



JUDY STANLEIGH

Women's Action for Peace

SEE STORY PAGE 4.

INSIDE BROADSIDE

FEATURE

THE PORN PLAGUE: Susan G. Cole explores the porn industry, the pornographic image, men's "right" to fantasize, the pros and cons of censorship and regulation, and what is being asked of women in the porn debate, namely silence. (Reprinted by popular request from *Broadside*, November 1981.) As well, Cole provides readers with new information on the obscenity laws. Page 6.

NEWS

MORE THAN A CLINIC: Abortion clinics, now undergoing police raids in two Canadian cities, are more than medical centres. They are symbols of women's need and determination to continue the fight against the odds and win justice. Lisa Freedman and Susan Ursel give an update on police tactics and women's strength in adversity. Page 3.

QUEENSLAND WOMEN:

During an eight-month stay in the Australian state of Queensland, Anne Innis Dagg first saw many similarities in the role and status of women, here and there. But in fact she found Australian women have a lot further to go to secure even basic rights. Page 4.

COMMENT

PEACE-FUL ACTION:

Margaret Hancock of Women's Action for Peace is interviewed by Leslie Coates and Jeanne St. Pierre about the coalition's on-the-line activities, its feminist politics, its philosophy of civil disobedience and non-violence. Page 5.



OUTSIDE BROADSIDE:

Don't miss our calendar of events for Toronto women, for August and September, 1983. Page 11.

ARTS

WOMEN'S WORDS: At the Vancouver Women and Words conference, Canadian women met to share skills, to network, to socialize. They learned about book distribution, censorship, and child-rearing. But the conference, says Eve Zarembo, was mainly about language, about women rewriting the language. Page 8.

MIDNIGHT HAGS: A new theatre company, Midnight Hags, is producing a play, *Burning Times*, about the European witch burnings of the Middle Ages, which will be in Toronto mid-August. Page 8.

FORCHÉ'S FIELD OF VISION: In Carolyn Forché's El Salvador poems in her collection *The Country Between Us*, there is no comfort to be had, says reviewer Carroll Klein, no escape from the unspeakable realities of El Salvador. "It should be required reading," says Klein. Page 9



FLASHBACK: This year's sleeper film, *Flashdance*, about a woman who "welds by day and dances by night," is, according to Donna Gollan, as traditional in its portrayal of women's roles as *Rocky*, or the "women's weepies" of the 1940s. Is this a film of the 80s? Page 9.

LETTERS

Feminist Press

Broadside:

I would like to commend Philinda Masters's article "Feminist Press: Front Page Challenge" (June 1983). For anyone who has wondered however do we survive, and why, it is an enlightening article.

Two points. While we Anglo feminists are justified in admiring and perhaps even envying the activism and productivity of our sisters in Québec (especially in theatre and the arts), it is instructive to have a closer look at the situation. *La vie en rose* indeed circulates 10,000 copies — in fact, it has increased its print run to 17,000 — but as of March 1982, it had only 1800-2000 paid subscribers (they were hoping and working towards 3000). In other words, no more than Sharon Batt predicted for any feminist publication in Canada (or any 'small magazine' for that matter).

But the key is that *La vie en rose* has access to two major distributors — a commercial one with 8000 outlets across the province of Québec and a political/parallel distributor which saturates newsstands in Montréal. Seven thousand copies are sent to each; if they get rid of half of them, they figure they're doing okay (40% sales is about average for most magazines, they argue). So while that may account for as much as 10,000 sold, it often remains more optimistic than actual. Which is not to suggest that *La vie en rose* doesn't merit

a wide readership — it is an attractive, accessible publication. And when you consider that its total market (in terms of population) is less than a third of ours (not including possible US sales for us), they are certainly doing well.

For anyone who has worked in feminist publishing in Canada, distribution is the bugbear and it's exciting to see the possibilities when that is somehow overcome — as it is in Québec for *La vie en rose*. In the rest of the country, we have only the limited resources of the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association in southern Ontario.

Second point. Last year, the Women's Programme, Secretary of State, commissioned a study of the feminist print media. Readers interested in "deep background" to the *Broadside* article should write for copies from The Women's Programme, Secretary of State, Ottawa, K1A 0M5, and while they're at it, inquire what's happened to its recommendations.

Needless to add, the undersigned is the author of that report as well as likely being responsible for the 10,000 circulation figure initially given for *La vie en rose*. Incidentally, keep up the good work; *Broadside* is among the best.

Eleanor Wachtel
Vancouver

Cambridge Raid

Broadside:

Perhaps you are aware of the recent raid on a houseful of activists in Toronto. Following the search and seizure a woman was charged with procuring an abortion and subjected to hours of questioning — not on the charge itself but about the Litton bombing. The charge was used as a pressure tactic to try to gain information on activities of others in the house who have done support work for the five presently being held on the Litton rap. She of course knows nothing about the Litton bombing but was offered a deal if she would tell them something.

The raid itself was clearly a violation of the right to protection against unreasonable search and seizure, but the Crown is attempting to seal the information used to obtain the warrant. If the warrant is successfully quashed, evidence obtained in the raid may become in-

admissible. This is the first strategy of defence on the abortion charge.

For more information please call (416) 463-8925. A new number should be given.

Sunday Harrison for
Colleen Crosbie Defense Fund
67 Cambridge Defense Committee
Toronto

Broadside:

On Monday, June 13 a houseful of political activists on Cambridge St., Toronto (near Broadway and the Danforth) was raided by the Litton investigation squad of the Metropolitan Police. Brandishing warrants, the 10 or so police involved proceeded to conduct a 4 1/2 hour search, seizing, among other things, the mailing list for *Bulldozer*, a prisoners' rights magazine. While newspaper columnists discuss the very real threats to civil liberties posed by the proposed new civilian spy agency, assaults on people with differing political, social and spiritual beliefs are occurring at this very moment.

These assaults are part of a wave of repression directed against the right of peace activists and others to engage in free association in their efforts to halt the nuclear arms race and to build an alternative world, the rights of gays and lesbians to engage in consensual sex, the right of women to control their own bodies, and the right of magazines to exercise free speech.

We must act or soon no one will be safe. The undersigned groups and individuals hereby: (1) condemn the harassment of politically active people; (2) demand that the evidence leading to the issuance of the warrants in the Cambridge case be made available to those concerned; and (3) express our public concern over the potential erosion of civil liberties implied in the proposal for the new civilian spy agency.

We seek the endorsement of groups and individuals who share our concern for the right to be politically active. For information or to endorse, contact Bruce Baugh, 533-4105. Margaret Atwood, Law Union of Ontario, Ald. Jack Layton, *Bulldozer*, CIRPA, Cruise Missile Conversion Project, Development Education Centre, Prof. Frank Cunningham, Philosophy, U. of T., Free the Five Committee,

Guys and Lesbians' Association for Disarmament, Grindstone Co-Operative, International Women's Day Committee, Kick It Over!, Lesbian Mothers' Defense Fund, Prof. Graeme Nicholson, Philosophy, U. of T., Prison Solidarity Collective, Quaker's Committee on Jails and Justice, Right to Privacy Committee, Rape Crisis Centre, Strike, Toronto Nuclear Awareness, Women's Action for Peace, Women Against Violence Against Women.

Movie Music

Broadside:

I am gravely disturbed by the tone of Rasky and Feinstadt in the piece called *Movie Music* (vol. 4, no. 9) and I find I cannot let it go unaddressed. In the past two years or so, I have noticed a tendency on the part of some feminists to exploit their right to criticize at the expense of the rest of us.

Somehow, in the Canadian women's movement a type of incestuous nouveau-intellectualism has fostered the growth of various self-appointed critics whose sole qualification is the fact of their having been in the audience. Rasky and Feinstadt's comments regarding *CT and April* were not only coarse and vulgar ("...her lip movements were looser...") but their attitude toward the performers was patently arrogant, flippant, and basically, lacked respect. When these women say that April's having used three guitars constituted more variety in the music, I know they don't know music from hogs.

I would have thought that you at *Broadside* would have asked them to clean up their own act before putting down that of someone else.

Marlene Wildeman
Westmount, Quebec

Broadside

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The *Broadside* Collective does not necessarily share the views contained in any article, even if the byline belongs to a collective member. Views of the Collective are expressed **only** in editorials, and essays signed by the Collective.

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EDITORIALS

This is Broadside

Item: May we remind Toronto friends of *Broadside* of the **Special Dinner at Crispins Restaurant?** Collect a group of friends and reserve a table for this late summer occasion. Tickets are \$25 and can be reserved by writing: *Broadside* Dinner, c/o O. Locky, 52 Admiral Road, Toronto M5R 2L5. The date to remember is **Monday, August 22.**

Item: At the end of August *Broadside's* rates are going up. The newsstand price will go from \$1 to \$1.50 (remember when you thought \$1 expensive?). The subscription cost will go from \$10 to \$13. So act now, take out a sub at the old rate, and save 25%.

Item: Under the **Wintario/Halfback** program, new readers can now apply non-winning Wintario tickets (dated after May 5, 1983) to *Broadside* subscriptions, up to half the value of one sub. One old ticket is worth 50¢. Our sub price is currently \$10, so send us 10 (signed) tickets and \$5 (or 4 tickets and \$8, whatever adds up to \$10). After September 1, 1983, the cost of a sub will be \$13 and the same rules apply (eg, send us 13 tickets and \$6.50). Start saving those old Wintario tickets now.

Item: After this issue, the *Broadside* collective takes a break, but we'll be back at the end of September, in time to celebrate our **5th birthday!**

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Broadside for \$18 —
save money and
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DATE: MONDAY, August 22
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Name _____

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Deadline August 15



Battle lines: an example of the forces pro-choicers fight against.

Down, Not Out

by Lisa Freedman and Susan Ursel

The Raid

On Tuesday, July 5, 1983 at approximately 11:30 am, carloads full of uniformed and plain clothes police arrived and the raid on Toronto's Morgentaler Clinic was underway.

Before the raid that day, two undercover police began to set the stage. A man and woman approached the clinic as a couple frantically searching for abortion services. Concerned about their confidentiality and their peace of mind, a few supporters outside the clinic asked insistent reporters not to photograph the couple or ask them questions. They discreetly let the two pass through the already growing crowd of media. No one realized they were police.

Andrea Knight, a pro-choice supporter, later commented: "I felt angry and used because of all our attempts to be as supportive as possible. I felt used and betrayed by her (the policewoman)... because of the support I tried to give her and what she did with it." Ironically the first concern of many on the outside was for the "woman patient" they thought had been caught in the raid.

Once the couple were inside the clinic, the police began to arrive. Uniformed police and members of the Morality Squad swarmed up the front and back stairs of the building. Anyone in the way was roughly shoved aside. It was clear they had planned this raid down to the last melodramatic detail and they weren't going to let anyone upstage them. They were completely flustered when folded cardboard cartons being carried into the clinic kept slipping out of their hands. Their irritation clearly showed at this unexpected hitch in the production.

At this point shoving began between the

police and spectators. A major confrontation was avoided though. At that moment the clinic staff, who had stayed in the clinic to give reassurance to patients, appeared in the doorway. They waved to the crowd and raised their hands in the symbol of victory. Supporters immediately moved back to allow them through the crowd, but the police watched passively as the three women were hounded and harassed by the media. It fell to two supporters to escort the women away from the reporters, who were apparently intent on adding another trauma to these women's day.

Where did all of this support come from? Tight organization, dedication and level heads helped make sure the support materialized when and where it was needed. Under the watchful eye of the police, people used the phones in the Toronto Women's Bookstore to activate other phone networks. The message was simple: "This is it. They're here." Those phoning for support were the eye of the storm. Calmly they set aside their anger at the bluster of events occurring around them, and got the word out.

By mid-afternoon the police had left, carrying off clinic files and equipment. One doctor was arrested and two others had warrants issued for their arrest. Supporters were left with an office, a phone and a passionate belief that the clinic must remain open. After fielding phone calls requesting advice and offering support they closed the office at the regular time of 6 pm. And opened it again the

next morning at 8:30 sharp.

At the turn of the century the powers that be used brutal force feedings, threats of violence and beatings to intimidate and discourage women who fought for universal suffrage. Today the tactics are slightly more subtle but all the same are intended to intimidate and thwart our efforts to realize justice.

Police in Winnipeg have given the term "stormtrooper" a new lease on life in Canada. Brutal and degrading invasions of women patients' privacy have characterized the raids on the clinics in both of these cities. While the attorneys-general in these two provinces moralistically intone that the law must be upheld, far more basic rights than those enshrined in man-made law are being violated.

Feelings about the Toronto raid operate on two levels for those who were outside the clinic offering their support. At one level they are angry at the tactics of the police, and question the legality of their actions. But at a deeper level the clinic has become a symbol in this city. It stands for the constant struggle women are engaging in simply to realize the basic right to self-autonomy and control of one's life. It stands for the determination of women against all the odds and their will to win justice.

How does an academic question like "Would you be willing to go to jail to defend your rights?" become a personal and political fight? Andrea Knight was there the day of the raid and helped efficiently marshal support

outside the building on Harbord Street. She probably speaks for many who were there during the raid and for more who heard about it later on the news or from their friends.

"I got involved because I thought it was an important struggle for women. I thought we could win an important victory for women across the country. It's not just a philosophical question. I feel I'm on the front lines of the struggle. These women (who are coming to the clinic) need help... I would go to jail for this. I'm not sure I would have before, but I would now. When I heard the police boots it was a reality as it has never been before."

We often talk of our rights as if they were some kind of abstraction, interesting points for debate but not something we feel are very tangible. The actions of the Toronto and Winnipeg police and the attorneys-general have helped women all over Canada bridge that conceptual gap. It is we who are being threatened, it is we who must defend ourselves and our sisters and it is most assuredly some of us who have and will continue to lay down our lives in this cause. For helping to make the battle lines so very clear we can genuinely thank those men in blue and their bosses who cower behind the facade of "law and order."

Lisa Freedman and Susan Ursel are two Toronto feminists still struggling to understand the logic of the legal system.

Women Like Me

The Women's Business & Networking Directory

Ontario

1983 By Karen Fraser

Looking to hire a woman plumber, lawyer or nuclear physicist?

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A Peace of the Action

The following article is an interview by Leslie Coates and Jeanne St. Pierre with Margaret Hancock of Women's Action for Peace:

How did Women's Action for Peace start?

Margaret Hancock: The original group was called Women for Survival. It was a group that came together in 1981 for an occupation of Ontario Hydro, in Toronto.

What were your demands at Ontario Hydro?

Essentially to stop the development of nuclear power in Canada and the exporting by Ontario Hydro of Candu reactors to other countries, because that was how nuclear weapons were being proliferated by Canadians. Obviously, Ontario Hydro would have nothing to do with the demonstrators. So the women stayed in the lobby and got arrested. After the occupation, the Women for Survival group continued and planned a conference called Women & Militarism, at Grindstone Island. At the conference there was a strategizing session and out of that session came the seeds of Women's Action for Peace.

Alliance. The coalition is made up of groups from Ontario and Québec who organize direct actions focused on all forms of militarism and oppression. They carry out some education around those issues as well. So far, the primary thing they have done is organize the Litton action last November.

What is the role of Women's Action for Peace within the Alliance?

At this point the Alliance is making up its basis of unity and so we have direct input into the fundamental agreements that the coalition will have. And I know that the coalition is struggling with the implications of feminism and anti-sexism and what that means for militarism.

Ottawa, October 30-31, 1982

What role did Women's Action for Peace play in the October 30 Ottawa demonstration against the Cruise Missile?

We saw our task to be that of organizers of a women's contingent. First of all we wanted



JUDY STANLEIGH

Women's Action for Peace contingent in Ottawa, October 1982.

What kinds of issues emerged at Grindstone?

There seemed to be a need to develop an analysis about women and militarism, to define why there was a relationship and what the implications are, not just for women, but for the whole Peace Movement. Disarmament does not happen in a vacuum. The analysis has to address itself to things like the oppression of women, the oppression of third world people, labour issues and investment abroad. You have to see all the links together. This is happening to a certain extent, but we felt there needed to be a time and place for us to come together and try to work on our own.

What connections do you see between the Peace Movement and the Women's Movement?

It is important that women come to see the Peace Movement as more than something that exists on the fringes of feminism. I have heard women say that they were turned off by the Peace Movement coming to the women's community and saying you have to drop all your work because peace is the only concern and without survival you won't have your issues anyway. You just can't say that; it is not valid — it's just another time when women are told that their issues are not important. And I think the Peace Movement has gone through some changes and gained some credibility through dealing with feminism. Peace activists are beginning to broaden their approach.

How do you feel about being part of the Alliance for Non-Violent Action?

I think it is very important to work in coalitions these days and particularly one like the

to publicize the fact that there would be a space for women and why we would walk together. And for that reason we put out a flyer listing a lot of events, and we had our Statement of Unity on the back which explained why we thought it important to walk as women. And then we worked on things like the banner and the May-pole and the visible stuff to have for people to walk behind that day.

Did a lot of people stay for the workshops the day after the demonstration?

Yes — hundreds of people. It went really well. There was a feminism and militarism section and so we proposed the topics and did some work on getting resource people for those workshops. Jo Vellacott and I facilitated one on bringing up children in a militaristic society.

Litton Industries, November 11, 1982

From your Statement of Unity you mentioned that non-violence training was required in preparation for the demonstration of non-violent direct action at Litton Industries. Would you discuss the women's affinity group and its participation in the November 11 action?

After you gather together a group of women interested in doing the civil disobedience action, you have a day long training session with two women trainers who are skilled at imparting their knowledge about civil disobedience action. They take you through things like group building exercises because at that point you don't know a lot of the people in your group. You talk about the

Excerpts from 'Statement of Unity,' Women's Action for Peace:

We are gathering at this time as a contingent of women because we perceive the undeniable clear connection between the bomb-making militarism of this male-dominated society and the oppression of women everywhere. We see nuclear weapons as the inevitable manifestation of a patriarchal society which believes that "might is right." (October 30, 1982)

In recorded history, the connection between patriarchal domination and constant warfare is clear. Unless we want to be yet another anti-war movement, we must clearly challenge this patriarchal domination, both in our personal lives and in the institutions and workplaces outside the home. We must expose the relationship between the power which produces nuclear weapons and the power arrangements which oppress us as women in our daily lives . . .

basic political analysis and philosophy of what you are doing, why you are doing it in this non-violent way, the strategies for that day and the legalities involved.

You do a lot of role playing so that you get experienced about how it feels if the police are hostile and how you might respond. It's quite remarkable, some people found that they were terrified and couldn't say or do anything. It became very important for them to see what the group would say or do and we discovered that we really need the support group.

So there are people who do support work for those participating in the civil disobedience action?

Yes — that means they do anything from carrying your personal belongings once you actually move into the action to doing jail support work. As we go over possible scenarios we try to help people understand that the support work is just as important as the civil disobedience work because you really can't have one without the other.

Did you carry out any other preparations for the November 11 action?

We made tombstones — white tombstones — with remembrances for different women. They said things like 'For every woman raped in every war', 'All women who were victims of assault or rape by their lover, friend, husband, son or father.' We tried to pick different areas of the world where we knew women were victims of persecution: women in Hiroshima, Viet Nam, Native Indian women. We were going to hang these on the gate at Litton. We had dyed long strips of cloth and we were going to tie them together and weave the gates shut. We were acknowledging the seriousness of the situation but also we were speaking of a hope for life and the weaving was a creative expression of this.

In the end the tombstones were hung from the police barricades because we were not allowed near the Litton gates.

The media used the word 'overkill' for the number of police officers that were there at Litton, almost outnumbering you . . .

They were — there were more than twice as many police as there were people doing the civil disobedience. I think the numbers were 30 to 150. There were 700 to 1000 people at the support rally.

I guess it really was, for me, the most powerful experience of confronting the power structure in our society. Seeing them there, and they are so physical and they were everywhere, cutting off our options so fast. We were in the bus trying to get to the spot to get out and I just felt trapped and they had such power, so much money behind them, and everything on their side.

At the same time, because you are doing something so actively to say what you believe, you feel very powerful. You say to yourself "I am going there and I am going to sit down and face them." There is a marvellous transformation that happens to people doing civil disobedience, and before November 11 I'd only been able to watch it on people's faces as they got arrested. It always amazed me to see their faces when the police would take them away, because they weren't afraid.

Non-violent action

How do you explain your desire for non-violent action as a means to social change?

When you look at the way the world is structured, the power structures that exist and all the destruction that those in power wreak on the world then you have to see that in order to change that structure radically, you have to treat other people and other groups of people in an equal, just way. Otherwise, you will just perpetuate the same power structure. So if you are talking about radical social change I don't see that you can really use any other technique.

It reaches out to the power that is in every individual person and encourages us to take that power, I think we lose this in our culture. So we have to learn what our rights are on a basic human level and to say these are my rights and I am not going to let you take them away anymore. That is an incredibly empowering thing for people to do. Non-violence can reach out to other people where traditional authoritarian ways just can't.

If you wish more information about Women's Action for Peace or wish to get involved, people to contact are Margaret or Susanne at 923-4215.

The women involved in the interview wish to bring to your attention the recent publication of an excellent anthology of writings by women on feminism and non-violence; Reweaving the Web of Life, edited by Pam McAllister, available at the Toronto Women's Bookstore and SCM.

SPACE for \$34

For as little as \$34 you can buy this space in **Broadside** to advertize your restaurant, store, concert, anything (multiple insertion rate).

Déjà Vu Down Under

by Anne Innis Dagg

I have just returned from an eight-month stay in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia where I talked to scores of women about women, and collected hundreds of newspaper clippings on the same subject. A sense of *déjà vu* began as soon as I arrived in Queensland: *Not a Love Story* was banned — banned in Queensland, the most right-wing state in the commonwealth, as in Ontario. Other news stories, too, could as easily have been in the Canadian papers as in the Brisbane *Courier-Mail*:

- A feminist group was organizing "Reclaim the Night" rallies in response to the large number of rape attacks — a recent survey found that Australia has more rapes per capita than any other country in the world.
- Harassment in the workforce was being discussed. One example was a student who needed work to put herself through university. When her supervisor said he would fire her if she didn't have sexual relations with him, she killed herself with an overdose of pills.
- The Right to Life Association was pressuring politicians to change the law so that any abortion would be illegal. At present abortions in Australia seem somewhat easier to obtain than they are in Canada.
- A study showed that movies featuring violence and pornography made men who watched them more violent as a result. Anyone with \$95 (\$115 Can.) can buy a videotape portraying torture, rape, and bestiality.
- A study recommending sex education in the schools was tabled by the Queensland government as being too revolutionary. Yet 53 percent of girls in Australia have had sexual intercourse by their 18th birthday. At Queensland schools each girl must take a Mothercraft Course to learn to diaper a baby, but she must not learn where a baby comes from!

We are better off in Canada than in Queensland, because at least on paper discrimination here is illegal. In 1980, the United Nations convention for elimination of all forms of discrimination against women was signed by the commonwealth government, but all the states must ratify it before it comes into effect. Queensland has so far refused to do this, even though discrimination against women is rife:

- The doorman of a large hotel refuses to allow female taxi drivers to pick up passengers, nor can they pick up fares from certain government departments or from Parliament House.
- A surgeon was asked to pay an insurance premium double that required of a man for a similar policy. Under the policy, men were covered indefinitely, but women were covered for only two years.
- Many stores refuse credit to women unless they have a male guarantor.

Even in the state of Victoria, which has an Equal Opportunity Board, counteracting prejudice is not easy. One servicewoman had complained nearly three years before because a Returned Servicemen's League Club had refused to allow her to join. Before the final board ruling, the club had so vilified her that she was awarded \$2000 as compensation for damage to her reputation. She won the case, but understandably no longer wanted to join the club.

Women's prospects in Australia are improving as more women are elected to the government, but progress is slow. Now there are six women in the House of Representatives, and some women senators have also been elected. A few fight for women's rights, but some do not. In either case it must be hard being a woman politician in Canberra, the capital city. One opposition member complained of harassment because a Minister hugged and kissed her in the parliamentary dining room. Two others who noted that a minister had missed a ministerial meeting were publicly referred to by him as "nasty little girls."

The male politicians' view of women is little different from that of the average man:

- One airline pilot announces to his passengers at take-off: "Good morning ladies and gentlemen, from Captain Virtue and his virgins." The passengers laugh but the "hosties" don't.
- A top surfer was quoted as saying he didn't like girls surfing. "They stick their bums out, they look awkward. I reckon myself they should be on the beach lookin' good."
- At cricket matches in the early afternoon men drinking beer gather in clusters to yell at passing women. If one wears shorts and a top, they shout "Get that top off, love" and sometimes "On second thought, keep it on." Then they fall about laughing at their wit. Later in the day, their jeers become too obscene to be quoted in the paper.

The Brisbane *Courier-Mail* reflects this general attitude:

- When women asked that a Year of the Lesbian be proclaimed, a woman columnist wrote that one might as well celebrate a Year of the Cockroach Lover or a Year of the Nose Picker.
- It advertises jobs for women and men under separate listings.
- When a woman with sons aged two and three gave birth to male triplets, it headlined the event "Triple Trouble for Dad."
- A journalist described the spectators at a boxing match as "mainly men but with a sprinkling of dumb blondes."

Of course some newspaper items reported good news for women, mostly those dealing with Firsts. During my stay the readers learned about the first qualified woman to become a rugby union referee, the first female forestry officer in the Queensland forestry department, the first federal government girl (sic) apprentices in Queensland, the first woman fireperson on the Queensland railways, and the first woman driver on a national speedway driving team.

Most news about women centred on the workforce, a vital issue as unemployment increases across Australia. Discussions such as "Are women taking men's (sic) jobs" were typical. At present 42 percent of the workforce in Queensland is women, with 62 percent of these married. In 1981, 35 percent of working women were part-time employees.

Because of heavy unionization, working women on the whole earn relatively more in Australia than in Canada — 76 percent there vs our 60 percent of a man's average wage. Sometimes the unions back up women's complaints to the hilt. When waitresses in a

Queensland tavern were pressured into wearing see-through blouses so that the bar would sell more beer, the union supplying the beer withdrew its services on the grounds that the women were being harassed. However, in spite of the union's efforts, the tavern continued to operate by ordering its beer from New South Wales.

Other unions have been anything but supportive of women, as workers have been laid off because of the recession. In Newcastle, 13 factory women were sacked on the advice of their union because they were married. Some of the union members who voted for this were men who themselves had wives working full-time, workers who had other sources of income, and workers who themselves had no dependants, unlike some of the married women.

In another Newcastle factory which had to retrench, all its women workers except the office staff were put on part-time work, even women with 20 years' service who did exactly the same job as men with one year's service. The single women with children were particularly incensed with this decision, which went ahead anyway.

In Canada, married women are usually considered to have as much right to work as single women, but this is not true in Queensland. The married women who work are defensive about their jobs, and often fatalistic if they are fired because they become pregnant. There is no unemployment insurance, nor can they get welfare in their own names. All of the housewives I talked to were against working wives, saying such things as; "Career women neglect their children," and "Married women shouldn't take men's jobs."

Single women are also discriminated against in the workforce. When a young woman answered an advertisement for recruits in the army reserve, she was told that the army needed men, not women, although no sex had been specified in the ad; the quota for women was full. A major remarked, "We don't seem to be able to get those males out of their panel vans, off the beaches and out of the pubs. I'm sure if they knew the unit was full of women they'd be rushing to sign up." In the Queensland police force, too, women are not wanted. The quota there is 8 percent women. There are 1000 women on the waiting list and although the police will hire 100 cadets this year, they will all be male.

The depressing statistics about women in Queensland go on and on: only 5 percent of principals in primary schools and 1 percent in high schools are women; only 3 percent of women hold managerial positions; about 5 percent of lawyers are women; of nearly 500 trade union heads, only 12 are women.

Whether women in Australia will forge ahead in the next few years will depend on the balance between the forward thrust of the women's movement and the negative force of the present recession.

Anne Innis Dagg is a resource person for Integrated Studies at the University of Waterloo, Ontario.



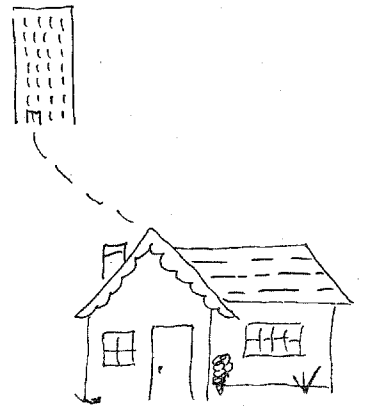
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Confronting Pornography

The following article is a reprint of an article originally published in Volume 3 No. 2 of *Broadside*, nearly two years ago. Since its publication we have had many requests from interested readers for copies and we now have exhausted our supply. We have decided to reprint the piece with some minor alterations and an update on changes in the Criminal Code with regard to obscenity. As a result of writing the article, Susan G. Cole began doing extensive research on pornography in Canada and is now writing a book on the subject.

by Susan G. Cole

The Pornographic Image

Most of us pretend it isn't there. Every newsstand is jammed with it. In the back of almost every variety store entire displays are devoted to it. Partly because it's the worst of our culture, and partly because we can't believe that the fear and loathing of women can be so strong, we try to shut it out.

The pornographic image. Woman in a state of ecstasy, the plaything of her male master; woman grovelling for more abuse; woman strapped in leather, straining to get loose; woman still hungry for the next lash. Who is she? How much longer, even as we avert our gaze, can we pretend that she isn't affecting us?

Essentially we tend to exclude the pornographic image from among those that really matter because the image is perceived to be a fringe phenomenon, part of the underside of our culture. But the profit figures associated with the pornography industry, greater than those of the film and record industries combined, suggest that this is big business and not a series of fly-by-night operations designed to cater to the transient and the furtive.

And the industry is far from underground. The makers of the National Film Board's "Not a Love Story," a film about pornography, travelled to the peep shows, the live shows and the trench-coated set to uncover horrifying images of women. But the most grotesque portrait was not to be found in the bowels of our culture. It was there on the cover of *Hustler* magazine — a woman's body churning through a meat grinder — available on every newsstand in the US.

We are expected to accept that the male aroused to orgasm by the sight of a woman being brutalized is a relatively benign phenomenon, that we should leave the poor fellow alone in his fantasy world. And who are we anyway to deign to exercise the kind of thought control that would judge anyone's fantasies? Fantasies after all, are an inalienable right. This would be a very useful question were it true that the male fantasizer is repulsed by his tendencies, filled with self-loathing because he needs to conjure up the image of a mangled female body for a sexual object that he is, at least in healthy quarters, supposed to love.

But he isn't conjuring up the hideous images. The pornographer does it for him. And the men in the films and photographs who shove bamboo up women's vaginas are not depicted as crazed weirdos. Quite the contrary, they are lionized, imbued with strange powers, role models, if you will, for the fantasizer. Whereas it could be true that a random male, may, if left to his own devices and fantasies, develop a sense that his proclivities are peculiar, that something is not quite right, the pornographic image presented in mass quantity serves the function it would in any mass medium. It legitimizes the consumer's disease. Far from bringing the consumer to terms with who he really is, the pornographer absolves him of his guilt.

Of course fantasies are an inalienable right, provided that they remain fantasies. The rise in the rape rate and the incidence of violence against women in the home provides a convincing argument against the notion that pornography is a safety valve that keeps men off the street and without any need to act violently. We are told nevertheless that the pornographic image is harmless and that under no circumstances is it ever translated back to real women in the real world.

The image itself is not a great deal different from the one that graces countless billboards or the movie and television screens. That "something about an Aqua Velva man" is the same awesome power the male has over the female in girlie magazines. The pornographer is no rebel. He reinforces images already prevalent in our culture. He is the absolver of the sexually dysfunctional male's guilt as he informs his consumer that the desire to violate women is not only acceptable but has its own rewards. With the possible exception of the advertising executive, he is our culture's most effective propagandist, designing as he does this vicious hate campaign. His success depends upon our silence.

Breaking the Silence

It is not always easy to break the silence. But as unpleasant as it is to accept, we have to face the fact that any opposition to the free dissemination of pornography is an unpopular stance: that resistance to the point of view is emotional and can evoke incomprehensible anger; that the tactics used to diffuse our arguments will be very, very dirty; and that any measure will be used to coerce us back into the cocoon of silence.

But what do we say? What do we do? We are uncomfortable with the unattractive option of censorship and with the fact that any desire to dismantle the pornography industry is shared with interests, the moral majority in particular, with



ILLUSTRATION BY GAIL GELTNER

whom we really prefer to believe we have nothing in common. Our hands are tied by liberals who balk at the notion of denying anyone freedom of anything and by artists who believe that their creative vision will be cramped by constraints imposed on them by an external body. For the most part, one can find a sympathetic ear to the notion that pornography is not good for women. But it is difficult to argue forcibly for solutions to the problem that don't raise the hackles of even the most progressive and well-meaning listener.

It would probably be useful if we were to stay away from the word censorship and replace it with the more acceptable "regulation." Regulation is actually a more accurate term for what should be done with the pornography industry and speaks more eloquently to the fact that only an infinitesimal amount of pornography could possibly fall under the rubric of art, which we are least likely to want to restrain. The rest is not art, it is *product*, and there is nary a product on the market that is not regulated in some way or which does not have standards to which the product must comply. So, when we say that the product must not celebrate violence against women and suggest that the censor administer that guideline, we are seeking to regulate in the same way as we say that white bread can contain only so much preservative or that hot dogs can contain only so much cereal.

This is admittedly a piece of fancy verbal footwork but it helps to place the pornography industry in its proper context. It is an industry and as such deserves no more special treatment than any other industry. There is no convincing reason why the pornography industry deserves a hands off policy, one which is accorded to no other capitalist venture.

The main drawback to stern regulation is the degree to which the guidelines may prevent the artist from exploring the potential for erotic art. But for our purposes, the proposed guideline in question provides no threat to anyone who wishes to depict graphically any sexual acts. Even the depiction of violence would be acceptable, as long as the perpetrator of violence is not portrayed as a hero. It is curious that an individualist has enough confidence in humankind to grant us the right to say anything about anything, confident the right would not be abused, and at the same time refuse to believe that an individual knows the difference between the glorification of violence and its depiction pure and simple.

The progressive-minded is worried most that regulation will be used against political dissidents and anyone else who supports alternative points of view. As a member of *Broadside*, certainly not a mainstream newspaper, I am keenly aware of such dangers. But I'm hardpressed to imagine that *Broadside* would be threatened by a clear guideline proscribing the celebration of violence against women in film. The assumption of the fearful progressive is that if we let the state regulate violence then the banning of everything erotic will follow closely behind; give the state an inch and it will take a mile. Bear in mind that the state has seen fit to regulate what is sold out of the Inco smoke stack without preventing us from continuing in our own backyards.

The issue of freedom continues, nevertheless, to be near and dear to the hearts of committed liberals, in spite of the fact that there does not exist a single social policy that does not to some extent curtail individual freedom. The basic tenet of our contract is compromise, that we cede our rights in order

Bound, Gagged and Silenced

in this world together. Yet instead of asking the pornographer to cede his right to exploit and propagandize, we grant to cold-blooded entrepreneurs the right to ply their trade even if in so doing we deny ourselves the right to walk the streets free from the fear of violence.

This last is a critical point that challenges one of society's most accepted assumptions, that freedom is our most precious value. But is it? Freedom of speech always *sounds* splendid, and in the abstract is worthwhile to be sure, but in reality it is precious only if it is afforded to everyone. The pornographer tells his customer that women have no right to speak, only the right to get fucked, and so the pornographer works to deny us the freedom of speech. And the experience of feminists attempting to avail themselves of a public forum in order to discuss exactly this is turning democracy's much-vaunted free market of ideas into something of a joke. An even more radical formulation is to say that as long as there is no real equality, freedom of speech is useful only to those who already have power.

Many will argue that if power is to be vested in any body, the last to be given more clout is the Censor Board. But regulation does not have to take place only at the hands of the censor. The members of the film industry might consider some form of censure of popular directors whose specialty is the glorification of violence against women. Filmmakers might do well to throw out of their associations and academies those filmmakers who abuse their craft and eschew art for exploitation.

The courts could be used more effectively if the Criminal Code, particularly section 159 which deals with obscenity, were taken a little more seriously. Obscenity has to be defined more clearly so that any photograph or film that makes brutality directed against a female heroic is *de facto* obscene. Subsection 7 of the section on obscenity makes it an offence to depict pictorially any crime. This section has the potential to allow charges to be brought against anyone who distributes material in which the assault of women is made titillating. Assault is, after all, a crime. But either of these approaches has its problems. While it could discourage pornographers from their most gross excesses, it could also clog the courts with case after case, conceivably grinding our already moribund justice system to a halt.

If the notion of regulation either by the courts, by the "artists' " peers or by the censor cannot be made palatable to the public, then perhaps we should allow the pornography industry to run amok and then tax it to death, both at the consumer's and manufacturer's ends. The goal would be to take some of the profits out of the industry and back into the hands of those battling the industry's influence. It would be a new

kind of Reconstruction program.

Add a hefty tax to the price of a girlie magazine and possibly consumption would fall off. If the appetite for pornography is so voracious that the consumer is still willing to shell out his money, then a tax on the pornographer's income might defray profits so considerably and add so much to his paperwork that he might choose to leave the business.

Such a solution places pornography in the same category as alcohol and tobacco — another vice for the state to exploit — but this time with a twist. The tax monies derived from the industry could be earmarked for the services that exist to mitigate the effects of violence against women. At least rape crisis centres, the shelters for battered women, and counselling services would have a greater means to undo the damage.

Are we anti-sex or sexually berserk?

Protestors would encounter less resistance if the image were of a Jew being led to the chambers while a swastika-adorned German jacked off, or if the pornographic image were of a Black being lynched to the sexual delight of a white hangman. The outrage of the Jew, the fury of the Black would be understood by cultural critics. In fact, our legislators have been so moved as to devise hate literature laws that ban the dissemination of material that advocates the genocide of any group, but only on the basis of religion, creed or colour, not on the basis of their sex. Hence, only women are without protection.

Why that is the case has to do with the mysteries of sex and eros, subjects that lend themselves only to analyses of the most abstract variety. We can speculate that the desperate need the consumer of pornography has for the pornographic image is connected to his need for total control and domination. He may be able to render women dependent on him — for money, for status, for information, for survival — but the last frontier is the one between the sheets, and while he may have a female sexual dependent, one whom by law he can force to have sexual relations, he can never master her the way the pornographic image tells him he can.

In the light of his failure to master her he must be convinced that she is totally deprived, and that if he can't bring her in line someone else can. And so her erotic energy becomes transformed into something pornographic. Hence the image is what it is — women capitulating to a sexual frenzy brought on by the manipulations of a masterful male. It is an image of women possessed, at once by her uncontrollable sexual urges and by the men who can exploit them. The very existence of the myriad photographs and films of women as victims give to the men who peer at them a sense of security. Just the fact that women pose for them is proof of our depravity. That women who

work in the industry do so mostly because of a lack of economic options is no matter. That the only other option available to many women in the trade is prostitution, one they perceive to involve many more risks, is of course not going to cross the consumer's mind. According to the man getting off, if the women submit to the humiliation of being photographed, then the message in the actual contents of the photograph must be true.

The pornographer's strategy is to harp on the symbols already woven into our cultural fabric — particularly the dual symbol of woman as either whore or virgin. She is either destructively depraved or completely innocent until, with the invasion of one of her orifices, she finds her true self — sexually berserk. Of late, the consumer of pornography can get the best of the virgin and the whore. Women are as corrupt as ever, enjoying especially masochistic experiences that find her branded with hot irons or gang-raped. Less and less, though, is she portrayed as the coy virgin. That role now falls increasingly on the shoulders of children.

As the pornography industry continues to burgeon, especially in the areas of kiddy porn and violence, more and more concerned observers are thinking that the most positive steps can be taken in the area of sex education, so that the pall of terror and disgust that hangs over the sexual arena can be dispelled. A crucial subject for study is the pornographic image, because it reinforces the power and control that the obsessive consumer of the image can never have. His quest for domination is doomed not because there is such a thing as a lesbian, or because historically men have been less than artful in their sexual relations with women, but rather because sexual energy was never meant to be manipulated or used or taken away — from anyone by anybody. Our erotic energy is our own, to share when we please, and for our own sake.

But the pornographer continues to rage against the power we want to keep. In the face of the barrage, we are expected to settle for the dubious assumptions of pornography's various apologists.

We are asked to believe that men have the right to get sexual pleasure from the image of victimized women, and that the pornographic image never affects real women in the real world. We are asked to believe that the pornographer is a potential artist and that his vision can brook no constraint. We are asked to believe that the smallest amount of protection in the form of regulation of the industry works against us. We are asked to believe that if we protest against the pornographer's propaganda we are either crazy or sexually dysfunctional.

We are asked to remain silent.

It is all too much to ask. •

Obscenity Law Update

Federal Justice Minister Mark MacGuigan has recently proposed changes to the obscenity sections of the Criminal Code. If Parliament agrees, Section 159 will no longer define obscenity as the "undue exploitation of sex or sex and violence," but instead will make illegal the distribution of materials containing the "undue exploitation of sex, violence, crime, horror or cruelty and the degradation of the person in a context of sex or violence."

There is both good and bad news to these developments. The good news is that Mr. MacGuigan has been listening. Indeed, MacGuigan has accepted, in principle, specific ideas that women brought to him. The Criminal Code, we argued, focused on sex and ignored violence, making it illegal to depict a woman sucking a penis but perfectly legitimate to portray her sucking a gun. This, we reasoned, meant that obscenity legislation catered to a bankrupt morality and left women without protection from what we perceived as a massive libel — images that consistently showed us as the willing victims of violence — and a hate propaganda campaign designed to perpetuate the maxim, both sexual and social, that men belong on the top and women on the bottom.

Some feminists brought new definition of obscenity to the Minister's attention. Helen Longino, for example, urged that obscenity be defined as "verbal or pictorial material which represents or describes sexual behaviour that is degrading or abusive to one or more participants so as to endorse the degradation." Others, like Jillian Ridington, tried to refine the definition, asking that obscenity include depictions where "an imbalance of power is obvious or implied by immature age or by contextual aspects of the presentation." In the end, MacGuigan's proposals look like a variation on feminist themes, referring both to degradation and to

context.

The good news is not only that MacGuigan has been listening but that he was *compelled* to listen by the sudden shattering of the silence surrounding pornography.

In fact, the feds have moved with break-neck speed to mollify the unlikely coalition of women, including those anarchists in the Women's Fire Brigade who blew up three Red Hot Video outlets in BC last fall, those protesters who froze in the wintry streets to vent their anger at Playboy's programming on Canadian Pay Television, and those persistent lobbyists who cajoled, badgered and threatened the Minister until he made some concrete proposals. Naysayers who insist that the government is impervious to women's rage should learn from this one: Women can have real clout in the political arena.

Fearful politicians who worry that the feds will simply use the new legislation to harass free-thinking individuals and publications must recognize that MacGuigan and the Liberals originally wanted nothing to do with making changes in the Criminal Code. They have always mouthed the familiar platitudes about freedom and privacy when it comes to sexuality and its peripheral issues. Remember how swiftly Frances Fox was reinstated after fiddling with abortion forms in an Ottawa hospital? His forged signature was a "private" matter. Child porn legislation went by the boards because the government worried about the "private" right of legitimate photographers to take snapshots of nude kids. And Pierre Trudeau said it himself more than ten years ago, something about the state having no business in the bedrooms of the nation. This is a government perfectly content to tread on political toes and the rights to privacy of political dissidents. But collectively, the Liberals have made a point of being groovy in the sex department and of articulating their

unhappiness about putting constraints on people's private behaviour.

As for the provincial Tories, people who are convinced that the Attorney General needs these changes in the Criminal Code to find a way to persecute *The Body Politic*, for example, underestimate the extent to which Mr. McMurtry can manipulate the justice system. If he didn't harass the *BP* using obscenity legislation as his instrument, you can bet he'd find another, zoning-by-laws for example, or any other means he could dream up. With that in mind, we cannot very well recommend striking every article of the Criminal Code that has ever been abused by everyone from the lowly cop on the beat to the high and mighty in the Attorney General's office. Otherwise we'd be left with a pathetic shred of document that would leave no substance to our social contract. If we are concerned about the machinations of McMurtry's henchmen, the answer is not to dismantle the Criminal Code or to oppose plans to toughen it up, but rather to turf the Conservatives out of office and to replace them with a government that is not obsessed with bullying the gay community.

The bad news about MacGuigan's proposals is that we are still saddled with the antiquated articles that make the undue exploitation of sex obscene. Regardless of one's personal tastes and one's views or analysis of the pin-up and its impact on our culture, the Criminal Code's reference to sex is outdated and has no value in a social context. In practice, the undue exploitation of sex means only one thing — penetration; explicit sex; in other words, the real thing.

Besides, the article concerned with the undue exploitation of sex emerged from the conventional debate on pornography, the one that was taking place before women were deemed "relevant" to the issue. In the old

days, "freedom loving" pornographers battled it out with repressive members of the decency contingent (male representatives of the Church usually) for the right of the (male) user of pornography to get off on whatever images gave him pleasure. The argument was about men's right to sexual freedom. In the end, the apparent proponents of repression won out and our laws prohibiting the undue exploitation of sex are the result.

These are the laws which imply that porn has something to do with sexual freedom. These are the laws which were developed without the slightest attention to women, who have since then brought a fresh perspective to the porn issue. Instead of focussing on how the user exercises his freedom, we are analysing the way in which women are enslaved by images celebrating our sexual coercion. Finally, the fixation on sex has created laws that will prevent women from developing an alternative sexual imagery which will allow us to reclaim our right to define our own sexuality.

The Justice Minister, though, wants to have it both ways. He wants to retain the old laws that threaten sexual exploration. And he wants to tack onto them new proposals that view pornography from an entirely different vantage point than the one which informed the original obscenity legislation in our Criminal Code. What we really need is the elimination of the entire existing body of jurisprudence on obscenity and the chance to start again in the area of obscenity using MacGuigan's new proposals as guidelines.

Unfortunately, MacGuigan hopes he can satisfy feminists with anti-violence legislation and placate the decency contingent by retaining the old anti-sex legislation at the same time. The Minister probably thinks feminists are Bible thumpers in drag. He's wrong. If he keeps listening, maybe he'll find that out too.

—S.G.C.

ARTS

Women and Words

The Writing on the Wall

by Eve Zaremba

The Women and Words Conference held in Vancouver over the July 1st weekend would have been a significant event even without the impetus given to it in preceding weeks by vitriolic attacks by some male journalists. That these disproportionate responses added to the exposure and importance of this gathering and unwittingly underscored the need for it cannot be denied. But the true significance of the conference lay within it, and was not created by any media hype, either pro or con.

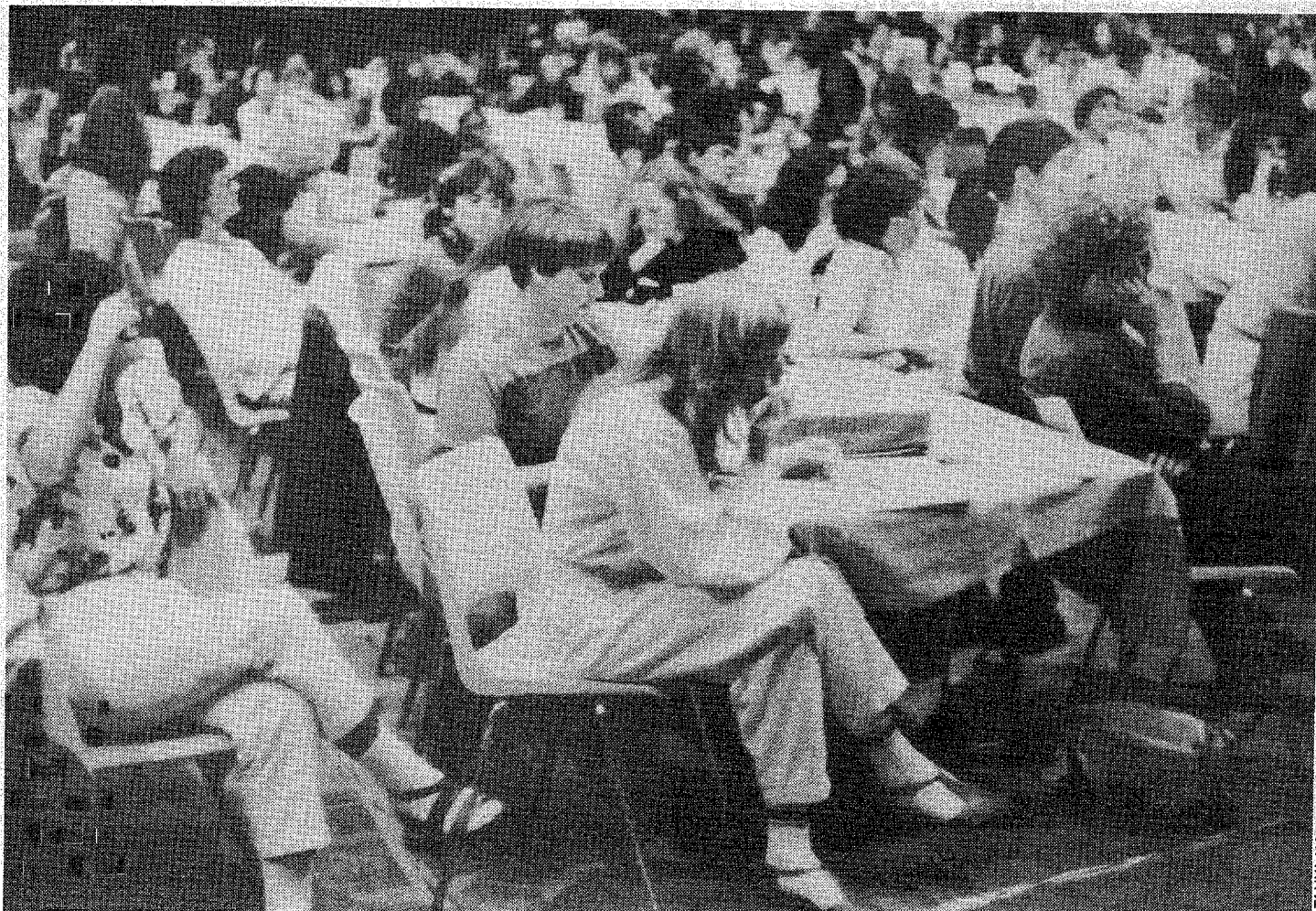
First of all, for all those who did not make it to Vancouver, or haven't read about it in the feminist press, it is necessary to state that all the usual descriptions apply... well attended (over 750 women), successful, smoothly organized, ambitious, first of its kind... Women and Words / Les femmes et les mots was conceived as filling a gap between academic conferences at which papers about women and some aspects of culture are read, and 'festivals' at which women's work is performed, read or otherwise exposed to public view. There have been a number of the latter and two of the former recently, one in Montréal in French and another in English at York University in Toronto. However, women writers and women involved in various aspects of the culture industry seldom have a chance to get together and talk about their work. This conference's intent was to provide such a forum and while sheer numbers did not permit in-depth or intimate contacts, a start in this direction has definitely been made.

What made this beginning especially exciting and potentially important both for women and for the future of Canadian writing was the presence at this conference in more than token numbers of writers from outside the traditionally white, anglo, middle-class milieu from which Canadian writers tend to spring. It is not just that native, immigrant women from many backgrounds attended or even that they spoke up. What matters is that they were heard. Attentiveness and goodwill were palpable in every panel and workshop I attended. It was very much *not* like old times of a few years ago when acrimony and self-righteousness all too often poisoned the atmosphere. Admittedly it will take much more than patience and courtesy to break through the cultural chauvinism of the majority whose roots are in the dominant culture and whose ignorance of all else is often difficult to distinguish from racism. But those distinctions must be made and those qualities of mutual respect cultivated if we hope to go on and get anywhere.

Inevitably some workshops and panels were more memorable than others. For excitement and inspiration, nothing which happened later beat Friday morning's bright and early panel on lesbian writing. Nicole Brossard told us that we must learn to live with blank walls — having taken out patriarchal content — and not panic. It was Brossard who said something which could stand as a motto of minority women writing: "To write, we must know that we exist." It is out of a sense of being and belonging that individual creativity springs. Mary Meigs spoke of the importance of that mutual support which enables us at last to write about our whole lives, not just the 'acceptable' parts. Beth Brant, an Indian writer and editor of *Sinister Wisdom's* recent issue by native American women, spoke of the erotic, how it heals and renews. Her presence and words at this panel confirmed once again the invisibility of native women and lesbians to themselves and others. ("To write, we must know that we exist.")

Betsy Warland, one of the chief organizers of this conference (who in fact conceived the idea a year and a half ago), was much concerned with language, one of the recurring themes here. She traced the etymology of common words and suggested that poets must rehabilitate words like 'surrender' which have been abandoned. Like others on this panel she wants to liberate herself and countless others by full-voiced lesbian writing which does not hide or deny any part of our lives.

The conference was notable for well-prepared, succinctly presented (for the most part) panel presentations, often highly informative



Betsy Warland (centre foreground) is one of 700 women concentrating on a speaker at Women & Words' plenary/breakfast session.

and stimulating. This made for the best possible use of time since the numbers and the multiplicity of backgrounds, interests and experience present in every room made real floor discussion virtually impossible.

Writers especially seem to make excellent panelists. I found the panel on the relationship between writers and publishers instructive and entertaining. The writers (Jane Rule, Audrey Thomas, and Sandy Duncan) were forthright, to the point, and amusing about their experiences with publishers. Many women probably heard about the Writers Union and the intricacies of contracts for the first time at this panel. The representatives of two very different publishers, on the other hand, gave us an idealized description of the process in which the wise and knowledgeable publishers want nothing but the good of each and every individual writer. It was a sales pitch

which played down conflicts between writers and publishers.

Such contrasts between panel members were not unusual. Academics tended to do their thing and give papers which would have been more appropriate at an academic conference. Women with well established positions and much knowledge of various issues had a forum for presenting them to the conference at large. Some of these concerns did not get much play. Others did. This was evident in the area of politics and culture and discrimination against women in the field. Facts, figures and research done by other women were new to at least some conference participants. Well, they are new no longer. This aspect of the conference culminated in the plenary session with a number of motions on political issues, reflecting a raised consciousness and increased militancy.

Much of the conference was concerned with language. Language is being radically rediscovered by women writers, especially, it seems, lesbians and poets working in both French and English.

For me the conference was most notable for what it revealed to us, Canadian anglophone women writers about our Québec sisters and their work! The Québec presence at the conference campus was marked. There is nothing and nobody in English Canada to match the output and the quality of Québec feminist writing, publishing and performance. Contacts made and experienced at this conference may do more good than ten years of platitudes about biculturalism or sisterhood. Perhaps in future we may hope to see a truly bilingual Women and Words / Les femmes et les mots conference, that is one where everyone is bilingual. ●

Burning Times

by Amanda Hale

A year ago, theatre director Mary Anne Lambooy attended a poetry reading at the Abbey Bookstore in Toronto. Maggie Helwig read from her book, *Walking Through Fire*, which deals with the witch hunts in Germany during the fifteenth century. The power of Helwig's poetry galvanized Lambooy into a summer of intensive research, followed by applications for funding of a theatre project on the European witch craze. In June, backed by a Canada Council Explorations grant and an Ontario Arts Council grant, Midnight Hags started rehearsal of *Burning Times*. The company consists of seven women: Mary Anne Lambooy, director; Banuta Rubess, writer; and five actors — Ann-Marie Macdonald, Maureen White, Kim Renders, Peg Christopherson, and Mary Marzo.

Burning Times is a collective creation, meaning that Midnight Hags started from scratch, without a script, and created their own show based on an initial two-week period of intensive improvisation and brainstorming. The actors explored various situations and ideas, thrown out to them by director and writer, ranging from abstractions to the most specific cases of torture and persecution suffered by women who were considered

to be "indigestible elements of society." (An estimated nine million women were burned as witches during the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries — a sad comment on the digestive system of patriarchal society during a period of so-called renaissance.)

Some sequences were drawn from the *Malleus Maleficarum* — a document of procedures for identifying and exterminating witches, written by Sprenger and Kramer, Chief Inquisitors for Germany, in 1486 — and some from actual trial transcripts, but the major responsibility was on the actors to invent their own material. Lambooy and Rubess took notes and made tapes while the actors improvised, then they worked together for three weeks, structuring the piece for presentation out of the wealth of material which had been generated by the actors' creative efforts. Now the Hags are assembling again for a two week rehearsal period and *Burning Times* will open on August 18 at The Theatre Centre on King Street West for a two week run.

Given the intensity of the subject matter and the professional backgrounds of the women involved, the show promises to be dynamic and provoking. Lambooy was founder and artistic director of Lagado Theatre Ensemble in Ottawa from 1979 to

1981. Her closing production was *Female Transport*. She has worked as assistant director with North Light Theatre in Chicago, and with Tarragon Theatre and Factory Theatre Lab in Toronto. Banuta Rubess was involved with the 1982 Theatre Company's production of *The Silver Veil* in the fall of 1982, and also with Women's Perspective '83 presented recently at the Partisan Gallery. Macdonald, Renders and White also appeared at Partisan in *Caution: Women at Work*.

It is to be hoped that *Midnight Hags*, like *Mean Feet* — another theatre company dedicated to the feminist perspective and about to present their second show* — will be successful with this, their first production and go on to present further feminist theatre. In the meantime, don't miss *Burning Times!* It's your story!

*Susan Padveen will direct *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, opening August 24 for a two week run. The show will be presented in various parks such as High Park, Kew Gardens, Toronto Island, St. James Park etc. *Mean feet* is soliciting scripts from women for a workshop during the first week of September, to be directed by Kate Lushington. For information, call 363-0420.

Flashdance: Bitter Aftertaste

by Donna Gollan

Adrian Lyne's *Flashdance*, the sleeper of the season, has already grossed over \$58 million in North America alone. This puts it second only to *Return of the Jedi* at this year's box office. Its title track, "Flashdance... What a feeling," performed by Irene Cara, continues to play in the top twenty. What could possibly account for the popularity of a movie that claims to be about a woman who "welds by day and dances by night"? Is it, as has been claimed, a "women's film" of the eighties?

Molly Haskell, in her fascinating study of the treatment of women in the movies, *From Reverence to Rape*, explains the women's film genre of the forties and fifties as "soft-core emotional porn for the frustrated housewife." She claims that a huge audience for the "weepies" was created by women who had taken jobs outside the home during the war. No sooner had these women adjusted their self-images to that of competent, money-earning workers than they were forced back into the home by protective legislation for returning veterans. The key to their subsequent frustration is their lack of choice in the matter. Enter the matinees in which women, as noble heroines, completely sacrifice themselves for their husbands and/or children and the audience gets a jolly good cry out of it. As Haskell puts it:

The weepies are founded on a mock-Aristotelian and politically conservative aesthetic whereby women spectators are moved, not by pity and fear, but by self-pity and tears, to accept, rather than reject, their lot. That there should be a need and an audience for such an opiate suggests an unholy amount of real misery.

Flashdance is a women's film, but it's no weepie. It is a fast-paced, exuberant, Harlequin romance in which strippers don't have to take it all off and tough, macho welders find nothing either threatening or unusual in having a gorgeous eighteen-year-old girl shooting out sparks in their midst. Despite the upbeat flavour of the film, though, the bitter aftertaste of women having to accept their lot remains.

Alex, as played by Jennifer Beals, is a young woman with big dreams of becoming a professional ballet dancer. Being of a prac-

tical nature, she has also learned the trade of welding, in order to support herself along the way. Being an independent woman entirely conceived by male writers (and director), she has the boundless energy and enthusiasm of youth that enables her to weld at dawn and dance all night at a fairly classy strip joint, Mawby's Bar. All this activity in no way impairs her sex drive or her ability to do fairly strenuous workouts in the late afternoons. Far from being a sad story of sacrifice, this is the story of a girl who has it all together by age eighteen, and still wants more. If this isn't threatening enough for you, wait for the encounter between Alex and her boyfriend's tired old ex-wife, who must be thirty if she's a day!

Alex has a guide and mentor in the guise of an old woman, Hannah, whom she often visits to talk over Hannah's early dancing days. She also has a girlfriend, Jeannie, whose dream of ice skating comes to nothing when she fails her auditions. The film's finest moments include these female characters, when Alex slows down long enough to be human and vulnerable with Hannah or to rescue Jeannie from slimy Johnny C's group of nude girl "dancers" after the failed audition. Unfortunately, the writers seem to know little about the quality of female intimacy — or perhaps they felt Alex needed a little more isolation in order to require a boyfriend — in any case she seems to spend an inordinate amount of time talking to her dog and a priest, instead of to Hannah and Jeannie.

Hannah is killed off just when a confidante is most needed. Though the scene itself is very moving, it is also a little mysterious. Hannah looks to be little more than sixty; however, in a film in which a woman is a sexual washout by the age of thirty, perhaps sixty is time to call it quits. Certainly this sudden absence gives Nick his chance to move into the void.

Nick is Alex's boss — when she is welding. Though she puts up some fight against dating "the boss," Nick wins her over with such devastatingly charming lines as: "You won't date your boss, have it your way: you're fired." Though he never goes to such lengths as this, he makes it quite clear that Alex cannot get along without him. He appears magically to rescue her from Johnny C in a dark parking lot and then, after one more rebuff,

simply follows her home, his car looming threateningly over her bicycle. This provides us with a wonderfully ironic scene of men protecting women from men, but it is probably unintentional.

Finally, Nick uses his connections to get Alex an audition with the Pittsburgh Repertory Company. Alex is justifiably incensed when she discovers she has not accomplished this under her own steam, but she tries the audition anyway. There is an interesting parallel to be made here between *Flashdance* and another mainstream success story,

Rocky. In *Rocky*, our hero, Rocky Balboa, succeeds on his own steam with the loving support of his woman — a traditional tale with traditional sex roles. The sex roles in *Flashdance* are no less traditional: Alex succeeds in the world of dance, not boxing, by having her man pull all the strings. In both cases the women are emotional and the men, powerful. When Alex does well at the audition, she forgives Nick's interference and he receives a single rose for his help. A happy ending is had by all and, as the saying goes, we have definitely not come a long way, baby. ●



Which one's the welder? Jennifer Beals (Alex) with Michael Nouri.

Heart of the Beast

by Carroll Klein

Carolyn Forché, *The Country Between Us*. New York: Harper & Row 1981. Pp 59

Late in the fall of 1981, when I was living on the small Greek island of Samos, I received a bundle of Canadian magazines from one of my women friends in Vancouver. Mail of this sort was a special event in my life. The tourists were long gone and with them the availability of foreign papers. Although I subscribed to the *Guardian Weekly*, I often pined for Canadian periodicals. So it was with acute pleasure that I sat down at a little taverna near the sea, sipping tiny cups of thick Greek coffee, drenched in the brilliant light that Durrell describes with such uncanny perfection in his travel writings, to pore over the news from home. It is ironic that the article that touched me most deeply was written by Carolyn Forché, an American, who described her experiences of travelling in El Salvador in the late 1970s.

Forché's article, entitled "El Salvador: An Aide Memoire — Poems and Reflections," appeared in Vol. 15, No. 4 of *This Magazine*. There was a brief, personal introduction by Margaret Atwood. The article was horrific, riveting. But it was the scattering of poems that remained in my memory.

...My friend said with his eyes: say nothing. The colonel returned with a sack used to bring groceries home. He spilled many human ears on the table. They were like dried peach halves. There is no other way to say this. He took one of them in his hands, shook it in our faces, dropped it into a water glass. It came alive there. I am tired of fooling around he said. As for the rights of anyone, tell your people they can go fuck themselves. . . . Some of the ears

on the floor caught this scrap of his voice. Some of the ears on the floor were pressed to the ground.

("The Colonel," May 1978)

Only recently I found the book from which these poems were taken. Forché's *The Country Between Us* was the 1981 choice for the Lamont Poetry Selection in the US. It should be required reading for anyone prepared to explore the knife edge of political terror, bravery, martyrdom, the palpable alienation of experience in foreign lands.

Early in the sequence of Salvador poems, Forché quotes José Martí: "We have lived our lives in the heart of the beast." What Forché wrestles with, sometimes coming to terms and at other times acknowledging that it is an impossibility, is knowledge of the nature of the beast. She listens to the stories of those who truly understand, who have lived through the horror. She has listened carefully.

A boy-soldier in the bone-hot sun
works his knife
to peel the face from a dead man

and hang it from the branch of a tree
flowering with such faces.

("Because One is Always
Forgotten")

Eloquent, terrifying images. Forché speaks of her friends who have remained in or who have returned to a country in which such images have been translated into political realities. Romero, Alegria, Viera — this is their world, their inescapable heritage, the "small country" in which "there is nothing one man will not do to another." The

Salvadorans are drawn to their own land as the reality of the outside world peels away in their minds, exposing emptiness at the heart. The inevitability of their choice, their ineluctable fate, is carved into the soul of every person. Forché, speaking of her own return to America, also speaks for the Salvadoran people: "You have not returned to your country, / but to a life you never left."

Forché recognizes herself as the observer; much of the tension of her poetry results from her split vision, from the urgency of her anger and horror and the knowledge that her voice will be muffled or dismissed when she speaks out against the regime. She is not comforted by the bitter fatalism she sees around her: "Carolina, do you know how long it takes / any one voice to reach another?" There is simply no comfort to be had in these poems, no escape for anyone, no possible way of reconciling her world with the unspeakable realities of El Salvador. But the poems must be read.

... You will fight
and fighting you will die. I will live
and living cry out until my voice is gone
to its hollow of earth, where with our
hands and by the lives we have chosen
we will dig deep into our deaths.
("Message")

As if these poems were an insufficient excursion into her world — they represent less than half the text of this collection — Forché offers her readers a sequence of travel poems that explores her experiences in more benign countries and her disquieting sense of what it means to return to America. The impact of

these poems, less dramatic than the Salvador sequence, lies in their quiet, ironic power. Once more, Forché gathers stories, from old women, political prisoners, fellow travellers. The stories tell of disillusion and uncertainty, of borders and changing currencies, of the traveller's growing awareness that reality is both ephemeral and relative. Forché is the observer who defines the experiences of others and incorporates what she has learned into her private vision.

For a month the almond trees bloomed
their droppings the delicate silks
we removed when each time a touch
took us closer to the window where
we whispered yes, there on the intricate
balconies of breath, overlooking
the rest of our lives
("Poem for Maya")

The last section of this remarkable collection is a single long poem that examines the experiences of one who has tried to understand the terror of war and the senseless suffering of the innocent. It is not possible, Forché believes, for us in our "calm protected world" ever to understand what it is to live in fear, but we must reach out and we must continue to work toward a just world.

... all things human take time,
time which the damned never have,
time for life,
to repair at least the worst of its wounds;
it took time to wake, time for horror
to incite revolt, time for the recovery
of lucidity and will.
("Ourselves or Nothing")

●

MOVEMENT MATTERS



Pension Reform

Two booklets on pension reform are now available, free of charge and both bilingual. *Pension Reform: What Women Want* is available from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, 40 St. Clair Ave. East,

Suite 306, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M9. *More Effective Participation of Homemakers in the Canada Pension Plan* (majority and minority reports to the Minister of National Health and Welfare) is available from the Canada Pension Plan Advisory Committee, Brooke Claxton Bldg., 15th Floor, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0L4.

Affirmative Action

(OTTAWA)—Flora MacDonald, Conservative MP and Status of Women critic, has expressed scepticism about the announcement last month that the federal government was intending to expand the Affirmative Action Program for the federal Public Service.

"While everyone agrees that the goal of equality must be realized, it is understandable that this latest public relations effort is being greeted with cynicism by women's organizations, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and all those who have reason to mistrust a government which has such a deplorable track record in this field," said MacDonald. The program's expansion "merely extends to other departments what was originally begun in 1975, and we are all very well aware just how unsuccessful that initiative was," she said.

The 1975 policy on equal opportunities for women in the public service raised expectations, but the intervening eight years have seen those expectations dashed. Government sta-

tistics bear this out. After eight years of so-called equal opportunity, only 0.2% of the women in the public service are in management positions; only 5.7% are in the scientific and professional categories. Yet, at the same time, the number of women as support staff and in the junior levels, has increased by 13%. Despite an equal opportunities program being in place, women have been unable to achieve significant breakthroughs in the federal bureaucracy.

The expansion of the Affirmative Action Program offers no new initiatives that can, or will, assist women in the public service. No mandatory goals have been established and, once again, women are expected to be satisfied with vaguely worded recommended targets.

"We only have the promise of the Treasury Board President that Deputy Ministers will be called to account for lack of progress in their departments," said MacDonald. Other government initiatives are enforced by a cabinet directive or an order-in-council. In this case, the government did not see fit to take such action.

Women + Therapy

Women & Therapy, a major conference for all who are involved in women's mental health, will be held November 9 - 11, 1983, at the Holiday Inn (Don Valley) in Toronto.

Keynote speaker will be Phyllis Chesler, author of *Women and Madness*, and storyteller Helen Porter will present *Voices of Women*.

Conference plans are to explore the social issues which influence women's mental health, to improve counselling effectiveness and to

deepen self-awareness. Topics will range from psychodrama and masochism to career stress and eating disorders. Participants include Arlene Anisman, Dr. Paula Caplan, Susan Cole, Rev. Shelley Finson, Dr. Judith Rochester, Harriet Sachs, Women Working with Immigrant Women, and the YWCA.

For full information and registration material, write to: Professional Development Associates, 3 Cameron Cres., Toronto, Ontario M4G 1Z7.



Ecumenical Forum

Dr. Lois Wilson, former Moderator of the United Church of Canada and past president of the Canadian Council of Churches, has been named to the position of Co-Director of

the Ecumenical Forum of Canada.

The Ecumenical Forum of Canada is a 63 year old centre engaged in research, dialogue and study programs on contemporary Christian mission, on world development and on interfaith dialogue. The Forum is supported and directed by a wide spectrum of Canadian churches and related organizations.

Dr. Wilson will share the direction of the Forum with Michael Cooke and will have special responsibility for program development and outreach activities.

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LYNN BREDIN: Contact Sky as soon as possible, c/o PO Box 34112, Station D, Vancouver, BC, V6J 4M1.

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Week of August 1

● **Monday, August 1:** The Women's Group, a support and consciousness-raising group for lesbians, meets at 519 Church St. 8 pm. Information: Raechel, 926-0527. Also Mondays, August 8, 15, 22 and 29.

● **Monday, August 1:** Judy Chicago's "The Birth Project" at Gallery Quan, 112 Scollard Street. \$5. To August 6. Info: 968-7822.



● **Tuesday, August 2:** Lesbian Phone-line open tonight for calls from women. Every Tuesday evening. 7:30 - 10:30 pm. 960-3249.

● **Tuesday, August 2:** Toronto Addicted Women's Self-Help Network (TAWSHN) meets at Central Neighbourhood House, 349 Ontario St. 7 pm. Information: 961-7319. Also Tuesdays, August 9, 16, 23 and 30.

● **Wednesday, August 3:** Lesbian Phone-line monthly general meeting, 348 College St., 3rd floor. 7 pm. Interested women and prospective volunteers welcome. Information: 960-3249.

● **Thursday, August 4:** OISE Women's Studies Summer Institute presents lecture by Jean Anyon, Rutgers University: "Patriarchy, Educational Research and the Study of Females." 4-6 pm, Room 4-441, OISE, 252 Bloor St. West. Info: 923-6641.

● **Thursday, August 4:** Women Out of Doors (WOODS) general meeting. 7:30 pm, 519 Church St. Info: Gail, 530-4007.



● **Thursday, August 4:** Mariposa's "Québécois Soirée" with Eritage in concert, plus dancing and traditional French-Canadian buffet. St. Lawrence Hall. 7 pm. Info: 363-4009.

● **Saturday, August 6:** 1st Annual WOODSwomen Music (& Eating) Festival. 11:30 am, Hanlan's Point, Toronto Island. Info: Shauna, 596-8157.

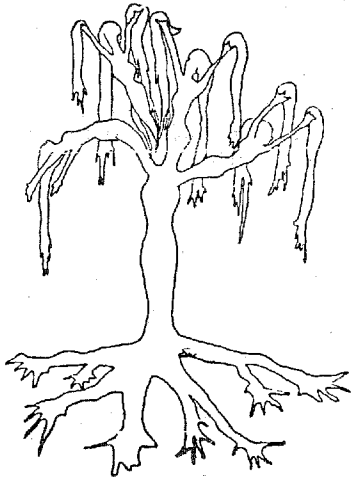
● **Saturday, August 6:** Hiroshima Day. 11 am — assemble at Christie Pits or Castle Frank, 12 noon — walk to Queen's Park, 1 pm — commemorate Hiroshima Day. Sponsored by Toronto Disarmament Network and Against Cruise Testing coalition. Info: 585-2255.

OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

TORONTO WOMEN'S EVENTS CALENDAR

August/September 1983

● **Saturday, August 6:** Branching Out — Lesbian Culture Resource Centre Summer Soiree. 9 pm to 1 am. OCA Auditorium, 100 McCaul St. \$4. All women welcome.



Week of August 7

● **Monday, August 8:** Claude Gagnon's film 'Keiko', a story about a young Japanese woman. Bloor Cinema, 506 Bloor St. West. Info: 532-6677.



● **Thursday, August 11:** Michigan Womyn's Music Festival begins. Features Maxine Feldman, Heather Bishop, Kay Gardner, Margie Adam and more. Continues until August 14. Hart, Michigan. Info: 925-6568.

Week of August 14

● **Wednesday, August 17:** International Women's Day Committee (IWDC) meets. Location to be announced. Info: Amy, 977-6854.

● **Thursday, August 18:** *Burning Times*, a play about the European medieval witch hunts, produced by Midnight Hags. 8:30 pm, The Theatre Centre, 666 King St. West. \$5-\$6. Reservations and information: 862-0659. To August 28.

Week of August 21

● **Sunday, August 21:** Women Out Of Doors (WOODS) Scavenger Hunt and Picnic. 11 am, Sunnybrook Park. Info: Marilyn, 483-9010.

● **Friday, August 26:** Mariposa's "Market in the Park" — concerts, children's programs, food, dancing, rummage sale and picnic. 11 am to 6 pm. Eglinton Park (just east of Oriole Parkway). Info: 363-4009.

● **Friday, August 26:** Women's Independent Thoughtz (WITZ). A seminar/discussion group for the exchange of ideas and creative endeavours in art, literature, philosophy and political thought. 7 pm. Info: 766-9496 or 766-0755.

Week of August 28

● **Tuesday, August 30:** Branching Out — Lesbian Culture Resource Centre holds a Cocktail Hour, with visual art and music. 8-11 pm, Thompson Lounge, Oakham House, 63 Gould St. Free (and air-conditioned). All women welcome.

September 1983

● **Monday, September 5:** The Women's Group, a support and consciousness-raising group for lesbians, meets at 519 Church St. 8 pm. Information: Raechel 926-0527. Also Mondays, September 12, 19 and 26.

● **Tuesday, September 6:** Toronto Addicted Women's Self-Help Network (TAWSHN) meets at Central Neighbourhood House, 349 Ontario St. 7 pm. Information: 961-7319. Also Tuesdays, September 13, 20 and 27.

● **Wednesday, September 7:** International Women's Day Committee (IWDC) meets. Location to be announced. Info: Amy, 977-6854.

● **Wednesday, September 7:** Lesbian Phone-line monthly general meeting. 348 College St., 3rd floor. 7 pm. Interested women and prospective volunteers welcome. Information: 960-3249.

● **Friday, September 16:** "Sisters Steppin' Out" cultural festival featuring some of the best Toronto local female talent. \$7. 8 pm. Harbourfront. Information: Womynly Way Productions, 925-6568. Also Saturday, September 17.

● **Friday, September 16:** Women's Independent Thoughtz (WITZ) A seminar/discussion group for the exchange of ideas and creative endeavours in art, literature, philosophy and political thought. 7 pm. Info: 766-9496 or 766-0755.

● **Sunday, September 18:** Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario (CGRO) sponsors afternoon bike-a-thon and picnic. Toronto Island. More information: 533-6824.

● **Tuesday, September 20:** Travelling exhibit from the Public Archives of Canada: "The Widening Gap — Women in Canada, 1870-1940." Collection of photographs, documents, reproductions. 2nd floor, OISE, 252 Bloor St. West. Info: 923-6641. To October 20.

● **Wednesday, September 21:** International Women's Day Committee (IWDC) meets. Location to be announced. Info: Amy, 977-6854.



● **Friday, September 23:** Claude Gagnon's film 'Keiko', a story about a young Japanese woman. Fox Theatre, 2236 Queen St. East. Info: 691-7330.

'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.
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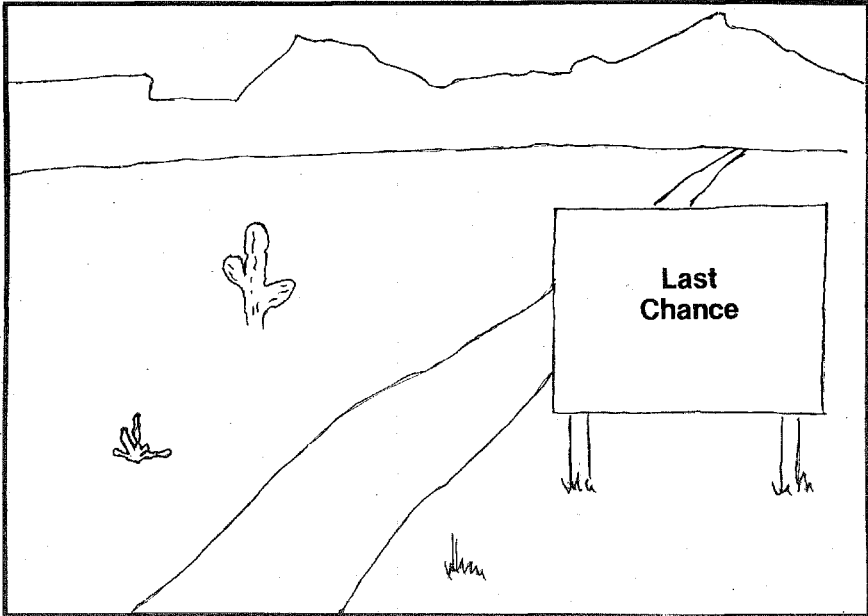


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