Histoire. Dans son pays en Egypte, ce sont les femmes qui ont inventé l'écriture et l'agriculture; Isis était la Déesse de la science et de l'agriculture et des premières écrivaines. C'est elle qui a écrit les

livres saints qui ont servi à composer la Bible. Cependant, on ne le sait plus aujourd'hui. Cela a été rayé. Nous devons aller derrière la diffusion superficielle des idéologies des Blancs par rapport aux Noirs, et voir l'oppression, comme le racisme a été intégré à la religion. L'attitude raciste a provoqué le problème de la couleur dans les livres saints par le paradis du Coran où il y a des femmes blanches qui attendent la récompense des bons plaisirs des Musulmans. Les femmes non-blanches n'ont rien; c'est ainsi qu'au niveau de la société, une femme musulmane, une femme bien, désire rester à l'abri des maisons à ne rien faire. Le féminisme a commencé dans les classes moyennes de femmes blanches et les noires ont été élevées à leur niveau; restons très attentives au racisme. Pour compléter le "Black and Third World Writer's Day". **Sonia Sanchez** nous revient sur les femmes noires et pour qui écrivent-elles? Sorties de l'esclavage les femmes noires ont dû passer à la reconstruction de leur culture, de leur forme spirituelle, un concept de rapport avec leurs ancêtres qui avaient lutté de mères à filles. Ceci gardera vivante la poésie de leur héritage malgré la coupure d'avec l'Afrique. Il est très important de connaître la vérité sur notre passé en tant que femmes de couleurs et écrire à ses semblables et aux femmes blanches son histoire; ne pas seulement écrire pour plaire mais pour changer l'état de méconnaissance de ce qu'elles sont réellement. En tant qu'écrivaines nous devrions risquer d'écrire pour ne pas perdre notre identité, composer notre anthologie. Le public américain dépend du capitalisme et une barrière existe au sujet des Noirs, des femmes de couleurs. Il faut se rebeller. **Barbara Burford**, d'Angleterre nous parle de la popularité de *The Colour Purple*, des conséquences. Le problème se situe dans le danger de manipulation par la subversion et la façon de faire dire les choses devenues à la mode. Dans un certain sens, les féministes peuvent bien faire de l'argent et il le faut pour contrôler le marché. Il faut gagner aussi des prix, être en avant mais comment ne pas être récupéré par le système? La réponse: que les livres des Noires atteignent les bibliothèques pour que tous puissent les lire sans passer par l'influence des médias. Par exemple, ici il y a très peu de production des Noires, d'où très peu d'accès au public. Les films provenant de Noir(e)s ou de couleurs sont d'abord testés par les Blancs Américains moyens, avant leur introduction en Grande-Bretagne. Les lectrices, le public pensent que c'est ça l'Amérique Noire dont les livres peu existants sur le marché, absents, en donnent une vision donc très partielle. Quand on ignore, on ne peut rien faire pour, par le sexisme et le racisme des médias. Le mouvement féministe doit aider les femmes noires, de couleurs, à franchir cette barrière, à pouvoir atteindre le niveau de la publication et de la distribution. Partager nos expériences, s'entraider, faire appel aux jeunes. Ne pas trop utiliser comme moyen la "Star" et créer notre propre réseau. ▼ Suite au prochain numéro

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Job Training for Tomorrow is a Manitoba Jobs Fund program that is committed to strengthening the employment capabilities and performance of Manitobans. Manitoba businesses must keep up-to-date with technological changes, adjust to new demands in the labour market, and increase productivity if they want to stay competitive. This program has been developed to help them do just that.

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Celebrating Sam's Birth

Wendy Lill reflects on her first year
as the mother of a son
with Down's Syndrome

by Wendy Lill

Samuel Edwin Starr was born on August 9, 1985 at the big yellow and white hospital in Fredericton. Two weeks early. I had spent the day sitting by the St. John River in the sun editing the first act of a new play, drinking fruit juice, which I rested on the big brown globe of a stomach in front of me. I felt terrific. Healthy. Strong. I was going to spend the next two weeks zenning in on my next exciting project — motherhood — so that I would be READY — for the great day the baby arrived.

The baby arrived that night just after 11; he came out so fast and with such energy that there was no waiting for the doctor, no waiting for Richard and me to get scared or to do our funny breathing exercises . . . he just came in a warm wet flood, two weeks early and, we were to learn the next day, with Down's Syndrome.

Diary Entry: August 12:

I want to kill the nurse who comes into my room to change the bed.

"They're very happy affectionate children" as she beat up my pillow, "and they're not hopeless . . . you can teach them a lot . . . and the families who have one of them just love them to bits . . . and they do plastic surgery on them now to make them look more normal."

How is it that this warm little baby suckling at my (sunburned) breast, who a few weeks ago, kicked and danced about inside to the music of Tina Turner, who turned and sighed all through the long summer as we dreamed sunny thoughts about him, can have a hideous

affliction, a "syndrome"? A defect. A flaw which would reduce him to being described as "one of them"?

And how is it that we, Richard and I, are suddenly open to assault by people like this who feel — (and I have yet to understand this) — at liberty to console and commiserate on what she assumes is the tragic state of our lives?

I called my parents in Ontario with the news; my mother's initial response was brief. "Oh God." My father's was resounding silence. They were only mirroring my own bewildered state of mind. I felt that a huge hole had been ripped in my heart. That night I woke up and I was literally scared stiff. My body was straightened out with fear. What ghastly things could I expect ahead of me if the announcement of my son's condition could engender such incredible reactions?

Down's Syndrome is a genetic imbalance which occurs approximately in one out of every 800 to 1000 births. Due to a failure of the chromosomes to divide evenly in the formation of the egg (or sperm), a child is born with an extra chromosome (47 chromosomes). This chromosome variation may cause varying degrees of mental retardation, heart conditions, poor muscle tone and identifiable physical characteristics such as somewhat slanting eyes with folding skin at the inner corners. This characteristic — the superficial similarity to the "Oriental" eye structure has led to the older term "mongolism" or "mongoloid idiot." It is sobering to realise that at the basis of a one form of discrimination lies another.

I was 34 years old when Sam was born. The incidence of Down's Syndrome increases with advancing maternal age. Old eggs. (But the father too, can contribute to this defect. In about 25 per cent of the cases, the original improper cell division occurs in the sperm, not the ovum.) It never occurred to me to have an amniocentesis to determine chromosomal abnormalities — something which some doctors (in some large cities) routinely recommend for women over 35. I assumed that my baby would be "normal" and that life would unfold as it should.

There are other theories about the causes of Down's Syndrome, ones which I think are even more distressing than the "biological time-clock."

Some scientists believe that viral infections or hormonal abnormalities may be factors in the scrambling of chromosomes. The incidence of Down's Syndrome may also be linked to the amount of radiation a woman is exposed to, and possibly to other environmental causes. Instead of buying the theory about maternal age hook, line and sinker, I think we should be *demanding more investigation* on links between radiation, environmental pollutants, and all sorts of birth defects, including Down's Syndrome.

We brought Sam home. We live in a farmhouse on the St. John River just outside Fredericton. (We moved here just a couple of months before Sam was born so we had very few friends, but the ones we have are incredible.) We had all of the warm, frightened,

cont'd on page 22



cont'd from page 20

bursting, first feelings one is supposed to have bringing home a new baby — my first baby. First bath, first sleep through the night, first soother, first smile, first recognition . . . first everything! We watched him, cuddled him, kissed him, photographed him, loved him, began to build a world with him. His condition seemed unreal, far away. Friends from across the country started arriving. My sister came to visit. Everyone checked Sam out and immediately became attached to him. They beheld a baby; cute, cuddly, pink, needy. Just a baby after all. They turned their attention to Richard and me. They wanted to see the impact all of this was having on us. I had the poignant realisation that the initial fear and dismay that people had was really for US, their loved ones, not this new little interloper who'd come along and somehow dropped a bomb in the middle of our lives. Well what was the damage done? What remained intact?

Well first and foremost, Sam was a really healthy baby; he had none of the physical problems which are often associated with Down's Syndrome and which often slow children in their development.

Sam had two parents and grandparents aunts and uncles and friends who, after the initial shock, rallied and would now move mountains for him.

Sam had the incredible good luck of being born into a privileged society where he is (relatively) free from the fear of hunger, war and deprivation — something millions of babies born each year will never be assured of.

Sam, because of his particular disability, would probably never be a brain surgeon or a microbiologist. When you have a child with a disability, some of your expectations are shattered. Some which you didn't even realise that you had. (There is room for humour in this kind of stock taking. Richard, in describing to his aunt in Halifax what Down's Syndrome meant said that it would probably mean Sam wouldn't be the Prime Minister of Canada but could possibly be a cabinet minister in New Brunswick).

Richard and I would probably feel the weight of responsibility for Sam long after others with "normal" offspring are wandering off into their golden age to enjoy peace and quiet in condominiums somewhere.

There was just so much to think about suddenly and not any of the fluffy stuff that you find in the books about bringing home your new mewling bundle.

Sam's arrival raised all the really HUGE questions for me which I am still trying to answer. Why do we have children in the first place; what the hell do we expect from them? In what way does their existence reflect on our own? I remember sitting with Sam in the basement of a church hall with five other mothers all waiting to have our babies inoculated. Everyone's eyes were moving uneasily around the room at the other babies, to see whether

one was standing or doing some other little skill before theirs. Competitiveness, constantly checking for differences, for the upper hand. Why do we women allow ourselves to get into that kind of competitiveness? How will that spirit of competitiveness affect my sweet little boy in the future? Will it hurt him? Why are we so afraid of differences? Of weaknesses? Of shortcomings? I needed people to keep me company as I walked through my fears, my new and sometimes harrowing observations with a bit of humour and wisdom. And some people have and still do take that journey with me.

Meanwhile Richard and I were adjusting to having a baby — pure and simple. The confusing, pleasing, exhilarating, tiring experience of a new love affair. Being extremely vulnerable. Everything appeared cataclysmic . . . heaven and hell.

Because of his Down's Syndrome, we immediately got involved in an infant stimulation program and since he was two months old, he's had an early intervention worker who comes out to play with him and assist in his development. He sees a pediatric physiotherapist, an occupational and speech therapist on a regular basis. We are probably more consciously involved in Sam's early education than most parents. We have helped him learn how to roll over, sit up, stand, hold a cup . . . all of the normal things babies do, some more easily and earlier than others.

We also continue to make a living, both of us as freelance writers. In the fall I wrote the second act of the play I started before Sam was born.* In January, I took Sam to Winnipeg for five weeks while the play was workshopped and produced. We stayed with friends who have a big robust bright-eyed flourishing "normal" one year old named Joel. Sam was at that time six months old. It was a watershed for me. I could see the differences that existed between Sam and Joel — in terms of precociousness and aggressiveness. There is a certain softness, not passiveness, but softness about Sam. A vulnerability. And I knew that was one of the differences. It was fascinating to see but it hurt me somewhere. For the first time, I saw how Sam was different because of his Down's Syndrome.

Diary Entry March 15:

I took Sam, all wrapped up in a blue comforter and a wool hat, out for a walk on the river a while ago in his little wooden sleigh. He fell asleep after half a mile but I kept walking. Everything was very white and almost wavy from the wind and also huge mysterious cracks deep down into the snow and ice. I wonder what makes cracks like that?

My relationship with Sam has deepened over the last few months. Obviously because my love has deepened but something else too. I'm constantly and painfully reminded what confused

values people have. As if somehow a flaw, a crack which can be detected right off the bat in a person is somehow more sad or unacceptable than the thousands of ones we program in from the day children are born. I have run into some responses to Sam's condition which have made me turn ashen inside — the gist of them being that his life is without any real value because he's different, mentally retarded. And yet underlying that, is there a framework of what really is valuable? Have these people in any way achieved it or are they striving for it? I have no sense of it. It would all be even more fascinating if it didn't hurt so much.

Over a year has passed since those first harrowing days in the hospital when Sam was born. He is now sitting on the floor while I work, hurling his plastic telephone around by its cord. Soon he'll get carried away and the phone will bop him on the knee and he'll push out his bottom lip and start to cry indignantly. The attack of the telephone. And I'll pick him up and soothe him and kiss him and then sit him down again to explore something else. Life with Sam has not been a tragedy or a nightmare. It's been the best year of our lives. The happiest and the hardest. Sam has entered every part of me, every recess of my imagination. He affects everything I write, what I notice, and what I care about.

On August 9, 1986, we had a big birthday party for Sam — lots of babies, (normal and not so normal!) lots of presents, lots of food and a wonderful assortment of friends. One of them gave Sam some state of the art rubber toys with a card which read "When I think of all the things that would have never been, if you had never been, I celebrate the day you were born."

Another friend told me that it was visiting me in the hospital when Sam was born and seeing how I accepted the reality of Sam's condition which made her decide she too had to accept her "condition" — that of an alcoholic. She hasn't had a drink for over a year. I certainly didn't feel brave or accepting back in August 1985 but it meant a lot to hear that from her. It means a lot to realise how we are all interconnected.

I'm not sure what the future holds for Sam — or for any of us. I know what I hope for him and will work and fight for, and that is what all parents wish for their children — a life full of happiness and stimulating experiences and fulfilling work and wonderful company. I hope people will celebrate Sam's birth and be happy and excited to meet him and enjoy being with him and give him the greatest things of all — respect, optimism, acceptance and affection. I don't think that's too much to expect. I don't want to have to settle for anything less. ▼

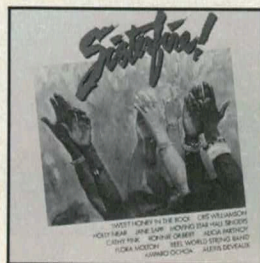
Wendy Lill lives just outside Fredericton, New Brunswick, where she is currently working on her fourth play.

*The Occupation of Heather Rose was performed at Winnipeg's Prairie Theatre Exchange from February 27 to March 23, 1986.

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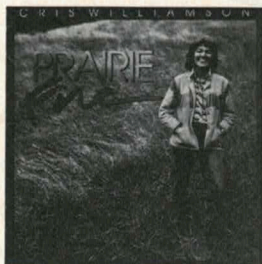


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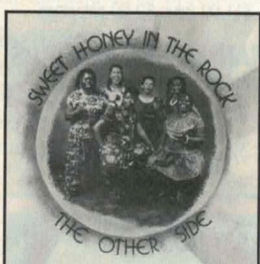
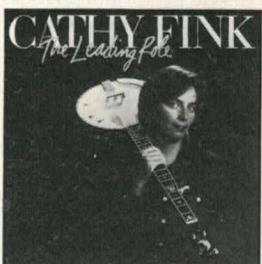


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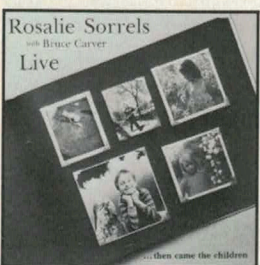


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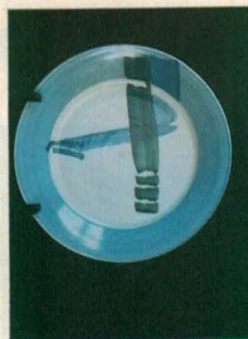
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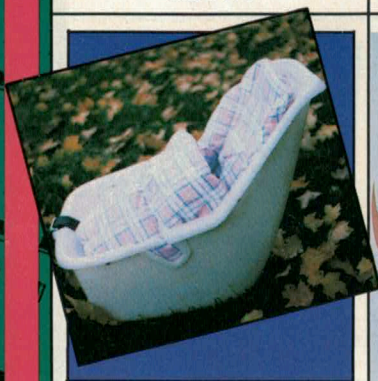
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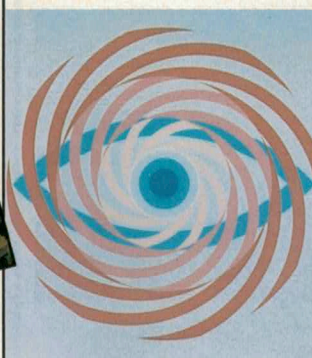


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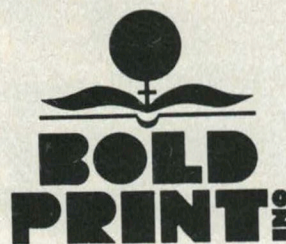
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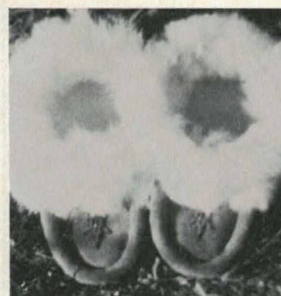
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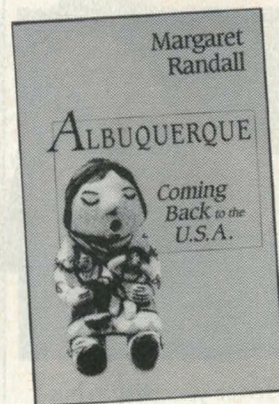
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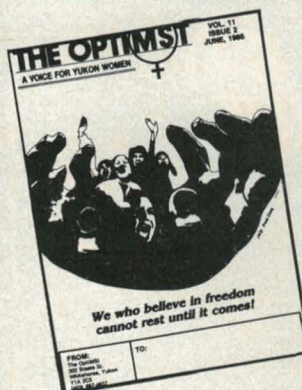


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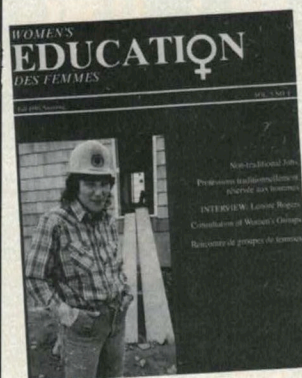
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*P*ope Joan's legend has survived for centuries in spite of efforts to ban her existence from history.



In Search of *Pope Joan*

The other day someone said to me: "You look like this female pope. I've just read her biography. Here." She thrust a book into my hand. It turned out to be *Pope Joan*, translated by Lawrence Durrell from Emmanuel Royidis' 1886 Greek version. It looked boring.

"The church banned this thing and excommunicated Mr. Royidis. Damned if I see why," she added, and left me with it. Mr. R's sexist heart, I would later discover, was in the right historical place in the debate:

"... what of the historical Pope upon whom our author has based his narrative," muses Mr. Durrell during his lazy introduction, "the latest writers who have been bold enough to enter the arena have given us to understand that she is a fiction. This view, needless to say, is not shared by Royidis . . ."

Nor is it held by Platina, who wrote *Lives of the Popes*, in which he gives us the scanties from history:

POPE JOHN VIII

'John, of English extraction, was born at Mentz and is said to have arrived at Poppedom by evil art; for disguising herself like a man, whereas she was a woman, she went when young with her paramour, a learned man, to Athens, and made such progress in learning under the professors there, that, coming to Rome, she met with few that could equal, much less go beyond her, even in the knowledge of the scriptures; and by her learned and ingenious readings and disputations, she acquired so great respect and authority that upon the death of Leo (as Martin says) by common consent she was chosen Pope in his room.

Mr. Royidis gives this account of Joan's mother, another victim of what history teaches:

"... her name was Judith. She was blonde and a goose-girl to a Baron. This noble Saxon, coming down one day to select the fattest among the geese for a feast he was to give, found his inclinations warm no less keenly towards the goose-girl than towards her geese: and translated her in one moment from the poultry yard to the bedroom. Bored with her after a while, he gave her to his cup-bearer, who gave her to the cook, who in his turn bestowed her upon the pot-boy. This last, being of a signal devoutness, exchanged her with a monk for the holy tooth

by *Trigane*



of Saint Guthlac (P.16). Should that not be disheartening enough, he gives this story of Joan's conception:

... These two mischief-makers encountered her on the banks of the Fulda where she was spreading out the wet tunic of her husband on a bush — while he having nothing else to wear, crouched under cover of the bushes like Ulysses, waiting for the article to dry. The archers spread her, too, out on the grass and reminded her rather forcibly of the destiny of woman on this earth. . . . Nine months after this, in the year 818, Judith was delivered in Ingelheim (or, as some say, in Mayence) of that future inheritor of the keys of heaven, Joanna.

I finished the wretched book blowing flames out of my nose, having decided that a quest for the truth about Joan was pointless, when an odd accident occurred in a second-hand book store. I happened to pick up a tome entitled *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* by Sabine Baring-Gould. In it was an essay "The Antichrist and Pope Joan", so I bought the book assuming its author to be named after those Sabine women raped in a famous classical painting by Nicolas Poussin. Imagine my chagrin on reading this list of credits:

"The author of this present book was a pioneer British folklorist . . . one of the most remarkable men of recent times . . . parson, squire, traveller, archaeologist, popular novelist, historian . . . these are some of the versatile activities packed into his ninety year lifetime . . . he was responsible for 140 books . . . he wrote the famous hymn 'Onward Christian Soldiers' . . ."

Before I had a chance to swallow my disappointment and read the article, a book came in the morning mail: Elaine Partrnow's compendium *The Quotable Woman* (1800-On). Naturally I browsed through the quotes over coffee and who did I find? Sabine, being a lot more versatile than even her editor knew: "Baring-Gould, Sabine (1834-1924) Dan. hymnist (p.67)."

In one book Sabine is a Catholic Oxford Don and in the other a Danish Lady Hymnist. This could only be accomplished by disguise, I thought, and there seems to be a long tradition of it. At least back to 840. Having sorted out that problem, I discovered another, more thorny one. Sabine thought Pope Joan was an historical hoax. Prepared to ignore this sticky wicket on instinct I turned to my *Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* searching for the real Pope Joan. What I discovered was a very curious Church ritual:

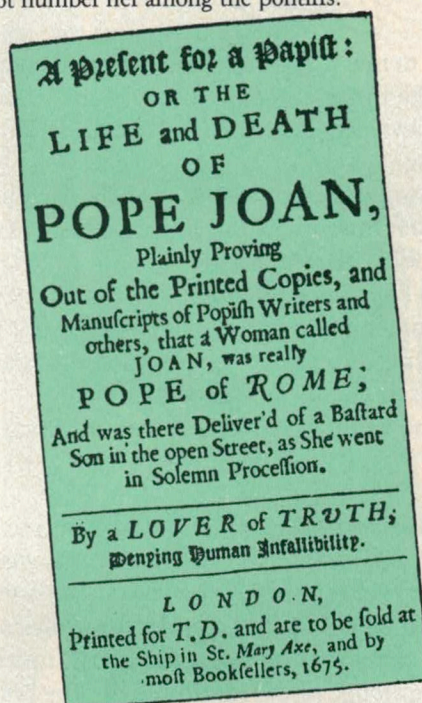
"Candidates for the papacy had to seat themselves naked on an open stool, to be viewed through a hole in the floor by cardinals in the room below. The committee had to make its official announcement: 'Testiculos habet et bene pendentes'. He has testicles, and they

hang all right."

Now why would they do this unless some person, sans testiculos, had already penetrated their male preserve, in disguise perhaps, and gave herself away by performing the only miracle male popes couldn't match:

As she was going to the Lateran Church between the Colosseum Theatre (so called from Nero's Colossus) and St. Clement's her travail came upon her, and she died upon the place, having sat two years, one month, and four days, and was buried there without any pomp. (Platina's *Lives*).

Or as Anastasius the Librarian (d. 886) put it in his chronicle: "The Pope, becoming pregnant, gave birth to a child, wherefore some do not number her among the pontiffs."



This papal testicle test may have been prompted by the same impulse which moved Lewis B. Terman when he administered the first Stanford-Binet IQ Test in 1916:

"When it was administered to the student population, it showed females at all levels outscoring males of the same ages by two to four per cent. So Terman and his colleagues CHANGED the test, removing the questions on which girls did especially well . . ." (*Beyond Power*).

But they can only do it after the fact, and the fact is Joan was in Rome outscoring all the men on her IQ tests, too. Mr. Royidis et al tell us "she taught continuously for two years and won renown for her eloquence", that she "glimmered like a beacon on a foggy night," that she became intoxicated with her success and "half began to believe that like Tiresias she had changed her sex." How can he know this? Which half was convinced? The half that wasn't pregnant? And Sabine purports to know that Joan's rise to power would have been im-

possible in spite of the fact that Italy and Spain had an ancient tradition of women scholars who could and did study alongside men.

Discounting the mild, sad, frightened or reverent accounts of Joan by "plagiarising medieval scholars", Sabine gives his own version of the story in terms calculated to discredit our pope's authenticity. That is the reason why, Dear Reader, I dare to quote the worst of it in full, because it is an excellent example of history forced to become legend at penis point:

She early distinguished herself for genius and love of letters. A young monk of Fulda having conceived for her a violent passion, which she returned with ardour, she deserted her parents, dressed herself in male attire, and in the sacred precincts of Fulda divided her affections between the youthful monk and the musty books of the monastic library.

Not satisfied with the restraints of conventual life, nor finding the library sufficiently well provided with books of abstruse science, she eloped with her young man, and after visiting England, France, and Italy, she brought him to Athens, where she addicted herself with unflagging devotion to her literary pursuits. Wearied out by his journey, the monk expired in the arms of the blue-stocking who had influenced his life for evil, and the young lady of so many aliases was for a while inconsolable. She left Athens and repaired to Rome. There she opened a school, and acquired such a reputation for learning and feigned sanctity that, on the death of Leo IV., she was unanimously elected Pope. For two years and five months, under the name of John VIII., she filled the papal chair with reputation, no one suspecting her sex. But having taken a fancy to one of the cardinals, by him she became pregnant. At length arrived the time of Rogation processions. Whilst passing the street between the amphitheatre and S. Clement's, she was seized with violent pains, fell to the ground amidst the crowd, and whilst her attendants ministered to her, was delivered of a son. Some say the child and mother died on the spot, some that she survived but was incarcerated, some that the child was spirited away to be the Antichrist of the last days. A marble monument representing the papess with her baby was erected on the spot, which was declared to be accursed to all ages.

Sabine may know that Joan's lust was hot and her sanctity feigned, but, for the rest, she asserts Joan represents the Whore of Babylon as prophesied in Revelations, "an adulterous woman who should rule over the imperial city" the story of whom "crystalised into this curious myth of a female pope." Holy Smegma, I said to myself, why take all that trouble turning a

cont'd on page 32

Did Joan Really Exist?

MAX WALLACE



*A Woman Pope (as History doth tell)
In High Procession Shee in Labour fell,
And was Deliver'd of a Bastard Son;
Thence Rome some call The Whore of Babylon.*

Today, the Catholic Church teaches that the story of Pope Joan is a myth, a fable disseminated by enemies of Catholicism. But for almost 800 years after Joan was said to have lived, there was no such questioning of her existence. Until the 16th century the Church and its followers accepted her Papacy as an embarrassing historical fact. Even the Catholic Encyclopedia admits that throughout all these centuries, "Joanna was an historical personage whose existence no one doubted."

But the coming of the Protestant reformation in the 15th century doomed the story of Pope Joan to the annals of legend. Protestant propagandists, eager to discredit the Church, gleefully circulated the story through pamphlets, treatises and even nursery rhymes. Soon, every Protestant knew the embarrassing story of how the Catholic Church was deceived by a woman.

The first verified reference to a woman Pope appears in the chronicle of Marianus Scotus in

the middle of the 11th century. His reference is brief. After noting the death of Pope Leo IV in 854, he writes, "to whom succeeded Johanna, a woman, for 2 years, five months and four days." Thomas de Eltham's official list of the popes contained this entry: "AD 855, Joannes. This one doesn't count. She was a woman."

A number of monuments attested to Joan's papacy. Not long after she is said to have died, a full-length statue of her was erected on the spot where she is believed to have given birth. The statue is mentioned in the 12th century manuscript, guide book of Rome, the *Mirabilia Urbis Romanae*, still to be seen at the Vatican Library. In it we are told that the statue, standing in the open space near the Colosseum, is called the woman Pope with her boy.

Just as well attested is the fact that for several hundred years, a bust of Pope Joan stood among the series of 170 popes in the Siena Cathedral. We know that this series was commissioned by Pope Adrian IV in about 1168.

It is unclear when the decision was made to eradicate from history all traces of Pope Joan but the first steps were taken in 1588 when Pope Sixtus V had the statue of her and her child taken down and thrown into the River Tiber, declaring it to be a pagan statue. In 1600, Pope Clement VIII ordered that her bust in the Siena Cathedral be altered and transformed into a manly appearance. When this was done, the name of Pope Zachary was placed underneath.

It wasn't until 1984 that Joan was brought back to life by British historian Joan Morris, who specializes in early Church history. While researching her unrelated book, *Against Nature and God* Morris discovered the obscure chronicle of Martin of Fulda, dated around 1374 AD. In his chronology of the Popes, Martin puts the pontificate of Joan after Benedict III instead of before. Other than that, he sticks to the usual account of Martin of Polonus. This is significant since he came from Fulda (in Germany) where Joan is said to have studied and so he may have had access to a source he considered more reliable.

Since previous historians had never actually succeeded in disproving Joan's existence but rather only that she couldn't have come between Leo and Benedict, Morris proceeded to investigate the possibility that Joan in fact came after Benedict and before Nicholas I.

She found considerable evidence to back up this thesis: The most persuasive of this evidence concerns confusion as to the pontificate of another Pope John VIII. Although Joan pontificated under the name of John VIII, she was never officially counted in the list of the popes since she was a woman. So, when in 872, another John became Pope, he took the name John VIII.

Hundreds of years later, all the documents in which the name of John VIII occur were collected and accumulated into one collection. Among this collection is a letter from John VIII to King Burgred of Mercia requesting him to protect nuns and dedicated women from men wrongfully taking them into marriage. This letter is said to have been written in the year 874. But by 874, Burgred was very old and had already fled to Rome after a defeat in battle in his own country. The letter must have been written much earlier and would have made much more sense if sent in the time of the first John VIII (Pope Joan), 20 years earlier. It is interesting to note her concern for the women in the country of her own origin. Two other letters in the collection don't make sense if applied to the time of the later John VIII but fit very well 20 years earlier. But, since Joan is not believed to have existed historically, the compilers of the collection had no choice but to include them. Max Wallace is a Montreal-based free-lance journalist currently working on a book about Pope Joan.

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legend into a whore and the whore into a myth with blue stockings? Why erect a monument to a myth?

I knew I was at a crucial point in my research: all my sources were biased, damned if I knew who to believe or what was real, how to proceed, and at times like these, I mused, tarot cards come in handy. Picking up my replica-deck painted for the Visconti Sforza's family in mid-Fifteenth Century Milan, I closed my eyes and pulled a card. The third trump. The High Priestess. According to Paul Huson and Stuart Kaplan, who wrote the instruction booklet cum history that came with my deck, this lady used to be called The Female Pope.

"Pope Joan may not have been so apocryphal as she is now portrayed. Part of the church's most carefully hidden history shows that there were women in high ecclesiastical positions up to the Twelfth Century when they began to be deposed. Abbesses in Germany and France once held episcopal powers and the title: SACERDOS MAXIMA: High Priestess." (*Woman's Encyclopedia*, p. 470)

Paul Huson traces the Female Pope symbol back to the Mother Goddess, so Sabine's Whore may well be Astarte or Ishtar, the main deity of the old city of marvels. Yes, indeed, this was the kind of evidence that wily Danish hymnist was trying to deep six in her article. Just when I was becoming biased myself, I found this illuminating passage in the *Woman's Encyclopedia*:

From Milan came a sect devoted to an unofficial papess named Guglielma, whose followers believed "she was the incarnation of the Holy Spirit." Her Second Coming was predicted, and she was reincarnated in a lady named Manfreda, whose votaries said the male-dominated Papacy would pass away, yielding to a line of female popes. In preparation for this event they elected Manfreda the first of the Popesses, and several wealthy families of Lombardy provided . . . the sacred vessels they expected her to use when she said Mass in Rome . . . but the sect was exterminated by the Inquisition, and Manfreda was burned at the stake in the year 1300.

By 1866, Sabine was kicking the ashes under the stake and turning the dust of historical female popes into pixie-poo. Linger over the little evidence left, Sabine insisted that the whole story was a Greek or Protestant plot to make the early church look bad. As a researcher, my feeling is it would be difficult, if not impossible, to make the early church look much worse than it managed to do all on its own, even discounting the libel of infidels:

It need hardly be stated that the whole story of Pope Joan is fabulous, and rests on not the slightest historical foundation. It was probably a Greek inven-



Johanna
Papisce

tion to throw discredit on the papal hierarchy . . .

The great champions of the myth were the Protestants of the Sixteenth century, who were thoroughly unscrupulous in distorting history and suppressing facts, so long as they could make a point. (*Curious Myths*, p.177.)

Mr. Roydis writes that Pope Joan "ordained fourteen bishops, built five churches, added a new article to the Creed, wrote three books . . . sheared the Emperor Lothaire, crowned his successor Louis", and generally made herself popular in the two-plus years of her reign. "Of course those historians who prefer not to believe that Joanna became Pope attribute some of these acts to her predecessor and some to her successor; or else they simply erase them altogether from the records of papal history." (p.137).

Super. Wonderful. What the hell did I know now? I hated my sources, loved the pope, wanted to believe, and had scant evidence for doing so. Then, when I was about to despair, I found this light in the distance of history:

Catholic scholars now deny that there ever was a female pope, but the legend of Joan persists. Even the church accepted Joan's pontificate as historical fact, up to the beginning of the Seventeenth century. Her portrait appeared in a row of papal busts in Sienna Cathedral, labelled Johannes VIII, femina ex Anglia, John VIII, an Englishwoman . . . Joan was the only pope ever stricken

from papal records, although her pontificate was better documented than many others, especially the popes of the fourth or fifth centuries, many of whom had no contemporary documentation at all, but were mere names inserted into later chronicles to create the illusion of unbroken succession. (*Woman's Encyclopedia*).

Maybe I was getting a grip on things. That the church had immediately banned Mr. Roydis' book when it appeared in 1886 lent some credence to the view that they might indeed be willing to tamper with historical fact in a good cause. And that cause, as far as I could see, was to avoid giving women the idea that if they had run Holy Mother Church so well before, then there was an historical precedent for them doing it again.

History seems to be created by the kind of people who would preserve every syllable of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and light their living-room fires with the collected plays of Aphra Behn. Those who unwrote Pope Joan were dealing with the need to create the appearance of unbroken male succession, so into the few years of her pontificate, they inserted "an anti-pope named John enthroned by popular demand against the will of the clergy, and soon overthrown." (*Women's Encyclopedia*).

Any researcher worth her pepper is going to get her fingers on the public pulse, so I went to the local bingo-parlour with my questions: How do you feel about ordaining women priests? How about a female pope?

Answers were many, but not varied:

"If God was a woman no one would listen to him."

"Women don't have the right kind of voices. No authority. We don't hire them to call bingo numbers for that reason. Can't be heard over the crowd."

"What would they want to do that for when they can be nuns?"

I didn't get much in the way of clerical opinion because they wouldn't talk to me about it. But I did find out what the Bishop of Calcutta thought: "I do not think that the question of women priests is a matter of discrimination . . . I think it is quite well understood that all of us in this life have our particular limitations and our roles to play." (*When For Women Priests?* Toronto Star, 1985)

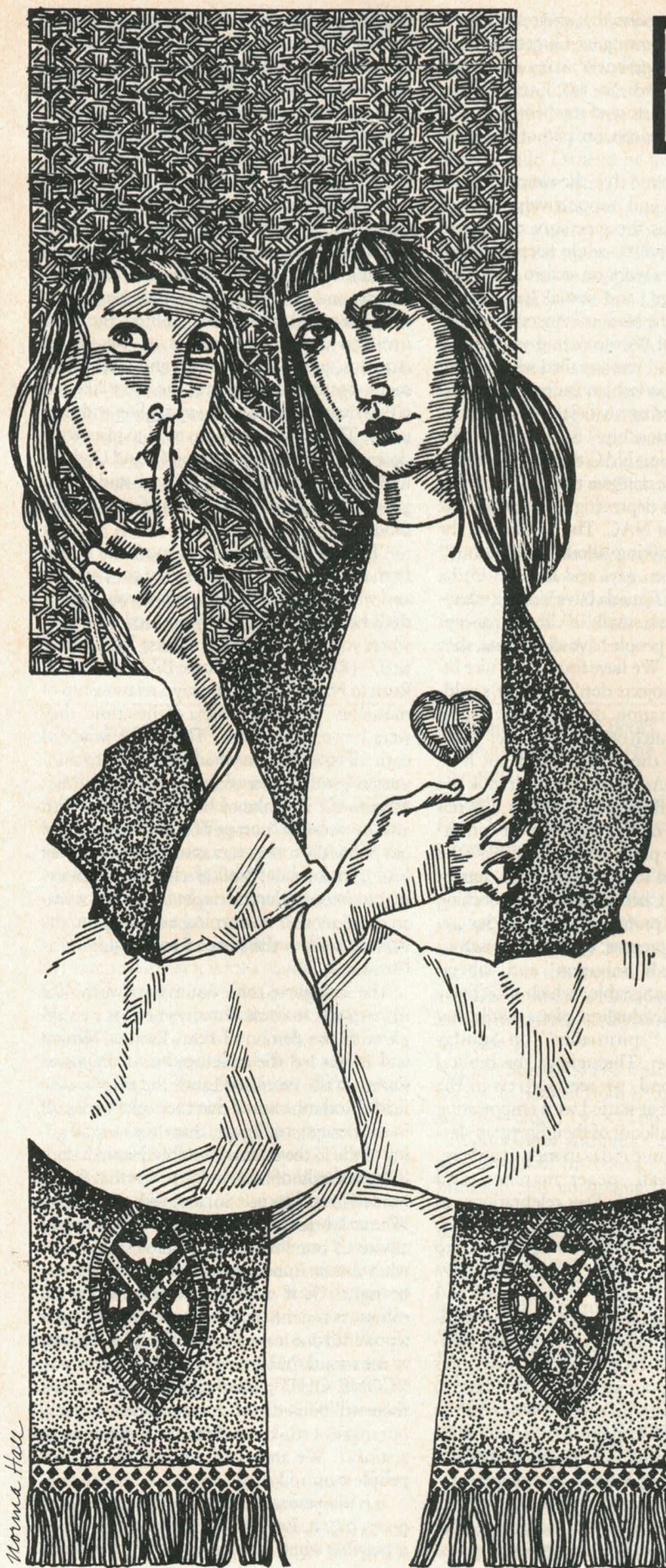
As for the rest, Michael McAteer, Religion editor for the *Toronto Star*, puts it this way:

At this point in the church's history, the question of women priests is closed as far as the hierarchy is concerned. As one U.S. bishop put it 'the women's ordination issue was not raised . . . and there are no signs that the teaching (of the church) will be changed.' The pope himself has been unbending on the issue and forcefully told a gathering of U.S. bishops . . . they should withdraw support from individuals and groups

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Blessed Unrest

A Feminist Minister Searches for Community



So, has Darlene found a job in Peach Pit yet?" asked Jean. I had moved to Peach Pit a few months ago to be the United Church minister in that small, rural community. My lover, Darlene, and I had made the painful and pragmatic decision to live apart for a time. Peach Pit, we gathered, was not quite ready for a couple of lesbians, much less a lesbian couple, in the manse. I told this to Jean. Her anger crackled down the long distance line to my end of the phone. "Shit! When is the United Church going to grow up?" My response was a sigh: I share that question, but I am also weary of feminists who don't in the same breath ask, "When is the Teachers' Federation going to grow up?" I have yet to understand why the women's movement deems it commendable for women to work to overthrow patriarchy in the Pipefitters' Union, or in Judaism and Islam, for that matter, but not in the Christian church. I'm feeling irked by the often matronising attitude of the women's movement, which tends to view Christian feminists in the same way we used to view prostitutes: pre-consciousness, victimised sell-outs to the wishes/whims of men.

To be a lesbian-feminist-Christian in a gathering of feminists (post-Christian, recovering Catholic, or otherwise) is like being a feminist woman in a room full of "feminist men" — Somehow, you know your experience is not going to be taken seriously. That's painful, because I expect more of the women's movement, and because we share more than you know. It's also painful because I often receive respect and support from heterosexual, non-feminist members of my denomination, which is where I least expect to find it.

For lesbian-feminist-Christians, community is our ultimate value. It is where we find support and where we can be comforted and cared for. For those of us who are members of the clergy, this is a bittersweet value, because most of us are in places like Peach Pit, small, rural, isolated places where community is more likely to be longed for than found. Our sense of community is

marked by what that iconoclast Jesus called "the kingdom," a term we have rejected in favour of less hierarchical names like "the Shalom age," or "the Jubilee." This gives us the sense that the community in which we live and for which we seek is "already and not yet," both ever-present and ever-elusive. It would be fair to say that we get glimpses of the Shalom age whenever we see justice/love being done, which is to say, whenever we have a sense of each of us being the image of God/ess. (This happens rather more frequently than one might imagine!) Community also means that we don't let the church off the hook by leaving it, giving our "Christian" opposition cause to say, "See, those deviant sinners don't really belong to us, they're outside agitators. Why, we don't have anyone like *that* in our congregation!" By choosing to stay in our denomination, we are choosing to afflict the comfortable, to wrestle like Jacob, saying, "We will not let go until you bless us." Why bother? We bother, not because we need the blessing of bigots, but because the bigots need to get to a

place where they realise that their salvation is dependent upon blessing us. Our community is not a community otherwise: it is a self-chosen collective of like minds. So, too, I write this not only to tell you the story of my people, but to remind you that we, too, are part of the women's movement.

It is a puzzle to me that the women's press reports gleefully and supportively on such church activities as the sanctuary movement and anti-nuke protests, while keeping mum about the church's work on sexism, domestic violence, language, and sexual harassment. This past year, at the National Action Committee on the Status of Women's mid-year conference in Winnipeg, I was appalled when I went to the workshop on lesbian issues. I'd expected we'd be discussing artificial insemination, mutuality in relationships, S/M, erotica. We talked about netting NAC to take lesbianism seriously, or, as one delegate put it, "to use that 'L' word." It was depressing to realise that the church is ahead of NAC. The lesbians at the workshop kept talking about "education." Members of affirm: gays and lesbians in the United Church of Canada have virtually abandoned the word as a small "l" liberal concept that assumes once people have all the data, they will behave justly. We have found that nice little educational projects don't work. It's cold-blooded confrontation that *converts* bigots ("My God, the church organist is a dyke!"). All the education in the world would not have desegregated the American South. It took the witness of Rosa Parks saying "Nuh-uh, I'm not giving up my seat on this bus," before conversion began to take place. And I think that's the language we need to use (conversion, repentance, evangelism), because what we're seeking to bring about is a profoundly spiritual change, not only in our oppressors, but also in ourselves.

For us, the words "salvation" and "liberation" are interchangeable, which effectively eliminates the individualistic pious piddle that masquerades as "spirituality" on Sunday morning television. Throughout the Biblical witness and beyond, we see God/ess in the liberating deeds that started with empowering the Israelites to walk out of their Egyptian slavery, and still continue today in such manifestations as Stonewall, peace marches, and International Women's Day celebrations, to name but a few. Indeed, the liberation from our Egyptian slavery is of great significance to us as a lesbian/gay couple. Moses could have passed. Born an Israelite, he was raised and pampered in Pharaoh's court, just as lesbian/gay people are raised in heterosexual community, and will receive all the privileges thereof if we deny our identity. Moses chose to identify himself with his people. Which brings us to the other salient point: liberation/salvation is not something that happens individually. It happens corporately, to a people.

This is where we sometimes feel ourselves to be at odds with the women's movement. Our vision of the Shalom age means not only that

we fight the oppressor, but also that we seek to convert the oppressor, so that nobody gets left behind in a slave/master mentality. Again, this is our stress on evangelism. It is not enough to have our heterosexual Christian sisters and brothers think or even feel that lesbians and gays are part of the community. We won't be satisfied until they believe it.

"But hang on," you say, "aren't the Christian churches profoundly anti-sex?" Some denominations are, some are not. The usual formula is that those that tend to be otherworldly and little engaged in struggles for social justice tend to be anti-sex. Often, the more involved a denomination is in, say, Latin America, equal pay, poverty and unemployment, South Africa, peace, the more likely it is that denomination is also struggling with sexuality. These denominations tend to place their doctrinal emphases on creation ("And God/ess looked at everything made and said, 'It is good.'") and incarnation (each of us embodies God/ess).

"Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God; where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried." (Ruth 1:16-17). These Biblical words of Ruth to Naomi hardly portray a relationship of mutuality, yet in the context of their time, they were brave, new words. They were words of oath, of covenant, in which one woman/non-person gives up her country, her family, her religion for the sake of her relationship with another woman/non-person. This may strike our politically correct ears as scandalous, but the scandal that (male) Biblical scholars are still trying to sweep under the carpet is that one woman chose another woman. Again and again, the Biblical story is the story of lesbian-feminist Christians.

The struggle to come out in the church, like the struggle to come out anywhere, is a struggle with the demon of Fear. Even as Miriam and Moses led the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery to the Promised Land, the people were fearful and murmured that they were better off in the fleshpots of Egypt, that they were all going to die in the desert. As Rabbi Hanokh said, "The real exile of Israel in Egypt was that they'd learned to endure it." So, too, with my people. We catch ourselves wondering if the ridiculous advice of our Pharaohs ("But we don't care what you do in bed, so why come out?") may be right. Or if not right, at least easier. Of course, it is neither, but the demon of Fear is a powerful one to overcome. When Jesus stands at the mouth of Lazarus' tomb urging him to "COME OUT", Martha reminds Jesus that there will be an odour. In other words, coming out makes a stink. And none of us wants to be a stinker. We are afraid, and rightly so, that people won't like us.

It is in naming the demon, Fear, that we get power over it. Rebirth, as incest survivors tell us, is possible when terror is faced. The black civil

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rights movement had to overcome the fear of jail. As long as black people in the Southern States were terrified of going to jail, there could be no struggle for justice. It was when blacks went into jail singing hymns and came out alive that the day of liberation was at hand. It has been said that the only institution that could give birth to and sustain the black civil rights movement was the church. During the civil rights movement in Mississippi, 13 black churches were burned. White policemen came at the protesters with clubs and dogs and firehoses, and all the protesters had were hymns.

My people, too, need to name Fear as the demon that keeps us from afflicting the comfortable as boldly as we can. We share the demon Fear with non-Christian lesbians/gays: we might lose our housing, our children, our families, our jobs. Lately I have been recognising that the fear of job loss is a middle-class fear. And for those of us (teachers, pipefitters, carpenters, clergy) who love our work, that class fear has tremendous power over our lives. It makes coming out anywhere but among our own an exercise in terror. It is the demon Fear that keeps me from allowing my name to appear with this article, and my failure to overpower that demon is a sin.

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favoring the ordination of women."

Mr. McAteer notes, however, that the issue is "unlikely to lie down and die." That would be my guess, too. Women hoping to undermine male authority in the church should imagine themselves sitting naked on that stool while all those cardinals take turns looking up at you through a hole in the floor.

Well, perhaps it is as difficult for a woman to become Pope as it is for a squire, parson and Oxford don to get into *The Quotable Woman*. My gut feeling is that both these things happened, but as a researcher, I can hardly countenance such subjectivity if I hope to be taken seriously, right? Therefore, I would like to sum up what I think I have learned from all this:

I don't look much like Pope Joan.

This is what history teaches: "Testiculos habet et bene pendentes", whether sacred or secular. In the specific case of Pope Joan (in whom I believe implicitly), we have the familiar message: Watch your step, woman. Especially during papal processions that are catered to create the illusion of unbroken male succession through Holy Mother Church or you may disappear up some legendary monument while you were thinking how wonderful it would be to have a Holy Mother pontificating from the Vatican and what would Her Infallible position be on birth control? ▼

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And yet, despite the powerful presence of Fear, we keep working, you in your small corner, and I in mine. Recently, a clergy friend of mine phoned. She wanted to know what was happening with Darlene and me. How were we coping with the separation? (Not terrifically). When would Darlene be joining me here in Peach Pit? (Not likely.) I told her that I don't know of any same-sex couples in which one partner is a clergy person, who are living together in the manse. When it is attempted, we are run out or simply worn out by typical parish ministry. I wished I had been more optimistic, for my friend went on to tell me that there's now somebody special in her life, and that someone is a woman. She had hoped for some words of encouragement. I'm not at all sure that pointing out that Moses didn't make it to the Promised Land was what she wanted to hear, yet that is encouragement. The Israelites *did* make it to the Promised Land, and we will too. ▼

The author is a lesbian, a feminist and a United Church minister with a tendency to get hot under the collar. Presently serving in a single-industry, rural town, she chose to write this article anonymously.

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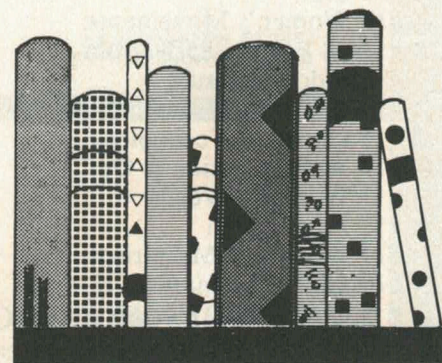
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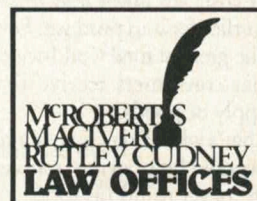
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Some trades are freer than others

LYN COCKBURN



Free trade, says the encyclopedia, is the policy of permitting the people of a country to buy and sell where they please without restrictions. It is based on the principle of comparative advantage according

to which, market forces lead producers in each area to specialise in the production of goods on which their costs are lower and import those which are costlier for it to produce. Such a policy leads to the greatest total world-wide production, so that consumers receive the largest possible supply of goods.

Pfui. If that's what Brian is trying to foist on us, it's no wonder he's having trouble keeping his polls up, never mind his socks.

Free trade means exactly what it says. Trade in which no money is involved.

For example, once Brian and Ron get their

acts together, we'll trade Wayne Gretzky for the entire state of Washington. It's certainly time the Americans had a non-violent hero and lord knows, B.C. needs something to discourage it from becoming the unemployment capital of Canada. I suspect tacking Washington onto the bottom of it will help.

Next, I think we'll trade Farley Mowat for Jerry Falwell. It's the only way Farley is going to get into the States and while no Canadian with an IQ above that of a zucchini wants Jerry, we can't always expect to come out on top. The concept of free trade requires a cooperative spirit of give and take.

Then, I believe it would be a good idea to trade senates. This agreement will rid Canada of a tiresome controversy and in exchange, we'll receive a bunch of politicians used to getting elected, working hard and stuff like that. The advantage for the Americans is they'll get a senate accustomed to doing nothing more arduous than breathing. Therefore, their political system, hitherto understood only by three professors at Harvard, will be simplified by 50 per cent, so there'll be some hope the rest of us might begin to comprehend it.

I don't really want the Pentagon, but if Ron offers it in exchange for the Star Kist people, I suppose we'll have to consider it.

And I suspect we can easily trade our Arctic sovereignty for the U.S.'s acid rain. They already have our Arctic sovereignty and we already have their acid rain, but I think it'd be a friendly gesture on our part if we made it official.

After that, it might be a smart move to trade our Post Office for a fleet of fast horses. The new Canadian Equestrian Post will certainly be an improvement on our present system and having to contend with our Post Office might well help take Ron's mind off Libya.

Brian seems uncertain whether or not Canadian culture will go on the bargaining table. What's the problem? I think we can give Ron the CBC for say, 20,000 extra copies of Rambo. Seems fair.

Next, we can trade Ed Broadbent for North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms.

Jesse, you may recall, recently made the papers because he invented a new disease called Liberal Bias. LB according to Jesse, is a crippling virus affecting anyone who criticises Ronnie, doesn't advocate the death penalty for theft over \$1.79 or who doesn't believe stockpiling nuclear toys is a peaceful endeavour.

Ed, the federal NDP leader, is the chap with the good sense of humour and the terrible French accent. After TV debates during national elections, everybody in English Canada says, "O! Ed was the only leader who made any sense" and then they all go out and vote Liberal or Conservative. It's not clear what Quebec viewers think because many of them think Ed is speaking German.

Anyway, Jesse will be a breath of fresh right wing air in a country noted for its liberalism, while Ed will give the U.S. a shot in the left arm, a part of that country's body politic which has languished of late.

Furthermore, I think it would be a clever ploy on Canada's part to trade our medicare program for the American military.

The benefits to both countries are legion. The U.S. remains one of the few countries in the western world without a government medical plan. This oversight exists because Republicans believe that anyone who can't afford to get sick better choose to remain healthy and somehow the Democrats have never been able to break through this tradition. And what's more, if Ron's Vice President, George Shrub, succeeds him, there's little hope of medicare becoming a reality in the immediate future. However, if we give it to them, their innate sense of politeness will insure its acceptance.

In return, we'll take the U.S. military and with typical Canadian nonchalance, will reduce it to a heap of leaky ships and rusty missiles in no time flat. We'll scrap Star Wars, have a chat with Mikhail, take the Cold War out of the freezer and be hailed as the peace makers of the 20th century.

Finally, I see no reason to limit our free trade agreements to the U.S. We ought to start bargaining with the Soviet Union as well.

We can begin by trading them Windsor or Hamilton for Vladislav Tretiak. I don't care if he has retired. Asleep, he'd be better than most of Canada's present NHL goalies.

All in all, free trade is a great idea, as long as we keep it simple. This complicated import, export, excise, incise, tariff, bailiff, sheriff, inboard, outboard stuff has got to go. ▽



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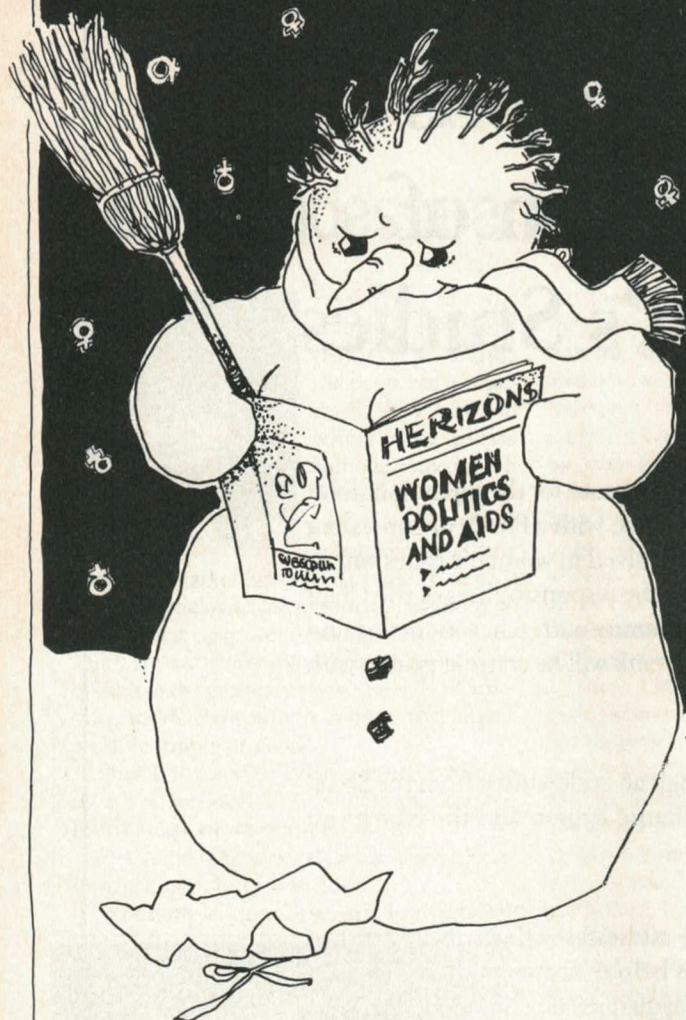


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My news on shoes

E U N I C E B R O O K S



I got my first pair of non-pedestrian pumps in time to sprain my ankle at a Valentine's Day dance in 1957, and I bought my last pair some 10 years later, because I fell off those pedestals and into

what was then called the liberation movement.

Although I never actually burned a bra, I chucked about 30 pairs of high heeled shoes into our furnace one day, and I've been as close to the earth as I can be, weather taken into consideration, ever since.

Nowadays, I'm following the motto: if it feels good, wear it. I don't need a boost from the bootery to stand as tall as any man. I'm big and tough inside where it matters. If I want to

wear stilts I'll join a circus, and get paid for doing it.

Why did I do it for so long? I knew to spring for a bus was to bust something. I sprained my left ankle so many times, I used to keep an elastic sock in my purse.

Besides my fall, you may wonder what other considerations brought me to that 30 pair pyre. Well, I like to walk. To me walking means locomotion, trekking, roaming, perambulating, strolling. Ever stroll in three inch heels? I never could. I need something with a cushiony sole to swish through October leaves and November rains.

Now I don't mind fantasy but who among us is still suffering from the Cinderella Syndrome? I don't think many modern lovers would search all over the land for a dance partner who fits into a shoe, and what a shoe, a glass slipper. Maybe when Dominion Glass gets into

making shoes again . . .

Recently, I did a mini-study of shoe ads in our local paper. In several ads women's dress shoes were described as: sensuous, elegant, barely there, and feminine. In the same paper, men's shoes were boosted with words like: superbly crafted, built to fit, quality, comfort, and excellence. It is time women demanded things like fit, quality, and comfort.

The obvious point is that someone is buying those dressy, high-heeled shoes in numbers that encourage the manufacturers to make and sell them. The market is there. So am I the only barefoot protester?

If you click off to work balanced on two heels the size of a thumb nail, I wouldn't want to be in your shoes. I want equal footing with men as I walk through life. Women in high-heeled shoes are getting a shoddy deal. Here's one feminist who will not be getting high on this season's fashion footwear. ▼

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
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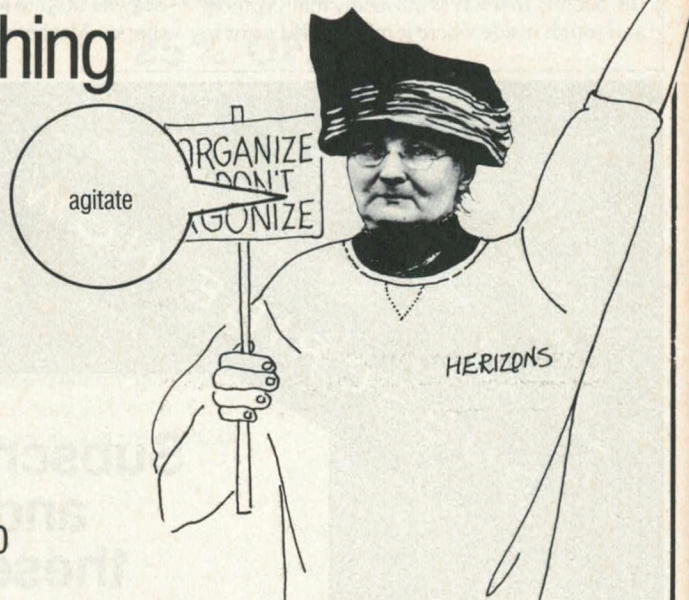
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Remembering Elsa Gidlow 1898-1986

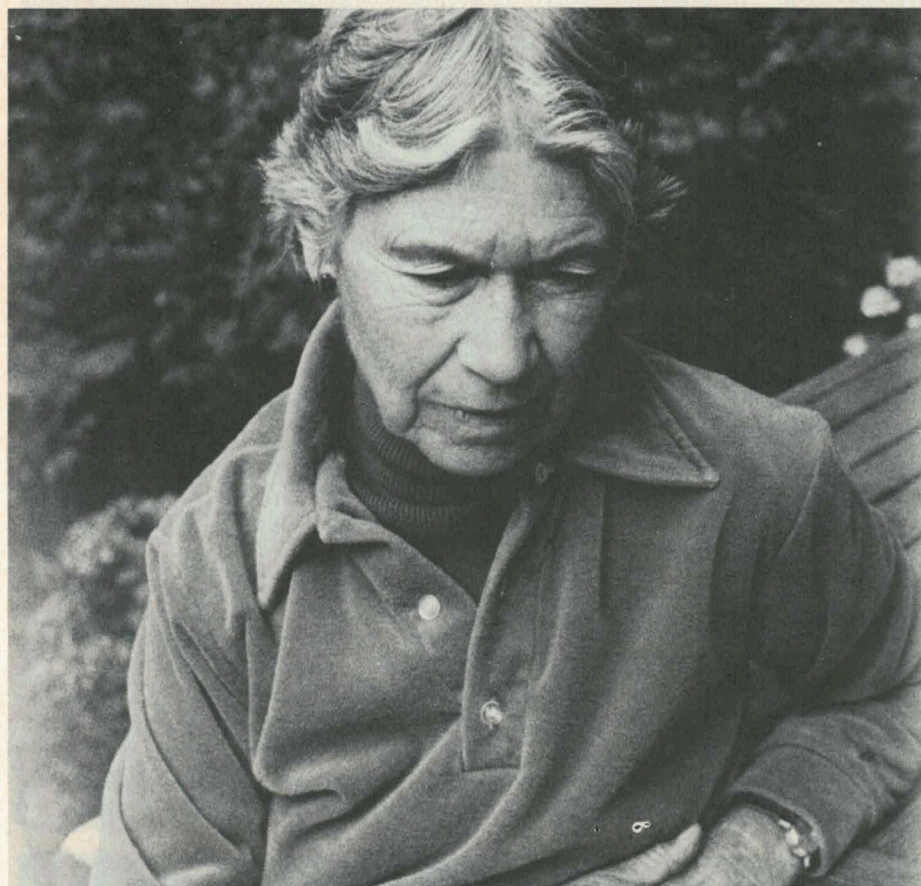


Photo: Laura Willensky

by CY THEA SAND

It was a close friend who informed me of the death of lesbian poet and philosopher Elsa Gidlow. She was 87 years old when she died June 8th in her Muir Woods country home in California's Marin County. Her first book of poems, *On A Grey Thread*, was published in 1923 and was the first collection of verse about women loving women to be published in North America. Her last book of poetry *Sapphic Songs: Eighteen to Eighty*, was distributed by Naiad Press in 1982. My friend enclosed a press clipping with the sad announcement and in it critic Alan Watts is quoted as having said that "superficially, she suggested that she was a very respectable and demure maiden lady, but someone had put raven's blood in her mother's milk." Other friends claimed that Elsa had been *born* avant garde and the Irish mystic and revolutionary Ella Young called her a poet-warrior. Elsa Gidlow said of the women's movement that "the women's revolt is fundamentally a quiet one, as quiet and inevitable as a plant bursting into bloom when a long, inner growth has reached culmination." She fused a profound spirituality and love of the earth with political acumen, and for the second wave generation of North American feminists, she embodied graceful endurance and commitment to progressive social change.

Elsa Gidlow was born in Yorkshire, England

in 1898 but spent most of her girlhood in a French Canadian village outside of Montreal. She moved into the city to find work when she was 16 and worked there as a clerk until she moved to New York in 1922 at the age of 21. She learned editing skills in New York and in 1926 made a final move to San Francisco where she earned her living as a freelance journalist, in her words, "always struggling."

Elsa Gidlow challenges women to conjure up their spiritual roots, so often mangled and choked by patriarchal religion. Heterosexual, celibate or lesbian, mothers or not, Gidlow argues that women must remain virgins — what Esther Harding describes as women one-in-themselves, "not necessarily abstaining from sex or marriage but remaining independent."

In a 1981 letter to myself and poet Barbara Herringer, who were editing *The Radical Reviewer* at the time, she wrote:

"The copy of *The Radical Reviewer* has reached me and I have read it through with delight. It gives me a strange feeling because Canada was my country for years after we left England and settled in the Montreal area. I was later in Vancouver and have crossed Canada several times by train, but have not lived there since leaving when I was 21. The strange feeling is partly because when I lived in

Montreal I feared that there was not another lesbian in the country. One reason, in addition to the hopelessness of a woman wanting to get somewhere as a writer and a journalist at that time."

Her support for our work not only infused us with the energy — in the face of deadlines and empty coffers — but also developed our sense of lesbian history. Thirty years before I was born, Elsa Gidlow walked the streets of my hometown of Montreal, dreaming of a society which would honour poetry and respect women. We continue the dream in our own time and space. Her gesture of welcome sharpened our sense of ourselves as writers and editors and as members of a community — past and present — dedicated to progressive social change.

It is ironic that Elsa Gidlow's life and work are less known to the average reader than are the names of writers who never discuss the conditions of producing art. To those of us who persist in searching for women writers who continue their work against tremendous odds, Elsa Gidlow speaks in a particularly eloquent manner. Referring to her continuous struggle to create poetry and support herself, her family and friends in a time of "no food stamps, no medicare, no social security or welfare" Gidlow writes: "I dealt with it in two ways, ways which reflected the split between the demands of the inner and outer and anger at what it did to me and the millions of others, taking from us much more than the pound of flesh in return for survival. On the one hand I wrote bitter social protest poetry that had little appeal to, and met with no understanding from, the well-heeled intellectuals and academics guarding the gates to . . . eastern magazines and publishing houses. They were not much interested in what women thought, felt, suffered. When it all became unbearable I could retreat, in the few free hours or days, to my realm of the sacred where some inviolable residue of faith in the worth of a life of the spirit, celebrated with another sort of poetry, might be salvaged."

The clearest impression I have from reading Elsa Gidlow's work is that this realm of the sacred, this place of rejuvenation is a basic right of women and that they must fight for the time and solitude to enter into it. Elsa Gidlow never doubted her right to the level of consciousness which permits art — a legacy of supreme importance.

Bits and pieces of Elsa Gidlow's autobiography have been published in feminist magazines and periodicals over the past several years. It has now been published in its entirety by Booklegger Press in San Francisco (555 29th Street, SF 94131) and is entitled ELSA: I Come With My Songs. Also currently in print are Sapphic Songs: Eighteen to Eighty, Makings for Meditation, Ask No Man Pardon, and Shattering the Mirror.

Planetary Visions

Sacred Images of the Earth

Roberta Sutherland and Anne Popperwell are both active B.C. artists in the field of non-traditional landscape. Though quite different in the way they work and the art they produce, each is profoundly concerned for the planet earth as nurturer and foundation of our lives. Each celebrates its mysteries and beauty with unique passionate vision.

"My paintings have much to do with space, with visions of the planet, with that feeling of our connection to the earth. I'm very aware just how much stress we humans, as organisms, lay on the rest of the planet, and just how much planetary and personal healing needs to go on," says Sutherland.

Canadian born and now living in Victoria, she has travelled widely. A single parent of three girls, Sutherland has lived, worked, and trained in Britain, Somalia, Nepal, India, and Spain. She is a spiritual woman, who has found the cultural and spiritual riches of the lands she has lived in to be a source of nourishment for her own philosophy and her artistic work.

Between 1975 and 1977, she worked for Oxfam in a camp in Somalia. It changed her markedly. At one point, an epidemic raged for some weeks through the camp, and about ten children died daily. The wailing and grieving went on day and night for weeks. The experience shattered Sutherland's prior faith. "It was no longer a case of 'Try a little harder; love a little more'; doing didn't seem to be the completely relevant answer," she says.

In subsequent years, including time spent in Scotland at the Findhorn community, Sutherland has developed an attitude of 'engaged introspection', as she terms it, in order to be what is missing in the world rather than to do — to impose a solution from outside. "I've used intensive Zen meditation; I'm interested in shamanism to develop individual and group ritual, and woman's consciousness expressed in goddess religions has been an important focus for me in the last few years," she explains. Sutherland believes that women currently foster awareness of our destructive impact on the planet and offer pathways for change.

Sutherland wants to offer joy and inspiration in her work. She also wants to re-create a sense of the sacred in art, a sense of the numinous value in the world about us. Sutherland's paintings are built landscapes that celebrate the mark of time within us and without us. "Nothing is ever lost," she says; for her, the new emerges out of the old, both within our own growth and change, and in the natural and human environment around us.

Sutherland's paintings create territories and locales, either cosmic or particular and small in scale. In England, she produced etchings based on the lichen tracery on old buildings; in India, she focussed on molds and rusts on dissolving stone; Somalia produced totemic, mask-like works.

"When a new image occurs in my work," she says, "it's always a real surprise to me. Usually, a year later the thread and network that image connects with has become much clearer and more evolved." By then, the initial image has led to a new series of works.

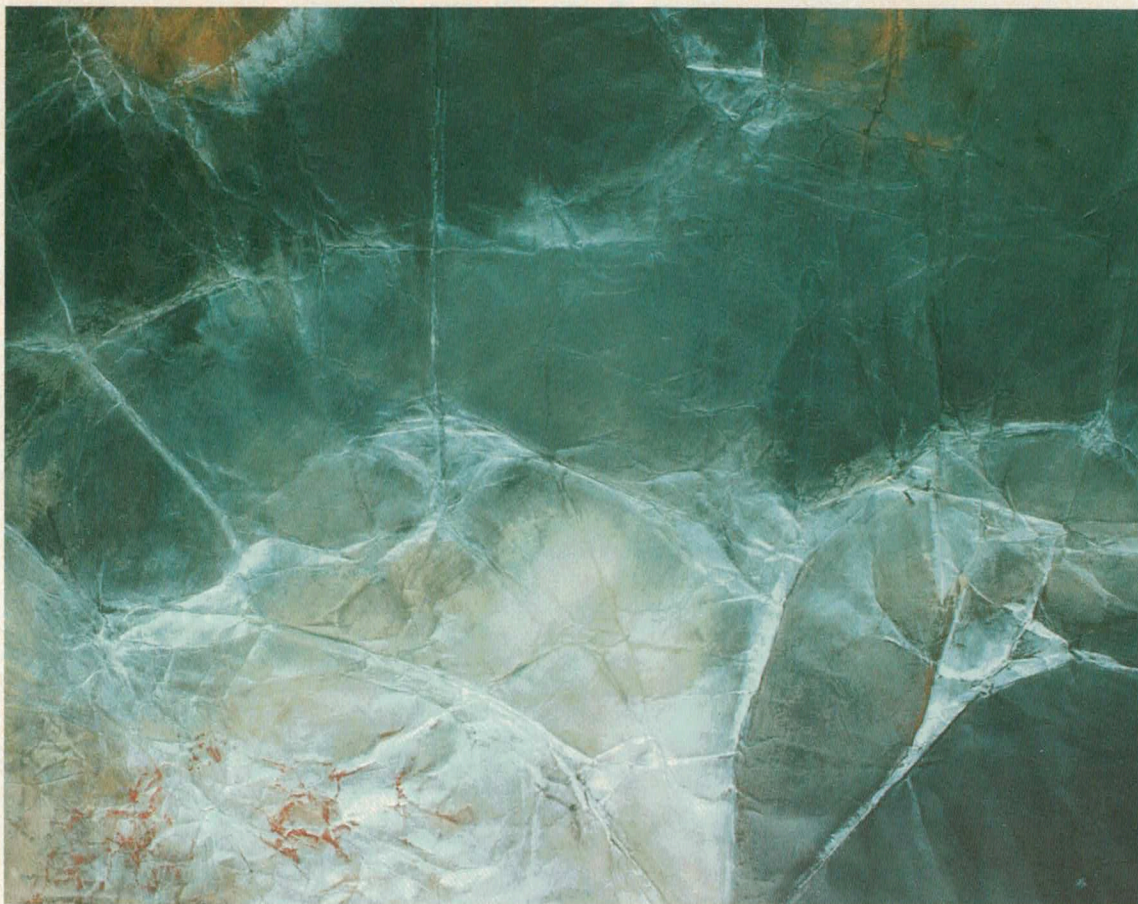
Sutherland's early work was more representational than it later became; until very recently it was entirely non-figurative. "Now, figures and shadows have begun to appear, and I'm letting them happen to see where they'll go," she says. Initially a printmaker, she gravitated to her paper and collage work in order to increase surface and texture.

She collects paper and fabric from all over the world. The preparation of the material prior to the drawing and painting is lengthy. For up to a year, she ages the paper and fabric by exposing it to the weather so that it acquires molds, grit and dirt, and even bird and animal tracks.

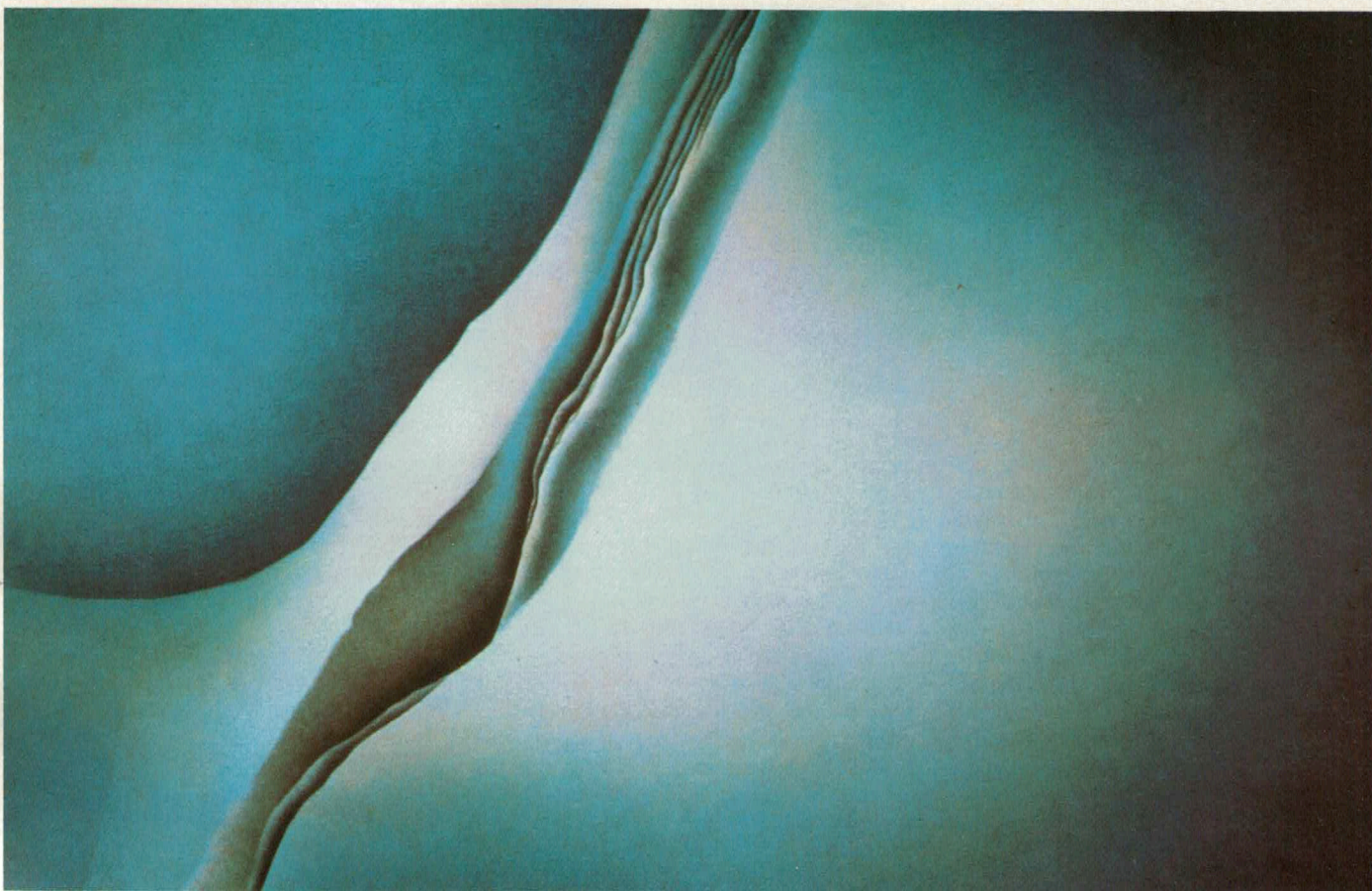
Next, the material is often wet and crushed. Once she is satisfied with the state of the paper, Sutherland will emboss sections in a printing press with non-figurative designs. Now well textured, the paper is ready for drawing and painting.

Sutherland uses acrylics, often metallic in colour; she scrubs, rubs, or waxes away the plastic finish because she dislikes the shine. She then adds collage elements like pulped paper, threads, fabric, even twigs, until the surface is richly tactile.

by Jennifer A. Waterman



ROBERTA
SUTHERLAND:
OUTWARD JOURNEY
28x36 inches acrylic
and graphite,
owned by artist,
slide by artist.



ANNE POPPERWELL: RACE ROCKS acrylic owned by artist, slide by artist.



ROBERTA SUTHERLAND: LANDMARK
24x30 inches acrylic on ragpaper, owned by artist, slide by artist.

What results is a work that looks like beaten metal, weathered leather, or fissured galactic rock. The works resonate with the force of sacred ritual place or totemic object.

"I know I can never paint the earth as beautiful as it is," Sutherland laments, "but I can point a finger to those moments when we know, with such power, that the universe is not chaotic, not mere accident."

Anne Popperwell lives on the Gulf Island of Saturna, two hours or so by ferry from Victoria. Born in Oakland, California in 1948, she emigrated to Canada in 1972, becoming a citizen in 1980. She has lived a peaceful, frugal existence on Saturna since 1976, drawn there by the eroded sandstone formations of its shoreline. She lives with her partner of seven years in a three-room cottage close by her tiny two-room painting cabin. Because she can live cheaply on the island, she can devote most of her time to painting.

Saturna has a population of 200. Popperwell feels she meets a wide range of people and is nourished by them. Although she has thought it might be exciting to live in an art colony, Popperwell recognises the importance to her of being part of the wider world of ordinary everyday activities. "I've met people here with profound experiences. A nurse here helped a man through his death when he couldn't get off the island; she helped him choose his moment of dying. That's a real gift; I admire that."

Originally a water-colourist, Popperwell has also been painting in acrylics since 1984. She uses no horizon line and a surreal scale. Her strength is line and composition and the rich light that rays up through the layers of her paint. The immediate content of her work is the sandstone formation of the Gulf Islands.

"There's something I'm trying to do — when you tell people you paint stones they think of something static — I'm trying to paint movement, a movement through time," she says about her artistic intention.

She does paint rock and stone, yet she evokes

in them the evolutionary flow of geologic time in which we momentarily stand.

"When I've been out on the rocks, I've had the experience, as I draw them, of sensing their form and colour in my own hand and arm so that I'm part of the very stone." For Popperwell, such intense experiences connect her with geologic time in nature. She explains, "Through these experiences, I started to get the idea of the rhythm, of the movement of the earth, of the time it has taken to deposit all those layers to compress all the particles which now are being worn down by the salt water and the wind, and being moved along in front of me and deposited somewhere else." Popperwell has a sharp consciousness of a vast river of sand that runs all the way down from the North West of Canada to the seashores of South America.

What she creates in her visionary celebrations of earth's stones and rocks is a visual myth through metaphor. For her, myth is a story that a culture creates about its relation to a surrounding environment. In her case, it's a rural environment, but she recognises and values urban myth created by artists such as Renee van



ANNE POPPERWELL: STONE FOLD
watercolour owned by artist, slide by artist.

Halm. Popperwell's visual myth touches on the juxtaposition of the static and the changing. Her acrylics and water-colours detail rock and stone, the apparently durable, yet the techniques involve remarkably fluid, sensuous line so that the works vibrate with energy. What is static flows.

"I like to explore edges in my painting. Sometimes when I look at my work I wonder why I paint all those edges," she says. In fact, she sees no essential contradiction between stasis and change. She feels we are strongly drawn to "the ambiguity of being stable and fluid all at once." The eroded Saturna sandstone provides a metaphor for human experience and informs Popperwell of the age old universal rhythm of such conjunction.

In her own life Popperwell is aware of living

at edges. "Yes, I feel that all the time," she comments. "It occurs in close personal relationships — that difference between the self and the other. That question of the flowing edge between people: Which is my body? Which is my friend's?"

Artistically, she begins her work through a process of intimate acquaintance with her territory. She walks Saturna's beaches and rows its shores daily. There, she sketches and photographs for the basis of her later works.

She builds up her water-colours with layer upon layer of coloured washes. At the thickest, the painting has a velvet darkness; at the lightest layers, vibrant light radiates through.

At times, Popperwell has been surprised that viewers find her work erotic. "When people relate to my painting as sexual, I'm astounded," she admits. Popperwell feels there is a very real connection and communality between the human form and the form of the universe. "That's part of my experience: it is all one form, one movement — life."

She says that it is because our culture does not celebrate generalised sensuality but focusses only on genital sexuality that some viewers see her work as sexual. "I've had the experience when giving a lecture of feeling that I've been turned into someone else's sexual fantasy, that they expected me to turn up in satins and boas. I find that disturbing."

Her recent acrylics make use of the layered wash technique developed in the water-colours; yet, the new material allows her to play with its opalescent qualities. Acrylics also offer different tones and a wider palette range and have led her to painting bigger canvases.

"I think a good painting is like good poetry where good poetry makes a picture and you finish it with your own experience. A really good painting lets you make the leap into your own experience."

Both Roberta Sutherland and Anne Popperwell offer opportunities to experience the earth and its beauty and, to read its messages for growth and healing. In their exultation of earth's universal rhythms, they focus each of us on our unique moment in the flow.

Roberta Sutherland has shown nationally in Vancouver and Victoria and internationally in Geneva and Malawi. She has been included in shows at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, and exhibits at the Open Space, Winchester, North Park, and Fantan Galleries in Victoria.

Anne Popperwell is represented in Victoria and Edmonton by the Robert Vanderlelie Gallery and by Baux-Xi Gallery in Vancouver. She has also had a solo show at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and in March this year showed her first acrylics at The Thomas Gallery in Winnipeg.

Both Popperwell and Sutherland were jury selected for the Prince George Festival of the Arts in 1986.

Jennifer Waterman is a freelance writer, counsellor and teacher who lives in Nepean, Ontario.

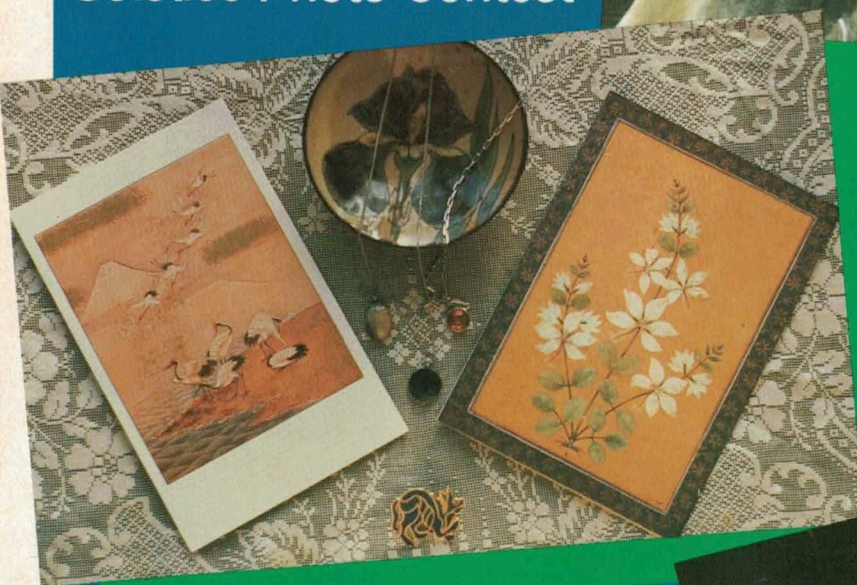
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*Our favorite solstice celebration
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daughter Caitlin.*

submitted by
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*Bill's granny survived a Japanese
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was taken on her 92nd Christmas.
Granny died last spring.*

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