

Broadside

A FEMINIST REVIEW

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June 1986

Volume 7, number 8

INPUT PH

Graphic FEMINISM

Graphic Art of the Ontario Women's Movement, 1970-86

A Space: 204 Spadina Ave.
Wed. May 14 - Sat. May 31
Opening Wed. May 14, 8pm

16 years of women's issues: choice, racism, equal pay, day care, lesbians, women's culture, violence against women, women in the labour force, sexuality, peace.

IN posters, leaflets, buttons, illustrations, t-shirts, magazines, books.

A project of the Canadian Women's Movement Archives

Photo: [unreadable]

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INSIDE BROADSIDE



Campaign Life's Way Inn

FEATURES

COUNSELLING CALAMITY: The politics of abortion is inseparable from the woman experiencing a crisis pregnancy. Karen Brill visited three "pro-life" counselling centres in an attempt to explore the "helping" intervention which ultimately punishes and degrades women. Page 8.

OUTSIDE BROADSIDE: Don't miss this month's calendar of Toronto women's events, for June 1986. Page 15.

MACHO ECONOMICS: With economic renewal and free trade talks, woman's place is left in limbo. We must, says Jennifer Stephen, consider seriously how our current government's economic agenda affects our security. Page 4.

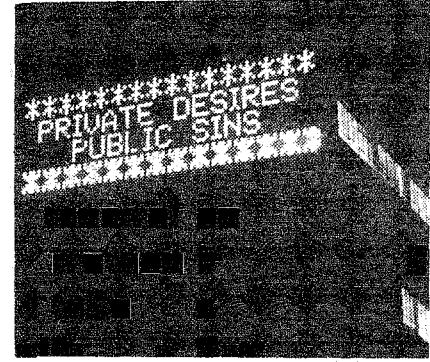
NEWS

FEMINIST TOP 40: Graphic Feminism, a retrospective of graphic art covering 16 years of the Ontario women's movement, gives us the opportunity to assess how the movement has changed. Although styles have changed, says reporter Mary Louise Adams, "we're still talking about the same issues as in 1972." Page 3.

PRINT POLITICS: 80 feminists from Canadian magazines and newspapers met outside Toronto in May to talk shop. But it was not a skills exchange; the main topics were race and class, and lesbian visibility. Ingrid MacDonald reports. Page 7.

WOOMERS WOE: "It's a Girl," an installation piece by Toronto artists The Woomers, mounted at Pages bookstore, included cosmetics, diaper boxes and sanitary napkins spray-painted red. The bookstore was charged with "displaying an obscene object." Beth Raymer reports. Page 7.

ARTS



PUBLIC ACCESS: A billboard in downtown Toronto recently read "Lesbians Fly Canada: Private Desires Public Sins," the offering of artist Lynne Fernie, as part of an art project called Some Uncertain Signs. Susan G. Cole reports on the story behind the message. Page 10.

EDGE OF THE EARTH: "She was a whore, a pimp, an informer," says playwright Jovette Marchessault of her main character in *The Edge of the Earth Is Too Near*, Violette Leduc, recently staged by Nightwood Theatre in Toronto. Reviewed by Amanda Hale. Page 11.

CRADLE SONG: Chaos reigns in the award-winning film *Three Men and a Cradle*, while the men fall apart at the seams and come together again over the raising of a year-old baby. Reviewed by Donna Gollan. Page 12.

BOOKS: Carroll Klein reviews Michele Landsberg's *Guide to Children's Books*; Lauren E. Wolk reviews Bobbie Ann Mason's novel *In Country*; Sarah Eliot reviews Martina Navratilova's autobiography *Martina*. Pages 13 and 14.



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LETTERS

Bookstore Background

Broadside:

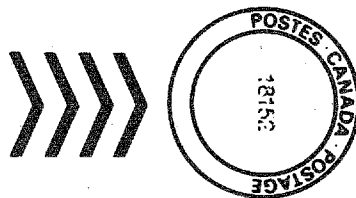
With respect to the letter from the staff of the Toronto Women's Bookstore (*Broadside*, April 1986), we would like to provide some background to the changes which have occurred at the store this year. We have all been associated with the Bookstore at various times during the past fourteen years.

The collective staff model which has been implemented at the Bookstore would be applauded by the founders of the Toronto Women's Bookstore. The Bookstore actually began as part of Women's Place, the first women's centre in Toronto, in 1972. When the store needed more space, in the summer of 1974 a move was made to Kensington Ave. by the collective of volunteers who ran the store at that time. In the fall of 1975 the store moved again, this time to 85 Harbord Street, where it would stay for almost eight years. Around that time the store was registered as a non-profit corporation, with a Board of Directors of three. Soon after the move to Harbord Street and the incorporation, Marie Prins and Patti Kirk, who were members of the collective, took over the management of the store, with the assistance of Joy Wilson.

Over the years at 85 Harbord the Bookstore developed from a small marginal business into a middle-sized independent bookstore. It grew with the support of the growing women's movement in Toronto. Through the years since 1975 the number of books published by and about women has increased tremendously, as has the market for them. The Bookstore also benefitted from the commitment and creativity of the women who worked there as staff over the years.

In 1983 the Bookstore faced a major crisis. The store was set on fire by an arsonist trying to destroy the Morgentaler Clinic which had moved into the second floor of 85 Harbord that spring. After several months the Bookstore opened a temporary location on Brunswick near Bloor. And, by the spring of 1984, with the help of \$3,000 raised in the women's community, the Bookstore's new completely renovated storefront at 73 Harbord was ready to occupy.

The new location is larger and more attractive than the previous ones. But, unfortunately, the cost of renting this space has turned out to be about four times what the cost was at 85 Harbord. The hope was that increased business at the new store would make up for the increased costs. This has not happened to date and there has been a sizeable deficit in each of the past two years. The current staff are determined to turn this deficit situation around by equalizing salaries, encouraging increased sales, and possibly by renting out some of the space on the second floor of the store.



The movement toward a new staff structure for the store started in 1985. Discussions early in the year led to expansion of the Board from three to five members. A staff representative and an additional community member joined Kirk, Prins, and Chris Lawrence on the Board.

In August last year both Kirk and Prins decided to leave the Bookstore by the end of 1985 and, eventually, to resign from the Board. Thus staff have taken over full responsibility for the store and its financial problems at the same time as redistributing tasks and changing systems so that decision-making can be equally shared among them. This is a stressful process.

The change at the Bookstore this past year were initiated by the women on staff since the move to the new location. But their concerns were similar to those expressed by several earlier staff groups. Those of us who would have liked to see such changes come about years ago would like to congratulate the present staff on their courage and persistence in pursuing goals of equity and collective working styles at the Toronto Women's Bookstore.

Chris Lawrence
 Stephanie Martin
 Betsy Nuse
 Deb Parent
 Janet Rogers
 Susan Ursel
 Ellea Wright

Wrong Status

Broadside:

I am writing with regard to your editorial (*Broadside*, May 1986) concerning the study entitled *A Feminist Review of Criminal Law*.

We were very pleased to read your comments on this study. *Broadside* presented a sensible analysis of the study's recommendations which, as you know, have been widely distorted by the mainstream press.

I should point out, however, that the study was not commissioned by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, but by Status of Women Canada. The enclosed booklet describes the respective responsibilities of each agency, as well as other federal

programs and services for women. Again, your remarks on the study are very much appreciated.

Valerie Raymond
 Director, Communications
 Status of Women Canada

Great Hope

Broadside:

May I say how very moved I was on reading Debi Brock's article on prostitution (*Broadside*, April 1986). A more thoughtful, gentle and persuasive article I have not read on this subject. It gives me great hope for our movement. Thank you.

Maude V. Barlow
 Ottawa

Quotes of the Month

"I think many of the issues that REAL Women stand for have had support among Conservative members and the party for long periods of time... What I have said to them is that the preservation of the family is one of the social policy thrusts of this Government." — Jack Epp, Health and Welfare minister (rumoured to be on the verge of giving substantial research funds to the group).

"In his column to MDs, The NDP is Villain (May 8), Orland French describes the Queen's Park rally of "white-smocked doctors and their wives." Presumably, a significant number of doctors were accompanied by their husbands." — Letter to the Editor, *Globe and Mail*.

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EDITORIAL

Power Politics

A recent scanning of any newspaper brings to mind a number of horror stories: the nuclear explosion at Chernobyl, the demise of the space shuttle Challenger, the repeated crashings of test cruise missiles, the Libyan/American conflict, and countless others of the same ilk. While these events may seem at first glance totally unrelated, they do contain some disturbing commonalities.

The endless political, economic and social competition that most countries today find themselves involved in merely reflects the endless quest of patriarchal structures for power. This obsession with *power over* — domination, subjection and oppression — seems to be the prevailing philosophy. The Libyan/American taunting over the "line of death" reflects this attitude just as Star Wars

shows that this domination extends beyond earthly boundaries.

We know that in the long run this notion of power is ultimately self defeating, because very few of us want to live in a society based on domination and control. Yet with shuttles blowing up and cruise missiles crashing and nuclear power plants exploding, one more point becomes evident. Capitalism is in crisis. The quest to dominate the world (or space) in the least expensive and most exploitive way had to blow up in our faces, because inevitably this "new" technology is no better (or worse) than the individuals who control the power. To this extent our reach has extended our grasp.

What is the alternative to this male definition of power? To some feminists the

answer is to share the existing power with men, or to emulate or outdo male politicians. This sharing in the game of domination politics will do little to change the power structure. Be it Margaret Thatcher or Ronald Reagan, the game continues unchecked.

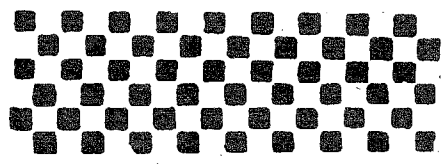
The answer is to replace domination politics with the feminist notion of *empowering ourselves*. This notion is not obsessed with aggression, it is not a notion that believes that putting a bullet in the enemy has anything to do with power. It is a notion that deals with the shoring up of our collective power, a notion that is both constructive and life enhancing. And as things are going, we'll soon have nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

Plus ça change...

Graphic FEMINISM

16 years of women's issues: choice, racism, equal pay, day care, lesbians, women's culture, violence against women, women in the labour force, sexuality, peace,

IN posters, leaflets, illustrations, buttons, magazines, t-shirts, books.



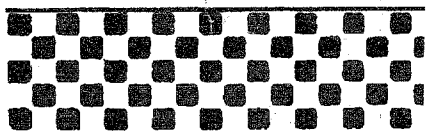
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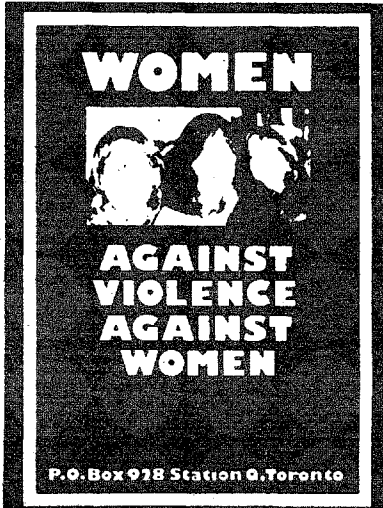
by Mary Louise Adams

It was 18" x 24", black ink on melancholy beige cover stock. The type was crooked Letraset. The graphic was so non-descript I can't now remember it. But the poster was easily my favourite piece in the show.

Reading like last week's feminist top 40 — prostitution, rape, radical lesbianism, socialism and women, imperialism and women's work — it advertised a 1972 discussion series at U of T.

My first reaction: incredulity at the realization that we're still talking about those same issues 14 years later and that in 1972 I was in grade 7 and had never even heard of feminism. Yet there it was, looking remarkably similar to the movement I know today.

An exhibition of graphic art from the Ontario women's movement, 1970-1986, Graphic Feminism is a project of the Canadian Women's Movement Archives. Magazines, posters, books, leaflets, T-shirts, buttons, postcards and a token album cover document



Deena Rasky, 1977

the issues and aesthetics of this most recent feminist era. The collection gives us opportunity to assess where the movement has come from and how it has changed. It's also a gentle reminder that you can't hurry a revolution.

The U of T series concluded with a discussion on "The Limits of Feminism." Of course I've no idea what those women actually talked about, but I found myself admiring them for having even broached the topic at a time when the movement was smaller and less institutionalized than it is now. It's a recurring discussion in a changing context.

Approaching the rest of the posters in the show with the benefit of hindsight, one gets a sense of the limitations we've actually managed to exceed and of the ones we're just now recognizing. In confronting them we expand and transform the definition of feminism. Where the early posters speak solely and specifically of women's liberation, or of issues that are explicitly women's, later pieces illustrate a broader range of concerns, some of which only recently have been defined as feminist.

Certainly a similar show a decade ago would not have included Stephanie Martin's 1984 poster for Colour Positive, an anti-racist film festival, or Barbara Klunder's poster from the same year, "Fighting for a Union at Eaton's."

The series of posters from International Women's Day events in Toronto makes the point blatantly clear. In the late 70s they called for "Women's Liberation." Period. The list of endorsers was recognizably feminist. In the early 80s, IWD posters demanded solidarity with women's struggles around the world. The list of endorsers diversified. In 1986 the headlining slogan was "Women Say No to Racism from Toronto to South Africa." Again the endorsements changed.

Similarly the presentation and tone of our messages has evolved dramatically. A 1977 poster by Deena Rasky shows a photo of three women obviously angry, white on black, extra-bold type, "Women Against Violence Against Women." There's no mistaking the intent of the piece. A 1973 poster, "Strike While the Iron is Hot" by C. Watson for Wages for Housework has the same sense of militancy. Both designers seem to have been more concerned with advertising the ideology than the organization.

Recent posters are more subtle, are more focused on events — rallies, concerts, benefits — and groups than on ideology, though ideology still has its place. They are also more sophisticated, artistically and technically. Feminism has grown more comfortable and more self-assured of its position in society. "Professionalism" is no longer feared as a sign of the patriarchy. As a result the women's community now has its own cadre of skilled graphic artists producing quality work. Indeed Graphic Feminism highlighted the work of a handful of artists over and over: Gail Geltner, Liz Martin, Joss MacLennan, Susan Sturman and Wendy Wortsman among others.

But existing alongside the glossy, four-colour posters and book jackets are the far more prevalent and familiar photocopied flyers and leaflets. As Carla Murray writes in the program book, their role in spreading the feminist message has been critical, photocopiers now being more accessible than even the Gestetners of the recent past (and where were the examples of work done on Gestetners?).

In displaying "16 years of women's issues," Graphic Feminism, which runs at A Space (204 Spadina Avenue, Toronto) until May 31, is commendable. In amassing an impressive assortment of feminist paraphernalia (which Pat Jeffries has done a wonderful job of displaying), the curators have given testament to the fact that this is a truly grassroots movement, with all the limitations and possibilities that term evokes. They have given present day feminist activists a historical context for our work.

But as a document of the Ontario Women's Movement the show is inadequate. The small number of contributions from outside Toronto does little to illuminate the issues or concerns of women in the rest of the province. As valid but isolated examples they pale beside the slick four-colour artwork around them. A tour of the exhibition could do much to inspire more submissions for a sequel. As someone wrote in the guest book, "Can we have more?"

Mary Louise Adams is a member of the Rites collective, and a regular contributor to feminist publications.

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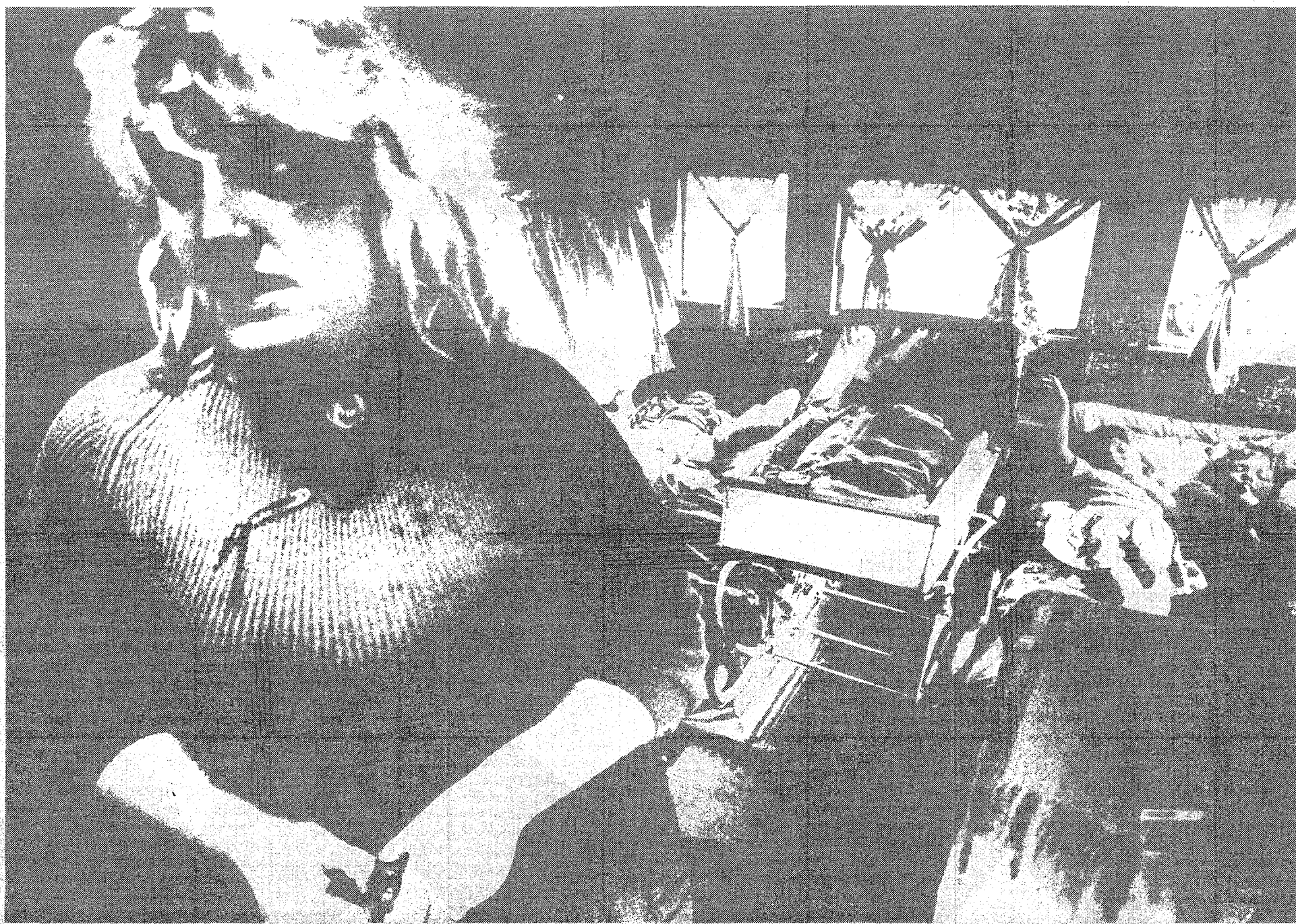
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Pennies from the Patriarchy:



by Jennifer Stephen

Recently, I went to a conference on free trade organized by the Toronto Centre for Labour Studies, primarily to attend a workshop about the potential effect of free trade on women. What went on in that workshop was far more related to what women experience in economic terms than anything that's ever been printed up in the business section of the mainstream daily newspapers. Free trade is not a new discussion: what is new is the general economic trend, of which free trade is part, away from the principles of the welfare state and toward a marketplace ruled only by macho-economics. While the business community talks about how this or that trade policy will affect their industries, women must talk about how the current government's economic agenda is going to affect our economic security.

No economic or social policy is politically neutral, regardless of what mainstream economists would have us believe. In their sobering studies of "economic man," economists assume that all decisions are based on rational choices made by free-wheeling individuals whose only constraints are price and income levels. This approach, which could be called economic rationalism, has never heard of systemic discrimination on the basis of race, let alone gender. The typical, antiseptic model for economic analysis assumes that there is a clear division between the market and the so-called private household. All productive activity is assumed to happen out in the public market, leaving out the equally productive, but hidden, work women do in the household. (A widely and currently used economics text defines housework as a variety of "assorted leisure tasks.") The primary actors in this field are the state, the firm and the household on the one hand, and the individual producer and consumer on the other. Clearly there is no room for systemic discrimination here.

Many economists have been alarmed by the dramatic increase in the participation rate of women in the paid labour force. In 1951, 24% of all women in Canada were considered part of the paid labour force, either working or actively seeking work. That rate had doubled to 53% by 1983: by the year 2000 the Economic Council of Canada estimates that

it will rise to about 70%, so that one worker in every two will be a woman. The reasons economists generally give for the greater presence of women in waged-labour are implicitly based on the notion that women have no business being there in the first place. Starting from this point, they look for external causes: the greater need for women to contribute to the family income, or increased job-opportunities for women due to expansion in the public sector. A few point to the recognized advantages of women's financial independence and to higher female productivity resulting from higher-level education and job-training as reasons for why more women work for wages. But whatever the reasons given, one thing is clear: the rational economists don't seem to understand that women's relation to the formal economy is not that of their "rational" man's. Their analyses are thickly disguised euphemisms for poverty — the 72% drop in women's income following divorce, the concentration of women in "pink collar" occupations, and the 38% wage-gap between women and men. One wonders at the blind energy devoted to legitimating women's marginalized status in the economy and at what would happen if the same amount of energy ever went into *explaining* it.

Some policy analysts interpret the statistics of women's work to spell the death-knells of the single family wage and they're right: the family just isn't what it used to be, or used to be cracked up to be. Others insist that women are working as secondary wage-earners and they think that's just fine: this response is considered basic testimony to the ability of the family to adapt to changing market conditions. The problem in all of this is that, while women are active producers and always have been, the sexual division of labour is maintained and taken for granted. Women are the primary caretakers in the household and bear all of the costs. Women are "occupationally segregated" in the labour force and bear all of those costs too, particularly in the form of wage inequity and sexual harassment.

The fact that women are paid less than men for the same substantive work is usually lost on the rational economist. According to this view, wages are simply a reflection of labour productivity which may be artificially inflated by the demands of organized labour.

Some economists, deploying various strands of circular logic, explain wage inequality in terms of women's occupational segregation in certain "feminized" industries. The crowding, or concentration, of women into specific occupations and industries is thought to result in "excess" labour, which subsequently lowers the going wage-rate. And why do women congregate in only certain industries? That question is rarely answered convincingly: women *choose* to enter female-dominated industries rather than the more stable, male-dominated ones; or women are segregated into the secondary labour market, of which these feminized industries are part, and are therefore excluded from the primary labour market in which males predominate. This last rationale has at least some merit: here we get a clearer picture of how women are consistently passed over for promotion, as part of the "last hired, first fired" syndrome. No matter where you look, however, the sexual division of labour is accepted at first glance. Wage inequality and the sexual/occupational segregation of women in the labour market cannot be explained consistently, or even rationally, since the economists generally assume that rational behaviour and market forces combine to equalize relations rather than to reinforce existing inequalities. In this sense any form of legislation introduced with the intent of achieving economic equality would most likely be construed as undue intervention in the free market. For example, according to the pin-striped brigade of the business community, equal pay legislation is simply too expensive. But, notwithstanding the sirens of the corporate sector who are convinced that the crash is near, it has now been estimated that the cost of eliminating the wage gap would amount to around only 4% of the annual payroll.

Social services are vital to the goal of economic equality. Before women can even become active in the paid labour force, an entire infrastructure of social supports and services is required. Universal daycare and guaranteed maternity/parenting leave are just two examples of what's on the platter of government study, but their absence or inaccessibility means the difference between poverty and a decent standard of living. Women's range of social and quality-of-life issues are quite different from those considered by mainstream

policy-makers. Our relationship to work is different from, for example, the male worker whose "work" is confined to an eight-hour shift. Still, it has been argued that social programs and services also have the effect of subsidizing low-paying jobs which maintain the ghettoization of women in occupations dictated by the standards of fundamental sex-roles.

While feminists are concerned about finding ways to socialize the costs and responsibilities of tasks like child-rearing, government policy-makers seem more interested in simply reducing the number of women who are receiving welfare payments. For example, child support payments, while welcome, continue to reflect the notion that child-rearing costs are privately shared concerns, instead of a social responsibility to be shared between individuals and society. After all, this is the underlying principle of universality, whether the program extends to health or child-rearing. The costs associated with reproduction are borne almost entirely by women and the current government's efforts to deconstruct the scaffolding of the welfare state indicates that these costs are to be even further privatized. Getting women off welfare and into low-waged jobs will accomplish little as long as the basic assignment of tasks determined by the sexual division of labour remains unaltered. Similarly, the entire gamut of educational and job-training programs must be overhauled to avert the process through which women move from private ghettos in the household into devalued occupational ghettos in the work force. This is particularly pertinent since the occupations in which women are now concentrated are those which are the most threatened by current economic policy.

Free Trade and the Agenda for Economic Renewal

Both the women's movement and the labour movement have begun to close ranks in opposition to bilateral free trade between Canada and the US, and with good reason. Free trade, or an open market policy between the two countries, means that the US, with the capacity to produce for a market far greater than Canadian industry, would have uninhibited access to Canadian markets.

Women in the Economy

American economic policy, otherwise known as "macho-economics," has taken on a Rambo-like character which includes union-busting, survival of the strongest, and an "anything that's good for business is morally good for the US" attitude. Behind all of the rhetoric, however, lies the unwavering allegiance to "free enterprise" and a dogmatic opposition to the welfare state. So what does all of this mean to women?

Women represent over 60% of all people employed in the manufacturing sector. Within this sector certain industries are especially vulnerable to the competition which free trade would bring: clothing and textiles, which employ primarily immigrant women at well below a living wage; micro-electronics; sporting goods; and leather products. These five industries alone account for 42% of the women working in the manufacturing sector overall and they have all been identified as high risk. In total, 13% of women in the paid labour force work in manufacturing and stand in direct line for job-loss, wage reductions, anti-union drives at a time when women have begun to make some headway in organizing for job-security and minimum wage standards.

Not coincidentally, the manufacturing process is itself most conducive to the global division of labour. This global production process has lately been undertaken on a grand scale by US-based transnational corporations. Global production allows corporations to venture out on an international shopping-spree in search of the cheapest labour source. "Host" countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand, Brazil and Malaysia offer free trade zones which leave the transnationals unhindered by organized labour, minimum wage rates, or legislated health and safety standards. The favourite employee is the most powerless, socially and economically: young, female, ancillary to the labour force according to cultural standards, and definitely not a card-carrying member of any union.

Alongside manufacturing, the service sector is considered to be particularly at risk, but not just by free trade. Over 80% of working women are employed in public and private sector service industries. On the one hand, the US is pressing for free trade in services, and has been since the last round of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations in Tokyo. At the moment the GATT roster, an international boys club which decides how trade will be conducted, doesn't permit free trade between the service industries of member countries. A bilateral free trade in services is one way the US seeks to circumvent the GATT commitment; it would also open the entire service sector in Canada to American-style competition and union-busting. As if in readiness for such a prospect, the service sector has become a target for what Finance Minister Michael Wilson calls "economic renewal": rationalization, deregulation and privatization. This is where free trade and current economic policy are tied ideologically, in a general return to free-enterprise economics in which the state plays the role of the so-called neutral arbitrator.

In order to cut government expenditures, the federal government has begun to open up the public sector, selling contracts for essential services to business interests. Usually, the contract goes to the highest bidder which is the way of things in the marketplace. This pattern of privatization has a two-pronged effect: one, on the quality of services provided, and the other, on making the change in working conditions from public sector (unionized) to private sector (profit-is-the-bottom-line). Once a private contractor takes over the provision of any basic service, wage and benefit packages (previously negotiated through a collective agreement) are eroded and the collective agreement is effectively gutted. Private employers institute lower starting wages and job security is tossed out the window. This scenario has been repeated in several areas where women are predominantly employed: in health facilities, social service agencies, and among clerical and maintenance workers. Significant job-loss also accompanies privatization of public services in an overall effort on the part of private contractors to cut corners and reduce costs. This leads directly to the question of the quality of services provided, since deregulation (which means changing the rules so that you don't have to break them) accompanies the turning over of what we used to call public services to private contractors.

Another pattern that is emerging in the restructuring of how basic and essential services are provided is volunteerism, perhaps

the most eloquent statement of the return to the principles of private charity and the public abdication of social welfare. Volunteerism has typically been considered the domain of women, particularly in those areas which accrue to the "caring" professions. The United Way, the Children's Aid Society, literacy programs, counselling for women in transition: all of these services are headed back to the institution of private charity and the hierarchy between provider and receiver of the service. Again, since women are considered best-suited to volunteer work, or any occupation which involves tending to the needs of others, it's almost certain that this sexual division of labour will be maintained. There is also nothing to ensure that the politics of the providing agency will be amenable to those of the feminist movement.

Considering that basic services like day care are prerequisites for women to work, any decline in both the provision and the quality of these services presents a problem. The cost of these services was being spread across society from 1960-75, when government expenditures on all social programs increased at an annual average rate of 9.5%. But that rate of annual increase declined to only 2.9% between 1975-1981. In comparison with other countries, like West Germany, Sweden and Italy, Canada went from a major commitment to government spending on education, health, family allowances and other income maintenance programs, to being one of the lowest spenders. What once appeared to be a strong commitment to the principles of a caring society, a recognition of the universality of social services and resources, has now become a move toward individual responsibility for one's own welfare. It took the Depression to educate western societies that poverty is structural and systemic, and it took the women's liberation movement to raise the necessity for legislated measures to further the goal of economic equality. Put the two together and it takes no time to realize that volunteerism, charity and the free market just don't work.

The last two federal budgets are similar to the attack on social spending under Bennett's administration in BC. A large and growing lobby definitely has the ear of these governments, particularly in the allegation that the welfare state is crippling western industrialized societies. Remember the cries of deficit and the calls for restraint which came wafting across the country three years ago? Although Bennett's regime has almost entirely dismantled BC's social service network, that province still has one of the highest rates of unemployment and poverty in the country. Women have been most directly affected by the restraint program: a 25% cut to public sector jobs; funding cuts to programs like childcare and shelters; a freeze on welfare payments and cuts in legal aid and housing subsidies. Where has all the loot gone? Well, we do know that soup kitchens and bread lines have sprung up alongside Expo '86. Maybe they're serving imported Bavarian rye and chilled vichyssoise?

Women are workers in this economy more so than owners of capital. It is now estimated that 80% of the revenue collected by the federal government from the corporate sector is returned in the form of direct cash grants. The understanding is that these grants will be ploughed back into the economy in the form of further development, updating the latest form of labour-saving technology and creating more jobs. The total turnaround, ie, the amount collected from and returned to corporations each year, runs at about \$6 billion. Added to that is an additional \$4.5 billion available to resourceful and enterprising upper-income and corporate taxpayers in the form of credits, preferences and deductions. We know them as loop-holes, oversights and tax shelters. Who pays their "fair" share is just part of the picture. In the latest federal budget, Wilson stated in his usual fatherly manner that old age security, family allowances and Unemployment Insurance were too important to be cut, since they were designated for "needy" Canadians. Instead, these programs have been frozen at the present spending level of \$86.6 billion. And despite the overwhelming commitment to national security, defence spending would be limited to an annual average increase of 2.75%, which, after inflation means about a 6% increase overall. In real terms, the defence "budget" will be \$9.36 billion this year, \$9.9 billion next, and \$10.5 billion in 1988/89, conservatively speaking.

Isn't the \$1.5 billion required to provide minimum quality childcare anywhere to be found? Not according to Wilson. Federal

spending on all government programs is to fall over the next five years: by the end of the decade the government intends to spend proportionately the same as was committed during the 1960s. In the meantime, all non-statutory programs, those to which the government is not bound to contribute (eg, Secretary of State Women's Program, Canada Council), will be cut drastically. Corporate tax reform amounted to a paltry increase of \$765 million, while consumers will pay an additional \$1.5 billion, or \$170 or more per year. Over the next five years personal taxes, sales and excise taxes will all increase by \$4.6 billion. In other words, reduction and servicing of the national deficit will be accomplished by everyone except those in the corporate and upper-income sector. In the face of it, the suggested refundable sales tax credit (an advance of the federal income tax return) of \$50 per adult and \$25 per child is nothing short of an insult. Again, women are particularly affected by this economic program: 60% of those living below the poverty line are women; 45% of all single-parent families headed by women live well below the poverty line; licenced day care facilities are available to only one of every 12 children; 75% of all older women in Canada live in poverty. These basic figures are known to all levels of government.

The primary beneficiaries of this latest round of so-called economic stabilization are primarily foreign-owned multi-nationals, whose quenchless thirst for labour-saving

consideration, according to the government-issued Green Paper on Pay Equity: in other words, women in occupational ghettos will stay there until we can talk about employment equity. And still, the pin-striped brigade sees not inequality on the basis of gender, but only market intervention and the payment of wages above the level determined by "market forces."

Most women work in clerical, sales and service occupations; of 500 occupational categories, women are concentrated into 22 of them. A great deal of the work women do is currently threatened by sub-contracting to the private sector and the accompanying erosion of the public sector, the micro-electronic revolution, customer self-service and the acceleration of part-time work. It's important to point out that several full-time positions are being phased out and replaced with only part-time positions. These are the changes which render terms like full-employment and the 40-hour work week obsolete, and government policy analysts know this.

The good news is that women are organizing in ever greater numbers within the labour movement. The most notable labour disputes over the past few years (eg, Eaton's and the bank tellers) directly addressed women's economic agenda. Women who work part-time are organizing, demanding full wage and benefit packages previously thought to accrue only to full-time workers. Effective lobbying at the federal and provincial levels has at least placed pay and employ-



ment equity on the table for discussion. And a large and growing movement has developed to resist free trade and the related erosion of essential services and programs, not as general issues of concern but as issues which have a differential impact on women. All of this is directed toward the recognition that women face an entirely disparate economic scenario due to the sexual division of labour and discrimination on the basis of gender.

Jennifer Stephen graduated in economics and history.

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MOVEMENT MATTERS

Housing Crisis

TORONTO — A housing policy conference entitled "Affordable Housing: an agenda for action" will be held on Sunday, June 22 and Monday, June 23, 1986 at the Hotel Plaza II, 90 Bloor Street East in Toronto.

The conference is intended to set out boldly and clearly the policy choices facing government, and to advocate a mix of housing programs which will most effectively address housing problems in the long term.

The current housing crisis in Ontario has many faces. There are the homeless singles who drift between hostels and rooming houses, or end up on the street; the single mothers who line up at food banks because they cannot afford both food and rent; low-income families, including recent immigrants, living in cramped basement apartments due to near zero vacancy rates and the lack of affordable housing.

The past decade has witnessed a reduced public commitment to housing those in need. In many larger centres, rental housing is less affordable today than it was ten years ago. More than 40,000 Ontario households representing nearly 100,000 people are on waiting lists for rent-geared-to-income housing.

The time is right for a critical look at rental housing policies from the perspective of consumers. The conference objectives are:

1. To use the conference as a media focus in launching a major public advocacy campaign around a coherent set of housing policies to form the basis of housing programs in Ontario.
2. To keep issues surrounding the strengthening of rent review and retaining the existing supply of affordable housing before the public as a part of the political agenda of this province.
3. To present research and analysis supporting the policy principles which place rent review and retention of the existing rental stock clearly within the larger debate concerning

future directions for social housing policy as a whole.

4. To educate tenants, consumer groups and the community at large regarding our rental housing proposals, and to facilitate a process of network building and information sharing among those engaged in research and/or advocacy efforts on behalf of tenants.

For more information, write to: Housing Policy Conference Office, c/o Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, Suite 1000, 950 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 2J4; or call (416) 961-9831. There will be a limited number of spaces reserved for people requiring subsidy. Please call before June 1, 1986.

Women of Distinction

TORONTO — On May 15, the YWCA of Metropolitan Toronto sponsored its Sixth Annual Women of Distinction Awards. These awards are given as a way of paying tribute to women who have made significant contributions to the community. Each year, six women in six different categories receive the award. This year's winners are:

Laura Sky in the Arts/Letters Category. Laura is a filmmaker who uses film to focus on ways to encourage women to deal with the social and economic conditions that affect their lives. She has been a filmmaker for 15 years and has garnered numerous prizes; she has taught film studies, has lectured in Canada, Germany and Sweden, and has done freelance radio and television documentaries.

Judith Ramirez in the category of Business/Labour. Judith came to Canada in 1968 after having lived in both the United States and Italy. She has had a strong commitment to working with immigrant women and domestic workers. Her work with these women began with her involvement in the Wages for Housework campaign. That led her to the founding of Intercede, to assist domestic workers from third world countries to find fair wages

and decent working conditions. More than 1,500 domestics have sought help from Intercede. She has won changes in the law, allowing domestic workers to apply for landed immigrant status from within Canada, and to get minimum wages, vacation pay, days off and the right to retraining. Judith has worked closely with many immigrant women's groups and has been called an "excellent strategist and organizer."

June Callwood in the category of Communications/Public Affairs. June is a civil libertarian and author of 22 books, including her 1980 release "Portrait of Canada" and her current release "Emotions." She helped establish Nellie's, a home for battered women; and Jessie's for teen mothers. Now she is working to open a hospice for AIDS patients, an interest she developed after helping a dear friend achieve a peaceful death at home.

Chaviva Hosek in the category of Community Service/Public Service. Chaviva is the president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. She was born in Czechoslovakia and moved to Montreal when she was 6. After graduating from McGill she obtained her doctorate in American Literature from Harvard, and went on to become a professor at the University of Toronto. At U of T she was the first woman to chair the academic affairs committee of the University's Governing Council. It was Chaviva who pushed for the television debate on women's issues during the 1984 federal election.

Paula Caplan in the category of Health/Education/Athletics. Paula is the head of the Centre for Women's Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. She has published numerous papers on child abuse, juvenile prostitution, sexual harassment, sex equality and sex differences in learning. Her latest book, *The Myth of Women's Masochism*, is one more arrow in the bow of contention that too many academics discriminate against women and use poor research skills to show women are inadequate in spatial skills, math and science, as well as that women are dependent and in many ways "sick."

Ursula Franklin in the category of Professions/Trades/Technology. Ursula has spent most of her adult life working to further women in the field of science as well as in society. Dr. Franklin has achieved the highest recognition for her contribution to the field of metallurgy and materials science. She is an active member of Voice of Women, a member of Scientists for Peace and the Consumer's Association of Canada. She is an Officer of the Order of Canada and has been

named University Professor, the University of Toronto's highest honour for a faculty member.

The Next Step

MONTREAL — The National Film Board, in collaboration with the federal Women's Film Program has produced "The Next Step," a series of three films examining the urgent need for services to battered women.

These half-hour films are effective, thought provoking, will stimulate discussion and encourage community action. They are a timely informative series providing a comprehensive overview of the kinds of programs and services needed in urban, rural, northern and native settings in Canada.

"Sylvie's Story" is the moving account of how one woman broke out of a violent marriage. Filmed at Auberge Transition in Montreal, the film emphasizes the importance of the transition house as a safe place, providing shelter, understanding, support and counselling.

"A Safe Distance" is a look at the special problems encountered by battered women in isolated rural, northern and native communities, and some innovative attempts to provide services and accommodation in remote areas.

"Moving On" is an inspiring example of a community that has effectively responded to the problem of battering by coordinating services and establishing a battered women's advocacy clinic, as well as a program for men who batter. Filmed in London, Ontario.

There is a user's guide that accompanies this series which contains a list of related films and reading material, as well as suggestions for pre-screening and post-screening discussions and ideas for action to improve services in your community.

Workers' Rights

The Ontario Women's Directorate has published a brochure entitled "Your Rights as a Worker in Ontario," in response to the many requests they have received from agencies and organizations requiring basic job information. Every worker in Ontario has rights and obligations under the law, and this brochure briefly describes the laws women should be aware of.

The brochure discusses: hiring practices; sexual harassment; terms and conditions of work, including the minimum wage, number of hours a day you can be required to work, holidays, sick days, equal pay for equal work, pregnancy leave, conditions of firing, domestic workers rights; health and safety on the job; and trade unions. It is available from: Ontario Women's Directorate, 4th Floor, Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1C2; (416) 965-4801.


Child Abuse

Reliable estimates of incidence of child abuse suggest that it has been seriously under-reported for many years. The increase in reports is therefore more likely to have resulted from the growing public and professional attention paid to the problem of child sexual abuse.

Section 71(3) of the Child and Family Services Act stipulates that Children's Aid Societies report all cases of verified abuse to the Child Abuse Register. Cases reported to the Register represent merely the "tip of the iceberg" and do not encompass all cases of incidence or investigation.

Reported cases of physical abuse between 1980 and 1985 have fluctuated from a low of 322 cases in 1981 to a high of 508 cases in 1984. In 1985 there were 480 reported cases of physical abuse, a decrease of 5.51% from 1984. Reported sexual abuse cases have increased from 249 cases in 1980 to an overwhelming 1547 cases in 1985. Between 1984 and 1985, the increase was by more than 45%. Reported cases of emotional abuse have gone from 8 in 1980 to none in 1981, 1982 and 1983 to 12 in 1984 and 16 in 1985.

Based on these statistics, the Ontario Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse has raised some interesting questions. Does the increase in sexual abuse reports reflect a corresponding increase in incidence? Does the decrease in physical abuse case reports reflect a decrease in incidence or is physical abuse being "overlooked" with all the attention on sexual abuse?



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Qualifications Required:
Masters or Doctorate in Women's Studies, Adult Education, Community Development or other related disciplines. Minimum of three years experience in providing innovative educational programming for women. Demonstrated knowledge of current women's issues and the women's movement. Demonstrated commitment to the creation of opportunities for women's learning from a feminist perspective. Experience in social animation and research preferred. Familiarity with women's organizations in Alberta an asset.

Forward applications, curriculum vitae, and names and addresses of three references by **June 30, 1986** to Dr. D. Foth, Dean, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta, Edmonton T6G 2G4.

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Publishing Priorities

by Ingrid MacDonald

What a time we had! Oh the discussions! Oh the food! I'm writing about the Feminist Periodicals Conference that happened in mid-May outside Orangeville, Ontario. The vegetarian food was terrific and the weather was speckless blue, and although the conference worked in two languages through a tinderbox of political issues, hardly was heard a discouraging word.

The conference which had preceded this one last June, as the faithful reader will recall, was a skills exchange weekend. We shared our schemes for professional journalism and better design. The circulation workshop was a file clerk's heaven, and being one, I should know. At that time I wondered in print (*Broadside*, July 1985) if it were possible to have a national periodicals conference that was anything but a recipe swap. We all had our own communities to whom we were accountable, and it could only be wretched Toronto centrism to expect the women from Whitehorse to have the same agenda as ourselves.

To a certain extent this was still true this year. As long as we are a grassroots movement our politics will be defined by the events in our own community. Yet the definition of, and the access to, community is a variable which changes the presses. We've all grown up in the media with the McLuhanism, the "medium is the message," and in feminist publishing this is still true, but only half so: our medium might be our message but for feminism the message has a life of itself.

So when a reader opens up an issue of *Broadside*, for example, she might not be surprised to find a functional if conservative design, copy heavy pages with nary a spelling error in sight (women, as we know, are perfectionists), a handful of ads from local supporters, a calendar page, and infrequently a cartoon but only sometimes (women, as we know, do not laugh). And of course there is that remarkable umbilicus, the letters page, connecting the paper to its community.

That same reader might also be delighted to find the sophistication of two feminist four-colour glossy magazines that have survived in Canada despite the minimal circulation potential here. *Herizons* and *La Vie en rose* have neither gone the way of *Ms.* magazine in the US with its liquor, cigarette and professional woman advertising, nor *Chate-laine* magazine which exchanged feminist sensibilities for articles about best and worst dressed celebrities.

So the Toronto women who hosted this year's conference in Orangeville took a sampling of evaluation forms from last year's conference and decided to program a conference with a politicized agenda. We began by examining the conditions of working within the feminist press and ended up with workshops that consider the politics of "why we do what we do." Is there a feminist way to work with writers, to value our work, to edit a piece of writing? (One could also ask if there is a feminist way to be a file clerk, to spell all the names on labels correctly and still meet two deadlines in one day?)

To have a political discussion is to agree to disagree on some issues, and still find a middle ground to share. At this conference our primary concerns were the accommodating of differences between French and English speakers; the need to establish a commitment to lesbian visibility; and the reckoning of race and class as issues fundamental to any feminist analysis and practice.

The feminist press, as with the feminist movement, is maintained and dominated by white middle and upper middle class women in North America. The reasons for this become clear when one counts the ways that race and class obstruct a woman's progress into print. Jane Rule once observed how time was a factor in any one's writing career, "a writer deprived of the time to practice the craft continually will rarely emerge as a major voice late in life."

Out of the Race and Class workshop came recommendations that we begin to make change around issues of race and class by integrating such analysis into everyday feminist



Enjoying the food: (from left) Chantal Cholette, Anne Michaud, Céline Messner.

content. This could be done by doing follow up work after supplements are done, or by actually giving editorial control over to a guest collective, as *Fireweed* did on Issue 16, the Women-of Colour issue, and most recently on the Native Women's issue. Makeda Silvera described the process of working with the Native women writers as learning how "not to meddle, not take control, not change women's voices."

Not taking and keeping control is a difficult art. Often when feminists are challenged with a politic that causes discomfort we can easily find a hook out of the obligation to deal with it, "There isn't enough... (money, time, volunteers, dogsleds) ...to deal with that right now." And it's not that we are not living through adverse times. The Mulroney government would rather have a summer student work the assembly line in the private sector than provide playground supervision in the in-

ner city. This is the same government that is giving increasing credibility to right wing women's groups opposed to feminist action.

In particular, lesbian visibility is a hot issue for the Conservatives. Feminist social programming is being "dyke-baited" which means that opponents, like the Catholic newspaper *The Interim* and the interdenominational group REAL Women of Canada, are mounting a smear campaign, suggesting that feminist projects are actually fronts for the Lesbian Movement. The word lesbian sits like a fly on the nose of a conservative government; they hope to swat feminists away with a lesbian pogrom. This conference agreed in defiance of governmental hysteria to publicly acknowledge that the lesbian press also attended this conference. While there is a gap between feminist and lesbian politics, some ground was broken.

The mandates for feminists in the press are

as different and various as the publications. Coordinating editor Betty-Ann Lloyd of Halifax's *Pandora* described her paper as having an emphasis on group process and outreach. "I'm not so much a journalist as I am a radical feminist," says Lloyd. "*Pandora* is providing a safe place where women who are so often silenced can find a hearing ear."

Former *Kinesis* editor Emma Kivisild stressed a paper's responsibility to stay in touch with the community by "creating our validity as a vehicle or a forum for political groups, while connecting ourselves to activism," and helping to make the news, not just write it. Kivisild also calls for the presses to maintain the ability "to challenge ourselves and overcome our fears of being criticized or encountering anger. Presses must be the only women's group that makes public apologies month after month." Vancouver writer Cy-Thea Sand described class as a political issue "where great risks are taken on a personal level." For the working class woman who walks into a newspaper office her own experience is on the line, "challenging the politics of the very thing we are doing." Québécoise author Céline Messner draws the bottom line at respect: "You can never forget to respect our differences. We don't have to justify ourselves for being different, and that's Utopian perhaps."

The conference was an opportunity for the women of the press, writers and file clerks alike, to come up for air and vivify out politics and strategies for change. The atmosphere was one of mutual empathy for difficulties encountered when bringing a political act through to a publishing deadline. Despite the ominous logistics at continuing to produce a regular issue under adverse conditions, there was a consensus to continue to challenge our own politics to the point of integrity.

Taboo Tolerance

by Beth Raymer

Last May, an installation piece entitled "It's a Girl," part of the Fem Fest series and the creation of a Toronto feminist art trio "Woomers" (Michèle Fillion, Barbara Pavlic and Toby Zeldin), was seized by Metro Toronto Police and both the owner and manager of Pages Bookstore, which was exhibiting the piece, were charged with "displaying obscene objects" (see *Broadside*, June 1985). "It's a Girl" made use of household and other items to depict the life of a female in our society from birth to death; objects used included a blow-up doll, cosmetics, women's underwear, a girdle, a shower cap, an empty disposable diapers box and magazines, as well as (and this is what offended police) menstrual pads splattered with red paint, plaster phalluses in various forms, and a junior tampon in its wrapper.

In August, Clayton Ruby was hired for the defence, with Lynn King as his associate. Ruby is an established criminal lawyer who has successfully defended *The Body Politic* on obscenity charges, while Lynn King, although a family lawyer, has represented the Ontario Film and Video Appreciation Society (OFAVAS) in their court victory over the Ontario Censor Board and has published on the issue of feminism and censorship. Ruby, believing there was still a chance to have the charges dropped, enlisted the help of Toronto journalist June Callwood and got together a petition with over 2,000 signatures, but Attorney General Ian Scott claimed that it was too late to drop the charges, and felt the issue was important enough to bring to trial. Pages Bookstore owner Marc Glassman had already set up a defence fund to defray legal costs, estimated at upwards of \$10,000. A pamphlet publicizing the incident was distri-

buted around Toronto with donation cans, and articles concerning the charge appeared in the three Toronto dailies, as well as such publications as *Broadside*, *FUSE*, *The Body Politic*, *Rites*, *T.O. Magazine*, *NOW* and *L'Express*. Four benefit events have been held to date, including readings at Harbourfront by 16 Canadian women writers in September 1985, and a film series organized by Woomers last winter at the Rivoli on Queen Street entitled "CAPTIVE: Images of Women in Film." Another benefit is being planned for this summer.

The trial started on November 25, and continued December 19, and April 18. The Crown Attorney was Laura Silver, and the judge Sidney Harris, a progressive who has acquitted *The Body Politic* on charges of obscenity. In November, the crown and the defence outlined their cases; the defence's case consisted of two constitutional objections directed at the section under which Glassman and bookstore manager Esther Bogoyo were charged. The first objection was that the word "disgusting" in conjunction with the word "object" is vague and subjective, and defies the Constitution and The Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The second objection was that the onus was on the defence to prove the work had merit and did not exceed the "Canadian community standard of tolerance." This onus implies guilt rather than innocence and therefore again defies the Constitution and The Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Finally, the defence claimed that the charge denied the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Charter. The crown contended that "community standards" had been exceeded, and that the law provides a safeguard for the rights and freedoms of society in making freedom of expression not an absolute right, but a limited one. Silver's single witness was

Constable Gordon, the police officer who laid the charges. The only evidence produced by the crown was the Pampers diaper box filled with the menstrual pads and the plaster phalli.

Witnesses for the defence who were called on the following days of the trial included John Bentley Mays, art critic for *The Globe and Mail*, who spoke on the artistic merit of "It's a Girl" and his knowledge of the "Canadian community standard of tolerance"; June Callwood, columnist for *The Globe and Mail*, who spoke as a feminist, Canadian journalist and mother on the community standard as applied to "It's a Girl," and of Glassman's reputation in the literary and bookselling community; sociologist Judith Posner, of York University; curators Philip Monk (Art Gallery of Ontario), Diana Nemiroff (National Gallery of Canada) and Elka Towne; Greg Gatenby, literary co-ordinator at Harbourfront; author Margaret Atwood and painter Ken Danby. Fillion, Pavlic and Zeldin of Woomers were also called to the stand to explain their work. All witnesses were asked by the crown about their views on censorship, whether they felt sanitary napkins were not inherently offensive, and whether art appreciation was for the elite and educated, ie, whether the "average" Canadian would consider "It's a Girl" to be art, and whether s/he would be offended by it either way.

The charges and trial have raised questions regarding censorship as it is applied to feminist art, and the challenge that presents to feminists who are not anti-censorship. Many in the feminist, literary and artistic community are keenly interested in what Harris' judgment will be.

(As *Broadside* goes to press, on May 27 Judge Harris will hand down his decision.)

Pro-Life Counselling:

by Karen Brill

Abortion continues to be one of the few emotionally charged subjects which embodies political, legal, religious, social, and moral implications. There remains a fervent polarization of views on the subject. With its attempt to decriminalize abortion in 1969, the government succeeded in offending both sides of the issue. Those who oppose abortion found the amendment to the abortion section of the Criminal Code unacceptable because it paved the way for "abortion on demand." The pro-choice lobby saw the amendment as highly discriminatory against women, because it removed the ultimate power over reproduction from the pregnant woman and gave it to a committee of, usually male, doctors, women being discounted as moral children, unable to be trusted with a decision that affects their lives foremost.

Amidst all the rhetoric, there are women who are in crisis, who are victims of external oppression, and need counselling and support in choosing between ending a potential life or the massive life changes that accompany caring for a newborn. Regardless of our political or moral sentiments on the issue of abortion, if we have real, human concern for the woman experiencing a crisis pregnancy, we must look critically at the quality of service available to her.

I have met with three pro-life counsellors in Toronto, two women and one man, at their respective agencies: The North York Crisis Pregnancy Centre (CPC), Birthright, and Choose Life Canada. The agency staff were helpful in directing me to pro-life materials and providing their own pamphlets or guidelines for volunteers. I chose to concentrate on the pro-life counselling centres, not as an exercise in denouncing these service providers, however disparate our political views. Many issues I have raised have been raised by pro-life writers. My efforts are an attempt to sort out supportive, loving, empowering intervention from the "helping" relationship that degrades and punishes women.

It was a difficult task, both personally and politically. Although the counsellors I spoke with were very accommodating, I had many reservations around conducting interviews where I felt unable to make myself known. I found it an emotional strain to expose myself to some of the more graphic pro-life literature. For this reason, I did not view the video materials that were available at each of the counselling centres. And it was difficult to meet with the well-intentioned counsellors who offer concrete services to women in crisis yet fail to analyse the broader picture of male-defined roles for women and the struggle for freedom from oppression. The politics of abortion are inseparable from the personal, from the woman who is experiencing a crisis pregnancy. Yet too often she is lost in the "rights of the fetus/rights of the woman" debate. I want to present her case here.

RESOURCES & SETTING

It is important to have some understanding of the physical resources employed by the different pro-life organizations. A brief look at advertising, setting, mandate and training of staff indicates some diversity between the centres.

Choose Life Canada opened an office in the basement of The Way Inn Coffee Shop (an affiliated Christian establishment) in June 1985 on Harbord Street in Toronto. Choose Life is a project of the Ken Campbell Evangelical Association and subsists on donations from the private sector. The service provides hospitality for the pro-life picketers outside of the Morgentaler Clinic next door, information-sharing with the use of video presentation, referral and some crisis counselling. There are three staff employed full-time with Choose Life — one clergyman and a married couple. The man I spoke with said the staff has no formal counselling training and, although they are very willing to talk with any woman who is seeking help, they usually refer the client to another pro-life counselling service for on-going intervention. The service advertizes through pamphlets, and the ministry of the Rev. Ken Campbell and other church networks.

The North York Crisis Pregnancy Centre is affiliated with the Christian Action Council (CAC) which originated in the United States as an organization dedicated to solving the abortion problem through the application of biblical truths. There are over 150 Crisis Pregnancy Centres in the US, seven in operation and two more in the planning stages in Canada. While the Christian Action Council provides organizational and educational materials, each crisis centre depends on donations from the private sector. Volunteer counsellors are given a two-day training seminar, and the North York CPC has one staff member, a woman with a social work background who oversees the training.

The North York CPC advertizes daily in the Toronto *Sun's* personal column. Their ad reads: "Abortion Alternatives. Free Pregnancy Testing, confidential." The counsellor interviewed at this service stated that this wording confused many callers. Women phone in enquiring about this alternative to abortion, assuming that it refers to a new method of terminating pregnancy. Agency statistics indicate that approximately 40% of the callers are not committed to carrying to term. The primary goal of the telephone conversation, according to their volunteer training manual, is to make an appointment for the client at the centre, so this ambiguous advertisement is not without purpose.

This possible misrepresentation is further apparent in the chosen name of the service and actual office setting. The North York Crisis Pregnancy Centre gives no indication of the agency's anti-abortion stand. The office decor has no

overt sign of the pro-life ideology. Unless the woman in distress carefully peruses the pamphlets available in the waiting area, she will be well into her interview with the counsellor before the anti-abortion bias is apparent.

The advertised offer of a free pregnancy test is another possibly coercive tactic to encourage the woman in crisis to make an appointment at the centre: these tests are not conclusive and must be verified by a medical doctor. While the client is waiting for the results of the pregnancy test, she is asked to view an educational video presentation. The film is entitled "A Matter of Choice" and is a series of interviews with people on both sides of the abortion issue. There is some footage of part of an abortion procedure. It is noteworthy that the client is encouraged to view the presentation alone, particularly if she is accompanied by a person who is pressuring her to abort.

The CPC keeps written files on each client, starting with an initial intake form. The counsellor usually fills out this form with the woman in crisis as an opportunity to develop rapport with her. The form includes information on personal data, medical history, pregnancy test results, intentions with regard to the pregnancy (abortion, carry to term, undecided), client's needs from CPC, referrals, and the client's reaction to the video presentation. The form indicates to the counsellor if the pregnant woman is "abortion-minded."

Birthright is a volunteer organization that originated in Toronto 17 years ago. Today, it operates over 600 centres across North America solely on donations from the private sector. Unlike the CPC or Choose Life, Birthright has no religious affiliations. There is no spiritual component in their counselling services. Birthright exists to ensure the right of every mother to give birth, and the right of every child to be born.

Toronto Birthright also advertizes in the Toronto *Sun's* personal column. The ad reads: "Are you pregnant and distressed? Call Birthright." The chosen name of the agency is a fair indication of their anti-abortion stand. Birthright operates out of a house which can be used as a temporary shelter for homeless or out-of-town women experiencing a crisis pregnancy. The waiting and counselling area overflows with pro-life literature and paraphernalia, including mother and child posters, statues and developmental models. The counsellor I spoke with stated that their service likes to be upfront around their anti-abortion views. Abortion is equated with murder.

All interested volunteers learn by observation over a period of six weeks or until they feel confident enough to answer the telephone and meet with clients. There is no formal training manual. Volunteers are provided with a brief list of guidelines which outline office routine, pregnancy tests (performed free of charge according to the client's needs), records, telephone manners, the Birthright Charter and care of clients.

PRO-LIFE COUNSELLING

There is very little printed material that describes the actual pro-life counselling approach. But although literature on counselling methods is scarce, the mention of the need for service is not. Virtually all proponents of the anti-abortion lobby call for the immediate availability of medical, legal, psychiatric and spiritual counselling. One book called *Abortion and Social Justice* says, "It has been shown that by the support given pregnant women throughout their pregnancy, the pressures to abort can be remarkably reduced, and in fact the pregnancy that is carried to term may be a positive factor in the mother's return to normalcy."

There is no explanation of "normalcy" offered here. One is left to conclude that the state of being pregnant and in crisis is pathological. As we will see, this theme is recurrent throughout the anti-abortion literature. A central contradiction in the pro-life counselling services is the honest effort to provide practical help to pregnant women while implicitly and explicitly blaming them for their situation.

1. Not the Whole Truth

The pro-life counselling services are unapologetic about the initial element of deception in their approach if it furthers the end of preventing an abortion. When a woman in crisis first contacts the centre by telephone, she is encouraged to make an appointment and asked to bring a urine specimen for testing. The volunteers are briefed on how to handle calls in which the client is "abortion-minded." According to the *Crisis Pregnancy Center Volunteer Training Manual*, the counsellor may avoid directly answering the client's questions, but must not lie to her. Some suggested responses to use with clients seeking an abortion are offered:

Client: "I want an abortion."
Counsellor: "You'd like an abortion."
Client: "Yes."
Counsellor: "What kind of abortion did you want?"
Client: "Do you do abortions?"
Counsellor: "You're interested in an abortion?"
Client: "Yes, do you do them there?"
Counsellor: "No, we don't perform abortions here, but we offer free pregnancy testing and will give you complete and accurate information about abortion."
Client: "Will you refer me for an abortion?"
Counsellor: "We aren't involved in abortion referrals, but we can give you good information and help you with your decision."
Client: "What kind of place is this?"



The Way Inn, Campaign Life's cafe, next door to the

Counsellor: "We're not a medical clinic. We're a volunteer organization of women helping other women through the crisis of a problem pregnancy. All of our services are free and confidential."

Client: "Are you pro-life?"

Counsellor: "What do you mean by pro-life?"

Likewise, the Birthright *Guidelines for Volunteers* discuss telephone manners: "It seems obvious that we must not a caller immediately that we cannot help her get an at-tion, for she will no longer be interested in talking to us is best to get her to talk about her problems by asking some leading questions — eg, 'How far along is your pregnancy? Has it been confirmed? ... Many girls who first thought about abortion have been saved when we have had an opportunity to discuss the alternatives.'"

These deliberate attempts to omit information, change subject or offer half-truths in an effort to mislead the woman in crisis, constitute a blatant misuse of power. The counsellor's reluctance to state her values explicitly in the initial contact is a form of lying, a power play which is exploitive of the woman seeking help. The pro-life counsellor uses her own position as service provider to manipulate the client who comes into the centre. The "helper's" answers are well rehearsed. Not telling the whole truth is overlooked in the higher purpose of saving the fetus. The client's immediate needs are secondary to the counsellor's goal of successful treatment that is, preventing an abortion. The woman in crisis is treated as morally unfit to make her own informed and responsible decision. The counsellor becomes one more person in a long line (along with father, boyfriend or husband, clergyman, doctor) to enter into a coercive relationship with the woman in need, and effectively keep her in her place — dependent and powerless. The pro-life counsellor is committed to helping the client make the "right" decision.

The CPC *Volunteer Training Manual* discusses the importance of genuineness and unconditional acceptance as the essentials of a helping relationship. These "essentials" preclude the deliberate misrepresentation of the agencies' mandate and the associated view of the woman in crisis as being unable to make her own informed decision on whether or not to proceed with the counselling service offered.

2. Information Sharing — The Physical and Psychological Implications of Abortion

If a client wishes to discuss the option of abortion, the volunteer counsellor is advised to listen to her, using "helping skills." The counsellor then describes for her the methods of abortion and the medical risks. It is important that risks are not exaggerated or used to frighten the client unnecessarily. Counsellors are advised to convey that many women who have abortions don't have any medical complications and are able to deliver normal, healthy babies later in life. However, pro-life agencies are obliged to tell women about the risks and complications in the interest of helping them make a "good" decision. In describing the physical aspects of abortion the procedure, complications, effect on fetus and effect on the woman are considered. The counsellor gives supplementary information to the material in the educational video presentation.

Pro-life literature on abortion is easily identified by its graphic and often gory depictions of the operation and possible complications. The *Volunteer Training Manual* offers the following descriptions:

SUCTION ABORTION

Effect on the Woman: ...Suctioning lasts 4 to 10 minutes

Isolation and Persuasion



INGRID MacDONALD

the Malar clinic in Toronto.

but many women find it to be an extremely painful 4 to 10 minutes. Anesthesia is available at some clinics, but costs more. Using an anesthetic increases risks, since there can be a reaction to the anesthetic.

Infection: The uterus is highly susceptible to infection during pregnancy. This infection occurs very often after an abortion. Usually the doctor will prescribe antibiotics, but sometimes the infection will not go away.

Hemorrhaging: ...can occur during or after a suction abortion.... Vitamin K injections or blood transfusions may be needed, and this increases the chance of getting septicemia or hepatitis.

DILATION AND CURETTAGE

Procedure: ...the doctor uses a curette (sharp, spoon-shaped knife) to cut and tear the fetus and placenta into pieces.

SALINE ABORTION

Effect on the Fetus: ...The outer layer of skin is burned off by the high concentration of salt, like brine working on a pickle.

Effect on the Woman: ...85% of women who have saline abortions are in hard labor for 12-24 hours, and often they are left alone to deliver the aborted fetus.

The complications are piled one after another to have the desired effect. While it is important that a woman considering abortion be well-informed around the risks of the procedure, the language used need not evoke fear and disgust. Pro-life literature uses every opportunity to generalize the risks and complications for the woman, and give a sensationalized account of a tortured fetus.

Another function of pro-life counselling is to warn the client of the emotional and psychological aftermath of abortion. The testimonies of regretful women who have had abortions may be presented to the pregnant woman. One woman writes: "I can tell you that having an abortion is killing me slowly."

Another story from an "aborted mother" offered by a pamphlet entitled *The Pain That Follows — Coping After an Abortion* says,

Joan, a 17 year old, had an abortion in the first twelve weeks of her pregnancy. She seemed to cope well. But during her second pregnancy, she "heard" babies crying at night and all the pain came back to her.

This kind of selective information exchange is a blatant example of emotive coercion. A woman who approaches a counselling centre may already be feeling alienated from herself, others and the world. Presented with these "true stories" without a balanced version from women who have dealt with their feelings around abortion and have no regrets, a woman is tricked into hating herself for ever having considered "killing her baby." She is oppressed by propaganda and then lied to about being oppressed as a helping hand is offered to assist her in making the "right" decision. Isolation, most often suffered by young or immigrant women, keeps these lies from being discovered. The woman's feelings of powerlessness are reinforced by this kind of information sharing.

Research findings and relevant statistics may be used as a follow-up to personal testimonies by women who have had an abortion. One study entitled the "Psychological Sequelae of Abortion" collected data from the Pregnancy Aftermath Helpline, a 24-hour distress line for people who are having difficulty following a pregnancy that ended in miscarriage, abortion or adoption. Given that the sample population were all in some kind of distress, having initiated contact with the

Helpline, it is preposterous to assume that this study could be generally representative of women who have had abortions, as the title would have you assume.

The researchers worked with information from 58 callers who expressed a direct relationship between their abortion(s) and their symptoms of distress. They listed a continuum of distress as identified by one or more callers in the sample. These included guilt, anxiety, depression, sense of loss, anger, change in relationship with boyfriend, deterioration of self-image, nightmares, loneliness, likely psychotic reactions, feeling misled by lack of information after the abortion, and physical concerns. The counsellors at the CPC add "lack of libido" to the above list and present these symptoms as "quite common" among post-abortive women.

Although it is true that some women may have negative feelings after an abortion, the alternative of carrying to term may result in greater psychological damage. The differences in opinion about the effects of abortion are paralleled in the different conclusions about the effect of abortion drawn from scientific research or the subject:

In one review of a large number of studies on abortion, conclusions were found to range from the suggestion that psychiatric illness almost always is the outcome of abortion to the virtual absence of psychological complications after abortion. In many instances "findings" are nothing more than the investigator's clinical impressions from observing many patients who have had abortions. (Esther Greenglass, *After Abortion*.)

The CPC *Volunteer Training Manual* describes abortion as "the death of a family member." The volunteer is advised to confront the abortion-minded client saying something like, "I've talked to lots of women who have had a really hard time after an abortion. You may have trouble sleeping or have nightmares or not want your boyfriend to touch you for a while. ... Most women find that the emotional consequences last for years. I would hate to see you do this now and regret it the rest of your life."

In her study of the psychological adjustment after abortion, Greenglass concludes that the major factor that seems to be related to a good psychological adjustment after abortion is the woman's perception that important people in her life accept and support her. She adds that the role of abortion counsellor must not be held by anyone who is morally opposed to abortion, a position which could only intimidate patients and lead to psychological problems afterwards. The pro-life counsellor contributes negatively to the psychological and emotional aftermath she so readily uses to dissuade her clients from abortion. The volunteer may interfere with the mental health of the woman experiencing a crisis pregnancy thereby, herself, being part of the problem, not the solution.

3. The Question of Birth Control

The right-to-life movement does not support access to safe birth control as a potential and obvious response to the abortion issue. None of the counselling services dealt with here offer, or refer their clients for, birth control information. The anti-abortion literature reviewed blames permissive sexual attitudes (ie, the woman's) for the problem of unwanted pregnancies.

Jean Staker Garton discusses what the abortion slogans "really mean" in her book *Who Broke the Baby*. In considering every woman's right to control her own body, she offers:

To be in control is to assume responsibility.... Before the (US) Supreme Court decision of 1973 (*Roe v. Wade*), sexual activity was taken seriously. Both the individuals involved, their families and the community which provided shelters and orphanages felt a responsibility for the child that might result. Today, with abortion available and employed as an after-the-fact contraceptive, such responsibility is optional. Thus abortion, promoted as a means of being "in control" of one's own body, is actually the evidence of a body which has been "out of control."

Present research suggests that the longer a woman must wait for a legal abortion, the more her physical and, to some extent, her mental health is endangered. Greenglass spares no words in accusing Canada's abortion law, which requires applications be approved by a therapeutic abortion committee of a hospital, of delaying the procedure and, therefore, endangering the health of women.

Staker Garton's statement is a total denial of women as individual, feeling, thinking beings. It trivializes women who have suffered with unwanted pregnancies, who have lived in poverty, have been ostracized from society, or continue to be trapped in brutal relationships because alternatives were not open to them. As for "the child that might result," he or she was likely stigmatized with illegitimacy and would share his/her mother's poverty.

Staker Garton's view of the good old days when communities felt responsible for a child born out of wedlock somehow neglects to mention the responsibility of the father or the actual living conditions in these "shelters and orphanages." Once more the patriarchal order can breathe a sigh of relief that they are neither implicated nor expected to inhabit the shelters or visit the orphanages.

One pamphlet that is routinely distributed by the North York Crisis Pregnancy Centre lists the hazards of sexual activity outside of marriage:

- Pregnancy, possibly resulting in a "quickie" wedding, many of which end in divorce, heartbreak, and disappointment.
- Abortion, the killing of another beautiful, unique person like you.
- Venereal disease which could permanently damage your health.
- Adverse effects from the pill and other contraceptives, some of which cause early abortion and create permanent health hazards for the woman.
- Loss of self respect at a time when you are just beginning to develop a sense of who you are.
- Exploitation by persons interested only in their own self gratification.
- Feelings of guilt, doubt, hatred, depression, or disappointment towards yourself and others.
- Loss of reputation...; premature stunting of future opportunities....
- Depletion of energy vitally needed in other areas, such as study, work, and creative activities.

The pamphlet goes on to suggest that one should develop hobbies and activities with people who help you use your "energy" in a productive way. The pro-life literature describes sexuality as normal feelings one probably has about someone of the opposite sex. While the right hand embraces the normalcy of feeling warm and sexually aroused in some situations, the left suggests a game of football and a cold shower to divert this normal sexuality until marriage. The responsibility to "say no" lies, invariably, with the woman.

The pro-life choice is between celibacy and marital sex. It is a call for women to be pushed back in the traditional wife/mother role and to be defined by that role. It is an overt denial of a woman's sexuality. In working with women who are experiencing a crisis pregnancy the pro-life counsellor offers an absurd inconsistency. While she honestly wishes to provide practical help to the woman in need, she explicitly judges her sexual activity, unavoidably blaming her for her predicament. The responsibility of the male in sexual activity is hardly mentioned. In the pamphlet, the author states that if pregnancy occurs, both the mother and father have a serious obligation to the child. She continues, "The expectant mother and the baby both need attention," but the father is not mentioned again.

A section in the CPC *Volunteer Training Manual* on Unconditional Acceptance advises the volunteer to value the woman in need, "even as you evaluate her behaviour and measure it against God's standard." In the pro-life context the guilt associated with an unwanted pregnancy is signed, sealed and delivered squarely to the woman.

THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY

Much of the pro-life literature and the counselling staff interviewed at Choose Life and the North York Crisis Pregnancy Centre discuss abortion from a Christian perspective.

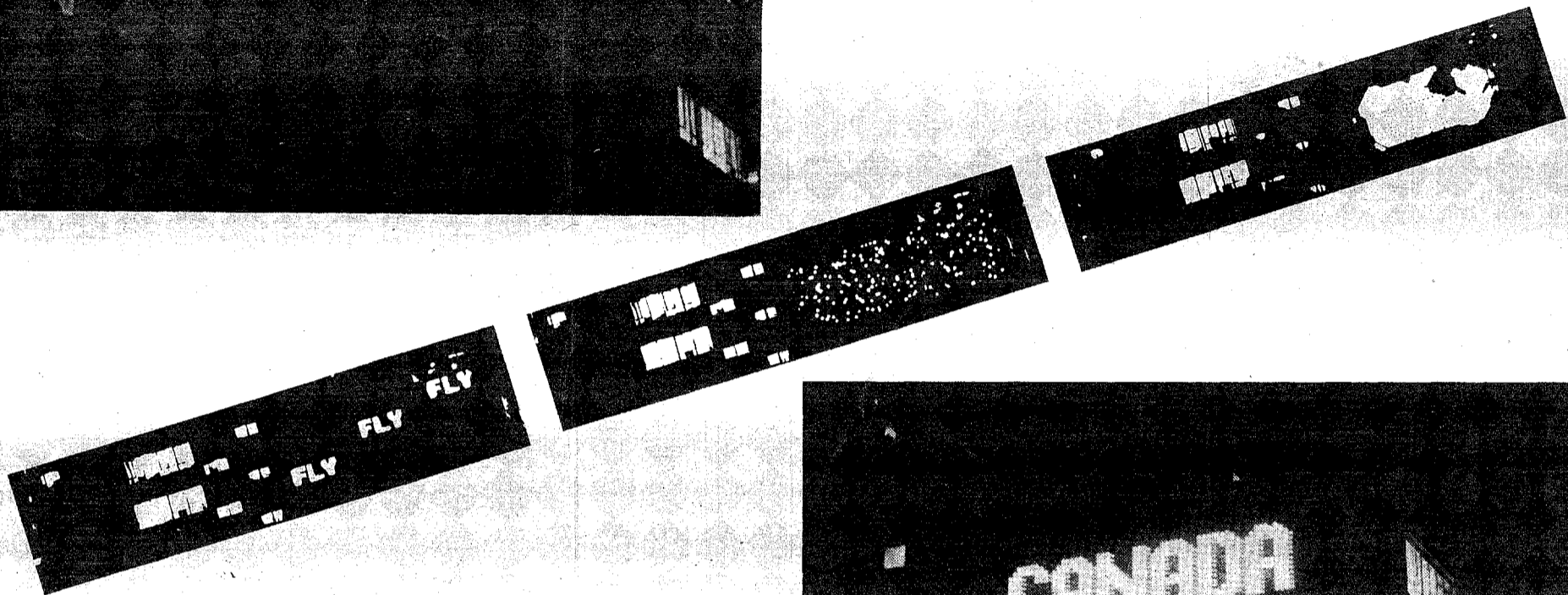
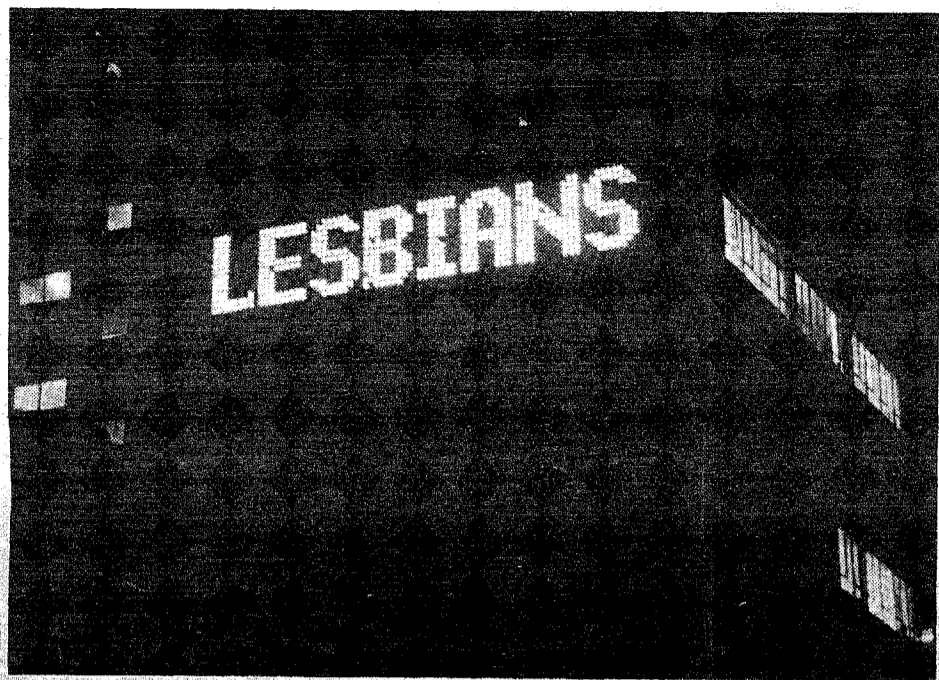
The CPC *Volunteer Training Manual* states, "The Word of God is capable of convicting (the woman in crisis), and is our most powerful argument against abortion." When talking to non-Christians, volunteers are advised that most women will admit that they believe in God, and most of them know that if there is a God, he does not approve of abortion. When counselling a Christian client who persists in seeking an abortion knowing that God will forgive her, the volunteer is encouraged to be confrontational. The client needs to be reminded that even though God does forgive her sin, she may bear the consequences of that sin for the rest of her life.

Here, God is used as one more patriarchal authority that controls the woman's life. This is the ultimate guilt trip, and can only result in reinforcing the woman's feelings of powerlessness and remorse. It is unlikely that a woman who is in crisis and in need of acceptance and support will do battle with this unseen, all-powerful authority whose "consequences" she fears. The odds are neatly stacked against the woman, claiming power over her own life.

With crisis pregnancy counselling offered by people who are morally opposed to abortion and pre-marital sex, counsellors cannot avoid blaming the woman seeking support. The counselling relationship is fraudulent, and the clients' needs are only considered if they tow the party line. The counsellors succeed in contributing to the clients' alienation, and support the patriarchal order which oppresses women in an effort to keep them powerless and silent. The offer of practical services cannot be construed as more than the fruits of conditional love.

Perhaps the rights of the fetus versus the rights of women is a dialogue that has lost meaning in the climate of irrevocably changed relationships surrounding reproduction. With the contraceptive revolution, women have no choice but to be responsible for our fertility. The nurturing, traditional female role has come under scrutiny and parenthood has become a decision. At the heart of that decision is not the "rights of the fetus vs. rights of women" debate, but an understanding of responsibility for self and others. Herein lies the appropriate theme of a woman-centred counselling relationship.

Karen Brill is a Toronto feminist, and seven months pregnant by choice.



PHOTOS BY TOM TAYLOR

Save Me a Seat!

by Susan G. Cole

For a fleeting week, anyone in Toronto standing on the corner of Yonge and Wellesley could face north and see something truly astonishing. Electromedia's giant Pixel board, that computerized dot matrix that usually flashes a version of "buy this or that," was saying, and in very bright lights, "LESBIANS FLY CANADA: Private Desire Public Sins." There was even a twinkling map of Canada to drive the point home. The message was written by visual artist Lynne Fernie as part of an artists project called Some Uncertain Signs.

But this was not Fernie's original submission. Her first version was "Lesbians Fly Air Canada: Private Desires Public Sins." The story of how and why Fernie's contribution had to change sheds some strong light on what happens when feminist artists try to occupy corporate territory.

The Public Access artists collective had put together Some Uncertain Signs to explore the implications of artists working in advertising venues. The Pixel board was donated by Electromedia, an advertising company which controls various billboards and display spaces. When Fernie was asked to contribute, her text was thoughtful and straightforward: She chose "Lesbians" because Electromedia's Pixel Board is located in the heart of the gay commercial district, and the word "gays," according to Fernie has been too gentrified by media; "Fly" because she wanted to avoid the word buy, the most blatantly consumer-oriented word; "Air Canada" because it is a crown corporation, publicly owned, with the word Canada in it. And essentially, Fer-

nie wanted to state a fact. Hence "Lesbians Fly Air Canada." The phrase, "Private desires, Public sins" captures Fernie's conviction that stating difficult truths is something Canadians avoid, especially if the truth has something to do with sex.

"I expected a problem, and I *had* called it my 'bad girl' project," Fernie said. "But as the work of an artist and a lesbian, by not questioning an absence in culture — particularly in advertising culture — the piece would have lacked integrity. I felt I had to address the inhabitation of a corporate sector which would rather die than associate themselves or their image with a particular group."

She was right. The message went right to the collective corporate solar plexus, and Electromedia didn't like it at all. The company rejected the submission. Fernie had expected this, and had already strategized a fallback position. She would have settled for "Lesbians Fly Air _____" followed by the twinkling map of the country. Rejected.

Bad girl project or not, Fernie had never set out to trash the corporate community, only to question its values. "I knew I was pushing the boundaries," she admitted, "but I had worked on it very carefully. I didn't want it to be an attack. I wanted it to be a critique of the absence of lesbians in advertising. It definitely was not corporation bashing. But apparently, the people at Electromedia kept insisting that I should address lesbians directly without making reference to anything else, which is homophobic."

Fernie had only three options in the wake of the first rejection: "I could withdraw from the project, in which case the absence would have been noticed by maybe 100 local artists;

I could delay the project; or develop a new one in three weeks." Fernie finally settled for the final version: Lesbians Fly Canada: Private Desires Public Sins. "I always said that if compromises were going to be necessary, it is important that we examine exactly what the compromise will be and that we articulate the boundaries of the acceptable. I personally never had the killer attitude, but I do know now what is allowable in public space."

It's interesting to note what Electromedia had considered acceptable before Fernie had challenged those boundaries. Electromedia had already had their progressive values tested through the submission of Les Levine. His text, "Rape Hate Kill Lie Steal," was considered too provocative until the collective convinced the corporate donors that he had the proper artistic credentials. Showing them another text of Levine's which had been mounted in New York's Times Square helped considerably. Fernie, though, was not so fortunate. She hasn't made the right New York connections yet. And besides, her previous work connecting lesbian visibility with feminist theory — particularly her paintings and drawings in Sparkes Gallery's Unparallel Views and the YYZ Gallery's Gay Gaze — doesn't have the Levine cowboy/artiste stance that might appeal to a corporate sensibility.

So who allows the expression, and why, continues to be the issue. Notice that the word lesbian was not the problem with Fernie's work. It was the connection between Air Canada and lesbians that counted. And it wasn't Air Canada who complained about the submission. Air Canada is not even one of Electromedia's clients. When a spokesman for Electromedia rejected the first ideas, he mentioned concern over a *potential* client,

not a current account. If the object of Some Uncertain Signs was to investigate the relationship between advertising and the corporation, Fernie's project was a complete success. It uncovered what Fernie calls the phenomenon of corporate citizenship. Even without a formal relationship with Air Canada, Electromedia was determined to do the right thing as a member of the corporate fraternity.

The Public Access artists collective, torn between principle and whatever good faith had been generated between the collective and Electromedia, could only give Fernie so much support. They wound up caught in the awkward position of appearing to approve of control of artistic expression. Mark Lewis, one of the collective members, tried valiantly to make the distinction between state and corporate censorship, but Fernie's anti-censorship politics were too sophisticated for Lewis's fine lines, and her earlier work shows it. Fernie's contribution to the A Space show Issues of Censorship was called Altering Image. Using the found art of Vogue photographs and a dense text, Fernie widened the discourse on censorship to take in anorexia and the way women's bodies are shaped and censored. Having done that much, she was not about to buy Lewis' argument that Electromedia had not really "censored" anything. "True, it's not state censorship," she allowed. "But it *is* the corporate control over what can appear in certain public space. Canada is a country where people don't like to talk about what's going on, and anything that threatens Victorian sensibilities gets swept under the carpet."

"And Canada's carpets," Fernie concludes, "are very lumpy."

Voices, Vices and Voyeurs

by Amanda Hale

"Violette Leduc was an ugly woman and a bastard child. She was a sex maniac, a voyeur, a sado-masochist and a paranoiac. She wept continuously and thirsted for luxury. She was a shop-lifter, a black-marketeer during the French Occupation, a vestal virgin to the homosexual literati of Paris. She was a whore, a pimp, an informer." So writes Jovette Marchessault in the introduction to her play, *The Edge of the Earth is Too Near, Violette Leduc*, produced to critical acclaim by Théâtre Experimental des Femmes in Montréal in 1981, and now receiving its English language première, produced by Nightwood Theatre under the direction of Cynthia Grant.

Hardly a sympathetic character you might say. No. But when you see the play — and I urge you to do so — it becomes clear through Marchessault's writing, that Violette is a product of her society and her time, and that her behaviour and personality are reactions against the world she finds herself in. Her mother worked for a wealthy family, one of whose sons seduced her; hence the title of Leduc's best known autobiographical book, *La Bâtarde*. Censored from the beginning, Violette's birth is an embarrassment to all concerned. She adores her mother and feels rejected when she eventually marries. Rather than accepting her victimization, Violette fights against the odds, pledging her life to "a passion for the impossible," in wild attempts to shape her own destiny.

As Simone de Beauvoir says in her introduction to *La Bâtarde*, "As she emerged from adolescence, she found herself caught in a devilish trap. She loathed the loneliness which she had made her lot in life, and because she loathed it she plunged even deeper into it... She never experienced a reciprocal relationship with anyone: either the other was an object for her, or she made herself into an object for the other...Leduc cannot accept a duality in which she sees lurking the threat of separation."

This is a play about censorship: literary censorship and the inner self-censoring voices that we all carry in our heads on insidious micro-loops. It is about a neurotic, tortured woman, born in 1907, moving to Paris, struggling in mid-life to gain salvation through writing, addressing the reader who provides what de Beauvoir calls "that impossible synthesis of absence and presence." The play begins with Violette snivelling and scribbling while the inner voices torment her. "You're wasting your time," says the mother. "You're too old to be wielding your pen like a sword, Don Quixote!" says her husband, Gabriel. "Are you sniffing? Hey writer, are you crying?" taunts Jean Genet.

The essence of the play for me is in the initial scene between Leduc and Genet, one of her many infatuations. She had a passion for homosexuals, for women, and for heterosexual men. Her ovaries are in her ears, she has a "sexual mechanism" in her head, "Eroticism for her...is...the master key to the world," writes de Beauvoir. Leduc's books were censored for their eroticism, specifically the sexual love between the schoolgirls, Thérèse and Isabelle in *Ravages*. "Being outrageous is not a woman's place," sneers Genet, moving ritualistically, light shining from above onto his shaven head. Speaking over a soundtrack of liturgical music, he intones, "Literature is ours, by divine right. An ancient and glorious heritage...a book is a potent thing: muscular, virile, seminal, penetrating the flesh through the holy ring of the anus... Our emblem of superiority over women." He is the personification of patriarchal sexism which both censors women out of existence and places self-censoring voices in their heads. Thief and homosexual, Genet is an outcast himself, but he is nevertheless triumphantly male. Despite his cruelty, he urges Violette on, beyond her snivelling: "Take the bull by the horns, defend yourself! Transcend!" By the end of the play she has,



Kim Renders (left) and Martha Cronyn in *Violette Leduc*.

to a large extent, transcended her emotional and societal circumstances. And in the process she has transcended the audience's censure through Marchessault's elucidation of her essential humanity and her universality as a symbol of the creative female spirit which is censored.

The final scene resembles the first, except that Violette has moved out into the world. She sits in the Café Flore where she has just met with her mentor, Simone de Beauvoir, who has encouraged her to write an autobiography. Violette begins to write, and the voices start up in her head, but this time she is not defeated. She goes on writing, defiantly. Leduc's triumph is the triumph of all women brought up in a sexist, oppressive society, in varying personal circumstances, from privilege to emotional and economic poverty, Leduc being on the latter end of the scale. The voices never go away, but we can learn to live with them. We can stop listening and being censored from within in our emotional and creative lives.

The play is structured in a series of episodic tableaux, presenting significant fragments of Violette's life, peopled with key characters such as her mother, her lover Hermine, her husband Gabriel, Jean Genet, the pederast Maurice Sachs who urges her to write, and of course Simone de Beauvoir and fellow writers Clara Malraux and Nathalie Sarraute.

Sado-masochistic and emotionally crippled, Violette is unable to sustain a relationship. Unfaithful to each new lover, she channels her insatiable eroticism into her writing, clearly depicted in a symbolic masturbation scene where she scrubs the floor with increasing rhythmic frenzy, verbalizing her orgasmic ecstasy to her manuscript as though it were her voyeuristic lover.

Kim Renders is a tour de force as Violette, putting a wry humour on the face of her suffering, evoking a delicate balance of toughness and vulnerability. And she is strongly supported by Martha Cronyn as her lover Hermine. Although the erotic power between the characters has not yet fully emerged, their scenes together are in every other way successful, particularly a scene at Schiaparelli's dress salon during which the effects of fashion, cosmetics and fitness propaganda on women are delightfully parodied.

Hermine's pain is palpable when Violette forces her to make love for the pleasure of a wealthy voyeur. The voyeur is hilariously played by Sky Gilbert, taking the edge of ugliness off the scene. The tangled emotional roots of Violette's whorish self-image are revealed here. She doesn't need the man's money. Hermine offers to pay for the champagne so they can leave. She has just bought her a dress at Schiaparelli's. It is a perverse attraction and identification with the man's power that draws Violette on into self-destruction and betrayal of her lover. It is pathological sado-masochistic behaviour.

Again this defiantly pornographic self-image emerges when she says to Maurice Sachs, "Writing is an act of prostitution... and you sell your charms. Every word is a come on. Come with me, adjective.... I'll show you a good time adjective. I'll drive you wild. How much? Oh, the price of the book about to be published."

Sky Gilbert also plays Maurice Sachs, a Jew about to leave occupied Paris, despite Violette's fears about the death camps. Gilbert manages to be simultaneously poignant and comic, and in fact provides a major part of the humour in the play.

In a scene in the Café Flore, Simone de Beauvoir, played to a T by Montréal actor Joan Heney, expresses impatience with Sartre's drug-induced hallucinations. In the next scene we meet Violette, recently escaped from a psychiatric institution, bathed in green light, battling with her demons on the edge of madness. She moves centre-stage into red light and hallucinates vampires on the ceiling of her room. With genuine hallucinations de Beauvoir has infinite patience and compassion. (The programme notes that this production is dedicated to Simone de Beauvoir, who died recently after a lifetime of work which has moved women forward, notably with her major work *The Second Sex*. In this play we see the personal expression of her ideals in the emotional, professional and financial support she provides Violette Leduc. De Beauvoir paid for Violette's hospitalization when in her darkest moments she required shock treatments and sleep therapy.)

Almost every scene contains connective images with, and echoes of, another — links which make implicit statements in a highly poetic manner. Genet's language does more

than characterize — it creates a complete aura around the man, played by Ian Wallace, whose movement and portrayal are masterful. As Violette's mother, Shirley Josephs does an excellent job on a switchboard operator comic monologue which does much to provide the flavour of post-war Parisienne literary society. She connects callers with such luminaries as Gallimard, André Breton, Max Jacob, Camus, Sartre, Cocteau, throwing in Sophocles and Euripides for ironic measure. John Blackwood plays an appropriately distant Gabriel, as well as a psychiatrist and an excruciatingly cruel hustler.

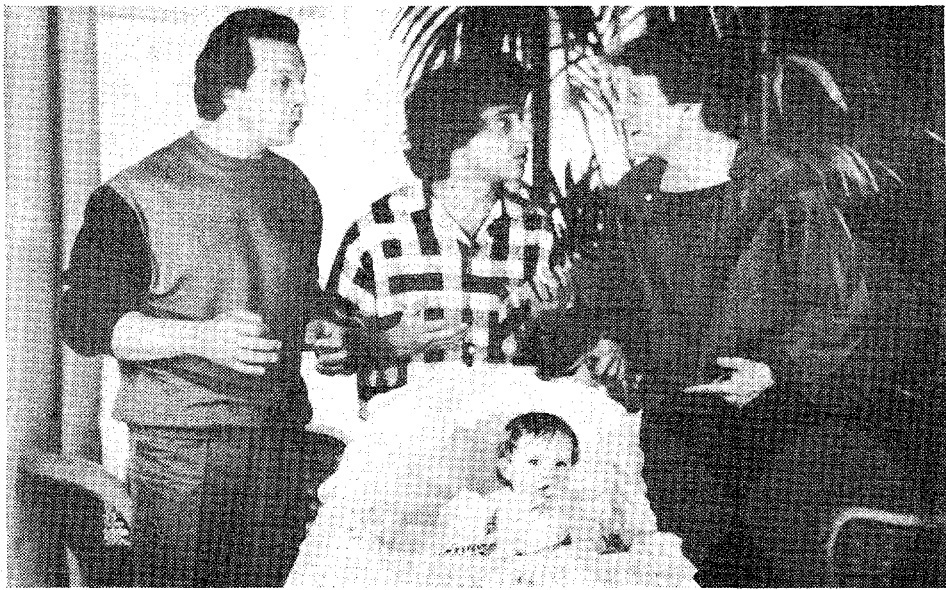
Cynthia Grant's direction is skillful and imaginative. She is backed up by a sound production team, with set and lighting design by Tanuj Kohli, stage management by Keltie Creed, costumes by Audrey Vanderstoop and sound design by Peter Chapman. The choice of set design is particularly interesting and unusual in that the audience is seated on opposite sides of the performing area and, while some of the action takes place in the open central area, the major tableaux are seen from the side or on a diagonal in one of two areas at right angles to the audience. The effect is to make the audience feel slightly voyeuristic, ducking and craning, becoming part of a play threaded through with the theme of voyeurism. The lighting is conducive to a hide-and-seek effect, as the actors move in and out of overhead spots, echoing the flitting in and out of Violette's consciousness of characters in the script — essentially, the play is a one-woman show with Violette bringing to life her memories and fantasies in the form of ephemeral glimpses of her fetish objects.

This is a difficult play to stage and Grant has precisely the light, and yet profoundly sensitive, directorial touch to pull it off. The costumes, music and sound effects contribute greatly to the creation of the Parisian ambience, and the lighting is at times other-worldly, as when Nathalie Sarraute enters Violette's apartment, intruding upon her mad monologue to a table and a chair: only Sarraute's feet are lit and Violette includes the feet in her crazed conversation before she fully connects with the presence of Nathalie. At the end of the play, as Violette writes against all odds, against the voices, the light intensifies to a white brilliance, reflecting her victory. Then the play ends in an abrupt blackout.

A major point of difficulty with the play, for actors, director and audience, is the intensely literary nature of the text. Here again the staging choices must be commended for reinforcing a kind of audience attentiveness which is rarely required in contemporary theatre. I was on the edge of my seat, intensely attuned both visually and aurally, entering into the world of a woman culturally and historically removed from me. A more familiar approach to the dramatization of the inner world these days is through the techniques of performance art, creating images with visuals and sound. But this heavily text-based play requires specifically intellectual concentration. It is a challenge to audience and actors alike, and the rewards are profound.

"It's because of women that you are so deranged," Gabriel tells Violette as a parting shot as he goes out alone after she has begged to go with him. The English word 'deranged' is specific and loaded compared to the more generalized 'deranger' which ranges in interpretation from 'to bother,' 'to disturb,' 'to upset' to 'to derange.' Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood's translation is insightful, here as elsewhere, pinpointing the fact that when women make real contact with each other, breaking the boundaries of institutionalized isolation, a derangement in the purest and most radical sense of the word does indeed occur, which turns the world right side up and begins the long slow process of feminist revolution.

(*The Edge of the Earth is Too Near, Violette Leduc* runs till June 1 at the Theatre Centre, 296 Brunswick Avenue, Toronto.)



Roommates (Roland Giraud, Michel Boujenah, André Dussollier) and baby (Jennifer Moret).

by Donna Gollan

Three Men and a Cradle, a French farce written and directed by Coline Serreau, has won three Cesar's (French Oscars): best film, best screenplay, and best supporting actor. It is a smash hit in France and is even being remade for the American market by Walt Disney Productions. Take my advice, see it now and brave the English subtitles; after all, this is no heavy duty "art film" but only a mild-

ly amusing human comedy. It is proving to have tremendous popular appeal even here, despite the rather snarky reviews by male mainstream critics who, not surprisingly perhaps, fail to see the humour in three grown men looking completely inept, or the attraction the average audience obviously feels for the ridicule of yuppie culture and a return to nurturing values.

The story is a charmingly simple one. Pierre, Michel and Jacques live in a fabulous

Three Men in a Fix

apartment and pursue beautiful women with near religious fervour. Jacques leaves on a three week holiday warning his roomies that a package will be delivered on Sunday and picked up again Thursday. Naturally, when a baby is left on the doorstep with a note consigning her to the care of Jacques, her father, Pierre and Michel assume Marie is the package. Chaos reigns. The two men take turns at the drug store learning intricate details of diapering and formula feeding from an ever-patient clerk. They spend four days attempting to answer the baby's every cry and getting in each other's way in a manner which can only be described as broad slapstick. Meanwhile a package of illicit drugs is delivered unnoticed.

Not surprisingly, by the time Thursday rolls around, they have learned a few skills, begun to spell each other off and developed a fondness for baby Marie. When the drug smugglers turn up at the door, they are patently horrified at being asked to take the baby. The scene in the doorway is a wonderful cinematic mirror for Pierre and Michel, as they gaze into a reflection of their own ter-

rified faces of some few days ago. Pierre astutely notices their sheer lack of comprehension, finds the real package and charges off to rescue "his" baby. His hue and cry involves the police and the second level of farce begins.

Pierre and Michel are plunged into a nightmarish world of police, drugs and thugs just as they are beginning to learn the basic skills of nurturing. In fact, their limitation to a traditionally "female" indoor world, the cunning manipulation they work on the police, and the increasing distance they produce from the all-male world of the thugs and police, begin to stand them in very good stead. The police do not look very closely at the trivial world of feedings and diapers and end up missing the drop entirely. The thugs, fortunately, have a woman on their side and the drugs change hands just in time for Jacques' return from holiday.

Fierce as mother bears with one cub between them, Pierre and Michel have learned one or two other "feminine" tricks as well. Instead of roaring at the hapless Jacques they subject him to the silent treatment, which later rises to the "hysteria" for which we women are traditionally blamed. Naturally, it takes Jacques very little time to catch the new hysterical mood of the household, possibly as he catches up with their level of sleep deprivation, and off he goes to scream incoherently at the friend who originally dropped the drug package in his absence. Part and parcel of what makes this film so enjoyable is the manner in which director Serreau holds up the learned (as opposed to instinctual) aspects of nurturing for our inspection and ridicule without causing them to lose an ounce of their value.

Just as overtly amusing as the gradual increase in their nurturing skills are the beginnings of the Consumer Urges which suddenly attack the men. From their earliest complaints about the construction of cheap diapers to the final scenes which show their bachelor pad completely taken over by baby equipment, clothes and toys, the three men obviously take every aspect of baby care which they learn dead seriously. A fuss is made over the baby's formula, the three-speed nipples, the special blender for her baby food, and her beautiful yuppie bath and crib as if it were impossible to separate good child care from material possessions. The three spell each other off on eight hour shifts and each develops his own fathering style, according to his personality. Still, money is no object to them and their baby is soon living in the lap of baby luxury.

Naturally this sets up mother, when she returns, for instant failure. Sylvie is a model who dumped the child on Jacques in order to punish him. She is overwhelmed by how much she missed the child, despite a very busy career. Taking Marie back to a small studio apartment, into which she has little hope of fitting all the gear which the men have acquired, she finds herself literally trying to do the work of three men plus her own career. Serreau manages to retain our sympathy for this young woman who, after all, deserted the prettiest baby in cinematic history, by giving us glimpses of her lifestyle as she pretends to be childless in order to get jobs and must rely on incompetent babysitters in order to keep them.

Meanwhile the men fall apart at the seams. Oh sure, they try to return to their former lifestyle but it is only now that we see the less romantic side of things. They find themselves leading a rather lonely and distanced male existence. Just as each was a different kind of father, so each suffers in character. Pierre broods over the rubber giraffe that featured in his first playful encounters with Marie. Michel stoops to trying to nurture his depressed roommates. Jacques becomes drunk and philosophical about Adam and Eve and the great ruse that men have been led to believe that life can be produced from a sterile rib.

The stage is set for the return of Sylvie and Marie in a scene which I have never seen topped at the movies for vulnerability and gentle humour. It is early in the morning and the three dash to the door, half-naked, to greet Sylvie-the-model looking completely frazzled. Never once do they heap scorn on her. In fact, they are quick to sympathize. They are ecstatic to welcome Marie back into their lives, however temporarily. It is perhaps appropriate that their celebration dance takes place in the kitchen, while Sylvie sleeps.

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Keys to Kidlit

Michele Landsberg's *Guide to Children's Literature*, Penguin, 1985, \$12.95.

Reviewed by Carroll Klein

I remember well the day I decided to join the library. I was eight, walking home from school, and as I passed the building that housed all those books I now believed I could read, I realized that I could have any of them. And so I went inside, in my innocence, and asked the librarian for a book.

I hadn't been raised in an educated or middle-class family that took for granted, as part of the enrichment package, weekly trips to the library to pick up books for the kids. All the adults in my family read, but nobody's taste was exactly cultivated; drug store novels abounded. But reading was considered a normal activity, like gardening or going to a hockey game, not the preserve of a cultural elite. I always had books of my own, and even though they may not have been classics, or the very latest of what was considered Good Literature for children, they left me with a sense that reading was a democratic activity.

The library, though, was an unexplored country, and I had chosen to go there all by myself. The librarian, wise woman that she was, let me take home a book though this was almost certainly against the rules without a parent's signature on the application card. I left the library dizzy with a sense of my own power, of the secrets about to unfold and the mysteries that would lay themselves open to my searching.

Michele Landsberg's wonderful new guide to children's books brought back to me the magic of my own childhood bibliophilia. Her passion illuminates every page; she acknowledges that books have shaped her life:

The books I read as a child transformed me, gave meaning and perspective to my experiences, and helped to mould whatever imaginative, intellectual or creative strengths I can lay claim to now.

The need for story is profoundly old. There is no time we can imagine when stories were not told. Myths and stories explained our origins, kept at bay the danger beyond the campfire circle, taught humans how to survive, passed on lore and created laughter. Lloyd Alexander, one of the great current writers of children's books, claims that the grammar of story, the shape of tales, is understood almost innately by children. What matters to kids is that story exists; they will come later to a critical view and to preferences, but in the beginning, most will accept whatever is offered.

Adults can play a powerful role in guiding children to reading habits that will inform their entire lives. Children develop values as they read, for books put them in touch with the human condition, broaden their perspectives, and help them to discover compassion. Books also help adults to pass on their culture, ideas, speech, heroes, and myths to the young who, in turn, become adults whose lives are shaped by a sense of continuity and belonging.

If children are raised with TV rather than books (and most are), their cultural touchstones are usually warped, numbed, and chaotic. Where, Landsberg asks, is there any room left for reflection, dream, and curiosity?

Her answer, of course, is in the imaginative world of books.

Landsberg writes at length of her own experiences as a young reader and as a mother anxious to instill in her children her own love of reading. She is clear, however, in defining the limits of her own enthusiasm. Love of books and reading is a fine thing to give to children, but demanding reading performance from children who are simply not ready, pressuring children to read books they're not interested in, or providing them only with books that have moralistic, instructive, or (and here we may all cringe a little) politically correct themes is the antithesis of what reading should be all about. Pleasure is the first principle. Landsberg quotes Jill Paton Walsh on earnest, instructive kidlit:

Though I think it is possible to learn from works of fiction, I don't think it possible to teach from them.... One does not rush to give *Anna Karenina* to friends who are committing adultery. Such impertinence is limited to dealings with children.

Landsberg's position on censorship of children's books is a liberal one. She believes that adults can tactfully intervene in "junk" read-

ing by offering a wider range of books without censoring kids' choices. She lashes out at the practice of books being pulled from shelves because of an offending whiff of adolescent sexuality and she is prepared to ignore some sexism and racial stereotyping in older books of literary merit and depth. Children, she feels, can make their own moral judgments. She recalls having read, as a child, a particular book that had anti-Semitic content, but since she knew that what was being said was wrong, it didn't concern her overly. This may be a rational, adult attitude to be held in the best of all worlds, but it makes me nervous. Jim Keegstra's students were encouraged to believe scurrilous anti-Semitic lies found in books; there was no liberal voice to balance, and a generation of racists was entrenched. Landsberg, however, is unbending in her belief in perspective and the role of the adult in helping to instill acceptable social views through discussion with the reading child.

The central part of this guide is broken down into chapters that discuss the genres of children's literature. Landsberg makes general comments about the subsets within the genres, condemning roundly, being snippy when she chooses, making no bones about what she considers personally offensive, and writing lyrically about the books she has loved as a child and as an adult.

The first two chapters of this section deal with books for beginners and first novels. The emphasis in both cases is on broadening the child's base of experience while assuring her that love and stability will always be there, and that she is worthy of love and trust. This is a period during which children are exploring their competence and testing out what they perceive as truths. Landsberg's commitment to the norm of a stable, two-parent home is much in evidence here, both in her point of view and in the books she recommends. Authors to watch for here are Laura Ingalls Wilder, Beverly Cleary, Joan Aiken, and Daniel Manus Pinkwater.

"Humour," Landsberg says, "can sputter with indignation and rage, and often does, but hatred is not funny." The chapter on humour focuses on books that are filled with a kind of hilarity and glee. Children are by nature optimistic and inventive; the books

discussed here reflect a manageably chaotic, upbeat world in which kids usually win the day and adults get their comeuppance. Florence Parry Heide and Russell Hoban (who also has written some of my favourite adult novels) have written some splendidly funny books for kids.

Children have personal, private lives that they must be allowed to nurture and explore. The quest for identity is another major category in this book. Landsberg looks at books that deal with children who are learning to recognize their own value and the value of those who are close to them, at books that explore building friendship and tolerating differences in others, and others in which children survive in adverse circumstances. L.M. Montgomery, William Mayne, Bernice Thurman Hunter, and Philippa Pearce are writers who can produce books of this sort without being patronizing or sentimental.

Alas, there is a real dearth of girls inhabiting adventure stories, but Landsberg ferrets out the best that exist and builds them in to a chapter on adventure writing. Here are stories of hardship, competence, and heroism. Most good adventure writing still comes from abroad, but Barbara Smucker's book *Underground to Canada* is discussed at length. Other favourite adventure authors include Arthur Ransome, Rosemary Sutcliff, and Emma Smith.

Good fantasy, whether directed at the children's or adult's market, is morally serious and must have an inner coherence and a natural order. Landsberg discusses fake fantasy as well, and points out that children who have been exposed to complex writing that deals with moral ambiguity will soon tire of the contrived, escapist plots of the imitators of this singular genre. Ursula Le Guin, Patricia Wrightson, Susan Cooper, and Mary Norton of *The Borrowers* fame are sure bets in this category. The following chapter on time travel introduces authors like Penelope Lively and Janet Lunn, the Canadian author of the extraordinary novel *The Root Cellar*.

There has been a veritable avalanche of "problem" novels for adolescents over the last few years, books that "pick away gloomily at the sores of the pubescent soul the way their adolescent subjects pick away at their complexions...." Not a pretty image, but it's

Michele Landsberg's Guide to Children's Books

With a treasury of more than 350 great children's books

certainly no more repulsive or offensive than many of these books. Obsessive navel gazing is not to be encouraged in Landsberg's canon; children and young adults should be "wonderfully distracted from self-concern." The Judy Blumes and S.E. Hinton of the writing world do nothing to enlarge their readers' lives. Good writers allow the reader to move out of herself, to explore other ways of being. There's a wonderful array of available authors who don't write about anorexia, being fat, having braces or involuntary erections or alcoholic parents. Of course such things exist in good books — or one must at least allow for their presence — but they carry no more and no less weight than they would in the real world. For books with complex levels of understanding about adolescent yearning, sexuality, passion, tension, alienation, look to writers such as Anita Desai, Jane Gardam, Alice Munro, Ouida Sebestyen, Virginia Hamilton.

No question about it, I'm a real fan of this book and I haven't even told you about the best part. The final section of the guide is an annotated list of children's books — good books, wonderful books — categorized by age. I've always paid attention to kids' books, but I'm humbled by how many authors I've never heard of and delighted by the treats I have in store. ●

Sam's War: Personal and Political

In Country by Bobbie Ann Mason. 1985, Harper and Row. \$22.95.

Reviewed by Lauren E. Wolk

It is ironic that a book about the war most Americans would rather forget is, in a word, unforgettable. Bobbie Ann Mason's *In Country* is a Vietnam war memorial of sorts. Like the black slabs that carve the Washington soil and tender the names of the Vietnam dead and missing, *In Country* does not glorify or commemorate. It puts forward, quite simply, the question Vietnam most inspires: "Why?"

Or rather, Sam, the 17-year-old daughter of a man KIAed before her birth, asks the questions. Why did her father go to Vietnam? What was he like? What was the war like? Why was he killed? Why does her uncle Emmett, with whom she lives, refuse to answer her questions about the war he somehow survived? How can he live a life so clearly and thoroughly influenced by Vietnam while conversely refusing to share his secrets? Why did her mother leave Hopewell, Kentucky, remarry, rebirth, and bury her past so cleanly? Above all, why does everyone else keep the silence she wants to break?

In Country is full of answers, but none of them the one Sam wants to hear. Her perceptions don't jive with reality, so — as far as Sam is concerned — reality is a lie. Ironically, Sam also doubts her own impressions: "I can't really see it," she says. "All I can see in my mind is picture postcards. It doesn't seem real. I can't really believe it was real." And Tom, the vet with whom Sam is so intrigued, replies, "It was real, all right.... You don't want to know how real it was."

But Sam really does want to know what Vietnam was like. *In Country* tells the story of Sam's struggle to understand the war and what it has done to the people she loves. More than that, it sheds new light on the pain of adolescence and draws parallels between

that pain and the suffering of adults who survived puberty but somehow fell victim to a second coming-of-age caused by the war. In their individual ways, the characters of *In Country* are trying to come to terms with post-war existence, to understand their post-war responsibilities: is it all right to forget, or is it better — more honest — to remember?

Sam, on the other hand, cannot forget something that ended before she was old enough to really experience its horror. So she fabricates, experiences vicariously, and invites television, radio, and literature to make their contributions to her collage of perceptions and impressions. To Emmett, Sam makes most of her pleas and vents most of her anger. "And what about me?" she asks him. "I feel like there's a big conspiracy against me. Like something the CIA would be in on." Sam grabbed up one of her Vietnam books from the table and shook it at him. "But I know about stuff that went on."

She watches M*A*S*H, devours the music of the sixties and seventies (especially the Beatles), conducts a life-long interview with vets and relatives of the dead and missing, and constructs a fragmented philosophy of war. She interprets every problem in her life, and in the lives of her Uncle Emmett and her mother, as direct results of the war. Emmett's pimples and gas she chalks up to Agent Orange, his nightmares, lethargy, and odd habits to the war in general. As Sam would have it, her mother's new marriage and second child constitute a retreat, a denial, an escape from the war, rather than a fresh and legitimate start. In the way of many adolescents whose lives centre on the self, Sam is selfish and uncompromising, quick to accuse others of cowardice and eccentricity simply because they will not, or cannot, confirm her views and expectations. To her boyfriend Lonnie she says:

"My mom said not to worry about what happened to Emmett back then, because the war had nothing to do with me. But the way

I look at it, it had *everything* to do with me. My daddy went over there to fight for Mom's sake, and Emmett went over there for Mom's sake and my sake, to get revenge. If you went off to war, I bet you'd say it was for me. But if you're planning on joining the Army, you might ask my opinion first. The ones who don't get killed come back with their lives messed up, and then they make everybody miserable."

In her actions and her thoughts she is as much a veteran as the true soldiers. And in her search to discover her father — the way he was, the way he felt — she relies far more on her own assumptions about war than on the subtle but revealing evidence that surrounds her. In a word, she glorifies him, and thereby diminishes the survivors.

And then she finds the only answer there is to the question of war. That there is, indeed, no answer. And she finds the answer to the question of her father. From honouring her father to despising the image she has unearthed in his wartime diary, Sam passes an important boundary. She finally understands, with a mixture of dismay and relief, that no one can know another person completely, that every person is something different to mother, father, wife, brother, and child, and that no matter how much she learns of the war, she will never know her father at all.

Bobbie Ann Mason has invented a plot that episodically promotes and resolves Sam's conflicts with herself and with those around her. The fantastic disharmony between a small southern town caught in a time warp, and a young woman plunging simultaneously into both past and future, makes *In Country* tantalizing. As Sam fights her own personal war, we find ourselves in country, and we cannot help but feel the quality of her pain.

Lauren Wolk is a language arts editor in Toronto.

A Slice of Martina

Martina by Martina Navratilova with George Vecsy, Knopf Books, 1985. \$24.75.

Reviewed by Sarah Eliot

Celebrities do not lead private lives. They are dissected in tabloids, held accountable to the public's expectations and, occasionally, served up cold in an ex-lover's fictionalized revenge. All of which is to say that, if and when they publish their own story, especially if they do so while still in the spotlight of stardom, it will not be read in a vacuum. So it is with Martina Navratilova's *Martina*. The slightly defensive tone of the work no doubt derives from an accurate perception that the autobiography will not be accepted as "the" word on Martina but as one possibility. She even refers to Rita Mae Brown's roman à clef, *Sudden Death*, in one passage:

when she wrote a novel about women's tennis — I'm told the main character is a tempestuous left-hander from Argentina...

Are we to believe that Martina has never read *Sudden Death*? Regardless, many people have, and promptly drew immediate correlations between Rita Mae's portrayal of the wealthy, expatriate Argentinian, left-handed, bisexual, female tennis player avidly pursuing the Grand Slam and the wealthy, exiled ex-Czech, left-handed, bisexual, female tennis player who successfully pursued the Grand Slam featured in *Martina*.

A more productive, and enlightening, comparison comes from studying the respective views of the relationship between the two women. In *Sudden Death* the academic Har-

riet all but renounces her career interests to follow her tennis player lover on tour, to support and nurture her. In *Martina*, the tennis player quite vehemently states that her game suffered because she sacrificed much of her concentration on tennis to the writer's interests:

She (Rita Mae) started prodding me: "Don't you want to learn anything? How can you stand just playing tennis all day?" And she started regulating our routine. We'd get up earlier, leave the hotel, try to do something every day.... But there were also times when I'd barely get to the courts in time for my match.

What is unmistakable in both books is each woman's unshakable and sincere belief that the other asked for too much, and that their respective professional lives suffered as a result of the over-reaching of the other.

This episode highlights a recurring motif in Navratilova's book: the ongoing attempt to balance relationships, personal growth and tennis in a manner as productive as possible. Not all her important relationships are discussed as sexual; indeed, they may not have been but they are all pictured as emotionally intense. Sandra Haynie is seen as quiet and supportive but she does not help Martina grow. Rita Mae gives excitement and intellectual stimulation, but she's bad for Martina's tennis game. Nancy Lieberman provides a competitive edge and complete devotion to sports but she ceases to be her own person. Renée Richards also emerges as subsumed in the Navratilova enterprise at the loss of her own distinct identity.

Unfortunately, all the women appear as one side or another of the same coin. Martina needs to focus, almost exclusively, on her game to be a champion. If the lover or friend participates wholeheartedly in this activity, then Martina becomes bored as she sees the other losing her individuality. Conversely, if the lover maintains autonomous interests, as Rita Mae seems to have done, then Martina's single-minded focus on tennis weakens. As her game deteriorates, the relationship which is seen to have precipitated the decline is cast off, not from boredom but from fear of professional failure.

Amateur autobiographies (those produced by people for whom writing is not their trade) fascinate because they often reveal much more than they ever set out to tell. I doubt if Martina Navratilova ever intended to convey to the reader a sense of the dichotomy in her personal relationships. Indeed, she re-



Martina Navratilova

peatedly sounds bewildered and confused when a relationship ends. Early on in her work, Martina confides in the reader her "ideal" relationship:

Grandma always gave me the feeling I was one of the most important people in her life. She never showed feelings of sadness over some of the sad things in her life, like the loss of her son and husband. She just loved me and encouraged me to enjoy life. Nobody has ever loved me so completely, so acceptingly, as Grandma. I only hope that some day somebody will.

Consciously, Martina never seems to realize that a "maternal" all-embracing, unquestioning love would ultimately bore an adult. Equally, full reciprocity isn't seen to be possible within a purely competitive and demanding professional life. The conflict — and it is presented as such — between the personal and the professional dominates the book. There seems to be little doubt that the periods of greatest athletic accomplishment coincide with the quiescent times in her personal relationships. Similarly, the intellectual and emotional growth Martina openly attributes to her time with Rita Mae corresponds to the nadir of her tennis life. In stereotyped terms, Martina, as a professional, needs a "wife" but, personally, becomes bored with

being a "husband." The golden mean becomes depressingly elusive.

Unfortunately, whether Martina articulates it or not, her views of herself seem circumscribed by the kind of conventional thinking that pigeonholes the roles of wife or husband. In her prologue she states she was told to play like a boy and did. As far as one can determine, this involves an "aggressive" serve and volley approach capped off with a burning desire to win. Is this a "masculine" way of playing? We know that Chris Evert may wait demurely at the baseline and always be a good sport; we also know she wants to win every bit as much as Martina. Martina understands this as well, even though she is hurt by, and questions, the public's perception of All-American Chris. She too participates in the cataloguing of Chris as "feminine." Moreover, Martina seems to accept that these equations diminish or threaten her own sexuality. Why else are we treated to pages of Martina discussing what makeup she now wears and how she takes care when photographed? I would hazard the safe guess that an integral part of her self-esteem has never recovered from being continually mistaken for a boy as a child. While part of her relentlessly plays catch up in the quest for "femininity," another part accepts the "masculine" label, thus predetermining integrative failure. Martina discusses and sincerely espouses acceptance of the individual: the tone of the book suggests she has not internalized the lesson. It is of no importance whether Martina wears makeup; rather, it is depressing that she feels she must tell us that she does.

Conflicts such as these are never resolved in the course of *Martina*, not surprising since Martina is still in the middle, or muddle, of these conflicts herself. There remains the question of, and controversy around, Martina's sexuality. She states she is bisexual although she finds the word "creepy." Rita Mae's fictional tennis player is a lesbian who finds the concept, and public reaction, frightening. One can accept Martina's definition of her sexuality while fairly observing that all of her important emotional relationships (excluding familial and professional) discussed in the book are with women. It also seems evident that Martina finds bisexuality less threatening to her own concept of femininity. One can only define oneself as one sees oneself. Others can and will define and evaluate as they deem accurate. Ultimately, an autobiography is only one version of reality.

Sarah Eliot is a civil servant with an interest in tennis.

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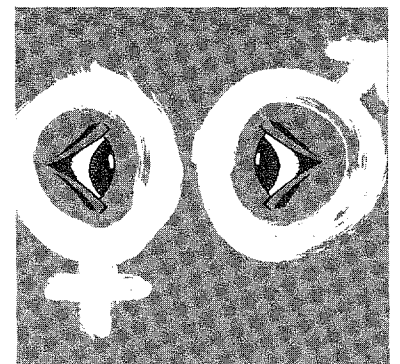
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• **Sunday, June 1:** "Shutterhappy Seniors." Sparkes Gallery presents a group exhibition of senior citizens' photography. Sparkes Gallery, 693A Queen St. West. Info: 368-6756. To **Monday, June 30.**



• **Sunday, June 1:** "Women and Poverty in the 80s." A women's forum presented by Toronto Arts Against Apartheid Festival Foundation. Panel discussion featuring Leah Tutu, Marlene Philip and others. Cultural Performance featuring Gay Allison, Faith Nolan and many more. Toronto City Hall Council Chambers. Doors open 12 noon. Free. Daycare by advance reservation: call 495-8496 or 591-1639.

Week of June 2

• **Monday, June 2:** The Women's Group, an open lesbian discussion group meets at 519 Church St. Community Centre. 8 pm. Info: 923-2778. Also **Mondays, June 9, 16, 23 and 30.**

• **Tuesday, June 3:** "Speak Out for Choice — The Abortion Law on Trial." Come see the video documenting the tribunal in which women's personal testimonies bear witness to the injustice of the abortion law. 7 pm. DEC, 229 College St. Info: Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, 532-8193, or 531-2369.

• **Tuesday, June 3:** "A Wedge of Night," Toronto's only live, improvisational continuing soap serial is moving to larger, grander premises. Enjoy Passion, Romance, Mystery, Intrigue, Good Music and Good Times every Tuesday. Lee's Palace, 529 Bloor St. West. 8 pm. \$5. Info: 536-0471. Also **Tuesdays, June 10, 17 and 24.**

• **Tuesday, June 3:** Lesbian Phone Line open tonight for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. 533-6120. Also **Tuesdays, June 10, 17 and 24.**

• **Tuesday, June 3:** Lesbian and Gay Youth Toronto are looking for more young women (under 25) to join their support group. 519 Church St. Community Centre. 7:30 pm. Info: 923-2778. Also **Tuesdays, June 10, 17 and 24.**

• **Tuesday, June 3:** The Women's Information Line is open from 7-9 pm. Messages may be left at any time. New number: 598-3714. Also **Tuesdays, June 10, 17 and 24.**

OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

TORONTO WOMEN'S EVENTS CALENDAR

June 1986

Compiled by Catherine Maunsell

• **Wednesday, June 4:** Christine Donald will read poems from her new book *Fat Woman Measures Up*, soon to be published by Ragweed Press. Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord St. 6:30 pm. Info: 922-8744.

• **Thursday, June 5:** Lesbian Phone Line open tonight for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. 533-6120. Also **Thursdays, June 12, 19 and 26.**

• **Thursday, June 5:** Women and Health: Finding Our Strengths. An educational forum for women's health issues. Topic: Women and Depression. 12 noon and again at 6:30 pm. Cummings Auditorium, Women's College Hospital, 76 Grenville St., Toronto. \$5.

• **Friday, June 6:** Susun S. Weed, author of "Wise Woman Herbal for the Childbearing Year," lectures on Healing Traditions: Making Sense of Conflicting Claims." Deer Park Library, 40 St. Clair Ave. East. 7 pm. Info: 929-9631.

• **Friday, June 6:** Launching of The Company of Sirens, a new feminist theatre. Party and performance with Lina Chartrand, Shawna Dempsey, Cynthia Grant, Amanda Hale, Peggy Sample, Lib Spry. 8 pm. The Theatre Centre (Poor Alex), 296 Brunswick. \$4 in advance (Women's Bookstore, Glad Day), \$5 at the door.

• **Saturday, June 7:** "Wise Woman Herbal Medicine," a 2-day workshop covering traditions in herbal medicine, finding medicinal herbs in the city (a "weed walk"), techniques for drying and preparing herbs, holistic and natural ways to approach health problems. Info: 929-9631. To **Sunday, June 8.**

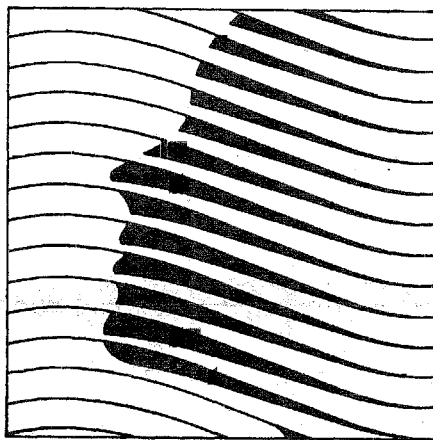
• **Sunday, June 8:** Canadian Action for Nicaragua (CAN) hosts an afternoon of international feminist films and entertainment, a benefit for the Simone de Beauvoir Women's Tour which will be visiting Nicaragua this August. Cinéma Lumière, 290 College St. 2 pm. \$7 (\$5 students, seniors and unemployed). Tickets available at Toronto Women's Bookstore and DEC.

Week of June 9

• **Tuesday, June 10:** Judy Brown, singer/songwriter, performs at the Free Times Cafe. 320 College St. 9:30 pm. \$5 minimum. Info: 967-1078. Also **Wednesday, June 11.**

• **Wednesday, June 11:** NFB screens "Change of Heart," a drama about the disintegration of a loveless marriage focusing on a wife's right to share in family profits and her re-entry into the workforce. NFB Theatre, 1 Lombard St., 12:15 pm. Free. Info: 973-0895.

• **Thursday, June 12:** Women and Health: Finding Our Strengths. An educational forum for women's health issues. Topic: Finding the Balance. 12 noon and again at 6:30. Cummings Auditorium, Women's College Hospital, 76 Grenville St. \$5.



• **Friday, June 13:** Women's Independent Thoughtz (WITZ), a discussion/ seminar group for the exchange of ideas and creative endeavours in art, literature, philosophy and political thought. Topic: Musical Smorgasbord. 7 pm. Info: 973-0895.

• **Saturday, June 14:** Caring and Contradictions, a day of workshops for feminists who choose to relate intimately with men followed by an evening program for women and men. Registration forms available from the Toronto Women's Bookstore (upstairs), or Side by Side, 626-5465.

• **Saturday, June 14:** Benefit dance for the Louis Riel Teacher's Brigade — help build a school in Nicaragua. Live music, cash bar, raffle. Ukrainian Labour Temple, 300 Bathurst St. 8:30 pm. \$6 door (\$5 at DEC and Drum Travel).

• **Saturday, June 14:** The second annual fund-raising yard sale for the Canadian Women's Movement Archives. 9 am-5 pm, 15 Washington Ave. (near Spadina and Bloor). To donate items call: 597-8865.

Week of June 16

• **Wednesday, June 18:** Information and registration night for Working Skills for Women — free day or evening program to acquire or update skills in computer awareness, mathematics and career planning. YWCA, 80 Woodlawn Ave. East. 6:30-9:30 pm. Info: 961-8100.

• **Wednesday, June 18:** NFB screens "The Third Person," an exploration of the chaos experienced by two parents following the birth of their first child. Also, "The Start of a Lifetime," showing one family's child rearing practices, and "Every Child." NFB Theatre, 1 Lombard St. 12:15 pm. Free. Info: 973-0895.

• **Thursday, June 19:** "WACCO Tour comes to Toronto," featuring Cathy Mackay, Sherry Shute, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Ahdri Zhina Mandela and Makka Kleist. The Pine Tree, 650 1/2 Queen St. West. Info: 925-6568. Also **Friday, June 20.**

• **Sunday, June 22:** Beaches Garden Party. The Lesbian and Gay Couples Group invites you to meet other couples in the community. Info: Bob or Ron, 591-6724.

Week of June 23

• **Tuesday, June 24:** Singer/songwriter Ingrid MacDonald performs at Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. 9:30 pm. 5 minimum. Info: 967-1078. Also **Wednesday, June 25.**

• **Tuesday, June 24:** Pornography workshop with American activist Nikki Craft. Slide show and discussion. 7:30 pm. Cumberland Room, International Students' Centre, 33 St. George St. Sponsored by the Women's Centre at U of T and OPIRG. Free. All welcome.

• **Wednesday, June 25:** NFB screens "Feeling Yes, Feeling No," a sexual assault prevention program for young children. NFB Theatre, 1 Lombard St. 12:15 pm. Free. Info: 973-0895.

• **Thursday, June 26:** Persimmon Blackridge, Vancouver artist and co-author of "Still Sane" will be in Toronto at A Space for a screening of the "Still Sane" video. Discussion to follow. 183 Bathurst, 8 pm. \$2 members, \$4 non-members.

• **Saturday, June 28:** Booksigning with Persimmon Blackridge, co-author of "Still Sane." At the Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord Street, Toronto. 3 pm-4 pm. 922-8744.

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