

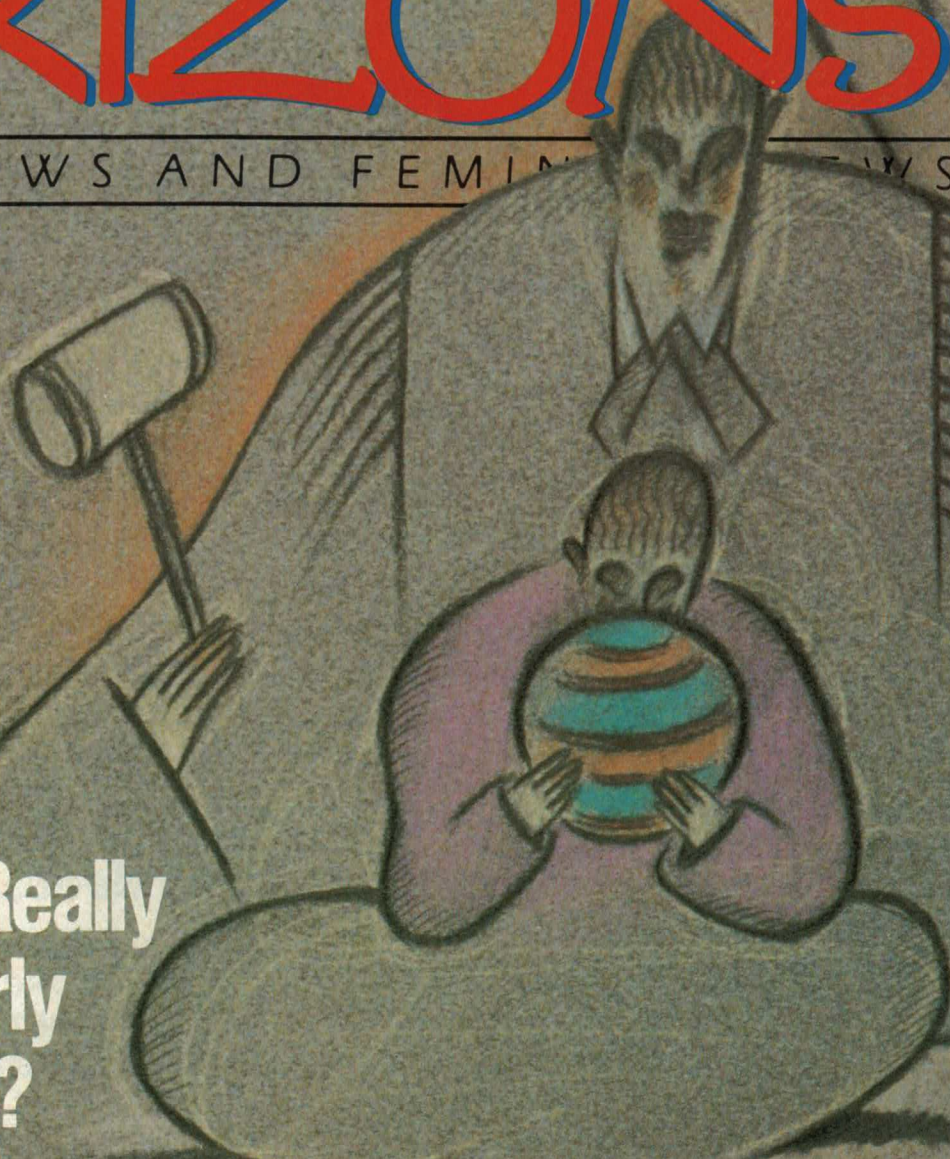
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NAC's Louise Delude Tackles Free Trade & Mulroneyism

HERIZONS

WOMEN'S NEWS AND FEMINIST ISSUES

MAD DADS

- ▶ Are Fathers Really Treated Unfairly In The Courts?
- ▶ Is Involuntary Joint Custody In The Child's Best Interest?
- ▶ What's Wrong With The New Divorce Act?



WE NEED

Like Never Before

Over the past 4 years, Herizons has grown to become a feminist magazine with an audience that spans the country — an accomplishment each and every one of our readers can be proud of.

But In Order To Continue Publishing Herizons Needs Your Donations

We have come to the end of our current funding. Now it's time to make it on our own. (Be sure to read this issue's editorial on page 5 for more details.) Although we are committed to continuing to provide the kind of informed analysis you've come to expect from a national feminist magazine, our determination isn't enough to keep Herizons going.

We Can't Do It

ED YOU.

That's Why We're Relying on Herizons Readers Now More Than Ever

Subscription and advertising revenues are a vital part of our ongoing efforts, but until our subscription expansion strategies bring in self-sustaining dollars, direct donations are crucial. We're not Chatelaine or Vogue, and we will never have the number of 4-colour ads that traditional women's magazines rely on.

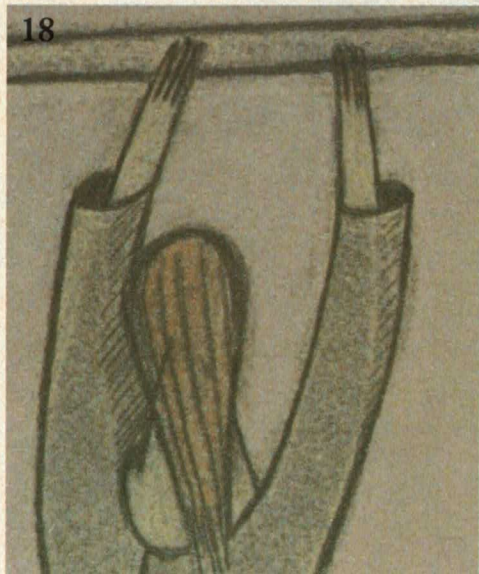
So please take the time now to invest in the future of Herizons. The money we receive now will ensure the Herizons tradition continues.

Without You.

HERIZONS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1987

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Making it on our own

PENNI MITCHELL



Herizons staff is (left to right) Penni Mitchell, Marie Montreuil, Patricia Rawson, Heidi Muench, Debbie Holmberg-Schwartz, Mona Brisson and Erica Smith.

The challenges and the excitement of a new phase in our publishing tradition stand before us.

As we come to the end of our operational grant from the department of Employment and Immigration, we must answer several crucial questions about the future of *Herizons*: Can we make it on our own? How will our operation change as we become a fully independent magazine? What is the most efficient way to expand our subscriber base in a short period of time?

These and other equally complex questions have consumed our time in recent weeks as the *Herizons* staff has gathered, to strategise for days on end, around the long wooden table that serves as our boardroom. It was around that same wooden table that six eager feminists made the decision to switch from publishing a community feminist newspaper to publishing a magazine. Then we believed in the idea of *Herizons*, but today we know *Herizons* can survive only if we can steadily increase our readership. In order to make it in the Canadian market, we know that we need to double our circulation in the next year. We have also set a target of \$50,000 for fundraising efforts and direct appeal to our readers and supporters; not

an easy goal by any means, but one which we believe is achievable. We're also going to trim as many publishing-related costs as we can without sacrificing the quality of *Herizons*. One decision we have made already is to reduce our publishing schedule by two issues this year, a move that will save us an estimated \$24,000.

Some of the most creative and innovative ideas arising out of our latest brainstorming sessions are those which will establish *Herizons'* long term viability. We know *Herizons* reaches a market which isn't satisfied with the analysis of women's issues found in other women's magazines. We also know that all of the women in Canada who are interested in reading a magazine with a feminist perspective don't as yet subscribe to *Herizons*. So we have developed plans to tap the potential of the women's movement in a more direct way. A recent joint fundraising-subscription promotion is enabling feminist organisations across the country that sell *Herizons* subscriptions to their members to keep half the subscription price to do their own feminist work. Other promotion plans will increase our visibility in women's bookstores across Canada as well as our subscription sales. We have also turned to members of the local women's community for their input, and are excited by their enthusiasm and contributions

to fundraising and direct appeal efforts.

We believe that such joint ventures can only strengthen both *Herizons* and participating women's organisations. Because the current political climate in Canada has made it increasingly important for women's organisations to have more irons in the fire when it comes to sources of funding, we are optimistic that these projects will succeed. Government cutbacks and a lack of any serious progress on the items on the feminist agenda have spelled out the bleak prospects we all face without a strong movement and a strong identity. Yet we know that the women's movement has the strength and dedication to accomplish almost anything it sets its sights on. Our own efforts and the inspiring support of our readers have convinced us of that.

We want to build on that strength, and at the same time, investigate other available grants. Both Secretary of State and the Manitoba Arts Council have been sources for project grants for *Herizons* in the past, and it will always be a priority for us to investigate all sources of funding.

Advertising, as always, is vital to our long-term survival and an ever-expanding market will become more and more valuable to *Herizons'* future. But the bottom line for an alternative magazine like *Herizons* is the dedication of its subscribers. It's not likely that we will ever be sustained by the four-colour ads that pay for the publishing of *Chatelaine* or *Ms.*, and that is why, now more than ever, we are relying on your support.

Subscription and advertising revenues will be critical in leading the way to a self-sustaining future, but in order to make sure we get there we are asking those of you who can, to contribute towards the publishing costs over the next few months in order to keep *Herizons* going. We are asking you to donate \$100, \$50 or whatever you can, to support *Herizons* at this crucial time.

1987 will be a milestone year for *Herizons* and your investment will make all the difference. The uncertainty, the risks involved in securing our future, are balanced by the potential of an upsurge in support from a readership that has already proven itself to be committed to feminist publishing. We are doing our best to ensure *Herizons* continues, but your help is crucial.

We can't do it without you. ▼

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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.

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

Jan./Feb. 1987

Canadian
Periodical
Publishers'
Association

CCAB

Reed Stenhouse out of S. Africa

In your July/August 1986 (Vol. 4, No. 5) issue of *Herizons*, under Canadian Corporations with direct investment in South Africa, you list Reed Stenhouse Companies Ltd. Reed Stenhouse is the underwriter for the student accident insurance plan with the Toronto Board of Education. The day after I sent out my son's insurance application, I read your article. I sent to Reed Stenhouse requesting cancellation of the policy. On Oct. 17, 1986, I received a letter from Reed Stenhouse (which explains that due to a merger of Reed Stenhouse with Alexander & Alexander Services Inc., of New York, the 22 per cent equity position in Stenhouse Bankorp, an Insurance Brokerage with several offices in South Africa, has been disposed of).

I am pleased that Reed Stenhouse has no longer any direct interest in South Africa, and also that your magazine printed the information on the companies with involvement in South Africa. And it is proof again that your magazine is not only for women.

Joseph Zevinsky
Toronto, Ontario

Women and weight right on

Congratulations on an incredible fall issue. "Ten Myths About Women & Weight," was right on! As I read it I kept wanting to say "exactly!" and "just what I always thought." At last some ammunition! But it was "How Society's Obsession with Thinness is Consuming Women" that moved me to tears. It was a floodgate opening. All the unshed tears of hurt feelings and anger of life as a fat person were released in hearing these brave women verbalise everything I'd felt as a child, a teen, an adult and a mature person.

Bravo *Herizons* for providing this forum for such a breakthrough of such a tabooed topic. Congratulations.

L. Dee Burnlees
Hepworth, Ontario

Friendly mail

Yours is the only magazine I've been able consistently to read from cover to cover! I commend you on your timely articles, your interesting and professional layout and the quality of writing. I look forward to the arrival of *Herizons* in the way I look to the visit of a dear friend.

Keep up the great work.

Shelley Smith
St. John's, Newfoundland

Fat and false illusions

Sheila Nopper and Joyce Harley's article caught my eye immediately. The myth that to be an appealing woman you must be thin has been ingrained in my own psyche to my serious detriment. With a great deal of support, I am trying to change my self-perception and am angered when I think of what I have put myself through — and to what end? So that I could be happy? Such a false illusion. The secret of happiness does not lie within an emaciated body. What an injustice has been perpetrated on women!

I am encouraged by such articles that challenge the unrealistic body ideal that has been determined for today's women. More media attention to our plight is needed in order for women to accept the freedom to make their own personal choices regarding their body shape. Keep up the good work.

Cheryl Jack
Pickering, Ontario

Across the ocean . . .

I wanted to let you know how much your magazine means to someone who is isolated from mainstream feminism. My family & I have been in Taiwan for over a year now & your magazine has kept me in contact with what's happening with feminist thought in Canada.

There's only one problem — I see all those notices of meetings & conferences & want to attend every one of them.

Keep up the good work.

Suzanne Grenke
Taiwan

Reflections on my life

Thank you Diana Aspin for allowing me to reflect upon my past. My mother was physically and sexually abused over a thirty-year period by a man she dearly loved. That love has since died . . .

"Stone Cold Dead" made me remember the misery and guilt I felt as a child: a helpless little girl who screamed & cringed every time his hands would pound her unconscious.

Not a day goes by that I don't question why our society ignores the pleas of those women and children who have been used/hurt by men. Why must so many suffer?

Like many others, I am a survivor. I only wish that my mother and I could have avoided being victims.

Hats off to those like yourself who give shelter and guidance to the victims of abuse.

Chris Mayta
Ottawa, Ontario

Economist warns of right wing support for annual income

If the Macdonald Commission's proposal for a guaranteed annual income is implemented, married women will be made even more dependent on their husbands, according to economist Monica Townson.

The income scheme was suggested by the Macdonald Commission as a way to streamline the entire income support system, but in an interview, Townson, a financial consultant and the author of the *Canadian Woman's Guide to Money*, warned women to be wary. She says that no one has made a comprehensive assessment of its potential impact on women and she believes an annual income scheme could have discriminatory effects on women.

"The major problem that I see with all of the proposals for a guaranteed annual income is that all of them are based on family income. That, I think, could have major consequences for women because what it does is put them back into a situation of dependency within the family."

The Macdonald Commission's annual income plan would replace the family allowance, the guaranteed income supplement for the elderly, the child tax credit, the married exemption, and the child tax exemption. Other proposals for a guaranteed annual income have targeted the replacement of unemployment insurance.

The commission's proposal, called the Universal Income Supplement Program, would guarantee \$2750 a year for each adult, and \$750 a year for each child. That would entitle a two-parent family of four to \$7000 per year — about half the current poverty level.



Monica Townson says women can only lose in an annual income plan based on family income.

In effect, a woman's rights to benefits would depend on her husband's income. "Women in that system are no longer treated as individuals, as they would be on U.I. for example, where a woman worker contributes on the basis of her own individual earnings, and has a right to benefits if she's unemployed."

However, Townson says she doesn't know what the alternative would be to basing it on family income. If it were based on individuals, she says, "You would then have a situation where the women might get guaranteed personal income, even though their husbands had quite high income, and that, presumably, would cause some protest."

Townson does not want to see family allowances disappear. "Family allowances have come

to be seen as some kind of recognition of the value of raising children. That particular benefit has been quite important to women, I think. It's a recognition of their role as mothers, and it's a benefit that's paid directly to women."

The annual income proposal isn't the only component of the commission that threatens women's economic independence. One of the major proposals of the commission is to cut U.I. benefits by 40 per cent, and use some of the savings to finance a program to help workers relocate. But Townson points out that rarely will a family relocate to help a female spouse find work.

Women would, regardless of their marital status, end up subsidising a program that would only help male spouses,

Even more frightening is the fact that one of the commission's background papers suggested rationing jobs — one per family. Certain workers would be certified as "employable", and in most cases only one worker in a family would be certified to take part in job creation or training efforts that were part of the income security program. Townson says men would be more likely to meet the proposed criteria for "employability," since the criteria would be created with a male bias. "So the wife who lost her job, once she'd exhausted her U.I. benefits, would not be eligible for any kind of assistance, and would presumably be expected to remain at home."

Such a program could be of some benefit to single mothers, but Townson says that's not enough of a reason for feminists to support it. "I think ultimately the way to improve women's financial situations is through measures like pay equity, where you introduce a policy that will eventually close the wage gap."

Townson says the entire range of proposals suggested by the Macdonald Commission fails to assess the potential impact on women. Its many biases include the assumption that most families have two parents, one of whom works, and one who stays at home. "So, when you apply their solutions to what is now the typical family, where both spouses are in the workforce, they're no longer appropriate solutions . . . 'people' in their model are really men, or at the very least those in a traditional family, and they now represent only 16 per cent of all Canadian families."

—Jennifer Dundas

Immigrant and minority women emerge unified after stormy conference



Fifteen women were conferred citizenship at a special court held at the immigrant and visible minority women's conference.

(WINNIPEG) — Despite the stormy environment of their three day conference, immigrant and visible minority women put aside their differences, as they laid the foundation for a joint national organisation.

While a snow storm dumped 35 centimeters of snow outside a Winnipeg hotel, women inside vented their anger at the conference planning committee.

Many said there were too many speeches from politicians, and criticised the fact that some delegates received invitations late. Others questioned the decision to hold a special court during the conference which conferred citizenship on 15 immigrant women.

As delegate Darlene de Prophetis put it, "It made many of us who are not citizens feel that our contribution to the ongoing development of this country is not recognised. For those of us who are citizens, we were reminded of the bitter fact that citizenship does not guarantee social, economic, or political equality in this country."

Many black women, angry at being left out the planning process, accused organisers of using them to get funding for

the conference. Some of their remarks alienated other visible minority women who countered that they had the impression that black women feel that they are THE visible minority. East Indian, Chinese, and Filipino women asserted that they too, are visible minorities.

Conflict arose at the conference between immigrant delegates and visible minority delegates whose perspectives and priorities were not always the same.

Black women born in Canada resent being called immigrants, and some women say they feel relieved of the "immigrant" label once they become citizens after three years.

When challenged, the organisers said they hadn't planned to include women who label themselves visible minorities, since the conference was for immigrant women. Most immigrant women are not white, and organisers were encouraged to include visible minority women who are not necessarily immigrant. "We were told that we'd be given more money if we included the visible minority women. We made an historical mistake and we are paying for it. We only

got the money two months before the conference," said Amal Umar, one of the organisers.

In his dinner speech, Secretary of State and Minister for Multiculturalism David Crombie denied any pressure was put on organisers. "There is no pressure and there will be no pressure from this government in pushing you into conclusions you do not want to take. The choice is yours."

The choice Crombie was referring to was whether the new organisation should be only for immigrant women or for both immigrant and visible minority women.

Glenda Simms, president of The Congress of Black Women of Canada, warned delegates that back-stabbing is counter-productive. "It doesn't matter what kind of slave ship we came here in, whether it was a Boeing 707 or whether some of our sisters were washed up on the eastern shore. The issue is that Canadian society has never offered us any dignity."

—Nonqaba Msimang

Alberta doctors halt abortion referrals over fee dispute

(CALGARY) — "The problem is of crisis proportions," according to Heather Halpenny Crocker of the Planned Parenthood Association of Edmonton. During the week of October 1st, Planned Parenthood was informed by eight (out of an average of 11) doctors who normally accept referrals that they would no longer be doing therapeutic abortions. They had hoped that the dispute over extra billing would sort itself out before too many patients were affected, but this is not, what happened.

Referrals to U.S. clinics are 34 per cent above the average of the last 9 months. October 1st saw the end of extra-billing in Alberta, seen as a victory for the working class, who have long opposed unaffordable specialists. With that victory, however, came the realisation

Unity finally prevailed, and the vote was close. Delegates voted to form an interim immigrant and visible minority women's organisation. Betty Lee, a teacher and businesswoman from New Brunswick, is president of the as-yet-unnamed group.

Singapore-born Lee has two years to work with her interim board, which will meet this month in Toronto. The new organisation has 20 representatives from the provinces and two from the territories, while ethnocultural organisations will send three.

The outcome of the conference will be a relief to Rosemary Brown, retired MLA in B.C., who, in her keynote address to the conference said: "The most important forward looking strategy is unity. Once united we can raise our collective consciousness, explore our collective history, develop shared goals and negotiate from strength with our government and society."

that doctors could refuse to do non-profitable, non-essential surgery. Therapeutic abortions are now regarded by many obstetricians/gynecologists as non-essential. Prior to the end of extra-billing, specialists charged an extra \$200 to \$250 above the \$84.50 they received from Alberta Health Care for a therapeutic abortion. No longer able to do so, they are refusing referrals.

"It is simply ridiculous that the sum of \$128.00 is paid by Alberta Health Care for a vasectomy, which is a half hour operation done under local anesthetic in the doctor's office, when a therapeutic abortion, done in the hospital under general anesthetic, warrants only \$84.50," says Halpenny Crocker. "Quite frankly, we don't know what should be done. We are receiving calls from desperate women and we

do not have much good news to offer them. We have received many suicidal calls and others from women who threaten to do it (abortion) themselves."

Calgary, which has an abortion clinic operating out of the Foothills Hospital, has not been as severely affected so far. Halpenny Crocker points out, however, that many Edmonton women are travelling to Calgary for the operation. Some, desperate and unsure of their status, use phony Calgary addresses in the process. Calgary facilities are now strained to the limit, and waiting lists are growing.

Opposing views are being taken by the Alberta Medical Association and the College of Physicians and Surgeons. The AMA feels that obstetricians/gynecologists should be allowed to charge an additional sum of \$75.00 for providing the required letter to the hospital's abortion committee. The College of Physicians and Surgeons feels that "extra-billing by any other name is still extra-billing." Planned Parenthood sent an urgent letter to Marvin Moore, Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, emphasising the extent and seriousness of the crisis, but has yet to receive a reply.

"If a woman is seven and a half weeks pregnant (date taken from the first day of her last period) we have no alternative but to advise her to travel to the United States," says Halpenny Crocker. "An abortion at a clinic there will cost her \$200 plus an additional \$300 for travel. Many women simply cannot afford this. We do not believe that the need for this essential medical service will decrease simply because it is no longer accessible in this province. Women who need it must have access to therapeutic abortions as provided by law."

—Marg Bail



Landsberg criticises social issue books for kids

Michele Landsberg's Guide to Children's Books is now in its third printing by Penguin Books. *Horizons* writer Martha Elliott interviewed Michele Landsberg about the boom in books.

Martha Elliott: What do you think about the spate of books that teach kids about the joys of using a potty, about sharing, and about sex education?

Michele Landsberg: I just think they're dumb. They're catering to the baby boom market. I don't think they're harmful, I just don't think they add too much to the kids' world.

Children have a deep and justified suspicion of all sex books. I think that kids have a built in resistance to books that are going to teach them something.

Martha Elliott: What about a book on streetproofing? Do they play on parents' fears?

Michele Landsberg: Yes, I think they do more to soothe the parents' fear than they do to protect the child. They don't purport to be literature or books for pleasure. If parents can't teach it themselves, I guess it's a good thing there's a "how to" book.

Martha Elliott: You use a phrase in your book: "bibliotherapy" — books that highlight social issues. You seem quite suspicious of such books.

Michele Landsberg: It's not the subject matter that's suspect. If there's something extra in the handling of it, some depth, some sensitivity, some illumination, maybe it could mean something to a kid. I just don't like books being used as medicine or as sociological do-good things.

Martha Elliott: But can a children's book be written to sensitise or educate about an issue, say, a physical handicap?

Michele Landsberg: The best way to tackle that, is when it isn't the motive of the author. I assume — I'm not a fiction writer — but I assume there is the impulse to create and give shape to feelings. I would say a genuine author would never sit



Michele Landsberg believes that girls who read Judy Bloom books are destined for a life of trashy novels.

down and think "I'm going to write a book about a handicapped kid." Take *From Anna* by Jean Little, a very moving book. Little didn't write it with a didactic motive. She wrote it out of her heart and soul. She knew how it felt to be blind and she was writing about that experience, but that wasn't the only thing about Anna. Anna was a very interesting child with a lot of interests and relationships.

Martha Elliott: How about the treatment of death in kids' books? Does a book come to mind?

Michele Landsberg: Yes, *My Grandpa Lew* by Charlotte Zolotow. That was an extremely sensitive book, perfect for small children. Again, it all depends on the gifts of the author. A good author can deal with absolutely anything and make it a valuable experience. A book that deals with death as with any subject can be valuable. It's just that I hate prescribing books the way you prescribe pills. Kids should read *My Grandpa Lew* because it's a good book.

Martha Elliott: So what is the problem with "problem novels"?

Michele Landsberg: A "problem novel" is always reduced to its simplest elements. You can see the whole structure creaking along. "Mom and Dad don't live together and I'm angry but mom helps me in the end."

They're so pathetically stilted. They're not real novels. They're not written out of the passion and depth of the author's soul. **Martha Elliott:** So you can't help a child with a book?

Michele Landsberg: Adults in a situation must deal with the child in whatever way they can. The child *may* be helped by books, but the parents can't prescribe what books are going to help the child. Art is very mysterious. What we have to do is enrich children's reading, offer them so much, show them the pleasures of a wide range of reading. They will find what they need. We have to trust them and we have to trust art to provide what they need. We can't go around narrowly prescribing books. "Oh, your parents are getting divorced? Here's a book about it." It's insulting. Not only that, it will probably hurt children more than help because they'll reject the specific book and say "that's not me." No book can capture an individual situation.

Martha Elliott: Is it better for kids to read junk than not read at all?

Michele Landsberg: I'm not sure. If a person reads junk and never reads anything else, then what has been the point of reading at all, except for pleasure? But they can get pleasure of the same kind from television because junk books are a lot like television — stereotyped, shallow, manipulative. So how have their lives been enriched in any way by the reading of junk books? They haven't. On the other hand, teachers may argue, and they often do, "Yes, but if they see that it's fun to read this, then maybe I can get them to read something more rewarding" and that's perfectly true. That's why I say in my book, never deride what the kid is reading or take it away or dump on it. Add to it, lead them on, that's our duty. So no, it doesn't hurt to read junk books; it only hurts if that's all they read.

Martha Elliott: Do you suspect that the girls who read

(American teen-novel writer) Judy Blume grow up to read Judith Krantz and Jackie Collins?

Michele Landsberg: Yes, In fact, I know they do. They're being prepared to be consumers of schlock. Those books are loaded with sexist and consumerist values — very shallow values. The girls who are reading them are flattered into thinking that it's OK to think that way. If they just read those, I can safely predict they will never read anything better. The critic Aidan Chambers calls them "flat earth readers". They're afraid to voyage further in case it's too hard, or they get bored.

I think that Judy Blume is a perfectly well meaning person. She's got the mind of a 12 year old, suburban, American consumer. Her books perfectly reflect what she is, there is nothing more to her. She's not some giant manipulator who hit on a formula that made her a million. Those books express her, that's what she is, those are her values. I find them beneath contempt and I would not want to foist them on kids I care about.

Martha Elliott: Are they the Harlequin Romances for the adolescent set?

Michele Landsberg: They're not even as honestly cheap as Harlequins because they pretend to be socially earnest.

Martha Elliott: In your book you say there is no room for "a moral" in kids books but in

your talk today you mentioned the "moral complexity" of some authors. What is the difference?

Michele Landsberg: This is exactly what makes a good book different from a bad book. Let's take *Treasure Island* as an example. I was baffled when I first read it. Long John Silver was so bad, surely he was the bad guy. Yet he was so attractive. He was nice to the kid and I just couldn't grasp this. Bad guys are supposed to be all bad and this disturbed me and I thought about it a lot. And when I finished, I realised that treasure isn't always a blessing and that bad guys are a little more complicated. This is moral complexity and this is what literature tells us. Good literature is always morally complex. A book with "a moral" is a bad book. The children's book that tries to preach to the kid is absolutely a bad book. Instead of the author expressing a vision of life in the best way she can, she's trying to manipulate the reader or teach the reader. We don't accept that in our adult books, we'd never stand for it. The whole experience of literature is one of the complexity of life, the many layers of meaning in everything. All literary questions and answers apply in exactly the same way to kids' books as they do to adult books. These are works of literature and we have to use the same standards in judging them. And if we don't, then

we're just condescending to children. We're saying we don't respect their minds and souls, and I do. Only the best is good enough.

Martha Elliott: What are the best ways to introduce the joys of reading to children? Do you have suggestions for parents and teachers?

Michele Landsberg: That's why I wrote the book. Very few people are ever going to be crazy enough to read hundreds of children's books. That's why a guidebook was needed. I wrote the book to show people how to become their own critics, to analyse books in detail. I'm fairly experienced, so I know what I'm looking for in a book and I share that with the reader. You have to start with the good authors. If they take any four authors out of my list, read those four and love them, they have a starting place. The book is there to help people get started if they have no experience of children's books. I tried to include the unmissable authors.

Martha Elliott: How important is it for kids to see their parents reading, to have books around the home?

Michele Landsberg: I think it's terribly important. If they don't see their parents reading, what possible motivation do they have? If kids see their parents really enjoying something, they want to get in on the pleasure and pleasure is the whole key to everything. I keep saying it over and over in my book at the risk of getting

boring, because I don't want parents to force their kids to read. Keep it a pleasure, please! If children are initiated into this pleasure, they'll never stop. How could they?

Martha Elliott: What books are sitting by your bed?

Michele Landsberg: *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Kundera. *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For a Hat* by Oliver Sacks. It's stirring. I've always been so antagonistic about science because it was so badly taught in school. I've just finished *The Periodic Tables* by Primo Levi. It's deeply moving and written by a humane man of letters. It's a tour de force — I'm lost in admiration. I also have a few novels by Alice Adams. I kept reading these rave reviews but I absolutely don't see it. They are the most trivial and boring books I've ever read. I also have *Lilith* magazine which is a Jewish feminist magazine published in New York, and *Horizons*. Oh, and I just bought Northrop Frye's book on Shakespeare. Very delicious.

Martha Elliott: Are you the type of reader who has to finish every book she starts?

Michele Landsberg: Yes. Once I start, I usually have to plow through to the damn end even if I hate every word.

Martha Elliott: Do you have the bookstore disease? Can you walk by a bookstore without going in and buying a book?

Michele Landsberg: Impossible. It's terrible. It's a fatal affliction!

—Martha Elliott

elliegram

EQUAL IN MATTERS OF PAINS AND PENALTIES — If women want equality, they're going to have to pay for it, especially poor women with children.

In a recent case in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, a judge gave a lengthy sentence to a woman convicted of shoplifting; since women want equality with men, he said, he would give her the same length of sentence he would give a man.

Mary-Liz Greene, chairperson

of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Halifax, notes that women remain very much second-class citizens within the justice system. A woman given a prison sentence for such crimes as shoplifting and cheque fraud risks losing her children to a child welfare agency. If she had been on social assistance before her imprisonment, she may not qualify again once she is released, and without shelter and a means of support, she cannot get her children.

Career plans of rapist protected

The sentence of a Manitoba school teacher found guilty of sexual assault was finally appealed, following community outrage and a public demonstration over the suspended sentence he received.

Judge Guy Kroft said he didn't want to put Lionel McBain in jail, because he had suffered enough and it might hurt his future job prospects. McBain was found guilty of raping a Winnipeg woman in a parking lot last year and he was

fired from his job before the trial.

Adding fuel to the fires of outrage over the trial, the Manitoba Teachers' Society declared before the crown's appeal was made public, that it was appealing McBain's firing.

Judge Kroft, in announcing the suspended sentence, said putting McBain behind bars would have "little justification, either for society or Mr. McBain." McBain is also appealing the ruling.

Jewish law still stubbornly paternalistic

(WINNIPEG) — "Feminism presents a challenge to Judaism by offering a new definition of women as equals, and Judaism poses a challenge to the feminist movement through its values."

This was the message of Blu Greenberg, an Orthodox Jew, feminist, and author of *On Women and Judaism, and How To Run A Traditional Jewish Household*, when she spoke to about 200 Jewish students and community members at a recent Winnipeg conference.

While the feminist movement has served as a changing force in Judaism, Greenberg related how, for many years, she divided feminism from her life as an Orthodox Jew. "I thought, never shall the twain meet, but eventually they did and after ten years I was able to acknowledge myself as an Orthodox Jewish feminist."

She told her audience that she has spent 50 per cent of the last decade praying and 50 per cent arguing with herself. "I was emotionally comfortable with the role women play in Judaism, including few obligations, but my ideological feelings were that women should have the exact same opportunities as men."

Greenberg noted that women were excluded from carrying out the majority of mitzvah — good deeds prescribed in the Torah (bible) based on the principle that a woman's primary role was to build the home and family.

"Although treated benevolently and respected, and even put up on pedestals, women were not defined as equals" in the areas Greenberg terms as the six L's: learning, language, liturgy, legal testimony, leadership and law (family). "Feminism has



Author Blu Greenberg

ago, before protection from unwarranted cause for divorce opened our eyes up to a lot of things we hadn't considered before," she said.

One area that has garnered more attention than others in recent years is that of family law. Greenberg explained that Jewish law states that a man may go to the Rabbinical court for a writ of divorce, hand it to his wife and send her out of their house. This scenario was common thousands of years was established.

Greenberg notes: "Women have remained vulnerable through the ages, because if they want a divorce, they're not the one who gives it, and essentially have to wait until their husband is willing and ready to give them a Get - a Jewish divorce."

"If a woman's husband refuses a Get because of blackmail or spite, she is technically still married to him in the eyes of Jewish law, and another marriage would be considered fraudulent and children illegitimate to the nth generation."

The Orthodox movement is trying to attach a writ of divorce in Jewish law to civil law. A Brooklyn judge recently held that a civil divorce requires a Get, and if the man wouldn't give his wife a Get, he'd face going to jail or paying a heavy fine.

Greenberg credits feminism for making Jewish women think seriously about the female entry into adulthood and for increasing the number of girls celebrating Bar Mitzvah. This event was singularly the domain of boys having a Bar Mitzvah in the past.

"We also never used to think about celebrating the birth of a female child," Greenberg says. "The bris takes place eight days after a boy's birth, and is a covenantal ceremony, not surgery, and we celebrate the enlarging of the community by one. Yet we never celebrated female entry into a covenantal community even though women are, of course, members of the covenant. Seven years ago, I attended my first celebration of a girl's birth and it was a strange and awkward celebration. Today, it's becoming more and more commonplace under the challenge of feminism."

Greenberg also noted that there is no blessing given to women for the act of giving birth, a fact she considers to be further evidence of sexism. "If men gave birth, there would be a stack of blessings and celebrations," she says.

—Ilana Simon

Contemporary movement born out of 60s manure

(LONDON) — Germaine Greer, one of four panelists reflecting on the era that gave birth to the contemporary women's movement at a recent Marxism Today panel discussion, reminded her audience that the Swinging Sixties was only an ad slogan.

Greer told a largely young, combative audience, "It was an era of slogans that suffered a disease of style. We produced some of the worst graphic art the eye has ever seen."

When members of the audience told Greer that they felt living through the 'swinging sixties' was like watching a party they weren't invited to, she said that the 'youth revolt' was not a grass roots movement.

"The terrible thing about the 1960s was that we forgot about the class struggle — we thought revolution was like a religious experience. We had a distaste for discipline and an inability to organise."

But Greer said her generation rebelled against the grimness of a post-Hiroshima future — they were children



Greer: spooked generation

who woke up screaming with nightmares about nuclear bombs. "We were the first spooked generation."

Greer added that political movements in the 1960s provided the fertile ground necessary for women, who were fed up with doing the shitwork for male revolutionaries, to cultivate a feminist consciousness.

"When I took over *Oz Magazine* (London's best-

known counter-culture publication) for a feminist issue, I realised I was writing against the grain — it was a macho culture with adulating women and posturing men," said Greer. "Women were ripped off."

What legacy has the 1960s left? According to Greer, young people now have "a distinct disgust for the generation that mothered them with its soft-headedness, and rightly so."

Jeremy Seabrook, author of *Working-Class Childhood* was also cynical about the achievements of the 60s.

"Those of us who grew up in the 1950s and '60s, who said 'never again' to mass unemployment and war, have to ask what our role was in bringing those things about again."

Playwright David Edgar added that Thatcherism has eroded many of the gains made in the 1960s, but the era did give birth to the environmental, anti-racism, green, and feminist movements still active today.

—Julie Wheelwright

Single moms steal sperm, cause kids' revolt

(LONDON) — The greatest problem Britain currently faces is not a faltering economic base or a steadily rising unemployment rate but single parent families, a Tory cabinet minister recently told the party faithful.

Dr. Rhodes Boyson, a local government minister, told a group at a fringe meeting organised by the Church Society at the Conservative Party's annual conference in Bournemouth, that one-parent families could be blamed for many of the nation's troubles.

Single parent families, "probably the most evil product of our time," according to Boyson, are also on the increase. Boyson was quoted in *The Guardian* as saying that these families were on the increase because of "the rise of artificial insemination and casual sex relations."

He added that, "single parents have made their case so well that they have expanded their subsidies from the public

purse from some 15 million pounds in 1960 to 1 billion pounds in 1983."

"Low paid members of normal families are taxed at standard rate to subsidise not only those forced to be one-parent families by misfortune but also to subsidise those who have specifically chosen to be one-parent families."

Sue Slipman, director of the National Council for One Parent Families was also quoted in *The Guardian*, and refuted Boyson's claims. She said 84 per cent of the one million one-parent families in Britain have been caused by divorce, separation or loss of a partner.

But Boyson had also reserved harsh criticism specifically for single mothers who could not be appropriate role models for their offspring because children could only be "civilised by firm and caring fathers."

"The wildness of the uncontrolled male young," could be blamed on a lack of fathers, he said. "The

banishment of the father means that boys take their values from their aggressive and often brutal peer groups and are prepared for a life of crime, football hooliganism, mugging and inner city revolt," he said.

The family is under attack from extreme feminists, youth cults and homosexual lobbies, he added.

Sir Frederick Catherwood, a British representative to the

European Parliament, joined in the attack. Speaking at a Conservative Family Campaign fringe meeting he criticised the Thatcher government's "neutralist stand on questions of morality."

Catherwood received a standing ovation when he added that Conservatives should be encouraging women to stay at home.

—Julie Wheelwright

Lobby group to end discrimination

An Ottawa-based gay lobbying group (EAGLE) is seeking support for a legislative end to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

EAGLE (Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere, in English; "Equal" in French) grew out of the Equality Writes Ad-Hoc Committee (EWAC). EWAC organised a nation-wide letter-writing campaign last winter to mobilise support for recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights. This all-party committee was unanimous in urging that discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation be prohibited.

In response to the

committee's Equality for All report, the federal government pledged last March to take whatever measures are necessary to ensure sexual orientation is a prohibited ground for discrimination in all areas of federal jurisdiction. Sexual orientation is not listed in the Charter of Rights as a prohibited ground for discrimination, and the Canadian Human Rights Act has not yet been amended to prohibit such discrimination.

EAGLE is urging the majority of Canadians who support equal rights for gays and lesbians, to notify the Prime Minister and individual MPs of their support.

Ontario woman sues over surgery

(TORONTO) — An Ontario woman is suing an Ottawa gynecologist for malpractice following an operation which impaired her sexually and caused her to limp for two years.

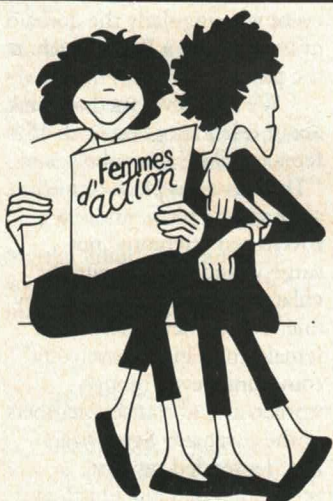
Sharon Roberts went into the hospital in 1980 to have a D & C after experiencing extremely heavy periods. Her gynecologist, Roberts says, commented that she had a dimple near the vaginal opening and said that he would take out her Bartholins gland to remove the dimple, even though Roberts had no complaints about her Bartholins gland, or the dimple.

Complications resulting from the removal of the gland, Roberts now says, left her genitals severely mutilated and caused her extreme physical and psychological damage. The

severing of the nerves in the genital area resulted in a loss of sensation and walking was impaired. The Bartholins gland works to aid lubrication. While it is an area which can abscess, Roberts has now learned that removal of the Bartholins is considered unnecessary, and even drastic, by medical experts.

It has taken six years for Roberts to undergo reconstructive surgeries and establish the permanent effects of the initial operation, and a trial is expected in January.

Roberts is hoping to raise \$20,000 to cover her extensive legal costs. Letters of support and donations can be sent to Brenda Massey, Supportive Friends of Sharon Roberts, 149-1555 Warden Ave., Scarborough, Ontario M1R 2S9.



Comment reconnaître une femme à la page?

RÉPONSE:

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HER 86

McTeer says feminists should shout louder

Feminist lawyer Maureen McTeer told a national teachers' conference recently that feminist gains will be eroded by those "who shout loudest."

"We've been overly polite, and well-mannered," she commented, referring to the recent lobbying efforts of groups like R.E.A.L. Women. "We've allowed the loud groups to ride rough shod over us."

McTeer's advice to the 9th National Conference on the Status of Women and Education was to get involved in provincial and federal advisory boards. "Write to the ministers, give them anecdotes on how legislation is going to affect certain groups. The Canadian Teachers' Federation is a powerbroker," said McTeer. Because ministers don't get a lot of letters, they regard 50 as a crisis. McTeer went on to say that women must make their views known on abortion, because, like capital punishment, it is a conscience vote that crosses party lines.

"Abortions can be carried

out under certain circumstances. What is before the Supreme Court is whether those conditions are constitutional," she explained.

Feminist gains can be eroded in other ways as well. Feminist scholar Margarit Eichler told delegates that many myths about women are destructive. She told her audience that "symbols cannot be simply rejected, they must be replaced." According to the professor from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (O.I.S.E.), it is not enough to remove sexist literature from the classroom.

Eichler pinpointed four basic myths about women that need to be challenged, including beliefs about men and women, women's nature, women's intelligence and their relationship to society. She noted how sex-typed behavior results in women being labelled as "sick" when they stray from the male-defined model of behavior.

Eichler noted that women face threats from anti-abortion groups, who use these myths to

stop women from controlling their lives.

"The fetus is being pitched against the woman. It is going to win against the woman carrying it." She was speaking specifically about a case in the U.S., where the state is suing a woman for miscarriage, on behalf of the fetus.

To disprove the current myth about women's alleged historic weakness, Eichler went to ancient Greece. She told the audience that Zeus, the Greek god, was said to have swallowed Metis, a wise woman, in order to stop her from giving birth to an equally intelligent daughter. Zeus couldn't contain the woman's strength however, and Metis' daughter Athene, leapt out of his aching head in style, armed with a crescent helmet, breastplate, shield and spear.

Noting that women have been victimised by myths since the time of Plato, Eichler told the audience that a non-sexist education has a big part to play in shaping the future symbols of women.

—Nonqaba Msimang



McDougall says fund only full equality groups

(OTTAWA) — Federal Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Barbara McDougall told a recent meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) Executive, that she agrees that only groups working for the full equality of women should be funded by the government.

The comments are at least some consolation to many

women who feared that anti-feminist organisations such as R.E.A.L. Women might be able to secure government money earmarked for the goal of full equality for women.

McDougall, who also sits on the cabinet committee on trade and is Minister of State of Privatisation, admitted to the lobby group, that any trade agreement that might be reached with the U.S. will "fall

short of what was looked for in the beginning." After hearing NAC vice president Marjorie Cohen outline women's concerns on the impact of free trade, McDougall agreed that the labour adjustment approach to changes that will result from free trade is unrealistic because of its belief that workers are able to pick up and move to where jobs are.

—Feminist Action

Bata ties up business in South Africa

It's time to update the South African boycott list that appeared in our July/August 1986 issue.

Bata Ltd., one of the world's largest shoemakers, is selling its five South African factories to an as-yet-unnamed buyer. Bata's decision came after Eastman Kodak decided in November to withdraw from the racially segregated company; Eastman now prohibits its subsidiaries from supplying products to South Africa.

Montreal-based Dominion Textile Inc. also recently announced that it was selling its 50 per cent interest in a South African-based textile company.

Still on the boycott list, however, is Falconbridge Ltd., which just spent \$31.6 million to buy a 24 per cent interest in Western Platinum, a South African company, bringing its holdings in the company to 49 per cent. After Falconbridge ignored the federal government's voluntary guidelines in South African investments, External Affairs Minister Joe Clark hinted that a mandatory ban might be on the way.

Food irradiation begins in China

The Ministry of Public Health in China has approved rice, potatoes, onions, garlic, peanuts, mushrooms and pork sausages for sale as irradiated foods.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited's publication *Ascent*, reports that more than 25 foods, including fish, bamboo shoots, cauliflower, carrots, dried dates and other fruit are also seen as potential candidates.

China's studies for safety included eight short-term tests of volunteer medical students and citizens who ate irradiated food for a period of only two to four months.

EASTERN REGION

DAWN is the DisAbled Women's Network, a national organisation controlled by and comprised of disabled women. DAWN Toronto meets monthly. Call (416) 694-8888 (Pat) for meeting times and places or for more information. Voice or T.D.D.

HOT OFF THE PRESS: The 1987 Canadian Women's Directory, a bilingual index of women's groups across the country, is available for \$7.95 plus \$1.00 (postage and handling) from Les Editions Communiqu'Elles, 3585 St. Urbain St., Montreal, P.Q., H2X 2N6 or phone (514) 844-1761.

WESTERN REGION

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-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté. Tickets are \$6 - \$8 and are available from J.J.H. McLean, 263 Edmonton Street, Winnipeg, Man. R3C 1S1.

TRIBUTE DINNER: A special dinner for Rosemary Brown is being held **January 12th, 1987** in Vancouver at Isadora's Restaurant. Tickets are \$20 and are on sale at Vancouver Status of Women, Women's Research Centre, and Ariel Books.

SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE SYMPOSIUM is being sponsored by the Sexual Assault Centre of Fort McMurray on **January 22-24, 1987** at the Peter Pond Community School. For more information call (403) 791-6708.

SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE: The 5th Canadian conference in solidarity with the women of Latin America will be held in Vancouver in **February, 1987**. If individuals or organisations wish to be involved or need more information please contact (604) 873-2257 or write: P.O. Box 38, Station A, Vancouver, B.C., V5L 2L8.

NATIONAL ASSOC. OF WOMEN AND THE LAW will hold a conference on Section

15: Equality in the Criminal Justice System and the Workplace: Fact or Fantasy? on **February 19-22, 1987** in Winnipeg, Manitoba at the Holiday Inn. For brochure, call or write: Laurie P. Allen, 201-110 Osborne St., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3L 1Y5: 1-204-284-8683.

INTERNATIONAL

WOMEN IN LAKESIDE PRISON need books and records, both feminist and general interest. Call Ivy or the BCFW Prison and Action Committee at (604) 327-8534.

CANADIAN PID SOCIETY works to provide support, counselling and resource referral to women with pelvic inflammatory disease and their families. For information contact: P.O. Box 33804, Station D, Vancouver, B.C., V6J 4L6 or call (604) 684-5704.

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH IN AN ERA OF ECONOMIC CONSTRAINT: THE CHALLENGE: is the fifth international congress of the World Federation of Public Health Associations. It will be held in Mexico City, Mexico on **March 22-27, 1987**. Contact: WFPHA Secretariat, c/o American Public Health Association, 1015 15th Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20005, USA.

GENDER/CULTURE/POLITICS: Northwestern University, **April 10-12, 1987**. Sessions on Masculinity, Femininity, Cultural Constructions of the Political — Sex, Race, and Class — Women as Culture-Makers and the Politics of Cultural Transmission — the Politics of Sexuality. For more information contact: Program of Comparative Literature and Theory, 150 Kresge Hall, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, 60201.

FIRST WEST COAST CONFERENCE OF OLD LESBIANS is scheduled for **April 17-19, 1987**, at Calif. State U., Dominguez Hills. Contact West Coast Celebration, 2953 Lincoln Blvd., Santa Monica, CA, 90405, USA or call Kate (619) 481-0375, Shaba (213) 857-2131, or Sylvia (805) 569-1276.

CEFEMINA: The 5th International Women & Health Meeting will take place in San Jose, Costa Rica, **May 23-28, 1987**. For more information and to register, write or phone: CEFEMINA, APDO. 5355, San Jose 1000, Costa Rica. Tel. 27.15.68.

WEAVING WOMEN'S COLORS: A DECADE OF EMPOWERMENT, the 1987 National Women's Studies Association Conference will convene at Spelman College in Atlanta, GA, **June 24-28, 1987**. Contact: NWSA '87, Emory University, P.O.B. 21223, Atlanta, GA, 30322, USA, or phone 404-727-7845.

THIRD INTERNATIONAL INTERDISCIPLINARY CONGRESS ON WOMEN will take place in Dublin, Ireland, **June 29 - July 3, 1987**. The theme is "Women's Worlds: Visions & Revisions". For more information write the Congress Secretariat, 44 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4, Ireland.

SUPPRESSED HISTORIES ARCHIVES founded by Max Dashu in 1970, has 30 slideshows on the cultural heritage of women in each area of Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas and a number of multicultural presentations on women as leaders, innovators, culture-makers, artists, healers, farmers and traders. For further information contact: Max Deshu, Suppressed Histories Archives, 3901 Clarke Street, #C, Oakland, Calif., 94609, USA.

WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES: An Introductory Teaching Packet is available from the Organisation for Equal Education of the Sexes, Inc. (OEEs) for \$14.50 plus \$3.00 handling. To order write or call: OEEs Packets/Posters, 438 Fourth Street, Brooklyn, NY, 11215, USA; 718-788-3478.

WOMEN'S HEALING VILLAGE Women interested in organising a women's healing village in Canada, in a rural, co-operative setting, please contact Gitta Ridder, P.O. Box 857, Pahoia, Hawaii, 96778.

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(From left) Back row: Erica Smith, Heidi Muench. Middle row: Mona Brisson, Debbie Holmberg-Schwartz, Brigitte Sutherland, Patricia Rawson, Marie Montreuil. Up front: Penni Mitchell.

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L'Initée

NICOLE MORIN



*Au groupe
des A.A.
Identification,
Montréal, à
toutes les femmes
qui m'ont
apporté leur
vérité en 1980.*

Cette effrayante nuit blanche! Était-ce la nuit du 7 au 8 mars 1980, à l'hôpital Notre-Dame à Montréal, où j'aurais pu imaginer la peur, enfin que je livre!

J'avais reçu un billet de Lorraine dans la journée, à 16 heures, sur une feuille jaune de l'hôpital, histoire de cas et notes d'évolution clinique. Référence: Docteur G... : Trans Love Express Pour: Réjeanne Nicole Morin De: Lorraine J... -L... Ceci est un billet d'avion pour le Pérou pour atteindre la 8ème dimension Bon voyage Love (signé un nom qu'elle se donnait). A vingt-sept ans, habitant sur la rue Des Érables, tout près du Parc Lafontaine, je me considérais comme une jeune mère de famille, responsable, un peu démunie, fragile dans le sens qu'on m'avait bien eu, je marchais constamment sous l'effet de l'aldol depuis mon entrée à l'urgence. Sur ma feuille verte des effets du client, ma condition était inscrite à la case "conscient", les autres cases sont: confus, inconscient et accompagné. \$25. en poche, un jonc, un collier, mon porte-monnaie, mes boucles d'oreilles, et n'ayant que mon linge sur le dos, je fus admise en psychiatrie pour une semaine, heureusement pour moi écourtée à cinq jours. Patient, on m'a arraché à mes trois jeunes enfants, à mes cours de clown et tap-dance, à ma liberté si chère, mon amie, qu'est-ce que je fais ici? Un divorce qui commence par la folie de la mère à prouver l'état de sa santé mentale; j'avais abandonné le foyer conjugal depuis plus de quatre mois; voilà... deux policiers, moi à l'hôpital.

Jour à vivre l'épouvantable, je me dis c'est comme passer une semaine de repos forcé, c'est-à-dire que j'ai déjà vécu des séjours courts à cause de mes accouchements. Maintenant j'y suis pour une semaine, coûte-que-coûte, je passerai à travers. Isolement complet dans un entourage assez fou, j'allais l'expérimenter. Prendre conscience que ma sécurité physique était à grands risques, d'incident en incident, quand les esprits claquent dans la tension ner-

veuse, de patiente je suis aussi insécure. Hommes et femmes étions ensemble, une dizaine d'humains dans un espace trop restreint et dopés, sous observation. Je me sens déracinée. Dépaycée. Pas de musique, un homme qui se rase sans cesse, un autre qui nous talonne constamment, aux yeux fous, un regard qu'on ne peut oublier, dans le vague. Belle Janine hospitalisée elle aussi en même temps que moi. Un oasis de tendresse dans cette prison! Dans un sous-sol avec des barreaux aux fenêtres, dans mon sac de laine mexicain noir où quatre oiseaux dessus se regardaient, face à face, deux par deux, s'y trouvait mon cahier d'écriture Hilroy: éprise dans Retour, jeudi, fermer les yeux pour imaginer ce bleu si clair entre fenêtres et ombres des murs, ensoleillé, de cette neige qui neigera, encore un peu sur les corniches, des pigeons habitués. Ecouter de cette musique se faire bercer lentement temps qui joue de ces jours, en attente, de marcher vers la maison, sans encens du matin, depuis que je l'ai quitté.

Durété de ces souvenirs de manies quand je n'en ai pas ou si peu j'ai dit au docteur à mon arrivée oui je trouve que ça va vite comme dans un train j'aimerais débarquer un moment J'ai eu peur le doute en moi s'installait en ce 8 mars 1980 je pensai particulièrement à toutes ces autres femmes qui ont eu de près ou de loin à démystifier la santé mentale Toutes les personnes impliquées mères enfants toujours des femmes enfermées dans des institutions dans leurs relations maniaco-dépressives hypomaniaque de la schyphrénie douce ce que j'ai là au coeur une blessure Je me concentrais à créer mon personnage de clown pour le dixième anniversaire de l'école de danse toute de suite m'est venue la peau de la vache "Pilule" Je m'en voulais d'être si mince j'avais maigri Sortie je me défendrais sur scène avec des souliers de claquettes danser au lieu de crier dans le burlesque absolu. Pour l'instant j'écoulais le temps à penser à mes trois filles coupée de tout l'unique source d'information la télévision Ce soir-là au canal 10 des chanteuses anglaises entrevues au Baby Face rue Ontario à l'époque Deuxième tentative d'escapade d'une jeune grande femme aux longs cheveux bruns enceinte pendant notre visite à l'autre étage question de nous peser... mes blouses de couleurs franches contrastaient avec le blanc des deux infirmiers assez corrects Une amie m'avait apporté mon livre sur les maisons solaires je pouvais donc vois un prêtre égyptien avec une enseigne

rituelle surmontée d'un disque solaire je pris comme habitude de m'endormir le soir les bras croisés sur la poitrine car c'est dans cette position que j'implorais la statuette de protéger mes nuits pour ne pas perdre contact trouver au moins refuge dans cette divinité ancienne une femme qui n'arrête pas de murmurer sans cesse parlant dans une autre langue une plainte agressive, possédée bouleversée Un homme ce soir-là qui tenta de se jeter sur moi retenu à temps par les mêmes infirmiers mes bras toujours croisés sur ma poitrine.

Nourrie, logée, assise j'essaie de passer le temps les chaises se vident à intervalles réguliers personne ne jase, sauf J... et moi, dans le temps elle travaillait à la radio on se sent un peu droguée, le traitement de la petite pilule, ça passera je passe de la lecture au tricot en surveillance je déplace ainsi mon corps de place mon coeur ne sait plus où aller je tricote sans me tromper un rang à l'endroit un rang à l'envers combien de temps cela prendra-t'il pour revoir les enfants deux expertises psycho-sociales la Cour et ses jugements le doute a fait son chemin des sillons dans mon champ de liberté, les filles seront affectées par ce brusque changement prouver mon état "normal" après toutes ces journées à attendre après quoi? Je demande pour téléphoner ce sera long trois voix et la mienne ma symbiose de mère en filles éclatée j'ai eu la sensation d'éclater brisée comme si mes pieds ne me soutenaient plus je croule sous la fatigue rien ne tournait autour de moi tout y était si laid je n'étais plus sur ma chaise berçante dans la cuisine, je n'avais plus rien ni mes plantes ni un lit à partager Péniblement je suis allée au lavabo du corridor me laver la figure Moi qui m'expliquais beaucoup en paroles pour cacher sûrement mes sentiments je ne pensai plus à rien un détachement de cette salle, je respirais beaucoup mieux je me vis comme dans un songe libérée à l'aise dans mes mouvements des chansons plein, plein de joie, une éclaircie, un sentier, peut-être le vent d'automne et ses odeurs particulières, pourtant en mars je me crus à l'équinoxe, me roulant dans les feuilles, je savais que je me retrouverais, virage en épingle à cheveux, un jeu avec les deux mains, je devine ce qui sera écrit dans mon dossier médical, je sortirai demain ça sera comme un drôle de rêve, un film qui fait peur, j'entre à nouveau dans la vie, celle du dehors des bien-pensants, de la charité et de mon nouvel espoir, y être réinstallée.

Si la mort venait me bercer dans ses bras
 Peut-être pourrais-je dormir paisiblement
 Si la mort venait me bercer dans ses bras
 Peut-être te voudrais-je près de moi

Cette mort,

Je l'imagine grande, svelte
 Vêtue d'une robe rouge, recouverte d'un manteau noir
 Son visage pâle, ses yeux bleus, étincillant
 Une femme forte, fragile
 Je l'imagine belle

Elle nous porterait jusqu'au grand lit bleu
 Toi et moi seules toutes les deux
 Cinglant sur les vagues immenses de cette mer
 Où les vivants n'ont pas le droit de se promener
 Nous lui ferions signe de partir
 Et resterions seules, toi et moi

Pour enfin pouvoir se dire
 Pour enfin pouvoir se lire
 Pour enfin pouvoir s'aimer . . .

Est-ce que l'amour existe après la mort?
 Le notre — "oui".
 Puisque tu m'as dit hier, "La vie n'est qu'un passage"
 Je ne m'imagine pas morte sans toi. Parce que la mort
 doit nous mener vers un autre passage - si celui de l'amour existe
 nous le trouverons . . .

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MOT-MYSTÈRE DE NEUF LETTRES:

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 A T F I A R T H A U D K
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| 16. ICI | 5. BIRD | 27. RENA |
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| 20. MIROIR | 9. DE | 31. YIN |
| 21. MOI | 10. DEVLIN | 32. YOURCENAR |
| 22. NOM | 11. EMMY | 33. ZWONOK |
| | | 34. ZETKIN |

RÉPONSE:

KOLONTAÏ. Politique, histoire et mouvements sociaux:
 Alexandra Kollant est une féministe révolutionnaire, fon-
 tionnaire et diplomate russe, autrice de "Féminisme et révo-
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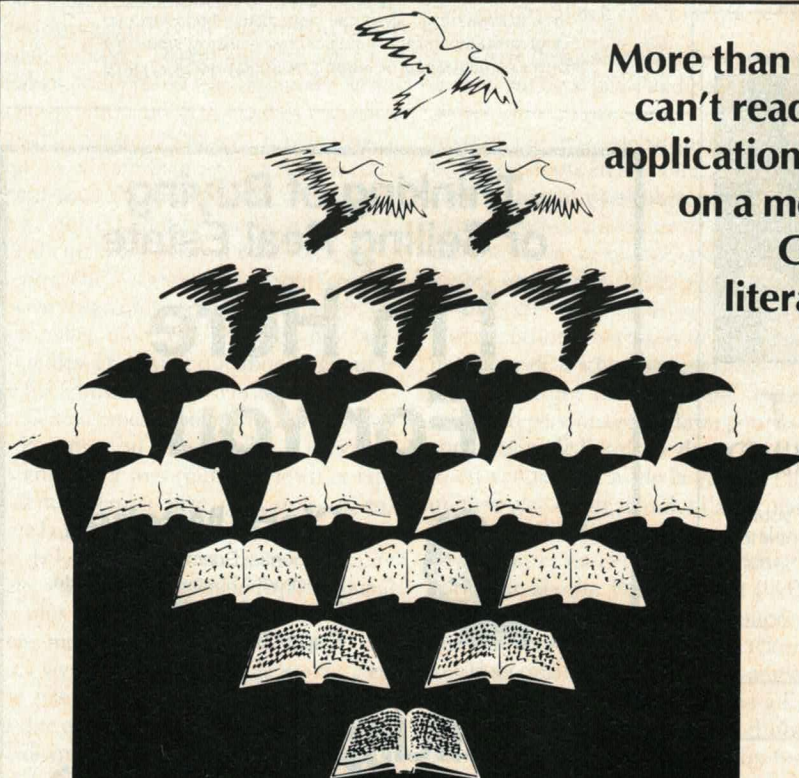
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I

nvuntary Joint Custody

What mothers will lose if fathers' rights groups win

by Louise Lamb

Canadians reacted with horror on August 1, 1985, when they picked up their newspapers to find a picture of a knife-wielding man dangling his two-year old son out of a third-story window. We found out, upon reading the story, that "the drama began with a domestic dispute, after the man had lost a court fight for custody of the child." Small wonder, readers probably thought, that the mother wanted out of the marriage and that she resisted the father's custody pursuit. But this is exactly the kind of situation cited by an organisation pushing for involuntary joint custody, as proof that involuntary joint custody is desirable. The Canadian Council for Co-Parenting, a national fathers' rights group, cited the actions of the father in the photograph as evidence of the burden endured by non-custodial fathers when the Council appealed to the prime minister to endorse its views about changes to the Divorce Act. The Canadian Council on Co-Parenting, and other supporters of fathers' rights, want family law to automatically presume that joint custody is in the best interests of the child. This, they say, will ensure that fathers without custody can have an equal right to child-related decision-making, regardless of whether or not they actually provide physical care for the child on a joint basis.

It was less than a century ago that Canadian law finally evolved beyond the notion that children were the property of their fathers. Until then, fathers were routinely given sole custody of children upon the breakup of the marriage, no matter how brutal or unfit a father was.

Today, the notion that children are property threatens to resurface. Canadian women are be-

coming increasingly alarmed at the growing acceptance by legislators and judges of involuntary joint custody as a way to bring equality to our divorce laws. In fact, many lawyers and feminists believe that involuntary joint custody could be disastrous for children and that it stands to push women's rights within the family back into the 19th century.

Mediation ignores
power imbalances be-
tween those in dispute
and valid reasons for not
wanting to "negotiate"
are seen as road blocks.

A broad-based group of feminists, historians, lawyers and social scientists, including representatives of the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL) met at Windsor last summer to discuss the threat of mandatory joint custody. At the end of the conference, The Politics of Custody Coalition was formed.

NAWL, a national non-profit feminist organisation comprised mainly of lawyers and law students, says that giving non-custodial parents

(usually fathers) an equal say in all matters relating to a child's upbringing, will cause added emotional and financial hardships for the primary care-givers (usually mothers). NAWL makes a clear distinction between voluntary joint-custody, where parents agree to the terms of their co-parenting arrangements, and court-imposed involuntary joint-custody, which can be imposed on unwilling participants.

In NAWL's brief to the parliamentary committee studying changes to the Divorce Act, NAWL pointed out that equity cannot be achieved by granting equal participation after divorce, to parents who have not shared equally in parenting during marriage. Even more serious is the fact that giving over half of the decision-making authority will place a powerful bargaining lever in the hands of fathers who want to minimise their support obligations, since most still relinquish primary physical care and custody to the mothers. NAWL alleges that fathers' rights groups misrepresent and misuse social science data to present a bias in favour of fathers, and says that legislators and some judges have fallen easy prey. NAWL points to the fact that two of the experts frequently cited for the position that children generally benefit from continued contact with both parents, Dr. Judith Wallerstein and Dr. E. Mavis Heatherington, have both explicitly repudiated court-imposed involuntary joint custody.

Having what feminists charge is only a superficial understanding of equality, a growing number of lawmakers and judges mistakenly conclude that 'equality' requires them to ignore typically motherly characteristics and behaviours in custody cases, because they unfairly favour women. When those characteristics include nurturing and day to day participation



in child care, it is easy to see how the contribution of mothers can be overlooked in the name of fathers' rights. NAWL suggested during the committee hearings that parents' past commitments to child care should be considered as important in determining custody awards, as their stated intention to "share" parenting when the marriage fails.

NAWL's position deserves a better hearing than the MPs gave it. After all, what is the reality of child care arrangements in existing Canadian marriages? Fathers' rights advocates point to a revolution in sex roles as evidence of their entitlement; they say men are accepting the role of nurturing parent on a wide scale. Research tells us something different. In a survey conducted by Statistics Canada, two thirds of the women said they suffered work interruptions because of their parenting and marriage responsibilities, while less than 1 per cent of men reported that their work had suffered in-

terruptions because of similar obligations. And, even in families where both parents work outside the home, research shows that child care is the least often shared responsibility, with the vast majority of parenting work still provided by the mother.

The fact that women bear the brunt of child care responsibilities during marriage is merely reflected in the fact that, until now, most divorcing parents have been content that sole custody should be awarded to the mothers. Only 15 per cent of all divorces involving children are contested, while 86 per cent of divorce decrees which involve parents award sole custody to the mother. These statistics are not an indication of simple-minded sexism on the part of judges; they parallel the reality of child care arrangements during marriage, and reflect a common sense understanding on the part of judges and parents about what is in the best interests of the child.

Joint custody has been characterised by many as a concept that women ought to support, because it is claimed that joint custody will simultaneously eradicate social stereotypes and economic inequality. Some say that it will eliminate the post-divorce overburdening of mothers, as well as the alienation of fathers and the maladjustment of children that can follow divorce. Fathers' rights groups tell us that it will lead to less child-snatching by parents, and greater economic opportunities for women, as the burden of child care becomes the shared responsibility of both sexes. Such dreams, however, are not based in the here and now.

For instance, fathers' rights groups claim that the rate of default on child support payments (currently running at a 75 per cent in jurisdictions without mandatory enforcement programs) would be lowered if men were allowed more parenting time with their children. There was no evidence of this presented during the

committee hearings, but American research has been done. A study of child support and visitation enforcement complaints in Travis County, Texas (a jurisdiction which enforces visitation as well as support orders), showed that in 1983, complaints of support delinquency exceeded complaints concerning denial of visitation more than 18 times over. Moreover, recently published American research shows that a significant complaint among divorced mothers is that fathers fail to exercise their access rights and that they don't see enough of their children. Contrary to the claims of fathers' rights organisations, joint custody regimes have been shown to have no preventative effect on child snatchings. In California, where pro-joint custody legislation exists, snatching arrests have risen steadily since joint custody went into ef-

spouses under the program have risen proportionately to the number of orders enrolled in the program. Manitoba's enforcement program is successful because it is automatic and uses strenuous and effective remedies: garnishing of wages, orders against properties and the enforcement of penalties of fines and/or imprisonment upon default.

Not surprisingly, the Coalition on Co-Parenting wants less emphasis placed on mandatory enforcement of support payments. Richard Haney, when he stood before the parliamentary committee in June 1985 on behalf of The Canadian Council on Co-Parenting, said: "I believe this government, this bill, this whatever, this committee, will make a serious mistake if it goes in the direction of enforcement rather than in the direction of

model of dealing with family disputes, according to NAWL, is the fact that it ignores existing power imbalances between those in dispute, and places such a high value on being 'co-operative', that individuals' valid reasons for not wanting to 'negotiate' (wife abuse and sexual abuse of children are two examples) are seen as creating roadblocks to agreement. The definition of "success", in the mediation model, is based solely on reaching an agreement. If one party feels coerced and protests the resulting agreement after it has been signed, there is no appeal mechanism, as there is in a court setting.

Linda Girdner, an anthropologist at the University of Illinois and herself a mediator, observes that although mediators profess to facilitate the access of divorcing parents to an empowering and self-determining process, they are, in reality, not neutral or non-judgemental.

"Mediation is based on the assumption that disputants have relative equality," she says. "In cases where the parents are of relatively unequal power, the emphasis on agreement may be at the expense of fairness. If the less powerful party does not agree to a settlement in mediation, he or she risks being labelled uncooperative. This has the potential of leading to a new way of blaming the victim, and subordinating the needs of children to the desire for parental compromise."

Mediation happens behind closed doors and critics say that it is a more welfare-like approach to serving women's interests. Pre-mediation advocates routinely criticise the involvement of lawyers and the court-room setting, but the procedural safeguards of formal justice may well serve women's interests more effectively than mediation. British feminist Anne Bottomley warns that mediation threatens to create yet another pattern of professional domination over women, along with its emphasis on private arrangements.

Canada's new Divorce Act says that the willingness of the spouse who wants custody (usually the mother) to facilitate access to the non-custodial parent (usually the father) is to be considered in awarding custody. This means that women who seek to have access by the father blocked because of a past history of physical or sexual abuse, risk being labelled as 'uncooperative' and stand to lose custody of their children.

This development, called the "friendly parent" rule, has been called "fundamentally illogical and insidious," by NAWL, because it suggests that the impact of the non-physical custodial parent is more important than the role of the parent who lives with and cares for the child day to day.

The friendly parent rule is now law in many U.S. states and many of these same states have involuntary joint custody laws. Nancy Polikoff of the Women's Legal Defense Fund notes that some judges in these jurisdictions have imposed joint custody over the objections of battered women. (Phyllis Chesler's book *Mothers On*

Highlights of Canada's New Divorce Act

- The "friendly parent" rule means the willingness of the spouse who wants custody (usually the mother) to facilitate access to the non-custodial parent (usually the father) is now a factor in determining custody.
- Judges will impose more time-limited maintenance awards and it is more difficult for custodial parents to change awards once they have expired.
- Emphasis on "clean break" means non-custodial fathers will be required to pay less child maintenance.
- Lawyers must now discuss the advisability of negotiating contested matters and must tell their clients about mediation services known to them.

fect in 1980. If child snatchings were motivated by distraught non-custodial parents who wanted to spend time with their kids, the beneficial effects of joint custody would show up in these statistics. In fact, child snatching is not motivated by love of children, but by spite against the other spouse.

In Canada, the Alberta Institute of Law Research and Reform conducted a 1981 study to investigate the reasons for support payment delinquencies. It concluded that there was no statistical relationship between fathers' satisfaction with access to their children and the rate of maintenance default. Nancy Polikoff, Staff Attorney for the Washing-based Women's Legal Defense Fund, reports a similar experience with U.S. defaulters. She says that the only systematic American study of custody arrangements and support payments "does not support the position that joint custody awards, even when voluntarily chosen, result in greater compliance with support orders."

Manitoba, where legislation enabling non-custodial parents to have access to information about their children has been in effect since 1983, is a case in point. Some members of the parliamentary committee inquired whether there was a link between this provision and the success of the Manitoba Maintenance Enforcement Program. In fact, statistics compiled by the enforcement program's officials show that the total payments collected by delinquent

justice . . . We should change this thing to reduce the cost to the taxpayer. After all the humanistic stuff, it still comes down to bucks, as this committee knows."

The Council on Co-Parenting is full of similar mixed messages. A look at its 'Objects' says that it wants to "promote new family models which fit into the context of changing social values, while supporting, strengthening and promoting the traditional family." Apparently feminism isn't part of the Council's vision of the traditional family. Haney has harsh words for feminists and government funding for feminist groups. He charges that "the feminist lobby" has "condemned many children and our own most sacred institution the family...to even more acrimony and suffering."

The Council on Co-Parenting supports a mediation model for solving custody disputes, a move which has also come under fire from NAWL. Recent changes to the Divorce Act make it mandatory for lawyers to discuss the advisability of negotiating contested matters and to bring to the client's attention existing mediation facilities known to the lawyer. However, there are currently no regulations governing those who call themselves mediators, no standardised training and no consensus as to what mediation really is. Richard Haney of the Council on Co-Parenting practices as a mediator in Ottawa.

The biggest drawback to the mediation

Trial is a shocking indictment of the erosion of women's rights that is occurring in the United States, as judges increasingly place children in dangerous situations.) The National Centre on Women and Family Law, a New York based resource for women and their attorneys, receives frequent pleas for assistance from the attorneys of women across the U.S. who have lost custody to abusers. The *New York Times* reported in May of 1984, that U.S. courts display an overwhelming bias against mothers who raise complaints of child abuse. The *Times* story cited the case of a 3 year old California girl who suffered severe physical and mental injuries when sexually abused by her father. He was awarded joint custody. When the mother obstructed the father's visitation rights because abuse was taking place, the court found her in contempt of court before her cries for help were finally heeded. Even then, it was only the California Court of Appeal's decision to admit evidence from a psychiatrist who conducted therapy with the child, that led the court to suspend the father's visitation rights. Dr. Ronald Summit, a psychiatrist at the University of California who has specialised in the treatment of sexually abused children for 15 years, was quoted in the *Times* article saying that the bias against mothers who complain of abuse is so serious that a woman who is aware of it is often told that she may do well not to bring it up because it will only bring trouble on herself (and her child).

Even after public and legislative hearings in Canada (such as the Badgley Commission), Canadian lawmakers do not appear to have made the connection between admitting that sexual and physical abuse of women and children is a common occurrence, to implementing safeguards for those victims, into family law. The trend to ignore mothers who bring up cases of abuse during custody trials will only be reinforced by the "friendly parent rule" in the new Divorce Act. NAWL calls this provision "the silencer," as women risk being seen by mediators and judges as vindictive and uncooperative when they reveal abuse perpetrated by the father. (And worse, risk losing their children to the abuser.) The potential ill effects of this are foreshadowed by the number of reports women are making about their vulnerability to battering when ex-husbands exercise their access rights. Fran Kopas of the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse says that reports by women who are vulnerable to continued violence when their ex-husbands exercise their access and joint custody rights are frequently made to the committee's crisis line staff. If they don't want to risk losing custody, the women may decide that continued exposure to abuse is the lesser of two evils.

Involuntary joint custody is not the only issue fathers' and women's groups disagree on. Law reforms favouring the wider admission of children's evidence in sexual abuse cases are opposed by at least one fathers' rights group. The Association des Hommes Separe du Divorce de

Montreal, said, in its brief to the Parliamentary Committee studying amendments to the Divorce Act: "all sorts of excuses, most often false are used (by the parent with legal custody to obstruct the non-custodial parent from exercising his right of access) . . . they accuse the other parent of violence or even incest, to the extent that they are prepared to perjure themselves in court." The Association recommended heavy fines and a loss of custody to the other parent, as a solution to "all these false allegations."

Self proclaimed "fathers' rights" groups aren't the only ones trivialising the crime of child sexual abuse these days. Another organisation, VOCAL (Victims of Child Abuse Laws) claims to speak for the men who have been falsely accused of child abuse laws in Canada. In a recent

Fathers' rights groups argued that women needed an incentive to become more self-supporting.

Maclean's article, accompanied by a photograph of a VOCAL spokesperson and his daughter, the group states confidently, despite an absence of empirical data, that the overwhelming majority of child abuse complaints are false, the product of vindictive ex-spouses and over zealous social workers.

Fathers' rights groups also maintain that false allegations of wife abuse interfere with the exercising of their parenting rights. Some have taken it a step further, blaming women-headed families for violence and crime. A British Columbia fathers' rightist, Vern Dillabaugh, recently sent a package of newspaper clippings to the Winnipeg office of NAWL. It was filled with stories about rapists and murderers whose victims were women. Angry notations in the margins of the articles read "Your sisters pay in blood for the 'mother takes all' system." Dillabaugh also writes: "the feminists create more mourning kids than you can supply drugs for," implying that children deprived of their fathers become drug abusers.

In 1983, Oregon Governor Victor Atiyeh vetoed a Senate Bill which would have made joint custody in that state a preferential disposition by the courts. The bill also guaranteed automatic access, by non-custodial parents, to medical, dental and school records and information, similar to what Manitoba law now requires. Part of the reason the bill was vetoed was because of protests from professionals in the community like social worker Susan Thomas, who told the governor that "There are some situations in which it would be detrimental to the child to

have the non-custodial parent involved in the records of the psychotherapy, or the records of the school counsellor, for example. These are generally situations in which some form of abuse or coercion is occurring, but may not be of the severity to warrant a family abuse prevention order, or termination of parental rights."

Child psychiatrist Eugene Borkan told the Oregon Governor that the issue of access to records and information regarding a minor child needs to be individually approached by the court, so that children's rights to confidentiality, are protected.

Unfortunately, the relationship between domestic violence and custody issues was largely ignored by Canadian Parliament when the amendments to the Divorce Act came before it. Wife abuse wasn't a cause for concern around enhanced parenting 'rights,' even though research indicates that men who abuse their wives are more likely to abuse children as well. Ironically, the Minister of Justice, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney have all announced that dealing with wife battering is a top priority of the federal government.

In addition to the "friendly parent" rule, fathers' rightists made significant headway in other parts of the new Divorce Act. The new legislation encourages judges to impose time-limited maintenance awards, and it is now harder for women to change time-limited awards once they have expired. Fathers' rights groups argued that women needed an incentive to become more self-supporting, and that reducing maintenance payments was the way to do it.

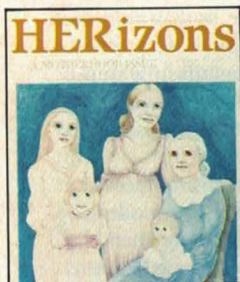
Meanwhile, 43 per cent of female-headed single parent families live below the poverty line in Canada, compared to only 14 per cent of male-headed single parent families. And, when maintenance orders are obeyed by husbands, the average payment amounts to one-fifth of the husband's net income, or less than one half the cost of raising the child(ren). Only 65 per cent of custodial parents are awarded any child maintenance, and only 18 per cent of those custodial parents are awarded periodic payments for themselves. Even when support orders are issued by Canadian courts, between half and three quarters of them are not honoured.

To make matters worse, the new divorce law threatens to make women even poorer. In the United States, where no fault divorce has been instituted in some jurisdictions for a few years, studies have shown that women's standard of living decreases 40 per cent after divorce, while men's *increases* 70 per cent. The new Divorce Act's emphasis on a financial "clean break" ignores the poverty endured by women and their children; but the Act's champions would have us believe that the legislation is expected to strengthen the continuing co-parenting relationship in a more fair and equitable fashion.

The biggest fallacy in the lobby for involuntary

cont'd on page 31

Herizons Back



1. February 1983

Premiere Issue on Motherhood. Single Moms, New Fathers, Miscarriage, A Lesbian Mother's Personal Experience, No-Marriage Mothering and Much More!



6. December 1983

Women's Arms Embrace Seneca Peace Camp. Parachute Club Rising Up. Spotting Bigotry: It All Comes Out in the Whitewash. Even You Can Write a Children's Book.



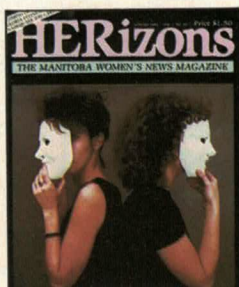
11. June/July 1984

The Listening is Easy. Summer Festivals. Del letters home to Mom in Lights. Interview with theologian Mary Daly. Name of Equality — W Fathers' Rights Mean t and Children.



2. April 1983

In this body image issue, *Herizons* explored Women and Weight in Consuming Women, Cosmetic Surgery, Weight Lifting and To Shave or Not to Shave.



7. January 1984

Coming Out — What happens when a lesbian looks for support. Also featured: An Interview with Gloria Steinem, Inadequate Child Care: The 80s Answer to the Pill.



12. August 1984

Women and Housing: a New Direction. Sonia — A Woman for Chang Lyn Cockburn — Can Digest a Condensed Bill



3. July 1983

This humour issue included Gloria Steinem's If Men Could Menstruate; Wearing Your Politics and (Spare) Rib Ticking Humour (a cartoon feature).



8. February 1984

Be Our Valentine: *Herizons'* Own Selection of Valentine Messages. Really Being in Love Means Wanting to Live in a Different World. Life After Birth: Post-Partum Depression.



13. September 1984

Herizons' launch as a magazine! How to Rel Live With Everyday Str There a Better Way to Teaching Children How and Much More!



4. August 1983

The ABC's of Sexist Schooling. A Non-Sexist Guide to Teaching. Mathphobia: The Invisible Filter. Conference Notes — Women and Words.



9. March 1984

DES Daughters: What You Should Know. Also, an inspiring interview with peace activist Monique Foley. This issue features the launching of our humour column by Lyn Cockburn, Satirically Yours: An Invitation to Robbery.



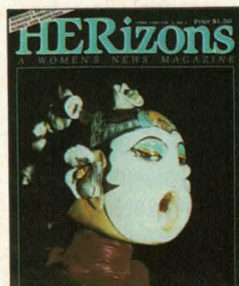
14. January/February

Special Issue on Youth! Wanna Be Equal. Fro to Punks. On Being Conversations with F Students. Teen Pregn and Essays.



5. November 1983

In Freedom for Whom?, Penni Mitchell examines pornography. Fem-Erotica discusses the insights of five women as they talk about sexuality.



10. April 1984

It's Just Your Nerves examines the dangerous practice of unnecessary prescriptions. Reaching for a Feminist Workplace discusses how we put our politics into practice. Profiles of several exciting Manitoba artists.

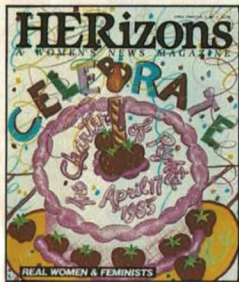


15. March 1985

Old Women Are Fem Sybil Shack. Should Personal with Your C portrait of Rural Wor A Letter From the Co Need Homemakers' Stay Afloat?

Just Look What You've Been Missing

Issues Special



16. April 1985

Our Cover Story — Celebrating the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. REAL Women and Feminists — Will Their Differences Come Out in the Wash? Women and the Criminal Justice System. Profile on k.d. lang.



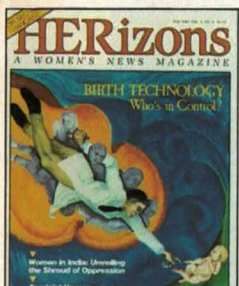
20. December 1985

Federal NDP President Marion Dewar shares her vision of equality, peace and justice with readers. Women of the Revolution in Nicaragua, a sensitive and personal portrayal of the worn-torn country. Living with Agoraphobia — A Woman's Struggle to Freedom.



24. June 1986

Rosalie Bertell: Can We Survive Our Nuclear Heritage? Witnessing the Struggle in the Philippines. Hard Times on the Homestead — How the Farm Crisis Affects Women. Chaviva Hosek: Working for a Feminist World.



17. May 1985

Birth Technology: Shopping in the Contraceptive Marketplace. Is Someone Bugging You? How to Keep Fit as a Fiddle. Feminist Voyageurs Paddle Their Own Canoes. Women in India Work for Change.



21. January/February 1986

The Politics of Planned Parenthood reveals how the state has crept quietly back into the bedrooms of the nation. Margaret Atwood discusses the frightening parallels to *The Handmaid's Tale* that threaten women today. Behind the Scenes of *Loyalties*.



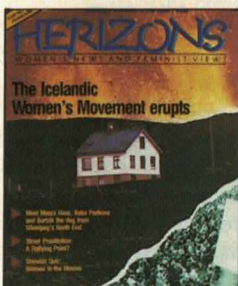
25. July/August 1986

Special Issue on Culture. The Parachute Club's Lauri Conger: A Key Player With a Vision. Health Clubs and the Ordinary Woman. Myrna Kostash Bridges Ethnicity and Feminism.



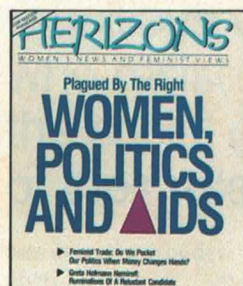
18. July/August 1985

Special Issue — Active in the Arts! This issue features country and western singer, songwriter and single mother Terilyn Ryan. Profiles on a Feminist Astrologer, Sci-Fi Writers and Much More!



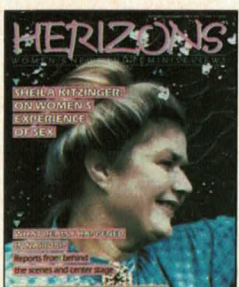
22. March 1986

The Icelandic Women's Movement Erupts. An Excerpt from Humourist Maara Haas' book, *On Stage with Maara Haas*. Lyn Cockburn talks about Don Johnson and Sex Appeal.



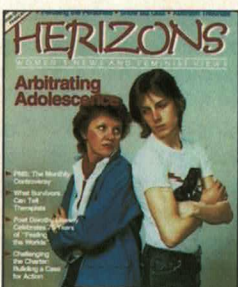
26. September 1986

Women, Politics and AIDS. Why Do Some Women Steal? — Understanding Poverty and Privilege. Quilting for Peace. What You Should Know About Amniocentesis. In Defense of Girl Guides.



19. October/November 1985

Renown child birth educator Sheila Kitzinger: On Women's Experience of Sex. What Really Happened in Nairobi? — Reports From the End of the Decade Conference. Gail Buente — Finding the Female in Mexico.



23. April/May 1986

Our cover story examines one mother's struggle through her sons' adolescence. What Incest Survivors Can Tell Therapists. PMS: The Monthly Controversy. And just for fun — Perusing the Personal Ads and A Show Biz Quiz.



27. October/November 1986

How Society's Obsession With Thinness is Consuming Women. Women Make Men; Men Make Art. Reading: A Requisite for Everyday Life. Housewives Tally Their Talents and Much More!

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An Interview with Novelist Joan Barfoot

REBEL MAKER

Joan Barfoot sips white wine as she watches rush-hour traffic from the old wooden porch of her London, Ontario home. Most of the cars that pass are silver — “a yuppie colour,” she comments, never having realised before how many people drive silver cars.

At age 40, Barfoot is an award-winning novelist, a part-time journalist, and a feminist. Her first novel, *Abra*, won the Books in Canada First Novel Award. A 96-minute movie based on her second novel, *Dancing in the Dark*, was chosen to represent Canada at the Cannes Film Festival last May. Her third novel, *Duet for Three*, is currently out in hard cover.

Right now it's tough to get any of her books. *Abra's* out of print, but will be coming out again soon, and the paperback rights to *Dancing in the Dark* have been transferred from Avon to another company. *Duet for Three* will be out in soft cover this year.

Barfoot is down-to-earth and unpretentious. She doesn't depend on money from the sale of her books and has never had illusions of immediate fame and fortune. While she writes fiction at home she retains a permanent job at the *London Free Press*, where she works on rewrite and occasionally on city desk. For the past year and a half, she and another woman have been job sharing.

This week is her week off, she explains as she extends her sun-bronzed legs over the porch railing. She's wearing a cool yellow top and comfortable looking denim cut-offs. “I get this little dip into the real world every other week, and then every other week I get time to spend just doing what I want to do,” she explains.

The real world work keeps her financially secure. “I really hate being poor. All that artist in the garret stuff is just bullshit. There isn't an artist in the world who would choose to live in a garret and not be able to eat. It's really hard to concentrate when you're hungry.”

But money for Barfoot buys more than food; it also buys freedom. Security “is having enough money so you can say ‘go screw yourself,’” she says, recalling the first time she left a job with money in the bank. It was at the *Windsor Star*: “It felt really good, but now when I quit work I have to have more and more money.”

In the early 70's she quit the *Toronto Sun*, where she worked as a reporter, in order to write a first novel. “This friend of mine had gone to South America and came back with a draft of a book. I was so impressed. I thought I'd like to be a writer though I never got around to writing.” She moved into a house in Burlington, Ontario with four others who were writing. “Three of us were working at *The Sun*. One was staying home, keeping house, which taught me a lot about how people treat housewives.”

Because she couldn't conceive of doing two jobs at once, she quit *The Sun* and spent the next nine months writing what she calls “a bust.”

“It was a stupid book that had a plot I can barely remember, but it was quite bizarre. It had these very peculiar people and it was just terrible. So then I rested up for a little while and wrote *Abra*.”

Barfoot says “there's awful tension being a journalist,” but admits that the profession has its benefits.

“I guess being a journalist does give you a lot

by **MADELINE SONIK**



Victor Aziz Photography Ltd.

Joan Barfoot's characters are rebellious women who resist the social confines of their roles

of insight into people. Because it's your job, you're entitled to go into a person's house and ask really awful questions."

Barfoot, a newspaper woman for the last 22 years, remembers when she was one of two women working in the newsroom at the *London Free Press*, and one of three who worked at the *Windsor Star*. "Back then I thought if this was a world of men and I'd chosen to go into it, then men must be more interesting than women — which, of course, I've found out since is wrong. I consciously thought I knew some really interesting women, but they were exceptional women."

In the 60's and early 70's she spent a lot of off-work time socialising in bars. "And of course, people who go out to bars tend to be men because women mostly have to go home and take care of things, so I socialised with men and socialised in their way. I think they regarded me as an exceptional woman as well."

Men perceived her as different from their wives, sisters, and girlfriends, she recalls. "They

really regarded it as a compliment to say 'Gee, you're just like one of us.' That was about the nicest thing they could think to say."

But gradually, as more women began to infiltrate the newsrooms, she grew tired of the boys. "After all those years of spending time with men, drinking with men, talking boy talk with men, I suppose I got really bored. People who you work with tend to say the same things over and over again anyway, but women talk about the same things from different angles."

As she discovered a common ground between herself and other women, "women didn't seem exceptional anymore."

It is only recently that she has accepted "feminist" as a label. "I had a lot of trouble with it, but now I think O.K. I'm a feminist — what can I do? I think I used to say something very much like 'I'm not a feminist but . . .' That stops making sense when all the butts add up to feminism."

The word "feminism" is a scary one, Barfoot admits, "but if it's used often enough it either

loses its scariness or develops a healthy fear in others."

Although she says she never suffered overt discrimination in pay or position as a journalist, she knows things were different for her as a woman. "I had to work an awful lot harder and be a lot better than the men, but I'm sure that's not turned out to be so bad." Today, Barfoot says, women in the newsroom between the ages of 30 and 50 seem to be the most alert about sexism. "Some of the younger ones aren't very alert at all, and they have to re-learn the same things in the same painful sort of way . . . it's too bad — although they may learn quickly, and certainly there's now a support system among women that didn't used to exist."

One of the problems, Barfoot says, is that many younger women stand to gain a lot by turning a blind eye toward sexism. "Men like to be admired, and they like to play mentor and that's a valuable role, but in the long run I don't think it does careers any good," she says.

cont'd on page 35

Casting a Big Net

NAC's New President Tackles Free Trade, Privatisation & Mulroneyism

Her smile is serene, calm. Her voice is low, melodic, and the information she is giving is ordered, concise. In one or two words she deftly slices to the heart of the most complex political issues. Louise Delude is making her first speech as president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), the largest women's organisation in Canada. She is smiling at the audience, casting her net, and I am hooked.

She could be *THE* woman politician, the first woman prime minister.

You know she is a lawyer. That is no surprise. And she is perfectly bilingual, of course. But there is something else as well. It is in the steady briskness as she talks to me afterwards, ignoring the conference hubbub around her, running through the main sequences of her life and then smoothly sailing into the issues. It's when she tells me she was a secretary for many years that I think, *of course!* This is the dynamite combination. I imagine her as one of those very efficient secretaries with eyes that say, quite plainly, that they see everything that goes on in the organisation, everything, and they are not impressed. Just the sort of person we need in politics.

Was it this that made her a feminist then? She laughs and shakes her head trying to make me understand. She *wanted* to be a good secretary, she explains. She wanted to be completely loyal to her bosses and she had 12 of them at different times. "A secretary has to keep quiet about what she knows. If you say anything out of turn about your boss, you are not loyal."

But, she claims, the years behind the typewriter taught her lessons useful now in politics. She observed the men engaged in bitter office competition. "It was no holds barred. They lied." She is thoughtful. "They lied a lot. No woman would engage in it. I think she would feel too demeaned."



Louise Delude's
'baptism by fire' was
witnessing the effects
of poverty on women.

by
Joan Baril

She got a degree in political science but it led nowhere. While the campus recruiters were scouting the male grads, the females were never interviewed. It was back to the typewriter, but this time to a job in Europe. When she came back, it was law school.

Did law school make her a feminist? "No," she says, "it was my first job — director of a legal aid clinic in the East End of Montreal. It was my baptism by fire!"

"They were all women coming to the clinic," she recalls. "All the poor were women. Battered women. Welfare women. Old women. Handicapped women. Most of them had never done anything wrong. Then why were they in this terrible situation?"

For Delude, poverty was incomprehensible. She had been taught that the system was logical. "I came from a family that discussed things, including politics. But we discussed politics in terms of personalities. We didn't challenge policies." Her father encouraged his children to speak up for themselves. And her mother had an independent streak. When the local priest forbade the women to speak to the few English Protestants in town because they might talk about contraception, her mother defied the ban.

But her small town upbringing in La Prairie, Quebec, and her convent education hadn't prepared her for the East End. Why were welfare payments so low? Why were pensions inadequate? These questions led Delude to Ottawa, to a job with the National Welfare Council, then with the Secretary of State, then with the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. She had found her "true vocation," she says. Research.

Her curiosity and drive to understand things completely make her a natural. Pensions for instance. When she did the report on Women and Aging, very few women outside the insurance companies knew all the ramifications of the pension question. Delude was one of the few who did. When the topic of pensions is mentioned, Louise's name always comes

up. But the complexities of the issue? As usual she moves right to the point.

"We are asking for a major increase in Canada Pension Plan benefits to 50 per cent of income. Only one third of women are in private pension plans. The CPP is where the major thrust must be if we are to help women get pensions.

"Also, we want pensions for homemakers. To get this the feds have to negotiate with the provinces. They have been very lackadaisical about it. This failure has allowed the provinces to dream up their own plans. Saskatchewan has brought in their own plan which is terrible — attractive to high income women but terrible for low income women. NAC wants a full subsidy for low income women. This mess shows the failure of the federal government to take a leadership position. We know people are in favour of pensions for homemakers. All the polls show it."

It was the pension issue that sent Delude to NAC. She wanted to change the pension law, but as senior researcher at the Advisory Council in Ottawa, she was getting more and more involved with administration. Then, too, her time was taken up with women phoning the council with personal problems. "It was like being in the clinic again. They were desperate. If they knew there was a lawyer there, they'd phone. It was very hard to turn them down. I couldn't do it. But you get burned out fast. It's like working in a crisis house. The solution is changing the law, not answering a dozen calls a day, because the law is not going to help them anyway."

Then too, NAC was expanding, developing a little muscle and flexing it. "Six years ago they used to look on NAC as freaks. Lynn McDonald told me when she was president they couldn't get a meeting with any minister. This year so far we have had two private meetings with the Prime Minister and innumerable meetings with cabinet ministers. We're part of the system now."

NAC is large, the umbrella of the umbrellas, with 470 member organisations representing four million women. As a political lobby organisation, most of NAC's time is spent pressuring politicians at the federal level.

Delude spends a large part of her speech telling her audience about the methods NAC has devised for networking across our vast country. In Canada, where the west coast often doesn't know what the east coast is doing, it takes extra effort to find out what the issues are. And, she says, it must start with a conviction that the sun doesn't rise and set on Toronto.

NAC has divided the country into 23 regions, each with a representative. They meet in Toronto every six weeks. "These are really intensive sessions. The regional representatives make reports on what the issues are. Then all of us from across the country get to hear what is happening everywhere else."

NAC's annual and mid-year meetings are held in different parts of the country. "We try

to make links with women across the country who are working on the same thing and who would not otherwise have a chance to talk to each other."

Delude readily admits that it's difficult to pinpoint the main women's issues today. "At one time, in 1972, when NAC was formed, it was easy to say: family allowances, child care, pensions for homemakers, equal pay. But now I could list a hundred issues for starters. To give you an example, the main issues we have been dealing with are around the federal budget, family allowance, job creation, regional development and free trade."

Free trade? This is a woman's issue?

"Yes. Journalists usually can't grasp that. But we say a lot of women's jobs, especially in

"Six years ago they used to look on NAC as freaks . . . this year we've had two private meetings with the Prime Minister."

the manufacturing sectors, would disappear. So why isn't this a woman's issue if a lot of women's jobs would disappear? A woman's issue is anything that interests women."

Right. But isn't this a government of smoke and mirrors, I ask, lots of pro-family rhetoric followed by the deindexing of family allowance? Wasn't the last throne speech all buzz words — day care, battered women, job creation — lures cast out to hook the women's vote?

Delude agrees. "Another buzz word is the phrase, 'the greatest emphasis on those in greatest need.' Code meaning — we're destroying the universality of the program. And the throne speech was vacuous. The only thing you can pin this government down on is military spending."

Privatisation, on the other hand, is not smoke and mirrors. It's the real thing. One of NAC's concerns centers around policies to facilitate the privatisation of day care. When she appeared before the Neilson Committee to make a presentation on day care, the members

kept repeating "*privatisation is more effective*" like a magic mantra to the great god of free markets. She tells me Sharon Wolfe, the Prime Minister's assistant told her, "When we think of private day care we think of Montessori."

We pause. When *we* think of private day care, we think of grubby basements, the unused room at the factory, the private companies lobbying to lower the standards and raise the care-giver/child ratio. I try to imagine the brain that can *only* think of Montessori, and give up.

I mention all the pre-election promises, the Great Debate on women's issues. There was a promise of mandatory affirmative action. "What we got instead was the Employment Equity Act which is just a statistical count with no mechanism for evaluation or compliance." Delude dismisses the federal government's own affirmative action plan. "This is such a dark secret that it is trotted out every few years as a new program."

At the root of the trouble with the federal government's affirmative action program is the fact that there is no commitment from the top. "No commitment, little compliance. It's uneven; some departments more, some less. If the top is lukewarm, nobody below is going to turn on the heat. Look at the Trudeau government's commitment to get more Francophones involved in government. It was done. The commitment was there; still is there."

Some women pinned their hopes on Flora MacDonald to carry the torch for women in the cabinet. Delude briskly throws cold water on that notion. "It was Flora's job to sell these useless programs to women. That includes Employment Equity and The Canadian Job Strategy, which is really just a subsidy to employers. Women didn't buy it. Flora got demoted."

Another election promise concerned the treatment of part-time workers. "The Swedish Minister on the Status of Women was in Canada and was appalled at the situation which had developed here. A disproportionate number of women are working part-time and many don't want to. They work on every sort of arrangement — part days, short-term contracts and so on." Another pause. We talk about people we know, working like this year after year, unable to buy a car on credit, unable to get a mortgage. "Employers like these jobs," Delude continues. "The pay is less; they are really cheap labour. We don't even have equal pay for equal work. People have no job security."

There are other issues, more traditional women's issues. She briskly ticks them off. The prostitution legislation. All the dire predictions came true. There has been an increase of violence against prostitutes. These women are spreading out into the suburbs where they can avoid arrest but where they are isolated and vulnerable. So the pimps *are* taking over in a big way.

This legislation came from John Crosbie's office, one of his more unfortunate efforts along the same lines as the discredited pornog-



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raphy bill. But Delude defends the ex-Minister of Justice on one thing. "He did try to bring in the amendment to the Human Rights Code which would forbid discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. He was very good here. He was committed, but the reactionary wing of the Conservative caucus reacted as if it meant the end of civilisation as we know it."

Abortion, she notes, is available less and less, with services completely shut down in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. "The buck is passed back and forth. The provinces blame it on the feds who, they say, should change the law; and the feds blame it on the provinces, who, they say, could set up accredited clinics if they wanted to but they refuse to do so — except Quebec."

She mentions the problems encountered by Native women, their status reinstated but no funds for the bands to help with the transition.

And tax reform. Always a worry. "The government talks about lowering taxes but not about plugging loopholes as was done in the United States." Delude favours the income tax over other forms. "It's progressive. The rich pay more. Other types — sales taxes, the so-called business transaction tax — would fall hardest on the poor."

I realise we are now talking about maybes, what the government may deal out, legislation that could be in the cards. How does NAC read those cards in advance? For the first time Louise sighs. "We need contacts before a bill is drafted. We need contacts all the way up the ladder the way the professional lobby groups do. They are always talking to MPs, lunching the key players. We have to educate the civil service, the mandarins as well as the politicians, so that, at least, they know our positions. We get leaks all the time but we don't have staff to follow up."

In Washington, NOW (National Organisation of Women) are the expert lobbyists. They have the staff and they have the money. Each issue has a staff person with real expertise."

And NAC, what does NAC have? "We have one full time staff person in Ottawa and one part-time secretary." They also have a five-person staff in Toronto working on administration and arranging meetings. And isn't she a paid staff person? She laughs. "I'm a volunteer. All the presidents of NAC have been volunteers."

As for the future, she is dismissive of quick solutions. Neither NAC nor the women's movement is going to change the world overnight. It is often ten steps forward and nine back; she cites the new family and property laws as an example. It's a daily struggle. She cites the various governments' slow progress toward pay equity. Hard work and struggle — it sounds like women's lives. But she is optimistic. "We're in for the long haul. Some people think the women's movement is a paper tiger. Well it's not. It's a baby tiger, just growing into power." ▼

Joan Baril is a Thunder Bay writer and frequent contributor to *Herizons*.

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April 2	MONTREAL
April 3	KINGSTON
April 4	OTTAWA

Itinerary may change

JOINT CUSTODY

cont'd from page 23

tary joint custody may be the fact that most fathers' rights advocates don't necessarily want their children living with them, even though their chances of winning a custody battle they initiate probably exceed 50 per cent. What they do want is joint legal custody; involvement in decision-making, and access to information without a corresponding increase in the responsibilities of day-to-day care. Armed with the knowledge that they can always fight for joint physical custody, fathers are in a better position to negotiate lower support payments, and mothers are more inclined to accept lower maintenance orders, knowing that their unwillingness to cooperate may result in an unwanted joint custody order.

But joint physical custody, even when it is agreed to enthusiastically by both parents, is not the panacea fathers' rights groups would have us believe. The few studies that have examined families who came to joint custody by having it imposed through court action or court services found that parents are unhappy with the arrangement. Dr. Howard Irving, who appeared before the parliamentary committee and expressed a personal preference for a presumption of joint custody, found in the preliminary results of his Toronto Joint Custody Project that the families he studies who came to joint custody involuntarily "were mostly dissatisfied with the arrangement." Irving is currently touting mandatory mediation and involuntary joint custody through an intensive campaign launched by Family Mediation Canada, of which Irving is past president. He also runs a mediation training program, edits a journal and has authored several books, which uncritically sing the praises of joint custody and mediation for most families.

Irving's Toronto study lacked any child data, but American evidence compiled on 48 joint custody families by Dr. Susan Steinman, who collected child data as well as parent data, found that court imposed or court-influenced joint custody arrangements were, without exception, unsuccessful. Even among the most highly-motivated parents, Steinman found that one third of the children were over-burdened with the demands of their situation, were generally confused, or were unhappy and were experiencing developmental difficulties. Overall, she found that children varied in their capacity to enjoy and thrive in the arrangement, and varied in the degree of stress they experienced. Some of the children were able to master the practical problems of living in two homes. But the study showed that even when parents are able to maintain a cooperative, smooth-running arrangement and remain satisfied with that arrangement, joint custody cannot definitively be said to be in the child's best interests.

Any custody regime that may only serve to aggravate the economic situation of mothers and their children must be avoided; we don't

need empirical evidence to know that poverty has a negative impact on the welfare of children. The Abella Report on women and work, released by the federal government notes that: "Year after year, women make the case for better childcare facilities, equal pay for work of equal value, equitable benefits, equal employment opportunities, unbiased educational options and an end to job segregation. Year after year they are told by governments that measures are being looked into and solutions being devised. Every year, progress is largely chimerical. The lack of progress results in a perpetuation of losses that become increasingly irreversible."

Given the American evidence that joint custody leads to a decrease in child maintenance, even when the so-called joint custody fathers spend no more time with children than if they were exercising reasonable access rights, it is clear that the interests of women and children are not best served by imposing involuntary "co-parenting," or joint-custody.

Custody laws don't have to pit parents against one another. They don't have to be set up along gender lines in order to reflect a fair and accurate parenting model. Take the West Virginia model, for example, where the "primary caretaker parent rule" is reducing the incidence of children being used as bargaining chips in divorce settlements. The law does not permit a maternal preference, *per se*, but it does accord an explicit and almost absolute preference to the primary caretaker parent, defined as "the parent who prepares meals, changes the diapers and dresses and bathes the child, chauffeurs the child to school, church, friends, home and the like, provides medical attention, monitors the child's health, and is responsible for taking the child to the doctor and interacts with the child's friends, school authorities and other parents engaged in activities that involve the child."

The list of criteria usually, but not necessarily, spells mother. That fact reflects social reality, while making room for those fathers who take care of the children to receive the benefit of the presumption as strongly as do traditional mothers. Furthermore, where both parents share child rearing responsibilities equally, West Virginia Courts hold hearings to determine which would be the better single parent.

While the West Virginia model at least encourages parents to share responsibilities while they are living together, Canada's Divorce Act does just the opposite. The "friendly parent" rule tells men that they need not concern themselves with the day to day care of children during the course of marriage, because, upon divorce, they will be at no disadvantage in fighting for joint or sole custody. The net result is that children suffer either way — by having to live with an unworkable joint custody arrangement or with the results of the custodial parent's bartering away of financial resources necessary for the child's support, in order to keep sole custody.

We haven't heard the last from fathers' rights groups now that amendments have been made to the Divorce Act. There is a continuing campaign, and their latest victory is that the Equality Rights Panel of the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) has announced its intention to grant research funds to the Council on Co-Parenting to investigate allegations of systematic bias against fathers in custody orders. The CCSD administers a \$6,000,000 Charter of Rights Litigation fund, which was designated by the federal government to assist disadvantaged groups identified in The Charter of Rights. The Council on Co-Parenting received "seed money" to develop a case to argue that granting sole custody to one parent is contrary to the equality protection of Section 15 of the Charter of Rights. The Council received a commitment for this money without submitting details of the research they wanted to carry out. NAWL has protested the CCSD's decision.

Recognising that mandatory mediation serves their interests, fathers' rightists are also playing a prominent role in mediation associations such as Family Mediation Canada, which describes itself as "an inter disciplinary association of mediators, judges, lawyers and other behavioural scientists." As they step up their pressure on the courts and legislators, it is increasingly important that the voices of women continue to be heard.

Law reform will better serve children's needs when it turns its attention from issues of parental self esteem to the issues of facilitating economic equality for women in the workplace, and providing for readily available, high quality, low cost daycare. If these kinds of economic and social changes are brought about, pre-divorce family life will be more egalitarian and men will be able to exercise the option to become primary caretakers during the course of marriage. ▼

Louise Lamb is a Winnipeg lawyer and a member of the National Steering Committee of the National Association of Women and the Law.

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Sharon Riiss and Anne Wheeler, the makers of *Loyalties*, are riding a crest of international recognition as part of Canadian film-making's



photo: Douglas Curran

NEW WAVE

by Julie Warren

These are days of cautious optimism for Canadian filmmakers. The international film community is showing the same keen interest in Canadian work that was reserved for the Australian "experience" a decade ago.

The Decline of the American Empire, by Denys Arcand, won the prestigious International Critics' Award at Cannes, and Sandy Wilson's *My American Cousin* has won acclaim in the international film community. Even independent filmmakers, like Louise Carre, (*Qui a tiré sur nos histoire d'amour*) are gaining renown in the current film boom.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of this upsurge is the fact that the number of women directors in the film industry is growing along with the increase in production opportunities.

Although the National Film Board's Studio D has produced many acclaimed documentaries by and about women, women filmmakers have generally remained invisible in the short history of Canadian cinema. And nowhere have their contributions been more ignored than in their own country.

However, it appears that this situation may be slowly changing. The recognition earned by Québécoise Léa Poole (*La femme de l'hôtel* and *Anne Trister*), and westerners Sandy Wilson

(*My American Cousin*) and Anne Wheeler (*Loyalties*) indicate that a new wave may be upon us.

It takes vision, endurance, and a sense of humour to survive as a filmmaker in this country. Competition for a limited supply of production dollars is fierce and opportunities for entry are few — very few for women. There are, however, those individuals who manage to beat the odds. The writing-directing team of Sharon Riiss and Anne Wheeler is a case in point.

Anne Wheeler's professional career began in 1975. Since then, she has been involved in more than 26 documentaries, films, and television dramas. Her accomplishments include the award winning short dramas *One's A Heifer* and *To Set Our House in Order*. She is probably best known for *A War Story*, a docu-drama based on her father's experiences as a prisoner of war.

Sharon Riiss is one of Canada's most gifted writers, equally at home writing novels, short stories, and radio and television dramas. Her first book was *The True Story of Ida Johnson*, which chronicled the adventures of a "low-rent prairie girl." Her first feature film script was *Latitude 55*, about a woman whose car breaks down in Northern Alberta during a ferocious winter blizzard.

The Wheeler-Riiss collaboration began with the acclaimed television drama, *Change of*

Women have to take risks if they want to make a splash in the film industry. Tantoo Cardinal and Susan Wooldridge emerge as friends in this scene from *Loyalties*.





photo: Douglas Curran

Heart, which centred around the decision of a farm woman to leave her marriage after 30 years. The success of this venture led to a second collaboration which yielded *Loyalties*, one of the strongest feature films produced in Canada to date.

Written by Riis and directed by Wheeler, *Loyalties* is a meticulously crafted film which reflects not only their collective expertise and the solidity of their partnership, but also their determination to tell stories of substance which are universal in appeal. This desire cannot be separated from an equally firm determination to live and work in Canada — specifically in their home province of Alberta.

The storyline of *Loyalties* and its presentation clearly demonstrate the range of abilities possessed by Wheeler and Riis. Within the context of a developing friendship between a middle

class white woman and a Metis woman, we are inexorably drawn into a parallel story of sexual abuse. However, it is the way in which the plot unfolds and the characters reveal themselves, that give *Loyalties* a unique strength. What emerges is a finely wrought portrait of the courage two women find in themselves, and in each other.

Loyalties stars Susan Wooldridge (from *The Jewel and The Crown* fame); Tantoo Cardinal and Kenneth Welsh (*Empire, Lost!* and *Heartburn*). Wooldridge plays Lily Sutton, an upper class Englishwoman who is forced to move with her husband (played by Welsh), a seemingly charming doctor, and their children, to the remote community of Lac La Biche in northern Alberta. Tantoo Cardinal is the strong-willed Metis woman, Rosanne, who eventually befriends the very lonely and uptight Lily.

Sharon Riis and Anne Wheeler spoke with Vancouver independent filmmaker Julie Warren about their recent success.

Julie Warren: How did you two meet?

Anne Wheeler: I had heard about Sharon and I was looking for a writer to work with on *Change of Heart* so I just phoned her up. We had a little chat . . .

Sharon Riis: We're different but we have a similar way of looking at things. *Change of Heart* went so well that afterwards Anne said she felt ready to do a feature and did I want to write it and I said "sure."

Anne Wheeler: I loved the characters of *Latitude 55* and I had read *Ida Johnson* and I thought it was incredible that this person was living in Alberta — you know 'out back there.'

Julie Warren: What are you most interested in writing about?

Sharon Riis: There's a general theme that runs through lots of my work and that is that people aren't what they seem on the surface. From *Loyalties*, for instance, you have the character of Rosanne's husband, who seems at first very unsympathetic and yet later we find he has better qualities than the doctor who is supposed to be so charming and likeable. Of course I'm interested in writing about women and the things we all have to deal with. You know, there aren't many feminists in Lac La Biche (where Riis lives) but we all have kids and we all have to clean out the toilet so there are things we all can identify with. When we talk on a one-to-one basis, we have the same concerns; sometimes it's just in how you put it. I also like to write things about people who are really ordinary but who do extraordinary things.

Julie Warren: Anne, is there a pattern which repeats itself in the films that you direct?

Anne Wheeler: Well, it's not dissimilar from Sharon. I like to show that people . . . who outwardly may look very different, inwardly have basic things which are the same. If you dig deep, there are certain values which are common among us. *Loyalties*, for instance, is the story of two women who went through a process to discover that there were things about themselves that were very much the same.

Julie Warren: Sharon, did you have difficulty making the transition from writing short stories or novels to writing for the screen?

Sharon Riis: No, I just kind of slipped into it. You know how some people can crochet really well, they're good with their hands, they have a knack for it, it's the same for me — I have the knack for it, partly because I like the collaborative process. Right now I'm writing a novel but I'll be sure to go back to film — I like the social aspect of it. And it's exciting to be part of a group of people who take such pride in their jobs.

Julie Warren: Anne, you write as well as direct. I'm wondering about the collaborative process which would go on between two writers working on the same project. You don't hear of many success stories . . .

Anne Wheeler: There are certain characters that I'll empathise with more than Sharon will. I would pretend to be one character and she would pretend to be another. Even on the set I had to do some changing of the dialogue to make it work. Now there aren't many writers and directors who can do this . . .

Sharon Riis: But we had worked so closely together on this script and it was the same film we had in our brain. (laughs)

Anne Wheeler: I'm not paranoid that she's going to dislike it.

Sharon Riis: And I know that she's not all of a sudden going to have the actors talking about Jean Paul Sartre or something.

There's an excitement that comes from that 'back and forth.' If you trust the other person and you're not afraid they're going to twist your stuff or steal it, then there is such a dynamic there and I really like that. It works well for me.



Anne Wheeler (far right), with *Loyalties* cast members: "If you make a mistake as a woman in the film industry then everybody judges all women by your mistake."

And knowing that somebody is waiting for something to be done makes me do it because (otherwise) I'm a terrible procrastinator.

Julie Warren: The director's job is to translate the writer's work to the screen. You often hear of horror stories where the writer has been totally surprised by the results, and says "wait a minute — I had something totally different in mind."

Anne Wheeler: I think it is more often that the writer is disgusted with what has happened with their material and there's lots of lawsuits to prove that.

Sharon Riis: That's right.

Anne Wheeler: There are often so many ego struggles. But I personally enjoy being collaborative. I started in a (film production) co-op and we always discussed what we were doing. If you have the best interests of the film at heart, you put your ego aside and stay open.

I spoke at a Women and Business conference last year and I did some research beforehand. It was very clear that the biggest providers of new jobs in North America right now are women in small business. And the reason they're doing well is that they're willing to ask questions. Women recognise their weaknesses and they cover themselves by being open to the strengths of others, to make sure that their business will succeed. And I think that is also a very healthy way of making films. So when an actor says to me on set, "My character wouldn't say this," or "I wouldn't sit down now," I have to listen to their point of view with respect.

Julie Warren: If women are to succeed in a business as competitive as film, what other kinds of attitudes do they need to develop?

Anne Wheeler: I think that women are very cautious when they're entering a field like film. On the other hand, it is a kind of double-edged sword, because if you make a mistake as a woman in the film industry then of course everybody judges all women by your mistakes, because you're representing a minority.

But I believe that women must take risks — just go out there and do it and make mistakes. It is very difficult . . . and I think that what happens with many women is that when they make mistakes they are often so devastated that they just quit.

Sharon Riis: Whereas men will often blame it on somebody else.

Anne Wheeler: When I spoke at that conference I mentioned earlier, my whole speech was 'Go out there and make mistakes, because that's what you have to learn to live with.' I have made some awful, awful films.

Sharon Riis: You can't cover your bets all the time. You have to take a chance.

To be any good you have to make yourself vulnerable. In writing, you make yourself vulnerable through your characters, with the words you put in their mouths, with the things that they do. You have to put yourself on the line and that's hard — probably harder for a director. As a writer, you do the hard part by yourself, in your room, and then it's out there, but it is once removed.

Anne Wheeler: The first films I made, I literally didn't know how to load the camera. I had some sort of confidence; I don't know where it came from. Or perhaps it was just a sense of humour about it all. The first footage I brought back I had literally shot upside down. I held the camera upside down for the whole shoot. It was more comfortable upside down and nobody had shown me how to hold the goddamned thing! And I came back with this footage and they put it on the projector and it was all upside down. It was perfectly exposed and well composed, you know, but I had had the nerve to go out there and shoot this entire film upside down.

Julie Warren: And what did you do?

Anne Wheeler: I had the projector bolted upside down, showed the footage to the sponsors right side up and carried on. ▼

JOAN BARFOOT
cont'd from page 27

The newsroom still reflects a male lifestyle. "Often people have to work nights and weekends and we also have to put in overtime to get things done." This makes it difficult to schedule babysitters and set aside time for children.

Slowly but surely, some things are beginning to change. Barfoot's job-sharing partner is a mother who wanted some time to spend with her child. "Job-sharing should be valuable to men as well as women," Barfoot says, "but I don't think they've quite clicked to it."

But every once in a while, Barfoot meets a throwback. She recounts an interviewer's response to her dual job: "You work at a newspaper and you write books too?" It doesn't even occur to them to say something like that to a woman who has a family to go home to — somehow that doesn't count for much."

And, she notes, "studies have shown that even when the husband goes out to do the shopping, the wife still had to make the god-damned shopping list up. So you've got to have all of this stuff in your head — it's taking out brain cells unnecessarily."

Still, she feels optimistic about women demanding more co-operation from male spouses as well as from patriarchal society. "I often think that because I still work mostly with men, the real revolution is in the homes now. Women rely on other women to work on their husbands. If the women are working around the house being 'real women' or 'total women' or whatever, we'd have a harder time than we do," she says, pointing to the recent poll that found 60 per cent of Canadian women consider themselves feminists.

Barfoot's concern for women naturally spills over into her books. *Abra* and *Dancing in the Dark* deal with the lives of married women who escape from their oppression. *Abra* leaves her family and buys a cabin in the middle of nowhere, while Edna, the "perfect wife" of *Dancing in the Dark*, kills her husband and ends up in a psychiatric hospital.

Both *Abra's* and *Edna's* rebellions "are not rebellions against their husbands. I tried to make sure their husbands weren't really bad guys — either one. I wasn't going to take a shit-kicking for being hard on them. I think both women rebelled against what they assumed they should be doing."

Duet for Three, Barfoot's most recent novel, published a year ago last fall, "is much gentler than the other two in that the relationship is mother-daughter, and husbands are peripheral." *Duet for Three* is the story of Aggie, a spunky older woman who lives with her school teacher daughter, June. Both women's lives have been controlled, in differing ways, by the social confines imposed on them.

Barfoot is currently working on a fourth novel. She says it lacks a plot as of yet, but the beauty and strength of her writing are in the detail of character and situation she depicts. For example, the initial glimmerings of rebellion

are seen in *Abra* after she gives birth to her first child. Her husband tries reassuring her in the hospital that the pain of delivery was "worth it"; but this infuriates her: "I hated him because for me nothing then was worth what I had gone through."


The writer and director of the screenplay *Dancing in the Dark*, Leon Marr, was attracted to the work because of its images. Barfoot saw Marr's finished product just before it went to Cannes. She had some reservations about her novel being turned into a film, partly because the action only takes place in Edna's mind, but she is thrilled with the film.

"I could have sworn that a) it couldn't be done and b) that a man couldn't do it. But he pulled it off, and I think I'm probably the toughest judge of that." ▼

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January 1. Here it is, then. You said on Friday that if I found it impossible to talk about it, I should try to write it all down. You suggested that it was a good way to start the New Year — like a resolution — something new and changing. You told me not to worry about grammar or sentence structure, but just to let it all pour out like a boil releasing its poisons. Its pus, in fact — your word, not mine. This is not easy for me. Releasing anything, that is. Or, to tell you the truth, to write anything without checking to make sure it is correct, without erasing any mistakes or signs of carelessness. My father said that anything worth doing was worth doing well. Nonetheless, I will try. Fortunately, you also said that I don't have to show the diary to you. I don't expect that I will. I can't bear the kind of disloyalty that washes family linen, soiled or otherwise, in public and to strangers. Although, of course, you are not really a stranger. But you know what I mean.

I'm here alone. No one can see what I'm saying or how I'm saying it. But that's the crazy part. Even when I'm alone, maybe especially when I'm alone, I sit in judgement upon myself. I am my own judge and jailer. Probably that's hackneyed, but I'm going to try not to worry about that sort of thing. This is a diary, not a piece of literature.

I am 55 years old. I am married to a businessman who is successful and scrupulously honest. His name is Meredith Wentworth. I feel that the name has weight and dignity. He usually treats me with respect and with decency. We have two sons, both of them in their twenties. Their names are Gerald and Luther. They have always been well behaved and courteous, and they are now employed in their father's business. I have no daughters. Some people say that this is unfortunate, but I don't mind at all, because you never really miss something you have never had.

Tonight the boys are coming to dinner with their girlfriends. I must put the turkey in the oven before too long. Gerald's girl wears too much make-up; her clothes are invariably too tight, and her name is Samantha. Can you believe such a name? I've often seen them together downtown, but this is the first time he has brought her home. When they are together, they touch one another far too much. This worries me. Meredith is almost certain to disapprove. And she is not Luther's type either. His girl's name is Jane, and she is everything a parent could hope for in a daughter-in-law. I am hoping against hope that they will marry.

January 3. I didn't write yesterday because I was too tired. You said I was not to force it, although you also advised me to write something each day, even if it was just to say how I felt.

I feel terrible.

That's mainly because of New Year's dinner. But that's not primarily what you want me to write about. You said to try to write about my

childhood. Alright. The least I can do, I suppose, is to make an effort.

When I think back to my childhood, the first image I see is my father. He was enormous. Or at least so he seemed. In snapshots, he appears to be about the same height as other men, but even with that visual evidence before me, I find this hard to believe. He was very dark, with a black beard — in the days before anyone had a beard, except possibly one's grandfather. He wore thick glasses, and his eyes were very fixed and piercing behind them. He was a Presbyterian minister. I can see him up there, huge and erect in his black robes, lifted far above us by his pulpit and by his purpose. His voice was deep and powerful, and very compelling.

"The wages of sin is death!" he would boom down at us from on high. With his voice, his bearing, it was easy to believe him. Then the hymns would follow, militantly urging virtue,

After all, he was my father. Besides, he looked exactly like God.

or melodiously promising peace and joy to the sinless. I believed everything he said. It was not hard to do this at all. After all, he was my father. Besides, he looked exactly like God.

New Year's dinner was just dreadful. Samantha's neckline was so low that you could actually see the division between her breasts. Meredith was very controlled, and was as polite to her as to Jane, who wore a beige cashmere suit, very suitable. But I could see him looking at Samantha's dangling earrings, her untidy mass of curly hair, her *chest*, and his eyes were like stones. Gerald looked cross and uncomfortable, although I think they were doing something with their feet under the table. Jane was perfect, of course, and tried to draw Samantha into the conversation; but none of her topics seemed to be in areas that interested Samantha. She mentioned Junior League activities, a recent trip to Europe, inflation, Princess Diana's baby, a whole spectrum of subjects; but Samantha had almost nothing to say. She is quite pretty, or would be if she would comb her hair and do something about her clothes. I can't for the life of me understand why Gerald doesn't make her change. He calls her Sam, and when he looks at her, I will admit to you now on paper something that I could never tell you face to face. I am jealous. No man has ever looked at me that way — as though he were seeing a vision — something delectable, desira-

ble, but sparked with grace. But it is the tenderness that really eats into my heart, and fills me with an envy as green as grass. I said that no one had ever looked at me like that, but that's not strictly true. There was Jamie. I thought about Jamie as I watched them. Then I tried to concentrate on the turkey, on the preparation and serving of food. I couldn't cope with all the conflicting things I was feeling, or with the vibrations shooting back and forth across the table.

January 4. I wrote a lot yesterday, so I needn't write as much today.

My father was the strong parent in our house. My mother was small and mousey, and I can't remember her with anything but grey hair. She wore housedresses out of Eaton's catalogue, and no make-up. She did everything my father asked or told her to do, and she never argued. I don't ever remember a fight in our house. I was an only child. My father talked a lot. He told us about how to behave, but he was even more eager to discuss sin. He described the wicked people in the congregation and in the town, and the evil things they did. It never occurred to me to like these people. Or usually. Once I started a friendship with a girl called Gertie Bowman, and invited her home one day to play. She was a lot of fun, and I loved her laugh, which was a sort of joyful shriek. My father took me aside afterwards and told me that her father drank too much, that her mother was a "bad woman," and that it would be a poor example for a minister's daughter to spend much time with people like that. I could see his point. He also talked a great deal about lying and stealing and coveting and cheating. And vanity. One day my mother came home in a cornflower blue dress. She looked pretty, which was unusual for her, and she seemed bright and happy. I was so proud of her, and hugged her, and told her how lovely she looked. My father stood up and said, "Where did you get the money?" and she said, "From Aunt Julia, for Christmas." Then he said, "I find the colour vulgar, and besides, we could use the money. Even I can tell that that dress was not cheap. We are not royalty. We have no need of such finery." She said, "Yes, Arthur," and left the room. She looked small and tired, even from the back. We never saw the dress again.

I've written more than I intended.

January 5. I wanted so badly to get to Heaven when I was small. I still do. It sounded like such a peaceful shining place. I was scared of God, but I was assured by my father that if I did exactly what He told me to do, He would be kind and loving forever. This meant that I must never never lie or steal or cheat or even think bad thoughts. It was particularly hard not to think bad thoughts, but every time one nudged itself into my head, I would order it out, clench my fists, and try to think of beautiful things. I became very skillful at this, but it took enormous effort.

I always kept hoping that if I did everything

right, my father, like God, would also be soft and loving. Sometimes he said, "Good for you, Allison," when I did something unusually wonderful, like the time I gave away my new doll to a poor girl on Water Street who had received no Christmas presents. It wasn't my idea, which I suppose would have been better, but at least I did it. But even then, he didn't hug me or anything, or say "I love you," or stroke my hair, like I'd seen other fathers do. The doll was china, like dolls were then. She had blue eyes, just like real eyes, with eyelashes, and they opened and closed when you changed the position of her head. She had a mauve dress with ruffles on the skirt, and her hair was full of tiny black curls — real hair, not just painted on.

January 6. I'm too tired today to write. Gerald came to see his father this morning, and they were in Meredith's study for 25 minutes. Although I couldn't hear what they were saying, I didn't like the sound of their voices. When they came out, Meredith was looking pale and frozen, but saying nothing. Gerald turned to his father and said, "I'm 26, Dad!" with a look on his face that I can't even describe. Then he dashed out of the house, slamming the door, without even looking at me. Meredith stood perfectly still in the front hall, and then went back into his study, closing the door with exaggerated care.

I wish I didn't have this awful desire to cry

all the time.

January 7. When I saw you yesterday, you said that I must try to write about the past, even if my mind is preoccupied with the present. It's alright, you said, to mention what's going on now, but that I might find everything, including the present, easier to cope with if I dug up all that really old stuff.

I forgot to mention that the day I gave away my doll, my mother cried. I can't remember if I did. I can't remember anything else at all about that day.

January 8. "I will never never forgive you if I ever catch you lying." That is exactly what my father said to me that day in June. I can hear him still, as clearly as if it were yesterday. He had seen a neighbouring boy, Joe Hamandi was his name, steal one of our daffodils the day before. The next day, when Joe appeared on the sidewalk, Father rushed out to scold him, to punish him. His face was red with anger, and his eyes were like black bullets. "How dare you pick one of our flowers!" he shouted, waving his fist, "How dare you steal my property!" The little boy was white with fright. "I didn't! I didn't!" he whispered, "Someone else did it! I didn't." And then he ran away. "Liar! Liar!" yelled my father. "Worse by far than a thief!" And then he told me what he would do to me if he ever caught me lying.

Gerald wants to marry Samantha. We are all

in a state of shock. Jane and Luther won't even discuss it with him, and Meredith, of course, is beside himself.

I don't know what to do. Worse still, I don't even know what to think.

January 9. This is a bad part, and will be hard for me to tell. But I don't have to show it to you if I don't want to. You told me that.

One day when I was eight years old, father was in a terrible mood. It was Saturday, which meant that he was writing his sermon, and he was always nervous on those days. I was playing hopscotch on the pattern of the parlour rug, when suddenly I tripped and fell against a table. The table swayed and then righted itself, but not before a glass lamp fell over onto the floor and broke in a thousand pieces. My father heard the crash, and came rushing in, pen in one hand, a sheet of paper in the other. He saw the lamp immediately, and fixed me with his terrible look. "Who did that?" he roared. "Did you break that lamp?"

"No!" The answer was out before I had time to think. "The dog rushed by just now and caught the cord! And over it went! Jason! It was Jason!" My fear had been terrible, but what I was feeling now was a hundred times worse. I stood on the carpet as though turned to stone, listening while he shouted for Jason. Then I held my hands over my ears while he beat the dog, hearing his squeals through my palms.

I went into my room and lay face downward on the bed. I cannot describe the weight of my guilt. When Jason crept into the room, tail between his legs, I picked him up and held him, with a shame and a remorse that was boundless, patting him, smoothing him, whispering, "I'm sorry! I'm sorry! Forgive me, Jason!" I knew I must confess, and yet I also knew I must *not* confess, all at the same time. For if I did tell him, my father would never forgive me that lie; if I did not, I felt that the warm face of Heaven would be hidden from me for all time, that God would forever turn his back upon me. I didn't cry. Sorrow was not what I was feeling. I felt a numbing fear, and a regret so deep I was drowning in it. Lost grace. That's what I felt. Grace irrevocably removed from me.

I feel so ashamed of the things I have told you about my father. I have made him sound like an ogre in a fairy tale. He wasn't. He gave away a fifth of his small salary to the church. He allowed himself no luxuries. He visited the sick and the dying, and his sermons were thrilling, inspiring. Ladies in the congregation sometimes cried while he was speaking. He wanted everyone in the world to be good.

You maybe can't believe it, but I worried about that lamp, that lie, for four years. I rehearsed speeches which I never delivered; I prayed for forgiveness, but felt there could be no forgiveness without confession. I would watch other children playing, strangers walking briskly along the street, animals running in the fields, and think, "Oh, to be one of them, without this binding burden on my heart." I went about the business of living — going to

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school, playing ball, drying the dishes — but always in a small part of my heart or head was this hard core of guilt, this feeling that I was doomed unless or until I told my father what had really happened to that lamp.

Samantha came and talked to me today. I like her. She lacks refinement, but she is warm and quick and passionate, which is more than you can say of either Luther or his father — both cold fish, and very virtuous and upright. And controlled. It is a terrible and unnatural thing to say about one's own son, but I do not altogether like Luther. I love him, of course. That is a different thing entirely. But his heart is squeezed and arrogant, and I often do not like him at all. Gerald is the spontaneous one, and kind.

As for me, I don't know what I am.

But I can tell you one thing. I can feel it in the air. Samantha likes me.

January 11

I know I'll never be able to show you this book. I reread yesterday's entry, and was shocked to see that I had called my son and my husband *cold fish*.

I broke the lamp when I was 8. One day when I was 12, my father and I were looking through an old family album in the parlour. "Wait," he said, "It's getting dark. I'll get a lamp." He brought a lamp from his study, and placed it on the same table that had held the first ill-fated lamp. I heard myself speaking as though it were someone else, as though a piece of quite casual information were being offered. I had rehearsed the words so often, that when they finally came out, they emerged without tone or emphasis. They might have been the tapping of typewriter keys.

"Father," I heard the voice say. "Remember the old glass lamp? The one that used to be on this table?"

"Uh? Oh, yes, I guess so."

"Well, it was me that broke it."

I don't know what I expected. Probably a spectacular display of rage, or an icy comment upon my sin, followed by a promise of eternal damnation. I think I had also half hoped for a thunder of drums or the sweet swell of violin strings, to accompany the end of my long period of fear and guilt.

But not much of anything happened.

"Oh?" he said. "Did you?" But I could see that he had long ago forgotten the episode. Or possibly he was too preoccupied by what he was looking at to pay much attention. Not that it mattered all that much, not really. It is true that I was relieved. But I also knew in that moment, without the smallest doubt, that crime never pays. If retribution does not come from without, it will surely always come from within. Look at what I had suffered during the past four years. I would watch my step even more carefully in future.

January 12. I can see by looking at old photographs that as a teenager I was pretty. I was also shapely. I can remember mother's shy remarks to me about my clothes. "Your father

wants you to stop wearing that red dress, dear. He says that it makes your busts too obvious. He says that modesty is a woman's most attractive feature." I think now that she said this a bit wistfully, being flat as a board herself. I would have felt better if he had called breasts *breasts*. Bust is a terrible word. It smacks of corsetted spinsters or of plaster of Paris. When I wore the clothes I liked, I felt cheap and vulgar. When I wore the kind of things he wanted me to wear, I felt droopy, desexed, undesirable. Either way I was a loser.

But Jamie desired me. Blousey tops, loose waists and all, he still looked at me as though I were a mixture of Lana Turner, a chocolate milkshake, and a delicate flower.

January 13. I am going to write about Jamie now.

Jamie worked at Sullivan's Garage after school, so he didn't have much time for parties or dating. But during the spring when I was 16,

Bust is a terrible word. It smacks of corsetted spinsters or of plaster of Paris.

he spent every one of his spare moments stationed in the vacant lot across the road from our house, or walking up and down the street, kicking stones in front of him as he went. If I came out the front door, his face would burst wide open with joy, and he would come forward to accompany me wherever I was going. When Father found out that his mother had once been charged with drunken driving, he told me that I must never bring him into the house, and that I must never under any circumstances accept any invitations from him. But even Father could not refuse him access to the vacant lot or to the municipal sidewalk. Or so I thought.

One day, quite by accident, I met Jamie downtown. We came face to face over the mittens and gloves section of Woolworth's; face aflame, he reached over and touched one of my cheeks, and then kissed me most tenderly on the other. Such an innocent and lovely thing. It was my first kiss of any kind, and I came very close indeed to falling head-first into the mittens. But Father saw us; he was standing not ten feet away, in the hardware department.

When I returned home, Father explained to me where such behaviour might lead. To the Devil, to Hell, to social disgrace, but more importantly to the East Concook Home for un-

married mothers. One day when I returned alone from an errand downtown, I saw Father talking to Jamie at the end of our walk. They were both gone by the time I reached the house, so I never knew what had taken place between them. But Jamie never returned. The vacant lot remained vacant, and the sidewalk bare. I thought I would die, but I did not.

January 14. I have just reread what I wrote yesterday, and it all came back to me so vividly. Not my love for Jamie, but the sweet heat and flavour of that time.

I don't think I feel like writing today.

January 16. After Jamie, Father was vigilant. I was young, too young to marry. But if there had been one Jamie, there might be others. Father really did love me. He wanted me to be safe. Safe for what? For heaven, I guess. Or for my own life, although that's hardly likely. Maybe for *him*, for his love and anxiety's sake. I must try to believe that, because I'm crying less these past few days. Instead, I'm feeling angry.

Father brought Meredith home for dinner, because he was new in town and probably lonely. Or so he said. More than likely, for a certainty in fact, he had checked his credentials. Twenty-eight to my 18. Staunch member of the Presbyterian church, and a generous contributor to the Building Fund. Immaculately dressed in navy suits with white shirts, blindingly white, with starched collars. Well spoken. Courteous. Six feet one inch, undeniably handsome. And with a good dependable job.

Gerald came to me today and begged me to argue his case with his father. He is very unhappy. I went to Meredith and told him I thought Samantha was a kind and loving person, and that Gerald was, after all, an adult who should make his own decisions. You cannot imagine how much courage it took for me to do this. Or maybe you can, it being your business to understand this kind of thing. Meredith does not rant and rave like Father. This quality is what drew me to him in the first place. I did not then realise that anger has many faces, and that there are a lot of subtler forms of violence and violation. Meredith looked at me very coldly, and said, "I cannot imagine how anyone supposedly clever can be so stupid. You claim to love this boy, and yet you are perfectly willing to wreck his life. I forbid you to side with him in this matter. Your view of love is naive and permissive. Kindly leave this matter entirely to me." When I tried to interrupt, he broke in and said, "Allison. If you please. I do not wish to discuss this further."

I can't really see that writing all these things down is very helpful. It is true that I am crying less. But I'm not sure that it is any improvement to be feeling this terrible new anger and frustration.

I gathered up some rugs today and hung them outside on the line. Then I took a heavy stick and beat them and beat them, until the yard was a fog of dust. I did not even feel tired when I was finished, and then I went inside and

slept for two hours. Meredith was not pleased when supper was late, but said nothing. He sighed a great deal, however. I wanted to kick him. Or to hang him on the line and beat him with a stick.

January 20. I'm remembering things that I must have shoved away to the back of my mind. I don't understand how your brain can let this happen. Surely significant things, good or bad, should be written in headlines on the forefront of one's brain. But no. Apparently not.

I have remembered something that happened the summer after my innocent fling with Jamie. I was 17, and I was delivering some of my mother's homemade bread to an old lady who was sick. Mrs. Bellamy was her name. She lived on the other side of town, and I took a shortcut across O'Donahue's Field to get there. This was not really a field, but a wild rough place with two hills, a lot of bushes, and a little creek. On my way across the smaller of the hills, I decided to go down by the creek to see if there were any Indian Pipes. What I found by the edge of the water were not Indian Pipes, but my father and Miss Henderson, the Director of the Junior Choir. They were kissing. They didn't see me.

Try as I will, I can't remember one single other thing about that morning. Whether or not the bread ever reached old Mrs. Bellamy I do not know. However, I do recall hearing my mother and father talking in the kitchen that afternoon. She was speaking.

"Mr. O'Toole said he tried to get you on the church phone this morning, but that no one answered."

There was a pause. And then my father said, "Then he must have been calling the wrong number. I never left the office all morning."

I now recollect trying to argue myself out of what I had seen and heard, much as one tries to talk oneself into a belief in Santa Claus after seeing one's mother filling the stockings. Maybe that wasn't really my father down there. I brushed aside the evidence — his diamond sox (knit by my mother) sticking out below his trouser cuff — his briefcase on the ground beside him, with his gold initials on it (gift of the Missionary Society) — and said to myself, *it was not him, it was not him*. And if it had not been him, then I had not heard him tell that lie. Then I forgot about it for 28 years.

Meredith has told Gerald that if he marries Samantha, he must leave the Company. Meredith Wentworth and Sons Limited. Gerald came and asked my opinion and advice. He said he had always hated working for the Company anyway, but had done it because of family pressure. Family pressure, my foot, I thought. Let us call a spade a spade, if you please. Father pressure. I knew that Gerald had once wanted to be a garage mechanic; as Jamie had been exactly that, I guess I had not looked upon it as such a disgraceful thing to be. But Meredith had refused to consider it for two seconds. Pride. The First Deadly Sin.

I told Gerald that I had been forbidden to offer advice or to discuss this matter with him.

"Please Mom," he begged. "Please. I think I know what I'm going to do anyway, but tell me what you think, how you feel about it."

"Do you love her a great deal?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. "Oh yes."

"Then leave," I said. "The Company will survive. And so will we. And so will you." Then I kissed him.

I am feeling neither angry nor weepy tonight. I am feeling rather pleased with myself.

February 1. What a month this has been. I may become a chronic diarist. I won't pretend that it solves everything. I'm feeling like a cracked egg — very very fragile. But *ready*. Do you know what I mean?

If you had asked me, I would have said that all Meredith's tears had dried up at birth, that there was no room in this man for fury or grief or for passionate responses.

When Meredith heard from Gerald that he was leaving the Company, he came to me and cried. *Cried!* If you had asked me, I would have said that all Meredith's tears had dried up at birth, that there was no room in this man for fury or grief or for passionate responses. So life is full of surprises. I comforted him. I felt like the strong one.

And that night I was visited by another memory.

When I was 18 years old — several months before I met Meredith — I was struck by a car. I was not hurt, but I was taken to the hospital for a routine examination. Insurance regulations required it. Word reached my parents that there had been an accident, before they received the news that I had not been injured. When they arrived at the hospital, Father pushed my mother aside, and rushed to me where I sat on a straight chair in the Emergency Ward. He took me in his arms and held me so tightly that I remember hurting all over. "Thank God, thank God you're safe!" he gasped. "Oh Allison, I'm so sorry, so sorry! Forgive me. Try to forgive me. Oh my child, thank God you are safe!" Then he put his head down on my shoulder and cried like a child. Much of that scene is fuzzy in my memory.

And I don't know what any of it means, or why I forgot it. But whatever else he may have meant, I can see now that two messages were clear. One, he was a human being after all. Two, he loved me very much. In any case, my moment of truth was short lived, because I fainted soon afterwards. When I came to, the scene was locked away where it was very hard to find.

February 16. Samantha and Gerald are to be married on April 2nd. Meredith has told Gerald that he may remain in the Company after all, but Gerald has informed him (very nicely) that (thank-you very much) he's already been accepted for a course in automechanics at the community college. He has some money saved. Besides, Samantha has a job. Meredith took this hard, but he is trying to adjust to all the new things that are happening to him. Luther is not trying to adjust to anything at all, although yesterday I astonished him by telling him he was an insufferable snob. I hope he will think about that. If this makes him angry with me, that's just too bad. Jane can prop him up, and I'm sure she will.

Samantha's mother died when she was 10, so I am helping her with her wedding dress. She has a flair for design, and I am good with a needle. The pattern is a bit extreme, but she has the looks and the figure to carry it off. We will keep it our secret until the wedding day. She is warm and communicative, and I think she is going to be the daughter I have always longed for. She says she has a lot to learn from me. She doesn't realise how much I need to learn from her.

Meredith will be alright. He hasn't really changed. It's just that now I'm ready to see things in him that must have been there all along. If you lie right down on your belly, yes I said belly, with your face pressed flat into the floor, you can't blame people if they walk over you. My mother was a doormat all her life, and I can't say I look back on her with any feeling stronger than a tender pity. I know it irritated Meredith when I was going through that weepy phase, and I can't say I blame him. Yesterday he said something arrogant to me, and I said to him, "Meredith, you are not God Almighty, and I would appreciate a little humility around here." He was obviously dumbfounded; but it was also clear that he preferred this approach to that of the teary-eyed wimp. He is not my idea of Lochinvar riding out of the West, and never was. But we'll manage. We'll be fine.

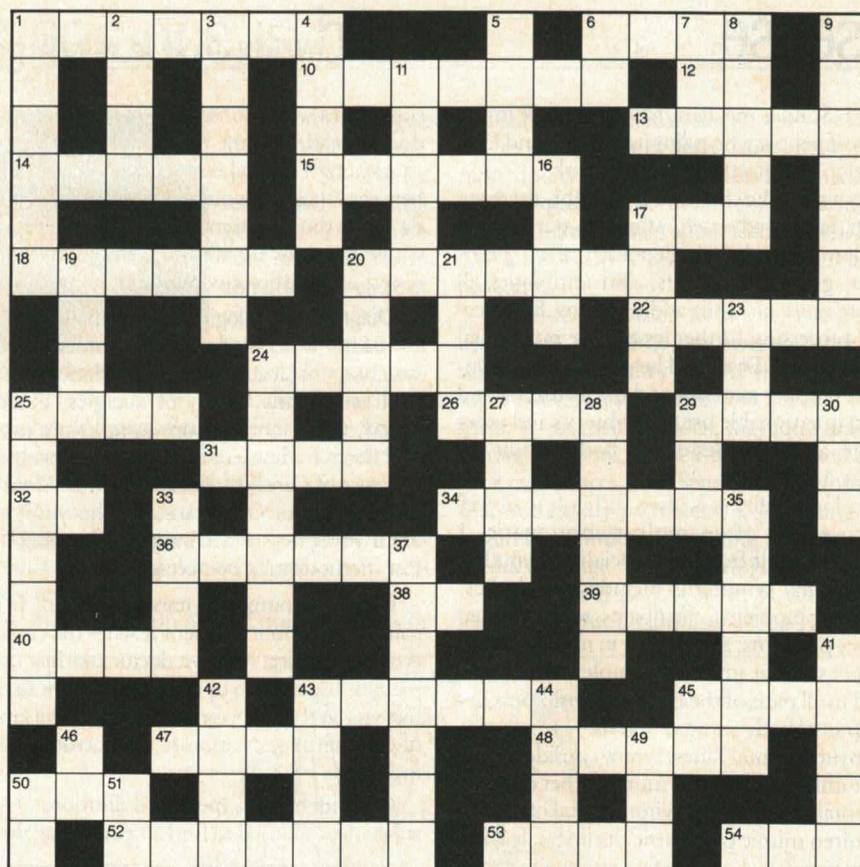
I never had any intention of showing you this diary. Not really. But maybe I will. I'm even tempted to invite you to the wedding. I feel that you are sort of responsible for it. One way or another.

Budge Wilson, a poet and author of children's literature, won first prize for Short Fiction in the CBC Literary Competition in 1981. A House Far From Home, a sequel to her first book, The Worst Christmas Present Ever, was published in September, 1986.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

W O M E N W R I T E R S

Margaret Fulford



ACROSS

1. *Frankenstein's* author (Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter) Mary _____
6. Bowles, Rule, or Austen
10. Novel by Virginia Woolf dedicated to Vita Sackville-West
12. Marie-Claire Blais' *A Season* _____ the *Life of Emmanuel*
13. Margaret Laurence's *The Stone* _____
14. Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster* _____
15. Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B.* _____
17. Protagonist of Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*
18. Joy Kogawa's novel about a Japanese-Canadian family interned during World War II
20. Heroine of Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career*, _____ Melvyn
22. Author of *The Black Unicorn* and *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*; Audre _____
24. French author of *De l'Allemagne*, exiled by Napoleon, Mme de _____
25. Sexton, Brontë, or Hébert
26. Chinese novelist Ding _____
29. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane* _____
31. British journalist and novelist Rebecca _____ or Nellie McClung's *Clearing in the* _____
32. Egyptian author of *The Hidden Face of Eve*, Nawal _____ Saadawi

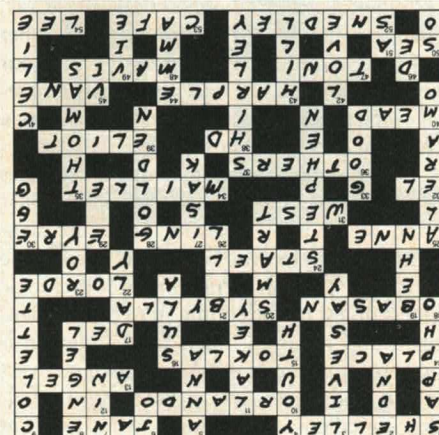
34. Acadian author of *Pélagie-la-Charrette*, Antoine _____
36. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Blood of* _____
38. American poet known by her initials, author of *Helen in Egypt*
39. Pen-name of Mary Anne Evans, George _____
40. Anthropologist, author of *Coming of Age in Samoa*, Margaret _____
43. Agatha Christie's spinster sleuth, Miss _____
45. Dorothy Sayers' character, detective novelist Harriet _____
47. Author of *The Salt Eaters*, _____ Cade Barnbara; or author of *Song of Solomon*, _____ Morrison
48. Montreal writer who moved to Paris, _____ Gallant
50. Jean Rhys's novel (about Charlotte Brontë's character Mrs. Rochester), *The Wide Sargasso* _____
52. Left-wing American author of *Daughter of Earth*, who spent years in China, Agnes _____
53. Carson McCullers' *The Ballad of the Sad* _____
54. Author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper _____

DOWN

1. Ancient Greek poet from the island of Lesbos
2. American poet _____ St. Vincent Millay, or Irish novelist _____ O'Brien

3. Canadian poet, author of *Right Hand Left Hand*, Dorothy _____
4. Vera Brittain's memoir *Testament of* _____
5. Russian poet _____ Akhmatova, or Marie-Claire Blais' novel _____ *World*
6. Tomboy/writer in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*
7. Diarist Anais _____
8. Author of *Bear*, Marian _____
9. Author of *Claudine à l'école* and *Chéri*
11. Member of *The Group* (by Mary McCarthy) who comes back from Europe with a baroness
16. Morrison's title character _____ Peace
17. Author of *The Church and the Second Sex*, Mary _____
19. The first English woman to support herself wholly by writing, Aphra _____
20. Ottawa-born author of *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*, Elizabeth _____
21. Charlotte Brontë's pseudonym, Currier _____ or Sylvia Plath's *The* _____ *Jar*
23. Franco-Manitoban author of *The Tin Flute*, Gabrielle _____
24. Heroine of Raddlyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, _____ Gordon; or Virginia Woolf, née _____
25. Italian feminist author of the autobiographical novel *A Woman* (1906), Sibilla _____
27. Pen-name of Karen Blixen, Danish author of *Out of Africa*, _____ Dinesen
28. Doris Lessing's *The* _____ *Notebook*
29. Margaret Drabble's *The Needle's* _____
30. Margaret Atwood's *Bluebeard's* _____
33. Nobel laureate Pearl S. Buck's *The* _____ *Earth*
35. British Columbia author of *Intertidal Life*, Audrey _____
37. L.M. Montgomery's red-haired P.E.I. orphan, Anne _____
41. Heroine of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, who writes to God
42. Elizabeth Bowen's *A World of* _____ or Alice Walker's *In* _____ and *Trouble*
43. Eliot's *The* _____ on the *Floss*
44. Austen's title character _____ Woodhouse
45. Sara Paretsky's female gumshoe, _____ Warshawski
46. Feminist writer born in Venice in 1364, Christine _____ Pisan
49. George Sand's autobiography, *L'Histoire de ma* _____
50. Emily Dickinson's poem " _____ bashful when I spied her"
51. Historian Mary Beard's *Woman* _____ a *Force in History*

S O L U T I O N



The 20th century disease

WENDY ANNAND

I have suffered from total allergy syndrome since 1981. At the time of my diagnosis in January 1983, I realised that the best way to regain control of my physical condition was to do as much research as possible and to use that knowledge to alleviate some of my symptoms while preventing other manifestations of the illness from occurring. What follows is a synopsis of what I have learned.

Why are we hearing more and more about the diseases variously known as "ecological illness", "twentieth century disease," "total allergy syndrome," or "environmental hypersensitivity"? Why are so many of our friends stricken with complaints that many doctors are unable to diagnose or cure? The simple answer is that the environment is no longer "natural." There are now over four million synthesised chemical compounds, most of which were created in recent years. As a result, we are immersed in a strange new chemical ocean.

Today, human beings have set in motion forces of such magnitude as to seriously challenge their own adaptive abilities. Your body is like a barrel which has the capacity to contain a specific amount of stress. Each encounter with psychosocial, physical, chemical, antigenic or infective stressors adds that much more to the barrel. At some point, depending upon variables such as genetics, gender, nutritional factors and age, the barrel overflows and symptoms begin to develop. In severe cases a spreading phenomenon occurs and the number of offending items grows with alarming and seeming relentless rapidity.

Some individuals have an inherited tendency to develop allergies, but the environment can also contribute to our ill health. Exposure to seemingly harmless amounts of solvents, dusts, fertilizers, household furnishings and other modern products may significantly add to our body's problems. The final trigger may be a severe viral infection such as mononucleosis, or a chemical over-exposure.

A body tends to adapt to frequent exposures to items to which it is actually sensitive. What often occurs is a "masking" of acute symptoms, and in fact the body starts to crave the substance. This can eventually result in chronic illness unless the offending item can be identified and removed. Such food addiction is quite common, as North Americans tend to eat certain foods repetitively, either alone or as hidden ingredients (for example, wheat, eggs or

milk). Similar mechanisms are at work in the cases of people who paint for a living and later develop symptoms away from work.

As well as the chemical onslaught, there are other factors adversely affecting our health. Modern agriculture's dependence on pesticides, growth enhancers, and antibiotics all reduce nutrients while adding toxins. Every level of processing further lessens the nutritional value of food. Fossil fuel heating, modern synthetic housing materials and the increasing and often questionable use of antibiotics and other drugs all further lessen the body's ability to adapt.

Ecological illness is often difficult to detect because it is often multi-symptomatic. I dragged myself from one specialist to another because my symptoms included headaches, breathing problems, chest pains, severe fatigue, kidney problems, and ringing in my ears. What happens is that immune complexes are circulated to all parts of the body but symptoms develop in already stressed organs.

Environmental illness is now considered the great imitator because it mimics other diseases. Cerebral reactions to environmental offenders can often mimic psychiatric disorders, leaving many people, who are in fact reacting to something in their environment, unfairly diagnosed as having a mental disorder. Symptoms produced by ecological disease are not dependent on the type or route of exposure. For example, dust, molds or pollens may affect not only the eyes, nose, throat and chest, but also the central nervous system or digestive tract causing headaches, indigestion, and diarrhea.

Clinical Ecology is a new way of looking at disease, one which understands that humans are increasingly unable to cope with natural and unnatural substances in their environment.

This is in sharp contrast to traditional medicine, which in recent years has become even more specialised or compartmentalised. More traditional physicians find it difficult to see that various syndromes like bronchial asthma, migraine, and reactive depression can all be closely related. They are primarily interested in acute illness, bodily mechanisms, analytical approaches, and mass-applicable diagnoses and treatment as opposed to clinical ecologists who are concerned with chronic illness, environmental features, holistic aspects, and individual diagnosis.

Much of the resistance to this new approach is a direct result of the opposition of the drug

companies who sponsor the medical journals doctors read, and the research they do.

Although clinical ecologists are few and far between, most of us can still be helped in Canada. Only those extremely sensitive individuals whose reactions are life-threatening cannot be tested in an office environment.

Diagnosis of ecologic disease is made initially by taking a detailed medical history, always watching for a cause and effect relationship as well as a family history of allergies. Usually blood, urine, and sputum samples are taken and tested for levels of immune complexes, the presence of *Candida-albicans*, or indications of organic diseases. Other causes for the symptoms are investigated and eliminated by whatever test methods may be necessary.

Generally, numerous tests have already been completed before a patient reaches the clinical ecologist's office. My own doctor asks first time patients to read two or three books prior to the first visit so that they can help identify the kinds of environmental exposure the doctor is looking for.

Once identified, measured dilutions of the substances are used to find a neutralising dose.

Serums are then regularly injected, or drops administered, according to exposure.

Patients who go to an ecologic unit (totally clean of chemical contaminants) are fasted under medical supervision for a period of five to seven days, during which time their symptoms usually clear. By means of re-introducing natural and processed foods, patients discover which items they may eat. Eliminating common foods from the diet and gradual testing by re-introducing can be done on your own, but if you have severe symptoms you should seek medical advice.

The main purpose of clinical ecology is to determine causes of illness and to design a proper management program which will not only control the existing manifestations of the disease, but prevent development of sensitivities in the future. The successful management and permanent control of ecological diseases is very dependant on the individual's desire to attain good health. This can only be achieved by patience, persistence and self-discipline. ▼

This article originally appeared in Vitality, a publication of The Women's Health Education Network, Box 99, Debert, N.S. B0M 1G0

Ignorance is bliss

LYN COCKBURN



Not long ago, South African President P. W. Botha reaffirmed his emergency decree which bans radio, television and photo coverage of violence in his country. He reiterated that

this legislation will curtail, if not eliminate, unrest. According to Mr. Botha, the media creates violence and gives South Africa a bad image. And he is prepared to back up his beliefs with \$8,000 fines or 10 years in jail.

What a splendid concept.

Don't talk about it, don't photograph it and it isn't happening. Or better yet, it will stop happening.

I, for one, am tired of all the good ideas in

and jail terms of 15 years do not seem excessive. No more pictures of food bank lineups, no more interviews with ill-clad louts in soup kitchen queues. No more icky stories about welfare moms worried about feeding their kids. No more money wasted on job creation programs.

The elderly. It used to be that old people obediently retired to rest homes, attics and cemeteries. Now, they're everywhere. They run super powers and churches; they get on TV and moan about their pensions; they form distasteful organisations called Grey Power and hold press conferences. And Stats Canada informs us that our elderly population is becoming ever larger. No wonder, considering the amount of media coverage they're getting.

Peace. We'll never get rid of it unless we legislate against the filming of peace marches.



the world belonging to the Americans, Russians or South Africans.

Nonetheless, we in Canada can easily adapt Mr. Botha's sagacious legislation and make it our very own.

Take prostitution, for example. This is a problem which has plagued our cities for years. The obvious solution is to pass laws prohibiting the media from filming, writing or talking about it.

In fact, using Mr. Botha's impeccable logic, we can justly accuse the media of causing and creating hookery.

And the unemployed. Most Canadians are sick and tired of them. Not only do they mess up our streets and our image, they mess up our TV screens as well, whining on about their plight.

All we need do, in order to rid this country of unemployment and poverty, is prevent media coverage of such topics. Fines of \$25,000

Brian probably would've signed us up right away for Ron's lucrative Star Wars program if it weren't for all those peaceniks on TV, the radio and in our streets.

And finally, Brian himself. He's had so many problems with his cabinet of late, I can no longer remember who got caught flogging tuna nude in a nightclub, who peddled their children to a bank, or whose wife sold Toronto without his knowledge.

All of Brian's troubles are the media's fault. If it weren't for the microphones and TV cameras, none of his cabinet difficulties would be made public. Therefore, they would not exist.

It is certainly time we brought in new laws designed to put the media in its place, from which it will cover only the good and ignore the controversial.

Otherwise, unsavory things will continue to occur in Canada.

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to assist us in clerical and miscellaneous office duties. Call Mona for more information at 477-1730.

VOLUNTEERS Is it time for you to become actively involved with a supportive group of women working to create positive change? The Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women needs you. An 8-week volunteer orientation to MACSW and feminist issues will be offered in the new year. Volunteers are needed to organise political actions, special events and resources, provide public education, monitor sex-role stereotyping in the media and become involved with newsletter production and membership recruitment. Call Marilyn or Char at 453-3879.

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Women of Consequence

by Jane Brown; Chatto & Windus, London; 1986. \$16.95 p.b.

Reviewed by HEIDI MUENCH

Forty years ago, Jane Brown, a newly-demobbed British wren, decided that photography was as probable a career for her as any other she could think of. *Women of Consequence*, a collection of 96 of Brown's black and white portraits taken over the last 27 years, proves that her choice of profession, however haphazardly made, was an inspired one.

The portraits, shot in the natural light Brown prefers, are captivating. Her subjects are, for the most part, famous British and American women, and it is a credit to Brown's talent and intelligence that each of the portraits in this collection is engaging and unexpectedly fresh. In a 1959 photo, Dame Edith Sitwell, arrayed in stunningly garish jewelry, proclaims her status as the high priestess of cultured eccentricity. Equally outrageous is the portrait of British romance novelist Barbara Cartland — her neck weighted down with four strings of hefty pearls and her sharp profile set off by an explosion of feathers above her right ear. In a more understated manner, Bette Davis gazes resolutely at the camera; a necklace of large coins and a gold wasp, posed ready to sting, break the austerity of her dark turtleneck. A portrait of Jayne Mansfield, in an open net crocheted dress, is haunting in its encapsulation of what it means to be a sex goddess.

One of my favourite portraits is that of Angelica Garnett, daughter of Vanessa Bell and niece of Virginia Woolf, sitting in the living room at Charleston. Surrounded by the art and artifacts of her two famous parents, her expression at once acknowledges the immensity of her inheritance and holds it at bay.

Mechtild Nawiasky, Brown's former boss at London's *The Observer*, believes Brown's secret is that she views her subjects "without the confusion of identification." Brown herself feels that her solitary childhood (she was raised by various aunts in different parts of England) gave her the ability to observe intensely without making the focus of her attention an extension of herself. Trained by the necessities of newspaper photography to capture "the best picture" quickly and with a minimum of fuss, Brown describes herself as "rather fierce . . . I'd do anything to get the picture. I've always been terrified of not getting it." In another part of the forward, she explains that "photographing people you have to feel. I mean, when I photograph someone and suddenly they look at me with the right look in their eyes I could hug

Women of Consequence

JANE BROWN



With an introduction by Suzanne Lowry

them. I love them for one brief moment."

Looking through *Women of Consequence*, it's hard to believe that Brown ever worried about not getting the right picture. Her subtle use of available light, her ability to express a sense of intimacy, of a private moment between subject and photographer willingly shared through the medium of the camera, create an exceptional experience for the viewer of her work. These are photographs meant to linger over. They invite reexamination, for their richness is revealed slowly. *Women of Consequence* demonstrates that in the case of honest photography, familiarity breeds only respect and love.

Amway: The Cult of Free Enterprise

by Steve Butterfield;
Black Rose Books Buffalo/Montreal, 1986.

Reviewed by CHARLYNN TOEWS

I wanted to find out if Amway is as bad as Steve Butterfield says it is in his 1986 book *Amway, The Cult of Free Enterprise* (Black Rose Books, Buffalo/Montreal). Whether, for example, distributors really do follow the elaborate hierarchy he describes, and whether they avoid any critical thought about Amway. However, the women I reached through the yellow pages refused to talk to me: one referred me to head office in London, Ontario, and the other, upon learning the book was negative, politely hung up.

According to *Amway, The Cult of Free Enterprise*, not only are Amway women taught to stand behind their company and follow its teachings and practices, they are also taught to stand behind their man. As Amway leader Dexter Yager says, "You have God, man, woman and kids, in that order. When you get that out of line, you've got problems." At a 1980 Amway convention, the husbands were

Housework

sometimes when I'm vacuuming
or scrubbing the john
the phone will ring
and it's a movie star
or Leonard Cohen
and he asks me to fly
to St. Ives with him
where he has a cottage
and a sloop at anchor
don't pack a bag he says
there's clothing your size
and he's put by white wine
and cheese and grapes
so I unplug the machine
or toss out the scrub suds
put rosewater and glycerine
on my hands and lips smiling
I walk out the door
leaving my family
and they don't even mind

©Eunice Brooks
Surrey, B.C.

Living Together

Gregory is not
sure he likes me
living with his Dad. He does not
get his turn to sleep
in his Dad's bed
curled against his Dad's back.
Instead is sent back to his own
bed in the middle of the night.

Three-year-old Gregory
would like to sleep with me, too,
would like to sleep between us.

Gregory likes my wind-up musical clown,
likes to have it
living in his Dad's house,
likes my donkey
with the nodding head and swinging tail.
"Can I keep the donkey when you move
into your own house?" Gregory asks.

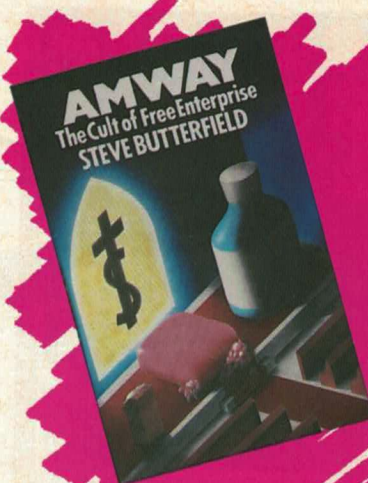
Gregory cries for his Mom
when I get shampoo
in his eyes washing his hair.
He says his Mom does not
put raisins in her pancakes
does not have a mustache
like me. Gregory wonders
why I've started to lock
the bathroom door.

©Shirley A. Serviss
Edmonton, Alberta

spurred on to greater productivity by being encouraged to woo their wives with furs and jewelry; the wives were told to submit cheerfully in the bedroom, to make their men feel like winners. Observing this, Butterfield, a former distributor, writes, "I wondered if I had been caught in some time-warped mirror image of a runaway space colony full of insane Baptist ministers."

Amway's system is a corporate heaven. The employees working in Amway plants and offices have tried in vain to unionise; they are usually from temporary employment pools such as Action Services, Manpower and Kelly Girls. In the field, large numbers of distributors sell soap and recruit new distributors, with all time and materials provided at their own expense. Their sponsors get a percentage of each box of soap sold "downline" from them. The sponsors' sponsors get a percentage, too, all the way to the top. Dexter Yager may be getting a percentage of any box of soap sold by the two Winnipeg women who declined to talk to me, depending on whose line they joined. Another interesting aspect is that distributors make their money mainly through sponsoring new distributors; the bulk of the profits from products, as well as from the sales kits and aids the distributors buy, go directly to the corporation.

Why would anyone want to work for free to fill the pockets of those upline from them? Likely because they plan to be one of the "haves" very soon, and believe the "have-nots" can look after themselves. Butterfield's estimates from the limited statistics publicly provided by Amway, however, show that 97



per cent of distributors at any time are working well below the profit level, contributing mainly to the bonus cheques of the other 3 per cent, the upper echelons.

Amway leaders, through seminars and rallies, teach that such thinking is negative. They then parade the few who have made it onto glittering stages as leaders, heroes and role models. These rallies are also platforms for anti-communist slogans, condemnation of government intervention in the corporate pursuit of profits, Republican campaign speeches, calls for cuts to social spending and increases to defence, and the need for the return of prayer in public schools: the New Right in theory and practice.

It is not surprising then that the wives of

married-couple distributorships (only about 25 per cent are singles of either sex) are told by Yager: "... What can a wife do to strengthen her husband's career? ... A very powerful force available to her is her own sexuality ... A woman must think positive, believe in her husband and be willing to take risks with him ..."

Butterfield compares the image of the ideal Amway wife to Marion Cunningham from *Happy Days*. Her role is simply defined. She is

"to keep the books, serve him coffee when he comes home, sell (Amway) lipstick and foodbars to her friends, and once a month, deck herself out like an expensive princess for the upcoming Rally to advertise and reinforce (her husband's) success."

While Butterfield expresses sincere concern for the potential harm to North American society that Amway represents, he fails to give readers more than a superficial analysis of its conservative political thought. He appears to lack a firm grounding in the philosophies of the labour, women's and anti-racist movements he attempts to defend. He often becomes self-indulgent and confessional when trying to explain his own involvement in Amway, and too sensational when he tries to prove Amway is a cult comparable to Reverend Jim Jones' and the Moonies of the Unification Church.

However, the book is an interesting exposé, an insider's view of Amway. It provides an in-depth look at the Amway family and within it the role of the Amway wife — one aspect of the New Right in theory and practice. ▼

LETTERS

cont'd from page 6

Help gays & lesbians in Manitoba

We're writing to let you know that now is the time to write that letter!

The government of Manitoba is presently deciding the agenda for the next legislative session in February, 1987.

We expect that the Manitoba Human Rights Act will be up for revision. The inclusion of 'sexual orientation' as a prohibited grounds for discrimination has been recommended by the Human Rights Commission.

It is imperative that our elected representatives hear from us! Otherwise, 'sexual orientation' may never make it onto the floor of the Manitoba legislature.

Please write a letter — to the Attorney General, explaining the importance of listing sexual orientation as a prohibited ground in the Human Rights Act. The letter does not have to be lengthy. Make a copy of the letter and send one to:

The Honorable Roland Penner
Attorney General
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0Z8

and the copy to your MLA, at the same address.

If you have any questions, please call Margie at (204) 783-9432.

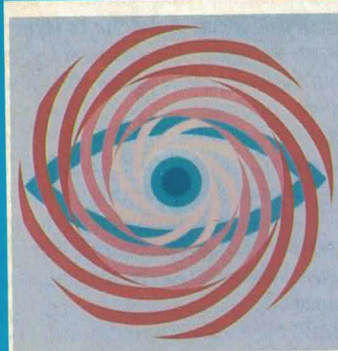
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Joan Miller
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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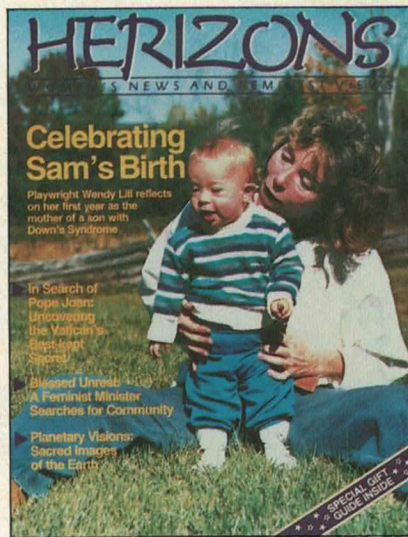
Why a magazine is not like any other product... and why that matters to you

Consider the magazine you are now holding. At one level, it is a product: ink applied to paper. Yet the reasons for which you value this magazine have nothing to do with either ink or paper. You're reading these pages for the images, the messages, the ideas.

It is particularly important to you because, like you, it's Canadian.

Why we need our magazines

- They're produced (written, edited, photographed, illustrated) by Canadians, and thus carry information about us and present our point of view.
- They reflect what we are interested in, preserving and encouraging our own unique values, the way we look at ourselves, the way we look at the world.
- They help us create the stars, the legends we need. Canadian magazines foster our own sense of ourselves.
- They present the best of the literature, prose and poetry that we produce.
- They express the regional differences that distinguish us from one another, and the national pride and purpose that link us together.
- They tie us together with a ribbon of print, and help us define who we are.
- They give us a vital voice of our own.



We've got our own excellence

A Canadian magazine is something special. It adds a journalistic dimension that no other medium can provide—depth and wholeness and texture, plus the visual impact of graphic design. Because a magazine is free from daily deadlines, it can achieve a level of thoroughness and excellence that is seldom attainable in other media.

How the governments of Canada helped

To assure Canadians the information a free and independent people need (given our small, spread-out population and powerful foreign competition), successive governments over the past century have gradually built a structure of postal, tariff and tax-related incentives and supportive measures.

And they have worked! Today Canada has a healthier magazine industry than ever before, with some 5,000 periodicals for people of every interest and location.

But it's a fragile industry: At last count more than half of Canada's periodicals had circulations of fewer than 2,000 copies per issue, and only 110 periodicals had circulations of 100,000 or more per issue. Foreign publications still account for 77% of all English-language newsstand sales.

The threat to your magazine

The Government in Ottawa is now threatening to treat Canada's magazines as if they were so many widgets. It's threatening to eliminate the postal, tariff and tax-related incentives and supportive measures...to dismantle the very structure that past governments have worked so hard to build and maintain.

The Government in Ottawa is threatening the survival of the majority of Canada's magazines and considering measures that will significantly raise the cost to readers of those that survive.

Canada's magazines tell us about ourselves. They're a voice of our own. If the current Government in Ottawa were to treat Canada's magazines as if they were just another product, it would diminish (or even silence) that voice forever.

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