

Broadside

A FEMINIST REVIEW

Volume 6, number 5

March 1985

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FEATURES

RIGHTS IN THEORY: With Section 15 of the Canadian Charter going into effect in April, can women expect real equality, or only "formal" theoretical equality, from a liberal democracy? Sheila McIntyre explores women's fight for equality in the context of our Charter, and suggests useful directions for feminists to move in. Page 8.

FROM BIBLIOGRAPHIES TO BUTTONS: The Canadian Women's Movement Archives started life in a filing cabinet of *The Other Woman* newspaper. It now has an office of its own and Canada's largest selection of women's movement archival material, graphics and ephemera. Eve Zaremba reports. Page 4.

COMMENT

RIGHTS IN PRACTICE: Judge Rosalie Abella's recent report on equality highlights the systemic inequities suffered by women and minority groups. Not much of it is new, but neither is discrimination.

INSIDE BROADSIDE

And to be practical, can we expect our white, male leaders to legislate away their privileges? Sarah Elliot comments. Page 3.



NEWS

FAMILY FIRM? The "benevolent paternalism" of the Eaton family empire is being assailed by workers, mainly women, in search of a contract. The struggle may be news, but it has happened before. Susan Ursel reports on the current situation and on the unsuccessful union drive at Eaton's in the 1940s. Page 6.


ARTS

SATIRE OR SCANDAL? Three gay men engage their audience in a theatrical exploration of sexploitation. *Pornography: A Spectacle* clarifies the dichotomy between role-playing and reality as the men alternate satires on porn mags with scenes from their own lives. Reviewed by Amanda Hale. Page 10.

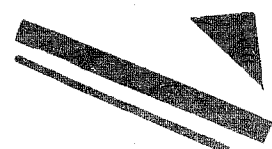
FILMS IN BRIEF: Donna Gollan reviews *Mrs. Soffel*, a beautiful film with terrible politics; *Paris, Texas*, a slow-moving exploration of the meaning of love; and Sara Diamond's video installation *Heroics*, which looks at the drama of women's everyday lives. Page 10

OUTSIDE BROADSIDE: Don't miss this month's calendar of Toronto women's events, for March 1985. Page 15.

BOOKS: Lisa Freedman reviews *Clenched Fists*, *Burning Crosses* by Cris South, a novel about Klan atrocities and the connected oppression of women in the US South; Judy Millen reviews *Women and Words: An Anthology*, a collection of fiction and poetry sparked by the July 1983 conference in Vancouver; Dorothy Zaborszky reviews Joanna Russ's *How to Suppress Women's Writing*. Pages 11 and 12.

TOP TUNES: At last, the results of *Broadside's* survey of favourite women's dance music! Of course, in true collective spirit, nobody topped the charts, and all choices were made by consensus. Deena Rasky reports. Page 12. 

VISUAL ART: Randi Spires reports on two group shows put on by Black Women's Perspectives, part of Black History Month. Page 13.



LETTERS

Broadside:

Eve Zaremba's piece ("What's in an Ordinance?" *Broadside* February, 1985) contains a number of misrepresentations, such as her claim that the Toronto group Feminists Against Censorship considers pornography "a non-issue, a red herring." However, let me just use this letter to correct one distortion that affects me personally, in the hope that more adequate space is given to F.A.C. members to explain how we think pornography is a serious issue indeed.

Rather than report what people said in the discussion following Carole Vance's talk on the Minneapolis Ordinance, Eve makes a list of her opinions about the comments. One of them is this: "with a flippant comment, a lesbian academic dismissed 15 years of feminist analysis on sexual objectification of women."

(1) What is the point of calling me a lesbian academic? Is there such a thing? How did she know I was out to the various U of T faculty in the audience, who surely could recognize me in Eve's caricature? Am I a lesbian academically only?

(2) In any case, calling me an academic is a tactic to tell the readers that what I said was ivory-towerish, irrelevant, and pretentious. Now, I find this galling, especially from Eve, because she herself has asked me on numerous occasions over the past few years to do articles and reviews for *Broadside*: I have always complied and tried to do a thorough job, even though this involved taking days or even weeks off from any academic pursuit. I have been as active as anyone, sat through more meetings than I care to remember, and have always situated myself in, not above, the movement. If I also happen to have a part-time job at U of T that earns me the privileged salary of \$700 a month, that is not sufficient reason to dismiss my remarks *a priori*.

(3) What I actually said was this: "There are problems with trying to ban all objectification, for, if I were never an erotic object for someone, I would never have sex." The vast majority of the audience laughed heartily after I'd said that. I had intended to go on and explain the difference between 'bad' and 'normal' objectification, but they were all having a good laugh, so I let the theoretical distinctions go. I was making a small point, perhaps irreverently, but surely not so as to dismiss anyone's work of 15 years.

(4) How about letting me do a feature article on what I *really* think about feminist theories of sexual objectification?

Mariana Valverde
Toronto

(Ed. note: A long piece by Feminists Against Censorship member Varda Burstyn will be published in next month's *Broadside*. As to Mariana's query re: an article on feminist theories of sexual objectification - anytime you're not busy, Mariana!)

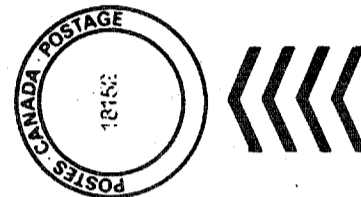
Broadside:

The Toronto Rape Crisis Centre would like to take this opportunity to inform the *Broadside* collective and your readers about a change.

In the February issue of *The Web*, we announced that as part of a Rape Awareness Week in May, we were planning a mixed dance at the Palais Royale (as one of the fundraising events). The reaction from a significant number of women in the women's community was swift and overwhelmingly negative and we are taking note! The TRCC is now organizing a *women-only dance* instead, hoping that enough women will turn out to make it a *successful* benefit.

But, we do want to encourage further discussion about raising money from alternative sources, other than governments and corporations. We would like to hear your opinions about mixed fundraising events, including dances. We are preparing an article for a future issue of *Broadside* to clarify our position.

Deb Parent
for the TRCC collective
Toronto



Broadside:

I am enclosing a cheque and subscription form: I find *Broadside* to be important personally, and informative.

However, I must say that if I worked in downtown Toronto where I could obtain *Broadside* from a newsstand or bookstore, I would do so, rather than subscribing. This is because issues reach me so late - usually about ten days of the events listed in the calendar have already gone by. Friends phone and ask what I thought of such and such an article - as they have obtained a copy in person at the Women's Bookstore well before mine appears on my doorstep!

I realize our postal service is hardly efficient, but with this knowledge in hand it seems allowances should be made for this when preparing the paper for mailing. The only suggestion, apart from this, which I can make that would at least go some way toward satisfying my gripe is more overlap in calendar listings, so that if the paper arrives late it has enough listings for the next month that the lateness matters less.

Keep up the good work.

Susan Rickwood
Toronto

(Ed. note: We appreciate your concerns. Second class mail "privilege" (the only way we can afford to mail out *Broadside*) is erratic, sometimes slow. As to calendar listings, we would need the help of contributors in remembering to send us news of their events well before the date they are planned. We often don't get notices of, say, March events till late February or well into March - too late for us.)

Broadside

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

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EDITORIALS

Still Ain't Satisfied

Another March, another International Women's Day. Congratulations to us all, we've survived another year, and by and large none the worse for it. It has not been easy and will probably get even harder, so it's just as well that we are in training for the tough times ahead.

Speaking of tough, and speaking of International Women's Day, how about those women and men on strike against Eaton's at six Ontario locations! They have been out since before Christmas through Ontario's hardest winter in decades. All for a first contract. They're not asking much: just recogni-

tion of their rights to a collective voice, to some say in their lives, to some security.

And yet, it proves to be a lot to ask of a management used to having absolute power over the working lives of its employees as of divine right. The Eaton family is as near to royalty as Canada has. It must be galling for them to have such stubborn uppity workers. Given the current pro-business political climate, not to mention the number of unemployed willing to take almost any job, it must seem downright presumptuous for the lowly Eaton minions to dare to take on the mighty empire.

For all of us, this is a very special struggle with one of Canada's most familiar institutions, a struggle now being taken on by the worst paid and least powerful segment of the labour force - store clerks, and mostly female. We can all help - by boycotting Eaton's, for instance - but ultimately it is *their* livelihood that's at stake, and it is in their hands to win. If they lose, we will all have lost. So boycott Eaton's and come to a picket if you can. (In Toronto, go to the Yonge/Eglinton Centre at noon on IWD, March 9.) That's the best way to celebrate International Women's Day.

Marian Engel: 1933-1985

Last month saw the passing of one of Canada's great women writers. Marian Engel, author, feminist, mother, died of cancer, in Toronto on February 16. She was 51 years old.

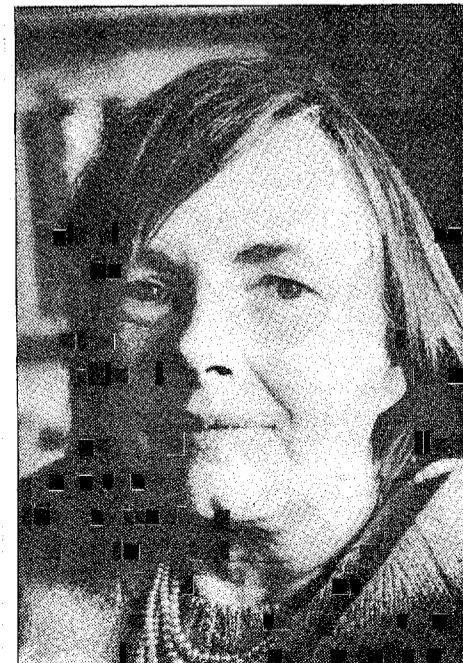
Most famous for her controversial 1976 novel, *Bear*, the story of a woman who has an intense erotic relationship with a bear, Engel's career spanned three decades and includes 7 novels, and a score of articles and short stories. Engel's most significant contribution to literature was her exploration in serious, complex, imaginative prose, of the stuff of ordinary female life. In *The Honeyman Festival* (Anansi, 1970), the main character dreams that she has mistakenly put her children to sleep in a full bath. Finding them, she gazed at them and thought, "They were beautiful, not puckered at all from the water. They were curled up like little gleaming fish, and dead."

Alice Munro, in *Room of One's Own's* special Marian Engel issue (June 1984), wrote that Engel had "caught something" of the way women are, "our tone, our bravado." Speaking of the controversies that had sur-

rounded her work, Engel in the same edition, described to interviewer Carroll Klein the dismay of students when they encountered her work: "I would have young women come up to me weeping and saying, 'Why did you, a respectable person, write a book like that?'" By way of response, Engel underlined the necessity for artistic vision to mediate life: "The point is, what exists must be handled."

Engel is remembered nationally for her championing of writers' rights. She was the first chairperson of the Writers' Union when it formed in the early seventies. As well, she was known for her anti-censorship position, which evolved at a time when Margaret Laurence's books were being banned in the Peterborough area: "Artists have to be free to describe sexual adventures whether they are pleasant or not."

Canadian feminists will miss a writer who could create a character (as Engel did in *The Glassy Sea*, 1978) who in the course of events turns an Anglican convent into a shelter for battered women.



Engel, April 1984

The Abella Report

At the Feet of Privilege

by Sarah Elliot

The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread.

Such is the promising epigram which introduces Judge Rosalie Abella's Royal Commission Report on Equality in Employment. Focussing on women, native people, visible minorities and disabled persons (altogether 60% of our population), the Commission received 274 written submissions, held 137 meetings and consulted with 160 other individuals. The final distillation was 117 specific recommendations.

All in all, very little of the data in the report is new. This is not necessarily a criticism; discrimination has been around so long it's becoming difficult to be innovative about it. The litany of wrongs and inequities is well documented. Why else the pervasive sense of *déjà vu* as the statistics are trotted out once again? Women earn 63% of the male wage. Native women make 71.7% of that (or 40% of the male wage). Fifty per cent of disabled persons who want to work are unemployed. Domestic workers - largely immigrant and non-white - are excluded from employment and human rights legislation.

The data is known and the implications, as promulgated by Judge Abella, are equally familiar, though still powerful. Whether discrimination is intentional (Abella is much kinder than need be here) it is systemic. Voluntary measures to eradicate this discrimination have been magnificently ineffective and only one option is left:

The choice for government is between imposing and hoping for equality in employment, between ensuring the right to freedom from discrimination and its mere articulation. In a society committed to equality, the choice is self-evident.

More importantly, the report pinpointed edu-

cation as the locus for changing current societal perceptions. If disabled persons receive segregated schooling; if white males are perceived as the authority figures, and if only they implement policies; if girls, native people and visible minorities are streamlined into vocational and clerical training, discrimination in employment will not and cannot change.

If language training does not exist in an accessible, practical fashion then non-English immigrants will have that work disadvantage perpetuated. A current language program prerequisite demands that language training be necessary to obtain a job. However, language for many immigrant women does not prevent obtaining jobs in ghettoized, low paying occupations. Language, Abella concludes, is as basic a need as shelter or food.

By far the most moving and eloquently articulated section of the report deals with the issue of childcare. The current impoverished and apathetic attitude toward childcare stems from well-known preconceptions about the mother's "duty" and a lack of respect for children. Using the metaphor of the handicapped, the report notes that, "Childcare is the ramp that provides equal access to the workforce for mothers."

In 1981, women had 963,000 pre-school age children; there were 123,962 childcare spaces. The average cost of childcare in Canada is \$2,500 - \$3,500 per year; women earn, on average, \$10,500. Low income subsidized childcare segregates children on a socio-economic basis and discourages mothers from taking promotions which will render them ineligible for the program. (How many promotions cover \$3,500 per child per year?)

Childcare workers earn approximately \$10,000 a year, kindergarten and elementary school teachers earn twice that. Abella concludes

Our society purports to value children but is not willing to pay adequately people, usually

women, for looking after them. If mothers stay home, they are unpaid. When they join the labour force, they are underpaid. And when parental substitutes are hired, these alternative care-givers are likewise underpaid.

Judge Abella sees universal childcare as a necessity, a notion which will be resisted just as public education was in the 19th century. It places a responsibility on everyone, it forces us to reshape the still prevalent image of families as "man and wife" into one of autonomous individuals with equal rights and responsibilities where women would not be "deemed as economic satellites of their partners."

The last, and probably weakest, section of the report specifies how mandatory enforcement of employment equity should be implemented. Abella recommends that all federal agencies have employment equity programs and that contract compliance (all businesses trading with the government) be imposed by legislation. Quotas are not recommended (though not dismissed as some reporting would have it) and many data collecting processes are urged. A major finding of the report revealed that while companies have statistics on women, none of the eleven Crown Corporations surveyed had information on the other three groups: numbers, income or job placements. (Perhaps they think there can be no discrimination where there is no documentation.)

Before evaluating the merits of the Abella Report itself, there are preliminary issues to be answered. What is the general purpose of this Royal Commission Report and other government-sponsored works of the same ilk? If it is to transform paper into process, then no one would begrudge the report's recapitulation of known facts. But what happens to such reports and their reform-minded recommendations? If they were implemented, then

this 1984 report would not echo much of what already exists in the 1970 Report on the Status of Women. Perhaps their purpose is solely one of pomp and circumstance. They direct our attention to the glorious parade of good will, while distracting us from their ultimate disappearance into some special government black hole, chewed up and spewed into the ozone by white, male politicians whose bastion of privilege they threaten.

Let us be practical. A government comprised almost exclusively of white males commissions a report which finds that 60% of the population is discriminated against in favour of white males. The report concludes by urging this privileged sector to legislate and enforce employment equity. The report also notes, over and over, that the four groups have wearied of begging, they are tired of being the supplicants at the feet of privilege. Yet the report proposes an enforcement agency (modeled on the Human Rights Commission) which would stand as another external structure to which these groups would go - to ask for equity. The theoretical advantage is that such an agency would be one of eventual self-destructing paternalism unlike the self-perpetuating paternalism now operative in society. But in either event, the perceived powerlessness of the groups themselves persists. The government is asked to institute an agency to bring about change, the government is requested to mandate legislation to revolutionize societal, educational and cultural inequities. The white, male government will bring about systemic change to destroy its own long standing system of privilege for the purpose of integrating visible minorities, the disabled, native persons and women equally into all strata of society. Does anyone believe this?

Sarah Elliot is a somewhat civil servant.

Happy IWD from All of Us!



NAC sends greetings to women of Canada on International Women's Day

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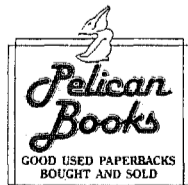
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CWMA: Collective

CANADIAN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

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by Eve Zaremba

The History

31 Dupont Street must be one of the significant addresses of the women's movement in Toronto. It was the first home of A Woman's Place (incorporated as Women's Information Centre - WIC - in 1972). A number of organizations which we now take for granted, like the Toronto Women's Bookstore or the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, had their start there, directly or indirectly. The Canadian Women's Movement Archives as such only came into existence in 1982, but in a very real sense its story begins over ten years ago on Dupont Street. The two elements of this story are Pat Leslie and WIC.

Let's start with Pat Leslie. In '72, Woman's Place was home to *The Other Woman*, which, after the demise of the *Velvet Fist* and *Bellyfull*, was Toronto's only feminist newspaper. *The Other Woman* survived until 1977, due in large part to the efforts of Pat Leslie with whom it will always be associated.

If CWMA can be said to have a founding mother, that must be Pat Leslie. Materials collected by her to augment the old editorial files of *The Other Woman*, became the nucleus of the present archives. Because of Leslie's dedicated and sometimes unappreciated work throughout all those years, by the 1980s the collection, much of it unduplicatable, filled filing cabinets in Leslie's various apartments. It was all too much for any one woman to deal with. In any case, it was time that this valuable resource became available to the movement of which it was such a vital part. In order for the archive to become a reality, it had to cease being a private collection and belong to a collectively constituted organization with a recognizable name, sound administrative structure and, most importantly, funding for staff, space and on-going expenses.

Now let's look at what has been happening to WIC in these intervening years. After Woman's Place closed its doors, WIC functioned primarily as the membership base for the Toronto Women's Credit Union, until that financial institution fell victim to the high interest rates and other problems.

All this time, WIC had been looked after by Chris Lawrence (not at all coincidentally, one of Woman's Place's early collective members), along with a couple of other women who had been involved with the Credit Union from its early days. Thus, just as WIC was looking for a long term project to take on, there was the potential archives and its clear and present need for a home. Serendipity. A new group of interested women was formed and, not without much trial and tribulation, WIC formally took over management of the newly established Canadian Women's Movement Archives. Once funding for staff became available the CWMA opened its doors in February 1983 - almost exactly ten years after the original WIC project, Woman's Place, came into existence.

The Present

Currently, the WIC board is made up of Nancy Adamson a Ph.D. in History, teaching women's studies at U of T; Andrea Knight who works at the Morgentaler Clinic and is active in IWDC; Lorna Weir, a teacher at York University and ex-director of the documentation centre at the Development Education Centre in Toronto; Luanne Karn who works at Emily Stowe Shelter for Women; Tori Smith, a stage manager for a feminist theatre; and Debbie Green, a visual artist and librarian at George Brown Community College. Pat Leslie, having been a founder of CWMA, is no longer active on the collective, but remains interested and involved.

CWMA is located at the corner of College and Spadina, in the heart of Toronto. It currently shares its space with the Woman's Art Resource Centre. Due to lack of adequate funding, there are presently no paid staff, but the collective functions very well, and anyone wishing to use the materials in the archives has no trouble getting access to it by arrangement.

The CWMA has the most extensive collection of Canadian feminist periodicals, newspapers, etc., anywhere. Many go back more than ten years; all are catalogued. It is especially rich in rather obscure ephemera like buttons, T-shirts, graphics, bumper stickers, flyers, ads, posters: generally stuff that we do not value at the time and do not think of as 'archival.' Nothing quite like the CWMA exists anywhere in Canada. While there are a number of resource centres and libraries containing feminist and women's liberation materials, only CWMA is independent and explicitly feminist. Its policy is to concentrate on the groups active in the Canadian women's movement, and it now contains irreplaceable information on the movement's history and achievements. The CWMA not only documents the movement but is also very much part of it. The fact that it is unaffiliated with any institution, university or library makes it rare and politically important. However, maintaining this independence is not easy.

So far, the CWMA has done very well, and with the expertise, hard work and the active support of feminists (like you and me) we will continue to see our archives grow and prosper. The women of the WIC board, the CWMA collective, the staff and the volunteers have done us all proud.

The Future

While the achievements of the CWMA have been impressive, its plans for the future almost made me want to quit *Broadside* and volunteer. As noted, the CWMA does not see itself as just a depository of materials on women, but as an active part of the movement. Its current plans reflect this orientation. One major proposal, dependent on funding of course, is to assemble an exhibition of graphic art from the Canadian women's movement, exploring this popular art form within its political and social context. The show, to be titled *Graphic Feminism*, is a retrospective look at posters and other examples of how we have used graphics to get our points across. CWMA is in a good position to mount such a show, having collected bits and pieces of this kind of material for years and now possessing what is claimed as the most comprehensive collection of feminist graphic art in Canada.

"The purpose of the show," according to the CWMA, "is to collect, organize, mount and showcase representative pieces of work in this genre. We expect to include between 50 and 60 pieces, including posters, book jackets, magazines (covers and overall designs) right down to pamphlets and flyers. We think that such a collection can serve two purposes: (1) to provide a forum and context for the work women have been producing over the years, often with little money but great panache; and (2) to let the visual products of the women's movement tell some of the movement's own story which we think they do in humorous, innovative and vibrant styles." It's a pretty exciting idea and well worth pursuing.

That is not all. Other ambitious projects include compiling a report on the state of women's archival collections across Canada. We need to know who is collecting what, and where, and to co-ordinate all these collections nationally. CWMA does not compete with any other regional or local archival collections; it has no wish to be the sole national depository. Quite the reverse, its aim is to avoid such problems by instituting a national system and then to act as co-ordinator of independent archival collections. It foresees the need for a central computer search service which would enable researchers to track down material wherever it is located throughout Canada. Unless we find, organize, preserve, catalogue and make accessible materials on our movement we will continue to see it mostly interpreted by others, or subsumed by other movements.



Collections

women
write in
armed
struggle



Kate Lazier



CWMA collective: top - Luanne Karn (left), Nancy Adamson; bottom - Lorna Weir (left), Debbie Green, Andrea Knight, Sandy Fox.

Do You Recognize These Buttons?

Each year hundreds of buttons, posters, flyers and stickers are produced by feminist organizations in Canada. We produce them in order to publicize women's issues, educate the public, lobby for political action and, hopefully change society through the women's movement. These buttons and ephemera document the history which we are in the process of making. They document events, groups, actions and issues which are important to feminists at this time in Toronto and in other Canadian cities. Unfortunately, the work of many of these grass-roots organizations is not being documented by mainstream historians and archivists. Therefore, we must document and preserve our own concerns, aims and achievements.

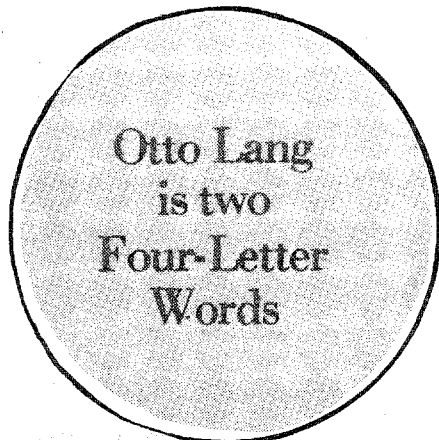
The Canadian Women's Movement Archives has more than 200 buttons, many T-shirts, stickers, ticket stubs and other ephemera from across Canada. Together they show the amount of work and the incredible number of activities which feminists have been organizing in the past fifteen years. Many of these buttons have been collected in boxes stored in women's basements along with "all of the junk you keep meaning to throw away." Now that they have been donated to the Archives, it is often a difficult task to find out who produced the button, why, for what event, and when.

"Otto Lang is Two Four-Letter

Words" is an example of a button about which the Archives has information. This button was produced by the Saskatoon Women's Centre in 1975. It was a response to an attempted cut in the government's funding of the women's centre, because the centre was giving abortion referrals to women. Otto Lang was the Federal Secretary of State at that time and the funding of Saskatoon's Women's Centre fell under his jurisdiction.

If you have any more information about this button or about the other buttons photographed here, or if you would like to donate material to the Archives, call 597-8865 and leave a message, (or call 537-5895 and ask for Luanne).

— Luanne Karn



Archives

The Canadian Women's Movement Archives is an organization of the Canadian Women's movement. This is not an obvious statement when one thinks about how archives generally operate as institutions. Our collective and volunteers at the Women's Movement Archives are feminist activists creating a community-based archives, one more like a resource centre in which diverse groups of women can be more comfortable than in an academic institution for skilled researchers. We treasure our autonomy from the usual institutions upon which archives are politically and financially dependent because such reliance would almost certainly place us outside the women's movement. The price of this independence is precarious financing and relentless fundraising.

Feminists in Canada suffer from a nearly complete lack of popular or scholarly writing

on the history of the contemporary Canadian women's movement. Much of what limited interpretation of our recent past which we do have is borrowed from south of the border. Since the collection of the Canadian Women's Movement Archives focuses on Canadian sources and feminist groups, the Archives will play a pivotal role in any future effort to write the history of Canadian feminism.

While the Archives does assist and encourage scholarly and specialized research, we see our main role in the field of popular education about the women's movement and women's issues. Brochures, postcards, buttons, pamphlets, gallery exhibitions and videotapes can make the history of Canadian feminism known popularly. Contingent on funding, the Archives would like to produce and distribute these kinds of resources, for they will bring the history of the Canadian women's movement back to those who are building the movement and to our sympathizers. And such products should be 1) fun and 2) interesting. What were the women's groups active in your area in 1970? Wouldn't you like to know, especially if you had pictures to look at?

Accumulating the materials produced by women's groups - buttons, posters, periodicals, internal records or organizations, photos, books - gives us the possibility of forming an image of our activities over time. The Archives is a project for the creation of a conscious historical memory of Canadian feminism under the control of feminists. What our movement did and did not do can tell us a lot about who we are and are not now. The type of archives we are building promotes a sense of pride and self-worth in the accomplishments of women. It gives individual women and women's organizations confidence in the collective strength of the women's movement. To be sure, a dull collection of women's movement documents is perfectly justifiable, but we would prefer to expand our mandate into being politically helpful to the growth and morale of the women's movement.

The more women involved with the work of the Archives, the stronger our group will be. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer, please give us a call at 597-8865 and leave a message on our tape machine. Donations of women's movement documents or financial contributions are always gratefully received, and may be sent to the Canadian Women's Movement Archives, PO Box 928, Station Q, Toronto M4T 2P1. Because of the increasing number of people using the Archives, we hope to have regular office hours in the near future, but for the present please phone us at the number noted above to arrange for an appointment convenient to you.

Canadian Women's Movement Archives



Pat Leslie

The last fourteen years of my life have taken me through ad hoc committees on rape, abortion and violence against women, feminist publishing, national conferences, lesbian politics and a host of other actions. This activity eventually led to the foundation of the Women's Movement Archives - a Canadian Herstory Project, since it quickly became clear to me that public archives, with few exceptions, have not been noted for their preservation of materials from groups working for social change. An independent archive on the grass-roots organizing of the women's liberation movement is more than it seems at first glance. None of the group papers or publications in the archival collection have any lasting historical value without the recognition of the great personal impact left on these groups by the women who actively participated. The archive is also about putting women back into history, in the way we see ourselves, and through our own eyes.

Too often we take the written word for granted. Many's the time I have rescued papers from the wastebasket. One woman's list of things to do for the week has great value long after the fact just by giving us some insight into her life as a woman. We censor ourselves by not keeping what we have written. Whoever said that time is money was probably a capitalist but surely was right in thinking that our time is valuable. The time we take to write a letter, a poem or a song is time stolen from all the other chores of washing dishes and feeding the baby. If the song being written is that important then it is important enough to keep. Certainly, if we continue to throw away leaflets publicizing demonstrations and film events or to consign our old buttons and T-shirts to oblivion or even to overlook the importance of keeping minutes of group meetings, our historical impact as a social movement will be lost. ●

The photograph of Pat Leslie, paired with her text, is part of a portrait series entitled *Faces of Feminism; Toronto: 1984* by Pamela Harris. It was shown at the Harbourfront Art Gallery in the December documentary show, and will be seen again at OISE, Toronto, until March 20.

On No Account!

by Susan Ursel

Fifteen hundred people are out on strike at six Eaton's stores across southern Ontario. They've been on strike since last November 30. Negotiations between their union, the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, and Eaton's negotiators broke down, again, on January 12, 1985. The negotiations have not yet been resumed.

If you think you've heard this story before, you may be right, but it's never happened at Eaton's.

But wasn't there a big union drive at Eaton's, sometime back in the 40s? And didn't the union end up losing the battle to the retail giant? Isn't history just repeating itself this winter?

The last big battle to bring a union to Eaton's employees began in 1947, and went on for four years, culminating in a representation vote in 1951. The union, Local 1000 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, lost the vote to represent over 9,000 of Eaton's employees by a narrow margin. It was a tragic end to one of the longest and most innovative organizing drives in Canadian labour history.

In the context of the drive itself, the loss was an incredible blow. In the context of labour history generally and the history of working women in particular, the Eaton's drive provided some valuable lessons. People who had never considered the possibility of belonging to a union before helped sign up thousands of members. The mere threat of a union in their store forced the Eaton family to improve working conditions and benefits for their employees. And the Eaton drive helped break the ground for other successful drives in the retail sector.

What are the differences between the first drive and the situation in 1984? What were the lessons learned?

The organizing effort in the forties and fifties was carried on over several years. Two thirds of the workers were women, a group often inherently conservative when first approached about unionization. The goal that had been set was mammoth: to organize, for the first time, over 9,000 employees of one of Canada's largest and most anti-union corporate empires. Eaton's had already demonstrated its capacity to resist unionization in a drive in the 30s to organize one of its garment factories. In that drive, members of the union were fired when they tried to negotiate a contract.

In contrast to the drive that began in 1947, the organizing effort of 1984 was swift and unexpected. Eaton's barely had time to acknowledge the presence of the union, before it found itself required to sit down to negotiate a contract. The goal this time was more modest, to organize 1,500 workers in six stores in southern Ontario. And this time, the



union was successful in establishing itself as the bargaining agent for those Eaton's employees. The major hurdle which had defeated the last union drive had been cleared. History is not repeating itself this winter at Eaton's, it is being made.

But why is it that we never hear of the importance of the original drive to organize Eaton's store employees? And why is it that despite the evident success of the drive in 1984, the efforts of the union and the workers it represents continue to be dogged by an image of failure?

The answer lies in the way in which labour history and the history of women is systematically denied, altered and erased in this society. We almost never hear about the battles of working people, especially women, to improve their living and working conditions. If we do hear about them, the conclusion is that they were ultimately unsuccessful, a conclusion which obviously does not serve the interests of working women, and hardly does justice to their efforts.

This is not to underestimate the hurdles which remain in the way of the striking Eaton's workers. There is no contract yet. Eaton's can't seem to sit down at a bargaining table long enough to say hello, let alone negotiate. And the employees at six Eaton's stores are walking picket lines in the midst of one of the coldest winters we've had in years.

But the strike at Eaton's has already been a success in many ways. The bulk of the people on strike are sales clerks, traditionally employees in the most precarious of positions. Job security for these employees is usually non-existent, and they wield the least authority in the Eaton's hierarchy. For these people to take on the Eaton's "empire" demands amazing courage and stamina. The workers on-strike have shown they have what it takes.

A basic feature of the work force at Eaton's continues to be that it is primarily female. This was true of the work force during the 1947 organizing drive as well. In the six stores which are on strike now, over 80% of the employees are women. Many of them, says union organizer and negotiator Robert McKay, are grandmothers, out on the picket line for the first time in their lives. After many years of loyal work for the company, they find that instead of receiving the dignity and respect they ought to be accorded, their "benevolent" employer has turned its back on them. They have responded by insisting on their rights and demanding that the employer sit down and negotiate in good faith.

It should be obvious by now that the strike is not only an important milestone in labour history, but a battle that is especially important to women. The significance is not just in the kind of demands this group of workers is making, but in the very process of making those demands. The women at Eaton's have empowered themselves. They have taken the employment situation there, which had grown intolerable, into their own hands. They have told their paternalistic employer to stop dictating and start listening.

What they want Eaton's to hear is not what you would expect. Wages are not the key issue in this strike. The key issues in this strike have boiled down to the inclusion of clauses dealing with job security, criteria for promotions, criteria for disciplining and discharging employees, and rest and lunch breaks.

Eaton's has balked on all these items. Its basic position is that it wants to retain virtually total control and discretion over these areas. For example, on the issue of job promotions, the union has suggested that the criteria for receiving a promotion be skill, ability and qualifications. Those criteria may not seem to be outrageous, but Eaton's just can't seem to handle them. The company's suggestion as to how this contract provision be phrased gives much insight into working life at Eaton's. Instead of "skill, ability and qualification," Eaton's thinks promotions ought to be handed out at the company's discretion, and only if the employee fits the "customer profile." What that language means was stated succinctly by one woman on the line: "The men have to be brown nosers and the women have to have cute asses."

On the issue of discipline and discharge, the company has again stated its demand in terms of control and discretion. A violation of the proposed rules would mean an automatic discharge. There would be no recourse for the employee through arbitration, which provides an impartial decisionmaker to review the actions of the employer and employee and determine if the penalty was justified or not. The company simply controls the whole process.

The issue of rest and lunch breaks illustrates just how far the company is willing to push the question of control. It has steadfastly refused to include a contract provision giving employees an hour for lunch, and it will only write in a rest break provision if the clause also states the company can suspend the privilege if the store gets busy. The defining of "busy" would presumably be a management function. It's clear though, that Eaton's workers, like women everywhere,

must be available on demand.

The kinds of provisions the Eaton's workers are on strike for are the same kind which are included as a matter of course in most collective agreements. Eaton's position on these issues has been based on over one hundred years of having it their own way, to hire and fire, promote and demote as they pleased. It's no accident that over top of this pattern of exploitation and control fits another pattern, men in management positions and women in the lowest paying jobs. When the women at Eaton's went out on strike, they weren't just challenging their employer, they began a process of calling into question all those myriad assumptions that go into determining a woman's value.

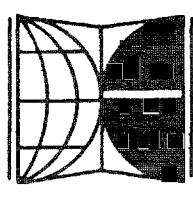
The strike at Eaton's has many dimensions. The union's ultimate success at the bargaining table will have ramifications for many different groups of working people, certainly not the least of which is women. But win or lose at the bargaining table, the women at Eaton's have already won a very precious victory. They have fashioned a voice for themselves and they have made Eaton's sit up and listen. Their success should not be underestimated. They have shown us, once again, that women can fight back, even against the most tremendous odds. This time, their example will not be forgotten.



What can you do to support the Eaton's Strikers?

1. Boycott Eaton's.
2. Write Frederik Eaton, Eaton's president, and tell him you support the strikers and their demands and that you will continue to boycott Eaton's until there is a collective agreement signed. (Frederik Eaton, c/o Eaton's Head Offices, 1 Dundas Street West, Toronto.)
3. Send a copy of your letter to the Ontario Federation of Labour, 15 Gervais Drive, Don Mills, Ontario. This helps the OFL keep track of the boycott and they will pass the letters along to the strikers. It's always so nice to get mail.
4. Cut up your Eaton's credit card and send it to the OFL. They're collecting cut up cards to send, en masse to Eaton's.
5. Walk on a picket line for a while. The stores being picketed in Ontario are: Shopper's World, Victoria Park and Danforth, Toronto; Scarborough Town Centre; the Yonge-Eglinton Centre in Toronto; Bramalea City Centre; the London Warehouse Store; Penn Centre in St. Catharines. Also, there's a line every Saturday at the Eaton's Centre store in Toronto.
6. Send money! Strike donations can be sent to the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, also at 15 Gervais Drive, Don Mills. Make cheques and money orders payable to the Strike Fund.

Susan Ursel is currently articling in Toronto.



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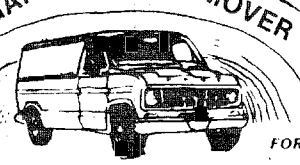
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Feminist Walking Tour

The 75th anniversary of International Women's Day is being celebrated in Toronto this year with a week of events, from March 2 to March 10. One of the highlights will be the innovative structure of the march itself, organized this year by the March 8th Coalition. Beginning with a rally at Convocation Hall and ending at Ryerson's Jorgenson hall (the site of this year's fair), the march will be structured as a feminist walking tour of downtown Toronto, pointing out local institutions currently contributing to women's oppression and naming the various women's groups active in organizing around these issues and institutions. As the march winds past the pinpointed places of oppression, attention will be drawn to them with chants, banners, graphic displays and a detailed Tour Guide written by the Coalition and handed out along the march. The walking tour concept is a strong example of the way we are putting ourselves "on the map," organizing for change in a very direct, local way, and that is, after all, what International Women's Day is all about.

After leaving Convocation Hall the walking tour will pass through the University of Toronto, commemorating 100 years of women at U of T and looking at the work of groups like the Coalition for a Women's Centre at U of T (after a hundred years U of T still doesn't have one), and the Divestment Committee, a pressure group lobbying the University to stop investing its money in South African businesses. Heading south on University, women will pass Queen's Park where attention will be drawn to three issues: the struggle for reproductive freedom and abortion clinics with the efforts of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics and its "Drop the Charges" against Dr. Morgentaler campaign highlighted; Frank Drea's policy for mothers on Welfare which allows them an impoverished \$21.23 a day and is being fought by groups such as Regent Park Sole Support Mothers and Family Benefits Work Group; and finally our demand for mandatory affirmative action policies, which both the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and Organized Working Women are working towards.

Further down University at College, the march will pinpoint the Hydro Building and call attention to the \$12 billion Darlington nuclear power reactor plant now under construction near Oshawa and soon to be the largest such plant in North America. Funded by Queen's Park, taxpayers and the Hydro Commission, Darlington will be a direct target for Soviet missiles, an environmental hazard of untold proportions and a very expensive addition to the nuclear technology and warfare that feminists vigorously oppose. The activities of the umbrella group, Campaign for a Nuclear Free Ontario, will be noted here.

As the march passes the stretch of hospitals on University, the oppressive practices and policies of the medical profession will be named. The central demands of feminists for alternative, women-controlled health services, which are essential to our regaining control of our bodies and sexuality, will be pronounced, as well as the action of the current midwifery movement.

The US Consulate will be the next target, along with Canadian complicity in US military interests worldwide, weapons testing and manufacture, including Cruise testing, and arms trade. One of the key organizations working in this area is the Anti-Intervention Coalition.

South of the Consulate is the Boer War monument and at this point the Tour Guide will educate IWD participants about a campaign launched by the British government after the Boer War in 1902. Basically a "movement for better breeding," this campaign tried to shift the blame for the fact that England had lost so many men in the war onto English mothers for not breeding strong enough sons! Incredible as it may seem, this campaign involved government workers visiting the homes of the poor and encouraging mothers to upgrade the level of their housework, while ignoring their poverty, lack of health care and poor diets.

Osgoode Hall is the next institution on the march, and the work of feminist groups working to achieve equality for women in the law will be highlighted. As the march swings by City Hall, a comparison will be drawn between the inexcusable lack of affordable



housing and daycare for mothers and cut-backs on shelters for battered women all due to what City Hall claims is a "lack of funding" and the now-approved \$150 million (a low estimate) sports dome, for which the City's contribution alone is \$30 million. This is a clear case of the needs of women being ignored in favour of a male playground, serving male business and political interests.

Leaving City Hall, the march will travel along Queen Street to Yonge, noting one of many sexist billboards, protesting sexist images in media and acknowledging the work of groups like Media Watch. In front of old City Hall is another war monument, this one commemorating the men who died in WWI, WWII and the Korean War. This monument is just one example of the silencing and ignoring of the herstory of women, because the millions of women raped and murdered in these wars are never acknowledged or commemorated, while both the useless deaths of millions of men and war itself are glorified.

Travelling up Yonge Street to Gerrard, the march will pass the Eaton Centre and acknowledge support for the women working for Eaton's on strike in an effort to legislate fair policies into their workplace by unionizing.

The final institution of oppression named along the route will be the numerous agents of pornography on Yonge Street. As Susan Brownmiller accurately described it "pornography is the undiluted essence of anti-female propaganda" and feminists agree that pornography fosters and legitimizes the physical abuse and sexual repression of women. The "Take Back the Night March," organized each year by the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, is just one example of the connections feminists are making between the ideology of pornography and the practices of sexual assault, both of which are increasing at a frightening rate, and which women are organizing to combat.

(See the Calendar on page 15 for details of IWD events, which include forums, art and cultural events, strike support for Eaton's and Angela Davis at Convocation Hall on March 8.) For general information call (416) 598-9838.

— Nancy Chater

Call for Help

TORONTO — The March 8 Coalition is looking for volunteers to do physical care for disabled women during all the events planned during International Women's Week, March 2-9, 1985. Please call immediately, Brenda at 537-1935, or Margo at 928-0765.

Immigrant Women

TORONTO — WWIW (Women Working with Immigrant Women), an umbrella organization of women active in the immigrant communities, is sponsoring "Everywoman's Voice — a Cultural Evening" as part of the week long series of events celebrating International Women's Day in conjunction with the March 8th Coalition.

The evening will feature a wide variety of cultural groups performing song, poetry and dance. The event will be held on Tuesday, March 5 at 7:30 pm, Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. West (just west of Spadina), Toronto. The event is wheelchair accessible and childcare is provided. There will also be information displays in the foyer. For more information, call Salome Loucas, (416) 531-2029.

Reproductive Rights Panel

TORONTO — A panel of four women at a forum on the Reproductive Rights Movement and the struggle for Abortion Clinics on March 4 will lead off what we hope will be as wide-ranging a discussion as possible. Carolyn Egan, a long-time women's health worker and activist with the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC), will explore the history of the recent abortion struggle: what strategies OCAC adopted at different points and why we did so. Vicki Van Wagner, of the Toronto Midwives' Collective, will discuss parallels between the struggles for midwifery and abortion within the wider reproductive rights movement. A common problem is the complex relation to state power. Both movements are confronted with and must try to use for their own purposes government policy, legislation and the courts, but this brings real dangers of being accommodated and demobilized. A third speaker will outline how the choice issue can be fought for and won within organizations such as labour unions and the NDP. Finally, a second OCAC speaker will analyze the current situation and where the struggle goes from here.

The forum's organizers hope to achieve a number of things with this forum: first, to contribute to the overall goal of the International Women's Day events of attracting new women to the movement; second, to clearly articulate our strategy — its underlying rationale and its strengths and weaknesses in comparison to other options. The forum should be a context in which people feel free to argue their critical differences: for example, some emphasize that clinics in themselves do not wrest reproductive control away from male-dominated professionalized medicine. The forum is an opportunity to make ourselves accountable to and receive input from choice supporters and other activists in the women's movement. Equally important, the present period is a critical juncture for the choice struggle, with tremendous implications — if we win or if we are set back — for the women's movement as a whole. Organizers hope this forum and the overall events of the week can mobilize pro-choice support and activity.

All choice supporters are urged to join the march on March 9 and form as large a choice contingent as possible. One of the places the march is stopping is Queen's Park, to let the provincial government know what the women's movement thinks of its refusal to recognize women's right to abortion.

Women Performers!

TORONTO — *Women's Music/Women's Culture* is coming to the New Trojan Horse Cafe, 179 Danforth Ave., Toronto, on the second Friday of every month. Beginning on March 9 (a Saturday, for this month only, because of IWD), these programs will bring together established and lesser-known performers, presenting women's music, poetry, drama and dance, in a relaxed "drop-in" atmosphere. Amanda Hale's latest performance piece on reproductive technology will be featured on March 9. (See Calendar, page 15.)

We are looking for women who are interested in performing or participating in other ways in *Women's Music/Women's Culture*, which is currently organized by a small committee of the Trojan Horse Collective. If you have ideas, time and/or talents to contribute, please call the Trojan Horse at 461-8367, and leave a message for Helen Lenskyj.

New Soccer League

TORONTO — Pink Turf Soccer League is calling for members. Sixty-five "women-identified-women" will have a chance to hone their soccer skills from May to August at a downtown Toronto location. It's first come, first served, so act now.

Come to a meeting, Tuesday, April 2, 1985, 7:30 pm at 519 Church St. Or send \$20 to Pink Turf Soccer League, Drawer F9, Box 7289, Stn A, Toronto M5W 1X9. For information, call (416) 463-3528.

Abortion Video: "The Struggle for choice"

The Struggle for Choice is the working title for a 55 min. videotape currently in production about the abortion rights movement in Canada. At this time extensive research has been completed in British Columbia, Alberta, the maritimes, Toronto and Montreal. The tape will explore the history of the abortion rights movement since the adoption of the current legislation in 1969, as well as present a national perspective on abortion availability and treatment today.

The videotape will feature interviews with women and men across the country: abortion rights activists, doctors and clinic personnel, and women who have had abortions and those considering one.

Because of the crucial importance of this issue, the filmmakers are inviting women to contribute to the production of this video tape. Partial funding for the project has been received from the Ontario Arts Council. Additional funds from individuals and groups will ensure that *The Struggle For Choice* has the necessary level of financial support. (Donations will be tax deductible.)

For research purposes, the filmmakers would also be happy to hear from women who would agree to be interviewed for the videotape.

This video is being directed by Nancy Nicol, an independent video producer and activist for the past six years in Toronto. Her recent productions include: *Mini Skools Pays Mini Wages*, and *Our Choice, A Tape About Teenage Mothers* produced with the Women's Media Alliance.

For further information about *The Struggle for Choice* please contact: Nancy Nicol, 9 Cunningham Ave., Toronto, M6K 1P1 or call (416) 531-1614.

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The Charter: Driving

by Sheila McIntyre

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a liberal legal document reflecting liberal legal ideals. The search for an equality model to give content and direction to Canadians' soon-to-be enacted rights under Section 15 necessarily involves confrontation with and within the limits of liberal theory and liberal law. The search for equality is currently stalled at precisely the point where liberalism is stalled - at the point where formal equality gives way to substantive equality, at the point for instance, where equal pay for (formally) equal work gives way to equal pay for work of equal value. And this is exactly the same point where feminist strategies for using the Charter are stalled. Our definition of substantive equality, an equality grounded in the particular situated experience of real women's lives, has no counterpart in the decontextualized universals (eg, the "ordinary reasonable man") or abstract formalism (eg, treating "likes" alike) of liberal law.

When the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into force on April 17, 1982, it contained a provision delaying the implementation of Section 15 (see box) for three years. Because Section 15 entrenched far broader equality rights than Canadian law has previously recognized, this three year moratorium was considered necessary to allow all levels of government to audit their laws and make the necessary amendments to bring them into conformity with the Charter. The assumption was that there would be laws that must and would be amended by April 17, 1985, and that it is preferable for our elected representatives to legislate such sweeping change rather than the courts.

Though the delay in implementing Section 15 was disappointing, it might have had some positive returns. For every discriminatory law amended by legislation thousands might benefit, and individual victims would have been spared the enormous cost of litigating their rights. Canadian courts have a dismal record recognizing discrimination at all, and, had legislators set a direction for the Charter we might have expected the courts to break with those precedents which have legitimized inequality. Moreover, legislated amendments would have been open to public scrutiny and debate, and the

The moratorium, it now appears, merely bought governments time.

process might have educated bureaucrats and judges. At the least, legislated amendments would have revealed how the law-makers themselves define equality and propose to balance individual rights against competing majoritarian interests. We could have begun on April 17 by challenging laws which violate the standards law-makers publicly set for themselves.

The moratorium, it now appears, merely bought governments time. Like the federal Tories (see inset), the Ontario Tories have refused to take a principled stand. They have just released a study outlining the pros and cons of all possible interpretations of the Section 15 and the remedies clause (Section 24), but propose initially to amend only those laws which are discriminatory on their face. Their only unqualified position is that the Charter is not designed to revamp our legal, political or social system (so much for systemic discrimination) or to demand a redistribution of resources.

At the same moment, and perhaps in the expectation that governments would come up empty-handed by April 15, a group of human rights scholars and practitioners organized a National Symposium on Equality Rights to educate those likely to play roles in implementing, applying or interpreting the Charter. At the end of January, Toronto was host to this exorbitantly priced, lavishly funded and by-invitation-only forum. Those invited - judges, lawyers, bureaucrats, educators, business and labour leaders and community workers - got a three day crash course in state of the art equality theory.

The good news is that the featured panelists seem to agree on three key issues:

- equality does not mean treating everyone the same but embraces accommodating differences;
- discrimination need not be intentional to be unlawful or to violate the Charter;
- systemic discrimination requires systemic remedies by way of some form of affirmative action.

The bad news is that Canadian courts have historically taken the opposite view on all three principles; the Ontario and federal governments' discussion papers waffle on all three principles; the recently released Abella report on Equality in

Employment rejects goals, timetables and quotas as a necessary component of affirmative action; and no government has yet committed itself to mandatory affirmative action or contract compliance (ie, requiring affirmative action as a condition of doing business with government).

In my view this is not only a matter of governments lacking commitment to frame concrete changes to make the Charter more than a rhetorical liberal ideal. It is also, as Jill Vickers argued at the Symposium, that the pursuit of substantive equality turns liberalism in on itself. Precisely the same ideology that champions equality in theory finds fault with concrete remedies to achieve equality in fact.

Liberalism stands for the preservation and promotion of individual rights. Under, through and within liberalism, white, able-bodied male privileges have congealed into both concrete and abstract "rights" which are protected by law. If equality means revoking these privileges, that can't be liberal because it is reverse discrimination. If fairness means replacing male goals, expectations and measures of worth with authentic individual and group self-determination or with the genuine pluralism of comparable worth, that can't be liberal because it is unfair to those who have prospered and dominated by the (male) merit system. If equality means remedying systemic discrimination by systemic change, that can't be liberal because it tampers with the "free" market and amounts to coercive redistribution of resources by the state. As Vickers noted, the phrase, "I believe in equality but..." defines liberal discourse on equality. Because the "buts," such as reverse discrimination, unfairness or market necessity, are consistent with liberal values and ring true to liberal theory, they are exceptionally hard to refute. Because the equality debate takes place almost exclusively on an abstract conceptual level, the contradictions inherent in such discourse are not obvious.

For the purpose of argument, liberal analysis assumes our society is what it aspires to be, namely, fair, open and an exemplar of freedom of choice and equal opportunity. The debate then becomes whether and how the state is justified in abridging individual rights and freedoms, as if the rights or freedoms in question actually exist. The fact of systemic inequality - as in pervasive institutionalized discrimination inherent to liberal society - does not really figure except as an abstraction to be balanced against other abstractions like "freedom of contract" or "censorship" or "state intervention" or "reverse discrimination." Actual measurable wrongs are equated with potential theoretical wrongs; the subjective experience of living, breathing victims of inequality becomes the object of theory. How else explain liberals' opposition to affirmative action because its beneficiaries may/will lose their self esteem if they are promoted for reasons other than their individual merit. How else explain anti-censorship feminists who seek to suppress battered women's testimony about the role of pornography in their abuse because such evidence of real oppression might become a "tool of the state" to suppress "freedom of sexual expression" or might have a chilling effect on artists or might ultimately hurt the "women's movement"?

For every discriminatory law amended by legislation, thousands might benefit, and individual victims would have been spared the enormous cost of litigating their rights.

Nowhere is the abstraction of the equality debate more unreal than in the courts. It is the courts which legitimized racial segregation and still legitimize sexual segregation as separate but equal treatment; courts which have held that discrimination based on pregnancy is not sex-discrimination; courts which found no violation of equal protection of the laws and equality under the law when Indian women but not Indian men lose their status - a process conceptualized as "enfranchisement" - by marrying non-Indians. It is also the courts, of course, which will interpret the Charter.

If judicial rulings on equality violate common sense, they have impeccable logic in liberal law. The aim of liberal law is to maximize individual freedom by balancing competing individual rights through the promulgation of neutral and consistent rules neutrally and consistently interpreted and enforced. At the heart of this ideal lie three principles: that in the private sphere, individuals are free to do as they like without state interference (a man's home is his castle); that in the adjudication of private rights and the legislation of public rights, likes should be treated alike (hence the importance of precedent); and that everyone is equal before the law and no one above it (a welfare mother stands on an identical footing as, say, Richard Hatfield).

The first principle assumes a meaningful distinction between public and private law and life. It provides that individuals may freely discriminate in the "private" sphere

"Reasonable"

On January 31, 1985, Justice Minister Crosbie introduced a bill to amend portions of some fifty federal statutes which his department believes currently violate the Charter. Fanfare aside, few of these amendments are ground-breaking, over half deal with powers of search and seizure, and the majority reflect court decisions which have already held similar provisions unconstitutional under the Charter.

In a grossly cynical move, the Tories have not only declined to table specific anti-discrimination reforms, but have refused to release their own position on equality rights. Instead they have produced a discussion paper and opted for public hearings on the same controversial equality issues that polarized the ERA debate. Some of the questions posed in the discussion paper include:

- would military effectiveness be compromised if combat roles were opened to women?
- is the military justified in refusing to admit homosexuals?
- is it reasonable to deny the vote to inmates of mental institutions, or to discriminate against applicants for immigration who are disabled?
- should the qualifying period for unemployment insurance be twice as long for women on maternity leave as for other applicants?

All the laws the Tories have thrown open to public debate are currently discriminatory on their face. Section 15 was supposed to be the state's constitutionally entrenched guarantee to minorities and women that their rights to equality before and under the law will not be abridged or suspended in the interests of a temporary or permanent electoral majority. Why are the federal Tories, then, taking an opinion poll on whether existing discrimination written into federal laws is "reasonable" or "justified" or, God help us, "effective"?

One answer may be that if the status quo is supported by the majority of those who respond to the discussion paper, the feds will have ammunition in the courts. All the rights in the Charter, including equality rights, are subject to such "reasonable" limits as can be demonstrably "justified" in a free and democratic society. So if the results of this democratic consultation with

without public scrutiny or sanction. The problem here is not simply definitional, a matter of consistently distinguishing which is public and which is private. It's also a question of whose meaning wins. As Catharine MacKinnon points out, the public/private distinction does not cut the same way for men and women. Public law allows and legitimates men's abuse of women in private. The private sphere of spousal rape, wife and child assault, use and abuse of pornography, is a political sphere of women's oppression.

In the equality context, the second principle requires that when laws distinguish between citizens, the distinctions made must be rational, not arbitrary, and must serve some rational purpose. Where there are real differences between individuals, and those differences are relevant to a legislative goal, discrimination is lawful. For instance, when law-makers believed women were biologically and intellectually incapable of practising law, it was legal to bar women from the profession. Because law-makers believe women are unfit for combat, it remains lawful to bar them from such duty. The definitional problem again reduces to whose meaning wins.

The principle that likes be treated alike cuts another way in equality jurisprudence. Over time, some types of distinctions

Women to Abstraction

Discrimination

public are that 80% of the respondents consider military homophobia justifiable or only think that restricting immigration into Canada to the able-bodied is reasonable, will the consensus-minded Tories amend these laws? If not, will they put their survey results in as evidence in court and will the courts buy it? Asking yourself how these questions are asked against the victims of these laws. No men have combat experience and few women do to argue for military effectiveness. No men have fought alongside women. So what makes a credible opinion on the first question more than the entrenched biases of military experts? Insofar as it is currently illegal for women and gays to be in the military, is it likely that passing as heterosexual will risk a "honourable" discharge by speaking for their organization? How well will the mentally disabled be able to articulate their views on their lack of voting rights? How well will they be able to phrase their views to opposing views in public hearings? In a world when immigrants are already scapegoats for unemployment, can you imagine many citizens speaking in favour of easing entry to the disabled? What if the hefty future increases in unemployment insurance premiums have been announced, will the public support reducing the eligibility period for women applying for UI while on maternity leave?

unpack the assumptions underlying these questions. Job segregation permeates this society and single-sex job ghettos are the norm, not the exception. Why is the military a special case? Why not ask whether nursing effectiveness would be improved by admitting men into the profession. Why not ask if employers are justified in admitting homosexuals into the construction industry or lesbians into secretarial jobs? Following the acquittal of Doctors Smoling, Tardif and Morgentaler, Mr. Crosbie justified maintaining existing abortion laws and their administration on the ground that the issue is a controversial issue on which opinions are so polarized that consensus is currently unachievable. The Tories have now made equality a controversial issue. My guess is that the discussion is being held by isolating such loaded issues as the only legal action on Section 15, is a set up to excuse equality once again. Which leaves the fight for equality where it has always been: from the hearts, the backs and out of the pockets of the oppressed.

— S.M.

on real differences — age, sex, race, religion, nationality, ability — have become inherently suspect because they have been used to justify arbitrary discrimination. The more suspect the group, the more rigorously courts scrutinize laws which infringe rights on the basis of that classification. Canadian law, for example has developed a three-tiered standard of review. Laws which distinguish on the basis of race are upheld unless they serve a necessary government objective which cannot be achieved by less drastic means. Laws that distinguish on the basis of gender fall unless they serve an important objective and there is a substantial relationship between the distinction and the law's goal. Laws based on age or ability stand as long as the distinction is relevant to a legitimate state goal. The problem with this model is that once a classification is plugged into the appropriate tier, all laws based on the same classification are subject to the same standard of review. All age discrimination is reviewed at the lowest standard, whether the dispute centres on mandatory retirement of teachers at age 65, or mandatory retirement of employees at age 30. Similarly, strict scrutiny of all race-based laws has resulted in the unconstitutionality of racial affirmative action.

The third principle, formal equality before the law, requires courts and allows the private sector to ignore real situational difference among individuals. Judge Rosalie Abella views universal standards as the prime reason for affirmative action in employment. In both her keynote address at the Symposium and in her Royal Commission Report on Equality in Employment she has emphasized that formal equality is not neutral and neutrality often results in inequality. She observes that neutrality merely entrenches rules, systems and practices either designed for and in the interests of white, able-bodied men or reflecting white able-bodied males' perceptions of the needs and interests of everyone else. Ask yourself, for instance, whose interests are served by using the "ordinary reasonable man" standard as the test of obscenity, or of "honest mistake" in rape, or of the amount of force which is legally justifiable when women defend themselves against battering spouses.

When liberals talk of systemic inequality, they don't get it, because they don't really believe it exists.

So what does all this mean in terms of the forthcoming implementation of Section 15? First, I think it means recognizing some hard truths. When liberals talk of systemic inequality, they don't get it because they don't really believe it exists. At best, it is no more than a concept which can be trumped by other concepts. Its remedy is no more than the removal of arbitrary barriers which currently prevent women and minorities from competing on the basis of individual merit in an economic and social structure which — because it's liberal — will remain basically unchanged. Affirmative action means providing ramps for the disabled or daycare for women so that they can enter the paid labour force. It does not mean altering the type of work they perform when they get in, does not extend to hiring disabled employees whose disability makes them less productive, does not require substituting non-male merit criteria for existing definitions of professionalism, and excludes those measures such as equal pay for work of equal value which might make Canadian employers less profitable in the liberal marketplace.

Second, arguing for rights within a liberal legal system amounts to challenging judges on three separate levels. We have to expose the partiality of rules and liberal values judges

consider neutral, including judges' unacknowledged subjective biases (eg, against rape victims who are strippers). In addition, we have to alter current distinctions between rational and arbitrary discrimination. Finally, we must force judges to question their fundamental legal grounding — the acceptance of the public/private distinction, the belief in the value of formal neutrality and consistency, and allegiance to precedent.

This is not to say that within the limits of existing law, we cannot achieve real gains for women and minorities, or that to pursue such gains is politically incorrect to the extent that we do not pressure judges to change at all three levels.

By playing on the public/private dichotomy, for example, we might be able to expand the scope of Section 15 beyond predicted limits to include not just statutes and regulations but unwritten rules and practices of all governmental agencies and all institutions funded, subsidized by tax laws or regulated by government. We can also argue that courts, as public institutions, may not enforce private contracts which violate Section 15. (This was the radical approach proposed by Dale Gibson at the Symposium.)

We can use the likes-must-be-treated-alike approach to secure parental leave, to challenge rape evidence rules (Catharine MacKinnon's brainwave), to combat job segregation at least in the public sector, and to fight so-called protective legislation like the Indian Act. We could seek to make all sex discrimination as suspect as race discrimination and subject to the strictest judicial scrutiny under Section 1.

If we use liberal legal reasoning and vocabulary, we must be prepared to have our arguments used against us. Precedent ruling that job segregation is discriminatory will likely be used to invalidate women-only hiring at rape crisis centres; support for anti-pornography legislation may well be used against feminist art. For every challenge we win, there will be tangible gains for real victims and a new precedent we may be able to use to our advantage. But we will not win many, and our losses will entrench precedents that may set us back for years.

Equality is not about getting more individual rights, but ending the dominance of men over women.

In my view, the Charter battle is only worth engaging in if we understand it is not designed to end systemic inequality and that victories may not be the same thing as winning cases. My view, and it is not a popular one, is that for women, equality is not about getting rights, and the exercise of litigating equality is misdirected if its end does not include changing the nature of equality discourse in and out of the courts. I am exceedingly ambivalent about winning abortion victories the way our most recent victory was won — by a high-priced, high profile male lawyer representing male clients, using standard adversarial tools and classic rights arguments, and involving feminists only on a volunteer and extra-legal way. I am not at all worried about losing a courtroom pornography argument by rejecting the public/private distinction, defining the sexuality pornography portrays and creates from a woman's point of view rather than from the community's, and conceding that my definition of pornography embraces much of western art, literature, popular media, religious iconography and sexual conduct.

The most exhilarating moment of the Symposium on Equality Rights occurred when Catharine MacKinnon urged women to accept that equality is not about getting more individual rights, but ending the dominance of men over women. From this perspective, inequality is, by definition, systemic and objections to positive remedial action framed in terms of reverse discrimination, individual freedom of speech, market necessity or unfairness to individual men just won't wash. The duty to treat likes alike requires an analysis of social, economic and cultural power relations rather than adherence to precedent. Women, on this approach, could argue with complete consistency that job segregation is discriminatory in some circumstances but not in others. We could more easily distinguish between pornographic and non-pornographic art (assuming there exists such a thing as erotica without non-mutuality between partners or between the viewer and the viewed). We could also easily distinguish between oppressive "protective" legislation and affirmative action, could explode the public/private distinction, and could substitute for the abstract universals of precedent a radical contextuality based on the power hierarchies implicit in individual disputes.

According to at least one feminist lawyer I know, "anyone who believes such arguments can be made in court is pathetic and naive." I think she is wrong. The arguments can be made. It's just that more often than not they will be rejected. But so was the argument that pregnancy discrimination is sex-discrimination.

Genuine equality means more than securing for women and minorities the right to equal opportunity to compete with men on male terms in male ways. I also think it means more than using liberal tools on liberal terms in liberal ways.

Sheila McIntyre is a Toronto feminist lawyer.

CONSTITUTION ACT, 1981 PART I SCHEDULE B

CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law:

Guarantee of Rights and Freedoms

1. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

Equality Rights

15. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

(2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

28. Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

Rights and freedoms in Canada

Equality before and under law and equal protection and benefit of law

Affirmative action programs

Rights guaranteed equally to both sexes

ARTS

Kitchen Table Heroics

by Donna Gollan

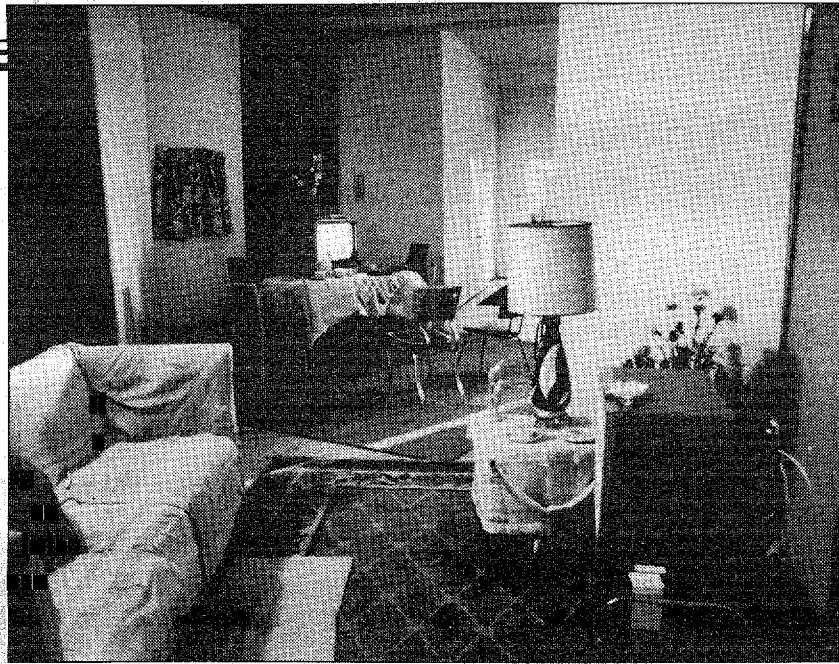
Vancouver artist Sara Diamond recently had a six-part video installation entitled *Heroics* at Toronto's A Space Gallery. Concentrating on re-defining what we mean by acts of heroism, it was distinctly reminiscent of Toronto filmmaker Barbara Halpern Martineau's *Heroes of Peace*.

Martineau took the first step in 1983 by exposing the dictionary definitions of the words "hero," a performer of heroic deed and "heroine," typically the woman who loves the hero. Her film, (see *Broadside*, July 1983) goes on to document the trials and triumphs of three women: a wheel-chair activist, a black immigrant, and a lesbian carpenter.

Diamond's project takes off from there. Each tape tackles a concept which is already socially defined for us, and, through women's life experiences, subtly changes those definitions, providing us with new insights into such concepts as creativity, choices, and activism. We are simply not accustomed to thinking of ordinary acts as heroic. For example, we meet a woman who is not merely heroic for learning to speak out on issues which she believes in. She is heroic for getting these skills on her own, for teaching them to the next generation who will need them, and, perhaps most heroic of all, for withstanding the disapproval of neighbours and relations as she left her children in her husband's care in order to be politically active.

Each pair of tapes is installed within the environment of its original setting. We sit in the kitchen with the screen perched on the table before us, as women speak to us from the very same kitchen. Similarly we sit in the living room in pink-and-white comfort as the women on the tape speak to us from deep armchairs. The environment we share puts us in women's space. Slowly we come to understand the confines of feminized existence and the sheer brute courage that it takes to break out of these spaces.

One woman's act of heroism is to challenge a male union co-worker who used his size and physical presence to force her off the platform. She is not thinking of the courage that it took to speak up to the thousands listening because she is past tackling that aspect of her life. She is thinking of the sweat that it cost her to beard the lion in his den and explain exactly what he did to her space and how much it had angered her. Her satisfaction arose from the point when he finally realized that she could not be dismissed as a crazy lady. He promised that he



From Sara Diamond's *Heroics*

would never invade a woman's space again.

Diamond has given us back our space, forced us to rethink it and shown us what kind of overlap occurs between the heroics of women's public and private lives.

Love in Paris

Wim Wenders's *Paris, Texas* is a love story. It is not a melodrama, or, put more correctly, it is the kind of melodrama you might expect to be written by Sam Shepard. Our hero, Travis, is about as far from being a hero as Paris, Texas is from being Paris, France. We first meet him travelling on foot through a desert. He collapses. His brother Walt is called to the rescue. "What the hell happened to you? You look like forty miles of rough road." In answer, Travis stares down the path he has just travelled. Each time Walt leaves him alone, Travis resumes walking. Each time Walt catches up with him, he coaxes him carefully back into the car. When Travis asks to drive, Walt does not hesitate to let him do so. When Travis refuses to fly the last leg of the journey, Walt accepts his fears and settles in to drive a long and weary road. Love is patience.

Arriving at Walt's home we meet Anne and Hunter. Hunter is Travis's boy but he has lived with Anne and Walt since the age of three when his father deserted him and his mother Jane left Hunter in their care. Anne welcomes Travis although she knows a mother's fear of losing eight-year-old Hunter. Anne kisses Travis. Anne loses no opportunity to touch him, to welcome him, to gently put aside his

lost memories, his desolation. Under such care Travis blossoms and Hunter warms to him. Together they leave to find Hunter's mother. Anne is inconsolable. Love is loss.

Travis functions slowly, always at level one. Hunter is quick, bright, interested in the galaxies, the formation of the earth, walkie talkies, and the speed of light. Hunter loved Anne and Walt but longed for the return of his own parents. Travis has completely lost touch with the fast pace of the world. He could not have undertaken a trip to Houston or found Jane without Hunter's quick brain. Love is need.

Travis finds Jane working in a glass booth, fulfilling men's fantasies. As they talk through the intercom the story of their love unfolds. Travis loved Jane to the edge of sanity. He had to work but couldn't bear to leave Jane. Hunter made him jealous. Everything made him jealous. Travis ran away. Love is fantasy.

Travis asks Jane why she left Hunter with Anne and Walt. Jane says she was afraid she would use Hunter to fill up all her emptiness. Love is self-knowledge.

They have been separated for four years. They are separated by glass. Jane was once his fantasy. Now she is Everyman's fantasy. Jane tells him that each man has his voice. Travis faces the death of his dream. Travis tells her he has brought Hunter. Jane goes to meet Hunter. Hunter hugs his mother. His mother hugs back. Travis drives away, alone. Love is not the nuclear family. Love is shattering.

Each of these characters learns something about life and about themselves through the medium of love. Travis learns to face an arid

Paris. Anne and Walt are gentle people who teach the value of love and learn of loss. Hunter and Jane learn of their own value, and will continue to learn from each other. Love is not romance. Love is revelation.

Mrs. Awful

Do not be fooled by *Mrs. Soffel*, Gillian Armstrong's (director of *My Brilliant Career*) newest film. Certainly the direction is superb, the camera work innovative and the editing fast-paced and smooth. Certainly the acting is alive and the sexual sparks do fly between Diane Keaton and Mel Gibson. Certainly there are some terrific parallels drawn between a prisoner condemned to die and a Victorian warden's wife, married since her teens and trapped by the confines of a stuffy husband and four children. There is all this and more to see, except that what you will be watching is a Harlequin Romance.

There are definite indications that this film was directed by a woman. There are several scenes of extraordinary sensitivity between a mother and her daughters, between two sisters who will never be soul mates, between a desperate wife and her unfeeling husband, and between a thirty year old woman who is afraid her life is over, and a handsome young criminal who is determined that his is not.

It is the politics of this film that need critical examination. We are never really sure whether Mrs. Soffel is being portrayed as a heroine or merely slightly deranged. She gives up her faith in God and the system of justice for a kiss. Love is all consuming. She smuggles in saws to the Biddle brothers and reads loud bible verses to cover the sound of sawing bars. Love is everything. When they escape from prison, she is swept off her feet and away with them, abandoning her children as quickly as she once abandoned her bible. When it becomes clear that the fugitives will be caught, there is an orgasmic scene in the back of a sleigh in which she demands that her lover shoot her. Freud has never been so thoroughly exploited. Sex and death and freedom from the drab ordinariness of everyday life: this is the stuff of which True Romances are made.

But our heroine doesn't die. Instead she recovers from her love wound and is put behind bars. We are back where we started. But wait, a woman hands her a posy of flowers bound up in a kerchief. As she unravels the ribbon that holds it all together we wait, breathlessly. Is it a file? Is it a saw? No, it's a picture of Ed Biddle and a bad poem about the strength of their love. Something to think about. ●

Stripping Down Pornography

by Amanda Hale

Pornography - a spectacle: created and performed by gay men. A co-production of the 1982 Theatre Company, England, and the Theatre Centre, Toronto.

Pornography was collectively created by three English men - Neil Bartlett, Duncan Roy and Robin Whitmore. It was commissioned by The Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, England, where it played along with *The Go-Go Boys*, also seen in Toronto recently, where it delighted audiences with its demolition of heterosexual-macho-male roles and gay bar, mustache-and-leather roles.

Pornography directly addresses the issue of pornography and how it affects gay men's lives and, by extension, all our lives. The theatre is set up in expectation of a real 'spectacle' - lots of glitz and coloured lights to create the ambience of a Soho strip joint. Neil Bartlett swivels and glides through the audience in black leather, chatting us up before the show. He establishes an audience/performer contact which is maintained throughout the evening. The boys emerge from behind a red curtain, through which we have seen men shadow dancing. They're wearing black stiletto heels and drag-queen duds. They prance and flounce in predictable style, verbally challenging the audience with cockney panache - "What're you into then?" Just as our worst expectations are on the verge of confirmation the whole thing turns around with a sudden break - "We're not into that." Robin Whitmore, retreating upstage, says "that was a direct quote." The implication is: I'm not responsible. I'm just playing a role. The performers clarify the dichotomy between role-playing and reality

by alternating between send-up readings from porn magazines, monologs about their own sexual desires told in porn mag style, broken by the recurring "We're not into that."

The performers keep the audience in constant awareness that they are real people, not actors, paralleling their definition of themselves as gay men rather than as ridiculous deviants - a socially imposed image which is reinforced by the pornographic model. The show is a process of stripping down, from the drag queen sequence, through the boyhood formative fantasy world - "when I was a boy, before I was a man" - to the culmination of personal story-telling. There are anecdotes throughout the evening, beginning with Neil Bartlett's telling of his 'first time', as an English schoolboy, at 13 or 14, in grey uniform, entering a public lavatory on his way home from school, and having his first sexual experience. By the end of the show the stories are full-blown, relentlessly honest, risk-taking documents of these men's lives. In the stories, they stand naked and unmasked, metaphorically speaking, as Robin Whitmore stood literally naked earlier in the piece and, with disarming simplicity, named the parts of his body. "This is my arm, this is my belly, this is my cock, these are my balls, this is my leg... this is me." "I want you," says another performer. "This is us. What you see is what you get," the boys tell us. "Don't expect us to be the exotic circus ring hybrids that a pornographic society has led you to believe we are." The performers are exorcising the roles and the expectations for both themselves and for the audience. It is a dual process, and an exciting and exhilarating one.

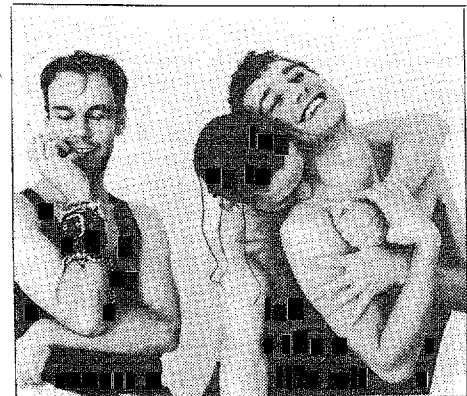
Duncan Roy tells his story about serving a sentence in Wormwood Scrubs prison in London. He shared a cell with a real macho type,

the sort who whistles "King of the Road," and protests about having to share with an upper class pouffe (Duncan has a rather refined accent). One day this man asked Duncan to give him a massage, "and when I flipped him over he had an erection, which I greedily gobbled up." Duncan alleviates the obvious, underlying grimness of prison life with wry humour. After the sexual relationship develops between the two men, Duncan gives up his job in the prison hospital and waits in his cell, "like a housewife," for macho-man to come home from work each evening. He cleans and tidies the cell, empties the piss-pot. The other man agrees to have sex only if he is allowed to 'play dead' and let Duncan do things to him. Gradually a power play develops and Duncan is forced into a classic 'feminine' role. Eventually Duncan applies for a transfer to another cell, but he misses the only spark of human love available in the prison situation, and goes back to the King of the Road.

A story I personally found difficult to relate to was Neil Bartlett's description of love-making with his 'boyfriend' as distinct from his 'lover'. This was a man to whom he obviously had a powerful sexual attraction rather than an emotional bond, and there was an intensity in their sexual encounter which culminated in sado-masochistic behaviour. The mere mention of nipple clips is guaranteed to make a woman wince. Bartlett describes flicking cigarette ash on his partner's nipples, pouring hot candle wax down the man's spine, and scratching his back till he drew blood - all in a matter-of-fact tone. I don't understand sado-masochism on a personal level but, as a member of the audience, I accepted Bartlett's story as honest and sincere. The sado-masochism was confined to the physical. It was not a symptom of fear and

hatred as pornographic depictions of heterosexual SM always are. It was the outcome of sexual intensity, not of uncontrolled negative emotion.

Pornography is a rich spectacle. It is honest. It takes risks. The performers were rewarded by frequent affirmation from the audience: "Yes, we've had that problem. Yes, we know what you mean." And they made themselves available for informal discussion after the show, and demonstrated genuine interest in their audience's response. Regardless of whether or not you understand or agree with all the segments of this variety-filled show, you cannot help but applaud this very personal exploration which, taken to its limits, expands into the universal, and goes a long way towards exploding the mutilating myths which pornography feeds on, and which have filtered insidiously into our culture.



Scandalous: Robin Whitmore (left), Neil Bartlett and Duncan Roy.

Facing Fear, Unclenching Fists

Clenched Fists, Burning Crosses: A Novel of Resistance. by Cris South. New York: The Crossing Press 1984

Reviewed by Lisa Freedman

Her thumbnails had done grown clean through her hands and was stickin' out the other side. The nails of her other fingers had growed into the meat, too. Nurses said they had tried to open her hands and cut them nails but they just gave up tryin'. I guess a woman clench her fists long enough, ain't nothin' nobody can do about it. Reckon it could happen to any of us.

Clenched Fists, Burning Crosses tells the story of how women go through their lives with clenched fists and how, in learning to fight back we can slowly unclench our fists. The book deals with hard realities, from the central theme of the atrocities committed by the Ku Klux Klan, through wife battering, rape and incest. The book moves us through brutality, pain, anger and frustration - to resistance and action. All within the context of women loving women.

And while this novel is not an easy read, it is a necessary one. It emerges as one of those novels that has the potential to empower, a novel that can shake us out of our lethargy and guide us through a personal and political re-awakening.



Perhaps the foremost reason why this novel does not become just another political tract is that it allows us to suspend our belief in what we know to be hard reality, while still allowing us to empathize with the characters. Not every woman survives atrocities and emerges not only whole but with a political consciousness. And I suspect that we aren't expected to believe that a small group of lesbians in the southern states are likely to be able to fight the Klan and succeed against all odds.

But *Clenched Fists* admirably reflects the

resilience of women. While the women in the novel may be what society conveniently labels victims, it is their very personal traumas that allow them to fight. Jessie, the central character, the sole eyewitness to a brutal Klan murder, soon becomes the target for Klan revenge; Beth, the battered wife, silently watching as her husband's growing involvement in Klan activities fuels his violence towards her; and Kate, the victim of child abuse and incest at an early age who now channels her energies into running a battered women's shelter, conveniently dealing with other women's traumas so that she does not have to face herself. The score of other women in the book, each with her own unique history, adds to our understanding of women's oppression, of how and where women are victimized and why women's victimization, be it because of sex or race, is uniquely different from men's.

While the book deals with the Ku Klux Klan, it is not the Klan itself that is the central theme but rather what the Klan represents to society and how "to simply label these people as lunatic fringes and not accurately assess their roles as part of the system is a dangerous error." These people are not clowns and the way to control them is not to ignore them. They exist because people want them to exist and to ignore them is the same as to condone them. And by acknowledging that the Klan can't be ignored, the women in this novel

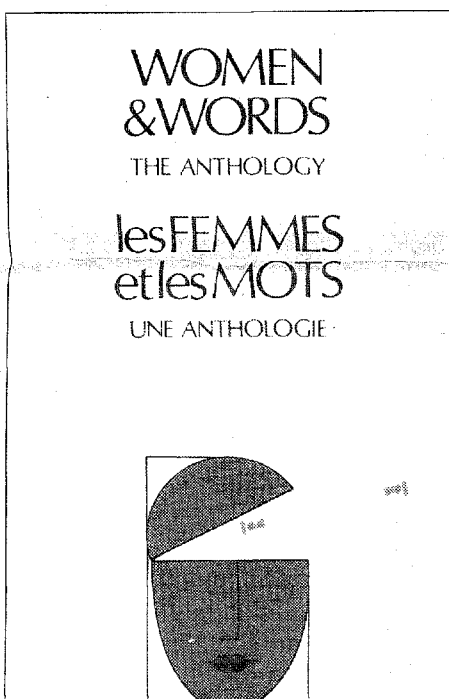
must also face other facets of their lives that they have been ignoring.

This is also a book about how society isolates women. It is a book about how battered women remain silent in the home because they are isolated, unaware that their plight is mirrored in the turbulent households of thousands of other women. It is a book about the fear that is endemic to our lives - the fear of outside forces and the fear of our own strength.

Clenched Fists also makes us deal with our own feelings - the gut reaction to back down, to let someone else do the fighting, to simply live our lives and make our living and not have to deal with all of the atrocities that the world metes out daily. It questions the convenient split that is often made between our political views and our personal reactions. We can speak a good line on violence against women but how do we deal with it when it happens to us, when it happens to our friends.

Perhaps one of the most frightening parts of the novel is that we would understand if the women were to quit for there is only so much that anyone should be expected to take in one's lifetime. Yet these women do not want to live in a world of constant fear. They reject that. They think it can be changed. And they want to try. It is not good enough to simply identify our enemies. Unfortunately they must also be faced and that is where the real terror begins and that is where, hopefully, the real terror too can end. ●

Intense Interplay



Women and Words: The Anthology
Les Femmes et les Mots: Une Anthologie.
edited by the West Coast Editorial Collective. Harbour Publishing 1984.
264 pp. Paper.

Reviewed by Judy Millen

It is commonplace in the writing of reviews - particularly of anthologies - to use the word "uneven" as a descriptive statement. Until now I have always understood and accepted the term to be a negative judgement. But, *Women and Words: The Anthology* is an uneven collection of women's writing in the most positive and vital sense of the word. When a collection of writing is as sensitively drawn together as this anthology is, it can be no other way. It is the unevenness that gives the book its very life, and what makes the experience of reading it a vital one. For it is in volumes such as these that women can read and experience as full a range as possible of the lives of women in this country. That is not to say that this is a something-for-everyone anthology that eventually disappears into nothingness. Far from it. For the power of these women's voices - some more practiced in their craft than others, some more sure of their ideas than others - is nevertheless clear. And firm.

This anthology was put together in conjunction with the organization of a bilingual country-wide conference held in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1983 and attended by 800 women! (Watch for a second such conference rumoured to be moving east in 1986.) Three hundred writers responded with more than a

thousand submissions. Close to eighty of these writers are represented here. French (more about that later) and English. Those of us who have been involved in any such organizational ventures know exactly how daunting a task it is. This volume represents a lot of hard work and care.

The unevenness of this book has the interesting effect of highlighting the reader's partialities. (It might be argued that a reader's partialities actively contribute to the unevenness but that's a whole other topic.) The reading experience here quite naturally exposes one's likes and dislikes. In a sense there should never be any apology for these partialities.

In the English selections there are many highlights. There is Jane Rule's practiced and mature voice doing what it does best, writing short prose, in this case a short story called 'Slogans.' Without melodrama or sentiment, Rule draws a portrait of two rather distant friends. One is dying of cancer. The memories of past friendship and mistakes, the bonding of the friends in the present, are outlined with subtlety and depth. Death is not something to be tidied up with neat slogans or even with Zen slogans that might offer some intelligent respite. Death, simply, is. Relationships in the real world are neatly bound together with metaphysical concerns.

There is Mary Meigs's essay, 'Pandora was a Feminist.' This essay does what all good essays should do. It succinctly outlines and gives freshness to an idea. In this instance the idea of the secret, of secrets, is investigated. Meigs shows how men view secret-keeping as a positive value and a way of silencing women. It is not true, she says that we can know too much about ourselves. It is good to be curious and disclosing. Pandora is a positive and liberating figure for women as long as we move beyond the typical male interpretation of the story. Pandora's curiosity, like Eve's rebellion, speaks of women's strength and desire to fashion their own lives. The last thing curiosity and rebellion are is evil!

There is Daphne Marlatt's poem, 'Vivaldi & You.' "Come through bright/ where I sit tell me/ about Vivaldi's/ orphan girls disfigured..." And now my involvement turns to the working of language, and the neat way it twists from line to line, asking first for one meaning, but only for a moment, then moving on, taking the "first" meaning into another... and another. Come through bright what? Bright where I sit? Why does one have to come through bright? The language as it is placed in relationship to itself brings out an intriguing array of questions.

These are just three of many possibilities in the English choices for this volume.

There is no way that an Anglophone with French as basic as mine can possibly review the French selections of this bilingual volume.

But there is a way that I can suggest how all of us who are not fluent in French can nevertheless make the French selections part of our reading experience. The first thing I did was unpack my rusty French and read as best I could. The more I read, the better I got. I didn't make it laborious, with dictionary out for every unknown word. I just read. Then I went to a bilingual friend and we read several of the selections together - the ones that had made me most curious. This ensemble reading sparked a lot of good talk and reminded me of how much respect and envy I have for those who have two languages. *Les Femmes et les Mots* became clearer to me. As the French editors intended, there is an innovative texture to their selections which, I am told, makes very challenging reading.

Nicole Brossard in her essay, 'La Page du Livre,' looks at a question which is central to the whole volume "... que faut-il donc pour écrire?" What is necessary in order to write? She gives a fascinating four stage answer to the question which centers around the idea of the literal, actually *in* the language, sense of being woman and producing that sense in language. For Nicole Brossard one must belong, or be in the process of belonging, to oneself and one of the ways of finding this belonging is through language. It is essential to have, or be in the process of having, a positive, nourishing and captivating image of oneself as a woman. Women and lesbians in their origin, and the sense that this origin produces, are most uniquely prepared to defy the present patriarchal imagination. "C'est risquer de ne pas trouver les bons mots pour dire avec précision ce que nous sommes les seules a pouvoir imaginer."

Louky Bersianik in her short story, 'Eremo,' uses language in a representative way to underscore the illogical structures of the man-made world. She uses the figure of a young girl and her deliberations on the word "guerre." The girl's mind follows this and other words associated with war into a fantasy that happens within the confines of her convent, and in a small and single incident she exposes the absurdity of war. In the process, the girl discovers the meaning of the word "tears" and moves to the first step of knowing herself as a woman and not as someone whose world is controlled by the meanings of words which make up the male world. The story ends with this first step.

This whole collection is vitally uneven in themes and styles and quality. It is, as they say, a very good read. If there are any overview impressions, they center around the strong interplay between the pieces that, as with many of the poems, present challenging ideas and abstractions and those that, as with many (but not all) of the prose pieces, present women in very "real" situations. There are diverse and intense portraits of women of col-

our, single mothers, women in conflict with their men, their families and their world. There are obscene phone calls and the threat to life. There is a whole lot of dish washing and cooking. Failure and success. In fact a few of the pieces seem so intent on being real that they don't appear to take on any ambiguity. I'm not too partial to a world view that doesn't have any paradox, but you may be. The appealing thing about this book is that there is room for both of us.

There are overview impressions around the interplay of seriousness and humour. In fact a number of the pieces are very serious indeed. Some of you might argue that it is time for us to laugh a bit more. But the humour is here in Penny Kemp and Marion Engel and Candis J. Graham, just to mention a few. Yet it seems evident that we have too long been oppressed by the bad male joke to feel entirely comfortable laughing at ourselves - with ourselves. That will come; there are signs in this book. Revolutionizing humour is not an easy task.

Finally there is the overview of the interplay of French and English texts. These two languages which are so different are here working to bring women to the centre of their own lives and an authentic voice. I liked the different types of engagement that the two languages offered me. There is room for a more thoughtful arranging of the French/ English text on the title pages and so on. The English-first arrangements can grate and it's aggravated by the fact that the French preface which comes second, and is crammed on to the second page, is a direct translation of the English. It gives the appearance that there was no autonomy for both committees. Whatever the realities are, this impression of French-as-second was there for this reader. Some of you might argue that I am quibbling. But when a single voice always comes first, strange things can happen.

This anthology highlights the diverse voice of women.

Judy Millen is a 44 year old writer and student living in Toronto.

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Women Writing: Occupational Hazards

How to Suppress Women's Writing. Joanna Russ. London: Women's Press 1984. Pp 160

Reviewed by Dorothy Zaborszky

Much of feminist scholarship has been devoted not only to new modes of analysis, but also the recovery of works by women hitherto unknown or unobtainable. This double approach of reassessment and retrieval has yielded some important and influential works in the last few years. In the area of literary historical studies we may note the work, in particular, of Ellen Moers (*Literary Women*), Dale Spender (*Women of Ideas*) and Lynne Spender (*Intruders on the Rights of Men*). Ellen Moers' influential and brilliant book is a study of key literary texts and images from a woman-centred perspective. Dale Spender's work falls into the general realm of history of ideas, again from a feminist perspective, and Lynne Spender's examines the relationship between women's writing and the problems of publication.

Joanna Russ's *How to Suppress Women's Writing* fits into this context extremely well. It shares certain basic assumptions with the above group of works – notably the impulse to reassess and retrieve – without overlapping with them in any way. Dale Spender is concerned with the erasure of women's works and ideas, her overall perspective being wider than just literature, while Lynne Spender tackles the mechanics of publishing and its effects on the works of women. Joanna Russ is interested primarily in what she calls "information control without direct censorship" and thus in the "patterns in the suppression of women's writing." The process she examines therefore includes pre- and post-publication problems encountered by women who write, now and in the past. As someone who both writes creatively (she is the author of *The Female Man*, among others) and teaches (at the University of Washington, Seattle), she is especially well placed to examine the whole question from a practical as well as a theoretical angle.

Ellen Moers has eloquently described some of the occupational hazards encountered by women writers. This is Russ's major focus in the book. As one reads it, one is impressed by the sheer strength of the creative urge in women writers and artists in the face of persistent, often crippling discouraging obstacles; Germaine Greer's choice of title for *The Obstacle Race* assumes renewed significance. In fact, once one truly appreciates all the ploys used to suppress women's writing, one is surprised and impressed by the excellence and quantity of literary works produced despite all inhibiting factors. Thus the usual male complaints about the lack of a "female Shakespeare" (Milton, Michelangelo, Beethoven – the list is endless) receive a new

She didn't write it. But if it's clear she did the deed... She wrote it, but she shouldn't have. It's political, sexual, masculine, feminist. She wrote it, but look what she wrote about. The bedroom, the kitchen, her family, other women! She wrote it, but she wrote only one of it. Jane Eyre, Poor dear, that's all the ever... She wrote it, but she isn't really an artist, and it isn't really art. It's a thriller, a romance, a children's book. It's not! She wrote it, but she had help. Robert Browning, Branwell Bronte, her own "masculine side" She wrote it, but she's an anomaly. Woe! With Leonard's help... She wrote it BUT...

How to Suppress Women's Writing Joanna Russ

twist: we should rejoice that Jane Austen, George Eliot, Aphra Behn, the Brontës and so many others managed to write at all. That they did so must surely mean that somehow the creative urge is quite irrepressible.

Joanna Russ states that in English-speaking countries, whence her examples are mostly drawn, there has been no formal censorship of women, or blacks, or other disadvantaged groups, and that it has been unnecessary. There are so many other informal techniques which achieve the same ends formal censorship would. Once we know what these are, it becomes easier to combat them, although Russ says that one of these – ignoring women's works – may be the hardest to fight. It is interesting to note some of the other techniques Russ describes. The long exclusion of women from education and literacy is an obvious one, as is poverty; even paper and pens have to be paid for, and women have often been very poor.

There is also what Russ calls "isolation," by which she means that if by some happy fluke a woman writer has had success with one work, it will be described as an "isolated achievement" and the writer's other works will be ignored. An example of this process is Elizabeth Barrett Browning, whose *Sonnets from the Portuguese* are fairly frequently anthologized and whose feminist *Aurora Leigh* is generally mentioned in passing as a prolix, long poem. In the Oxford paperback anthology of Victorian prose and poetry, edited by Lionel Trilling and Harold Bloom (1973), *Aurora Leigh* is described as "...much admired, even by Ruskin, but it is very bad. Quite bad too are the famous *Sonnets from the Portuguese*...". Incidentally, it is heartening to note that this important work is now available in The Women's Press (Lon-

don) paperback, edited by Cora Kaplan.

Another variant on the same technique can be found in the case of Virginia Woolf. Her own husband, Leonard Woolf, has described her as "the least political animal since Aristotle invented the definition." Attentive readers of her work, especially *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*, would hardly agree. But keeping in mind Russ's description of the ploys of suppression (and Dale Spender's analysis of the erasure of women's ideas), we should not be surprised to note the chorus of hostility which accompanied both works, and particularly *Three Guineas*. Again, as in the case of so many others, it has taken the work of feminist scholars to rectify the perspective.

Yet another technique is what Russ calls false categorizing. Here "works or authors are belittled by assigning them to the 'wrong' category, denying them entry into the 'right' category, or arranging the categories so the majority of 'wrong' (works or authors) fall into the 'wrong' category without anyone's having to do anything further about the matter." Dorothy Smith has referred to men as gatekeepers of knowledge; applying this concept, it is easy to see that men have also determined the number and nature of literary and other categories. F.R. Leavis's notorious "the great tradition" is a good example – writers not included in his discussion were simply not part of it and of course very few women made the grade. As Russ points out, the selection process which goes into anthologies is very much part of this ploy and she provides useful statistics which illustrate the malestream bias. The urge to label fits in here, too; as Russ says, until recently, Kate Chopin and Willa Cather, but not Faulkner, were considered "regionalists," which of course is the "wrong" category.

Russ gives interesting illustrations from her own experiences and all of us educated before the advent of Women's Studies can multiply her examples. Until I read Ellen Moers, I had never heard of *Aurora Leigh*, not to mention Aphra Behn, and until I read Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, I did not know about Mary Wollstonecraft. Mrs. Browning's novel-inverse is of course in the "wrong" category, belonging as it does to a literary mode not much practised in English. Aphra Behn's plays are also in the "wrong" category, since the received wisdom was that women did not write plays during the Restoration. Her alleged promiscuity in turn resulted in the stereotype of what Russ calls "Aphra the Whore." The traditional view of Wollstonecraft holds that she wrote "propaganda" and "bad" novels, thus resulting in two "wrong" categories. Accordingly, Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* can be seen as "propaganda" but Ruskin's "Of Queen's Gardens" is "literature."

The concept of women's work also impinges

on the area of writing. Domestic chores, being unpaid, have long been thought of as not being "real" work and yet being the inescapable responsibility of women. The ways in which these chores are endlessly time-consuming are too well known to need mention; suffice it to say that in the case of the woman writer they represent, together with possible childrearing jobs, serious demands on her time and a disruption of the creative process. As Russ, and Moers before her, points out, it is therefore not surprising that many women writers, past and present, were childless. The seriousness with which male creative endeavours were regarded has only rarely been accorded to women's similar efforts. The resultant lack of status has meant the continuing trivialization of women's writing. Even so-called major writers like Jane Austen or George Eliot have had their share of this. In the case of Austen, this can take the form of blame for what she did not do ("She never mentioned the Napoleonic wars" is a variant), whereas with Eliot it may manifest itself in blame for what she did do, for example, strictures for her "overly philosophical" bent of mind.

The sexual stereotyping with regard to work, domestic chores and marital status includes the biological argument as well. Again, Russ discusses this area extremely well, not only in terms of the perceived inability of women to write, but also in terms of the main types, such as the Whore, the Spinster, the Wife, etc. Each of these types carries with it the appropriately pejorative critical equipment. For example, Aphra Behn and George Sand are obvious examples of the Whore, Jane Austen, Emily Dickinson, Emily and Anne Brontë of the Spinster, Elizabeth Barrett Browning of the Wife; each of these writers has received peculiarly stereotyped critical treatment. Mary Wollstonecraft's life has provided special ammunition, since she could be seen as Whore, Spinster, Bluestocking and Wife. (For a specially *ad feminam* attack, Richard Cobb's review of Claire Tomalin's Wollstonecraft biography may be consulted: *Times Literary Supplement*, September 6, 1974).

How to Suppress Women's Writing is a deeply felt, passionate and also witty indictment of the varied and long-standing techniques of informal censorship used against the writings of women. Although by definition the subject is not cheerful, somehow Russ manages not only to inform but also to entertain the reader. The book should be of interest not only to those teaching and studying women writers, but to everyone concerned with the retrieval and preservation of women's works.

Dorothy Zaborszky is assistant professor of English at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario.

Data on Discs

by Deena Rasky

The results are in. It would have been easier on a computer but that's not in the *Broadside* budget. Not as many music forms were filled out as anticipated and here's a sampling of "why nots" from those approached: "I know what I like only when I hear it," or "I only listen to early Baroque music, sometimes Renaissance and occasionally classical," or "I'll mail it in, okay?" or "Who remembers when you're out on the dance floor anyway?"

So many said they just didn't remember the names of the songs and the singers. I thought everyone grew up lip-synching their favourite hits in front of the mirror, then hypnotically playing their top choice over and over on the hi-fi. Perhaps that applies only to the ones who completed the survey.

In true non-conformist fashion, hardly anyone completed the form as designed. Most of you chose to name your favourite performers in long lists running into the margins, or wrote a single artist's name over the entire ballot. In true feminist fashion, the top six performers were voted by consensus: no one performer got the "most" votes.

The top performers chosen, in no particular order, are; Parachute Club, Ferron, Cyndi Lauper, Joan Armatrading, Tina Turner and the Pointer Sisters. The four runners-up, again chosen consensus style, are: Nina Hagen, Holly Near, Bette Midler and Rickie Lee Jones. Others frequently mentioned are: Heather Bishop, Meg Christian, Marianne Faithful, Beverly Glen Copeland,

Billy Holliday, Grace Jones, Lene Lovitch, Eurythmics, Donna Summer, the Roches and Cris Williamson.

Of the top ten performers, the following dance tunes have been chosen: Parachute Club's "Rise Up" and "We Love it," Nina Hagen's "New York, New York," The Pointer Sisters' "Jump" and "I'm so Excited," Tina Turner's "What's Love Got to Do With It" and "I Can't Stand the Rain," Bette Midler's "Beast of Burden" and Joan Armatrading's "What we got is the Best."

For slow numbers: Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time," Ferron's "I never was to Africa" and Joan Armatrading's "Are you Strong..." have been selected. Only "Rise Up," "Time After Time" and Beverly Glen Copeland's spiritual "Onwards and Upwards" were specifically mentioned more than once as a fave tune.

What surprised me the most was who wasn't even mentioned. Patti Smith wasn't on anyone's list, yet only a few years ago, we were all raising our arms to "Gloria" and sighing over "Because the Night." I guess she committed suicide by getting married and disappearing from the music scene. Thelma Houston didn't make the list even though her "Don't Leave Me This Way" hit was played so often at women's dances it became the anthem to get up and boogie. Where is she now? Teresa Trull wasn't named either. Trull's energetic stage presence and knock-em-dead smile hasn't been captured on vinyl. Maybe videos will be the answer for Trull. Another

disappointing omission was Kay Gardner. The intimacy of her music isn't suitable for public dances unless everyone is willing to sit on the floor cross-legged and chant. If you want to unwind after the dance, put her "Rainbow Path" album on. Guaranteed relaxant. And for no one to mention Sister Sledge's "We are Family" is completely unforgivable. At least one loyal soul hasn't forgotten Mama Quilla II, by including "Angry Young Women." They still get my vote too.

Marianne Girard's name covered someone's entire ballot. Girard deserves a push into the mainstream. Her special fan wrote "subtle vocals, liquid as glass, unusual harmonies." Another form filler said, "Secrets and Sins" album by Luba is wearing thin at the grooves. Luba, currently on the front cover of *Capac's Canadian Composer* magazine, is lead by a Unkranian-influenced, Montreal singer who wants the world to know that women write more than just love songs. "Every time I look at your picture" is their powerful single. Luba must be good, even K-Tel has recognized her band!

One voter gave a tip about a new discovery: a Kingston, Ontario subscriber encouraged me to check out Tret Fure's premiere album "Terminal Hold," saying: "She's great!" I took the gamble and it was worth it. I haven't been so excited about a woman performer since I first heard Holly Near. Lively, delightful lyrics and a voice like a rocking Casse Culver (remember her?).

As for Holly Near. It's true that Near is considered the pure, pristine guardian angel of women's music. Her holy image invited such protests as: "We don't like Holly Near as much as we're supposed to," "Women's music isn't just Holly Near," and "Holly Who?" No Boy George fans responded and I was chastised for alienating them. Sorry. However, this didn't stop one defiant woman from listing Iggy Pop's silly domination/bondage hit "Now I wanna be your Dog" and super sexist van Hallen's "1984," explaining: "I don't think feminist when I choose music." On the other hand, one respondent stated: "There is non-sexist, inoffensive music by men that is radical in its own way (especially Black music)." She listed Eddy Grant's lively "Electric Avenue" as an example. It's true. Jimmy Cliff's rebellious, reggae album "The Harder They Come" for instance, can be taken as our own music to struggle by.

Many rock reviewers wonder, as the years go by, which side of the generation gap we are on. This happened when I did not realize P.T.O. under the favorite performer category meant that there was a message on the other side of the sheet! Maybe there'll be a more enthusiastic response to a classical music poll, even though one wonderful woman wrote in bold caps: "THANKS FOR DOING THIS SURVEY". I love you too. A woman at the *Broadside* Bash confided that she'd rather be part of a book survey. Book editors... you hear that? ●

Strength and Diversity

by Randi Spires

As part of Black History Month 1985, two exhibits containing artwork by Black women were shown in February in Toronto. One of these was a group show held at the Black Perspectives studio and contained pieces by both men and women. The other entitled Visions of Black Women at the Gallery 940, has works by women only. Several of the artists have works in both shows.

Black History Month has been celebrated in North America since 1976, when it was expanded from what was Black History Week. In addition to the aforementioned art exhibits, the month's events include poetry readings, music performances and storytelling evenings. Much of the organization was done by Black Perspectives in conjunction with other groups such as Gallery 940. Black Perspectives is a project of the Dixon Hall/Regent Park Residents' Association. Charles Smith, co-ordinator of Black Perspectives, said that one of the main purposes of these events is to enable Black people to see what they have achieved, thereby fostering community pride. A secondary purpose is to reach out to non-Blacks. Many of the residents in the Regent Park area are women, yet traditionally much of the community and political leadership has been done by men. Smith said the Black Perspectives project is making a special effort to get more Black women involved, both by highlighting women's work during the month and through special ongoing organizational efforts throughout the year.

At both shows the pieces ranged from traditional portraits and landscapes to works heavily influenced by cubism. Several of the works were quite large, belying the old saw that women are by nature miniaturists. One of the most powerful works in the studio space was *Dance* by Grace Channer. In black and grey tones, it depicts a lone flutist playing to a single dancer. The figures are framed by what appears to be the entrance of a cave. The viewer becomes in effect a voyeur, looking in on a private magical moment. Although we can see the face of the flutist, it is not recognizable as any one individual. The face of the dancer is not visible at all. Channer said that while at one time she did paint specific faces she now prefers not to, and by making her faces more abstract she thereby makes them more universal enabling anyone who sees the work to identify with the subjects.

Another work done in the cubist mode is *Little Mother* by Marcia McCurdy. McCurdy, who is now a first year student at the Ontario College of Art, said she did this drawing

in response to a high school health class on pregnancy and birth given by midwife Vicki Van Wagner. It was the first time, said McCurdy, that she had seriously thought about what it would be like to be pregnant. In this drawing, although the woman is confined to a ladder, she is bursting out in great rounded forms - her curved belly, swelling breasts, huge knees and displaced buttocks convey a sense of enormous potential and not a little ambivalence about her pregnancy. McCurdy's predilection for rounded forms is also evident in the drawing *Still Life With Vessels* on display at Gallery 940.

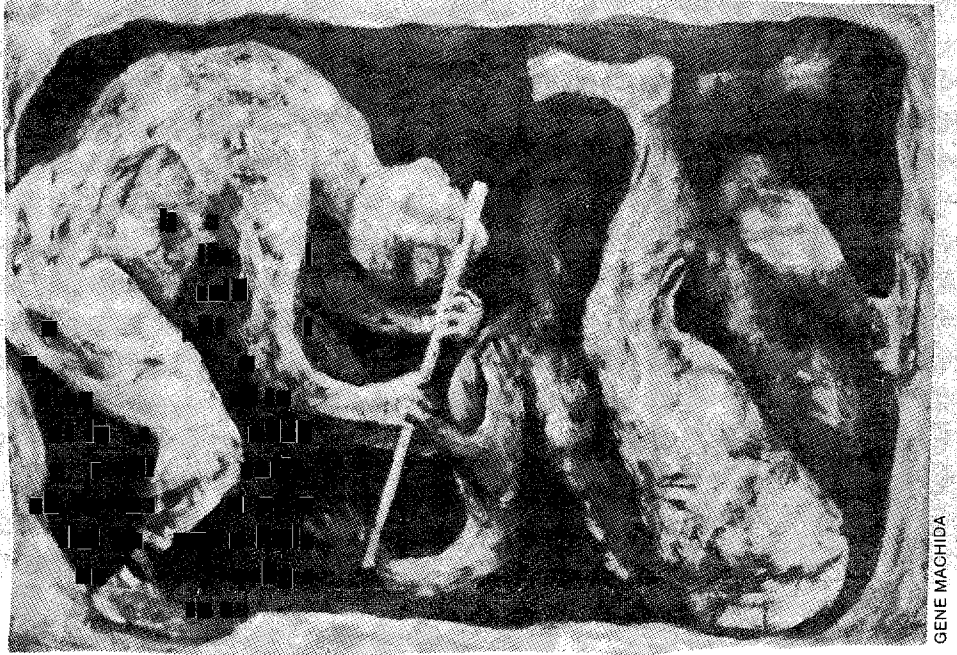
Photographer Stephanie Martin contributed black and white pictures to both shows. At Gallery 940 are sensuous photos of three of the women who performed during the Rainbow Women in The Arts festival in Toronto. At the studio space, her work included a portrait of Kiesha, a beautiful young girl whose face graced the poster for the Colour Positive Film Festival.

A number of colour photographs by Collette Fournier, taken in Jamaica, are on display at Gallery 940. Particularly powerful is *The Black Seeds*, in which a line of young children all dressed completely in white stand before what is probably the door of a church. Another Fournier photograph, *Mother and Child*, is also quite pleasing in terms of form. A woman sits on a chair by a door holding her child in her arms. The woman looks peacefully at her daughter while the girl stares toward the camera. Here the lines formed by the woman's arms and her dress straps parallel those of the door frame. The yellow tones of her dress reflect the colour painted on the wall.

In Noveline Christian's black and white picture, entitled *Women in Religion*, a lone woman shrouded in white looks upward. Since one eye is covered we see only part of her face but the feeling conveyed is of a woman made peaceful and strong by her faith.

One of the most talented of the exhibitors in both shows is Beatrice Bailey. Bailey refuses to limit her work to one particular area. She sees herself as an independent generalist, with no interest in the commercial and political games inherent in the art world. Instead, she works in whatever medium strikes her fancy at the moment. As a result she has produced everything from photographs and drawings to sculpture, painting and works of mixed media.

At the studio space, her most striking work was a black and white photogram. While a photogram may appear to be a photograph, it



GENE MACHIDA

Dance by Grace Channer

is not produced with a camera. Instead, objects are carefully placed on photographic film which is then exposed to light. In a sense this technique is more akin to painting with film than it is to photography.

In this case Bailey took a doll on the lower part of the film and sprinkled water around the knees. Above the doll she placed the branch of a tree. Bailey said that at the time she made this she was feeling morbid. The branch was meant to symbolize the flowers found over a grave. While Bailey may have been depressed when she did this picture, the effect on the viewer is somewhat lighter. The globules of water appear to be aiding the doll to disintegrate while the delicate beauty of the branches promise reintegration and renewal.

At the Gallery 940 show, Bailey has an outstanding mixed media work called *Mirror Image*. In this piece, Bailey said she was trying to demonstrate the effect of opening a window into an interior space. At first, all one notices are floating sparkles and swirls of light. To show this, she placed wax over a grey background. Wax was boiled in a saucepan and with a brush literally painted onto the canvas. To achieve different intensities of light and dark, Bailey used a knife to scrape the wax down to its final form. Adjacent to that segment of the picture is what is meant to be a mirror. Instead of grey, the background, which is painted in acrylic, is a luscious peach colour. And instead of wax, oil paints are used to create coloured sparkles of light. The mirror, said Bailey, is meant to represent our imagination as opposed to the darker reality of the waxy surface. The wood of the door frame parallels the wood of the actual picture frame, while the grey of the exterior wall is repeated in the building interior and also in the frame of the mirror.

Bailey, who has a BFA from York University has, over the past four years, exhibited

her work in a number of group shows throughout Metro Toronto.

One of the delightful things one can learn from these two shows is how diverse in media, in style and in content the work of these women is. The act of putting together images is both a personal and a political act. On a personal level one can enjoy the talent and strength of much of the work. On a political level it is important for women of all races and Blacks of both sexes to acknowledge and celebrate what these women have achieved. ●

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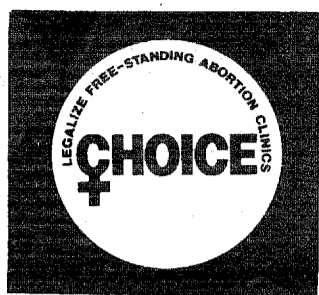
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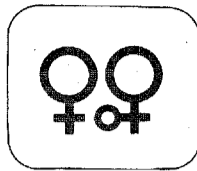
~~~~~ Your loving mom. ~~~~~

**Happy IWD from All of Us!**



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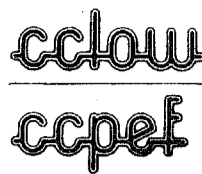
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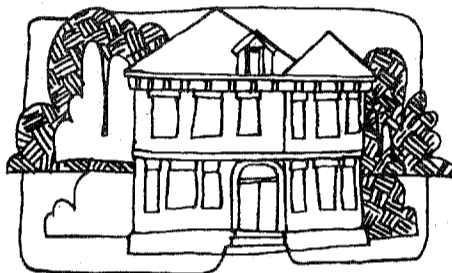
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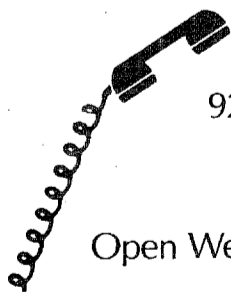
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# OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

## TORONTO WOMEN'S EVENTS CALENDAR MARCH 1985

Compiled by Catherine Maunsell

● **Friday, March 1:** Women and Health Conference, sponsored by the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues. Park Plaza Hotel. 8:30 am. Free (\$10 fee for dinner). Childcare available, wheelchair accessible, interpreted for the hearing impaired. Info: 965-1111. To Saturday, March 2.

● **Friday, March 1:** Visions of Black Women, an exhibition by Beatrice Bailey, Marie Booker, Grace Channer, Stephanie Martin, Novlette Dell, Marcia McCurdy, Channa Berbian, Claire Carew, Collette Fournier. Co-sponsored by Black Perspectives in celebration of Black History Month. Gallery 940, 940 Queen St. East. Info: 466-8840. To Sunday, March 3.

● **Friday, March 1:** Mariposa March Warmup. Concert, workshops and a country dance by 4 excellent teachers: Michael Cooney, Judith Cohen, Bill Usher & Lanie Melamed. Unitarian Church, 175 St. Clair Ave. West. Info: 363-4009. To Saturday, March 2.

● **Friday, March 1:** Menopause: Liberation or Liability? YWCA workshop facilitated by Judith Golden, BSW, MEd. 2 to 5 pm. Woodlawn Residence, 80 Woodlawn Ave. \$30/2 sessions. Also Friday, March 15. Info and registration: 487-7151.

### IWD Week

● **Saturday, March 2:** Women's Solidarity Picket for the Eaton's workers. Yonge & Eglinton Eaton's store. 12 noon. Organized by R.W.D.S.U. and the March 8 Coalition. Info: 598-9838.

● **Saturday, March 2:** Pam Harris's "Faces of Feminism," photographs with texts of Toronto feminists. 2nd floor, OISE, 252 Bloor Street West. To Thursday, March 21.

● **Saturday, March 2:** Artist Klara Elek presents her first public one woman show of recent oils and pastels at the Kiva Gallery, 215 Queen St. East. Opening 12 noon. Info: 921-2581. To Saturday, March 16.

● **Sunday, March 3:** The last day of the show "Visions of Black Women." Discussion with the artists at 2 pm, co-sponsored by the Women's Art Resource Centre. Gallery 940, 940 Queen St. East. \$2/\$1. Info: 466-8840.

● **Sunday, March 3:** Lesbian Mothers' Pot Luck Brunch. Food and friendship. 1-4 pm. Info: 465-6822.

● **Monday, March 4:** Forum on The Reproductive Rights Movement and the Struggle for Abortion Clinics, sponsored by OCAC. Trinity-St. Paul's Church, 427 Bloor St. West. Wheelchair accessible, interpreted for the hearing impaired. \$2 donation. Info: 789-4541.

● **Monday, March 4:** Women's Independent Thoughtz (WITZ). A seminar/discussion group for the exchange of ideas and creative endeavours in art, literature, philosophy and political thought. Topic: The Nursing Home Industry with NDP health critic David Cooke. Community Centre, 519 Church St. 6:45 pm. Info: 536-3162.

● **Tuesday, March 5:** Forum on cultural funding needs, sponsored by the Gay Community Appeal. 7:30 pm. Committee Room 1, City Hall. Info: 869-3036.

● **Tuesday, March 5:** "Every Woman's Voice: A Cultural Evening" sponsored by Women Working with Immigrant Women. Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. West. 7:30 pm. \$2. Wheelchair accessible. Info: 598-9838.

● **Tuesday, March 5:** Singer Kristi Magraw, with Dunstan Morey and Elizabeth Paddon. 8:30 pm. Free Times Cafe (College at Major). Info: 967-1068. Also Wednesday, March 6.

● **Tuesday, March 5:** Lesbian Phone Line open tonight for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. 960-3249. Also Tuesdays, March 12, 19 and 26.

● **Wednesday, March 6:** Lesbians and Gays at U of T. 8 pm, International Student Centre, 33 St. George St. Check 923-GAYS for weekly topic. Every Wednesday.

● **Wednesday, March 6:** Gays and Lesbians at U of T present Christine M. Browning, President of Lesbian and Gay Caucus of the American Psychological Association. Pendarves Room, 33 St. George St. 8 pm. Free.

● **Wednesday, March 6:** Video by 'Feminists, sponsored by A Space and Community Arts. A Space, 204 Spadina Ave. 8 pm. \$4 non-members. \$2 members. Info: 598-9838.

● **Wednesday, March 6:** "Women and Medicine," a show by Barbara Louder opens at Gallery 940, 940 Queen St. East. Info: 466-8840. To Saturday, March 30.

● **Wednesday, March 6:** "Dream of a Free Country," a film documentary of the Nicaraguan women who fought to overthrow Somoza. NFB Theatre, 1 Lombard St. 12:15 pm. Free. Info: 369-4093.

● **Wednesday, March 6:** A Three Woman Show with photographs by Janice Oakley, Carla Smith and Rafy opens 8 pm. Sparkes Gallery, 1114 Queen St. West. Info: 531-1243. To Friday, March 29.

● **Thursday, March 7:** Barbara Ehrenreich speaks on "Changing Male-Female Relations in America." 10 am, at U of T. Location and info: Women's Studies, 978-5404.

● **Thursday, March 7:** Lesbian Phone Line open tonight for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. 960-3249. Also Thursdays, 14, 21 and 28.

● **Thursday, March 7:** 5 Minute Feminist Cabaret, sponsored by Women's Cultural Building. Proceeds to OCAC. The Salon Theatre, 1087 Queen St. West. 8 pm. \$8 employed. \$5 unemployed. Info: 598-9838.

● **Thursday, March 7:** Information meeting for The Béguinage, the new women's housing co-op in downtown Toronto. 397 Shuter St. 7:30 pm. Info: 925-2475, ext. 330. Also Thursdays, March 14, 21 and 28.

● **Thursday, March 7:** Lesbian Phone Line organizational meeting. Interested women, prospective volunteers welcome. 525 Bloor St. West, 2nd floor. 7:30 pm. Info: 960-3249.

● **Thursday, March 7:** International Women's Day celebrations with poets Dionne Brand, Afua (Pam Cooper), Marlene Philip and more, plus Hummer Sisters "Hormone War Zone" in video, plus musicians Faith Nolan, Élan Curaçao, and comedian Sheila Gostick. York Hall, Junior Common Room. 7 pm. Free admission. Wine and cheese to follow. Info: 487-6181.

● **Friday, March 8:** Angela Davis speaks at Convocation Hall, U of T, sponsored by the Committee for March 8. Tickets at Bookworld, DEC and Toronto Women's Bookstore. \$3. 7:30 pm. Childcare provided. Wheelchair accessible. Info: 598-9838.

● **Saturday, March 9:** Amanda Hale, Peggy Semple and Lynne Hutchinson in comedy sketches on reproductive technology. New Trojan Horse Café, 179 Danforth Ave. 8:30 pm. \$4. Info: 461-8367.

● **Saturday, March 9:** International Women's Day Rally at Convocation Hall, U of T. 11 am. Interpreted for the hearing impaired. The march (Feminist Walking Tour) begins 12 noon at Convocation Hall and ends at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. The Women's Fair at Jorgenson Hall, Ryerson, from 3-7 pm includes workshops, information booths, performances and more and is sponsored by the Ryerson Women's Centre. Childcare provided. Wheelchair accessible. Info: 598-9838.

● **Saturday, March 9:** The "Organizing for Change" Dance, in celebration of International Women's Day, co-sponsored by the Lesbian Phone Line and "Communication Between Women" (Sparkes Gallery). St. Lawrence market, 92 Front St. East (at Jarvis). 9 pm to 1 am. \$7 (\$6 unemployed). All women welcome, childcare provided. Info: 533-6120, 598-9838.



● **Sunday, March 10:** "How to Save This Planet," a public forum sponsored by NAC's Survival Committee. Castle Frank High School. 9:30 am-3:30 pm. For childcare, call 699-7619. Info: 598-9838.

### Week of March 11

● **Tuesday, March 12:** The Women's Art Resource Centre reading group meets at 7 pm. 455 Spadina, Room 215. Info: 593-0058.

● **Wednesday, March 13:** "Abortion: Stories from North and South," is screened at the NFB Theatre, 1 Lombard St. 12:15 pm. Free. Info: 369-4093.

● **Thursday, March 14:** Dr. Rosemary Barnes of Toronto General Hospital speaks on "Psychological Issues Related to AIDS," sponsored by the Lesbian and Gay Academic Society at U of T. Rhodes Room, Trinity College, Hoskin Ave. 8 pm. Free. Wheelchair accessible, interpreted for the hearing impaired. Info: 964-6474.

● **Friday, March 15:** Branching Out Lesbian Productions, in collaboration with the Sparkes Gallery, is producing an all-lesbian art show to open in early May. Deadline for submissions is March 15, addressed to: B.O. Art Show, c/o Sparkes Gallery, 1114 Queen St. West, Toronto, M6J 1H9. Info: 531-1243.

● **Friday, March 15:** Women and the Charter: Theories of Equality and Strategies for Change, day long conference sponsored by Osgoode Hall Law School Women's Caucus. 9 am to 5 pm. \$5 registration, \$10 dinner. Info: 667-3961 or 667-3391.

● **Friday, March 15:** Bratty and the Babysitters perform at the Rivoli, 334 Queen St. West. \$4. Info: 596-1908.

### Week of March 18

● **Tuesday, March 19:** Meet Barbara Louder, creator of "Women and Medicine" for a discussion of her work, co-sponsored by the Women's Art Resource Centre. Gallery 940, 940 Queen St. East. 8 pm. \$2/\$1. Info: 466-8840.

● **Tuesday, March 19:** Dr. Gillian Hanscombe (D. Phil., Oxford) will speak on "The Other Bloomsbury." Faculty Lounge, Scarborough College. 7 pm.

● **Wednesday, March 20:** The Coalition for a Women's Centre at U of T sponsors a reading by Gillian Hanscombe (author of 'Between Friends', 'Hecate's Charms' and 'Title Fight') and Suniti Namjoshi (author of 'Feminist Fables' and the 'Bedside Book of Nightmares'). Library Science Building (beside Roberts Library), 7th floor lounge, 140 St. George St. 7 pm. \$2 donation. Refreshments. Wheelchair accessible. Info: Anne, 699-9759.

● **Wednesday, March 20:** Nancy K. Miller of Barnard College speaks on "Arachnologies: The Woman, the Text, and the Critic," the last in a series of lectures on the impact of feminism on the academic disciplines. U of T. 4 pm. Location and info: Women's Studies, 978-5404.

● **Thursday, March 21:** Benefit for Emily Stowe with the Red Berets, music and poetry. New Trojan Horse Café, 179 Danforth Ave. Info: 461-8367.

● **Saturday, March 23:** The Armstrong Sisters from Chicago, 2 performers who trace the history of women through traditional and contemporary folk songs. New Trojan Horse Café, 179 Danforth Ave. Info: 461-8367.

### Week of March 25

● **Tuesday, March 26:** The Women's Art Resource Centre reading group meets at 7 pm. 455 Spadina, Room 215. Info: 593-0058.

● **Thursday, March 28:** Friends and supporters of the Women's Counselling, Referral and Education Centre (WCREC) are invited to our open house. 525 Bloor St. West, 2nd floor. 3-7 pm. Reserve before March 14 for childcare. Info: 534-7501.

● **Friday, March 29:** "Sisters: Steppin' Out." Three evenings of entertainment as Toronto women take the stage. Trinity-St. Paul's, 427 Bloor St. West. 8 pm. Wheelchair accessible. Interpreted for the hearing impaired. Childcare. Also Saturday, March 30 and Sunday, March 31 at the Bam Boo Club, 312 Queen St. West. Info: 925-6568.

● **Saturday, March 30:** Emma Uncrates the Sun: Spring Equinox Dance. Benefit for Emma Productions. 8 pm. A Space, 204 Spadina Ave. Info: 461-3488.

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

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**LESBIAN COMING OUT GROUP** beginning mid-March, Wednesday nights; Max. 10 women, call Marie at (416) 651-3921.

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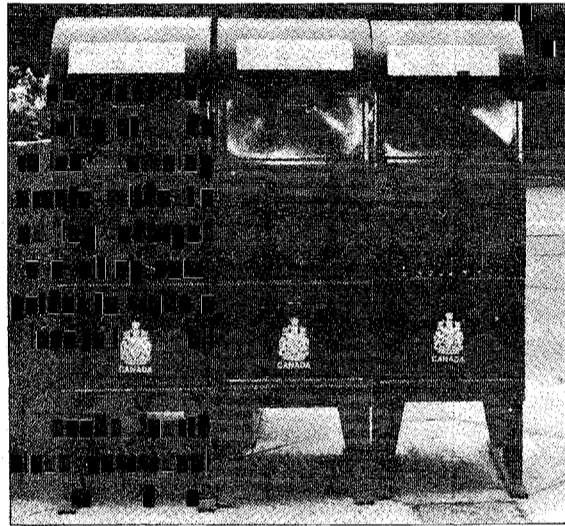
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