

# Broadside

A FEMINIST REVIEW



Festival of Festivals: Scene from *Entre Nous*

SEE STORY PAGE 8.

**FEATURES**

**FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS:** Women's films were not set off in their own category at Toronto's film festival—an encouraging sign. Donna Gollan reviews six of this year's offerings by women directors, including *Born in Flames* and *Camilla Horn Watching Herself Play Gretchen in Murnau's Silent Movie Faust*. Unfortunately, some of these films will never be seen again in Canada, says Gollan. Page 8



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**Virgin Mary, the rise of femininity** (connected to the former), violence, anger, potted passions and pornography (which includes Shakespeare and the Bible). Page 5.

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**KAHLO ON HIGH:** As a teenager, Brenda Roman set women on pedestals: Theda Bara, Margaret Sanger, Rosa Luxemburg. One by one, they tumbled off, and it was Frida Kahlo who taught her not to demand they be perfect models. Page 12.

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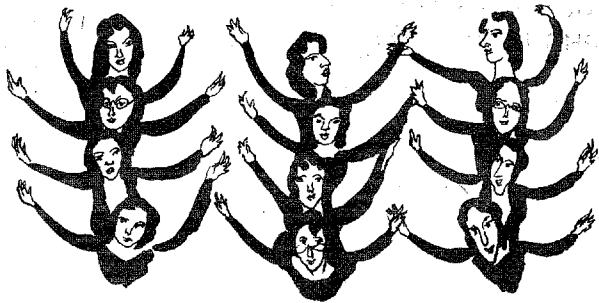


**TAKE A GOOD LOOK—**And have a good listen to Marianne Girard's first album, *When It Hurts*. Her style is rock reggae and her voice is strong, says reviewer Deena Rasky. Page 11.

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# LETTERS



GAIL GELTNER

## IWD 1984

### Broadside:

March 8th, International Women's Day, might seem like a long way away. But every year in the March 8th Coalition meetings, which usually begin in January, women lament the strains of not enough time. We in the International Women's Day Committee have, for the past five years, got the Coalition rolling by sending out a letter to women's groups across the city, inviting them to join in a coalition to plan and carry out IWD celebrations. This year, in an attempt to reach more women, earlier, we are publishing this letter in *Broadside*.

Although the numbers attending the IWD rally, march and fair have grown each year, we

are also aware that there are improvements to be made in the coalition process, outreach, and in the events themselves. Making changes takes time. That is why we are calling on you now to discuss this proposal in your groups, with your friends and come with your ideas to help begin the 1984 March 8th Coalition in early December.

This year we've decided to propose some changes in the coalition process in order to improve the effectiveness of our outreach. We suggest that we dispense with the long, arduous discussions which have in the past six years produced longer and longer leaflets (to the point where they could more accurately be called pamphlets!). Since most women find them unreadable and boring, it is a most ineffective way to reach women. The discussions on the leaflet have had one function, however. They have enabled us to figure out what we can all agree on—what March 8th will be trying to get across that year—as our basis of unity.

So what we are proposing is a shorter discussion on the specific themes and demands out of which a short, snappy outreach leaflet would be written. We could also use the time gained to organize women to speak in schools, clubs, union locals, etc., about March 8th and the themes we are highlighting.

Our proposal is this:

That we have an overriding slogan like the one we used in 1980 ('Bread and Roses in the 80's'), 'Rising Up Strong' and 'Rise Up!' have been suggested as possibilities.

We propose three themes—Choice, Jobs and Peace.

Against the choice theme, we propose: Wage Controls and Unemployment, Yes to Affirmative Action and the Right to Unionize for the jobs theme; Refuse the Cruise and US Out of Central America for the peace theme.

We propose a week of events which will culminate in the rally, march and fair on Saturday, March 10. For the evening events during the week, we propose that workshops and/or public forums highlight the major themes.

We are hoping that at the first coalition meeting, on December 7, we could reach a decision about themes and demands, as well as set in motion workgroups for the leaflet, publicity/outreach, and planning for future coalition meetings.

With this letter we are also launching a poster and button contest (for women only) for International Women's Day, 1984. Designs can be rough and don't need to be fully finished or professional looking. All entries should be brought to the December 7 meeting, or sent prior to that meeting to IWDC, Box 70, Station F, Toronto, M4Y 2L4.

We emphasize that the proposals in this letter are just that, and will be discussed and decided upon at the December 7 meeting and other coalition meetings. We encourage all women who want to join the coalition, either as individuals or as representatives of a group, to attend the December 7 meeting.

The first coalition meeting, December 7, will be held at the Metro Library, 789 Yonge St., just north of Bloor, at 7:30 pm. If you have any questions or would like to give us feedback, call Mariana at 532-8989, or write us at Box 70, Station F, Toronto, M4Y 2L4.

International Women's Day Committee  
Toronto

## More Choice

### Broadside:

Re: "More Choices for Pro-Choicers," (October, 1983), by Vivian Harrower.

Where has Ms. Harrower been? The pro-choice side has always included much more than a narrow view of the abortion issue as she implies. CARAL has continually advocated contraception, comprehensive programs of contraceptive and sex education, as the only effective means of reducing the need for abortion. This goes without saying particularly when it is clear that the anti-choice movement frequently opposes contraception and sterilization. CARAL and its affiliates label ourselves as pro-choice *not* pro-abortion because we believe that a woman in consultation with her doctor should be permitted to choose whether or not to continue a pregnancy. Women facing unplanned pregnancy should be free to choose *either way*.

Women rarely use abortion as a replacement for contraception. Harrower's quote of the study of 50 women is not a fair sampling. Based on the Badgley report, the percentage of repeat abortions is quite low and of these repeats the proportion of women getting birth control was much higher than when obtaining an abortion for the first time. Given the choice, women prefer contraception to abortion.

Recent cutbacks in aid to family planning agencies indicate a lack of commitment by the government to improve the teaching of birth control and health promotion and thereby reduce the need for abortion. Who do these cutbacks most affect?—precisely the women she speaks of—young, unmarried women, poor women, teenagers, etc. CARAL denounced these cutbacks and the government for its policies in this area.

The whole attitude of society must change in the area of sexuality and mothering. When women receive adequate support for their role as mothers through universal day care, pensions, proper contraceptive information and education, counselling, and health services then and only then can they not be considered victims.

Catherine Daw  
Vice-President, CARAL

## Abortion Rally

### Broadside:

On October 1, an estimated 20,000 people attended an anti-abortion, anti-choice rally in Toronto. By contrast, estimates for the pro-choice gathering that rallied and marched on the same day range from 350 to 1,000.

350? 1,000? I find it hard to believe that these figures reflect the pro-choice population of Toronto and vicinity. So where was everyone?

We are all aware of the current rise of right-wing sentiments. These sentiments are held by a very organized segment of society—for example, the anti-choice forces bussed in people to beef up their numbers and were very efficient in their use of propaganda. With the amazing lack of effort on our part put forth for the pro-choice rally, who can hope to counteract such an organized movement?

If we don't express our opinions more noticeably, this simple and basic right of freedom to choose will be further forfeited—by default.

Jude Johnston  
Toronto

## Steppin' Out

### Broadside:

We are writing to *Broadside* because, once again, feminist groups have scheduled major events on the most holy of Jewish holidays. This year Womynly Ways scheduled its first event of the season, 'Sisters Steppin' Out,' on Yom Kippur, September 16-17. Nationwide NAC executive and committee meetings were also scheduled for these days. The date upon which this holiday fell was clearly indicated in *Everywoman's Almanac*. It began at sundown Friday and continued until after sunset Saturday.

It saddens us that once again we are put in a position where we must remind our sisters of our cultural specificity. We expect political feminists to be aware of, and to respect, cultural diversity within the women's community.

We are writing not just to criticize past mistakes but because we want to prevent such mistakes being made again. Expressions of regret are appreciated but not sufficient. In the future, before scheduling such events, please check your *Everywoman's Almanac* for the dates of the three major Jewish holidays, Rosh Hoshanah, Yom Kippur, and Passover. And please remember that Jewish holidays always begin the evening before the date indicated in non-Jewish calendars.

Die Farbrente Schwester (Frieda Forman, Mirian Garfinkle, Cheryl Gaster, Esther Geva, Marla Goldstone, Sara Himelstein, Ronnee Jaeger, Sharon Kirsh, Reva Landau, Fay Nemani, Avril Orloff, Laura Weintraub)  
Toronto

## Broadside

### EDITORIAL

Editor, Philinda Masters  
Advertising, Donna Gollan  
Circulation, Catherine Maunsell  
Distribution, Susan Cole

### EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE:

Susan G. Cole  
Donna Gollan  
Amanda Hale  
Carroll Klein  
Philinda Masters  
Catherine Maunsell  
Deena Rasky  
Jean Wilson  
Eve Zaremba

### THIS ISSUE:

Lisa Freedman  
Maureen Phillips  
Beth Raymer  
Wendy Wine

Address all correspondence to:  
*Broadside*  
P.O. Box 494  
Station P  
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2T1  
Tel. (416) 598-3513

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## EDITORIAL

### Case Study

Six Toronto women were awarded over \$21,000 damages in October after the Ontario Human Rights Commission heard testimony in a landmark case of sexual harassment. The six women, all of them from immigrant communities, risked jobs, their dignities and in one instance, a marriage, as the proceedings were prolonged through the past five years.

The complainants, who worked at the Commodore computer factory, charged that they were persistently propositioned and man-handled by their foreman, Rafael DeFilippis. When they refused to comply with his sexual demands, they were bullied on the job or forced to move to more difficult or strenuous work.

The hearing ruled in the women's favour, but the case is far from a total victory for women seeking a sign of a new consciousness about sexual harassment in the workplace. To begin with, the settlement is alarmingly small given that the suit was for over \$100,000 and given that the highly publicized hearings had a profound effect on the women in their own families and communities. Second, it may be that the women would not have won the case had they not lived in conservative and traditional communities where they risked so much. Would the Commission have rendered the same decision had the complainants been single or from a less easily identified ethnic community? For that matter, would the Com-

mission have rendered the same decision had the accused been a blue-blooded WASP?

Finally, the management of Commodore has refused to fire DeFilippis, arguing that the emotions of the situation had more impact on the decision than the facts. Perhaps it's time for a boycott. What would happen if every woman working on either a Commodore computer or word processor refused to carry on with the job as a protest? If that's not practicable, at least women in positions influencing the purchase or rental of office equipment should argue strongly against doing business with a company that supports male privilege more readily than the findings of a public hearing.

## Women and Therapy

### Broadside:

The following is an open letter to Professional Development Associates, the organizers of the Women and Therapy conference being held in Toronto in November:

I wish to formally withdraw from participation in the upcoming Women and Therapy conference. I'm aware that it is quite late for me to withdraw and for that reason, and that alone, I apologize. My initial misgivings have given way to a growing sense of horror over this conference and I wish to publicly disassociate myself from it.

It has become clear to me that the conference is a big money-making proposition and that money is being made at the expense of women. In a Machiavellian fashion women are again being used, both as therapists and clients, as advertising for a commercial venture. The fees for two days of this three-day conference that range from \$135 to \$160 are ludicrously high. The fact that the first day of the conference, euphemistically labelled "pre-conference," costs an additional \$50 to \$65 is simply outrageous. The so-called reduced fee of \$90 for students (\$30 for the "pre-conference") is utterly impossible for the vast majority of students. It might as well be \$900. My guess is that a form that each participant was asked to sign regarding taping of the sessions and sales of the tapes also means that we

would be unable to allow students access to the conference by making our own tapes of the sessions. One cannot describe such an event as feminist since it is inaccessible to virtually all women. I'm tired of shamefacedly apologizing to classes of students, most of whom would like to attend the conference, and to feminist friends for participating in such an elitist event.

My realizations regarding these issues finally crystallized as I was preparing my notes for my presentation on The Empowerment of Women and Feminist Therapy. Women can never be empowered as long as such elitism is carried out in our names and in the absence of most women's voices.

I am not criticizing the other participants in the conference, many of whom are in private

practice or free-lancing, and who are, quite legitimately, being paid reasonable fees for their presentations. I am criticizing Professional Development Associates who are, by all indications, making a good deal of money on this event. If there is a next time, we can do it ourselves. Most of the participants in this conference are local. We could bring in a few people from elsewhere, pay honoraria to people in private practice and free-lancers, and still charge very nominal fees. Non-profit events of this sort are the rule rather than the exception.

My only regret in withdrawing from participation is that I will now be unable to attend the conference. It's too expensive.

Jeri Wine  
OISE, Toronto

## No Choice for Pro-Choice

by Eve Zaremba

Abortion has not been illegal in Canada since 1969, when the Criminal Code was 'reformed' to permit abortion under certain specified conditions.

Yet, just a few months later, in May 1970, the Abortion Caravan set out from Vancouver, "stopping in a dozen towns and cities en route to Ottawa," as Myrna Kostash reported in her book *Long Way From Home*, "holding public meetings and swelling their ranks with supporters anxious to add their bodies to the demonstrations planned for Parliament Hill. In Kamloops, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, the Lakehead, Sudbury, Toronto, activists knew they were coming; they greeted them, billeted them, cooked up hot suppers. . . They travelled with a coffin, symbolizing the women dead from illegal abortions, and filled it, in one town after another, with petitions signed by thousands and thousands of women demanding the repeal of the abortion laws."

We knew then that the abortion law was a sham. It set out conditions which were (and are) discriminatory, demeaning and dangerous to the health of women. Much has changed in the intervening 14 years but this discriminatory, demeaning and dangerous law remains on the books.

Like all unjust and inequitable law, the Canadian abortion law must be made ineffective until it can be repealed. That is, means must be found to spare women its worst effects. Free-standing clinics are such a means. These should ultimately be women-run, but until that becomes possible any free-standing clinics are a challenge to the law and a boon to women who need them.

Due to the perseverance of Dr. Henry Morgentaler, who at considerable personal cost won a series of legal battles, free-standing abortion clinics operate in Québec as part of the provincial health care system. Like it or not, Québec remains constitutionally a part of Canada and the Criminal Code is operative there. These clinics can operate in Québec only because test cases were won.

Having established this legal precedent, it was Morgentaler who moved to set up clinics in Manitoba and Ontario. No other doctor was

either willing or financially prepared to do so. It takes money, dedication and guts for a doctor to so challenge the established system. Morgentaler has all three.

As was fully expected by anyone not totally naive, each of the clinics outside Québec was raided and closed. Morgentaler and the staffs of both clinics have been charged under the Criminal Code with 'conspiracy' to perform abortions without fulfilling the required conditions. The Winnipeg case's trial date will be set soon; in Toronto hearings are to start November 21 at Old City Hall.

These are important test cases. Regardless of their initial verdicts, both will go to appeal, all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. It is going to be a long, hard and at times discouraging process. We must be prepared to carry on for years to come. For the issues are clear: it is not Morgentaler, or even his clinics, it is women's reproductive freedoms which are at stake. *Lest we Forget!*

Abortion holds a special position in our Liberation Movement, largely because of the nature of the anti-abortion forces. On no other issues central to the liberation of women do we face such well organized, well financed, vocal and focused opposition. There is plenty of resistance to women getting access to better job training, better jobs or better pay, but let's face it, thousands do not come pouring out of rented buses to demonstrate against equal pay for work of equal value or for affirmative action.

This kind of thing only happens on the issue of abortion. That is what makes this a different and uniquely difficult area to work in. It is difficult to plan future actions in the glare of media publicity. It is hard to discuss internal problems or resolve strategic differences knowing that our opponents are watching and waiting to take advantage of our open consensual ways of organizing.

They have no such constraints on their efforts. Quite the reverse. They organize from the top down. Via the church-run school system they have access to the minds and bodies of young Canadians, to captive audiences in church pews, and to millions of tax-free dollars. Mighty and influential institutions, like the Roman Catholic Church, are working



It all started here! Henry Morgentaler (centre) with supporters (from left) June Callwood, Michele Dore and Judy Rebick at OCAC meeting in Toronto, November 1982.

against the sexual and reproductive self-determination of women; no wonder our chicken-shit politicians are afraid to buck them. They would like the abortion issue just to go away. Perhaps we will forget the whole thing if sufficiently discouraged, they think. Perhaps the moon is made of green cheese.

It should be clear to anyone who cares to hear us that access to abortion is part of an historic drive by women throughout the world for reproductive freedom. At a minimum, this includes universal access to safe birth control, freedom from coercive sex and from forced sterilization. These are the indivisible prerequisites for our liberation. Therefore, sexual and reproductive issues such as abortion are ultimately non-negotiable.

Since we are going to be in this fight for a long time to come, let's be smart about it. It's time to evaluate our strategy. We know the strong points of our opponents; let's not play into them. For instance, we have seen their ability to put on an impressive show of numbers when allowed the lead time to organize. We know that they far outstrip us in material resources. Sending women out into the streets was a useful tactic when the objective was to focus attention on the issue. But that has long been well and truly attained. To get into head-count competition now with the

anti-choice forces is an inefficient use of our resources. The time and energies of activists must be deployed to best advantage, not dissipated pointlessly. The issue is in the courts; we need to be present there consistently and persistently but not en masse. There are other issues and struggles to work on as well.

An interesting possibility is to try to turn the very abilities and strengths of the Church-led anti-choice forces against them. How do Canadians feel about the use of our tax-supported separate schools to propagandize our children on a one-sided political issue? How safe is any religious, cultural, sexual or racial group when a powerful minority can have its 'moral' standards legislated and made mandatory for the rest of us? How do we like the sight of those buses from Buffalo and Detroit full of people recruited in the States to swell the ranks of the anti-choice, anti-clinic demonstrators in Toronto? There are people and groups which may not be pro-choice on abortion, but which would be very much disturbed by such manifestations. Let's get more publicity on this. The federal election looming in 1984 provides an opportunity to get after all three parties on these highly political issues, as well as on abortion alone.

There is much to do. We need not get stuck with stale old strategies. ●

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# Lesbians Who Sleep With Men



RAMONA DEVONSHIRE

by Lilith Finkler

Even as I write this article, I am becoming more aware of the potential to distort the information it presents. This essay could be construed as a denial of real lesbianism, or as a suggestion that lesbianism is merely a "stage," or even perhaps that if one finds the right man, a dyke could be "cured."

This is not the point of my article. I am trying to describe a very complex situation. What happens when a lesbian-feminist (and a political activist at that) decides to sleep with a man? What does she experience? What kinds of questions does it raise for her and the community to which she belongs?

My ideological reference points are a combination of lesbian-feminism and anarchism. For me, lesbianism is not just a sexual orientation. It is a political statement; a rejection of male supremacy at work, at home, and in bed. I allowed myself to become intimate with a man because I felt it was part of a personal process. I had to reclaim a part of my traumatic past that included many violent rapes. Heterosexual sex triggered many painful memories; it broke through the blocks and forced me to actually deal. Of course, I trusted the individual male in question, and was attracted to him, or I would never have let him so close.

Nevertheless, it proved very difficult to reconcile my emotional situation to the current political reality. While allowances are made for "women-identified" women, lesbian feminists often think of themselves as superior to their heterosexual counterparts. After all, as Ti-Grace once said: "Feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice."

I myself adhered to such a belief system, although I would not have necessarily admitted it in public. While I was sleeping with a man, I convinced myself that since feminists had always fought for "the right to determine our own sexuality," I did not have to worry about my own political credibility. I could not forget however, participating in one group a few years ago where being heterosexual (celibate or otherwise) was a political liability. Nor could I forget "A Fine Kettle of Fish"\* which deteriorated rapidly into a session of angry declarations and anti-man-ifestoes.

More importantly perhaps, I realized that the woman I had quietly mocked before was the very woman I now faced every morning in the mirror.

I, Lilith, am a working class, white, Jewish, anarcha-feminist lesbian. (Talk about labels!) Yes, a lesbian, although I ended a ten month relationship with a man in April of this year. I

\*A public meeting in 1979 for lesbian and heterosexual feminists to discuss working together in the movement.

do not intend to have another relationship with a man. I identified as a lesbian throughout my sexual involvement, making it quite clear that my emotional and political priority was other women. This attitude was undoubtedly the source of many tensions in our time together as a "couple."

During the time that I saw Robert, I operated in a no-woman's land of social semantics. For the past six years, I had identified myself as a dyke, but now for the first time, I was seeing a "MAN"! (So I'm bisexual, but I'm not sleeping with a woman so maybe I'm heterosexual with past lesbian experience? But lesbianism is not just who you sleep with, it's a whole politic, a way of life...)

I felt confused, unsure and afraid to approach other lesbians with my own personal truths. After all, I, as a lesbian had not wanted to hear about other women's straight experiences. And a dyke gone "het" is just ten times worse. I was a traitor to my cause.

I found out during the course of my "phase" that there were many lesbians like me who had for a variety of reasons explored sexual relationships with men.

Some were actually questioning their sexuality, others had ended painful relationships with women and yet others had moved to smaller communities where there were no "out" lesbians.

Once I had spoken to these other women (they called themselves "lesbians" in spite of their temporary liaisons with men), I began to feel validated; there were others like me. I was not alone in the pursuit of my own unique label.

Some, having read the above, may feel that I have not analyzed correctly. One could posit that women turn to men not for personal exploration, but for political gain: i.e. Social Acceptability. To deny that particular element in social dynamics would be pure folly. Of course, being Normal is tempting.

Nevertheless, all the lesbians I have spoken to, without exception, are strongly women-identified, and carry in their hearts some vision of a matriarchal world. One cannot so easily discredit their personal struggles.

Many of these women mentioned being afraid to be affectionate in public, lest they be spotted by past acquaintances. I, too, was fearful of others discovering my political inconsistencies and personal confusions. How ironic that I, who insisted on kissing my woman lovers everywhere and anywhere, would a few years later be terrified to hold the hand of a man.

For a while, I avoided attending "women's" events and local demonstrations where I was likely to meet old friends and acquaintances. Then I realized that in spite of my cir-

cumstances, the lesbian community was and would continue to be *my* community. My essential values had not changed. But how was I to reconcile what was in my heart to what was in my head to what was in my cunt?

It was no mean feat "coming out" once again to my "family," my circle of close lesbian friends. I was afraid of being rejected and of being judged "politically incorrect." I am glad to say that without exception the members of my immediate "family" accepted me as I was. Other women were not so lucky. One woman's friend refused to discuss the male lover. Another actually spit on the floor and walked out in the middle of a conversation. I feel tremendously lucky to know that at least for me, sisterhood is powerful.

During the time that I spent with Robert (no, that's not his real name), I discovered heterosexual privilege. I was finally "normal" to the outside world. I could talk about my boyfriend to virtual strangers and they would nod sympathetically, acknowledging the primacy of our relationship. This was so different from talking about my "friend" or "roommate" in the hope of disguising the level of our intimacy.

I didn't have to inquire whether events were actually "gay" or not because I was "straight" and everything in this world is heterosexual unless designated otherwise. I'll never forget going to a restaurant I had frequented with my woman friends. I had always been allocated a small table beside the door, even when booths were available. When I went with Robert, the hostess smiled and judging us to be a couple, gave us a private booth at the back. I couldn't believe the difference. So this is heterosexual privilege.

Sleeping with Robert brought up a lot of political questions too. What is a lesbian? Is she simply a woman who sleeps with other women? Is she a woman who commits her life to women emotionally and politically? Or, is she all of the above?

Was it "politically correct" (forgive the cliché) for me to call myself a dyke while I slept with a man? Was that dishonest or misleading? Or, on the other hand, would it have been a cop-out for me to peel off the label "lesbian" and apply "bisexual" instead?

While I would not presume to judge the lifestyle, I personally do not like the term "bisexual." It implies a political equality that does not exist. Sleeping with a woman is not the same as sleeping with a man. A woman must consciously decide to be lesbian. She need not question herself at all to be actively heterosexual. The prefix "bi", or the implication of two equal sides, is therefore an inaccurate represen-

tation of present day sexual relationships.

One major concern of lesbians who sleep with men is their actual position as members of the lesbian community. I often asked myself whether an oppressed group should be expected to retain individuals who no longer fit the official criteria. As a member of at least three minority groups, I recognize the need for some mechanism that will help me to identify those who share my own oppression. Standardizing the approach however, also standardizes the procedure and resultant interactions. I am not willing to give up spontaneity.

We, as lesbians, do need constant validation for our lifestyle. The male-stream media is certainly not renowned for its accurate portrayal of our experience. Having women who are "uncommitted" or "confused" enter the movement dilutes the strength and character of the lesbian milieu—but does it?

There are many women who do not identify as lesbian; not all are heterosexual or have lovers of both sexes. Some are closeted lesbians who may risk their homes, their jobs, their kids or all three. Some of us can be more sure of ourselves or more public than others. I believe that diversity, in all its manifestations, is our strength.

I would suggest that we continue to be open to hearing about the myriad of lesbian experiences and refrain from passing judgement. Let us integrate the whole spectrum of lesbian sexualities in our discussions, newsletters, conferences, etc. We should redefine the word "lesbian" to include those of us who have questioned ourselves in the past or who may do so in the future. Our ranks may well be thinned by the inevitable percentage who will attach themselves permanently to men. However, we will be much stronger by having allowed those amongst us to be open and honest about who they are.

A great many women I know have questioned themselves, experimented, had one-night stands. It is a lot more common than any one of us would like to think. Yet coverage of this issue merits precious little space in the feminist press. One column in *Our Right to Love* (Ed. Ginny Vida) and one short article in *Off Our Backs* (October 1982). Is this really all there is to say?

Unfortunately, the unspoken lesbian-feminist politic has often led to a narrow chauvinism that does not allow dykes to indulge in personal insecurities or to discuss them with one another. Silencing is not an effective tool for consciousness-raising. Criteria of any sort spell the creation of a hierarchical setting. Thus, it is for each woman to declare herself lesbian or not. If we develop standards and seek to impose them, are we not the very people we choose to battle? ●



# Mary, Mary Quite Contrary...

Last March, Mary Daly spoke in Vancouver, at the invitation of women from UBC. Eleanor Wachtel interviewed her in Daly's room at the Hotel Sylvia.

### Interview by Eleanor Wachtel

**Mary Daly:** God. I got rid of him a while ago. Goddess is a symbol, a metaphoric symbol that I think is useful. Is there very much—I hate the word—feminist spirituality around here?

**Eleanor Wachtel:** This is the West Coast. But how is the Goddess useful? Doesn't she share some of the problematic features of God?

**M.D.:** It can. If all you do is trans-sex God, who was trans-sexed to begin with from the Goddess, and you still think of it as a super-being up there, the great mother, then I think you fall into the trap of the archetypes again.

In *Beyond God the Father*, and I still agree with most of the book, is the breaking of what I then called God into a verb, into a process. I was realizing that there was something very basically wrong at the core of consciousness within patriarchy: the myth symbols, those tentacles in our psyche sucking our energy all the time.

**E.W.:** Is it better to use words like 'spark of being' and avoid all the resonances of...

**M.D.:** I think the tactic around naming is to use lots of words and not get caught up with any one in particular, because any word can turn into a label. Lesbian is a word that can mean the opposite of what I would mean by lesbian.

**E.W.:** How?

**M.D.:** Just rarified sexuality. It can mean feminist, lesbian, so-called S&M, it can mean a caricature of deep contact between women, or just gayness, and I find it's an embarrassment. It's the opposite of everything we've struggled for. Feminist can mean something

absolutely stupefying. It can mean being a fembot—a success, you know.

Any label can become its opposite in the land of reversals, which is where we are. That's why I think it's so important to keep spinning words and putting them in different contexts. You can be accused of being obsessed with words or verbiage, but we are being baffled by verbiage all the time and I think it's respect for words that makes women try to be creative with them, to try to hear them differently.

**E.W.:** Is that why you write theology books?  
**M.D.:** I don't even know how to name the reason for it; it comes naturally. Once you start tracking things down in the dictionary it becomes a real hunt, an exciting chase. You begin to realize that this is necessary to unlock your spirit, to say what it is that you mean to say. Because it's almost as if the dead words (the philosopher Suzanne Langer, who was no feminist at all, wrote about faded metaphors), the whole language, is full of faded metaphors and I would say sleeping metaphors. If you wake them up they have a life of their own.

**E.W.:** Just waiting for the kiss—

**M.D.:** ... sort of. Virginia Woolf. As far as I know there's only one tape of Virginia Woolf actually speaking. It's only eight minutes and it's about words. She spoke about them almost as if they were women. They have a life of their own and they connect with each other, and what they hate. They hate making money. They hate being useful. They'd like to come alive.

**E.W.:** What do you think about the recent feminist interest in pornography?

**M.D.:** One problem I would have writing about pornography and singling it out would be that everything—great literature, religion, psychology—it's all pornography, just more subtle. The Bible is extremely pornographic, it's disgusting, it's revolting. Shakespeare, all of it.

**E.W.:** Because of the assumptions?

**M.D.:** Because what it does is degrade women, and that's what pornography does. Reducing women to what men consider to be whores. It's just more subtle, more sophisticated, more hidden, but what they're doing is degrading women to the lowest state. It's pornography if it's denying you your own soul, keeping you from knowing who you are. And I don't mean that it isn't very important to single out pornography, like Andrea Dworkin does for example, but I see my job as getting women to see the context in which that's possible. Say I had never heard of pornography as such, hard core porn. The fact is I think I've been bombarded by pornographic ideas since I was very small, starting with Catholic schools denying my right to be who I am.

**E.W.:** Is it just a matter of gradations of violence, or actual manifestations of violence, or is it more subtle than that?

**M.D.:** I think it's obvious there are certain cases where there's absolute horror, horrible physical violence and I could get into the trap here of saying that it's all the same but I don't think it is all the same. Obviously to be gang raped is unspeakable, but there's also psychic violence and because we don't feel it, that's

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



DENYSE COUTU

"Bursting the accustomed bounds even of feminist discourse." -Adrienne Rich

**GYN/ECOLOGY**

The Metaethics of Radical Feminism

**MARY DALY**

**THE CHURCH AND THE SECOND SEX**

WITH A NEW FEMINIST POSTCHRISTIAN INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR

**MARY DALY**



CATHERINE MAUNSELL



DALY, from previous page

the horror too. We don't know what's happening; it's like a lobotomy.  
**E.W.:** Which is more insidious...  
**M.D.:** It's that lobotomizing, the psychic porn, that makes it possible for the other to exist. It creates an atmosphere in which women do not protest. So the continuum involves these logical extremes. If God is male, then every male thinks that he's God. It's the logical implication that of course women should be violently abused, dismembered, slashed, everything; every atrocity follows upon that. You could spell out the logical links. And I think it's the lies, the absolute lies, that control this society, the pornographic conceit, you know, the lie that every woman wants to be beaten, raped, maimed. But you have lies like those I grew up with, theological lies, and if you can believe those, if you can believe, for example, that a piece of bread is God, that the priest made it into God, you can believe anything.

**E.W.:** But you've been intrigued by the notion of the Virgin Mary.

**M.D.:** Everyone in Western society is affected by what they've done with that symbol. I could go on and on but, it would seem kind of esoteric. It's not just the virgin birth being a perversion of parthenogenesis; there's the doctrine of the immaculate conception. Mary was conceived free of original sin in her mother's womb, by the grace of her son who wasn't born yet, because she wasn't born yet, and she wasn't even conceived yet. But she was full of grace before she was conceived, having been saved by her son, who wasn't born yet, but who would be born of her. She had to be prepared by his grace. It's the most inconceivable knot of contradictions. (**E.W.:** The pretzel theory.) That's what they've done to the myth of the Goddess.

Do you know what the immaculate conception dogma is? It isn't the virgin birth. It's the idea that she was conceived free of original sin in her mother's womb. The theology behind that is that everyone inherits original sin from Adam and Eve; a defective intellect and inclination to sensuality and art. But Mary was pure. Theologians developed this theory for hundreds of years. It finally became a dogma in the middle of the 19th century. The timing was very interesting—1854. If you think what else was going on in the world in 1854... the first women's rights conventions... 1848,

1851, '52, obviously the Communist Manifesto. It would be very threatening to have women rising, so they pull this out. She was done in. Not just before she was born, before she was conceived, she was finished. Full of grace, which meant empty of herself; it was the Goddess made into a zero. I have a theory. You can't go to Europe and see the cathedrals built to Mary without knowing that in the Middle Ages, whatever the theologians said, the people's concept of the Divinity was female. The mother of God. Somehow through that broken down symbol, I think there was a more ancient tradition of female principle, of female divinity. And clearly (this is old stuff in a way) they could not have converted the so-called pagans without Mary. None of them were into a male God. But, to the Celts, they could present this package deal.

I think the power in the female symbol is so strong it came through anyway, and I think Protestant women were worse off than Catholics in many ways. I don't think that it was a coincidence that Protestantism happened at the same time as the witch trials. If you look at what they did on a symbolic level, the most devastating thing about Protestantism is that it got rid of Mary. It incorporated everything into this androgynous wimp, so that there isn't anything for women to identify with. And on a practical level, what they did was invade the convents (which were very different from convents now). There were some wild women in those monasteries, and great scholars, women who escaped marriage that way. What the Protestants did was invade them and make all those nuns get married, and so, on a practical level, you get an assimilation into marriage.

**E.W.:** What was the advantage of creating this new dogma about Mary in the mid-19th century?

**M.D.:** For them? I think they needed to hype up Mary, juice her up, make her do something to seduce the masses again. They were seeming to exalt a female symbol. They wanted to keep women hooked into their institution because that was the time of the so-called first wave of feminism.

**E.W.:** Can women working inside the church make changes?

**M.D.:** I don't think it's a good idea for women to be in the church. The only really strong logic I can see for women in the Church is to figure their way out of it. I don't think women can make changes, it's not women who control the symbols. How you have anything to do with the symbols that are affecting your life is to change your life. But if you stay within the church, you're like a walking contradiction, that is, a square triangle.

Do you think that women staying in the church for all these thousands of years has made it any better? Let me use an analogy, about the Ku Klux Klan. For a woman to try to reform the Catholic Church, or any church, is like trying to get into the Ku Klux Klan. Why would you try to reform it?

**E.W.:** What about a woman who needs the structure of organized religion?

**M.D.:** I would want to talk to the woman about why she needs a structure. Where does that need come from? Why can't she just go out there amid the water and trees? There, you get it direct. Or being with a lover, a friend, other women, yourself, and creating... there you have it full force. Why would someone choose to have, from a little funnel in the polluted little way they drip it into your psyche, what's available all around you? As if they own it, as if they own spirituality, and you have to go begging for it.



It's the atrocity of reversal.

**E.W.:** Do you create neologisms, new words, because you're mistrustful of language? Does this make your work less accessible?

**M.D.:** I think I have some reality check. I know I'm not writing only for myself because I have friends and I'm writing for them. Sometimes people say things like, "What about the women at the supermarket?" I go to the supermarket.

I don't have any delusion that I can reach everyone. You do the thing that you feel best at. I think that having to talk grass-roots, square one—perhaps there are women who are very good at that and who have the patience to handle it, but, maybe also there's a division of labour. There's a kind of functionalism. Not everyone has to do the same thing at all times.

**E.W.:** Is there a need for interpreters of your work?

**M.D.:** I don't think there have to be interpreters. I think the whole intention of *Gyn/Ecology* was not to be a bible, but a springboard. That's the way I use books, and if it's a springboard then I think people should do their own work. I'm not into having a whole slew of interpreters, specially when you know what they do with Christ figures anyway. The other side of that kind of glorification is to string you up, no one want to idolize someone else. Underneath they really hate the people that they're idolizing.

**E.W.:** Is there a place for anger?

**M.D.:** I work in anger. It's not just coming out of my head. I think one of the very difficult passages has been "what to do about rage against women" because in the 70's there was a certain stage of sisterhood for some of us when it was so clear who had the power, who were the rapists, while knowing all the time about imbedded self-hatred, and horizontal violence. Nevertheless, there was that clarity about who had the control. I think that, at least among women I know, there's been the necessity to face the effects of the horizontal violence among women. There have been terrible abandonments, betrayals, and it has been discouraging. If the rage is against men, it's one thing; when your friends seem to have betrayed you or they just can't seem to keep going, that is more perplexing on an emotional level. I think rage can become this massive bull, but I also think that rage is a kind of energy and the task is to turn it into creativity. I try to do that by analysing rage.

itself. It's almost like trial by fire. There are levels and levels of knowing. There are things that I wrote in *Beyond God the Father* that I understood, but I didn't understand them the way I understand them now. It's a very spooky thing. Sojourner Truth said she knew a thing, and then she knew it twice, to really know it on another level. And, I think knowing about self-hatred and horizontal violence is something that one knows more deeply as one goes along. You also know encouraging, spinning things more deeply.

**E.W.:** How is that?

**M.D.:** It's almost, as if you have the impression of moving in two directions at once, and vision is so much clearer, ecstasy is so much more there, but the knowledge of the horror corresponds with that. The deepening knowledge of the horror. It seems to me that there are some times when you can't or you don't feel the choices so clearly. If you feel sad sometimes, you do feel sad, you can't just turn it off. But there's a lot to grieve about. I think there is a choice for life, pro-life is a word that was stolen from us. What I would call bio-philia, love of life over necro-philia. Necrophilia is what patriarchy is all about.

**E.W.:** Do you have to keep choosing life?

**M.D.:** That's interesting. I think sometimes you don't know all that you're getting yourself into in taking that first step. To take the first step in feminism, luckily you don't know how hard it's going to be further along. Even along the way you have to keep making your choice. I think one of the things that some of us who've been at it for a while have grieved about is that there are women who seemed to be there, but it was harder than it appeared. The point is to have high expectations of one's self.

**E.W.:** A friend once said there's no such thing as an ex-feminist.

**M.D.:** I used to say once a Catholic always a Catholic! The feminist journey is toward original integrity, and in the fragmented state a woman can know with part of her mind about feminism. Sometimes we can be speaking to that part of her mind but there are other parts within her mind, almost like other persons, that haven't heard. We all have some of those not completely developed aspects of our self. I think some of us know now not to be naively optimistic.

**E.W.:** How can we lose our optimism without being burned out?

**M.D.:** I think you have a right to be burned out sometimes. I have a theory about plastic passions. A lot of emotions and passions are man-made, and my thesis is they wouldn't exist in a gynocentric society. The kind of passions that have no object, and are just free-floating, like depression, anxiety, guilt, hostility, fulfilment, boredom. I think those are counterfeits of genuine passion, and so the problem becomes how to reconvert those into genuine passion. Also, I have a theory of potted passions: women love the wrong things, desire the wrong things, hate the wrong things and are angry over the wrong things, the thing is, with these potted passions, to unblock the flow. Anger is clearly a real passion, it has a real object as opposed to depression, which has no clearly defined ob-

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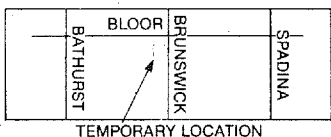
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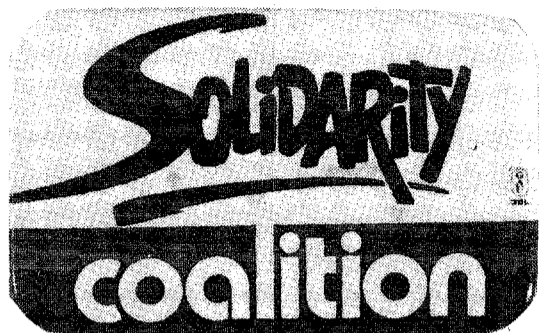
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# MOVEMENT MATTERS



## Women Against the Budget

VANCOUVER—Formed in July to oppose the budget, proposed legislation, and social service cutbacks brought in by BC's Social Credit government, Women Against the Budget (WAB) has participated fully in the Lower Mainland and Provincial Solidarity Coalitions and has also mounted several large actions in its own name. These have included a demonstration in front of the home of Minister of Human Resources Grace McCarthy (a lively gathering, compared to the activities of the Ku Klux Klan by the president of BC's Employers' Council), and a large public meeting aimed at exposing the full implications of the Socred program for women and children. WAB has also sent scores of women out door-knocking and circulating in shopping centres to gain signatures for Solidarity's petition to the legislature, provided innumerable speakers for TV and radio and community groups, done leafletting of downtown workers, successfully pressured one employer to rehire a woman who walked off her job to participate in the Solidarity rally on August 10, and organized an enormous Picnic Against the Budget which featured songs, balloons, facepainting for kids, and youthful speakers explaining what the budget

would mean for children.

WAB is certainly one of the largest and most vital women's movement formations in Vancouver in a long time. It not only brings together women active for many years and women just entering political life, but also provides a forum wherein feminists of greatly varied kinds can and do struggle over how to work together in a principled and united way. Predictably, the enormous pressures of time and urgency which characterize the political climate in BC right now have mixed effects. WAB can indeed move very quickly to respond to a situation or an issue; but WAB doesn't always take the time it desperately needs to work through on long-term strategy or to sort out the politics underlying disagreements on issues such as outreach, internal structure, and relations with the Solidarity coalitions.

Working in these formations is both encouraging and frustrating for feminists. Solidarity unites a very wide range of community organizations and unions, and to be involved in such mass-based political activity is lifegiving. In turn, WAB delegates, WAB members, and other feminists are a visible force within the Solidarity movement. Its tendencies range from those who would be willing to do a deal, to those who see a general strike as the only viable strategy; in this heterogenous ferment, WAB provides militant yeast. To date, the commitment made by Solidarity to fight for withdrawal of all the legislation and for restoration of all social services has held firm. As the end of October approaches, and with it the date on which 1600 members of the BC Government Employees' Union are due to lose their jobs and their sisters and brothers are due to walk out with them, WAB and all the other members of Solidarity need to hold very firm indeed.

—Cynthia Flood

## Women and the Law

OTTAWA—The National Association of Women and the Law is a Canadian, non-profit organization dedicated to law reform and public education with a feminist perspective.

These are crucial times for women. The Charter of Rights as well as the proposed revisions to the Criminal Code are all matters which closely affect Canadian women. It is imperative that women continue to have input on the public decision-making process which so profoundly affects their lives. NAWL plays an important leadership role in establishing equal rights for women.

We cannot achieve these goals without strong support and assistance from you. Please consider:

- Donating to the NAWL Trust for Research and education, a registered charitable organization. All donations to the Trust are tax deductible; and/or
- becoming a member of the Association. Your contributions will assist us in our efforts to:
  - establish a *Women and the Law Journal*, a bilingual national looseleaf service which will summarize reported as well as unreported decisions affecting women from federal and provincial judicial, quasi-judicial and administrative tribunals. In addition, a journal section will provide commentaries and analyses from contributing writers;
  - continue our research and lobbying efforts in areas such as pornography, day care, soliciting, pensions, affirmative action, divorce reform, abortion, parental benefits;
  - monitor the enforcement of the Constitution, ensuring government compliance with Section 15 of the Charter of Rights.

As a member you will have the opportunity to keep abreast of all legal issues concerning women. You will receive our newsletter and have access to our Information Bank. You will also be invited to voice your opinions and set priorities for the Association.

Contact NAWL at 124 O'Connor Street, Suite 305, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5M9.

## Doctor's Privileges Upheld

PETERBOROUGH, ONT.—In June 1983, a medical advisory committee recommended to the Board of Governors at Peterborough Civic Hospital that Dr. Joyce Barrett's obstetrical privileges be suspended for 60 days. After deliberating for 12 hours on October 16, the Board decided to reject the recommendation.

The MAC report was based on Barrett's alleged "repeated breach of hospital policy" in allowing mothers to keep their newborn babies with them rather than transferring them immediately to the nursery, and in permitting two previous 'caesarean section' patients to undergo labour without consulting

an obstetrician.

In both cases, Barrett said, it was not she who broke hospital policy but the patients, who had made informed choices: "I am convinced it is wrong and unethical for a doctor to usurp a patient's decision-making prerogative." She added that the use of an "informed refusal" form should carry as much weight as an "informed consent" form in hospital procedure.

After four months, the Board rejected the committee's recommendation, and instead set up a committee to study policies and procedures in the hospital's obstetrical department.

About 100 Barrett supporters had gathered outside the hospital (the hearing was closed to the public) to cheer her in her victory.

## Birth Control Pledge-A-Thon 362-6211

I pledge to abstain from sexual intercourse with any man, from this day forward for

\_\_\_\_\_ Weeks  
\_\_\_\_\_ Months  
\_\_\_\_\_ Years

Or, until Free-Standing Abortion Clinics are legalized across Canada.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Hand-out at the October abortion rally, Toronto

## "The Feminist Eros Festival"

TORONTO—Womenfilm/Womenart in conjunction with the Women's Festival Collective '84 invites the co-operation of artists and art organizations as contributors and collaborators in the *Feminist Eros Festival*. The tentative dates will be March/April 1984. We invite women artists to explore the theme of feminist Eros and produce it in original music (rock and folk), poetry, theatre, performance art, dance, and feminist art theory. We also invite all women artists, co-ordinators, and producers to be involved in the process of realizing this event.

As we understand it, the concept of Eros originated as a primal, creative, life-affirming energy. Through patriarchal history Eros has had many interpretations and distortions—one of the most distinctive being the silencing of women's sexuality through socialization as women.

Pornography, considered by the patriarchy as male sexual entertainment and by feminists as violence against women, means the death of eros.

Out of this chaos we urge artists to search their own meaning of Eros—to give voice and image to women through an expression of Eros that is feminist.

Interested artists should send texts and/or descriptions of work to the Festival Co-ordinator, Women's Festival Collective '84, c/o Womenfilm/Womenart, 201 Spadina Rd., Toronto, M4C 4Y1.

Deadline for submissions *January 1, 1984*.

Women interested in joining the Festival Collective leave a message at Womenfilm/Womenart, (416) 926-0015.

## Peace Camp

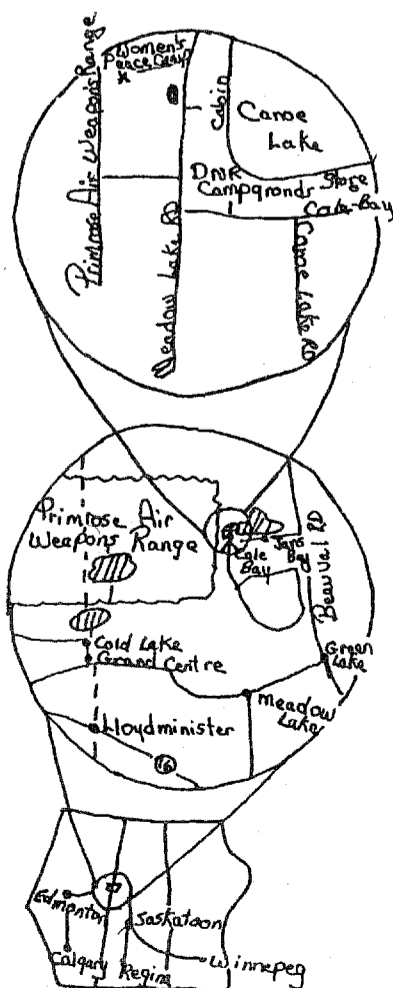
COLE BAY, SASK.—Canada's first permanent women's peace camp has been established near Cole Bay, Saskatchewan, along the eastern border of the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range.

The camp is an extension of the Vancouver-based Women Gathering to Stop the Cruise organization. This summer they organized a two day 'Peace Camp/Ritual/Action' in Cole Bay from August 19 to 22. The event included some 80 women from all walks of life and from across Canada who gathered together in protest against the testing of the cruise missile.

During the two days, workshops were offered on militarism and feminism, non-violent direct action, Latin America, and the history of the testing range and its effect on the Native people of the area. The gathering culminated in a three-hour ritual which was a powerful and uplifting experience for all the women involved.

As a result of the efforts that went into the gathering, a permanent camp is now set up. The Native people are actively supporting the camp and its participants. They believe it is important to establish a network to exchange ideas for actions to protest both the testing of the cruise missile and the unresolved issue of aboriginal rights to the land that is now being used as an air weapons testing range.

The *Kipichisikamisik Peace Camp* needs help. If you want more information, or if you are able to help with a donation of food, money, camping supplies, winter clothing, etc., please contact: Women's Peace Camp, General Delivery, Cole Bay, Saskatchewan, S0M 0M0. (306) 829-4232, 829-4218, 833-2557.



## Family Benefits Work Group

TORONTO—The Family Benefits Work Group has launched its fifth annual Children's Coat Campaign early this year with the hope that children will receive warm clothing before freezing temperatures are upon us. Help, please, to help those children who otherwise would not have warm clothing.

Last winter the Work Group, a registered charitable organization, provided new winter jackets and snowsuits to over 400 children. But because donations did not come in to the FBWG office until November and December, clothing could not be distributed until the snow had already fallen.

This year sole support parents and their children are living 50% below the poverty level. Until such time as social assistance levels are based on realistic expenses or that there are enough jobs available to employ all our citizens, thousands upon thousands of children will go without warm winter clothing.

The FBWG has already received hundreds of requests from parents in desperate need of assistance. Your donation will be greatly appreciated. All donations are tax deductible and receipts will be mailed out. Make cheques payable to: FBWG Coat Campaign, c/o 33 Charles St. E., Toronto, M4Y 1R9.



# Festival Celluloid My

by Donna Gollan

There is one school of thought that does not bother to analyse the myths and stories of popular culture, claiming that fiction has little effect on fact, and that popular fiction is even less worthy of study than acknowledged works of art. There are plenty of feminists, too, who claim that there is enough to do to improve the legislation on equal rights, employment, pay, assault and so on, that pertain to female reality before we need to delve into the fantasy world of advertising and the movies, pulp magazines and best sellers. My premise, and it is by no means an original one, is that the images presented through various media of popular culture can influence their times and that even if they haven't any direct or measurable effect on people's actions, they can certainly reflect prevalent attitudes.

Studying popular culture, rather than "high culture," has certain advantages in the search for how attitudes are changing. For one thing, popular culture reaches a huge audience and obviously can affect or reflect the attitudes of more people. Also, its aim is so unabashedly to be popular, that the stories and images have to change swiftly enough to capture and recapture its huge audience. A thirst for new material will quite often result in a slightly more progressive plot, as the producers will take what they consider to be risks to test out a new idea on the audience.

I have a particular interest in the movies and the images of women that they present because of the peculiar quality of the movies that makes fantasy seem like reality and, worse yet, male fantasy seem like the only reality. The makers of celluloid myth have long been men and while I will not accuse them of plotting against women, I am continually amazed at the images of us that they create, expecting us to enjoy them. The fact is that movie images of women that have alternately made us laugh, cry, scream and rage have always been made in the hope of attracting large audiences of women and men alike. If a certain image was not popular, it was quite simply dropped. The analysis of popular culture, then, has forced us into a state of consciousness of what has appealed to women in the past and why we have spent our money to see myths and fantasies that can at best be described as severely damaging to our self-images.

It has been the absurd world of the movies that split women into mothers and whores and had men fall in love with their horses anyway. The movies have presented us time and again with beautiful female spectators for adventurous male exploits. We have been "entertained" often enough by a world in which men are best buddies and women are competitive bitches; men compete for prizes and women compete for men. To top it all, the movies have made us a gift of the women as ideal murder victim.

Mireille Dansereau, a talented French-Canadian filmmaker, feels that it is long past time that women should have the tools of production of this industry firmly in our own hands.

What I am saying is stop identifying with the images in *Vogue* and *Elle*, stop making ideal images of what should be happiness. Work with reality... You should always have images and myths, but from within. Not from men or newspapers. You should be in contact with your own imaginary world. (from *Women in Focus*, Jeanne Betancourt, p47)

Of course the problem has always been money. Making film is an incredibly expensive form of popular culture. For some years there was a feminist aesthetic in filmmaking that claimed the rougher and cheaper and less slick the film was, the more easily it could be called feminist. It is also true that the movie industry is an incredibly technical one and that women who have been trained from day one to believe themselves mechanically inept have to overcome their own prejudices as well as the whole industry's. With sheer determination and guts we are nevertheless getting our hands on this tremendously effective mode of mythmaking. And guess what? We are making myths from our own imaginary world.

When I sat down to choose the films that looked as though they might have feminist leanings at this year's Festival of Festivals in Toronto, this past September, it did not take me long to realize that I could see quite a lot of film if I restricted my viewing to material that was made predominantly by women. This included a wide range of documentary, feature, short and video productions that hailed from Canada, the United States, West Germany and France. Despite the fact that these films are going to have a hard time getting any kind of decent distribution, the very fact that there are so many in one year is tremendously exciting. A lot of credit has to go to the people who programmed these movies. Kay Armatage gets top billing on my list, not only for booking some of the best films I saw but also for getting them into the festival without creating a "women's film" category.

Some of the films I saw fall into the category of women making images of our own reality. *Im Jahr der Schlange (In the Year of the Snake)* is a feminist documentary that follows the personal development of a small group of women through the women's movement in such a way that it practically dares male reviewers to hate it. *Camilla Horn Watching Herself Play Gretchen in Murnau's Silent Movie Faust* plays with the layers of a woman's reality, often letting the audience perceive more than the woman can herself. *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute* is the kind of film that presents the everyday lives of thousands of women through fiction, in order to be kinder to its viewers than a documentary picture would allow.

On the other side of Dansereau's desire to see female reality come to the screen is the wish that women filmmakers would

make myths from our own, as yet untrammelled, imaginary world. Films like *Entre Nous* work with the memories of the filmmaker as a small girl coming to terms with her mother's passionate friendship with another woman and the love affair that grows out of it. *Variety* is a film that deals with the inner world of one confused young woman as she tries to cope with the way men see her through their pornography and the tortuous tension between sex and power. *Born in Flames* is a futuristic movie that trashes male myths and creates female heroes whom we can admire as they cope with fantastic situations.

The very fact that there were more films made by women that I was able to see and certainly more than this space allows me to discuss is a reason to rejoice. The freshness and novelty of seeing our own reality and several of our fantasies explored will wear off, in time, once there are as many women making film as there are men. Meanwhile, there have been some *Enormous Changes*...

## Enormous Changes at the Last Minute



Dir.: Mirra Bank, Ellen Hovde, Muffie Meyer. Prod. Co.: Ordinary Lives Inc. Prod.: Mirra Bank. Screenplay: John Sayles, Susan Rice. Orig. Stories: Grace Paley. Cin.: Tom McDonough. Ed.: Mirra Bank, Ellen Hovde, Muffie Meyer. Cast: Ellen Barkin, Kevin Bacon, Maria Tucci, Lynn Milgrim, Sudie Bond. USA, 1983, 110 mins.

To make these images, from short stories by Grace Paley, and to make them into entertainment is to present to the world the lives of thousands of invisible women. There are other women like Virginia, who revel in their sex lives with their husbands but unfortunately continue to produce babies as a result. Her husband screams at the kids and then says to her, "If we continue on like this, you're going to hate me." Virginia calmly, if somewhat falsely replies: "I hate you now, so do what you like." His parting, macho kiss is about as helpful as the sharp, clipped advice of the social worker with whom Virginia must deal if she's to feed her abandoned children. And yet the film is never unfair to any of its female characters. Even the welfare worker is responding in a typical way to Virginia's rudeness, while Virginia's manner stems from pride and an inability to accept her sudden, new, non-status position in the world.

John is an old flame who begins to drop by once the marriage has officially broken up, even though his own marriage is supposedly intact. Pudgy, balding, and kind, he bribes Virginia by bringing her presents for the kids. One dreadful day spent worrying about the children and being harassed by the welfare worker about John ends with Virginia trying to take stock of her problems by listing them, in crayon, on the back of one of the kids' drawings. John sneers at the list, comparing her petty little problems with earthquakes and famines. What are the "disturbances of man" he raves, compared to the "catastrophes of God!" We can only laugh gently, on Virginia's side all the way. Throughout this story it has indeed been the disturbances of man that have caused all the trouble. As women, we can only sympathize.

The second part of the film is the story of Faith. She has been divorced a little longer and her children are a little older. Perceptive as kids are, the best moments in this little vignette are supplied by their remarks and reactions. Faith's story is very ordinary and we are subtly informed of her troubles when her young son tells her father that "Mom mostly laughs for company now." Fed up with her huge responsibility for her young children and elderly parents, Faith demands that the kids bury her in the sand. The children panic, afraid of losing her, afraid she wants to lose them, until she explains that they're to bury her only to the neck. That final shot of her covered in sand is a charming way of il-

lustrating the weight of all the nurturing for which she is responsible without being boring and didactic.

The third and final story concerns another social worker, Alexandra, who falls for a younger man who writes songs and drives a taxi. There is about ten years difference in their ages, just enough so that Alexandra feels no need to take the relationship seriously. When she discovers that she is pregnant she wants only to say goodbye, in her mind letting Dennis off the hook, but in his mind, using him and throwing him away. The conflict that results is then handled so dextrously that the viewer finds herself shifting from side to side, at one minute wishing that Dennis would quit being such a pest and at another, wishing Alexandra would be less prickly. When they reach a compromise, nobody has lost and an awful lot has been explored with a sensitivity that has hitherto been almost completely lacking on this subject in popular culture. Nobody is to blame. This is not a situation that calls for sin and guilt and other outdated labels. One leaves the theatre feeling that the child in this womb has a hope for a better future.

## Camilla Horn Watching Herself Play Gretchen in Murnau's Silent Movie Faust

Directors: Hans Sachs and Hedda Riugeberg. Federal Republic of Germany, 1981. 17 mins.

This film is a small, seventeen-minute gem that delivers its message with a delicious irony. Camilla Horn watches the film she made with Murnau shortly before his death, some fifty years ago, and mourns her lost beauty. She distinctly remembers each of the tortures that she was made to suffer, but tries to distance herself from that time by continually referring to the woman in the film as "she" or "her." No one overtly questions her on the wisdom of the great Murnau in causing a young girl to sit for hours in a crouched position, while everyone else involved in the filming takes a break to eat, so that she will look sufficiently broken for the next scene. Rather, she comments that Murnau "knew just how to handle a beginner." Again, when we see the conclusion of *Faust* in which Gretchen is burnt at the stake, the older Camilla Horn laughs uncomfortably, remembering the way she fainted into the props man's arms, suffering from smoke inhalation.

This is a story of exploitation that dances on that fine line between the horror of the young girl's exploitation and the even greater horror of the older woman's lack of understanding of the whole situation. Her tears, she insists, are for the beauty of the film. She must see the film over and over again, her face reflected back to us in a mirror, showing us a self she cannot even comprehend. It is this lack of consciousness that feminists must deal with time and again when faced with women who have been damaged by a sexist world but who face the camera with dignity and pride and the sound of uncertainty forced through their laughter.



## Variety

Dir.: Bette Gordon. Prod. Co.: Variety Motion Pictures. Screenplay: Kathy Acker, Bette Gordon. Cin.: Tom Dicillo, John Foster. Ed.: Ela von Hasperg. Music: John Lurie. Cast: Sandy McLeod, Will Patton, Richard Davidson. USA, 1983, 97 mins.

*Variety*, an independent US production, is a difficult film to really enjoy. Unlike the gentle humour of *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute*, or the ironic tones of *Camilla Horn*, that provide the feminist viewer with some distance

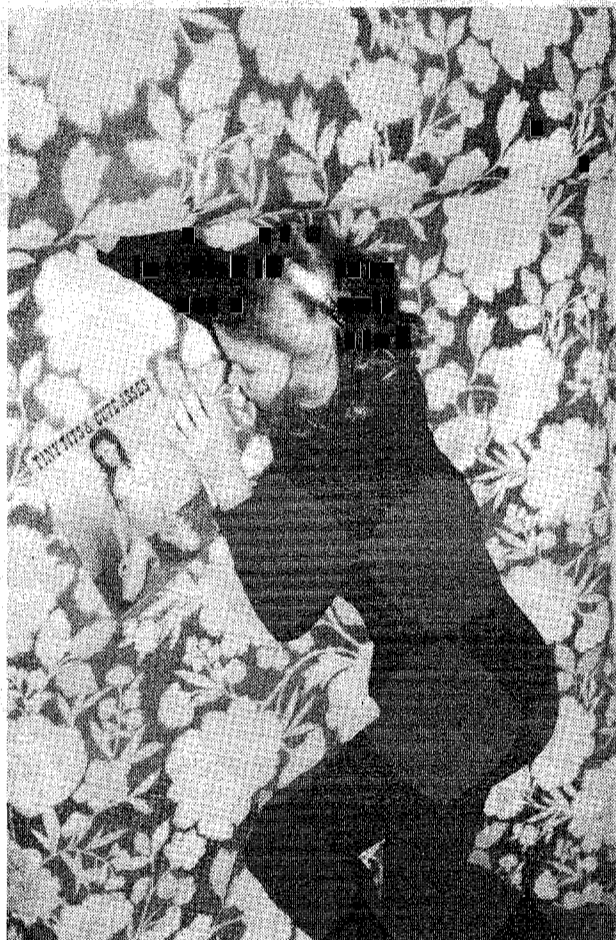


## Festivals

## hs: Take Two

from the pain of women's lot, *Variety* seeks to poke and probe until whatever hurts most can be laid bare. The quality that the film possesses of being able to seriously disturb the viewer is certainly a politically valuable one. In this case the film explores the relationship between sex and power, that strange combination of the two inherent in pornography, and the effect that has on one woman's image of herself. Certainly *Variety*'s aim is to force us to question pornography, in a way that precludes evasive thinking but simultaneously provides no clear-cut answers or insights.

Christine is a young woman who desperately needs a job and settles for one taking tickets at a pornographic movie theatre. Curiosity draws her into the lobby to watch parts of the shows and she begins a process of attempting to grapple with the sexual power she sees being exchanged. At times it is the dominant male position that obsesses her, but is clear that she also sees the women in these sexy dramas as extremely "in control" of the situation. At home she begins to try on lacy undergarments and to preen herself in front of the mirror. She also starts to recite these lurid scenes to her boyfriend in a flat precise monotone as if she wants to discover where the sexual power comes from, the acts or the method in which they are relayed. It is also possible to interpret these near-expressionless recitations as indicative of the way that the films appear to her as she watches them from the



lobby. Their effect on her boyfriend is at one and the same time exciting and threatening. His reaction is to simply stop seeing her, counting her as crazy and not returning her calls. Whether this is meant as a sign of his unwillingness to allow her to have that much sexual power in the relationship or whether she is merely trying to prove a point to herself is so totally beyond analysis that again, any one of a number of interpretations is possible.

As the movie progresses, the whole tone changes to that of a cheap thriller. One of her regular customers at the theatre asks her out and she begins to track down his sordid connections to a fishing union racket and the underground world of pornography. When she has, at great personal risk to herself, "got the scoop" on him, she calls to arrange a meeting. It is clear just from listening to her half of the phone conversation that he has suddenly changed from a suave, debonair, older man to a frightened, querulous one, offering money for her silence. The truly fascinating part of the whole exchange is that she refuses the money. The film then ends, before we have a chance to do much more than conjecture that she will inevitably be killed at the meeting.

Any analysis of a piece of popular culture that is as significantly different from the norm as this movie is must include questions on our own reactions. Why did I, for example, feel Christine was putting her life on the line during that telephone call? Surely she felt a surge of the kind of power she had been seeking all along, while I was picturing her as a victim. Was the thriller format meant to lead me into this very trap in order to force me to rethink my views on sex and power? Was this woman seeking some sort of identity through pornographic images and if so, how could she possibly find one that enabled her to feel a sense of power, rather than victimization? If the point was to celebrate this woman's daring and intelligence in uncovering the various scams, then why did the film end before the meeting occurs? Perhaps the filmmakers were trying to avoid letting me off that easily, knowing that the relief of seeing the petty porno king deflated and Christine walk off alive and triumphant would effectively stop my self-questioning. A further analysis of the clues provided by the images in *Variety* just might provide some stunning answers to all these questions, but if so, it will take a better woman than I to find them.



## Born in Flames

Dir.: Lizzie Borden. Prod.: Lizzie Borden and the Jerome Foundation. Screenplay: Lizzie Borden. Cin.: Ed Bowes, Al Santana, Phil O'Reilly. Ed.: Lizzie Borden. Music: The Bloods, The Red Crayolas, Ibis. Cast: Honey, Jeanne Satterfield, Adele Bertei, Flo Kennedy, Becky Johnston, Pat Murphy, Kathy Bigelow. USA. 1983, 90 mins.

*Born in Flames* is another impressive independent production. It was made on a shoestring budget and, as such, took five years to complete. Though it may have taken the filmmakers that much longer to realize their goal, it meant that they had the opportunity to make any images they liked, without fear of interference from the big money sources. In other words, they could be as politically outrageous as they pleased. *Born in Flames* takes full advantage of this licence!

Set in the future, ten years after the "Social Democratic War of Liberation," it is the story of the oppression of women which has seen little improvement despite a supposedly revolutionary environment. In fact, the whole film deals with problems that are currently so prevalent that the atmosphere mimics that old familiar feeling we have all experienced after an election. This is what makes the escalation of the violence inherent in the actions of the Women's Army so extraordinarily powerful. We can feel ourselves getting angry with these supposedly fictional characters. We can recognize non-fictional oppression when we see it. When a woman is harassed, at first verbally and then increasingly physically, by some young punks on the street, the audience sends up a murmur of fear, anger, discomfort and empathy. When the Women's Army zooms in from all sides on bicycles, blowing loud whistles to alert a whole network of rescue, the audience sends up a cheer. This is wonderful storytelling. One look at this image of women coming to their own rescue makes up for a lot of old movie scenes in which the hero unties the damsel from the railway tracks.

From this point on, the characters become increasingly active and politically aware women. The fictional equivalent of the CIA start in to keep tabs on the movement. They are blocked by their own ignorance of women. Unable to deal with the difference between women operating under the influence of unconscious socialization and women who have begun to think for themselves, once politicized, the men do not even understand the nature of the battle. One baffled spy reports to his boss that it is impossible to discover the leaders of the movement; it appears that they rotate leadership in a totally unpredictable way. You can tell that the word "collective" is not an often-used word in this man's vocabulary!

There were many women present at that Festival of Festivals' screening who reacted to this film as spontaneously and as noisily as I did. Possibly we were enjoying that sweet, if vicarious, taste of revenge that is available only through viewing fantasy as lifelike and real for us as such a film can be. Possibly, too, we were enjoying a private joke about the secret power we know we would have if only we could tap that distilled anger at the heart of all womankind. All I know for sure is that we were having fun watching images of violence which women are supposed to find extremely discomfoting.

## Entre Nous

Dir.: Diane Kurys. Prod. Co.: Partner's Production, Alexandre Films, Hachette Premiere, Films A2, SFPC. Prod.: Ariel Zeitoun. Screenplay: Diane Kurys, Alain Le Henry. Cin.: Bernard Lubic. Art Dir.: Jacques Bufnoir. Sound: Harald Maury, Alix Conte. Music: Luis Bacalov. Cast: Miou-Miou, Isabelle Huppert, Jean-Pierre Bacri, Guy Marchand, Robin Renucci, Patrick Bauchau. France, 1983, 108 mins.

Diane Kurys' film *Entre Nous* is a complex story that encompasses a wide range of possible relationships between women and men, women and women, men and children, men and men, and women and children. The story is a simple one of the great friendship that develops between two women, Helen and Madelaine, until it finally overrides any other relationship in the film. How the film begins, with the two women firmly in the arms and hearts of two men, and how it ends is clearly a metaphor for the awakening of feminist consciousness.

Helen and Madelaine begin by being the sort of pretty, feminine women who do not take control of their own lives but simply allow fate a free hand. Helen is swept up out of a civilian prisoner camp by one of the guards who marries her and later takes all the credit for creating her "out of nothing." Madelaine has her lover shot in her arms, in a scene that is so shockingly moving it is reminiscent of the moment in Rossellini's *Rome, Open City*, in which a small boy sees his mother shot down in the street. Madelaine goes on to marry someone else and produces a son whom they both regard as a nuisance. Helen and Madelaine meet through their children and the meeting is touchingly intimate, like old movie scenes of love at first sight.

There is a naive innocence to their relationship as they come to depend on each other for support in battles with the men in their lives. The biggest compliment that they can pay to each other is that the men are not their equals. These two women are at once elegant and childlike, confused and yet intelligent equals. It is easy to see what draws them to each other. It is even more clear why they eventually leave their men, one raging at the failure of his creation and the other merely sad that he has never been enough to satisfy his wife.

There are moments in this film that I am sure ring true only for women, leaving the male portion of the audience confused and a little scared. Kurys captures the bond that has sprung up between women since the days of quilting bees, dress altering and recipe exchanging. There is nothing new about women supporting women, despite the movies' presentation of competitive bitches and male buddies. The extent of the bond between the two men is a bit of borrowed money, though Helen's husband is at least shown enjoying the company of his daughters. Those are his most sympathetic scenes in the film and they are clearly the reason he cannot relate to his wife as an equal. He perceives her, too, as a child of his making.



There is a scene in which one of his daughters has wandered off from Helen and Madelaine and arrived at his workplace. He arrives home with the errant child to a frantic household. While the child receives no reproof, Helen is sent staggering across the room with a resounding slap across the face. It is quite clear whom he feels is the guilty child in this situation.

As the film progresses, so does his violence. As Helen gains some independence, opening a small shop of her own and planning a day when Madelaine will join her in this endeavour, Michel begins to feel "crossed out" and forbids his wife to see

CONTINUED PAGE 13

# ARTS

## Out of Print, Out of Mind

Lynne Spender, *Intruders on the Rights of Men: Women's Unpublished Heritage*. London: Pandora Press, 1983

Reviewed by Jane Springer

Alas, a woman that attempts the pen  
Such an intruder on the rights of men.

Seventeenth-century poet Anne Finch provided the first part of the title of Lynne Spender's book, *Intruders on the Rights of Men*, and its central theme of women as unwanted outsiders in the world of print. Spender aims to "deconstruct the myths and mystique associated with the publishing industry," to show how what she sees as men's control over the printed word has served to devalue women and their words, constituting an actual unpublished heritage of women's words. In fact, she gives us one more book detailing women's unequal access to writing itself, and never manages to analyze the inner workings of the publishing industry.

Spender's book is most interesting when it looks at the problems women have had getting published historically. In particular she identifies women's "heritage of harassment"—as we know, some women writers have been forced to take male names in order to be published, others were simply anonymous ("Anonyms" was a woman apparently). If women did manage to be published, male literary criticism then determined the fate (read "early death") of their work.

I also liked Spender's speculations about how we would have turned out had we studied *Aurora Leigh* (for those of you, like me, who had never heard of it—it's an epic poem on the "woman question" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who is known to most of us only for her love sonnets) instead of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. And her defence of the "melodrama" of some women's writing is a good one, recognizing as it does that "such stories of drama and nightmare are the genuine experiences of women's lives in a male-dominated society." But her historical anecdotes do not provide Spender with the information necessary to demystify the publishing industry of today.

In her discussion of contemporary publish-

ing in England, Australia, Canada and the US, Spender almost completely disregards the economic bases of the large commercial publishers, concentrating instead on what she calls the "irrationality" of their editorial decisions. Rather than showing how the profit motive quite logically and rationally determines the publishing decisions of these companies she focuses on the image of the old boy's club publishing has always loved to convey: the famous editors' "eccentricities," the whims, the mysterious, amorphous quality so essential to publishing called "flair." Taking this self-reflection at face value, Spender comes up with an old boys conspiracy theory of publishing.

Much of the description she uses to piece together this theory is apt—a few "privileged" men control what she calls the "social values" of the society and women are excluded from decision-making positions by these male keepers of the gates—but she fails to note that along with most (not all) women, the majority of men are also excluded, as are people of colour and other oppressed peoples.

Spender's emphasis on values and attitudes to the exclusion of economic concerns also means she cannot make a real distinction between the large commercial publishers—many of which, especially in the US, are now owned by multinationals (Simon and Schuster, for example, is owned by Gulf and Western, which has sales and assets of nearly \$6 billion)—and the small, alternative presses, most of which are unprofitable, if not non-profit. She mentions feminist presses, to be sure, but only in the general context of women in the publishing industry.

So there is a real confusion in her analysis: she decries the fact that women do not have access to publishing because it is controlled by men; but she does not recognize the potential of the instances where women do control it. Now this would be understandable if Spender wanted to critique feminist presses for being no different, in terms of their criteria for publishing, say, than the others; or because she felt they were too insignificant to be considered at all. But this is not the case. She appears to be more concerned that women be a part of the big publishing conglomerates than that feminist politics become widespread throughout the publishing industry.

In the last few years, in Canada at least,

many more women *have* taken on key positions in the large publishing houses, but their effect on the content of the books published by those publishers has been minimal. Real feminist content and feminist politics can only enter the publishing industry wholeheartedly in the form of independent feminist publishers working to change its masculinist power structure. One would expect that any book that purports to be about women's access to publishing would make a strong statement in favour of publishing with alternative feminist presses. Unfortunately this book does not.

Because Spender does not focus on the transforming potential of the alternate feminist publishers she is also very pessimistic about the future of women's writing. She warns her readers that women's words have been lost before and can be lost again. Perhaps we need this reminder, but I am inclined to be more optimistic. I'll use a quote Spender cited by Virginia Woolf to explain where some of this hopefulness comes from. Woolf wrote the following in 1929, and I'm certain no one since has better described the problem women confront in trying to appropriate forms that were made for men:

But it is still true that before a woman can write exactly as she wishes to write, she has many difficulties to face. To begin with, there is the technical difficulty—so simple, apparently; in reality, so baffling—that the very form of the sentences does not fit her. It is a sentence made by men; it is too loose, too heavy, too pompous for a woman's use... And this a woman must make for herself, altering and adapting the current sentence until she writes one that takes the natural shape of her thought without crushing or distorting it.

—from *Women and Writing*.  
London: The Women's Press, 1979

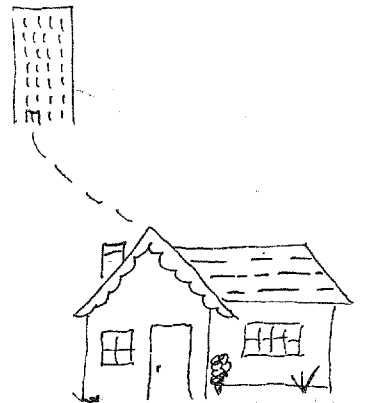
It's clear that we still haven't solved this problem, but a lot of women, and not just one far ahead of her time, are grappling with it.

Nowadays we talk about the development of a feminist discourse, a feminist way of seeing and describing the world. Of course there are many different feminist discourses: from the growth of writing by feminists in Canada alone, we can see that not only are more of us

writing, but we are writing in different forms and genres and from different points of view. But there are also clear similarities among us. Much of our writing began with our stumbling individual experiences—gutsy, irrepressible attempts to portray a space, a feminine way of being in the world. Now we are starting to articulate the feminist collective voice that is emerging from all of those unique yet shared experiences.

And this is one of the contexts into which we must put any discussion about women's access to publishing. The old (old boys') forms just aren't adequate for the new voices we're developing. Feminist writers and publishers are going to have to put their confidence in each other in order to become the vehicles we want them to be—and to ensure there's a place for the women who come later.

Jane Springer has been working in the Canadian publishing industry for eight years and is currently managing editor of the *Women's Press*, Toronto.



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Donna Marchand

by Deena Rasky

So, you want to buy an album for a friend. You want this album to be by a local woman performer, maybe someone not too well known, but someone who plays popular music in such a way that she *could* be the talk of the town.

There is such an album awaiting you at your local woman's bookstore. The album is Marianne Girard's *When it Hurts*. The best selling point of the album is Marianne Girard's clear, strong voice. It's a voice that you really do want to hear much more. Sure, there are many singers around town with a similar quality, but how many can carry it off with such warmth and sincerity?

This album is her first, and it's only a sample of her capability. It's on the Sailor label, a new company which made its debut with Girard. Unfortunately for Girard, Sailor personnel didn't do much in terms of promotion and distribution. In fact, it seems that Girard helped make a name for *them*.

Her music definitely shows the influence of rock reggae. During one of her live performances, she declared Robert Palmer (one of the first white musicians to incorporate "black music" into his style) to be a kindred spirit. The reggae rhythm comes through most clearly in her song "Think I Better Go Now," a song about deciding whether to have a one-night stand or to go home in the cold, pouring rain. This driving beat, further emphasized by the use of both percussion and drums, makes her music quite danceable stuff, especially on side B with "Frankie" and "Ride," a lively number she collaborated on with Brent Titcomb.

Her backup includes Robert Louis Stevenson on drums (no relation to the *Treasure Island* novelist); on guitar, Sherry Shute from Hamburger Patti, among other bands; Evelyn Datl doing fine work on the keyboard and Alex King filling in especially on bass; Margo Davidson plays saxophone, flute and also helps out on backup vocals. On the album, the back-up vocals are provided by Shirley Eikhardt and Catherine MacKay.

## When It Hurts

strong, no-nonsense woman who is in touch with her identity. She's not the type to sit around and wait for things to happen. "I don't wait," she declares in "Don't Have to Make Time." In "Crazy Out Tonight," she wishes she had a car instead of having to put up with drivers hassling her out their windows with "Hey baby, wanna lift?"

In her liveliest and upbeat autobiographical cut "Frankie," she warns us to "Take a good look at me, but hang on to your seats, 'cause I'll turn you inside out and upside down." This is precisely what she does to her listeners, especially last summer when she performed solo at the Trojan Horse café in Toronto. Stripped of her band and electric guitar, the essence of Girard remains and it is 100% solid. There was no special effect mixing to speak of and she even played on a borrowed guitar. Her own acoustic guitar wouldn't accommodate her eight month pregnancy, but that didn't stop her from playing her music. Her powerful voice quickly filled the room.

When you think of a woman with acoustic guitar you ordinarily think of a folkie, but with Girard's strength and overall presence you get a riveting performance that few folk singers could come close to. She's a true artist, able to conjure up imagery with a slight inflection here, a punctuation there combined with well controlled crescendos that only a few mature musicians have developed over the years. At times she transcended the lyrics and made one feel that the song was strictly between Girard, and you.

Listening to the album, or hearing Girard on stage with the rest of her band, one gets the impression she's only a part of the whole instead of the foundation. Possibly that's a problem when the band members are allowed an equal role in music making. Hearing her alone, you really know why the album is credited to Marianne Girard, not the band. Girard is working toward another album, on a different label. It would be great if her voice is given more prominence. She deserves it. ●

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# Hollow Pedestals

by Brenda Roman

This Is Really a Letter about Frida Kahlo. Back in the days when I cast about rather wildly for women role models who could show me how to survive with both love and courage, a motley pantheon of photographs graced my hallway.

First came the elegant Margaret Sanger, later to found Planned Parenthood, but at the time of my photo, she had not a thought of birth control troubling her young brow. She gazed from her frame with the serene confidence of her class.

Then came Bessie Smith, her head cocked triumphantly over her shoulder, seeming to call out "Hi-ya, Toots!" as I went by.

And Rosa Luxemburg, who strode toward the camera wearing one of those impossible turn-of-the-century skirts, oblivious to her slip showing on one side by a good two inches.

Finally, a high-contrast photo of Theda Bara—no greys in this picture—black hair receding into black background, white face and shoulder thrust forward, eyes grotesquely shadowed in black, staring insolently at the viewer. I carried this image with me like a totem through film school whenever I felt intimidated by creative geniuses, and smuggled it improbably into every project one way or another. "Theda Bara" said studio P.R., was "an anagram for 'Arab Death'." In Theda Bara, did I really see Theodosia Goodman from the Bronx saying "Things ain't what they seem,

sister.?"

Whatever I saw, all the images failed me. One by one, they toppled from the pantheon: Margaret Sanger's undoubted courage compromised by a society marriage and political changes, Rosa Luxemburg fleeing from women's issues like the plague, Bessie Smith and Emma Goldman (they had similarities in my eyes) so seemingly unhappy in their sexual freedom, and Theda Bara, who vanished in a puff of ancient studio publicity once I faced the real world.

Even then I had yet to learn that most important lesson of being an adult woman; namely I have only my sweet self and my friends to get me through. It's no use turning the photos to the wall. It's not the women who failed. It's for me to stop demanding they be my models, and to move on from my own heart and in my own time. I have Frida Kahlo to thank for teaching me that.

The Reason for This Letter: A one-time "possible" for my pantheon, she was politically radical (good), and arranged to get Trotsky into Mexico, giving him a reprieve from Stalin's assassins.

A: *But he was killed by Stalin's assassins, dummy! The C.P. muralist Siqueiros made a machine-gun run at him and missed, but nearly got his four-year-old grandson, and then a Spanish Stalinist finally got him with an ice-*

*axe, right in the side of the head!*

Q: *So, what do you think, I don't know what happened to Trotsky?*

A or Q: *For a Protestant girl why do you ask yourself questions in a Yiddish accent?*

Q or A: *Look, I haven't been a girl of any kind for years. And I was talking about Frida Kahlo.*

A: *Hah!*

In any case, I was still judging these women with the inquisitional standards of a teenager. Would Frida Kahlo measure up or not?

Added to the plus side was her bohemian bisexuality which I quite admired. On the minus side came one of those slick documentaries of the 1960s from which the subject emerges without a shred of reputation left. Kahlo's art looked hysterical and naive, and she was shown to be a radical heiress who tried to manipulate people by making suicide threats.

By the time I finally got to Frida Kahlo's museum home in Coyoacán she'd tallied up a lot of pluses and minuses in my book, and I was hungrily looking for evidence to tip the scale.

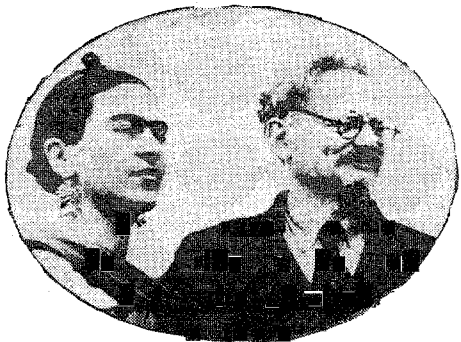
Her rumoured affair with Trotsky bothered me. After all, when encountering these brave political exile families, shouldn't we support them around their vulnerable edges instead of

making sexual raids on their relationships?

A: *There you go again with your teenage inquisition! "Sexual raids"! And you've added to it the most absurd maternal 'pat-pat-patting' around Trotsky and Natalia Sedova, as if they weren't capable adults who could take care of themselves!*

A+: *Well, I was really thinking of Natalia. I mean, Trotsky's marital history can't bear much looking at.*

A: *And another thing, you're portraying*



Frida Kahlo with Trotsky, 1937.

*yourself as a lone principled feminist, trekking off to the wilds of Coyoacán with your book of Frida Kahlo's pluses and minuses.*

A+: *Oh, no. Nothing like that. First of all, Coyoacán: It was rich, all right, but not the wooded retreat of the late '30s. I took the Mexico City subway out there with my 3-year-old son and my former husband. It was Mother's Day, a big deal in Mexico (and I'm all for it). When we stopped at Sanborn's that looked like Howard Johnson's with tiles, they were giving away flowers to mothers.*

*Trotsky's compound: The gun turrets now face onto an urban freeway.*

*Frida Kahlo's house: dingy, drab, what you'd expect of a museum made from the home of a sick person where everything is left "just as it was when she died." In snapshots, my blond Canadian toddler, full of life, clowns in Frida Kahlo's dreary patio.*

Still, when we join the tour, I eagerly sweep the house for clues. The guide is extolling Kahlo, giving the history of every dusty pen and pencil on her desk, recommending that we tour the museum of that talented asshole Diego Rivera. Finally we stop in front of her easel. A chill goes right through my feminist neo-Trotskyist bones.

On Frida Kahlo's easel is a detailed drawing for a portrait she was working on at the time of her death, a rather glorified likeness. "Unfortunately," the guide continues, "she was prevented by her death from carrying out her plan of presenting the finished portrait to her subject: Josef Stalin." ●

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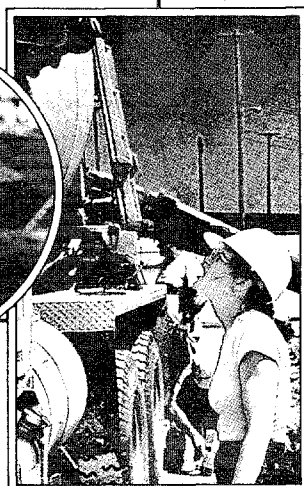
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**ENTRE NOUS**, from page 9

Madelaine again. Since he really considers women of so little account, this independence is doubly galling to him. When he catches Madelaine in Helen's little shop he goes insane, destroying everything in sight, while the women concentrate on protecting each other from his onslaught. Helen finally takes this as a sign to leave. When he later shows up at the beach house, pleading to see his children, hoping that Helen will return to him, his tears are not especially moving. Somehow Diane Kurys, with all the cinematic subtleties at her command, has better captured the silent tears that raged inside Helen when her little shop, and her greatest friend, were under attack.

**Im Jahr der Schlange**  
(In the Year of the Snake)

Dir.: Heide Breitel. Prod. Co.: Alexandrow & Glauert Film, AV Produktion GmbH. Screenplay: Heide Breitel. Cin.: Elfi Mikesch, Eva Hammel, Riki Kalbe. Ed.: Heide Breitel. Music: Frauenrockband Ausserhalb. Cast: Anke-Rixa Hansen, Rosemarie Kusserow, Ingrid Schmidt-Harzbek, Sigrid Vagt. Federal Republic of Germany, 1982, 97 mins.

The film that really pulls all this together is Heide Breitel's *Im Jahr der Schlange*. If *Entre Nous* tries to introduce an unaccustomed audience to lesbian love in a veiled, tentative way, this film is noisily excited about the possibilities of women loving women. If Kurys' film attempts a fictionalized peek at the strength demanded of unsuspecting women during and after the Second World War, Breitel's film explores the experiences of several women and their observations of their mothers at this time, and goes on to extrapolate how the women's movement grew right out of this whole situation.

*Born in Flames* is a wonderful fairy tale about women involved in a revolution that is to free womankind. *Im Jahr der Schlange* exposes the fairy tales involved in revolutions and then presents

us with the positive growth that several women have accomplished anyway. If Camilla Horn worshipped Murnau in spite of the tortures he put her through for the sake of his art, the women in this documentary actually come to terms with the false gods that they made of absent POW fathers and uncles. While *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute* centres its fiction on the reality of women having babies and coping with children without men, *Im Jahr der Schlange* begins with graphic scenes of childbirth and the young, unwed mother's disappointment that the father didn't come to participate.

Despite the seemingly haphazard occurrence of events, there is a certain emotional order that develops out of the masses of material presented in this documentary. It begins with universal female experiences, like having trouble relating to your mother, then giving birth and understanding a little better why you have that trouble. It doesn't offer a complex analysis of these experiences but rather, one woman's song, another woman's tears, one woman's pregnancy and a whole group of women gathering for their fortieth birthday party and coming dressed as their mothers had dressed the year that they were born. (The year of the snake, 1941.) One woman complains of a struggle with her costume because she can't quite master the look of long-suffering that her mother used to wear with it! Experiences tumble out of their mouths, they offer each other support and friendship, and the party begins.

The party explores female experience, female storytelling and mythmaking and female fun. They all have a shot at trying bellydancing. They have a feast—what women's celebration is complete without one? There is palm reading and tarot card reading and diary reading. These women are passionately involved in reading themselves. They sing campy songs to each other and kid about their love for one another and then the party calms down.

During a long, quiet talk, a handful of the women explain how they came to terms with their own sexuality. One woman

complains that men only meant separation to her. Another explains that she felt that there was a terrible split in her life between intimacy, which she had with women, and sexuality, which she had with men. It takes the film, as it took these women, a long time to admit that there can be a fusion of intimacy and sexuality, of physical love between women. It comes as no surprise to us at this point in the film that these women are lesbians. When we were partying with them earlier we felt no lack, no need for men. These women are happy and whole in and of themselves.

The documentary format is what enables this film to go one step further than each of the films mentioned above. It has the freedom to relate personal experience to the dusty history we are all tired of hearing. It can swing from a party mood to a sad one, history becoming entwined with myth and all of it a reality that has, until now, gone largely unexplored. Nothing is withheld from the audience and then doled out in small, palatable doses. Everything is important and everything is emotional. *Im Jahr der Schlange* is a film made by, for, and about women. Watching it feels like nothing less than a celebration. Even as we hurt, dance, laugh and sing our way through the film, we are aware of the risk that these women are taking. The filmmakers assume that they are going to have a sympathetic female audience but they don't care if they don't. Such an attitude dares people to scream "separatist!" and male reviewers to pan the whole party; after all, they were not invited.

It is a dreadful moment when the curtain closes and we wonder whether we shall ever be invited back to meet such interesting women. It is a triumphant feeling that springs from the knowledge that, thanks to the women's movement, all we need to do is throw our own party and the very same women will attend.

*Donna Gollan is a Toronto filmmaker and new Broadside collective member.*

**DALY**, from page 6

ject. Depression just a free-floating glob. So if it's potted, at least there's a passion, but a stunted one.

**E.W.:** How do you develop strategies to free it?

**M.D.:** Specific strategies? Obviously naming is very important. By naming, I don't mean just saying words or putting labels on it, but actually thinking it through, and living it out, naming it with your life. What happens very often is that our experiences remain inchoate and unanalysed. I know that when I'm writing in a good space, really writing, there's a massive readjustment that takes place. The energy that I feel around me is very different from other activities. I feel I'm doing what I should be doing. But then, we're all individuals, so there's the problem of finding what it is that you should be doing.

One way of going at it might be to pare away the obstacles to it. Assume when writing that it's wild, natural, elemental, but it's in you, and assume that therefore it's not an artifact that you have to get but it is who you are. It's the original integrity. Given that the assumption is right, then the problem would be to get rid of what's blocking it. Which puts it in a different context from going out and looking for something, hunting for some guru or some church. You're just trying to get rid of crap. There's a lot of crap that you can recognize, to peel away.

Tillie Olson has a line in *Silences* defining evil as what distracts, and what distracts would be what's pulling you away from final causality. Your own telos, your own purpose, and I think you then get into the terrible problem that some have far more distractions.

But we all have the power to some extent to get rid of what's pulling us away from our purposes.

**E.W.:** Do we all know our purpose?

**M.D.:** That's a problem. It would appear that there's been more damage in some cases than in others, that there are more obstacles in some cases than in others, but I don't know how to measure that. Some women do seem to feel that they've always had a sense of direction. Others have been dislodged from it so early that they can never remember having a sense of direction. I don't know what to do with that except that whatever you have as a sense of direction, follow.

**E.W.:** How do you feel about therapy?

**M.D.:** I think it's obvious that I hate it. I'm anti-therapeutic, but I see that also as insidious. Therapeutizing of everything is a way—let's deal with it, you deal, I deal, do I hear you, do you hear me? And yeah, it's important to hear, but there are women who would turn college classes into nothing but therapy sessions. Let's see what's going on here. There's stuff to read, there are ideas to discuss, not that it isn't important sometimes to see what's going on, but to take every class and turn it into this *process*, and then everything becomes therapeutic, it's therapeutic to write, it's therapeutic to read....

**E.W.:** Is it role-playing?

**M.D.:** I've never been to a therapist and I don't know anything about it except what I've read, but I think I know a lot about it because it's all around. I think one of the problems is also that it blocks deep memory, because you have all these reconstructed memories. I don't know that I would stress it that much. But I do think it's responsible,

probably not directly, for a lot of the atrocities that are happening: the self-blame and the obsessions with guilt within the so-called women's movement that turns attention away from who's killing whom, who's raping whom and all those things. It's a good way of (Marcuse's term) keeping us tied bid- dingly to institutionalized powers, like sexual liberation theory does, to keep you fetishizing a particular form of behaviour.

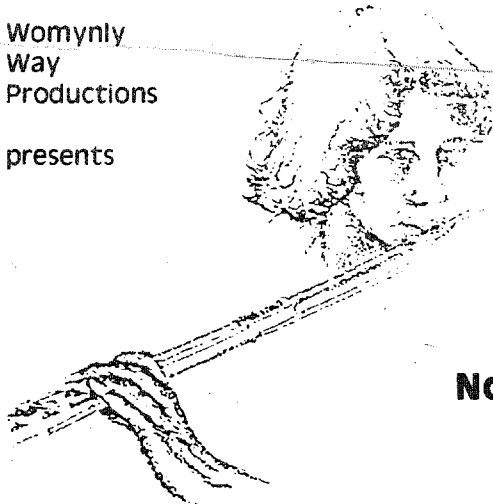
**E.W.:** Is sexuality related to spirituality?

**M.D.:** The word sexuality has been so fucked over. As male-defined, it's strictly genital or thereabouts, and I think that sexuality doesn't name all there is at all about women's communications with each other: which are bio-philic, touching, bring us into metamorphosis. In one chapter of *Gyn/Ecology* I talked about women as the touchable caste (comparable to the untouchables, except that

women are supposed to be totally touchable): by gynecology, by rape, by being emotionally touchable, you know, seduced. It seems to me that the terrible taboo, the total taboo, within patriarchy is against women deeply touching. Now I don't mean only each other, only sexually, nor do I mean to put down sexuality, but I mean touching of auras. And so of course they would reduce it to mere games, flat films like *Personal Best*; if that were all the world, why bother? Sexuality's not feared and hated so much when it's divorced from transcendent spirituality: a whore, she can have it all, she can even do it with women. They have it all neatly divided.

*Eleanor Wachtel is a Vancouver drama critic and founding mother of Room of One's Own. Thanks to Barbara Cadotte for transcribing the tape.*

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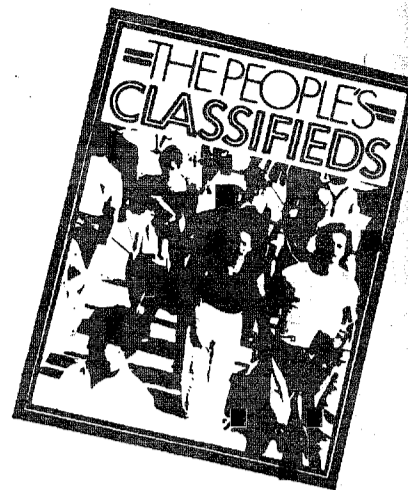
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Week of November 1

**Tuesday, November 1:** Penelope Liatt, writer and film critic, reads from her new book, *Mortal Matters*. Harbourfront. 8:30 pm. \$3. Info: 961-5665.

**Tuesday, November 1:** Lesbian Phone Line, open tonight for calls from women. 7:30 to 10:30 pm. 960-3249. Every Tuesday evening.

**Tuesday, November 1:** Women's Architecture League. Works from the design competition for the Women's Cultural Building. ARC, 789 Queen St. West. Info: 967-9169.

**Wednesday, November 2:** Toronto Addicted Women's Self-Help Network (TAWSHN) meets at Central Neighbourhood House, 349 Ontario St. 7 pm. Info: 961-7319.

**Wednesday, November 2:** International Women's Day Committee (IWDC) meeting. Fireside Room, Trinity United Church, 427 Bloor St. West. 7:30 pm. Info: Amy, 977-6854.

**Wednesday, November 2:** Stop 86 (YWCA hostel) Open House. 86 Madison Ave. 11 am to 4 pm.

**Wednesday, November 2:** Lesbian Phone Line general meeting. 7 pm. 348 College Street, 3rd floor. Info: 960-3249.

**Thursday, November 3:** Peace Banquet. Benefit for October 22 Coalition. Nightwood Theatre production. \$5 and \$7. 121 Avenue Road. 8:30 pm. Info: 968-3585. To Saturday, November 19.

**Friday, November 4:** Kay Gardner, composer, conductor, flutist, in concert. Trinity United Church, 427 Bloor St. West. 8 pm. Tickets: \$7.50 advance, \$8.50 door—at DEC, Toronto Women's Bookstore, SCM. Free childcare. Info: 925-6568.

**Saturday, November 5:** Advanced Portable Production workshop. Instructor: Nancy Nicol. 12:30 to 5:30 pm. Trinity Square Video, 299 Queen St. W., Suite 500. \$50. Info: 593-7165. Also Sunday, November 6.

**Saturday, November 5:** "A Debutante Ball" sponsored by Branching Out: lesbian culture resource centre. 8:30 pm. OCA Auditorium, 100 McCaul St. \$4.50. All women welcome.

**Saturday, November 5:** Nancy White Album Launch Concert. Ritz Theatre, 500 St. Clair Ave. West, 8:30 pm. \$6.50. Info: 653-4455.



**Saturday, November 5:** Music and healing workshop with Kay Gardner, for music lovers, musicians and practitioners of holistic healing therapies. 427 Bloor St. West, 11 am. \$15. Info: 925-6568.

Week of November 1

**Monday, November 7:** The Women's Group, a support group for lesbians. 8 pm. 519 Church Street. Info: Raechel, 926-0527.

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

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# OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

## TORONTO WOMEN'S EVENTS CALENDAR

### November 1983

**Monday, November 7:** Audio for Video workshop. 7:30 to 10:30 pm. Trinity Square Video, 299 Queen St. West. \$50. Info: 593-7165. Also Wednesday, November 9.

**Wednesday, November 9:** Toronto Addicted Women's Self-Help Network (TAWSHN) meets at Central Neighbourhood House, 349 Ontario St. 7 pm. Info: 961-7319.

**Wednesday, November 9:** Toronto Rape Crisis Centre Open House. 4 to 9 pm. 340 College St., Apt. 2. Info: 964-7477.

**Wednesday, November 9:** "Women and Therapy" three-day conference. Keynote speaker, Phyllis Chesler. Holiday Inn (Don Valley & Eglinton). Registration: \$50 — Wednesday; \$150 — Thursday and Friday. Info: 486-6925. To Friday, November 11.

**Wednesday, November 9:** Times Change Open House, to celebrate opening of their new Access Centre. 3 to 6 pm. 22 Davisville Ave. Info: 487-2807.

**Wednesday, November 9:** "The Issue is Choice," reception sponsored by ad hoc coalition on choice. \$50 includes champagne and dessert. Meet Gloria Steinem and Flo Kennedy. Proceeds go to defence fund for those standing trial for setting up freestanding abortion clinics in Toronto and Winnipeg. 8:30 to 11 pm. Grand Ballroom, Sheraton Centre.

**Thursday, November 10:** Gloria Steinem reads from her new book, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. U of T, Medical Science Bldg. Auditorium. 4:30 pm. Free.



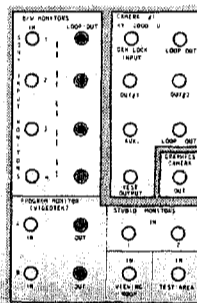
**Thursday, November 10:** Self defence course for women, offered by Rape Crisis Centre. 8 weeks, \$30 (\$15 low income women). East and west locations. Registration and info: 964-7477.

**Thursday, November 10:** A Space presents *Fifth Column* and *Mickey Skin & Her 500 Bucks*. Part of "Womensbands" series. At the Rivoli, 334 Queen St. West. 8:30 pm. \$5. Info: 595-0790.

**Friday, November 11:** Rally and procession to Litton. Buses leave Bathurst St. United Church (730 Bathurst) at 3 pm. \$2. Starts 4 pm, Dixon Rd. and Cityview Dr. Info: 364-1901.

**Saturday, November 12:** The Women's Press 4th annual "Slightly Damaged Book Sale." Discounts 50-90%. Free refreshments. 16 Baldwin St (between Beverley and McCaul, north of Dundas). 10 am to 4 pm. Info: Margie Wolfe, 598-0082.

Week of November 13



**Monday, November 14:** Advanced Studio Production workshop. \$50. Trinity Square Video, 299 Queen St. W. 7:30 to 10:30 pm. Info: 593-7165. Also Wednesday, November 16.

**Monday, November 14:** The Women's Group, a support group for lesbians. 8 pm. 519 Church Street. Info: Raechel, 926-0527.

**Monday, November 14:** Forum on Sex, Censorship and Politics, sponsored by Film and Video Against Censorship (FAVAC). Admission free, donations welcome. 8 pm. Canadian Centre for Photography, 596 Markham St. (south of Bloor).

**Tuesday, November 15:** A Space presents "The Second Link: Viewpoints on Video in the Eighties." 8 pm. 299 Queen St. West, Suite 507. \$3 per screening. Series runs till Sunday, December 4. Info: 595-0790.

**Wednesday, November 16:** IWDC meeting. Fireside Room, Trinity United Church, 427 Bloor St. West. 7:30 pm. Info: Amy, 977-6854.

**Wednesday, November 16:** Nancy Cole in *Gertrude Stein's Gertrude Stein*. Palmerston Library Theatre, Bathurst & Bloor. 8 pm. \$7.50 (\$5 students/seniors). Info: 463-4279. To Saturday, December 3.

**Wednesday, November 16:** Toronto Addicted Women's Self-Help Network (TAWSHN) meets at Central Neighbourhood House, 349 Ontario St. 7 pm. Info: 961-7319.

**Thursday, November 17:** *Gertrude Stein's Gertrude Stein*, benefit for the Toronto Women's Bookstore. Palmerston Library Theatre. 8 pm. \$10 includes wine and cheese reception. Info: 531-2486.

**Thursday, November 17:** "Reflections on Gay Politics in Toronto," sponsored by Lesbian and Gay Academic Society. 8 pm. Rhodes Room, Trinity College, U of T. Info: 924-6774 or 921-5317.

**Friday, November 18:** 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 536-3162.

**Saturday, November 19:** Video Artists and Their Work—a workshop at Trinity Square Video, 299 Queen St. West. 1 to 5 pm. \$6. Info: 593-7165.

Week of November 20

**Sunday, November 20:** Jan Conn reads her poetry at Free Times Café, 320 College St. Sunday brunch, 2 to 4 pm. Minimum purchase \$3.

**Monday, November 21:** The Women's Group, a support group for lesbians. 8 pm. 519 Church St. Info: Raechel, 926-0527.

**Monday, November 21:** Video Documentation for Community Groups, workshop. Instructors: Phyllis Waugh and Elizabeth Schroder. Trinity Square Video, 299 Queen St. West. 7:30 to 10:30 pm. \$50. Info: 593-7165. Also Wednesday, November 23.

**Tuesday, November 22:** Women and Words—open meeting for all women interested in writing and publishing. 7 pm. A-Space, 204 Spadina Ave. Info: 767-9950 or 534-7635.

**Wednesday, November 23:** The Wood Studio presents Toronto band *No Frills*. Bamboo Club (Spadina & Queen). Tickets: \$5 advance, \$6 door. Info: 535-5096.

**Wednesday, November 23:** Toronto Addicted Women's Self-Help Network (TAWSHN) meets at Central Neighbourhood House, 349 Ontario St. 7 pm. Info: 961-7319.

**Friday, November 25:** Bingo Night, sponsored by Womylnly Way. 7:30 pm. MCC, 730 Bathurst Street. Info: 925-6568.

**Saturday, November 26:** Fundraising dance for the Stop Entertaining Apartheid Coalition (SEAC) Cash bar, food. International Students' Centre, 88 St. George St. 8:30 pm. \$3.

week of November 27

**Monday, November 28:** The Women's Group, a support group for lesbians. 8 pm. 519 Church Street. Info: Raechel, 926-0527.

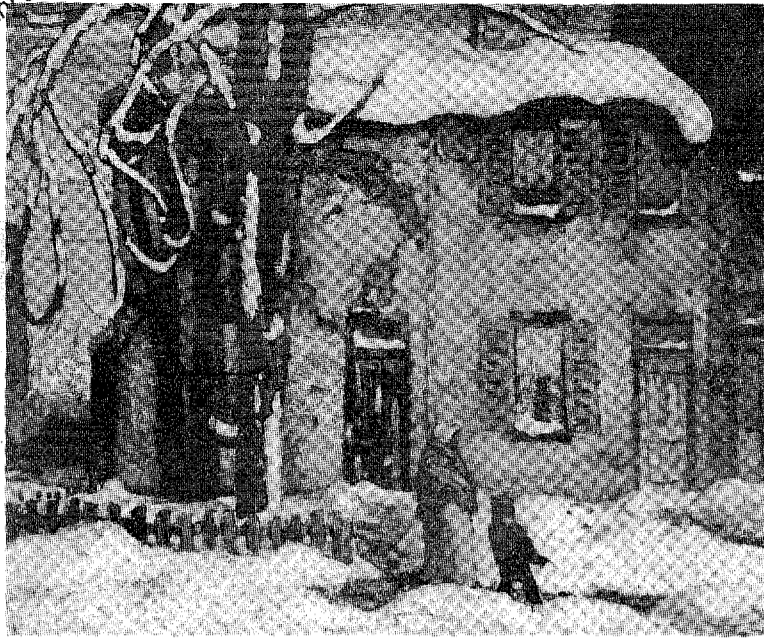
**Wednesday, November 30:** IWDC meeting. Fireside Room, Trinity United Church, 427 Bloor Street West. 7:30 pm. Info: Amy, 977-6854.

**Wednesday, November 30:** Toronto Addicted Women's Self-Help Network (TAWSHN) meets at Central Neighbourhood House, 349 Ontario St. 7 pm. Info: 961-7319.



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