



Dawn Black, M.P.

# Women's Report

June 1989

## Inside:

- Update on choice
- Funding for women's and anti-equality groups
- Budget blues
- Child care
- and more!

## U.I. update

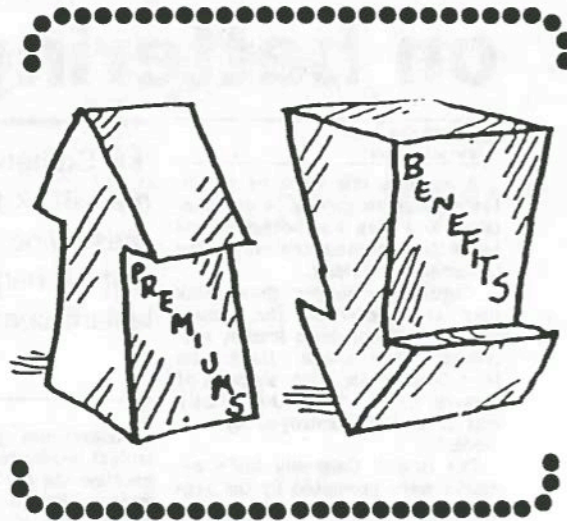
Massive changes in the Unemployment Insurance program were announced by Employment and Immigration (and Status of Women) Minister Barbara McDougall in April 1989.

NDP status of women critic Dawn Black was vocal about the effects of the U.I. changes on women during Question Period. She also included information about these changes for the use of women and women's groups in the special budget edition of the Women's Report of April 1989.

Dawn pointed out that women experience a higher unemployment rate than men, and are therefore in greater need of the U.I. system. She spoke out against the harsh penalties that will rob women of the benefits they themselves paid for through premiums if an employment officer decides that a woman left her job without just cause. Some women are bound to fall between the cracks of this draconian labour scheme, and be deprived of benefits if they leave a job because of sexual harassment, sexist treatment, or to move to be with a spouse. The most disadvantaged women - poor women, Native women, disabled women, immigrant women - those who are most alienated from the system, may not be aware that they could or may not feel confident to take on the unemployment insurance bureaucracy in an appeal.

The 15% increase in U.I. premiums is harder on women, who tend to be poorer than men.

The government was finally forced to give natural fathers parental leave through the U.I. system through the efforts of Shalom Schachter, who took the federal government to court on this issue. At the same time, the government reduced parental leave for adoptive parents from 15 weeks to 10 weeks.



The piece of legislation that will make these changes law is currently passing through the House of Commons. New Democrat Members of Parliament are speaking against the legislation. Because there is a Conservative majority, the legislation will probably pass in autumn 1989.

New Democrats are joining with others to demand public consultations on U.I. Unemployment Insurance is unfortunately only one of the many social programs and services cut back or eliminated after free trade. We must continue to oppose the erosion of our social programs.

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Women's Report is the quarterly publication of Dawn Black, M.P. (New Westminster-Burnaby), New Democratic Party critic for the status of women. It is a resource for women and women's groups to keep track of Dawn's activities, and of events of interest in the House of Commons.

Next issue: September/October 1989



Health and Welfare Minister Perrin Beatty made two recent statements about family violence. One was an announcement of the projects funded under last year's initiatives.

In June of last year, the government announced the Family Violence Initiatives, which allocated \$40 million to battered women over a period of four years. This amounts to \$10 per battered woman per year. Only a little over half of the money was allocated to shelter. The \$40 million includes funds for academic-style research on battering.

Mr. Beatty has now promised battered women a national strategy against wife assault, to be announced in Spring 1990. He would not say how much money, if any, would be involved, nor what this strategy will entail.

If you are unsure as to whether Mr. Beatty can come up with an effective strategy, or are concerned that this family violence strategy will go the way of the national child care strategy, you can write to Mr. Beatty postage-free at the House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6.

## MP blasts ruling on battering

By Paul Gessell  
Citizen staff writer

A decision this week by an Ottawa judge to give a 90-day sentence to a man who severely beat his wife provoked protest in the Commons on Friday.

"Sometimes judges may think they are preserving the family unit by handing down lenient sentences," said Dawn Black, the New Democratic Party's status of women critic. "But the family unit is already destroyed by violence."

The British Columbia MP's remarks were prompted by the sentence given Oreste Capretta of Ottawa for beating his wife, Franca, on the head with a baseball bat in 1986. The beating left the woman unconscious for a month.

Ottawa district court Judge Edward Houston declined the Crown's plea for a tougher sentence, saying the husband was the family's sole breadwinner.

"I'm sure all right-thinking people in the community find this conduct abhorrent," Houston said. "But undoubtedly the family unit would be at least to some extent destroyed (by a harsher sentence)."

Black said she disagrees with such judgments.

“ Sometimes judges may think they are preserving the family unit by handing down lenient sentences. ”

—Dawn Black  
NDP MP

"Sometimes judges may think lenient sentences are appropriate because the batterer is the breadwinner. But it is dangerous for women and children to be financially dependent on a batterer."

Forty per cent of all homicides in this country involve domestic violence, Black noted. "Women need economic equality, not dependence on abusers."

The Ottawa case is indicative of a national problem, she said later.

The solution, she added, is to educate women, their abusers, the judiciary and members of the public about the problem of family violence.

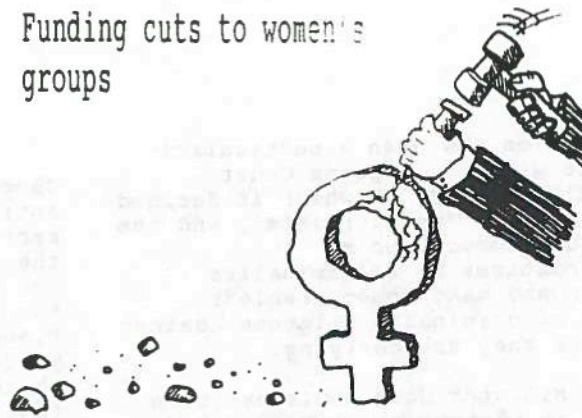
Additionally, more money should be spent to establish transition houses.

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## Funding cuts to women's groups



Question in committee, June 8, 1989

Women are continuing to fight Canada's first federal budget after free trade, a budget that has put into effect everything women's groups had warned about: erosion of social programs, including unemployment insurance, pensions, Family Allowance, health care and education funding, child care, and funding for the necessary work of community groups. Other consequences of the free trade budget include a regressive sales tax that penalizes the poor, most of whom are women, cuts to services such as VIA Rail, and a continuing government commitment to privatization.

The Get the Budget on Track campaign, organized by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), crossed Canada to call attention to the budget that is a devastating blow to women. Many other groups participated in the campaign, including Native, labour, peace, rural, and anti-poverty organizations. The majority of Canadians will be hard hit by the budget measures, but many will not realize it until the 9% federal sales tax on a wide range of items will kick in in January 1991, or until they try to access a needed service and find it is no longer there.

Dawn Black, NDP status of women critic, released a special edition of the Women's Report on women and the budget in April 1989, when the budget was dropped on Canadians. A limited number of copies are still available from Dawn Black, M.P., House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6.

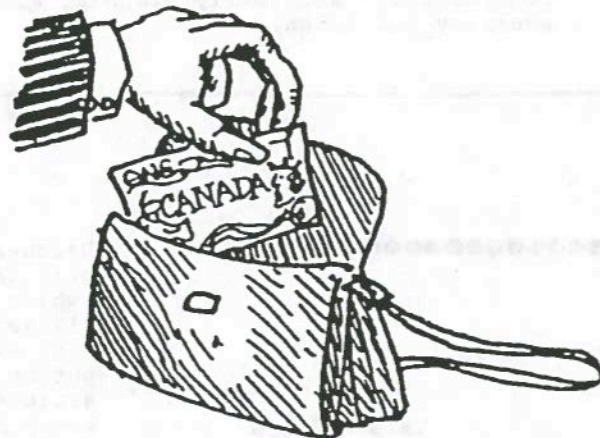
**Ms Black:** You spoke about your commitment to women's equality and the commitment of this government to women's equality. I would like to ask how the funding cuts to the women's programs advance that cause; how you can rationalize those funding cuts

Excerpt from Status of Women Minister Barbara McDougall's answer:

**Mrs. McDougall:**

Our hope is that over time we can do more for women. But it is just not realistic to suggest that women do not have a role to play in overall national objectives; and one of them is to bring down the debt and to bring down the deficit. We cannot bring in a massive child care program unless we have some control over the deficit and the debt. It is in women's interests that we do that. It is in women's interests that we ensure the future of our social programs. And we cannot do that as long as the interest continues to spiral out of control. That is not partisan, that is arithmetic.

If you would rather see the Conservative government control the debt and deficit some other way than on the backs of women and children, please tell Status of Women Minister Barbara McDougall so, at House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6. You can write to her postage-free.





## Reproductive choice: The struggle continues

This session has been a particularly busy one with the Supreme Court Borowski decision, in which it decided not to rule on "fetal rights", and the Law Reform Commission's recommendations to recriminalize abortion and make women liable to charges of criminal negligence against the fetus they are carrying.

Justice Minister Doug Lewis has been evasive on whether the government would bring in another abortion law. It is now not likely until September. Dawn Black, NDP status of women critic has spoken in favour of choice both inside and outside the House of Commons. However, the government is under a lot of pressure from its own backbenchers, and anti-choice cabinet ministers.

Government is also inundated with anti-choice letters. If you know that recriminalization of abortion is not the way to reduce unwanted pregnancies and the suffering that goes with them, but reinstating the \$61 000 cuts to Planned Parenthood over the last four years is, and providing real economic choices for women is; if you believe that women are responsible enough to make our own choices about our bodies and our lives, please write to your Member of Parliament and tell her/him so, and to Doug Lewis, Minister of Justice, House of Commons. Letters to M.P.s are postage-free.

The following Members of Parliament spoke out against choice in the House of Commons so far this session:

Réginald Bélair (Cochrane-Superior) Liberal  
Don Boudria (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell) Liberal  
Suzanne Duplessis (Louis-Hébert) Conservative  
Girve Fretz (Erie) Conservative  
Jim Jordan (Leeds-Grenville) Liberal  
Francis LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands-Canso) Liberal  
Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North) Liberal

The New Democratic Party is the only political party represented in the House of Commons with a clear policy against the recriminalization of abortion. New Democrat M.P.s have been trying to reduce the numbers of abortions through practical and compassionate means, such as pressing for safe, effective contraception and family planning education, and economic equality for women.

NON-ISSUES IN PARLIAMENT

THIS SESSION

Neither the flawed pornography bill, nor the broadcasting act (which included an equality clause) have been reintroduced this session. Child care has been put on the back burner (see article page 5), and abortion is being avoided by government. New Democrat Members of Parliament have been keeping some of these issues, and many others the government would rather forget, alive in the House of Commons.



# R.E.A.L. Women: The continuing story

Just before the government cut Women's Program funding by 15 percent, it granted \$21,212 to R.E.A.L. Women for a conference entitled "Equality Revisited", held at the end of April 1989.

Dawn Black, M.P., NDP status of women critic, told the House of Commons that this clearly represented the government's plan for women: "It is a back-to-the kitchen agenda."

When the conference funding was announced, Dawn wrote a letter of protest to Secretary of State Gerry Weiner. Having received little cooperation from the Secretary of State's office on the matter, she applied for all the documentation relating to the decision to grant these funds through Access to Information. She shared this information with women's groups who had written to her to protest the funding, and with other groups who expressed an interest in it.

Dawn also submitted a motion to the House of Commons to the effect that "the government should refuse funding to groups that are actively working against women's equality as guaranteed in The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms..." She also questioned Secretary of State Gerry Weiner on the funding in a House of Commons Standing Committee meeting.

Dawn informed Status of Women Minister Barbara McDougall in committee of the report of the conference she had obtained from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. In one workshop, participants were

apparently told by a male psychiatrist that children in child care would become partial psychopaths. Former R.E.A.L. Women President Gwen Landolt, as a part of her arguments against women's full participation in the armed forces, said that women in the Soviet army were shot if they became involved with male armed forces personnel. During the conference, the credibility of every female Supreme Court Justice was attacked.

Copies of letters from Mr. Weiner's office one month after the conference still claimed that the conference funding was consistent with the government's commitment to equality for women.

Dawn received a warm reaction from women and women's groups for her efforts to ensure that no group that was not strictly an equality-seeking group would obtain government funding. However one newspaper columnist called her unfair and undemocratic, and she received telephone calls at her constituency office calling her a Nazi. Many people still do not understand that Secretary of State does not have a mandate to fund all women's groups, but only those who work towards equality.

We must continue to fight the government's attack on the women's movement, and on women's equality. Write to Secretary of State Gerry Weiner at the House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6, postage-free. Don't let the issue die.

Bill C-24 is a piece of proposed legislation that seeks to remove the discrimination in survivors benefits laws. Simply stated, it will restore pension benefits to about 6,700 spouses of deceased public service employees and other federal personnel (military, RCMP, etc.) who lost these benefits when they remarried.

The Federal Superannuates National Association had recently begun a court challenge under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms because the old superannuation arrangements discriminated on the basis of age and marital status.

The old superannuation legislation basically assumed that a woman's husband would take care of her. Therefore the pension she received upon the death of her spouse was taken away from her if she remarried. Women lived common-law for fear of losing their pensions.

## New pension legislation

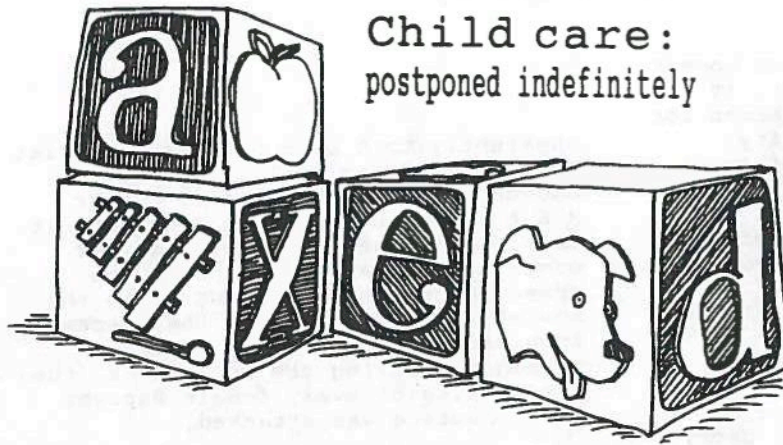
C-24 also eliminates the penalty for survivors who were more than 20 years younger than the deceased.

Pension reform is essential for women's economic security. One in two unattached women over 65 is poor.

Unfortunately, C-24 does not provide for retroactivity. Survivors who remarried can apply for their pension, but will not receive reimbursement for the years they were not receiving the pension. It also does not provide for fair, systematic treatment of common-law spouses.

Jack Whittaker, M.P., NDP seniors and pensions critic, has supported C-24, but has brought up the many concerns not addressed by the bill.





## Child care: postponed indefinitely

All we ever asked for was a decent child care system. The Conservative government answered us with The Canada Child Care Act and tax breaks, which would not have created the necessary number of spaces to meet the demand. The Act died when the Conservatives called the 1988 election, and now after being elected with another majority government, they have pushed child care right off the agenda. A child care bill will not be introduced this year. Mothers who are forced onto social assistance because of a serious lack of subsidized spaces will have to wait until the next election.

To protest the lack of government commitment to child care, Joy Langan, NDP social policy critic, participated in the child care bake-off organized by the Canadian Day Care Advocacy

Association and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). She sent her home-baked cookies to Finance Minister Michael Wilson, and to the members of the press gallery, with a note demanding that the Conservatives "meet the real needs of Canadian families for affordable, and accessible quality child care" rather than child care centres having to rely on bake sales to meet their budgets.

The Minister to write to about child care is the Hon. Perrin Beatty, Minister of Health and Welfare, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6. Send your letter postage-free. Mr. Beatty is former Minister of National Defence. Send a copy of your letter, postage-free, to Joy Langan, M.P., at the House of Commons.

## Language training for immigrant women

Having met only with inaction from the government, immigrant women and LEAF are taking the federal government to court to obtain justice for immigrant women in the area of language training.

Employment and Immigration Canada provides the only full-time job-oriented language training program with a basic living allowance, and transportation and child care allowances. Although these allowances are inadequate, they provide necessary income support for persons who would otherwise have to go without income during a period of language training. Going without any income is not an option for most immigrant women and their families.

The system effectively screens women out of this program. The large majority of Family Class and Assisted Relative immigrants are women. They are not eligible for the basic allowance. The sexist attitudes of employment officers have prevented

many immigrant women from being referred to language training because officers deem it unnecessary. Knowledge of an official language is essential in the integration of immigrants into Canadian society. Without it, they are isolated, and locked into job ghettos.

Because of free trade, jobs in the textile and clothing industries have already been lost. These are industries in which immigrant women with low levels of official language ability are concentrated. Not only will these immigrant women find a greatly reduced unemployment insurance system, but many will find themselves screened out of a language training program that might enable them to find a better job.

Immigrant and visible minority women have developed a strong organization in recent years, and have put these issues on the agenda. Dawn Black, NDP status of women critic, has brought up the issues of jobs and language training for immigrant women in the House of Commons.



## Women losing jobs in fish-processing industries

65-70% of the workers in the British Columbia fishing industry are women, many are Native and immigrant women. These are union jobs; the average wage is \$13.50/hour. They are jobs now being lost to the United States.

On the east coast, because of cuts in cod quota, Newfoundland's largest fish company is planning layoffs. There are also plant closures and reductions of operations at fish-processing plants in Nova Scotia. Women form the large majority of workers in the east coast fish-processing plants as well.

The Conservative government, through its mismanagement of fisheries, is costing women their jobs. Women's livelihoods are being destroyed in economically depressed regions, where jobs are scarce. Women are losing their employment at a time when government is chopping the Unemployment Insurance program.

Tom Siddon is Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. His address is House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6.



CANADA

Excerpt from House  
of Commons Debates  
June 21, 1989

OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby):

The fishing industry is a very important industry in my home province of British Columbia. After successive years of both Conservative and Liberal mismanagement the Canadian fishing industry is really at risk now, both on the East Coast and the West Coast of Canada. Why are they in danger? This is because the Conservative Government decided to put the needs of the Canadian people and the Canadian workers last.

On the East Coast, overfishing has meant massive lay-offs. Those who fish have lost their incomes. Fish plants are shutting down, processing jobs are lost. What has the Government done to help these laid off workers? It reduced their benefits. The Minister talks about retraining but, Mr. Speaker, retraining for what? Where are the jobs in these small coastal communities?

The Minister knows that 70 per cent of those who are employed in the fish processing industry are women and many of them visible minority women. Why has the Government chosen to attack the regions of Canada, attack the fragile resource industries of our country? Why has the Government allowed these jobs to be stolen from Canadian working women? The Government has introduced changes to our unemployment insurance program which may force these women and their families on to the welfare system.

I wonder whether the Government thinks that it is some kind of accident that the countries with the most progressive unemployment insurance programs also have the lowest rates of unemployment? Countries like Sweden, Austria and Switzerland, all with truly progressive unemployment insurance programs, have unemployment rates of less than 5 per cent.

Why has the Government again found it necessary to finance its agenda on the backs of the average and lower-income Canadian families? What benefit can come of this for Canadian people? None. Working people pay more when the Tories are in power and they receive less and less. We have a Government which said social programs were a sacred trust. We have a Government which chooses not to inform Canadians during an election of its plans to slash our social programs. We have a Government that invokes closure after only one day of debate on such a fundamental change to our social contract in Canada. This is flawed legislation. It is a sad time for all Canadians.

## New Reproductive Technology:

### Nowhere to be found

A Royal Commission of inquiry into new reproductive technologies was announced in the April 1989 Throne Speech. Since then Dawn Black, NDP status of women critic, searched through the budget allocations for Royal Commissions and other commissions of inquiry for 1989-90, and found no budget allocation to the Royal Commission on NRTs. There has been no word so far on the appointments to or the terms of reference of the Commission.

Dawn Black questioned Status of Women Minister Barbara McDougall about it, but Mrs. McDougall said it was the "Prime Minister's prerogative", and that he would get around to naming the commission.

Dawn will continue to pursue the matter, and has also consistently insisted that at least half of those appointed to the Royal Commission are women, that all of the commissioners are aware that women have the right to decide the fate of our own bodies, that the commissioners not be made up of only representatives of the legal and medical professions, but of women's groups, that women's groups be consulted, and that the Commission travel across the country so that women do not have to bear the expense of travelling to appear before the Commission.

The person to write to postage-free on this issue is Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6.



# Prison reform for women

## A long time in coming

The Kingston Prison for Women (P4W) is the only federal penal institution for women in Canada. It is a maximum security prison, housing maximum, medium and minimum security prisoners, because women in Canada are not provided with the same prison services as men.

All thirteen studies of the P4W, over many years, have recommended that it be closed. It is a mind-deadening place. It is not designed to promote renewal, or make a transition into a new life.

The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Society states that women prisoners are likely to be young, poor, Native, "undereducated", "unskilled", victims of physical and sexual abuse, addicted to drugs/alcohol, emotionally/financially dependent on abusive male partners, and charged with property (non-violent) crimes.

An estimated 90% of the inmate population have been the victims of sexual/physical abuse, yet there is apparently only one therapist versed in these issues for the entire prison population of about 140 women.

P4W is understaffed. It is also a victim of the Tory restraint policy. Correctional Service received no increase in funding.

Women prisoners have written of self-mutilation, suicide, and becoming alienated from their families because women from all across Canada are incarcerated so far away from their own provinces and communities. They speak of severe difficulties in trying to see a case management officer to make a phone call to their children. Native women, who form a disproportionate percentage of the



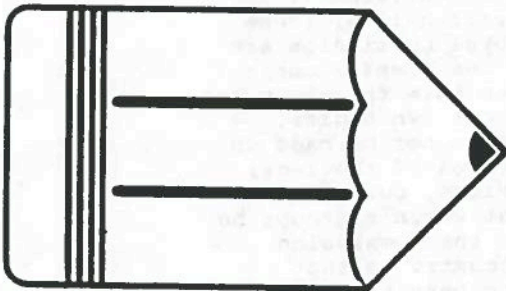
prison population, lose touch with their culture.

Two New Democrat Members of Parliament recently visited P4W and questioned senior Correctional Service officials over the deplorable conditions they found there. They were Dawn Black, status of women critic, and John Brewin, critic for Solicitor General.

In the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General, Dawn Black brought up the inadequacy of services for women prisoners, the total lack of French-language sexual assault therapy and drug/alcohol recovery services even for women who are unilingual francophones from Quebec, and the oppression of Native women. John Brewin brought up the fact that every study of P4W in the past 20 years recommended its closure, and demanded action from Correctional Service Canada.

A Task Force report on female offenders is due to be completed on December 15, 1989. There is no guarantee of whether the recommendations will be implemented, or at what time.

Dawn Black and John Brewin will continue to press for fairness for women prisoners, and all New Democrat M.P.s will work with you to change the social and economic conditions that lead to imprisonment. The Solicitor General for Canada is Doug Lewis. His address is House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6.



Throughout the Women's Report, names and addresses of Ministers are given for you to write to if you have the time. Unfortunately, for so many women who are doing two or more jobs, paid and unpaid, we do not have the time or energy to lobby Members of Parliament or Ministers. However, it is important to have a strong voice, vocal at the level of elected politics.

If you would like to be on our mailing list, or you wish to inform us of a change of address, or have comments about the Women's Report, please write to Dawn Black, M.P., House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6.



## DO YOU KNOW YOUR JOB? Asks the Pay Equity Commission

How well can you describe your job? Have you ever described it in detail? Have you ever defined your job according to skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions, as required by the Pay Equity Act.

If you are like most women, you probably have not. That's too bad because many women are now being asked to complete a description of their job for pay equity purposes and they simply don't know how.

Writing about one's job is a skill that generally seems to have been neglected. However, achieving pay equity depends on this one key step: You must be able to describe your job with accurate, up-to-date information *and* write about it in a way that is bias free.

It sounds harder than it actually is. Gender neutrality is a new idea that is slowly but surely becoming understood. You can be a part of the learning process by carefully assessing and choosing the words and phrases you use to describe your job.

The following guidelines will help you to describe your job in a gender-neutral way:

1. Don't underdescribe and consequently undervalue your job — not enough detail may wrongly detract from the importance of a specific task or responsibility. For example, don't overlook if you:

- train and orient new staff
- provide service to several people or departments and work under many simultaneous deadlines
- provide emotional support to patients, children or institutionalized people
- deal with stress from open office noise, crowded conditions or production noise.

2. Include all aspects of your job — don't judge that some duties are too insignificant to mention. You may be selling yourself short.

3. Describe the job, not yourself — for example, you can state you "work with minimum supervision" but not you "need minimum supervision".

4. Use active verbs such as assigns, charts, compiles, reports and sche-

dules to describe your duties and be specific about what you do. For example, say you "Review, purchase and maintain inventory of office supplies" instead of you "Order office supplies".

5. Re-evaluate your job title for accuracy and gender neutrality — for example, you are a "cleaner" or "maintenance worker" not a cleaning lady.

Although theoretically it is your job that is being assessed, it is really the words you use to describe your job that will be evaluated. The language and detail you use to describe what you do will directly determine the value of your work. So know your job — especially on paper.

If you need more details or material on writing a non-bias job description (which includes a list of active verbs that you may apply to your job) or additional information on implementing pay equity, call the Pay Equity Commission at (416) 481-4464. We are here to help you make pay equity a reality.

## Supreme Court makes two landmark rulings

Hailed as two major victories for women, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that employers are guilty of sexual discrimination if they tolerate sexual harassment on the job or treat pregnant women differently from other workers.

The court ruled unanimously on an appeal by two Winnipeg waitresses that sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination and that employers who tolerate it must take the blame.

"When sexual harassment occurs in the workplace, it is an abuse of both economic and sexual power", said Chief Justice Brian Dickson. The Supreme Court upheld an earlier Manitoba Human Rights Adjudicator's ruling.

In a second decision, Chief Justice Dickson took the rare step of reversing a 1978 ruling that allowed employers to exclude pregnant women from company accident and sickness plans.

"Pregnancy discrimination is a form of sexual discrimination because of the basic biological fact that only women have the capacity to become pregnant," said Dickson. His decision restored the right of three Brandon Manitoba cashiers to receive compensation for unrelated illness during their pregnancies.

Both of these decisions will have a tremendous impact on sexual equality across Canada.

## CUPW announces child care study

After extensive debate, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) has reached an agreement with Canada Post to study members' child care needs and availability of child care facilities. Canada Post will hire a consulting firm, DPA Group Inc. The right to a study was won by both CUPW and LCUC in the last round of negotiations.



Sister Muriel Collins, CUPE, Local 79, 1989's Woman of Distinction for the category "Labour" presented by the YWCA.



## Ontario ILGWU members elect first woman president

The Ontario District Council of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union elected its first woman president. Sister Mary Said won by a narrow majority after the third ballot in the March 16 election.

Sister Said, a member of Local 14, is a sewing machine operator at Omega Sportswear in Toronto. She became active in her union when she helped organize her co-workers at Omega in 1981. She was elected as the local's

## Queen's Park has lost touch

The Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 79 has launched a campaign protesting cutbacks in funding to Metro Municipal Daycare Centers and the Metro Homes for the Aged.

Despite the fact that more than 1,000 old people are on waiting lists for Metro's homes for the aged and more than 4,000 eligible kids are waiting for subsidized spaces in Metro's daycare centres, the province's cutbacks leaves Metro more than \$12 million short for these services. CUPE 79 is asking for your help to put the politicians back in touch.

## Grindstone Island Conference

Women active in their unions seldom have the time to get together to focus on their needs within the Labour Movement, to assess their own issues and strategies and to develop support networks.

The third annual Women and Unions weekend conference at Grindstone Island, August 10-13, will give union women a chance to take time together away from the hectic environment of meetings, executives and employers, to share their experiences and envision how they will move forward in the future.

The format includes informal facilitated discussions with invited resource people, space for a spontaneous workshop and plenty of time for chats, swimming, games or rest.

Organized workshops will include:

### Lesbian/Gay challenge to O.H.I.P.

For over four years, Karen Andrews has been fighting for family OHIP coverage for her partner of 10 years and their two children by Mary's former marriage. Karen's employer, the Toronto Public Library is willing to pay the family premium but OHIP refuses to accept it.

Her union, Canadian Union of Public Employees, has financially supported this effort, first through arbitration and then in the courts. It will cost \$10,000 to appeal Justice McRae's March 4 Supreme Court decision. The law firm, Sack, Charney, Goldblatt, Mitchell

Steward in 1982, and after negotiating their first contract became Chief Steward in 1985.

In 1986, Sister Said was elected to the District Council in Ontario and became the Council's Recording Secretary. Beginning a three-year term as president, Sister Said says, "In these times of free trade, it is more important than ever that we stick together. I am looking forward to the challenges ahead."

- Let them know you want to live in a community that cares for kids and elderly people.
- Ask the Province to stop pushing Metro to get rid of our day care centres.
- Ask the Province to lift the freeze on funding for Metro's Homes for the Aged.

CALL David Peterson, Premier: 965-1941; Robert Nixon, Treasurer: 965-6361; John Sweeney, Minister of Community and Social Services: 965-2341.

- Overcoming the Barriers: How do we change our unions to allow increased participation of women of colour and immigrant women?
- The Shift to the Right: What can we do?
- Achieving the Balance: How can we balance our family and community lives with our union activities and work?

The cost is \$180 including room and food (\$165 for low income and \$210 to help support others). A deposit of \$60 will reserve your place. As special childcare arrangements are being made for this conference, we request that women bringing children register no later than July 3. For more information on this conference, contact Donna at the Grindstone office, 968-9187.

represents Andrews. The Karen Andrew's/Local 1996 Access to OHIP Committee has pledged that the money will be raised. The case will be back in court some time in early summer.

DONATIONS CAN BE MADE IN TRUST TO: Harvey Hamburg, 97 Maitland Street, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 1E3.

Also, please write a letter of protest to: Minister of Health Elinor Caplan, and Attorney General Ian Scott, Legislative Buildings, Queen's Park, M7A 1A1.

## New jobs in Canada pay less

More than half of the 781,000 new jobs created in the service sector since 1983 pay less than \$300 a week.

After analyzing Statistics Canada figures, the Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre concluded that there are "clear grounds for concern over the quality of new jobs being created in the current period of economic expansion".

Hourly paid workers in the service sector work an average of only 28 hours a week.

## UFCW Convention endorses National Women's Committee

Delegates to the recent United Food and Commercial Workers' National Convention endorsed policy papers on Pay Equity and eliminating harassment in the workplace.

They also passed resolutions dealing with investigating the cost of child care assistance for members to attend conferences and conventions and establishment of a National Women's Advisory Committee.

## CUPE wins landmark pay equity contract

The local union which represents clerical and technical workers at the York Region Board of Education has negotiated a \$2.3 million contract. This landmark settlement for the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1734 will give 602 workers pay increases ranging from \$2.36 to \$8.79 over a three-year period.

The new rates were achieved by comparing female-dominated jobs, mostly secretaries, with male-dominated jobs, mainly maintenance workers.

In a significant victory, the wage adjustments are retroactive to January 1, 1989, one year earlier than required by the Pay Equity Act.

## Job sharing

The National Union of Provincial Government Employees (NUPGE) has adopted a policy on job sharing. Although NUPGE does not promote job sharing, the new policy is designed to ensure that members who seek this route to meet their needs will not undermine the role of the union in maintaining full-time positions and negotiating collective agreements.

The policy outlines 16 proposed standards for job sharing. Copies of the policy are available from: NUPGE, 2841 Riverside Drive, Suite 204, Ottawa, Ontario, K1V 8N4.

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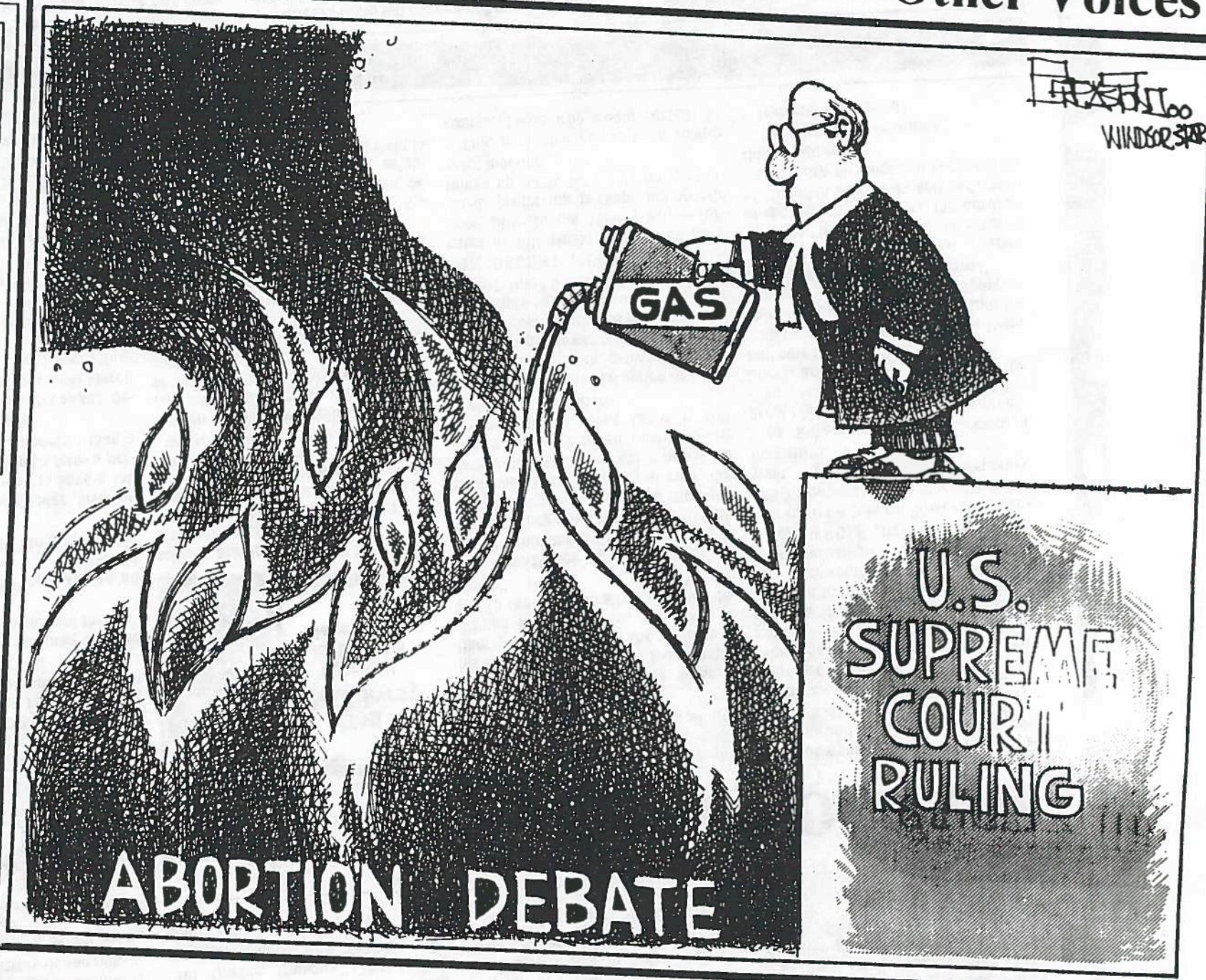
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will never be appreciated, and that mistrust rests on a rooted animosity, fruit of myths, of betrayals and lies."

Poet Henry Beissel, who left his na-

of the Catholic congregation. The sign was plastered with stickers reading "101 Quebec francais." The church was spray-painted with "101" on walls, doors, windows and signs.

He recalls some family history. "I am of Polish origin. In the 19th century, teaching in Polish was forbidden under pain of death. "One of my great-grandfathers, a

The vandals of Laval, the fastidious Outremont intellectuals and the Grande Allee politicians are working efficiently together to build Sparta in Quebec.

# Dark clouds appear on horizon

OTTAWA — A chill wind blows.

So wrote Justice Harry Blackmun at the end of his eloquent dissent from this week's U.S. Supreme Court decision giving states the right to sharply restrict the access of women to abortion.

The wind blows cold, and the sky has darkened on both sides of the border.

In Toronto, a judge has granted an injunction to prevent a 22-year-old woman from having an abortion in Ontario.

This ruling by one judge favoring the right of a boyfriend to have a say in the matter and calling a fetus a person is obviously less important than a Supreme Court decision.

The Supreme Court of Canada declined in its Borowski judgment March 9 to rule whether a fetus has constitutional rights.

But the injunction granted by Justice John O'Driscoll of the Ontario Supreme Court shows the way the wind is blowing.

**THE DANGER** to the rights and liberty of women is obvious.

If a fertilized egg is a person and the man whose sperm fertilized it has a say in what a woman does with her own body, then the woman's right to



**Don McGillivray**  
Columnist  
for Southam  
News Service

privacy and to security of her person is sharply circumscribed.

And since no man's rights would be similarly restricted, such a trend in the law would split this nation in two as far as rights are concerned.

**MEN WOULD** have full rights. Women would have restricted rights. And men would regain, just by reason of their sex, some measure of control over women.

We're not there yet. The decision of our Supreme Court on Jan. 28, 1988, striking down the "manifestly unfair" Criminal Code prohibition of abortion except in certain circumstances still means there is no law forbidding abortion.

Even in the United States, the Supreme Court did not overturn Roe vs. Wade, the 1973 decision that established a woman's constitutional right to obtain an abortion.

But as Blackmun noted in his dissent, the plurality of the court would not now uphold the reasoning of Roe vs. Wade.

"I fear for the future," he wrote in his dissenting opinion. "I fear for the liberty and equality of the millions of women who have lived and come of age in the 16 years since Roe was decided."

In Canada, the rights of women are partly protected by the reluctance of the Mulroney government to deal with such a divisive question. Just after the Supreme Court decision last year, the government promised quick action on a new law. Seventeen months later, Justice Minister Doug Lewis is still considering his options.

Among these are the option of doing nothing, letting the provinces enact such laws as they can get past the Supreme Court. Another is the option of a law simply saying that abortions must be performed by a doctor.

**IN RECENT MONTHS**, the advocates of full rights for women have done little to put their position forward, preferring perhaps not to stir things up while they rely on government inaction.

This may turn out to be a foolish course. Those who would curtail the

rights of women on behalf of the fertilized egg and the non-viable fetus have not been idle.

No one contests the sincerity of these people. But sincerity doesn't give them the right to enforce their religious beliefs on millions who do not share their faith. Nor does it give them the right to turn free Canadian women into bondwomen and handmaids of a new paternalism.

**THE WHOLE IDEA** of charters and bills of rights is to remove certain matters from politics and place them beyond the reach of temporary majorities.

As Robert Houghwout Jackson, a great chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, once put it: "One's right to life, liberty and property . . . depend on the outcome of no election."

But as the American humorist Peter Dunne commented wryly through his character, Mr. Dooley, "Th' Supreme Court follows th' illiction returns."

Those who believe that charter rights to "life, liberty and the security of the person" should be the heritage of Canadian women as well as Canadian men can no longer sit back and let things happen.

The darkness is returning. It should be resisted.

## Letters

The Windsor Star's letters to the editor section is a public forum for opinion, debate and comment on topics of public interest.

Letters must include signature, address and telephone number. Letters are verified by telephone, so please provide your phone number and indicate where you live.

Letters should not exceed 400 words. They are subject to editing for readability and clarity, and may be condensed to save space.

Letters containing libellous, abusive or inaccurate material, personal insults of unsubstantiated allegations will not be published.

Submission will constitute a declaration that the letter represents the writer's true opinion.

Names will be withheld only under extraordinary circumstances.

The Star reserves the right to . . .



By Stephanie Brown

WHEN I CLIMBED OUT OF THE shower, I looked into the bathroom mirror over the sink and saw that my nipples had grown to the size of silver dollars and darkened to a deep, bronzy brown. I had to face it: I was pregnant.

I had refused to acknowledge the possibility up until then—eleven days past the due date of my always-regular period—not only because a pregnancy at this moment in my life was simply unthinkable, but also because my husband and I had tried for eight months to conceive our last child and had succeeded, at last, only through use of an ovulation thermometer. This pregnancy was the result of one drunken collision in the dark with a near stranger.

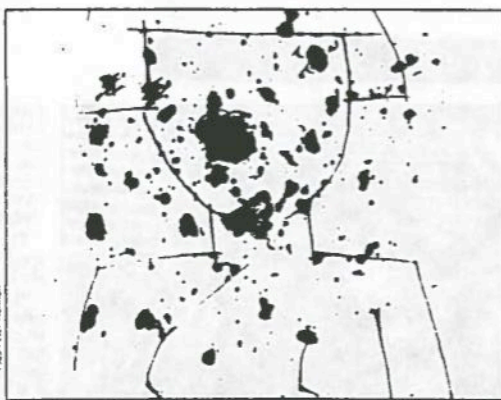
Only two months before I had left my husband back in New York and taken our son and daughter, aged six and three, to live in Sausalito, California. I chose Sausalito partly because my mother was living there, but mainly because it was three thousand miles away.

I had sworn off men forever upon my arrival in sensual, blossom-filled Marin County in February 1964. But it wasn't long before all the eligible (and non-eligible) men in the neighborhood were sniffling around my door like stray dogs after a poodle.

**A date with disaster:** I never really intended to sleep with Tom. He was a starchy Englishman who made his living as a stock transfer agent. We were ill-suited to one another on every level. He was tidy, no-nonsense and a 55-miles-per-hour-in-the-middle-of-the-road conformist. I was his diametric opposite. But he was kind, always showed up for a date looking polished and took me to charming places—so I saw him once in a while.

We had been dating about a month when he finally convinced me to see his apartment on Russian Hill in San Francisco. I had drunk too much fine vintage wine, the view from Russian Hill was all twinkle and romance and Tom insisted that I'd had my period only last week—he thought that he had felt my sanitary belt while dancing with me (though a small voice in the back of my head, kept trying to shout through the fog not to believe him). At any rate I decided, What the Hell.

Now, I was faced with an absolutely impossible situation. I had no money. My strait-laced father was temporarily supporting me and the kids, and I certainly couldn't ask him for abortion money. I was still looking for a job. Abortion was illegal in those days, and even if I could find a safe abortionist, it would cost several months' rent. Of course, I couldn't have the baby. Caring for my two existing children was already a desperate burden, and who knew to what extremes I hiring detectives?



## Illegal abortion: a blast from the past

kidnapping?) my husband might be driven if he learned of my "unfaithfulness."

I tried to shove the whole problem out of my mind. Maybe I'm not pregnant, maybe something else (a tumor, I hope?) is delaying my period, maybe...

Early pregnancy tests had not yet been invented. I went to a local clinic and took a urine test. After an interminable three-day wait for the results, the doctor told me that something went wrong with the test and he couldn't be sure. Meanwhile, I was beginning to panic. I knew that it was essential to have an abortion within the first couple of months, otherwise nobody would do it for me.

I told the doctor that it was urgent for me to know right away because I simply couldn't have a baby right now. He cut me off in mid-sentence and told me, "I don't want to know about it. If you do anything and you get into trouble, you can come to me for help afterwards."

Well, So as he had suggested, I took birth control pills for five days and then stopped for three days. If my period did not begin, I could conclude that I was pregnant.

My period did not begin. I confided to Ida, a new friend I had met in Sausalito, about the mess I was in. She, surprisingly, had an answer.

**No choice:** She had lived through two abortions herself. They were "natural" abortions done by a black midwife who lived nearby in Berkeley. And they were cheap: only \$150. For me to come up with that much money without betraying myself to my family I'd have to starve myself, go nowhere and buy nothing for more than a month. But I had no choice. So my friend made an appointment with her "Mrs. Jones" and drove me over to Berkeley the next

day, as soon as her own husband left for work.

I was nauseated and shivering with fear and morning sickness as we crossed the bridge from San Francisco to Berkeley. We drove to an older section of town where blacks lived in slightly shabby row houses. People looked at us curiously as we climbed the front steps of Mrs. Jones' house and rang the bell.

A very pregnant teenager opened the door and stared at us with vague, glazed-over eyes.

"Some peoples is here. Ma!" she announced.

Her mother, a plump woman in a torn print housedress and an apron, came to the door, drying her hands, and greeted us. She sized me up.

"She look fine to me," she told my friend. "Nice healthy girl."

Mrs. Jones had Ida wait in the living room while she led me into the bedroom. Pictures of Jesus and little

### A time so long ago that it's almost tomorrow.

plaques with legends like "Souvenir of Marine World, Florida" adorned the walls. Newspapers had been lanned out on the bedspread.

"Just take off your panties and lie down, darlin'," my obstetrician told me.

I did it. She went into the other room and came back with a long, red tube. Later my friend explained that this was a surgical catheter with one end sealed.

**By any means necessary:** The catheter was supposed to be inserted into my womb, and a few hours later the presence of this foreign body would cause me to abort naturally. I

would "have" the baby.

I opened my legs, and Mrs. Jones went to work. She sweated and grunted. She couldn't seem to get my cervix, where the tube needed to be inserted. I felt no pain. At last she said that the tube was in place, that I should go home and wait.

## ABORTION

I gave her my \$150.

Ida took me home. I paid off the baby-sitter, gave my kids supper, and waited. Nothing happened. I read a few chapters in a paperback. Nothing happened.

So I called Ida. She said it had been too long, maybe we'd have to go back to Mrs. Jones, but that she would almost certainly want more money.

I hung up the phone and went into the bathroom to check the tube. It had fallen out.

I thought it over. I now had the tube. I knew where my cervix was better than Mrs. Jones. I, moreover, understood the value of sterilization and the danger of infection. And, most important of all, I cared whether or not I survived this damned procedure. I decided to do it myself.

As soon as the kids were in bed, I wrote out a "will." I had been looking at my children all evening as though for the last time. I loved them so helplessly. I couldn't bear the thought of leaving them.

But my life would be over if I had this baby as surely as if I died to death on my mattress this night, wounded by my own lolly.

I wrote out a simple document asking that, in case of my death, my children be taken to my husband. I had nothing else of value to bequeath.

**Coming to a boil:** Then I went into the kitchen and put a big kettle of water on to boil. I took some picture wire from the kitchen drawer (wire would be needed to stiffen the catheter). I boiled the catheter and the wire for half an hour and took them, still in the kettle, into the bathroom to cool. Then I washed the toilet seat, my thighs, arms and hands with liquid Pifsox soap (an anti-bacterial soap containing the now-banned hexachlorophene, which I routinely used to clear up my complexion).

I sat down on the toilet seat and threaded the wire into the tube. Then I put my feet up, one on the towel rack and one on the sink, and leaned back. I reached a finger up my vaginal canal and found my cervix. Then I took a deep breath, thought how I wished this baby had been my husband's and mine, back in the good times, and started the end of the tube into my cervix. It didn't feel like much, rather like having a Pap smear. I carefully withdrew the wire as I inserted the tube further and further, never al-

lowing the wire inside my uterus where anything that rigid might cause a fatal puncture.

The tube seemed miles long, but finally it was all, except for a short tail I left dangling, inside me. I optimistically put on a sanitary napkin.

I went into the bedroom and called Ida. I told her I had done it myself and that if she didn't hear from me by 9:00 a.m. she should call an ambulance.

Then I laid the will on the pillow next to me and went to sleep.

I awoke early the next morning with cramps. I smiled to realize that I was, so far, okay—no fever, no hemorrhaging.

I went into the bathroom and found that bleeding had started slowly removed the tube.

I called Ida, and she almost collapsed with relief.

**Moving on:** As it happened, I had to prepare to move into a different apartment that day. My lease on the old one was up, and there was just no choice but to walk around, park and keep the kids busy and out of the way.

The bleeding was heavy now, an unusually large clot was coming through. I wondered which of them was my baby. I felt a bit light headed but kept going. *Might a hell let it all come out*, I thought.

The next day was moving day. The movers were miraculous and waited every last thing from my place to the other in two hours. Lucky that they did, because my bleeding had become so heavy that some blood spilled over the side of my napkin and fell on the floor right in front of the movers, an unforgettable experience. I gave them a check, put the kids in front of the TV and went straight to bed.

The doctor at the clinic had promised to help me. I called and told him what had happened. He was reassuring and ordered me to place an ice pack on my abdomen and to absolutely stay off my feet.

The bleeding subsided, and I recuperated without event. Not three weeks after the abortion my husband and I were reconciled, and returned to New York. Twenty-six years later, we are still married.

For years after that I hung out my precious red catheter. Catheters were hard to come by then, a surgical supply houses knew the midwives and registered nurse were using them to perform illegal abortions.

I hid mine under the lingerie in my top drawer until abortion was legalized on January 22, 1973. Then glad to be rid of the thing I had so both hated and needed, I took out to the incinerator of our apartment building hallway and burned it.

Stephanie Brown is the pseudonym of a widely published writer who lives in New York.



## BLUMA APPEL

By Catherine Dunphy Toronto Star

Can one woman make a difference? Can one woman break through fear, loathing and hatred, and get the whole world — yes, that's the entire world — on side in a global war on AIDS?

In a lot of circles in this city, the betting is on the woman — because Bluma Appel has prestige, power, money and, most of all, connections. Because she's got heart and chutzpah, and because she's got stamina. And a reputation for moving mountains for good reasons.

But most of all, because this arts philanthropist turned social activist (she is now volunteer head of the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research, the nation's largest AIDS research organization) is not afraid to talk to anyone.

Here's her idea: Canada would help launch a global war on AIDS that would last one year. The United Nations would proclaim it. Everywhere, in every city, town, village, hamlet, there would be some sort of project or initiative to combat the fear and ignorance surrounding acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

And everywhere a young army of AIDS fighters would be forming. In Canada she sees high school and university students spearheading the drive by buying Global War on AIDS buttons for a loony. Cheap tokenism? She has made an end-run around that notion. That loony buys commitment; they give their name and address and become members or the soldiers in this war.

### Names in computer

And the thousands and thousands of names go into a computer, to be used as proof positive that Canadians care about AIDS, to be waved at politicians to lobby for programs and facilities and research and commitment to put an end to AIDS, to fund the cure, or harrang that, the vaccine.

Or, as Appel herself says, "to say to the kids: Get clear of it, stay out of the way." She wants all children — and all adults — to know that AIDS can be prevented by safe sex and clean needles, and that no one — no heterosexual or homosexual — is immune to it.

Most of us think of AIDS as something terrible that happens to other people, Appel says. But she thinks of it as watching an avalanche.

"You're standing at the bottom. It is right at the top of, say, the Swiss Alps. It's a little ball. You are standing there looking right at it, watching it, not realizing the momentum it is gathering and that it is going to hit when it reaches the bottom," says Appel.

"AIDS is nature gone amok, nature out of control. What do you do with tidal waves, earthquakes? Sometimes all you can do is get out of the way. I'm trying to say: Kids, stay clear, get out of the way. It's really here for you. Even if you don't hear the rumbling of an earthquake, it is going to happen."

For more than a decade, Appel, a grandmother of five, has been hearing the rumbling. As a noted arts patron (Toronto's Bluma Appel Theatre in the St. Lawrence Centre For The Arts is named after her), she is now seeing people she knows die of AIDS.

She knows the Canadian statistics: As of June 26, 1,609 have died of AIDS and 2,790 have been diagnosed. About 50,000 are infected with HIV, the human immunodeficiency virus that causes and inevitably leads to the disease. Canada has the second highest incidence rate in the developed world (The United States has the highest.)

She knows what is predicted for



ANDREW STAWICKI/TORONTO STAR

**WOMAN WITH A CAUSE:** Bluma Appel, volunteer head of the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research, has been talking to corporate and political leaders about the problem.

Estey, businessman Edward Bronfman, former Mayor of Toronto president John Evans; Crownx Inc. chief executive officer Michael Burns; and Mary Alice Stuart, philanthropist in her own right and guiding light to CJRT radio station.

The top-drawer listing was deliberate. It was also one of the hardest things she has ever pulled off.

"I went to some of the most sophisticated, intelligent people in the country who turned me down because of the lifestyle issue. They said things like (people with AIDS) chose their lifestyle and they will have to live or die by that. For every one I got three or four turned me down. I was so discouraged at one point I was almost despondent, but then I got these good guys who really came forward," Appel recalls.

Still AIDS is not yet a respectable cause; bluestockings feel more comfortable being seen supporting hospitals and ballets. Appel knows this and uses it.

"It may sound presumptuous, but there's no one in my socio-economic position who is interested (in AIDS). So I have to do it because there is no one else. I can get access to corporate heads and to political heads," she says.

### Largest group

She has talked to former Ontario premier Bill Davis and through him to the Prime Minister's Office about it. She has met with Canadian Auto Workers leader Bob White.

But that's not all. Among the other world notables she has been talking to about AIDS, and specifically about a global war on AIDS, are:

- Danielle Mitterrand (wife of the president of France).
- Luc Montagnier of France's Pasteur Institute and the man credited with discovering the AIDS virus.
- Jonathan Mann, head of the World Health Organization.
- Canada's ambassador to the United Nations, Yves Fortier.

At the recent International Conference on AIDS in Montreal, she sat next to Kenneth Kaunda, the president of Zambia, whose son died of AIDS.

Hearing the chilling prediction that 1.1 million people in the world will have AIDS by 1991, a Nigerian doctor stated that in 47 African countries the largest group of people with AIDS are children aged 1 to 5.

"Millions of kids are going to die," she says. "It's tantamount to murder. This is a total war. When you get into a war everybody joins. You forget all about other causes and you work for the common cause — survival."

She wants the war to start on International AIDS Day — Dec. 1 — and she wants it to last 12 months through 1990. And she wants the United Nations to deem it so.

But although U.N. sources say 1991 is free, 1990 has already been taken. It's the year dedicated to literacy, a pet cause of Barbara Bush, wife of the U.S. president.

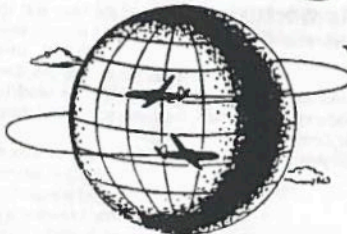
Appel is undaunted: "My answer is that people haven't been able to read for tens of thousands of years. One more year won't matter. Meanwhile, we might save millions of lives."

Privately she admits she'd be happy with 1991, "as long as the momentum is still there."

But CanFAR's Ross, for one, is confident Appel will pull it off. All of it. Even 1990.

"I don't know," he says. "Bluma Appel against Barbara Bush? My money's on Bluma."

# Waging global war on AIDS



*Many are betting on her ability to get everybody working together*

Canada: 15,000 cases by 1995.

The woman who has always been at the cutting edge of causes, who led the fight for dignity and rights for psychiatric patients, who was involved in the fight to save the environment as far back as 1956, has been hard at work trying to fight AIDS for some time.

Recently however, she has doubled her efforts. She has decided that for one year she's going to focus on working for the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research. Known as CanFAR, this privately funded organization is based in

Toronto. It is funding research on all aspects of AIDS and HIV infection.

The American organization, AmFAR, is headed by the prestigious scientist Dr. Mathilde Krim and its honorary chair is actress Elizabeth Taylor.

When Appel agreed to work for CanFAR, the first thing she did was assemble a board of advisers.

But this is no ordinary board. This is a blue-chip, establishment board consisting of the likes of Victoria and Grey Trust chairman Hal Jackman; former Supreme Court justice Willard (Bud)