

Broadside

A FEMINIST REVIEW

Toronto Women's
Calendar Inside.

Volume 3, number 6

April 1982

\$1



Amy Buehler

Looking In On Womanspirit

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EDITORIALS

Lock, Stock and Filing Cabinet

All around us we see women's services which started in the early and mid-seventies changing, fluctuating, reforming, re-examining their goals, struggling to survive, and occasionally closing down altogether.

Watching a women's service lose the battle to survive is disheartening but, in some cases, not entirely surprising. In a climate of right-wing, anti-feminist campaigning and general economic recession (the two are not unconnected) the ones which survive do so against increasing odds.

It's not surprising, therefore, that the Metro Toronto Women's Credit Union is preparing to close its doors forever within the next month.

The decision to close has not been an easy one. The process started a year ago with a general meeting asking members to agree to merge with another Toronto community

credit union. Several months before the meeting, the Ontario Share and Deposit Insurance Corp. (OSDIC) put the Women's Credit Union "under direction," meaning that OSDIC — an insurance company, after all — had decided to vet the health of one of its clients in order to protect its own financial position.

After complicated negotiations, the merger fell through last summer and the credit union was back to square one, with assets that had fallen from over \$600,000 to closer to \$100,000 as women heard rumours of its difficulties, stopped applying for loans and withdrew their savings.

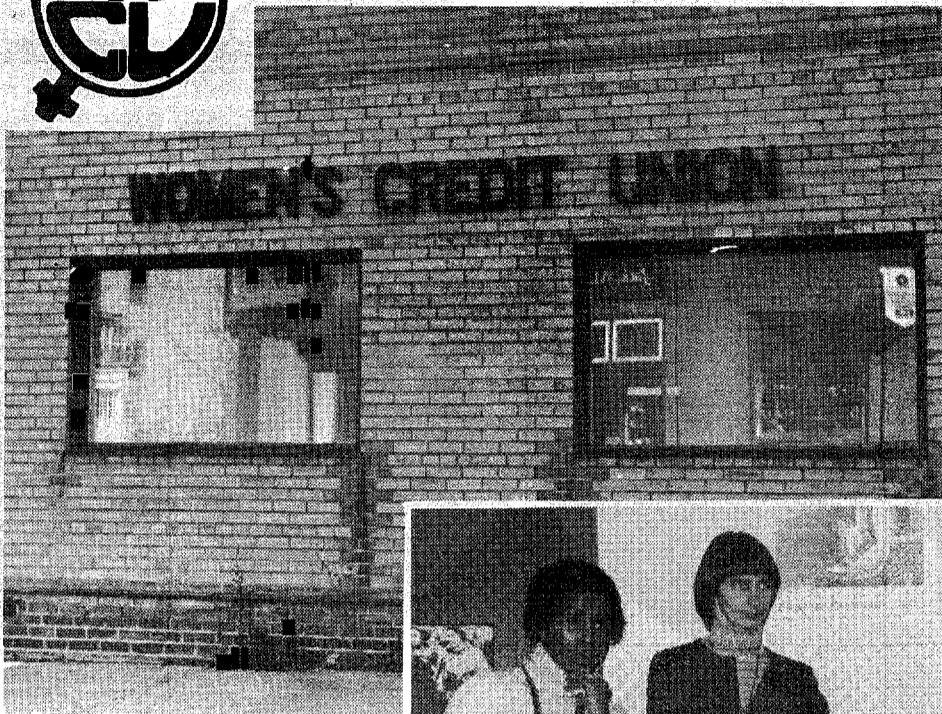
As *Broadside* goes to press, OSDIC has taken control of the credit union, lock, stock and filing cabinet, and the credit union Board will be recommending at a general meeting on March 31 that members vote to close it down once and for all.

The Women's Credit Union opened in November 1975, and has served the women of Toronto for close to seven years. It has served us well: building assets of \$600,000 is no small feat, and helping combat economic discrimination against women is an important task.

With its closing, it is tempting to fall into the 'blame-the-victim' syndrome and to castigate the women involved: women are irresponsible, women can't handle financial matters, feminism and business can't co-exist, etc.

But credit unions must exist within an economic and political milieu which may not be conducive to their well-being. In many parts of Canada the co-op movement has gained a political stronghold and credit unions (money co-ops) have become Big Business. But in Conservative Ontario, the co-op movement has dwelt in relative obscurity, and credit unions have suffered as a consequence.

The Women's Credit Union is just one of many small credit unions in Ontario that have been forced to close down in the past couple of years. Its closing, then, should not be seen as the failure of a feminist venture, but as the difficulty of fostering a small business when the squeeze is on.



The Women's Credit Union office (above), shortly to close its doors; (right) two original Board members, Ayanna Black and Penny Goldrick, watch opening day proceedings in November, 1975.



Beverley Allinson

Courtesy Women's Credit Union

Broadside

EDITORIAL

Philinda Masters, Editor
Jean Wilson, Books

PRODUCTION

Philinda Masters, Co-ordinator
Moira Armour

Lois Fine

Kim Fullerton
Elaine Johnson
Ruth Stanners
Karen Tully

DISTRIBUTION

Elaine Berns
Gina Jones
Flora Macquarrie
Carol T. Rowe

CIRCULATION

Catherine Maunsell, Co-ordinator
Joy Wilson

ADVERTISING

Judy Stanleigh, Co-ordinator
Ottie Lockey

FINANCIAL/LEGAL

Jane Hastings, Co-ordinator

COLLECTIVE MEMBERS:

Beverley Allinson, Susan G. Cole,
Jane Hastings, Judith Lawrence,
Philinda Masters, Catherine
Maunsell, Layne Mellanby, Deena
Rasky, Judy Stanleigh, Jean
Wilson, Eve Zaremba.

Address all correspondence to:

Broadside
P.O. Box 494
Station P
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2T1
Tel. (416) 598-3513

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Broadside Bulletin

Item: Come to *Broadside's* Yard Sale. Keep the date open for Saturday, May 15, 11 — 3 pm. Do you need ski boots, a typewriter, a lamp, or a tweed jacket? Then try your luck at 382 Brunswick Ave., Toronto. Come see our bargains and collectibles, and make them yours. Proceeds will go to a charity of our choice (namely, us).

Item: Next month's *Broadside* (in case you've missed the last five months of editorials) is a "Sampler" — samplings of articles from our first two years, plus gra-

phics and a couple of feminist games. If you haven't kept all your back issues, but want to read that article on anti-nuke campaigns, matriarchal history, or abortion, wait for May's *Broadside*. Subscribers will get it automatically (instead of the regular edition); others can pick it up at newsstands or bookstores.

Item: Beautiful *Broadside* sweatshirts in a variety (three) of colours are still available. And for our summer line — we will have *Broadside* T-shirts, with our logo tastefully

located above the left pectoral muscle. Available soon!

Item: Subscribers would do us a favour by providing us with their postal codes, if such does not already appear on their address label. The Post Office does not like to do much in the way of sorting mail for its 'second class' customers, so we have to do it for them. Without postal codes, we don't know which pile to sort it into. There are greater problems in the world, but ironing out this wrinkle would help.

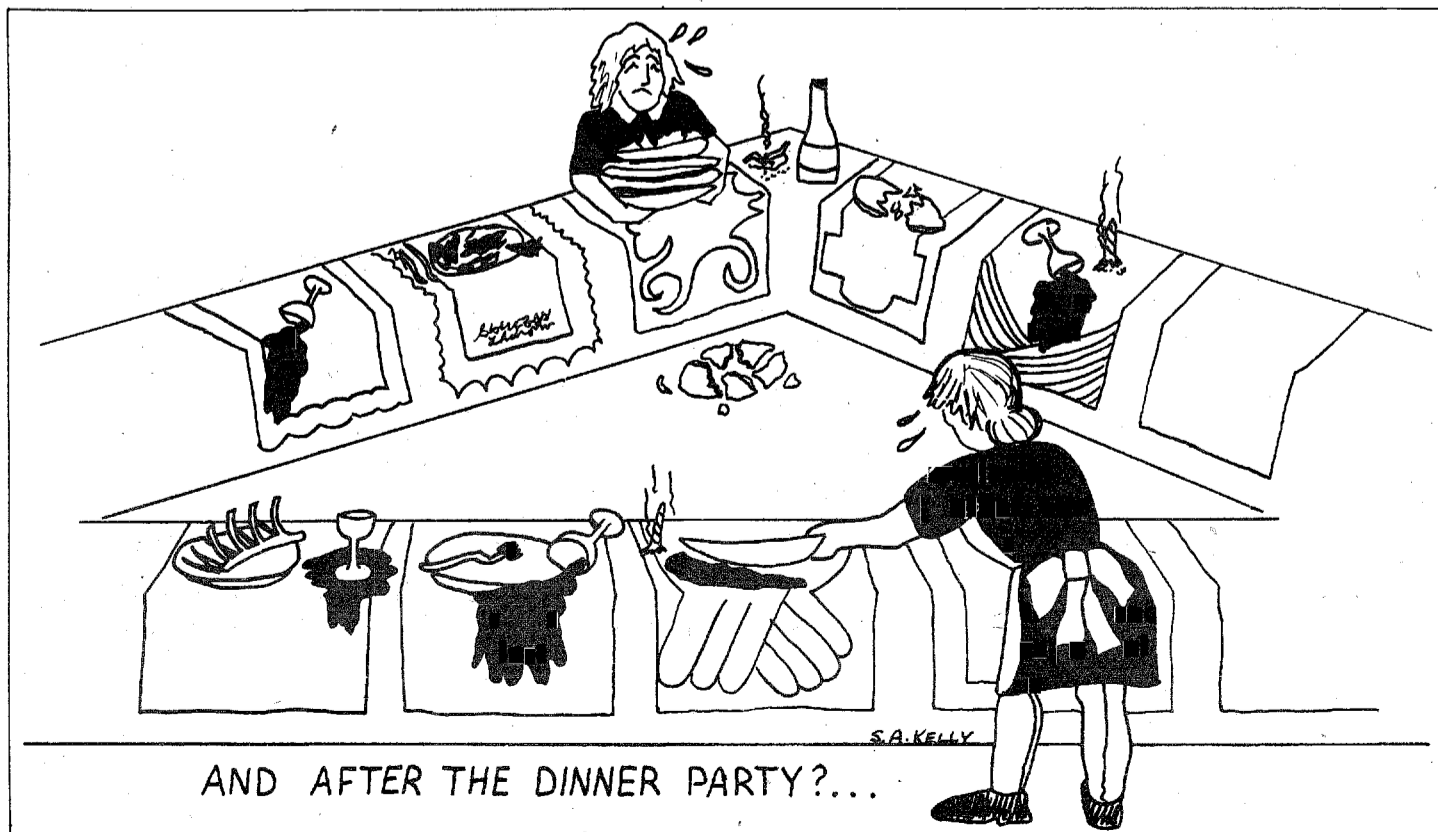


Illustration by Susan Kelly

LETTERS

Broadside:

I note with interest in a letter in the March issue the (I hope) sarcastic statement that 'a women-only dance is lesbian, not feminist.' I have recently heard straight feminists arguing the same thing quite seriously, and I have also heard lesbians proudly claiming that it is Lesbian-Feminist Practice alone that produces women-only dances.

So what has happened? Straight women don't have a problem with the sexist behaviour of men any more? We are so sophisticated that feeling it is OK to enjoy the company of women without the validating presence of men isn't an issue nowadays? Dancing is something so exclusively sexual that we can't dance for ourselves and have to direct it at a possible sexual partner?

If we believe the main point about women's dances is that lesbians are hostile to men, we have swallowed a patriarchal biggie, and lesbian chauvinism isn't helping our digestion any more than is straight homophobia.

Christine Donald
Toronto

Broadside:

We are writing in response to the last paragraph of Barbara Halpern Martineau's otherwise enlightening review of the movie *Reds* (Vol 3, no. 4), in which she quotes her friend's statement: "It's so sad that people have worked so hard for the working class, and the workers never really appreciated them." As working class women this statement is like a slap across the face. It is clearly indicative of the lack of class consciousness in our women's community and the (primarily middle and upper middle class) social change movement in general. It is not possible to avoid taking such a comment

personally, and this and similar classist remarks hurt deeply. Convert that statement to a sexist one or racist one and *Broadside* might find a picket line on its doorstep.

Why is it not obvious that hard work on behalf of the working class is hard work for the betterment of all society against the patriarchal capitalist oppression that exploits us all in so many different ways? Martineau's "courageous political friend" who made this remark obviously never worked in a factory or missed a meal in her life. There is apparently no solidarity between Barbara Martineau, her "courageous political friend", *Broadside*, and working class women. The next time any of us have the time and money to work politically, see a movie, or just relax let's remember the hard-working working class women that are responsible for the availability of leisure space in our society.

Working class women in the women's community constantly have to deal with the hurt and shame that our poverty and class background set us up for. Many women are socially isolated because of financial restrictions. The pain and loneliness that results is only made worse by the insensitive comments and oversights that are part of every day life in our women's community. Aside from challenging Barbara Martineau's classist article, *Broadside* has an editorial responsibility to edit any article containing politically insensitive comments.

Pati McDermott and Saphyre Moon
Toronto

(Barbara Martineau replies: The temptation to reply with another ad feminam argument is strong (ie, my friend is as true-blue a working-class woman as ever suffered through the Depression...), but what is at point is the use of irony which my working-classier-than-thou critics seem to have missed.)

Broadside:

I gave away my February 1982 issue of *Broadside* and have been regretting it ever since. Enclosed is a cheque for \$5 for two copies of that issue, your trouble, and to help defray the deficit. I wish I could send more. If by chance you are out of that issue, keep the money but please let me know so I can find a copy elsewhere. The article on coalition politics was/will be very useful, and the analysis of the Polish crisis and the role of the Catholic Church in it is the reason I passed it on. Now I want it back!

Since our Calgary Women's Newspaper folded (lack of funds and volunteer burn-out), *Broadside* is a lifeline for western women starved for feminist press.

Claudette Reed Upton
Calgary

Broadside:

After perusing almost every issue of *Broadside* as "she" comes along, I almost drop a line to tell you how wonderful you are. How could I have failed to do so for all this time, and especially how not, following on the heels of your Dec./Jan issue — with introductions to such outstanding women as Mary Meigs and the political profile of Angela Miles (in itself worth more than the price of a year's subscription). Then too, the final recognition of Thérèse Casgrain, whom I once had the privilege of greeting, and dining and talking with.

Many more articles could be mentioned, except that I have a bad habit of sending *Broadside* on to some ought-to-be-interested person, sometimes almost before I'm quite through with it.

Your reader from Saskatchewan (Vol. 3 No. 4) should be aware of Bill 89: Quebec's

new Family Law. The law is sometimes recognized more in the breach than in the application; just the same it's helpful to be able to point to a respectable precedent.

DH Blair
Bowser, BC

Broadside:

I'm responding to Laurie Kokko's letter (Vol. 3, no. 3). When my wife and I got married in 1972, we both changed our surnames to a third name.

I went through a legal change of name just before the marriage, whereas Jaki just adopted my new surname. Does that blur the point of it? We could have both made the formal change, with a little more cost and time.

Everybody accepted it and got used to it. When we've had any need to explain about it, it's helped people to think about the sexism of the old custom.

This way does increase the disadvantages in paperwork and in covering up family connections. But it allows our nuclear family to share a name, and unlike double last names, it can easily be used by several generations in a row if they want to.

Sometimes I insert my old surname (my father's name) making it almost like a double surname. I didn't know my father or his relatives very well, so maybe I easily gave up that name. And on the other hand, since Jaki and I both have admired Bertrand Russell since before we met each other, we are still saying who we are by using his name as our own.

Fraser (Collison) Russell
Regina

Nancy Jane Sinclair

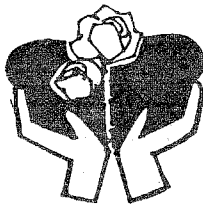
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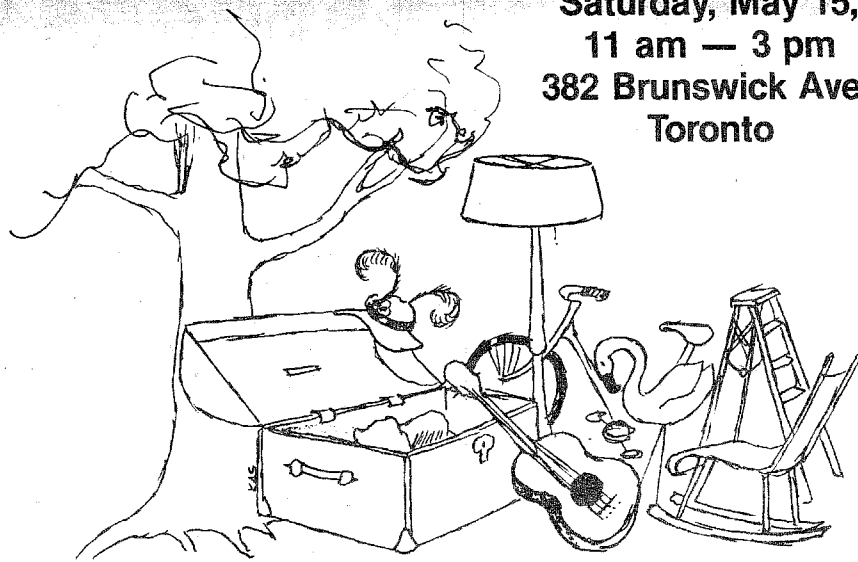
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Where the Spirit of Women Is Gathered



by Janet Rogers

Womanspirit Art Research/Resource Centre and Art Gallery is located on Dundas St., the main street of London, Ontario, just east of a downtown strip typical of

southern Ontario towns. It occupies one half of a handsome Victorian house. A large circular Womanspirit logo fills the bay window. Inside there is a sense of space, especially in the gallery area at the front of the house. The works of two local artists

and a poet are hanging there. Down the hall, at the back of the house, is the resource centre. It's a woman-oriented environment. The walls are covered with a mixture of feminist posters and announcements of various women's events — art shows, concerts, readings, theatre. A set of shelves along one wall contains many feminist classics and a solid collection of books on women and the arts. On the opposite wall there is a display of feminist journals, mostly with a cultural focus. Also stored in the resource centre is one of Womanspirit's unique assets — a slide collection of the works of many Canadian (and some American) women visual artists. Whenever I enter the resource centre I have a strong desire to settle in there to soak in the richness of women's words and images.

zation built on the willingness of women to give their time and energy to create an environment where they can feel safe in expressing themselves and where they can share such expressions with other women. The university community in London provides some support for Womanspirit. There is also a substantial artistic community in London and the surrounding area. Although neither of these groups is particularly supportive of women in general, or of women in the arts, there is nevertheless a feminist presence in both. Thus Sasha McInnes-Hayman was able gradually to gather the women who are Womanspirit's supporters now.

The first major task which Womanspirit undertook was research on women artists in Canada working before 1930. McInnes-Hayman began the project in 1977, and several other women have since worked on it. They have compiled a list of close to 600 Canadian women artists who were working prior to 1930. There is full biographical information on about 100 of them, partial biographies on another 115, some information on 236, and names only for the remainder.

Kalene Nix, the current researcher at Womanspirit, explained to me that information is gathered largely through correspondence, plus a few interviews with older artists. The

Womanspirit Research

Research on pre-1930 Canadian women artists commenced in 1977 with the setting up of Womanspirit. To date a large bank of data has been compiled in various ways. One of the main sources has been the art galleries, museums and provincial archives across Canada, which have been most helpful in sharing their resource material with Womanspirit. Research was also conducted at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto as well as at the local centres, such as the London Regional Art Gallery, the London Public Library and the University of Western Ontario. Inadequate funding has not permitted travel further afield but it is hoped that this will be rectified later this year.

The research is an interesting but painstaking job, for apart from the well-known women like Emily Carr, Paraskeva Clark and Yvonne McKague Housser, little or no information has been compiled in an easily accessible form on their contemporaries, who now number well over six hundred. So, like the archaeologist who must peel off layers of earth, dirt and clay to expose the hidden artifacts, the art researcher must leaf through old texts, catalogues and newspapers to find the hidden artist: first finding a name, then the life span, then a work in a public collection, then the name of a living relative — bit by bit, a composite picture is assembled and a whole person emerges.

Stories of these women's lives are varied. Many of them were teachers in rural areas, others were prominent members of the community and active in local art clubs. Many were unable to take up a painting career during the war years and the Depression but turned to it in their middle age when family and other commitments had receded from their lives. Others, particularly in Ontario and Québec, were members of formal art organizations, exhibited with them and became established within the male-dominated art world. Some of them gained executive status within these groups.

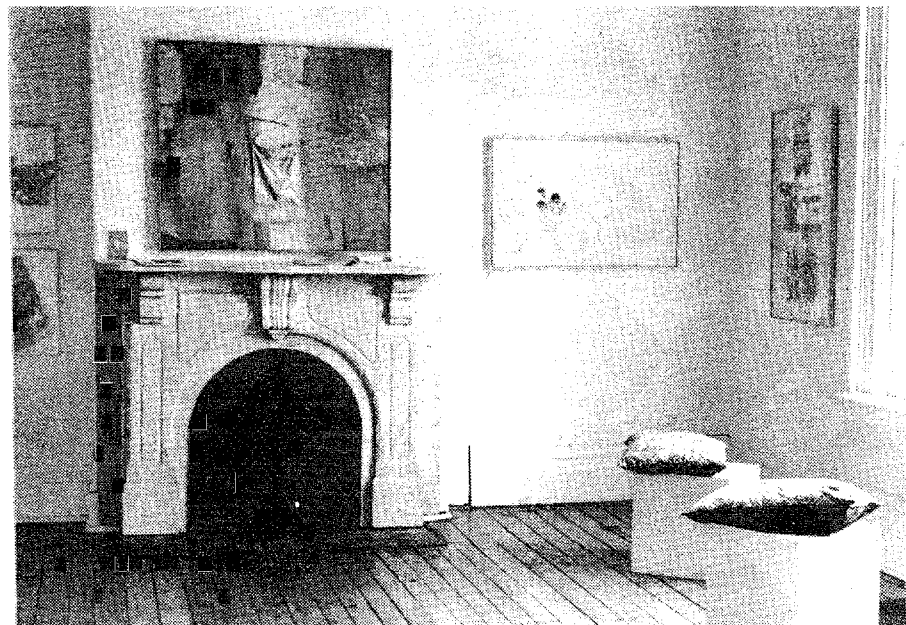
Many were married to artists, sculptors and poets, and benefited from their husbands' support and reputation. A large number were members of the Women's Art Association of Canada, which was instrumental in encouraging painting classes, appreciation of art and cultivation of handicrafts across the country. They took exhibitions of European art to remote areas, they organized ateliers for groups of women artists and set up exhibitions for them. The Women's Art Association established what was probably one of the first networks for Canadian women and was prominent in the cultural activities of the time.

Women before the 1930s were regarded as the 'guardians' of Victorian culture. They supported the arts, inculcated an appreciation of them in their children; worked voluntarily on their behalf. They founded ballet companies; designed in china painting, quilting and other home-based activities. Yet reading today's publications, one is told that they were never creators.

That myth presents one of the many problems which today's art historians have to tackle and resolve. The amateur or professional status of these women is constantly brought into question and anyone with the merest taint of amateur status is ignored. But at a time when the term 'professional woman' — never mind 'professional woman artist' — was unheard of or considered unsuitable (ex-ling, which were seen as an extension of woman's maternal nature anyway), this distinction between professional and amateur was irrelevant.

It is only by examining and studying these women in the society in which they lived — a society in which they were thought to have a 'proper sphere' — can their achievements and failures be assessed and judged, but only on that basis.

Kalene Nix



Photos by Amy Buehler

best sources were women working in art galleries, libraries, and archives all over Canada; they were able to provide actual information or clues about the stories of the women who never made it into the art history books. Other than Emily Carr, very few of the artists documented by Womanspirit are known, even in artistic circles. On February 19, Nix presented a lecture and slide show at the gallery based on her research, entitled "Emily Carr's Contemporaries." Two of the artists described in the lecture who most intrigued me were Florence Wyle and Frances Loring, significant figures in the Toronto artistic community in the 1920's and 1930's. They were the subject of the book *The Girls* by Rebecca Sisler, published in 1974. The lecture also covered the "Beaver Hall Hill Group," women artists working in Montreal in the 1920's. The National Gallery presented a show of their works in 1960. Nix quoted from Norah McCullough's exhibition catalogue: "Some of the best still life painting in Canada radiates from the Beaver Hall Hill Group's canvases."

The goal of the research carried out at Womanspirit has been not so much to add to art historical knowledge as to discover the life patterns of women who tried to be artists in a culture which did not accept being an artist as a valid choice for women. Judgements of their work at the time reflect the patriarchal art criticism which still dominates the world of "Art." The fact that these women made the effort that they did is noteworthy in itself. The Womanspirit research project will create the basis for the show "Canadian Women Artists: 1900-1940" which is being mounted by the London Regional Gallery in 1983. Of course, selections for the show will be made using artistic criteria — but informed by a feminist perspective. Kalene Nix will be writing a social history of the women who are included in the show.

Since December 1980, when Womanspirit moved into its present location, considerable energy has gone into creating a space where women artists can have exhibits and where a wide spectrum of women's cultural events can be held. Presenting programs that bring women from visual arts, music, and literature has been a high priority. A winter solstice celebration in December 1981 reflected this desire to integrate several forms of creative expression. There was a one-act play on the theme of women and aging, followed by a dramatic reading of poetry and prose with musical interludes and accompanied by slides of women's art. This kind of program is an attempt to foster sharing between women at a spiritual/cultural level. The assumption is that such sharing will form bonds which will contribute to making women a more cohesive group politically.

Over the year and a half since the gallery space opened there have been fifteen exhibi-

tions. The artists range in age from young students to 77-year-old Evelyn Crooks, whose show was held in January 1982. Before Christmas the gallery had a show of the works of women artisans — affirming them as artists and encouraging the purchase of women's work as gifts. Some of the work presented in the gallery is consciously feminist, but a feminist perspective is not a necessary condition for exhibiting there. However, because Womanspirit is openly committed to feminist principles, most of the artists who choose to show their work there are making a statement by that choice. Almost all women artists find it very difficult to have public shows, because the men who control the art "scene" are prejudiced against women and against the images they create. Though many women artists still accept this oppression and look to the controversial art establishment for validation, an increasing number are looking for alternatives such as the one offered by Womanspirit.

Womanspirit has been trying to locate and make contact with such women across the country. Last fall a questionnaire was sent out to 350 women visual artists all over Canada requesting information on their needs with respect to marketing their work. Womanspirit is collating the responses they received and will use the results to plan their own programming and to apply pressure on governments and arts organizations to meet the expressed needs. Indications are that women outside the major cities are particularly in need of more knowledge and support in the "business" side of their art.

During the past year, in fact, Womanspirit has, in the midst of great local expansion, begun to be part of a national network connecting women's cultural groups and individual feminist artists in Canada. Out of this grew *Spirale: A Women's Art and Culture Quarterly*, which was first published by Womanspirit last fall. A second issue appeared at Christmastime and the third one should be available now. *Spirale* is a risky venture; co-ordinating it takes some energy away from Womanspirit's local program and criticism is inevitable, both from the women's movement and from artists. A venture; co-ordinating it takes some energy away from Womanspirit's local program and criticism is inevitable, both from the women's movement and from artists.

One of the most impressive qualities of Sasha McInnes-Hayman and of other women at Womanspirit is their willingness to take chances. A publication like *Spirale* is needed now, especially since the federal government is re-evaluating cultural policy. It is one way in which women in the arts can become more visible and express their complaints about the treatment of women by cultural agencies, both public and private. *Spirale* is, at this stage, more of a newsletter than a journal at this stage, both in format and content, but with the potential for

growth.

It is amazing to add up all that Womanspirit has accomplished when you realize that the organization has never had a steady source of operating funds. There have been several project grants through Employment and Immigration Canada plus some training positions funded by OCAP. Funding for *Spirale* and a seven-month feasibility grant came through the Women's Programme of the Secretary of State last summer and fall. Presently Womanspirit is being evaluated by the Women's Programme to see whether ongoing funding will be provided.

Running the kind of ambitious programme that they have for the past year and a half with no consistent funding is very exhausting for both staff and volunteers. The women who have been hired on projects have usually been enthusiastic but lacking in the special skills needed in operating an art gallery or even in doing research. Time must be spent finding staff and training them — and then the project is over in three or four months. The volunteer board is forced to be preoccupied with financial survival, as is the case with all too many women's institutions, rather than with long-term planning.

Much of the credit for Womanspirit's persistence and growth must go to Sasha McInnes-Hayman. She has put a huge amount of time and energy into it over the past five years, to the benefit of many women here in London and elsewhere. But she has now resigned as director of Womanspirit to take a position with Status of Women Canada focussing on women and culture. A new director will be hired this spring.

Susanna Joyce-Jones, acting Director and a board member, feels hopeful that the Women's Programme will fund Womanspirit and has been planning programmes

into the spring and summer. But Womanspirit is now facing a difficult stage in its development. Although all of the projects which have been started are worthwhile, they may demand more time and energy than can reasonably be expected from volunteers or staff over a long period of time. For the gallery and programming to be effective, it is important that Womanspirit develop and maintain an active presence in the women's community in London. To play this role, Womanspirit will have to invest considerable effort in bringing more women to the resource centre and to the cultural events they offer. Cooperation with other women's groups, including those at the University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College, is a good policy which should be continued and extended. Perhaps *Spirale's* success will show that the time is ripe for a woman's cultural network, so that Womanspirit can share with others the responsibility for publishing it. This would leave staff freer to focus on running the gallery and the resource centre.

Recently, several women active at Womanspirit have left London or have had to decrease the amount of time spent on it. This is a natural process in any group, but in combination with Sasha's departure and the staff turnover which has occurred, there could be an ensuing lack of direction. If the operating funds are not forthcoming from the government, the women on the board will have to make some tough decisions about their priorities and how best to use the resources that do exist. Whatever the outcome this spring, it is clear that Womanspirit has already made a significant contribution to women's culture in Canada.

Janet Rogers is a student in Library Science at the University of Western Ontario in London.



Israeli Women Go Out and See

by Evelyn Lilith Finkler

The infant state of Israel, with at least nine active groups and women's services in operation, is virtually blooming in consciousness. There are at present three rape crisis centres, two battered women's shelters, two women's bookstores, one feminist magazine and one feminist press.

At a recent housewarming party of Tzena U'rena, the feminist centre in Tel-Aviv, attendance was overwhelming. Women were constantly brushing shoulders and the atmosphere was warm, friendly, cordial.

Tzena U'rena literally translates "Go out and see," and refers to a biblical commentary relating specifically to women. Now it is the base for a group of dedicated feminists, primarily Israeli-born, who are working for a change in the status of female citizens.

One of them, Yehudit Rottem, says: "The rights of women in Israel are greatly limited by the religious influence in government. In the Shulchan Aruch, a biblical guide, it says that women are dumb "NASHIM DAA-TAM KALA") and that the status of the woman is as that of the slave, and neither can be witness in a rabbinical court.

"Unfortunately, it is this same court that governs the details of a woman's private life. For example, the income tax files are always registered under the husband's name. It would not matter if he made ten shekels and I owned a factory. And to add insult to injury, I need my husband's permission to see the piece of paper."

Politically, the situation does appear rather grim. The results of the last election forced Prime Minister Menachem Begin to form a coalition with the religious bloc in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament.

Members such as Yosef Burg or Aharon Abu-Hatzeira are Orthodox Jews and are therefore unlikely to advocate a greater role of freedom for Jewish women in secular society. Marcia Freedman, head of the now defunct Women's Party, did not run for reelection so no official representative exists. The sole speaker on behalf of women in the Knesset is Shulamit Aloni, author of a book on the current situation of women and leader of the Citizen's Rights Party. Aloni is concerned mainly with the interference of the government in the private life of the individual.

In spite of a recent court decision to the contrary, Israel operates on a theocratic level. According to Halacha, Jewish religious law, women are bereft of the most basic rights.

Says one woman pessimistically: "Women, youngsters and imbeciles are not able to be witnesses. That's what was written over a thousand years ago and that's what exists today. Look at Islamic law; two women equal one man. In Judaism, a woman isn't even worth half a man."

The laws regarding divorce also reveal a double standard; only a man is allowed to initiate a divorce. If a man wants a divorce and the wife refuses, a husband is permitted to live with another woman and the children are legitimate. If a woman wants a divorce

and the man refuses, the wife is stuck. If she chooses to live common law with another man, her children are bastards. As such, these children are not allowed to get married in Israel for ten generations.

In religious neighbourhoods, women are cautioned to dress "modestly" — long sleeves past the elbow, dresses past the knee lest the man's eyes wander and he be tempted. Comments Chana, an instructor at a Yeshiva in Jerusalem: "First, women are considered on a different spiritual plain than men, so we have to dress more carefully, more modestly. Also, men and women have physical differences. Men get aroused more easily. So, to prevent something from happening, it's just better to cover ourselves."

Sixty percent of the Jewish population in Israel is of North African and Asian origin, and Israel, culturally, has retained many traditional values while trying to cope with new ideas. The unspoken view of women primarily as mothers still exists today, a necessity to keep up with the ever growing Arab population. Abortion is permitted only under extreme circumstances. Women are encouraged to marry before their eighteenth birthday in order to obtain an exemption from the two-year army service.

In addition to the barriers from within, there is always the physical threat from without. The perpetual state of military alert creates a definite set of priorities. "Women's issues" are at the bottom of the list. When they are brought up, the reaction is often rhetorical: "How can you think about changes in family law when there are

hostile neighbours ready to overrun our borders?"

Chana Tzur sees the "neighbours" in another light. "It's very difficult for us to connect to Arab feminists. Their culture and experiences are so different. After the Begin-Sadat agreement, some of us went to Egypt to try to link up with women there. They are mainly involved in the left and it was hard for us to communicate. We came back disappointed."

Women at Tzena U'rena, members of Kol Ha eesha (the Women's Voice) and other groups, are attempting to fight the prejudicial laws and attitudes. They organize consciousness-raising groups, classes in self defence, women's health and sexuality. They also provide a forum for discussion on issues pervading Israeli society at large, such as the split between Sepharadaic (North African) and Askenazic (Eastern European) Jews.

The magazine, *Venus*, is a source of information for feminists living outside the major urban centres. The feminist press has been responsible for both translating and publishing books written abroad which are of specific interest to women. To date, they have four books on their list, with *Against Our Will* by Susan Brownmiller as their most recent release.

Although at times it appears that Israeli women are battling on all fronts, there is certainly cause for hope.

Evelyn Lilith Finkler lives in Toronto, works in a group home, and has recently returned from a lengthy visit to Israel.

Too Soon to Judge

by Val Edwards

When *Broadside* asked me to write on Bertha Wilson's appointment to the Supreme Court of Canada, I accepted; but I soon became aggravated by a sense of regret for accepting the assignment. I knew nothing about Madame Justice Bertha Wilson.

Well, not quite nothing. In first year law school, my professor in contracts introduced the class to one of Wilson's decisions. He stood at the front of the class waving the case about in the air. "Idiotic!" he ranted. "Stupid! crazy! insane!" The students all chortled and clucked as they highlighted the impugned paragraphs with screeching yellow magic markers.

When news of Wilson's appointment trickled through the law office where I work, there were no clucks or chortles. The event was noted with some small interest, but there was no excitement, positive or negative. I wondered how my old contracts professor had taken the news, and could imagine him gleefully rubbing his chalky hands together at the prospect of scoring even bigger points with the peanut gallery. In any event, the appointment came as a surprise to no one.

In order to write about her, I spent a week digging out Wilson's decisions and calling every lawyer I knew for an opinion. There is a clear consensus among lawyers that Wilson is a bright, studious and competent judge. Some consider her one of the outstanding judges on the Ontario Court of Appeal. And what about her politics, I asked? Is she a liberal? Is she a feminist? Few of the people I spoke to understood the relevance of this line of inquiry, and even fewer had answers.

It is extraordinarily difficult to assess a judge politically. Of course, there are exceptions. For example, we all knew where His Honour Judge McEwan stood a few years ago when he refused to accept the evidence of a witness because she was middle-aged and probably in menopause. But by and large judges cloak themselves in the intricacies of the law. They are technicians, not policymakers. Even where a judge is known to hold certain political views, his decisions rarely reflect them.

Let me give you an illustration. Bertha Wilson's one claim to fame among feminists is her dissenting judgement in the Debbie Bazso case. The Ontario Rural Softball Association (ORSA) refused to let Debbie play in the league. The girl's family sued on the grounds that her rights under the Ontario Human Rights Code had been violated. The Ontario Court of Appeal ruled in a 2-1 decision that the baseball league could not discriminate on the basis of sex.

What most feminists do not know is that Wilson also delivered the majority judgement in the Gail Cummings case, which was decided at the same time as Bazso (August 30, 1979). The Court of Appeal unanimously held that the Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) could exclude girls from the league.

Why did Wilson swing both ways on the same issue? Both cases focused on the interpretation of the Human Rights Code. The relevant section reads: "No person...shall discriminate against any person or class of persons with respect to the accommodation, services or facilities available in any place to which the public is customarily admitted..." In the Bazso case the only issue was whether the word "public" referred to the physical space or the type of service offered. Wilson felt that it referred to the space, and since ballparks are normally open to the public, the softball association could not exclude girls.

In the Cummings case, however, there was an extra twist. The OMHA was unincorporated, unlike the ORSA. Did the OMHA constitute a "person" within the meaning of the Code? The law in this area is quite clear. Corporations are legal persons; unincorporated groups are not. From the layman's perspective, the reasoning and result are bizarre — what difference is there really between the two leagues? From a legal perspective, the discrepancy in Wilson's decision makes perfect sense.

The American experience with the judiciary is very different from ours. It is much easier to discern a judge's political colours in the United States, partly because many judges are elected to their positions. More importantly, however, the American Constitution invites judges to make, rather than just interpret the law. Many more American judges are willing to make innovative decisions based on broad considerations of public policy than Canadian or British ones.

The Charter of Rights should open things up a little in Canada. The character and composition of the Supreme Court in the next ten years will determine whether Canadian judges will follow the American example. Wilson's appointment could not have come at a more critical time because there is some evidence that she may assume a leading role in interpreting the Canadian Constitution along liberal policy lines.

Potentially, the Charter of Rights' most significant impact will be in the area of criminal law. The *Toronto Star* recently cited criminal law as one of Wilson's weak spots. The article claimed that she concurs in criminal decisions rather than writes her own judgements. Not so, says lawyer Brian Greenspan, who argues as many criminal appeals as anyone in Ontario. "Wilson is a compassionate, relatively defence-minded judge" who is not afraid to take on the heavyweights on the Court of Appeal — Justice Dubin and Justice Martin — in criminal decisions. Wilson is much more likely than they are to find that a trial judge's error has resulted in a miscarriage of justice to the accused. Without such a finding, an accused will not receive a new trial no matter how many errors the trial judge made.

Wilson's dissenting judgement in the Bezaire lesbian mother custody case is another indication of her potential for doing "good works" on the Supreme Court. Mr. Justice Arnup for the majority stated: "In my view, homosexuality, either as a tendency, a proclivity, or a practical way of life, is not in itself alone a ground for refusal of custody." In other words, homosexuality is just one of many negative factors which a court should consider in granting custody. Contrast Wilson's approach: "I would like to add... that in my view homosexuality is a neutral and not a negative factor as far as parenting skills are concerned. To the extent the learned trial judge proceeded in a different view I would respectfully disagree with him" (October 6, 1980).

Since law plays a relatively minor role in custody cases, there is a lot of leeway for judges to demonstrate social and political values. I doubt that Wilson was motivated by sympathy for the gay and feminist movements. Her roots in the legal community are quite conservative — she was a senior partner at Osler Hoskin & Harecourt, a high-powered Bay Street law firm specializing in corporate/commercial law. However, she is a woman with liberal Christian values who is active in community work with the Clark Institute and with the United Church of Canada's committee on the status of women. Where two judges opted for an exceptionally narrow interpretation of the Human Rights Code in the Bazso case, Wilson took the liberal route, stating that her brothers on the court were defeating the very purpose of the Code.

Wilson is in a position to tip the Supreme Court of Canada to the left at a time when all eyes will be watching how the court responds to the Charter of Rights. Prior to Wilson's appointment, the Supreme Court consisted of roughly 4 liberals and 4 conservatives, with Mr. Justice MacKintyre of British Columbia swinging to the right or left. Wilson replaces Roland Martland, one of the most conservative members of the bench. MacKintyre's vote is now less critical — the liberals form a majority without him — at least in theory.

We will soon know whether or not Wilson wishes to lead the court in a liberal interpretation of the Charter and, more importantly, whether she will be able to do so. When the nine judges meet in chambers to discuss the cases before them, Wilson will be called to give the first opinion as the court's most junior member. She has a reputation for being quiet and softspoken during court sittings. Unlike many of her counterparts who try to dominate lawyers during argument, Wilson has never honed her advocacy skills through practising civil or criminal litigation. However, sometimes judges with the biggest mouths are incapable of appreciating novel or subtle legal arguments. Wilson's primary asset is her legal acumen: her credibility as technician will stand her in good stead on a court that, for now, may not be able to handle anything more.

Val Edwards is currently articling at a Bay Street law firm.

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What Is This Thing Called Love?

The human being is a social animal, so the combinations and permutations of relationships concern us all, whether it is between men and women or women and women. Below, Judy Stanleigh points out some of the pitfalls and signposts of lesbian relationships.

by Judy Stanleigh

Being in love, falling in love, wanting to love, needing to be loved, having a lover, and loving forever are all states we hope we'll experience in a relationship. We're all brought up dreaming of scenes of fireplaces, bottles of wine and good food, a walk in the woods on a calm winter's day, sharing a hot drink or eating a bowl of soup around a campfire; and all of these are common media exploitations of love. Take the exploitation away and what these scenes represent are warm, friendly, peaceful ways of spending important time with a person you care about.

How many of us have fallen in love, or in lust, and thus become obsessed with someone? Usually at this stage our thoughts, time, energy and emotions are intensely invested in that other person — where they are, what they are doing, when we'll see them next. The next stage may be sinking into a comfortable relationship where trust and bonding are being established. But sometimes we get carried away in the infatuation stage and overlook other important issues that will affect the future.

Real love is not something that emerges overnight. Both in friendship and in love affairs, it develops over time and grows in intensity with the quality of the relationship. To love a person is to love the history you both share and the things you contribute to each other's sense of self.

Every relationship is built on trust. What a woman says, how she articulates her thoughts and feelings, and the ways these are acted out in the relationship, all influence the evolving trust. You have to trust that what she says is what she means; that how she says she feels is true; that if information is left out, it is not to hide the truth but to develop more trust before it will be spoken. Each relationship evolves its level of trust as a result of day to day interaction. Lying for your protection (not really hers) or because you fear the truth might jeopardize the relationship means trust has been broken. If your lover feels threatened by another woman you are friends with, you may choose not to mention seeing her. It's a decision made to protect your relationship and to avoid stress, but it ultimately breaks down honesty and trust, and once trust has been broken, it is extremely difficult to re-build.

Monogamy or not?

There are basically three choices in the form a relationship may take: monogamy, serial monogamy or non-monogamy. Monogamy in its most extreme form is defined as two individuals belonging to each other, living under one roof, in one bedroom. The couple generally agree to sleep only with each other, and they talk of sharing their life together forever. This form is often considered restrictive and stifling.

The same rules apply to serial monogamy except that the time commitment is shorter

(although usually the relationship is as intense), and sometimes both individuals live in separate quarters. The third choice, non-monogamy, is often considered the most positive, healthy, life-giving form of relating. But others see it as irresponsible, a 'cop-out.'

In non-monogamy, a person never commits herself sexually to one individual. She may have a primary relationship and other lovers on the side, or she may be involved in multiple, equally important relationships. The secret of success in non-monogamy seems to be to not get deeply involved with any one individual, and to be honest with your lovers as to where you stand emotionally with each one of them. This often means choosing to live a life which is fraught with stress. One lover may fall in love and want more than you do, or one lover may become jealous even though you both agreed to non-monogamy. Being at a social event with more than one lover has its own special problems: who and how much time do you spend with each? Giving yourself private space can be a difficult and exhausting juggling act. The lesbian/feminist community has tried for years to function under this model. It has not always been a particularly positive or successful experience for many women.

Is jealousy politically incorrect?

Everyone has the capacity to be jealous, yet lesbian-feminists often consider it to be part of traditional, patriarchal, possessive relationships: in other words, jealousy is politically incorrect. To admit to feelings of jealousy becomes difficult and shameful.

Is jealousy bred into us after birth, or is it an instinct? If we consider it to be social conditioning only, then we can strive to rid ourselves of it. We may be successful, but I think it ultimately goes beyond heterosexist conditioning.

When our friends see jealousy as a negative emotion, then we may get very little support for the feeling. Our jealousy becomes *our* problem to deal with and it becomes only our responsibility to find a way to work it out.

But it can be a paralyzing factor for an individual who is trying to deal with her lover — whether the cause is a sexual affair or simply knowing a lover is attracted to another woman. Jealousy can be aroused over the *potential* of an event with the same force as if it were actual. We all struggle with jealous feelings and fears of losing a lover, losing her attention, not being as good as another, not being wanted anymore and being replaced by another.

If jealous feelings cannot be expressed directly, we may make our feelings known in other ways. We may make extra demands on the relationship, or point out problems that never seemed serious before: "I don't seem to be seeing you these days!" (feeling neglected). "I think Janis (the third party) is selfish and out for herself" (criticizing friends). "I don't feel like sex with you tonight" (strategic withdrawal). "Why is it all of a sudden you are complaining about being too tired to spend time with me. You never seem too tired to see Janis!" (feeling neglected again). In this way jealousy is never identified directly and thus never resolved.

When jealousy is confronted in a rela-



"Sandwoman" © Tia Cross 1980

tionship, it still may not be resolved positively. Sometimes, you are asked to make choices ("Choose her or me") and sometimes you make choices without being asked because it is a way to alleviate the stress.

So there is still a lot of work to be done to find ways to accommodate jealousy in relationships.

Sex, power and money

Sex is the basis of an intimate relationship, so if there is a problem with sex, then stress is always present. We still have great difficulties talking about our sexual needs, even with our sexual partners, and rarely talk about our sexual life with people outside our intimate relationship. Sex needs to be talked about not as self-indulgence (which trivializes it), but as a significant part of our personal growth and identity.

How many of us have wanted more sex than our sexual partner? Or less? Who initiates sexual encounters in the relationship? What do you do if you find you and your partner are sexually incompatible? How do you deal with the fact your partner may be more sexually inhibited than you? Learning to meet the needs of your lover and being sexually satisfied yourself is a process that takes time as each individual becomes familiar with the other.

Seeking a balance of power in a relationship is an important factor in meeting the needs of each individual. We try to obtain a power balance by avoiding intimidation or domination, sharing living tasks equally, assuming equal monetary costs, sharing legal ownership of property, avoiding competition for friends or for time apart, and communicating openly.

How often have you struggled to define to what extent you compromise yourself in relating to the other person? You may have to make decisions (such as changing schedules to accommodate your lover, giving up activities to try to adjust routines, having

time to be emotionally supportive when she needs it) which at times may seem like giving up your own needs. You may want something so badly that one day you wake up and realize your lover is unable to meet your needs at all. Or you may feel that what's expected of you is far beyond what you can give. And it's important to differentiate between unreasonable demands and real needs in order to sustain a balanced relationship.

Money has more of an effect on relationships than is generally acknowledged. It affects who you relate to, how you meet people and how you spend your time with a special person. It influences the day-to-day aspects of a relationship — the type of job you have and the salary you earn affect where you live, the type of furniture you buy, where you go for holidays, how much spare time you have.

If you are a spender and she is thrifty, you are an impulsive shopper and she is careful, conflict can arise over each person's expectation of changing the other's habits. When you arrive home to an intimate dinner with your lover, walking in with a six pound lobster as your contribution, what reaction do you expect? If she looks you straight in the eye and says it is not on the budget, you have problems.

We are constantly evolving in relationships, ending them, building new ones, searching for ways to fill needs yet unmet, and trying to find the ultimate balance. Everyone wants a sense of security, closeness and continuity. Discovering what we want and need in an intimate relationship is essential, but our emotions may not coincide with what is considered desirable. Listening to our hearts is more important than adhering to a party line, following the "politically correct." We need support, not judgments, for the exploring we must do in order to follow that elusive dream of walks in the woods on a winter's day and calm conversations by the fireside.



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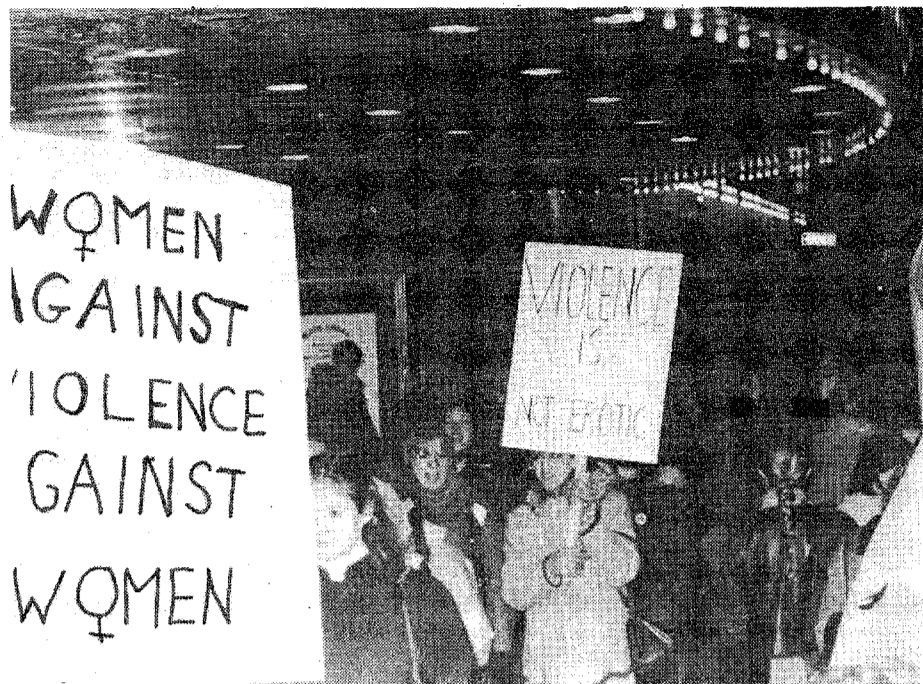
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Tickets for both events available at the Toronto Women's Bookstore (40¢ service charge), SCM Books, and Parliament Gold Records. Tickets for the Alive! Concert are also available at the BASS outlets and the Harbourfront box office. These events are part of the "Reaching Out on the Environment" series.

MOVEMENT MATTERS



Jacqueline Geering

WAVAW at the Bloor Cinema: 'Dressed to Kill' does violence to women.

Dressed to Kill

Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) organized a picket against the film *Dressed to Kill* outside the Bloor Cinema in Toronto on Saturday, March 13th. The screening was targeted specifically because the management had agreed not to show *Dressed to Kill* again after women protested against the film last August. A leaflet stating WAVAW's position and calling for a boycott of the film was distributed to people before they entered the theatre. Prior negotiations with the management had secured a refund policy for those who chose to leave the theatre within the first half hour of the film.

Dressed to Kill uses violence against women as entertainment. Director Brian De Palma's cinematic juxtaposition of sex and violence exemplifies a greater trend within popular culture, where images of women in pain are misrepresented as erotic. Violence against women is both real and all-pervasive, yet its depiction in mass culture is used to titillate. Furthermore, the entertainment

media persist in showing women as both inviting and consenting to abuse, thereby perpetuating the ultimate male myth: that women enjoy pain. In this manner the popular media legitimates violent behaviour against women by reinforcing the lie that women desire abuse. There is a profound and direct relationship between the images of violent abuse of women and the treatment women experience in society.

The picketing of *Dressed to Kill* signifies WAVAW's ongoing commitment to identify and combat violence against women in all of its overt and insidious manifestations. WAVAW's approach is to develop strategies for political action from discussion of feminist theory. Success requires women's involvement. All women are welcome at WAVAW Meetings; check *Broadside* for meeting dates or contact WAVAW at PO Box 174, Station "D", Toronto, M6P 3J8.

— Anna Marie Smith
and Melanie Randall,
WAVAW, Toronto

Fight the Right Festival: May 1, 1982

Over the last few years, right wing groups have stepped up their efforts to turn the clock back and prevent the gains of progressive movements. Groups like the Ku Klux Klan, "Right-to-Life", National Citizens' Coalition and Renaissance, along with government social and economic policies threaten us all. This right wing resurgence attacks us as women, racial and ethnic groups, lesbians, gays, users of social services, supporters of third world struggles, or the potential victims of a nuclear holocaust. In response to this increasing threat a coalition of groups and individuals have come together to FIGHT THE RIGHT.

This coalition is organizing the Fight the Right Festival. It will be an opportunity to celebrate our communities, learn from and support our various struggles and develop strategies for future action against common enemies. For example, support will be developed for the prochoice demonstration being organized to counter the large annual "Right-to-Life" anti-abortion rally on

Mother's Day.

On May 1, at Harbord Collegiate from 1-5 pm the groups involved will be presenting cultural activities, workshops and displays. The cultural events will include music, dance, poetry readings and theatre. The following artists have already confirmed — Marcia Cannon, the Red Berets, Arlene Mantle and David Welch. Workshops and displays will include the anatomy of the right, cutbacks in social services, lesbian and gay rights, men against sexism, police harassment, racism, reproductive rights, strategies for fighting the right, the struggles in El Salvador and South Africa and violence against women.

All progressive groups and individuals are invited to take part in the overall planning of the Festival as well as organize their own displays, workshops or performances. For more information call: Shelley 789-4541; Gary 653-4939; Bob 537-5540 or write P.O. Box 793, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 2N7.

New Women's Cultural Centre

When the news broke that the Pauline McGibbon Cultural Centre was in receivership, women involved in the arts and cultural activity in Toronto came to the realization there was no focal point for developing a cultural basis for the women's movement.

The Pauline McGibbon Centre had never become that focal point in any event. Never really clear about who its constituency was, the administration for the centre had failed to appeal to a grass roots base that would support the centre and infuse it with the energy and commitment a cultural centre with a broad mandate needs to survive.

For the past four months a group of women involved in film, video, music, theatre and publishing have been meeting to chart a course that would lead to the creation of a

viable women's cultural centre. And they want to do it right this time.

The women are convinced that the key to the success of such a centre is a broad base with political proportions. The group is looking to form a collective of about thirty women with political and/or artistic interests and are especially interested in finding collective members who are working with women's organizations in the community.

On April 15th, at 519 Church Street, Toronto, the initial working group is holding a meeting at 8 pm to introduce their ideas to any women interested in participating. It is likely to be an important gathering. It is, after all, a first for Toronto women. (For more information, call Carole, (416) 366-6295.)

Abortions Cancelled

The following is a letter sent to Larry Grossman, Ontario Minister of Health, in late February, by nine different groups, to protest the termination of abortion procedures at Women's College Hospital in Toronto.

Dear Mr. Grossman,

It has come to our attention that as of January 1, 1982 the gynecology clinic at Women's College Hospital is no longer performing therapeutic abortions. We understand that this is due to the appointment for a six month period of a chief resident who is personally opposed to abortion. According to our information this is the third such appointment in recent years, with the same withdrawal of abortion services.

According to the law, the hospital therapeutic abortion committee makes the decision as to whether or not an abortion can be performed. We find it appalling that an individual resident in a publicly funded hospital can decide whether or not a particular medical service is provided.

We do not feel any medical staff should be forced to participate in performing therapeutic abortions if to do so would be against his or her own personal beliefs.

However, such persons should not hold a position where they can deny access to this health service.

The availability of therapeutic abortions in Toronto is already restricted. This is due, in part, to hospital quotas (stated or unstated) and to the small number of opted-in gynecologists who perform abortions. Women usually wait two to three weeks for a procedure and many leave the province to obtain abortions.

We believe the establishment of women's health clinics where abortion services would be available would help to eliminate some of the problems described above.

We wish to protest most strongly the current situation at Women's College Hospital and request an immediate reply to our concerns.

Yours truly,

Deborah Bartlett for Toronto Abortion Committee, Birth Control and V.D. Information Centre, Toronto Women's Services Network, Canadian Abortion Rights Action League — Toronto Chapter, International Women's Day Committee, Medical Reform Group, Hassle Free Clinic, Kensington Family Planning Clinic, Women Healthsharing.

Survival — Whose Priority?

Not long ago a women's group applied to the Secretary of State Women's Programme for a small grant to help run a seminar entitled "Women and Militarism." They were turned down on the grounds that this was not a priority of the programme. The women are going ahead anyway since they firmly believe that if this priority is not addressed very soon, other priorities will be irrelevant.

This need to take action in opposition to the escalating arms race was reflected strongly at the Annual Meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) in Ottawa in March. For the first time, a workshop of survival was announced, and about 70 women attended. The new National Film Board film, "If You Love this Planet," was screened. In the film, Dr. Helen Caldicott describes what would happen to individuals, to cities and to our whole environment were a nuclear "exchange" to take place. She estimates that it might all be over in about half an hour. In a workshop later, physicist and medical expert Sister Rosalie Bertell said, "Women must be the ones who change the world's direction." The urgency of the issue calls for all kinds of imaginative action. "It is appropriate to be passionate about survival," said Bertell. "As Helen Caldicott says, 'This is the ultimate conservation issue'."

Women's role in society has generally been one of protection and care for other human beings and their environment. Men have more often been the hunters, fighters, promoters and decision makers. They still are. Women negotiate — to avoid disaster and make the best of a situation. This perspective is largely absent from today's decision-making amongst the nations, which

are still using big stick threats and "negotiate from strength" tactics. The nuclear bomb has made these tactics a threat to the future of the human race. Computerized confrontation, either by design or accident, can destroy our world. Women must add our perspective, skills and above all numbers, to make it clear that disarmament and negotiation, compassion and love are the only means to ensure our survival.

To do so Rosalie Bertell proposed that women stop work on the sixth day of every month, in all but essential jobs. "Imagine no women in those office buildings," she said. "Business could not continue." Women in other countries have downed tools and brought the economy to a standstill. Something like this *must* be done here to reverse the policies of "the boys with the toys." Although not everyone at the NAC general meeting agreed with the proposal, resolutions were passed calling for a fundamental change in Canada's defence policy: making Canada a nuclear weapons free zone, and getting out of military alliances which tie us to increased military spending and testing programs.

The call for Government commitment to our future survival brought the whole room full of women to their feet, clapping and shouting. Some, too were crying. There is so little time, and men are so locked into their old pre-nuclear ways when conventional arms, tanks and soldiers could, they believed, win wars. A new way must be found, and women must play a full part in finding that way.

— Kay Macpherson

Kay Macpherson is a past-president of NAC, and a long time peace activist.



Jane Hastings

Doris Anderson, who resigned as president of the federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women last winter, was recently elected president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC).

Rape Relief Funds Cut

The BC Coalition of Rape Centres has had its funding cut by the BC Socred government.

The government gave the centres — located in Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo and Terrace — 30 days notice in January that the \$151,000 they share would be cut as of February 28.

The issue over which negotiations broke down was that of confidentiality of clients' files. The government had wanted the rape centres to provide detailed statistical information on rape victims in a manner which was unacceptable to the Coalition.

Their clients (rape victims) have clearly indicated they want complete confidentiality of the information in their files. Women in small towns are especially vulnerable in the case of misuse or careless handling of information contained in their files.

The Coalition has received strong community support for its stand on the issue of confidentiality.

Following announcement of the funding cut, the government apparently encouraged individual centres to drop out of the Coalition and negotiated separately for re-funding on the government's terms. This is clearly a divisive tactic which should be condemned.

Also divisive is the fact that the government has announced it wants funding applications from other community groups willing to provide the services the Coalition now provides. This indicates the government hopes and expects the Coalition will drop out of sight once it no longer receives government funding.

But the Coalition says it will not disappear. The centres plan to fight for the lost funding. For the present, it is looking at ways to raise money from other sources to pay rent and telephone bills.

(Reprinted from *Kinesis, Vancouver Status of Women newspaper, March, 1982.*)

Women's Resource Library

Founders College, at York University, is now housing the York-YWCA Women's Collection, a comprehensive library on women's issues originally housed at the Y's Women's Resource Centre in downtown Toronto. The York centre is presently operating as a resource library with plans to coordinate lending privileges in the near future. While the collection is open to the public, the organizers anticipate it will be primarily of value to students and staff of York and its surrounding community who do not have easy access to the downtown area.

Another of the centre's activities is the

continuation of *Canadian Women's Studies/les cahiers de la femme*, a bilingual journal published quarterly, formerly an operation of Centennial College, now to be a joint effort of both York and Centennial. The first co-operative issue, focussing on women and art, edited by Shelagh Wilkinson and Johanna Stuckey, is now available.

The centre is located in room 204 Founders College, and is open from 10 am to 12 pm, and 2 pm to 4 pm on Monday through Wednesday, and from 3 pm to 7 pm on Thursday.

— Karen Tully

Music Festivals

• June 4—6: National Women's Music Festival in Bloomington, Indiana (previously held in Champaign, Illinois). Performers include Margie Adam, Teresa Trull and Julie Homi, Alive!, Robin Tyler and Mary Watkins. For information write: NWMF Committee, 631 East Michigan St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, USA.

• July 2—4: East Coast Women's Music Festival, date tentatively scheduled, in western Massachusetts. For more information, call Womynly Way, (416) 925-6528 in Toronto.

• August 12—15: Michigan Women's Music Festival. Details to come.



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Off the Wall and Onto the Fridge

Dear Mary Hemlow:

Lately *Broadside* has been publishing a list of women's meetings and telling us to fasten it to our fridges. How are we supposed to do that? With thumbtacks, nails — what?

Wants to Keep Up

Dear Wants:

Well, everybody reacts differently, but I'm pretty good at figuring these things out. What I did was I bought this huge rubber band and put it around the fridge and I stick the *Broadside* calendar under the rubber band. Of course, I can't use the fridge to keep food anymore, but it's worth it to me knowing exactly what the women in Toronto are doing with their evenings. Don't for Heaven's sake pound nails or tacks in your fridge — that would be stupid.

In sisterhood
Mary Hemlow

Dear Mary Hemlow:

I see there is a group called LESBIANS AGAINST THE RIGHT. What is a Lesbian? Why are they against the right?

Nellie M.G. McClung

Dear Nellie M.G.:

You almost had me there. I've never heard the term before, but I've looked it up for you. A Lesbian is an immigrant from some island in Greece, but as to why these immigrants are against the right, I have no idea. I've referred your letter to the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Immigration.

In sisterhood
Mary Hemlow

Dear Mary Hemlow:

What is NAC? For years now I've heard women talking about NAC, but I didn't like to ask. You know how it is.

Rain Blues

Dear Rain:

I sure do. Some women are very *cranky*. NAC is the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. It's a big building designed by a famous architect and it's great except it's hard to find the front door. They have all kinds of spiffy shows there and people who can find their way in say it's terrific fun. You are often asked to support NAC and I hope you will.

In sisterhood
Mary Hemlow

Dear Mary Hemlow:

Why did the government bells keep ringing? Why does the government have bells anyway? Why don't the MP's work hard?

Freedom Summer

Dear Freedom:

The bells kept ringing because nobody knew how to turn them off. Not everybody is mechanically minded, you know, and the bells are very high up and some people are very short. You've got to have more *patience*. The government has bells to keep the MP's alert. How would you like to sit all day hearing other people's personal opinions on the post office, offshore rights (the rights of women at sea), egg marketing, the butter surplus, frozen turkeys (a sensitive subject for MP's) and so on. It's quite boring and sleepy-making and the MP's start to dream about food and wine and sex and they have to be brought back to reality by the bells. Anyway, they *do* work hard.

All during January and February they listened to boring subjects all day and then at night Judy Erola made them watch *Not A Love Story*. It's hard, you know.

In sisterhood
Mary Hemlow

Dear Mary Hemlow:

Are you very disappointed that you weren't made a Supreme Court Judge? We fought hard for you.

Women For Mary Hemlow

Dear Superior Group:

No, I don't feel too bad. I'm used to this kind of discrimination. I'm glad Bertha Wilson was appointed because I know some people called Wilson, and they are brilliant and marvellous, so I'm assuming she is too.

In sisterhood
Mary Hemlow

Dear Mary Hemlow:

What happened to that excellent group called *Concerned Women in Utter Anarchy*? Do you know the whereabouts of Charlene? How would you describe this group?

Nellie Network

Dear Nellie:

We haven't heard much about CWIUA for a year or so. Better watch your *Broadside* calendar of events for future meetings. Charlene went away for a bit, some kind of misunderstanding with the police — something to do with the sudden and tragic deaths of all the women who shared the Co-op house with her and something about *money*, too. I just forget all the details. I would, and always do when asked, describe CWIUA as the most (if not the only) truly radical women's group in Canada.

In sisterhood
Mary Hemlow

'Outside Broadside' is a monthly feature of the paper. To help make it as comprehensive as possible, let us know when you are planning an event. In explaining your event (see coupon), keep it short — max. 25 words. Copy that is too long, or with incomplete information will not be printed. We need to know well in advance: two weeks before the month your event's happening. Fill in the coupon below and send it to *Broadside* or drop it off at the Toronto Women's Bookstore, 85 Harbord St., Toronto.

Calendar Information

What: (type of event) Marathon radical discussion (10 hours)

Who: (sponsor, telephone) Concerned Women In Utter Anarchy (CWIUA)

Where: Ottawa - location TBA

When: April 1, 1982

Cost: \$500.00 (non-members)

Members - free



Sphinx Film Productions

The Power of Men Is the Patience of Women

Any person who can't comprehend why women stay with husbands who beat them should have seen *The Power of Men is the Patience of Women*, a film sponsored by *Broadside* at the Reel to Real Film Festival on February 21 in Toronto. The West German film — on target to the last detail — attempts to describe the dilemma of the battered woman.

Addi, pictured above, cannot talk to her friends about the violence in her home because she is ashamed. Her husband's friends and drinking buddies know he beats up his wife but won't break the male bonds to confront him.

And so the situation remains shrouded in silence.

Once Addi leaves home, she is not instantly liberated. She is compelled to live with neighbours in cramped and inconvenient circumstances until she discovers the women's shelter in town. There she receives a good deal of support from women, but the quarters are as cramped there — bunk beds occupied by other victims of wife assault and rooms crammed with children.

Even with the support of other women and the knowledge that she is not alone, Addi has a long way to go, particularly through the bureaucracy. Her quest for

welfare benefits takes her to a social worker who found Addi's husband utterly charming, and the red tape handlers cannot believe her story.

Addi ultimately decides to live communally in a house with women who have shared the experience of violence in the home. But the message of the movie is not necessarily that all battered women can live happily ever after. Rather, the movie makes the strong statement that every institution, including the institution of marriage, the courts, welfare systems and the strictures of a lean job market, is stacked against victims of wife assault. — SGC

Insult...

by Lisa Freedman and Susan Ursel

The appointment of Bertha Wilson to the Supreme Court of Canada came too late to give women a voice in a decision that has placed their lives and well being in jeopardy. Just a few weeks earlier, on January 26, the Justices decided that women must endure the lengthy and expensive process of a superior court hearing to obtain a restraining order against an abusive spouse. The previously fast and accessible means of applying to a family court judge for such an order was ruled out. In sum, this decision has placed yet another hurdle in the paths of women seeking justice and recognition of their right to personal safety.

Women abused by their spouses do have more legal resources today than in the days when a marriage licence could be equated with a man's licence to "discipline" his wife. Women now can lay a variety of criminal charges. But these are generally an after-the-fact reaction to a harm already inflicted.

To prevent rather than punish violence, women previously had access to the provincial family courts which could grant "restraining orders." The wording of such orders varies between provinces but the effect is the same. In Ontario, for example, the *Family Law Reform Act* allows a married or common law spouse to apply for a court order restraining the other spouse from "molesting, annoying or harassing the applicant, or children in the lawful custody of the applicant." (The neutrality of the language belies the commonly understood reality that it is a beaten woman who is seeking to restrain an attacking husband).

It was a similar provision of the British Columbia *Family Relations Act* that was the subject of the Supreme Court decision. In that decision the Court stripped Provincial Court judges of their power to issue restraining orders. To understand the reasons behind this decision, a side trip through the intricacies of our court system is required.

In each province there are a series of courts, each with different areas of jurisdiction, that is, matters that they can legally try. At the bottom is the small claims court and, of interest to us, the family law courts. These are known as inferior courts, for reasons that will soon become obvious. Above them, in ascending order, are county and district courts, and the Supreme Court of the province with its adjunct, the Court of Appeal. Sitting on the top of the heap is of course the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC), ruling on

Injury...

by Susan G. Cole

Within the nuclear family, that much-touted paradise the reactionaries are defending against all comers, one out of every ten women staggers. She is nursing broken bones, not just the welts from the odd hand-slap; she is recovering from concussions and the damages from miscarriages incurred as a result of a kick in the stomach. She is the victim of wife battery.

The victims of wife assault are a closeted community, perhaps even more hidden than the victims of incest. Children, after all, are assumed to deserve the protection of everybody and are not made nearly as accountable for their victimization as are adult women. Until recently, groups known for sophisticated feminist analysis and which purported to deal with all issues pertaining to violence and women never confronted the issue of wife assault. Something about battered women makes other women, even feminists, very uncomfortable.

Why do they put up with it? That's the question put forth most often by feminists confounded by the assaulted woman's dilemma. It's strange how demanding we can be as feminists. Our own confusion is part and parcel of a syndrome we have created which demands that all women get it together, and fast. We are barely tolerant of the woman who would opt for housewifery before the rigours of a career. We are only just learning that women have the right to choose. We can barely understand women who complain about a sexist live-in male lover and who won't move out. We get impatient. We tend to think that a little consciousness-raising, a few well-selected feminist texts, and some intensive woman-support will transform the victims of patriarchy into the strong independent women we know they can be.

To assume that life is this simple is to forget that every institution is stacked against the victim of wife assault, and in favour of the assailing male. Even our vocabulary gives us away. "Domestic violence," for example, is a convenient gloss for wife battery, and use of the term indicates our own unwillingness to deal with some painful facts of life.

The first sad truth is that men beat their wives because they are permitted to do so. They are permitted to do so by institutions determined to perpetuate the sexist value that women should be seen and not heard and that a man's home is his castle: he has the right to get carried away now and again.

Says Maureen Adams, a para-legal worker assisting battered women: "If she (a victim of wife assault) goes to a social worker, the social workers will say, 'Go home and behave and he won't hurt you.' If she calls the police, the police will agree to walk her husband around the block to cool him off." As for laying charges against the assailant, police have been loathe to do so unless they've witnessed the assault. The victims, they claim, don't make reliable witnesses.

We don't understand her, police have no sympathy, social workers try to put her back into her place. The assaulted woman is alone. It is crucial that we try to face her situation head on.

She is not a masochist. She is a casualty of a sexist society. The victim of wife assault tends to be more conservative than most, a believer in romantic love and in the institution of marriage. Her faith in the institution of marriage is buttressed on all sides by media and institutional propaganda. When the first violent attack on her occurs, she is usually taken completely by surprise. Her immediate reaction is invariably, "What have I done wrong?" As she tries to smoothe things out, then realizes that the attacks will continue and even escalate regardless of her efforts, she assumes that violence is part of the family package deal, something she must accept.

Women who believe that it is a problem are too ashamed to talk of it to other women. Leaving the marriage outright is not necessarily an option in a society where the job market is not particularly hospitable to women. Seeing a counsellor may mean enduring a devastating encounter with a traditionalist who assumes the woman brought the attack on. Calling the police probably means an encounter with men who don't want to mess with a "domestic" dispute and who find it difficult to invade a man's castle in the first place.

Where is the woman to go? It is estimated that there are 24,000 battered women in this country and there are only 700 beds across the country in shelters for battered women. Every new shelter than opens is filled up in less than a week.

The movement to assist battered women has been led by shelter workers who are on the front line of the crisis, too

busy to politicize other women, too busy dealing with immediate questions of counselling and support for women; concerned with where the funding for the shelter is going to come from, with the personal trauma of watching many women decide that they can't change their lives so dramatically as to walk away from a marriage. Shelter workers are famous for burn-out and it is no wonder.

In the past few years some changes have taken place that promise an improvement in the situation. Deborah Sinclair and Susan Harris, two social workers operating out of Etobicoke, have begun a program to introduce the feminist values of the shelter movement into traditional agencies. They are talking with other social workers, educating them about the real situation of battered women, encouraging counsellors to urge victims to get control over their lives and not to go back to the violent nightmare in their homes. But for the most part wife battery has been the preoccupation of a few social workers and the women working in hostels.

Recently, the issue came into focus when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Family Court judges could not issue restraining orders to protect assaulted women, and as a result wife battery as a sexist reality has finally come out of the woodwork. Women organizing to protest the decision have formed Justice for Assaulted Women (JAW-s) and are making the entire matter of wife battery a political issue.

The effect of the Supreme Court decision is to make it harder for women to get protection against violent husbands. Now, in order to receive a restraining order, women have to have legal counsel, an expense they didn't have to incur when family courts were issuing the orders, and they have to have more time for the paper work and to get onto the Supreme Court roster. Of course, the more time it takes to get the orders, the longer a woman is left unprotected.

Supreme Court Decisions are final. All JAW-s can do is devise ways of working around them. And they do have a number of strategies. The first is to put battered women into the Red Tag category at Legal Aid. This means that Legal Aid makes a point of processing applications quickly. Second, JAW-s have brought together feminist lawyers who are willing to take on the task of getting to the Supreme Court without waiting for Legal Aid to come through.

As well, JAW-s is circulating a petition that calls for three steps to be taken to mitigate the damages of the Supreme Court decision. Since the decision states that only federally appointed judges can issue the orders, and since family court judges have traditionally been appointed at the pro-

ding Insult to Injury

those matters of supreme importance to the nation, or at least to that part of the nation that can afford to drag matters that far.

The issue at the core of the SCC decision is a jurisdictional technicality. Under Section 96 of the BNA Act, judges of the county, district and supreme court must be federally appointed (the prevailing wisdom behind this section is apparently to secure the impartiality and independence of the provincial judiciary). The provinces appoint all other judges, such as those of the Family Court. The jurisdictional problem arises because of the nature of "restraining orders" (or as they are characterized in the BC case — "non entry" orders).

The key point to be decided in the case was whether these orders are equivalent to a form of preventive justice or to a form of injunctive relief. Preventive justice consists of obliging those persons whom there is "probable grounds to suspect of future misbehaviour to give assurance to the public that such offence as is apprehended shall not happen." This is not meant as any form of punishment, unless, perhaps, for a man's imprudence in giving just ground for apprehension. If these "restraining orders" are characterized as such then Provincial Judges can rule in this field, the right to do so being traced back through English authorities to the year 1361. If however, "restraining orders" are likened to injunctions (a legal order restraining someone from commencing or continuing a wrongful act) then their enforcement must fall to federally appointed judges as these "Section 96" courts assumed injunctive powers at the time of Confederation. The SCC decided that these orders were in reality injunctions and therefore could not be issued by other than federally appointed judges. With the preventive justice theory rejected, Family Court Judges can no longer issue these orders. For assaulted women, then, these courts are definitely inferior.

In 1980, an Ontario court dealt with exactly this question and came to the opposite conclusion. Unfortunately the fact that an Ontario court called these orders preventive justice does little to help us. While the wording of the Ontario Act is different from that of the BC Act, the effect of the SCC holding (while not technically overruling the Ontario court) has led provincially appointed judges in Ontario to stop issuing these orders. What is interesting to note here is that the Ontario decision was based on pages of persuasive, historically grounded reasoning. What kind of reasoning did the SCC use to justify its opposite decision?

The answer is very little. To understand how this could be possible in a decision that goes on for more than 50 pages, requires some perseverance, but stick with us and you'll have gained fresh insights into how the top legal minds in our country work.

There were four sections of the BC legislation at issue. These areas included guardianship and custody of children, possession of the family home and "non-entry" orders. The majority court ruling was that guardianship and custody orders could still be granted by provincially appointed judges but orders pertaining to possession of the family home and "non-entry" were matters for federally appointed judges. There was a minority decision in this case that said that all four of the areas were beyond the competence of provincially appointed judges and it is in this reasoning that our examination will begin.

A minority or dissenting opinion is an opinion of a minority of the nine SCC judges; it is not necessarily contrary to the majority decision which becomes law, it's just that it is not exactly the same on several key issues. In this case, the dissenting opinion played a major role in how the majority came to their conclusion. Chief Justice Bora Laskin, writing for the minority, had to deal with two separate "non entry" sections. On the first section he reasoned that given its wording (a wording that will only allow the granting of a non-entry order where there is a valid custody order in force) the logical conclusion was that "non-entry" orders were intended to enforce custody orders — in essence to keep the spouse away from the wife and children. If custody orders were not within the jurisdiction of family court judges, then "non-entry" orders couldn't be either.

However, the majority opinion, which is the law, decided that custody could remain within the jurisdiction of provincially appointed judges. And what then did the majority make of "non-entry" orders? They said these orders are beyond the jurisdiction of a provincially appointed judge. And why? Because of the reasons given by the Chief Justice in the minority decision. Yet when the majority rejected Laskin's argument for placing custody in the hands of federally appointed judges, his essential link between custody and non-entry breaks down. How did the majority deal with this problem? They didn't! What is outrageous is that this passes for law and justice in our country.

The other section which dealt with non-entry orders stands on its own and has nothing to do with custody. In discussing this section the Chief Justice dismissed the argument that it was preventive justice by, figuratively speaking, stamping his foot and saying "It's not, it's not." In his own words, "What we have in section 79 is more akin to injunctive relief than it is to any relief against an apprehended breach of the peace (preventive justice)." And that's about all he said. The majority heartily concurred.

The outcome of this decision is that an expedient and inexpensive way of ensuring that women can get an order stopping husbands from beating and harrasing them has been denied. The route is now through the slower and more

expensive higher courts. Lawyers are needed in these courts, whereas before women could represent themselves or have an "agent" represent them at minimal cost. It also has to be stressed that these higher courts are not as geographically accessible as the "inferior" courts. Therefore, travelling and accommodation costs, plus child care costs, must be absorbed by a woman seeking a "restraining order." Laskin did indeed deal with this issue, in a few callous words, which give us more insight into the attitudes underlying the decision than any amount of legal reasoning. He said:

...It is no answer to say that the provincial courts are more accessible to those who might need relief under the *Family Relations Act* than is the Supreme Court, especially in the availability in outlying areas. This was not an answer in the immediate post 1867 period when communication and accessibility of judicial services were far less advanced than they are at the present time and it is not an answer today.

Are there any solutions to the problems raised in this decision? If the problem is seen as the fragmentation of jurisdiction then the "simple" solution would be to unite the various areas of family law in one package and establish a court that has jurisdiction to deal with all of these matters. This "unified family court" concept is currently in existence in Ontario in the Judicial District of Hamilton-Wentworth. The judges are, by necessity, federally appointed. This court has virtually full jurisdiction over all areas of family law. The advantage of this system is that its procedure is not as formal or as expensive as that of a traditional supreme court, and non-lawyers may represent clients in certain situations (including the granting of restraining orders). The current reality though is that there is only one such court in Ontario and few other similar unified courts throughout the country; therefore accessibility is still a major problem.

The problem, however, must be viewed in a broader sense. It concerns the general legal attitudes toward the treatment of women in violent domestic situations. Easy access to the courts is one avenue of recourse but faster police response to domestic crises and the expansion of temporary shelters for assaulted women and children must be parallel issues.

Above all a solution requires a recognition on the part of police, crown attorneys, judges and society as a whole that assaulted women deserve the full protection and support of the legal system.

Lisa Freedman and Susan Ursel are active members of the Toronto Area Caucus of Women and the Law.

vincial level, the petition calls for the Minister of Justice to appoint from his federal office judges to sit in Family Court. The petition also calls for a unified court system, like the one in the Hamilton-Wentworth judicial area, that would make it easier for women to work through the justice system.

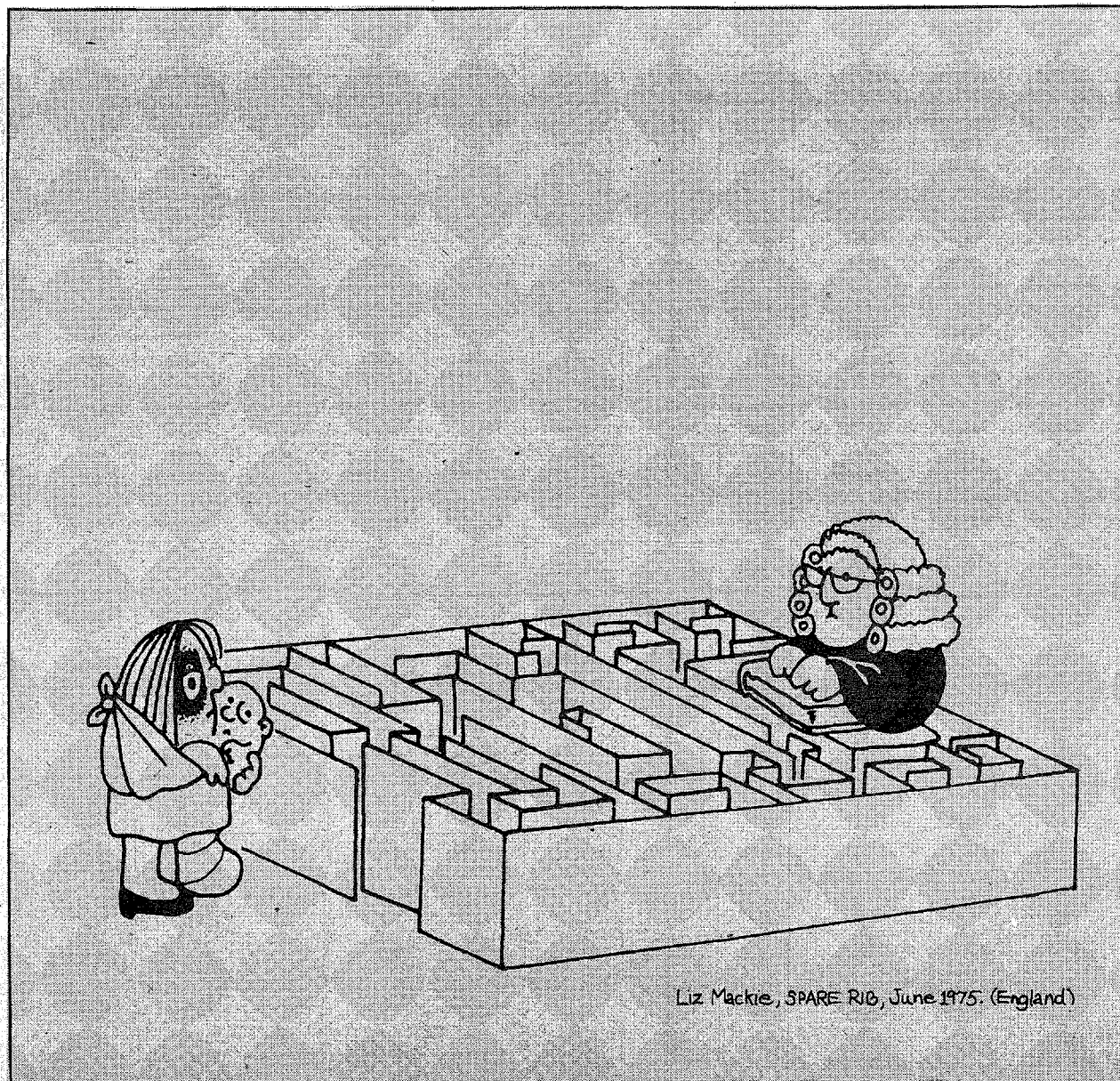
Finally, JAW-s is demanding that Parliament draft appropriate enforcement provisions to protect assaulted women, so that protection exists on the legislative level and isn't left to the discretion of police departments. As it is, police have not used their authority in a way that guarantees enforcement of a restraining order.

Apart from the petition campaign, JAW-s has developed a legal committee that will be in touch with Ontario Attorney General, Roy McMurtry. JAW-s will deliver to McMurtry a brief outlining the legal ramifications of the decision and will make a declaratory judgement asking the Court of Appeal to determine that the Supreme Court decision, based as it was on BC legislation, does not apply to Ontario's Family Law Reform Act regarding restraining orders. Chances are, though, that such a decision cannot be made without a test case. The test case would take a long time to meander through the courts and it is practically impossible to find an assaulted woman who can afford to live unprotected for the length of time (weeks or months) it would take for a judge to hear the argument.

Finally, JAW-s is anxious to do education and outreach. In the course of their campaign they will present some devastating facts:

- Wife battery is not a phenomenon confined to the lower classes. Women in upper income brackets are just as likely to be beaten by their husbands.
 - What kind of man beats his wife? Every kind.
 - There are only 700 shelter beds in Canada, 700 for 24,000 potential victims of wife assault.
 - Why don't women leave? Because they have nowhere to go.
 - By wife battery we don't just refer to slapping around: 60% of female homicide victims between the years 1961 and 1974 were murdered within a family context.
- Can we afford to let it go on? Obviously not. But the first step is to bring the issue out of the closet, to understand that wife assault exists because sexism exists, to come to terms with the fact that the existence of the battered woman is not evidence of the frailty of women but of the power of patriarchy.

And that we can never underestimate.



Liz Mackie, SPARE RIB, June 1975. (England)

ARTS

Canadian Images Film Festival

Creating Our Own Image

by Martha Keener

For the first time in its five-year history, the Canadian Images Film Festival devoted a major part of its program to the films of women. The festival, presented annually at Trent University in Peterborough, was held from March 11 to 14.

Some two hundred and fifty films were screened (mostly Canadian), ranging from minutes-long to feature-length, including documentary, fictional, animated and experimental. The programming covered several aspects of interest, including films from Canadian filmmakers' co-ops, a Michel Breault retrospective, National Film Board releases, the Genie Award nominees and winners, visual arts exhibitions, and, of particular interest to me, *A New Look: Women and Film 1982*, co-ordinated by Joyce Mason.

This area of the festival was the one I chose to devote my time to. Even so, it was impossible to see and hear everything; there were over seventy films and three major seminars. It's astonishing to me to realize that, although I felt occupied and preoccupied to the point of total immersion, I managed to attend a total of fourteen screenings (one of them only three minutes long) and the three *New Look* panel discussions. The time frame of the festival predicated the necessity of two or more simultaneous screenings, often of films that are difficult of access outside a festival framework. It was unfortunate that conflicts occurred among films with common themes or cinematic approaches, those which would presumably appeal to the same audience or individual filmgoer. I had a difficult choice on Friday, for instance. Ellie Epp's *Trampoline*, described in the catalogue as "composed entirely of static camera shots... a painterly film conveying a state of limbo," Mo Simpson's *Solitaire*, "a film... that has the potential to extract us from the routine of our lives and forces us to look inward," and Bette Gordon's *Empty Suitcases*, with "a concern for exploring issues of representation and identification in cinema" conflicted with Toronto filmmaker Patricia Gruben's films. Having to choose between two programs of feminist experimental films was frustrating, particularly in the knowledge that screenings are rare. To see *Trampoline* or *Solitaire*, one would have to arrange a private group screening, or hope to find them at a Canadian alternative film theatre such as The Funnel in Toronto. To see *Empty Suitcases*, one would have to go to the United States; it's not available in Canada.

I nonetheless chose to see the Gruben films, *The Central Character* and *Sifted Evidence* — probably an indulgence generated by my favourable memory of the former, which was shown at the Feminist Film Festival in 1980. *The Central Character* is a sixteen-minute black-and-white exercise in introspection, depicting a woman's attempt to keep chaos at bay, and the gradual disintegration of order into breakdown. The film is constructed through the use of printed text and graphics, step printing and an arresting "disintegrating soundtrack." Its use of experimental techniques is entirely congruent with its content, and once again I found this a very satisfying film on both the aesthetic and psychological levels.

Another engrossing film, one with a very different approach, was Michelle Citron's *Daughter Rite*. This colour film explores the relationships among mothers, daughters and sisters, and looks like a documentary. In fact, it is the result of interviews with forty women, which were the basis of a narrative fiction. Conversations between two "sisters" about their relationship and those of each of them with their mother are intercut with "home movies" of their childhood. The aesthetic and emotional accessibility of this film is such that I would love to be able to see it with my daughter, my mother and my sister!

The newest film from independent American filmmaker Barbara Kopple, maker of *Harlan County, U.S.A.*, had its Canadian premiere. *Keeping On* is a dramatic film about the difficulties of unionizing an Alabama textile factory. It is a sensitive, absorbing documentary-like look at the meaning of the experiences of the organizers and workers and their families. There was also a late-night screening of Kopple's 1971 film *Winter Soldier*. It is what is called a "talking heads" film; that is, it is composed of scenes of people talking about their experiences. In this case, it is a film made at a conference of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. It is gripping and horrifying. The strength of this film is such that Kopple says it has been suppressed in the United States.

At times, I had trouble reconciling my cinematic appreciation with my political beliefs. For example, Nelly Kaplan's feature-length *Nea* is a fiction about a brilliant schoolgirl who is writing an erotic novel, decides she needs personal experience, and persuades (with little difficulty!) her publisher to have an affair with her. He, not surprisingly, exploits her both personally and financially. Next comes the sticky part: to get back at him, Nea cleverly and elaborately stages a scene to make it appear that he has raped her. This ruse is wittily presented on the screen, and my first reaction was to laugh and cheer her on. After some reflection, however, I felt co-opted. Rape, and the society it reflects, is such a serious issue that I am uncomfortable with a light-hearted superficial use of it as an amusement.

The films that spoke most personally to me were those of San Francisco filmmaker Barbara Hammer. In her introduction, Hammer said that her films represented a combination of her sensuality as a lesbian, and her aesthetic experiences as a twentieth-century human being — a synthesis that epitomizes to me the meaning of lesbian sensibility. A sampling of Hammer films: *Haircut*, a woman's ritual in which as the hair grows shorter, the freedom and lightness grow larger; *Double Strength*, the stages of a lesbian relationship between two trapeze artists; *Our Trip*, an intimate, joyful backpacking trip in the Andes; *Sync Touch*, an exploration of lesbian aesthetics, the connections between sight and touch.

As well as these and many other screenings, the other events of major interest in *New Look* were the panel discussions: Women Making Films: Integrity and Control; Feminist Film Theory: Aesthetics and Politics; and Pornography, Eroticism and Censorship. Time and space preclude detailed discussion of all of these; I would like to concentrate on the latter, which was very thought-provoking.

Moderated by Barbara Halpern Martineau, feminist writer, filmmaker and critic, and Varda Burstyn, writer and theorist, the panel was composed of Kerri Kwinter, writer and critic, Susan Cole, journalist and cultural commentator, Bonnie Klein, the above-mentioned lesbian feminist filmmaker, Julia Lesage, feminist critic and teacher, and co-editor of the film journal *Jump Cut*, and Paule Baillargeon, actress and the director of *Anastasia, Oh Ma Cherie* and *La Cuisine Rouge*.

The panelists each spoke for some ten minutes on various aspects of the complex and intertwined issues of pornography, eroticism and censorship. And then Barbara Martineau met the challenge of summarizing the discussions, speaking of the problems of putting together realities which are contradictory, conflicting and congruent.

Kwinter raised the question of why, particularly in Ontario, cinema is the only art subject to prior censorship, and suggested that the government perceives film as a more intense and personal medium, and therefore more threatening, than other arts. She suggested that competent obscen-

ty laws, child protection acts and hatred legislation can be seen as at least as effective as prior censorship, which judges arbitrarily and without appeal.

Cole presented her feminist perspective on the pornography industry. Women are presented by pornographers as voiceless, powerless, willing victims. In pornography, the woman as willing victim is fantasy, but the violence depicted is done to real women. Pornography is propaganda for male domination; the pornography industry is a symptom of it, but is also its agent and an active force in its perpetuation. Cole posed the question of how to dismantle the pornography industry, and suggested that the long-range goal is to eliminate the market. In the meantime, some alternative controls might be considered; obscenity laws might be re-evaluated; political action by women must be ongoing; hate literature legislation should be updated to include sex; the current censorship system should be examined; heavy taxes could be imposed on the industry; and sex education should be improved and broadened to "bring sex out of the closet."

Klein described her experiences of censorship in relation to *Not a Love Story*. Ontario is the only province in which the film can't be seen publicly. She said that the standards of the Ontario Board of Censors, with its dictum against the portrayal of penetration or ejaculation, do not touch the issue of abuse of women. For example, one of the most horrifying images in *Not a Love Story*, that of a supine woman writhing with a revolver being pushed in her mouth, is allowable by Board standards because she is fully dressed. Klein said that in Ontario discussions of the film tend to evolve into talking of censorship rather than pornography, thus subverting the issue of the film.

Hammer suggested that in out-of-balance times such as ours, which are weighted by controlling rational interests, we are in need of art, especially erotic art. Art can be described as the representation of the elevation of the human spirit, and the enrichment of an undernourished part of the experience of human beings. Erotic art can be the expression of deep communication and intimacy, transcending the limits of finiteness. We need to reclaim our imagery, in particular lesbian imagery, which has been depoliticized into an unusual personal event. Hammer said that when informed experience is repressed or censored, it will come out in another form. If erotic expression were supported in our culture, there would be a diminution of pornography. Erotic expression is part of the basis of a new feminist language.

Lesage spoke of the difficulties of talking about pornography. She ascribed them to three unavoidable intersecting realities; we live in a rape culture; there is a great variety in human sexuality; and we live in an image culture. Anger at living in a culture in which rape is an ever-present possibility tends to make rage readily ignited. Ignorance of each other's sexuality and fantasies limit discussion of people's experiences of pornography. In our image culture, pornography is influential in other areas, such as advertising. The entire world of images offers women abusive images of ourselves.

Baillargeon spoke of her practical experience of censorship; in particular a film she acted in, *Vie D'Ange*. When she saw it four years later, she confessed she didn't like the film's violence. But at the time, it was banned in Ontario because a man and a woman in it were making love and "got stuck." Said Baillargeon, "It wasn't shocking in Quebec!"

Martha Keener is a Toronto photographer, who recently moved from London, Ont.

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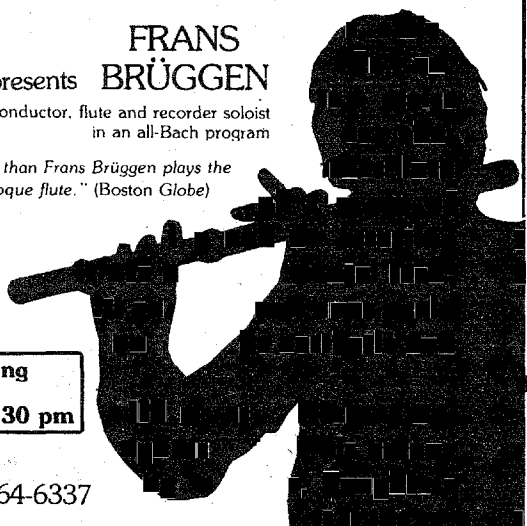
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Barbara Halpern Martineau

Life Before Art

"I speak about pornography to make money," said feminist theorist Julia Lesage, "and while I'm travelling I speak about Nicaragua as my political action." The statement is the kind of oversimplification I have come to expect on issues relating to social change — it throws a harsh light in dark corners. Julia Lesage bears good news about Nicaragua — during the month she spent down there last November teaching a Super-8 and slide-making workshop for women, she also took many slides and "hung out" with women in the neighbourhood where she lived. Her resulting slide show and talk (presented in Toronto on March 10 by Canadian Action for Nicaragua) is a testimonial to the atmosphere of calm optimism she found there, where people living in poverty and in the aftermath of a debilitating war for independence are filled with hope and a spirit of cooperation. "There are no single issues in Nicaragua — all struggles are seen as part of the whole."

The word on pornography is not so good. In the course of several lectures at York University, and in her presentation at the Canadian Images Film Festival at Trent University, Lesage discussed the reasons why it is difficult for women and men to come together to speak about pornography reasonably and constructively. "We live in a rape culture, a culture where it is thinkable that men can rape women. There are cultures, like China, where rape is not thinkable." That we live in a rape culture, that we live in a culture saturated with images of women as objects, as victims, as playthings, that we have very different sexual preferences and very little tolerance for each other's differences — these are the reasons cited by Lesage for the levels of guilt and rage which choke rational discussions of pornography. In the past two weeks, I have come to understand, through personal experience, why a feminist might feel cynical about the value of speaking publicly about pornography.

Lesage's presentation at Trent was part of a panel discussion of eroticism, porno-

graphy, and censorship from a feminist perspective. Eight women — six panelists and two moderators — sat in front of the audience in the places usually occupied by one, two, three, maybe four authority figures. Eight women, all feminists, each with a different perspective, from Québec, from Ontario, from California and Chicago. Surely the audience would perceive authority in a different light, faced with eight different and differing women. As one of the moderators of that panel, I received a lot of warm response afterwards from women and men who were fascinated and delighted to hear what for many of them was their first public discussion of these issues, certainly the first in a feminist context.

Some of the audience, however, became very uncomfortable. Some men expressed enormous concern that this feminist junta was somehow threatening their civil liberties. As one man put it, in loud angry tones, "It's none of your goddammed business what crap I choose to masturbate to." The only "coverage" of the entire event by the mainstream print media was a personal commentary in the *Globe and Mail* by a woman apparently committed to this man's cause of patriarchal privilege.

I have no illusions about the function of prior censorship as exercised anywhere in Canada — I know that I and my friends are likely targets of any sanctioned censorship within our patriarchal system. I agree with Berkeley film maker Barbara Hammer, another member of the panel, that the expression of erotic experience, particularly of female eroticism, and more particularly of lesbian eroticism, is a rendering visible of that which has been suppressed, repressed, at the cost of whole consciousness. Pornography and censorship are facets of each other, aspects of a split society based on authority and repression. I see prior censorship as a protection racket, imposed upon us by the same system which threatens us by its pornographic definitions of sex roles.

However, the question to be resolved is

one of tactics: How to proceed to, as panelist Susan Cole put it, "dismantle the pornography industry," without invoking the spectre of censorship and cries of wrath from civil libertarians. We already accept, without serious question, the appropriate application of law against dangerous forms of expression such as shouting fire in a crowded theatre, preaching genocide or extermination of any racial or ethnic minority, slandering or libelling individuals. How then do we accept that anyone has the right to slander, libel, invoke violence against, and advocate rape, mutilation and murder of women and homosexuals?

I would like to go on record now as saying that this outrage in our daily lives is of a magnitude far more serious than the implied loss of liberty to have "any crap" a man, or woman, might choose to have available for masturbation. Life before art, I say; stop rape, mutilation and murder first. I demand that anti-censorship activists join me in the struggle against violence against women, and children, and gays, and men, and I insist that that struggle have priority.

I say this in full awareness of the importance of free speech and free artistic expression. The situation, I think, is very similar to the situation of women in the left in the late '60s and early '70s, a situation which led to the resurgence of feminism. Yet again, I am being asked — no, told — to put women's needs in second place. Coalition politics only work when the basic goals of any one group are respected by the coalition, and I do not see that the right of artists to violate basic human dignity has ever been justified.

After the panel at Peterborough, after Carole Corbeil's distorted commentary on that event in the *Globe and Mail* (Monday, March 15), I feel the need to repeat myself, to attempt to be perfectly clear. I do not advocate prior censorship in any form. But it is not my priority, because of the way the struggle has been constructed, to defend the

free expression of patriarchal sexuality, not when women and children are constantly abused in this rape culture, not when "free expression" is linked to the oppression of my entire sex. Life before art, sex without violence, people before property.

The *Globe and Mail* was sympathetic in its reportage of how the Polish people have boycotted and protested performances by Polish artists who have supported the government against Solidarity. Evidently some forms of artistic expression are seen to be deserving of censure. The *Globe* also saw fit, in its freedom, to ignore the screening, as the highlight event of the Canadian Images Film Festival, of scores of new films by women from all over the world. In her eloquent concern for a man to endlessly proclaim his right to "any crap" he "chooses to masturbate to," Carole Corbeil conveniently omitted to mention that the man in fact *did* get to speak his piece, and that it was subsequently pointed out that women and girls are exploited, hurt, even killed (remember snuff movies?) in the production of such innocent "crap." Leaving aside the important question of the effect of such crap, the circumstances of its production is, contrary to said righteous man's contention, my goddammed business.

Yes, I demand the right to speak freely, provided what I say does not materially injure any person. Yes, I demand the right to masturbate, or make love, freely, provided my actions injure no one, and depend on injury to no one. That is the context in which I believe any discussion of censorship must take place, so that the mockery, the outrageous travesty in which "freedom" is invoked to show pictures of women, real women, bound, gagged, strung up like meat, for no purpose other than profit, will no longer be tolerated, but exposed for the double-speak it truly is.

Barbara Halpern Martineau is *Broadside's* film columnist.

The Personal Is Apolitical

Last month Susan G. Cole wrote that *Personal Best*, the film about two Olympic athletes involved in a lesbian relationship, was not bad for Hollywood. This month Lois Fine responds with another point of view.

by Lois Fine

It is obvious that Robert Towne, director of *Personal Best*, was never a Lesbian. I would venture to question whether he has ever met one. His film, although it attempts to deal with the portrayal of a Lesbian relationship, ends up as nothing but a regular Hollywood movie, replete with fast cars and pretty "girls." Set in a male-defined dynamic where women talk to each other as men, it adopts all the old clichés while boasting consciousness. Towne may have thought he was being liberal by including the controversial issue of Lesbianism, but his statement smells, faintly at first and then distinctly, of patriarchal reinforcement.

The phalli in the movie ranged from women's fists to flagpoles to batons. In the very first lovemaking scene, Chris (Mariel Hemingway) holds a very long-beaked bird lamp up to Tory's (Patrice Donnelly) knee to examine a scar, her hand grasping the beak and pointing in the direction of Tory's crotch. Is this Towne's statement that after making love women still unsatisfied must reach for a cock instead of a cigarette?

Throughout their relationship, although Tory remains loving and sincere, there is an air of competition and an emphasis on gold medals. The women's coach, a slimy insecure ex-jock, reeks a tough hard male image and an obvious resentment of women. He wanted to be a man's coach. That would have been so much easier. After all, they don't complain when their feelings are hurt

or that they have their periods. These lines come at a time of high tension in the film and are obviously meant as comic relief. It is okay to laugh at what women take seriously.

There are racist jokes in the film, heterosexual jokes and scenes meant to make us laugh at a fat woman trying to jump hurdles. Just because it is all done in an air of 1980's openness (there are even male cheerleaders) it is still harmful content and the message is clear: women, faggots, fatsos and chinkos are invalidated in one swoop of the hand and the audience laughs in applause.

Tory's love for Chris seems sincere and believable, real and supportive. Chris, however, seems to be along for any ride that will stop and pick her up. She uses her body as she's been taught to — to get what she wants. She'll cry in anyone's arms. When her jealous coach tells her that Tory was responsible for her hurting her knee ("Your girlfriend's crippling you"), Chris stops seeing Tory, sleeps with her coach and tells him, "I'll get plenty of magnesium and calcium and anything else you tell me I need."

There was an obvious sigh of relief in the audience at this point, as the coach climbed on top of Chris and put her in her place, so to speak, underneath him.

Chris goes on to meet her knight in water polo armour. From then on, Tory is referred to as a "roommate," someone about whom she apologizes. Her new man is very big about it; he forgives her her depravity.

Personal Best could have been worse. It could have been blatantly cruel instead of subtly undermining of the relationship. It could have made the women seem like the usual heterosexually perceived image of Lesbians as pseudo-men. Towne, however, chose to use two beautiful women, attempted to portray them erotically, and

ended up just titillating male fantasy. He says himself in an interview that the reason he chose to portray women in a same-sex relationship was that "I would rather watch two women together than two men."

At no time is the word Lesbian ever used in the film (no use offending the audience more than necessary). In fact when Chris talks to Tory she refers to Tory as her friend. "We're just friends," she says "straight"-faced.

As inaccurate as this film may be in terms of describing a positive Lesbian relationship, it is still important that Hollywood has finally addressed itself to Lesbians. Lesbians have remained invisible to the silver screen for too long. It is important

that the public be made to recognize that two beautiful women, strong, athletic and independent can fall in love with each other and still smile. It is unfortunate that Towne chose to slot *Personal Best* into a disaster film formula: first shock the viewers then excite and titillate, and finally placate them with a happy ending. Chris gets her man, the towering inferno is extinguished, the Poseidon returns to port. Nothing is changed. Once again, Lesbians are exploited just as pornographic magazines publish "Lesbo Lust" as an added treat when *Hustler* becomes too mundane.


Lois Fine is a Toronto singer/songwriter.

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Sun, Fun and Georgia O'Keeffe

Deena Rasky describes the highlights of her recent trip through the American Western Sunbelt.

What is Berkeley, California like? Try to imagine the crowd from the recent International Women's Day taking over a whole town. No matter where you go, a political sign or message is within eyesight. Buildings are draped with flags criticizing foreign policy: "US Out of El Salvador!". Turn around the corner and you are in front of graffiti condemning the President: "Reagan shoots Geritol!" The parade of car bumper stickers adds to this street dialogue: "Question Authority!" "Try the Solar Solution to the Nuclear Problem!" "Witches Heal!". Even the standard grocery stores have been taken over by Natural Food Co-ops.

No wonder women-run businesses here are thriving. On a typical Sunday morning, the Brick Hut — made famous by Mary Watkins on her *Something Moving* funk/synthesizer album — has a waiting list that would make many a restaurateur cry. This simple, unpretentious restaurant offers standard fare — eggs, pancakes, sandwiches, etc. — but the low prices and the little extras that go into the preparation, such as the use of whole wheat flour in the waffles, or onions, green pepper and a dollop of sour cream with the home fries, make the difference. Not to mention the people who go there ... You can find an Amazon Kung-Fu teacher sitting next to an oil-stained trucker at the counter eating an identical breakfast.

"It's always crowded, got to wait for a seat but watching the people is some kind of treat. They got hippies, hoboes, Jims and Pegs Everything from drinks to scrambled eggs Just the place to shake your gloom Like being in a shrink's waiting room."

Brick Hut © 1978 Mary Watkins

Even though it was hard to locate, ICI: A Woman's Place, it was worth the visit. This bookstore is well-stocked, designed for wheel-chair access with spacious aisles, and has a special bin of periodicals with the proceeds going to women in prison. You could spend hours alone reading the announcements covering hundreds of square feet in the lounge and then plunge into an old sofa and chat with whoever's there.



Deena Rasky

Mary Watkins of the Brick Hut

The lounge converts into a workshop on certain evenings. As part of Black History Month, Mary Watkins spoke about her life and work there. She spoke candidly about her personal story and encouraged women to tell their own. Her upcoming album consists of full-scale orchestrations, so perhaps Womynly Way Productions can book her with the Toronto Symphony next season!

Within walking distance of where I was staying with my travelling companion was La Peña, the Third World Cultural Centre, bar/restaurant and lecture/concert hall. The building is decorated by a 3-dimensional mural found on the cover of Grupo Raiz's album, the Latin American instrumental folk band that performs with Wallflower Order Dance Group. Inside the building Grupo Raiz were now collecting tickets and stamping hands for the Adrienne Torf/Linda Tillery/Adele Chandler concert. No day care was provided for the concert but it didn't matter since the children were lovingly passed around the capacity audience. During intermission, Linda Tillery became a babysitter.

Not all our time was spent in Berkeley. San Francisco is only a Bay Bridge away. All those wonderful things you've heard about San Francisco being a lesbian/gay/feminist haven are true. Just as Castro Street is known for being a gay male centre, Valencia Street is becoming known for its women-run businesses. On this street there are two women's bars, a couple of gay/lesbian-run restaurants, a woman's bathhouse, Old Wive's Tales — the woman's bookstore, and a lesbian-owned beauty salon. I fell in love with the décor of one of the restaurants, The Artemis Society Café, with its deep avocado green walls, luscious floral prints and ornate walnut piano.

The further south one travels from San Francisco, the further one gets from political consciousness. Southern California is the perfect breeding ground for the likes of President Reagan. The car bumper stickers now read: "Guns, Guts and God Give Us Freedom."

Certain "feminist" places we visited in Los Angeles were disappointing because the women's movement seemed to be the "in" thing. Feminism can be more trendy, fashionable and profitable to certain people than a lifelong commitment to the betterment of women. It bothered me that the woman running a woman's bookstore was rude to us as customers, the goods were overpriced and she wouldn't give me a receipt in return for copies of *Broadside*.

San Diego wasn't much better. A café listed as feminist turned out to be more of a place for heterosexual men looking for a liberated fuck. But the town offered some bright spots. I met a friendly, balding transsexual who was an expert at winning the brass rings on a Merry-Go-Round. There was also the extraordinary sight of an Amazon Sweet Shoppe, "Home of Ice Cream Without Sugar Blues," right in the heart of the most banal suburban plaza. Imagine Mr. and Mrs. America with their 2.3 children walking into a natural ice cream store complete with spears, shields and the names of hundreds of women-loving-women on the walls!

There was actually a purpose to our trip besides sunning and funning and that was to meet the American artist Georgia O'Keeffe. Yes, young supplicants make quest to meet the Old, Prolific, Wise One. But how do you find her? Abiquiu, New Mexico is a very small town not known for its tourist motels, golfing and discothèques. The town is so tiny that our Ontario Motor League map of the southwest United States located it in the wrong spot. Luck was on our side because we found a motel owner — an artist himself — who not only knew the town but also precisely where O'Keeffe's home was.

It was an adobe castle on top of a hill. The view was gorgeous — in one direction you could see cow pastures, farmland, and rolling hills, and in another dark red badlands.

Once there, the challenge was how to meet this legendary figure when Gloria Steinem and Judy Chicago have failed. She is known for being abrupt to strangers at her door. Once she opened her gate to a stranger who asked to see Georgia O'Keeffe. "Front side!" she declared, then turned and announced, "Back side!" Then she turned again and briskly said to the speechless stranger, "Goodbye!" and slammed the gate.

Her place is not inviting to visitors. It is surrounded by a 6-foot adobe wall tipped with barbed wire, and signs on the door proclaimed in large type: BEWARE OF DOG. We found a raised trap door, probably leading to a cellar, which we stood on to see into the garden. A face appeared on the other side in one of the house windows, then disappeared. I decided then it was time to put my camera away and get out my violin.

I'm only an amateur violinist, but we knew Georgia O'Keeffe once played the instrument herself and for many years allowed the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival to reproduce her works for advertising posters. It was the only negotiating tool we had. We decided to wait until someone came out by a grouping of three stumps near a door. Sure enough, a young woman soon opened a gate, took a look at me and sternly asked, "What do you want?"

I had rehearsed my reply over and over again in my head. Hesitatingly, I asked, "Would Miss O'Keeffe like to hear some tunes on the violin?" She asked for my name, then quickly darted back into the house. A few moments later she returned, nodding and told us to wait five minutes while she attended to some chores. We whooped with delight.

When Georgia O'Keeffe finally came out of the house, I convinced myself it was all a dream. Otherwise I wouldn't have been able to function at all. She was dressed like she was in a 1948 photo except she now wore a black bandanna, black pants and carried a cane.

She had aged. Her eyes were a brighter red than the nearby badlands, her face weathered, liver spotted and lightly covered with downy facial hair, but her 95-year-old presence was as strong as ever. I started to explain who composed the violin pieces. She raised her hand to silence me and said it didn't matter. While I played she sat on a nearby stump with her head down and eyes shut. Afterwards, our conversation was brief but her replies were witty and filled with a youthful innocence. When I told her that I had only been playing the violin for a few years she told me I was very brave. I mentioned that one piece really needed a piano accompaniment. She raised an eyebrow and said a piano would be very difficult to carry about. I asked about her health. She paused, raised her head and gazed at me. "I'm healthy, don't I look it?" she replied with mock indignation.

Looking at my companion, she asked if her job was to follow me about. "No, I have a profession of my own. I'm an artist." Georgia O'Keeffe gave her nurse a knowing glance, then spoke: "An artist. Well, good luck to you." She must have believed me to be a wandering musician. "Who are you going to play for next?" she asked. I was taken aback. There isn't anyone that I'd rather play for.



Georgia O'Keeffe at home in New Mexico in 1948.

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Classics Revisited:

Women's Estate Has Firm Foundations

This review of *Women's Estate* is the second in a series of re-evaluations of important feminist and political writers and their major works published between 1950 and 1975. In the June issue of *Broadside*, we will feature Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*.

by Maureen Fitzgerald

Juliet Mitchell, *Women's Estate*. New York: Vintage 1973. Pp. 182, \$3.95.

Looking at a friend's full shelf of books on feminist theory, it is startling to be reminded that a decade ago there would have been just six or seven books there: Millett's *Sexual Politics*, Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*, Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, Engel's *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State* (without the introduction by Eleanor Leacock), the anthology *Sisterhood is Powerful*, and possibly de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*.

Until 1971, when Juliet Mitchell's *Women's Estate* was first published, there might also have been a photocopy of Mitchell's article "Women: The Longest Revolution," which was published in the *New Left Review* in 1966. I am told that socialist feminists of the day considered this article to be the most important analysis to date of women's oppression. In *Women's Estate*, Mitchell goes beyond the process of critique and reformulation of Marxist theory begun in the article: *Women's Estate* was then — and remains — a dazzling tour de force, a description and analysis both of women's oppression and the organization of women's liberation movements in North America and Europe. Its comprehensiveness is awesome. In addition to reviewing the specifics of the movement in England, Holland, Sweden, France, and the United States (with a few brief reflections on Canada), Mitchell puts the growth of the "second wave" of feminism in the context of the particular wrinkles of consumer capitalism that also produced the black movement and the youth movement of the sixties. Under advanced capitalism, there is an extension of consciousness (for the sake of expanding consumerism) and an expansion of education (for the sake of extending the number of surveyors of the process). Such an expansion of consciousness can backfire on the economic system that produces it.

The media that enables you to experience the feelings of the world, brings the Vietcong guerilla into your own living-room along with the whitest wash of all.

This development produced at the least a demand for fulfilment of the promises of liberal democracy (the ideology of capitalism) and at the most radicalization of those demands into a critique of, and rebelliousness against, the "system."

But Mitchell's work is not only comprehensive, it is also analytically adventurous. Rather than simply apply classical Marxist thought to the issue of women, she works with a reformulated Marxism that pays close attention to the ideological construction of oppression. But Mitchell's real originality is the way that she moves out onto the frontiers between wholly different systems of thought. Initially she says: "We should ask the feminist questions but try to come up with some Marxist answers." By the end of the book, however, it is clear that she is not going to be content with Marxist answers and we find her out in the terrain of psychoanalysis.

Both because of the analysis that she brings to her description, that is, the analysis of a particular historical moment, and the theoreticalness of her work, it can be an overwhelmingly difficult book. The style is terse; whole arguments are distilled into a few elegant sentences. When I was a young feminist I gave up on this book in frustration. I now find it a delight to read and I urge others who might also have given up to have another go.

The clearest, in the sense of the most accessible part of Mitchell's analysis, is the description of what she calls the key structures of women's situation: production, re-

production, sexuality, and the socialization of children. Even more interesting is her causal ordering of this into maternity, family, absence from production and public life, and sexual inequality. To start the process with mothering or maternity, Mitchell is answering some feminist questions with some very non-Marxist answers. As she rather dryly observes: "The biological function of maternity is a universal, atemporal fact, and as such has seemed to escape the categories of Marxist historical analysis." She doesn't, however, explore this "universal fact"; neither to my knowledge has any subsequent Marxist feminist analysis. It has remained a task of radical feminists such as Adrienne Rich.

Because she has given such a wide scope to ideology and has thus beat a path through the inadequacies of Marxist economism, Mitchell has taken radical feminism more seriously than it has ever been taken by a Marxist feminist writer before (or since for that matter). Indeed, part of the agenda of *Women's Estate* is a synthesis of radical feminist thought and what she calls abstract socialism. "As radical feminists demand, we must dedicate ourselves to a theory of the oppression of all women and yet, at the same time, not lose sight of the historical specificity in the general statement."

In many respects her book sets in motion a number of lines of inquiry that she hopes will in the end lead to "a scientific account of gender and sexuality which both explains the longevity of women's oppression and its specific form under capitalism." Indeed, looking at what is not covered in *Women's Estate*, or what is covered in a very nascent form, enables us to chart the intellectual and political developments of the last decade. The key words missing in this book are "misogyny," "women as the reserve army of labour," "domestic labour," and "compulsory heterosexuality."

It is interesting to note that there has been in the last decade a shift in feminist focus from a concept of "woman as sex object" (which Mitchell does cover) to violence against women (which she does not). "As a worker finds himself alienated in his own product so (roughly speaking) a woman finds herself alienated in her own commercialized body." More and more, women are also finding themselves bound, gagged, and mutilated in their own commercialized bodies. More and more we have come to recognize the depth and pervasiveness of misogyny. There is no mention of woman-hating in this book. This lapse leads Mitchell to make what I think is the one silly statement in the book. In considering the threat posed by women as non-unionized cheap labour she says: "Men are set against women by their own job insecurity. Only loyalty to traditions of feminine deference saves them. Courtesy unites, by its own hierarchies, what the economy divides." It is the "loyalty of traditions of feminine deference" that escapes me.

It is true that it is in the interest of capitalists to divide workers and that the division of workers along sex lines is an apparent and very usable, for capitalists, division. Because women, along with immigrants, can be pushed into and out of waged labour, they can be used competitively to expand the labour force and keep wages down. This concept that women form part of the "reserve army of labour", a concept put forward most comprehensively in *Last Hired First Fired* by Patricia Connolly, is not explicitly stated anywhere by Mitchell. Neither is the other side of this coin, which is the primary task of women, their labour in the home — housework to most of us, "domestic labour" to the Marxist scholar. When *Women's Estate* was written, it was apparent that housework was hard work. But no one had yet examined in detail how that unpaid labour contributes to the economic process through biological production of a new generation of workers and daily reproduction of the labour force through the sheltering, feeding, clothing, cleaning, and nurturing work of the housewife. Instead, Mitchell minimizes the role the family plays in economic production and concentrates on the ideological role of the family.

However, she does not neglect the

negative effect of the family. "By its very nature it is there to prevent the future." This is a feminist conclusion that is in danger of being lost in the present focus on validating the work that women do in their families. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that housework is carried on in isolated, miniscule, work units based ideologically (and, in fact, as long as women earn 60% of what men earn) on a male wage and female dependency. The overall effect on women is a conservatizing one. This, combined with what sometimes feels like a stampede of feminists back to the security, or perhaps respectability, of families, complete with marriage, makes credible Susan Harding's recent assertion (see "Family Reform Movements: Recent Feminism and Its Opposition," *Feminist Studies*, Spring 1981,) that "the feminist movement has been derailed into a family reform movement." The solution, as Mitchell points out, is not to call for abolition of the family but "the diversification of the socially acknowledged relationships which are today forcibly and rigidly compressed into it ... Couples — of the same or of different sexes — living together or not living together, long-term unions with or without children, single parents — male and female — bringing up children, children socialized by conventional rather than biological parents, extended kin groups, etc. — all of these could be encompassed in a range of institutions which match the free invention and variety of men and women." To some extent, feminist demands for universal, free 24-hour daycare, equal pay for work of equal value (a demand which absorbs Mitchell's criticism of the Equal Pay for Equal Work slogan), access to safe, effective birth control and abortions are as much the precondition for alternatives to the family as they are for family reform. But what we must also call for is an end to "compulsory heterosexuality." This brings me to the weakest and most dated section of *Women's Estate*.

At the time of writing, Mitchell saw sexuality as the weak link in the four structures of women's oppression. However, in her typically thorough way she also pointed out how, for women, this liberalization is more apparent than real and thus demonstrated how changes in any of the four structures are impeded by what is happening in the other structures. Looking at it today, she might stress even more emphatically the distortedness of that liberalization. She could not fail to notice that there is a growing and militant lesbian movement taking shape, sometimes within, sometimes alongside the women's liberation movement. She vaguely allows for a sexual liberation that would involve the "freedom of both sexes to transcend the limits of present sexual institutions," but aside from a passing comment about "the release of bisexual or homosexual possibilities in all of us" there is no mention of what is fundamental to a repressive sexuality for women, namely compulsory heterosexuality. Until we have the freedom to live openly as lesbians, no woman has real freedom. I wonder what Mitchell would have to say about this incipient lesbian movement. She demonstrates how, in the United States, the women's liberation movement grew out of the student power movement, which in turn grew out of the civil rights movement, and comments: "Each withdrawal (of these individual movements) has strengthened that segment and as none of the movements from which each emerged has disintegrated with success, so alliances with or influence with, these other radical movements have become possible." I expect that she might say the same for the lesbian movement.

Does Mitchell achieve the synthesis of Marxism and feminism that she sets out to achieve? Well, clearly she does not think that the feminist concept of women as the most fundamentally oppressed people and therefore the most revolutionary is to be counterposed to the Marxist position of the working class as the revolutionary class under capitalism. She asserts that because women's position within the overall system is an oppressed one, the group as a whole, regardless of class position, is potentially revolutionary. But the consciousness of

women, even working class consciousness of most women — most women are, after all, objectively working class — is thwarted by their primary locus in the family and their secondary role in production. "Women working with women doing 'women's work,' employed as cheap labour, seeing their wages as secondary, can have social but not political solidarity amongst themselves. They cannot strike themselves because the work is not important anyway — a strike would assert that it is." I think she is being too pessimistic here. It is still true that it is often hard to develop trade union consciousness among women and that many women do not believe that they have a right to an independent living wage. But in the last decade we have seen a quite dramatic shift in that opinion as the number of sole support mothers and the rate of inflation rises. Women are entering wage labour out of their own interests and are beginning to organize and make demands specific to their needs as women workers.

Perhaps it is Mitchell's gloominess on the possibilities for immediate dramatic gains for women that causes her to end with a rather large question that bears on the long-term agenda in "the longest revolution." She has said that we need a "scientific account of gender and sexuality which will explain the longevity of women's oppression." In the end, her answer to this question is less to be found in a fusing of radical feminism and Marxist feminism than in a whole new field of discourse — psychoanalysis. Her belief in the promise of psychoanalysis is based on a very wide definition of this science of the mind, which she claims "charts the borderline between the biological and the social" and "explores the primary interrelationships between human animals that make them human beings." The borderline between the biological and the social is what anthropology also sets out to chart, and my own belief is that the answer to the question is more likely to be found in that science of society which has the access, if it would take it, to an analysis of women in pre-capitalist societies, Rumour has it that Mitchell is or has gone through the long process of becoming a psychoanalyst. While I don't think that it will answer that larger question, I do believe that, given her track record, she will do, and has done in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, for Freudian thought, what she has done for Marxist thought, namely reformulate and apply it to the question of the oppression of women.

Maureen Fitzgerald teaches women's studies at the University of Toronto and is a member of the Women's Educational Press collective.

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DAUGHTERS OF COPPER WOMAN



Sacred Stories Shared

marry Mowita, Copper Woman's first daughter. The transmutation of matter and gender is fascinating. By the time Copper Woman dies, she has become Old Woman. To facilitate death, she simply lies down, her skin splits, she leaves her meat and bones on the beach, and she comes from within, herself freed. "Then the daughter with the green eyes, whose name is known only to the initiates, lay down on a bed of skins and Old Woman, hidden in the skins, became pregnant. From this the green-eyed daughter lived as part of Old Woman and lived in Old Woman who was also part of her and in her."

It is from this lineage and this understanding of the spiritual transformation of matter that the Society of Women lives on. The children are not like ordinary children. They are the Children of Happiness. They are usually little girls, but sometimes little boys are born with the signs.

Then we jump a few generations and find that for centuries the women have not concerned themselves with politics or argument, leaving these things to the men to give them something to do while the women concern themselves with spiritual things and with studying the teachings of the society and keeping its precepts.

In doing so, the women become complacent and the men begin to dominate many areas of society and to encroach on women's domain. But Quolus, who is a "female figure and father of the four sons who fathered all ordinary people," intervenes and teaches the women how to deal with this problem. This is a story unto itself.

The Society of Women resumes its strength. It is intertribal, open to all women regardless of age, social status, political status, or wealth. No one can buy her way into it. One has to be invited to become one of the sisters. The education of all girl children is the duty of the members and these girls are taught by means of jokes, songs, and legends, and they learn how to care for and respect their bodies and bodily functions.

Then, from a woman's point of view, the first Europeans arrive with their missionary momentum. The repercussions are devastating. The European priests corrupt the men into believing their women are witches, un-

clean, and so undermine their patriarchal power. The little girls are sent away to white men's schools. By the time these girl children are allowed back to their villages, their minds have been so poisoned, their spirits so damaged, their souls so contaminated that they are no longer eligible for candidacy in the Society of Women. It is a painful description of the watering-down process of a female culture.

With the chapter entitled "Chesterman Beach," there is a dramatic, and for me unexpected, change in style. I must add here that by now for me the book had already triumphed, for despite a style which I found irritating, the story itself held power and manipulated the emotions deftly. With "Chesterman Beach," Cameron rolls away the stone and jumps into the modern age with a writing style that is sure and moving. A group of contemporary Nootka women are sitting around the docks watching the boats and listening to the CBC during an especially bad fishing season, which makes for long introspective conversations on the sidelines. The announcer on the radio alerts all fishing folk to a red tide warning, which leads Granny off on a remembrance of things past after the Europeans had infested the native population with tuberculosis, syphilis and other toxic elements of deadly persuasion. The awful account of the sexual abuse and murder of two young girls, followed by the revenge of the women one foggy night, is a striking adventure story that evokes a vigilante response.

At a time when Indian children can still be taken away from their families by Children's Aid because their families cannot provide them with "fit" housing, and when many of our native women peers have stories to tell of being raised far away from their kin, at a time when Indian children's welfare rights are still being bandied about by our legislators in federal/provincial negotiations, it is a balm to the heart to read about the roots of a society which takes care of its young.

A woman asks Granny what happened in the old days when a woman with a child died. "The grandma took over, just like I done with Ki-Ki, or an auntie, or a family that was good with kids. All orphans were the responsibility of all the people, espe-

cially the chief and the rich, and lots of times the orphans were better off for wealth and status than if they'd never been orphaned. Nothin' can make up for not havin' a family, but everyone tried to make up for it best they could."

To the woman who feels that she has been a warrior in another life, this is an instruction manual. "A warrior woman had to be able to recognize the face of the enemy or she couldn't be a warrior woman. Anyone who just dithered around like a muddlehead and didn't do anything about her problems would have her warrior headband taken away and she would have to start all over again, trying to qualify to get it back."

I don't know how the fisherwomen of the village of Ahousesat hear about the struggles of the present-day women's movement — certainly not through the CBC. However, Anne Cameron takes great pains in rerouting the stories of individual women back to contemporary feminist analysis. "So many good women who would have been in the Society of Women were killed off by diseases or perverted by residential schools and the women now are speaking truths about alcohol, pills and body shame, rape and other abuses to women. We are rallying by communicating, by participating in the women's movement, looking for truth, looking for support and love and a circle to join."

Finally, *Daughters of Copper Woman* contains many passages of beautiful writing and in many ways is a literary touchstone which gives vitality and valour to women's present-day struggles to remain resolute in the face of political and economic setbacks.

I still have some trouble in resolving the dilemma of taking words from the mouths of women who will not or perhaps cannot speak for themselves and only wish that the author had taken another leap of faith with her readers and admitted to some long stretches of poetic licence so that readers such as myself would not have had to venture into this book with such a large grain of salt.

Alexa DeWiel is the author of a poetry collection, *"Conversations with Bibi."* She lives in Ottawa and works for the Women's Programme, Secretary of State.

(Watch for an interview with Anne Cameron in the June issue of *Broadside*.)

by Alexa DeWiel

Anne Cameron, *Daughters of Copper Woman*. Vancouver: Press Gang 1982. Pp. 150. \$7.95.

I'm not much for myths of creation, be they Eve and Adam or any other descriptions of spontaneous combustion denoting birth of human life on earth. Nor do I take instantly to people who speak on behalf of others to educate the masses. Therefore, when faced with reviewing Anne Cameron's latest book, *Daughters of Copper Woman* — with its discreet introduction implying a trustee relationship between the author and a matriarchal, matrilineal society of women among the Nootka people of the west coast who were going to speak through Cameron to the general public — I began the book with great hesitation.

The first part of the book did nothing to assuage my difficulties. Written in that plodding, one foot in front of the other, style of many mythsayers, I was not thrilled to read about the union of Copper Woman with Snot Boy, the incomplete mannequin. Snot Boy was company, but although she "taught the small creature as much as she could, he never really seemed to learn properly." But Copper Woman had been brought to the island (Vancouver Island) by the Old Women at sacrifice to their own lives and it was up to these two creatures to procreate.

Their hybrid children emerge and my interest begins to wake up when Quolus, wife of Thunderbird, descends to earth and changes form to become the first man and

The Euguélonne: Out of This World

by Louise H. Forsyth

Louky Bersianik, *The Euguélonne: A Triptych Novel*. Victoria and Toronto: Press Porcépic 1982. Pp. 348. \$9.95.

"One man out of two is a woman."

The Euguélonne has come, via Québec, to English Canada. Her name proclaims her to be "Suave Goddess and Good News." She left her own negative planet, with its arbitrary division of the population into Legislators and Pedalists, on a quest for both her positive planet and the male of her species. She discovers, of course, that Earth is not the positive planet she is seeking and that the social traditions, the legal, religious, and cultural institutions of Earth's patriarchal society are the inventions of males whose will to power and dominance assures that they are of an alien and hostile species.

The Euguélonne looks with fresh and innocent eyes at the customs and practices which the people on Earth, both women and men, seem to consider to be normal. Her amazement at the discovery of a seemingly endless series of anomalies, absurdities, and injustices, as well as the language used to justify and legitimate the clearly illegitimate situation, allows Louky Bersianik to launch an energetic and effective satire on the fundamental misogyny of our social fabric. I am sure that no one can read this book without simultaneously feeling delight, revelation, and overwhelming outrage. The Euguélonne's arrival makes it impossible to continue to take society's most sacred and respected institutions seriously. The basis of their position of social

dominance is not at all self-evident. Our collective society is one of the most effective steps possible in bringing about necessary change. And that is precisely Louky Bersianik's purpose: "Transgression is progression."

Louky Bersianik first published *The Euguélonne* in French with La Presse in Montreal in 1976. As a result of its extraordinary originality, its perspicacity and lively, quotable style, it was an immediate success. Within two years it was republished in Paris, where it had great critical and popular success as well. Now it has been translated into English by a team of translators who have done an excellent job in retaining the delightful flavour and most of the rich qualities of the original language of the French text, with its puns, figures of speech, and a wide variety of innovative techniques used to sabotage and debunk the discourse of dominant ideology.

The difficulties faced by the translators were considerable, since Louky Bersianik exploits fully the subtleties of language as her most effective satirical weapon. Fundamental to *The Euguélonne* is Bersianik's belief that language is power. Those who exercise power, whether in private or public life, are able to do so because they believe they have divine right to the Word. Language has been used since the beginning of civilization to give form to a complex and pervasive version of reality which suits the masters and continues to be used to perpetuate and consolidate their absolute control of all human activities. The masters use language to determine what is to be or not to be. It is through language, then, used to reveal the world in a radically *other* way, that an effective challenge can be made to the

situation of male dominance. Jennifer Waelti-Walters's introduction is an excellent discussion of this and other major themes in the book. Waelti-Walters insists very rightly on the extraordinary originality of *The Euguélonne*.

In tone, form, and structure, *The Euguélonne* is constantly changing, ranging from pithy statements and rhetorical pronouncements to lyrical passages and flights of surrealist fantasy. Bersianik has used and adapted for her own purposes forms of expression from all literary genres and such non-literary fields as film and journalism. It is a work of literary creation which resists all attempts to classify it according to traditional criteria. It is fun to read, each page a new adventure. Its basic structure is based on a parody of the Bible. The fundamental purpose of this parody is to denounce the male pretensions of continuity throughout history, leading back to the moment of Creation when a male Godhead created Man and subsequently gave him the gift of the Word. Bersianik offers to the reader a delightful alternative version to the theological myths and has created her heroine, the Euguélonne, who, because she comes as a saviour, is the product of an "Emasculate Conception."

In the third Panel, the Euguélonne and her friends are subjected to "The Sermon on the Mount" pronounced by St. Siegfried (Freud), whose phallic science has become the ideological complement to traditional religion in the modern world. In her reply, the Euguélonne denounces the stupidity and pomposity of Man, using his own jargon to denounce his inflated and empty language, which is:

engendered by the Obelix or monolithic phallic complex, itself

derived from the *Herrschaft* or the Domination Psychosis, which is a phallic paranoia extremely dangerous to Humanity. Then, grafted on to this disastrous folly, come mild manias such as the Adam complex — also known as the Rib complex —; the Helios complex; the Cain complex; unidirectional Engendritus, symptomatic illness of the "fecundating" male; desire for a substitute-penis, such as a revolver or a machine gun; the severe superiority complex, compensation for the severe inferiority complex which is doubtless a maternity envy; the infantile wish to return to the maternal breast manifested during coitus, called a combination of breast-, vagina-, uterus-envy. And I give up! (pp. 196-7)

The Euguélonne is full of extraordinary characters, droll adventures, play with sexist stereotypes, and incisive statements, such as: "The measure of genius is its misogyny!" It is an inexhaustible source of insight into the feminine condition and its systemic, institutional foundation in society.

In addition to a number of texts published in various periodicals, Louky Bersianik, who is also a film-maker, script-writer, and author of children's stories, has published three books: *Pique-nique sur l'Acropole*, *Maternative*, and *Les Agénésies du vieux monde*.

Louise Forsyth teaches French at the University of Western Ontario, and has a particular interest in feminist literature from Québec.

Loving Women?

by Karen X. Tully

Loving Women should have been called "Loving Men" or "Women Who Are Loving." The show had very little to do with loving women. The posters scattered across the city in a publicity blitz are entirely misleading. With names like Margaret Atwood, Sylvia Plath, Jane Rule and Holly Near heading the advertisements I expected to be moved. I was not.

At The Palmerston Library Theatre, Loving Women, a production of The Women's Drama Collective, is a compilation of stories, poems and songs, most of which carry with them their own power, integrity and mythology, all of which was lost in superficial performances, weak transitions and an obvious attempt to create a slick production. With a little bit of censorship it could have played on television as a prime time variety show.

The show began on solid ground with a piece about women's strength, but the ambiguity of its direction and intent emerged as barb m. james sang, without any apparent awareness of the irony involved, "Why Can't A Woman Be More Like A Man?" from the outdated, sexist Broadway musical, "My Fair Lady." It was followed by tired old ballads about women as victims, interspersed with virginity and rape stories, that were delivered amidst flowery naivete.

Bertolt Brecht's, "Surabaya Johnny," a song about a woman who grows old waiting for a man who promised her eternal love as he skips out the door never to be seen again was romanticized when it might have been critically reviewed for the strategy of passivity it perpetuates, as was a story of the same theme, "How I Met My Husband," by Alice Munro, as was a housewife's lament in a song by Barry Manilow, as was an excerpt from Sylvia Plath's "The Bell Jar," in

which the narrator is caught in the old double standard virginity dilemma that reigned and repressed women in the 1950's.

To reiterate stories of women's social and political entrapment with an apologetic giggle, undermining the depth in the words by choosing to remain ignorant of their profundity is a step in the wrong direction. It is like ironing out old clothes and putting them on again.

The choice of material seemed almost arbitrary, a haphazard collection of old cliches, which were slotted one after the other, each piece unconnected to the one before it.

It was the "hat and cane" presentation of Margaret Atwood's poetry that was most disturbing. The text of the poem used is a startlingly honest account of the horrors of rape, clitorrectomy and pornography that cuts through all the historical justification for these atrocities. The power of Atwood's words was lost in a failure of the performers

to let go and speak from their insides. Instead, they were recited unemotionally, as if they were a recipe for chocolate layer cake.

There were a few good moments: "I'm a something else," proclaims barb m. james, "I want it all. They got to my mother and made her a woman, but they won't get me;" Jane Rule's, "Killer Dyke and the Lady," performed by Helen Porter, sympathetically portraying the vulnerability beneath the tough armour of a leather-clad Lesbian; and "Rehabilitation," an inside view of a woman prisoner by Jean Samuel, convincingly played by Randi Helmers.

The strongest creative element in the show was the drawing of a woman, her arms spread, almost wing-like, her head up, body expressing movement, which appeared on stage as a partial backdrop, and on the posters, program and flyers.

It is not with a callous turn of the head, but with questions, that I criticize the repetition of women's victimization in literature and theatre. Why not speak of women's strength, of women's desires, of women's work towards the creation of a more habitable, more human existence? Work that persists in spite of the Barry Manilow's of the world, in response to all the "Johnny's" who loved 'em and left, in anticipation of the not too distant future when we shall begin to ask, "Why Can't a Man Be More Like a Woman?"

Books to Note

by Elaine Berns

Prose

Sarah Aldridge, *Cytherea's Breath*. Tallahassee, FL: Naiad Press 1976

- a novel set in the first decade of this century. Emma Wycliff, a young physician concerned with women's oppression, becomes the protégé of Miss Margaret Bell, a wealthy Baltimore spinster and eventually her lover.

Sarah Aldridge, *The Latecomer*. Tallahassee, FL: Naiad Press 1974

- a novel about two very different women who meet on an ocean liner returning from Europe and who expect never to see each other once they reach New York. However, circumstances intervene and a love story unfolds.

Louky Bersianik, *The Euguélonne*. Victoria and Toronto: Press Porcépic 1982

- classic science fiction by one of Québec's finest feminist writers. The Euguélonne (Bearer of Good News) arrives from another planet seeking the male of her species and discovers how patriarchy permeates our society through religion, psychology, the law, and sexist language.

Ann Jones, *Women Who Kill*. New York: Fawcett 1980

- a thought-provoking look about women who kill, especially battered women who kill in self-defence. This is also an excellent analysis of how male society punishes female murderers in comparison with males who kill.

Margaret Randall, *Sandino's Daughters*. Vancouver: New Star Books 1981

- interesting interviews with many Nicaraguan women who participate in the war against the Somoza dictatorship — their roles in the revolution and also their everyday lives as mothers, daughters, wives, and sisters.

Anna Wilson, *Cactus*. London, Eng: Onlywomen Press

- an interesting novel about four women and how they affect each other's lives. Lesbian feminists Ann and Dee are trying to live together in a small English town; Eleanor is the local greengrocer, and Bea is a former lover of Eleanor's (now married) who comes for a visit.

Poetry

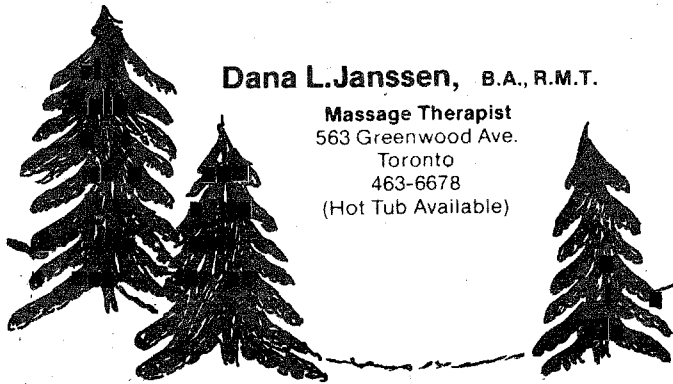
Betsy Warland, *A Gathering Instinct*. Toronto: Williams-Wallace 1981

(These books are all available at the Toronto Women's Bookstore.)

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She Who Laughs, Lasts



Deena Rasky

Kate Clinton

by Deena Rasky and Helena Feinstadt

A Kate Clinton performance changes your life in subtle ways. Can anyone who's seen her, hear someone say "Sarah Lawrence University" and not think of designer diaphragms with little alligators on them? Or how about when you go to the women's bookstore and see the *Lesbian Reader* on the shelf. Do you smirk while remembering her routine about seeing that book, turning red, her heart beating faster, then moving over to the self-help section to calm down?

Kate Clinton describes herself as a feminist — that's feminist and humorist combined. She says her best training came from teaching high school English for eight years. The approach sounds unorthodox, but as she explains: "It helped my timing and taught me how to deal with hecklers. It also taught me not to go into a blind murderous panic and walk off stage when things weren't going well."

It's hard to imagine her in a classroom, wearing a red and white polka dot dress with a braided border, tiny belt and heart-shaped buttons. She jokingly regrets getting rid of the dress, but not the role she had to play. Her involvement with the women's movement led her to the Women's Writers Center in Casinovia, New York, where she studied what she calls the three Rs — reading, writing and radicalizing. "I spent a lot of time writing about being a writer, and I am amazed at how I resisted writing in a comic voice. Although, at the time, I was rejecting dichotomies at the rate of one per week, I never questioned the serious/ humorous split."

She had written thirteen books of theory, poetry and short stories, but it was the *reading* while studying at the Women's Writers Center that had the strongest influence on her future and her career.

"It was real, radical reading time. I read Susan Griffin and Mary Daly; stuff I never

read in my straight education. This was only two years ago and I had just come out. I was politicized at the same time."

Mary Daly's books, *Beyond God the Father* and *Gyn/Ecology*, radically changed many women's ways of thinking. Kate Clinton describes her reaction as taking the top of her head off and scrambling up some of her oldest and best brain patterns. Few, if any, women would consider Daly's philosophical treatises as humorous. Clinton emphasizes that for her, "Daly's analysis of language made me listen more carefully to language and to the special language of humour. I heard finally whose butts are the butts of men's humour. Daly's analysis of men's thought in the land of reversals gave me the understanding of irony that I never got from any 'Satire and Irony, 203' course I ever took."

Clinton feels strongly that it's time we come to realize the power of our own humour. She isn't referring to the women who stand up and make fun of themselves — once again the joke is on us. To use Clinton's definition, women's humour is "making light" or "light enough to see where we're going and be able to move through heavy issues." She feels that the ability to laugh offers an important release. We need to be able to laugh at real issues together, while still being active in fighting the problems together. During her routine she spouts out: "I love labels... that's why I became a lesbian," or asks: "If abortion is murder, why isn't fucking a felony?"

In a radio interview with a straight ("heterosexually impaired") announcer, she was asked why there weren't more women com-

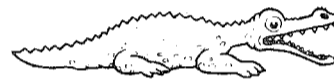
edians. She thoughtfully replied: "When you're funny, you're drawing attention to yourself and women are not supposed to do that. The only way you can do that is to be beautiful but quiet. I know a lot of little girls who were very funny, but when they hit thirteen, they had to conform." The same interviewer described her as very serious and an unlikely candidate for being a comedian. "If you want to hear a couple of lines of jokes, you'll have to give me a couple of bucks," she retorted.

Clinton believes that women's humour can be very sensuous and powerful. Her earliest and fondest memories are of laughing with her young girlfriends, tears streaming down their faces. Throughout her life, she has made a commitment to joy and sensuality with her humour, and as she puns, "Joy is not an easy woman to please." These feelings were reaffirmed when she read Audré Lorde's essay, "The Power of the Erotic." For Clinton, women laughing together are like women coming together.

"We make sounds we don't ordinarily make. We gasp for air. We rock back and forth. And there's soft moaning after."

Kate Clinton sees humour as a pathway to feminist visions. The future, according to Kate, just might be around the corner. After all, the gay "Gay 90's" are coming up and whatever happens, with Kate Clinton around there will be plenty of fun.

"Women laughing together are an intimation of what we can be together in community. There is a natural equality, playfulness and joy which is essential for our survival and eventual triumph."



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TO SUBLET: Room in flat, Mid-April through September, College-Ossington area. No cats please (due to allergies). Rent is \$138.00 per month inclusive. Contact Ruth, (416) 532-7963 or 925-6568.

DUPLEX AVAILABLE: Coxwell & Danforth, Toronto, facing park. \$375/month. Available June 1. Call Leslie, (416) 463-9529.

FEMINIST JEWELLERY — pens, pendants, rings — labyrises, women's symbols, and IWY pieces. Silver or gold. \$14.00 up. Contact Gail Kenney, 71 The Lindens, 100 Bain Ave, Toronto M4K 1E8. (416) 469-0184.

PIANO TUNING & REPAIR. Reasonable rates. For more information call Jocelyne Wallingford at (416) 531-3148.

SPRING WEEKEND for women at Tapawingo, Parry Sound. April 23-25, 1982. Hiking, canoeing, big lodge with fireplace. \$50 prepaid. Send cheques to: Women's Camp, c/o 52 Admiral Road, Toronto, Ont. M5R 2L5. For more information, call Susan (416) 921-4755 or Kye (416) 967-7118.

QUOTES BY CANADIAN WOMEN: Do you have favourite quotes to share with other women? Send us your fully-referenced quotes by women (famous and unknown) and we'll credit you in our book. SD Publications, 133 McLeod St., Suite 3, Ottawa, Ont. K2P 0Z6.

GREENPEACE needs energetic, friendly canvassers for a proven door-to-door fund-raising program. Evenings and weekends. Good commissions. Call Pati, (416) 922-3011.

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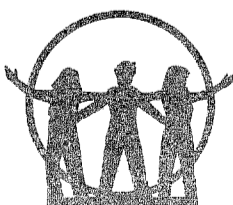
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WE NEED YOUR HELP!

In order to raise funds for the Toronto Addicted Women's Self-Help Network, we want you to clean out your 'closets' and donate clothes, records, books, etc. to a garage sale. Contact Sharon Barkley 656-8404, Dot Mercer 484-8232 or Maxine Walsh, 922-2485. The sale will be at Trinity United Church, 427 Bloor St. West in Toronto; Saturday, June 5th. We need volunteers.

Toronto Addicted Women's Self-Help Network

Week of April 4

- **Sunday, April 4:** Poetry Reading by Roberta Morris, Susan Zimmerman and poetry by Leila Parlow read by Paulie Thompson, Abbey Bookshop, 168 Brunswick Avenue, 2 pm.
- **Sunday, April 4:** Toronto Area Caucus of Women and the Law (TACWL) presents "Rape Law Reform: Ten Years of Waiting," a feminist critique of Bill C-53. Debates room, Hart House, University of Toronto. 7:30 pm.
- **Sunday, April 4:** *P4W: Prison for Women*, award-winning film about five women in the Kingston Penitentiary, Bloor Cinema, 504 Bloor Street West, 7 pm.
- **Sunday, April 4:** Reel to Real Film Festival presents "Deadly Force", sponsored by the Citizen's Independent Review of Police Activities, Bloor Cinema, 2:00 pm. \$3.50.
- **Monday, April 5:** CBC Stereo's "Ideas" presents a series on women, including "The Experts' Advice to Women," and Debates on Sociobiology and Pornography. Weekday evenings, till April 30.
- **Tuesday, April 6:** Lost Women Composers Concert/Lecture Series presents Romantic Women Composers, 5:30 pm., Trinity United Church, 427 Bloor St. West, 5:30 — 7:00 pm. \$5.

- **Tuesday, April 6:** Lesbians Against the Right (LAR) meeting, 730 Bathurst Street, 7:30 pm.
- **Tuesday, April 6:** Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party" shows at Musée d'art contemporain in Montréal, Tuesday through Sunday until May 2.
- **Monday, April 5:** "Clay and Process" exhibition at Metro Toronto Library Gallery, 789 Yonge St. Till April 26.
- **Thursday, April 8:** Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) meeting at 519 Church Street, 7:30 pm.

Week of April 11

- **Thursday, April 15:** Opportunity for Advancement presents a Training Program for social service workers, eight sessions \$175.00, 245-4241.
- **Thursday, April 15:** Women's Cultural Building Collective, meeting for women interested in culture and feminist issues, 519 Church Street, 8 pm. 366-6295.
- **Friday, April 16:** Weekend excursion to "The Dinner Party" in Montréal (from Toronto) \$125 includes transportation, accommodation, two evening meals, entertainment; limit 38. For information call Margaret or Phyllis, YWCA, 487-7151.

OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

TORONTO WOMEN'S EVENTS CALENDAR

April/May

- **Friday, April 16:** Women and Mathematics Education presents "New Developments in The Math Education of Women," Royal York Hotel, Manitoba Room, 5:30 — 7:00 pm.
- **Saturday, April 17:** Women's Storytelling, share stories, songs dance with other women. 175 Carlton, 8:30 pm. Pay what you can.
- **Saturday, April 17:** "Shaping the Future — Career Challenges for Women in the Eighties," Sheridan College, 8:30 — 4:30. Call Mariruth Morton, 459-7533.
- **Saturday, April 17:** Women in the Eighties, Work, Technology and Change"; workshop at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, 763-5141 ex 57 or 58.

- **Saturday, April 24:** Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL), Eighth Annual General Meeting, 9:15 - 4:00 pm. Debates Room, Hart House, University of Toronto. Speakers include Dr. Henry Morgentaler, Kathryn Morgan and Morris Manning. 961-1507, information and registration.

- **Saturday, April 24:** "Women in the Eighties: Work, Technology and Change," workshop at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, 763-5141, ex.57 or 58.

- **Saturday, April 24:** Mama Quilla II plays at the Lower East Side, Hotel Isabella, 556 Sherbourne.

Week of April 18

- **Sunday, April 18:** Poetry reading by Ronnie Brown, Amanda Hale and Ross Leckie. Abbey Bookshop, 168 Brunswick Avenue, 2 pm.
- **Tuesday, April 20:** Toronto Board of Education and the Women's Bureau, Ontario Ministry of Labour, present "Make It Happen," a film about alternative career patterns for girls and women, 5 and 6 pm. OISE, 252 Bloor St. West, auditorium; cash bar 4:30 — 6:30.
- **Tuesday, April 20:** Lesbians Against the Right (LAR) meeting, 730 Bathurst Street, 7:30 pm.
- **Tuesday, April 20:** Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley Street, presents "The Club" — women play men in Eve Merriam's play about a men's club; 364-4170; to May 1.
- **Thursday, April 22:** 'Treatment Issues with Battered Women.' A Training for Helping Professionals. OISE, 252 Bloor St. West. 9 am - 5 pm.
- **Thursday, April 22:** Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) meeting at 519 Church Street, 7:30 pm.
- **Friday, April 23:** Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL) presents "Right Out of History: the Making of Judy Chicago's The Dinner Party," Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, 7:00 and 8:00 pm, \$5.00.

Week of April 25

- **Monday, April 26:** Farmworker Week: Theme: "Women in Struggle." For information, call Faye at (416) 485-5781 evenings, or Tom Watson at 482-7423, ext. 219. Till May 2.



Kathy Shaw

Don't miss *Broadside's* Yard Sale.

- **Saturday, May 1:** Womynly Way presents "Alive," Harbourfront Brigantine Room, 9:00 pm, tickets on sale now at the Toronto Women's Bookstore, \$6.
- **Saturday, May 1:** Fight the Right Festival. Cultural events, workshops, displays. Harbord Collegiate, 1-5 pm.
- **Tuesday, May 4:** Rexdale Immigrant Women's Project presents "Women, Money and Work," Albion Community Centre, 1485 Albion Road, 9:00 to 11:00 am.
- **Thursday, May 6:** Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) meeting, 519 Church St., 7:30 pm.
- **Friday, May 7:** National Press and Allied Workers and Allied Workers Jazz Band perform a benefit concert for the Toronto Elizabeth Fry Society, Palais Royal Ballroom, 1601 Lakeshore Boulevard West, \$12.50, 924-3708.
- **Saturday, May 8:** "Cherifa," women's science fiction, fantasy discussion group meets; for more information call Susanna Bennis, 535-7932.
- **Saturday, May 8:** U of T Women's Newsmagazine Benefit Dance. All women welcome. UC Refectory, 15 King's College Circle. Tickets at SAC, U of T. 8:30 pm.

- **Friday, May 14:** "Future for Life Skills" conference: panel discussion and workshops. Conference Centre, Glendon College (Bayview and Lawrence). Registration information: Sue Clancy (519) 759-7200 (Brantford).
- **Saturday, May 15:** *Broadside* Yard Sale. 382 Brunswick Ave., Toronto. 11 am — 3 pm.
- **Tuesday, May 18:** Lost Women Composers, a lecture/concert series presents Baroque Women Composers, Trinity United Church, 427 Bloor Street West, 5:30 - 7:00 pm \$5.
- **Tuesday, May 18:** Rexdale Immigrant Women's Project presents "Housing," Albion Community Centre, 1485 Albion Road, 9-11:00 am.
- **Thursday, May 20:** Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) meeting, 519 Church St., 7:30 pm.
- **Friday, May 21:** Womynly Way presents The Reunion of CT and April, Innis College Town Hall, 2 Sussex Avenue (at St. George) 8:00 pm. Tickets \$5.50 advance, \$6.50 at the door.
- **Friday, May 28:** Toronto Rape Crisis Centre presents a weekend of information and action on violence against women. 964-7477, (to May 30).

'Outside Broadside' is a monthly feature of the paper. To help make it as comprehensive as possible, let us know when you are planning an event.

In explaining your event (see coupon), keep it short — max. 25 words. Copy that is too long, or with incomplete information will not be printed.

We need to know well in advance: two weeks before the month your event's happening.

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What: (type of event) _____

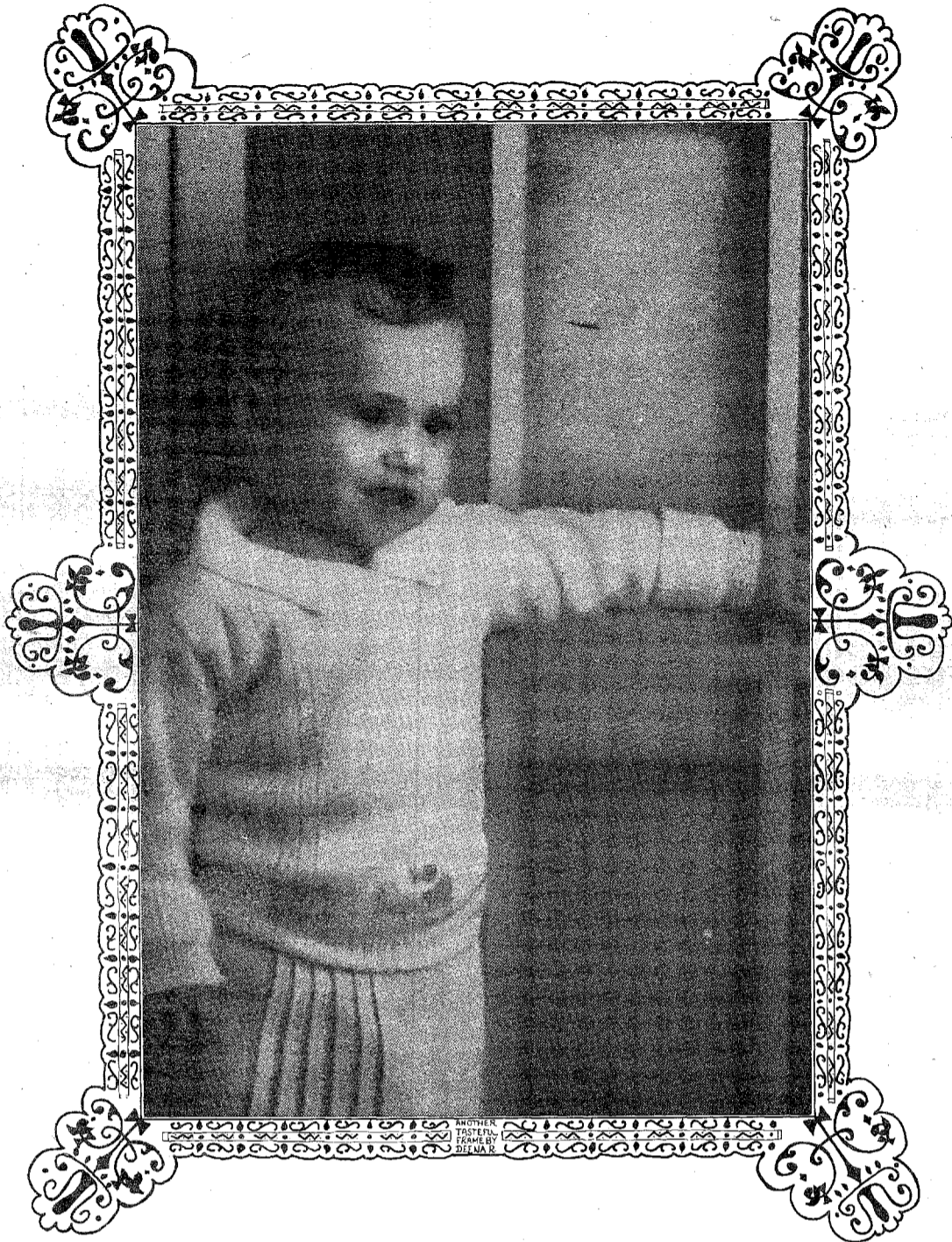
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