

INPUT



Sistren: Jamaican feminist theatre collective SEE STORY PAGE 11.

INSIDE BROADSIDE

FEATURE

THIN ICE: A theatre production touring high schools, Thin Ice shows teenagers a slice of reality, and confirms every parent's worst fears: it's all about sexual coercion and date rape, says writer Helen Lenskyj. Page 8.

NEWS

DEAN DRAMA: A group of women lawyers and law students has launched a Human Rights complaint claiming individual and systemic discrimination against women. Called MAC, the group formed after Mary Jane Mossman was *not* appointed Dean of Osgoode Hall Law School. Judy Parrack reports. Page 3.

WELCOME WORKERS? Immigrants are "welcomed" to the country and then often not protected by our Employment Standards Act. A group called INTERCEDE has been lobbying, often successfully, to improve the working conditions of domestic workers. Shirin Perston reports. Page 4.

MOVEMENT MATTERS: Read Kay Macpherson's report on women at NATO in June; read about Wardair's flight attendant policies; about an anthology about daughters of alcoholics; and more. Page 7.

COMMENT

BORDER SKIRMISHES: Canada Customs officials are stopping so-called "obscene" lesbian and gay material from crossing the border. Most titles are later released, reports Ingrid MacDonald, but the message is clear. Page 4.

SEXUAL INTRUSION: Women gathered in Toronto to protest the number of recent rapes. When a man exposed himself at the demo and police refused to lay charges, it was clear to the women that men, including police, protect each other. Melanie Randall comments. Page 5.

NO AGREEMENT IN STRUGGLE: Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics member Lynn Lathrop criticizes Nancy Nichol's video series on Canada's abortion struggle for misrepresenting the facts and negating the work of a strong women's movement. Movement Comment, page 6.

ARTS

LOOKING AT LOLITA: Nightwood Theatre's "The Last Will and Testament of Lolita" rewrites Nabokov's story of a "nymphet" from a perspective of 30 years later. Reviewed by Margaret Gail Osachoff. Page 10.

INNA ALL A WI: Jamaican feminist theatre group Sistren performed their play "Muffet: Inna All a Wi" at the Popular Theatre Festival in Nova Scotia, and gave a drama workshop in Toronto. Reports by Amanda Hale and Lina Chartrand. Page 11.

BLUEFISH COVE: Half the Sky, a feminist theatre group from Hamilton, Ont., performed "Last Summer at Bluefish Cove," a play about a lesbian extended "family." Reviewed by Susan Baillie and Gay Bell. Page 12.

UNDER TONGUE: Nicole Brossard's poem *Sous la langue*, translated by Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, is the first book of Libby Oughton's new imprint, gynergy, read at the opening of Montréal feminist bookstore L'Essentielle. Betsy Nuse reports. Page 12.

DYKEVERSIONS: Reviewer Marilyn Murphy approached this anthology of lesbian short fiction expecting to be disappointed, but was surprised: "Almost everything about the book pleases me." Page 13.

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OUTSIDE BROADSIDE: Don't miss this month's calendar of Toronto women's events, for July 1987. Page 15.

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LETTERS**Sweet Reason?****Broadside:**

As a member of the Immigrant Women and Women of Colour Caucus at the National Action Committee on the Status of Women Annual General Meeting, I would like to respond to two articles in your June 1987 issue, the first by Greta Hofmann Nemiroff, and the second by Margaret Buist.

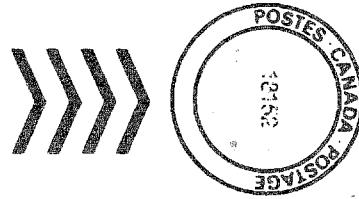
Glenda Sims, President of the Congress of Black Women, in her keynote address spoke strongly of the need to integrate an anti-racist perspective throughout the policies and structures of the organization. She challenged NAC to respond to the concerns and issues of all women, including women of colour. She warned of the dangers of ghettoizing our concerns in one committee (the Immigrant and Visible Minority Women's Committee) and allowing NAC to assume that our issues are therefore being addressed. Fighting racism is everyone's responsibility. NAC must recognize this if it is ever to be truly representative of all women.

Nemiroff's article "Striving to Survive Sweet Reason" gave the impression that it was women of colour who moved a resolution that the name of the committee be changed to the committee on ethnocentrism and racism. This was not the case. If my memory serves me correctly, it was Nemiroff who brought this up, and a delegate sitting with her who made the motion. This was done without any consultation with the caucus or the committee. Women of colour and immigrant women are not a homogeneous group. We have differing political strategies and perspectives. It is presumptuous to state what we as a group want or think without consulting us. A member of the committee spoke against the resolution asking that it be referred back to the Immigrant Women and Women of Colour Caucus, where the women involved would make the decision. Nemiroff witnessed this referral, and should have had the respect to speak to Caucus members before writing an inaccurate report. She should recognize that misrepresenting something as significant as the manner of our continuing role in NAC could be quite destructive to our ongoing involvement.

The following is the Caucus's decision, which was part of a letter sent to the NAC Executive after the 1987 AGM:

"The committee will continue its work as long as is necessary and until Immigrant and Visible Minority Women member groups collectively evaluate that a successful integration of issues of interest is achieved within NAC.

Participants agreed that, since the com-



mittee was established, more groups representing Immigrant and Visible Minority Women's interests are now participating in the work of NAC. As it was clarified, the role of the committee will be:

- 1) To provide NAC with the Immigrant and Visible Minority Women's perspective on issues that NAC addresses
- 2) To promote the specific issues affecting Immigrant and Visible Minority Women
- 3) To help other NAC committees integrate these issues in their work
- 4) To recommend actions to be taken by NAC, in order to deal with these issues

It was recognized that Immigrant and Visible Minority Women members of NAC will support the work of the committee, but they should also be actively involved in the work of the other committees. This involvement is necessary in order to achieve a successful integration of the specific issues affecting Immigrant and Visible Minority Women, in the work of the other committees."

I would also like to mention that women of colour do not need to be praised by white women for the manner in which we speak. I find it extremely patronizing. Nemiroff may be so surprised that she had to mention the "eloquence with which women of colour spoke," but unfortunately we are not surprised by this all too common response. It was also she who challenged the right of caucuses to meet to discuss policies and candidates for elections, arguing that this would be in contravention of NAC's regulation against campaigning. The chair ruled against her, and our caucus as well as others were allowed to discuss what we chose. If she is truly interested in empowering individual delegates, most of whom have never met each other before, trying to obstruct the right to discussion in caucus is not helpful.

Inaccurate reporting of our issues surfaced again in Margaret Buist's article "Affirmative Accessibility." She claims that women of colour do not want our issues to be aligned with those of immigrant women, and that the NAC executive was directed to change the name of the Immigrant and Visible Minority Women's

committee. This is incorrect. We may speak "eloquently," but no one seems to hear what we say. This was not the position taken by the caucus. It is up to us to make our own decisions, and unfortunately this type of statement could be taken as an example of the divisive tactics that are often used to separate us from those with whom we choose to work.

I hope that in future reporting, Nemiroff and Buist get their facts straight by checking with the women involved, before commenting on our perspectives and positions.

One final note, the caucus was larger this year than in 1986, another inaccuracy in *Broadside's* reporting.

Judy Vashti Persad
Women Working with Immigrant Women
Toronto

Broadside:

I am indeed curious to know more about the "sweet reason" Greta Hofmann Nemiroff is struggling to survive (see "NAC: Striving to Survive Sweet Reason," *Broadside*, June 1987 at the annual general meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

Nemiroff makes repeated references to the dichotomy of "us-them": this dichotomy I asserted in reference to both women of colour and to what she terms "specific interest groups" whom she considers unduly beset by the "tyranny of the politically correct." With somewhat skillful manipulation of language, Nemiroff seems bent on reducing all political discussion and debate to the level of personal conflict and power-mongering. We are very familiar with this kind of tactic: it's usually called propaganda, and is frequently deployed by established institutions—like organized electoral political parties. The purpose of this kind of tactic is to stifle genuine political discussion, to enforce a single agenda, and to redefine difference as hostile dissent and threat. Let's not forget that the women's movement is often reconstructed by the Mulron administration, among others, as a "single interest group."

In her article, Nemiroff claims that women of colour must be content with the "appropriate gestures of concern and agreement" which were rendered in response to the strong critique of NAC's failure to integrate an anti-racist politics. Nemiroff then goes on to offer a weakly reasoned argument about why NAC cannot address the issues raised by the women of colour caucus: "It is not clear how the problems will or can be resolved within NAC whose slim resources and atomization membership militate against dialogue which

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EDITORIAL**Rightfully Proud**

Festive and upbeat, Toronto's Lesbian and Gay Pride Day is a time of celebration for the many vibrant individuals and diverse groups who live, love and agitate in this city. Rightfully Proud (this year's theme) is an opportunity for lesbians and gay men to come together to flaunt it, as it were, in a celebration of our sexualities and the joy they bring to our lives.

A rightfully proud romp is just what the doctor might have ordered now. Social fear of AIDS has given homophobia an unprecedented momentum, in the media and from the right. Lesbians share with gay men the role of being targets of social prejudice that is expressed as violence. Gays and lesbians, although protected in Ontario by recently installed anti-discrimination clauses, are discovering that legislation is only the beginning of a huge task—changing dominant social values.

As the number of Toronto's lesbians and gays increases, the community is being recognized as a constituency worth wooing. This year, along with the live music and the outdoor fair, several politicians have been given an opportunity to court the crowd. Provincial members Susan Fish (PC) and Ian Scott (Lib) who supported the sexual orientation amendment to the Ontario Human Rights Code will be on

hand to wish well and no doubt to remind residents of the upcoming election.

Corporate wooing will take place in the form of a Molson's hospitality unit. Molson's sponsorship of Lesbian and Gay Pride Day has raised as many eyebrows as it will glasses. Molson's, a Canadian company with an interest in making friends in the lesbian and gay community, is nonetheless the owner of the Canadian brewing rights for Coors beer. For many years, our lesbian and gay counterparts south of the border have been actively boycotting Coors because of that company's anti-gay, anti-union and pro-military practices, and because of the Coors family's explicit links to the Moral Majority. Pride Day is caught on the horns of a dilemma that is, often enough, the price of a corporate sponsorship. Put at odds with the lesbian- and gay-initiated boycott (that last summer was an important issue amongst bar goers) Pride Day has not yet decided that price is too high. Molson's meanwhile is willing to market one line of their product against another, if it means keeping the peace: ironically they're supplying the stickers for this year's Boycott Coors campaign.

The Pride Day committee has been wrestling with something that has been a fact of life

in the women's movement: community countability. We are glad to see that the committee has recently amended its childcare policy, so that it now will cover the full cost of childcare for the caretakers of children. As community becomes more sensitive to the differences among us, we look forward to the when children are not only paid for, but welcomed by on-site activities. This however, is responsibility not only of the organizing group but of the community as a whole, which in give as clear a message to children as to organizing members that children are welcome as full members of our community. Is it emblem of our current political approach the wading pool area of Cawthra Park to be a child's space on Pride Day and become a beer garden with an age restriction in effect?

As feminists, we look forward to this opportunity to celebrate and liberate. *Broadside* be there as always with our newspapers subscription discounts. This year we'll be giving watermelon slices to complement the theme of our buttons, which say, "Fem are everywhere. . . They read *Broadside*." wish a joyous and happy day to all lesbians and gay men.

Discriminating Decision

by Judy Parrack

On May 15, 1987, York University President Harry Arthurs announced that James MacPherson would be the new dean of Osgoode Hall Law School, effective January 1, 1988.

The applicants for the job were numerous, but the main candidates for the position included Mary Jane Mossman, Associate Dean of the Law School, and James MacPherson who presently works for Chief Justice Brian Dickson of the Supreme Court of Canada. The announcement of MacPherson's appointment both saddened and angered women and men throughout the legal community, many of whom had hoped, and even assumed, that Professor Mossman would be the new dean.

The question that remains is, "How could this have happened?" The answer is both simple and complex; the legal profession is structured in such a way that it discriminates against women both on an individual basis and on a systemic level. This answer fueled a group of feminist lawyers, law students and legal academics to launch a formal complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission stating that the promotional practices (both the criteria and the process) of the University were and are individually and systemically discriminatory.

A few facts to broaden the picture: of the numerous law schools in Canada, only two have female deans—the University of Calgary and Laval University in Montreal. Osgoode Hall Law School, approaching its 100th birthday, has never had a woman dean, even though the number of female law students has increased to almost half of the student population. No Ontario law school has ever had a woman dean, although Ontario has the largest number of women in the profession. Women also remain poorly represented as judges in the province. Of the 45 full time faculty members at Osgoode, only seven are women.

Throughout the search process, Professor Mossman had the support of the faculty, the students and the legal community at large. The majority of the faculty voted in favour of her appointment; the students sent numerous letters, some with over 100 signatures, to the search committee and to President Arthurs; letters from around the country were sent in support of Professor Mossman's candidacy. His overwhelming support was ignored.

The criteria used by the search committee in the selection of the dean falls into three main categories: scholarship, administrative abilities, and teaching. A line-by-line analysis of the resumes submitted by the two candidates indicates that Professor Mossman excelled in all of these areas; she was in fact the "perfect" candidate. As well as excelling in these "male" defined areas, Professor Mossman had demonstrated her commitment to the legal community through her work with Legal Aid, Social Welfare and women's equality rights. She has introduced courses at Osgoode which allow for the critical analysis of the "maleness of law" and provided many women students at the school with a voice which is not only heard but respected.

It should be noted that the last three decanal appointments at the Law School have been internal candidates, one of which was President Arthur himself. This tradition was broken with the appointment of Mr. MacPherson. President Arthurs has justified this "break with tradition" by stating that Osgoode required a person with "new" ideas who could lead Osgoode in "new" directions. The irony of this is that Professor Mossman has brought new ideas into the Law School through her introduction of a feminist analysis and curriculum.

It is a lesson to women that even when we play the male game according to male rules, men have the power to change the rules to preserve their domination of the legal profession. As Professor Mossman stated in *The Globe and Mail*, an "insider" was actually chosen; she was in fact the "outsider." Her gender and her commitment to equality and social justice has placed her "outside" what is valued by the male legal system.

Since the announcement that a formal complaint would be launched by a group of women, affectionately called MAC (Mossman Action Committee), the reactions have been mixed. There is support for the action around the country, and the number of women joining the group continues to grow on a daily basis. Although Professor Mossman is not herself a complainant, she has both publicly and personally given her support.

Many women have expressed their concern that this action may do more harm than good. But since women face sex discrimination every day in the legal profession, the harm has already been done and it continues to be done. Men, either consciously or unconsciously, have created a legal system that functions to keep women out of the highest levels of the profession. As women, we can commit ourselves to our work, yet the rewards will always be less even when our work is more. That is the harm. This action can only be good for women; it sends a clear message to those in control that we are not willing to accept any decision that is premised on sex discrimination.

Many people have stated that we will lose this action, and this loss will have negative repercussions for all women, whatever their profession. In any litigation there is the chance that one will lose, but this does not and should not prevent anyone from bringing a claim which is well founded in legal substance. There is a fear that this litigation will rock the boat, and many women will fall out, but it should be remembered that until we control the boat equally with men we can be displaced at any time, litigation or no litigation. During the press conference which announced the complaint, Toronto lawyer Mary Lou Fassel was asked whether or not she believed this action was winnable; her response was an unqualified, "Absolutely!" This action is an indication that, as women, we can be proactive, challenging a system that continually tries to belittle our achievements and our excellence.

Judy Parrack is a recent Osgoode Hall graduate.



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FOR MARY

Some of you may know that Mary Hassard has been unable to work since developing breast cancer two years ago. Currently she is undergoing immune augmentative therapy with Dr. Lawrence at Berton in the Bahamas. This treatment is very costly and not covered by OHIP, and Mary is very much in need of financial assistance.

As her friends, we are asking you to contribute whatever you can afford to enable her to continue her treatment. Please make your cheque payable to "DOREEN CRYSTAL" (FOR MARY), 3000 Bathurst Street, Unit 1009, Toronto, Ontario, M6B 3B4.

Your kindness and positive thoughts will surely help her.

Domestic Stress

by Shirin Perston

You have just come from the Philippines to Canada, the land of opportunity. You will receive a net minimum wage paycheque of \$476 a month; \$238 has been taken by your employer from your gross salary for room and board, and the government has taken \$113. You will need every cent of your \$476 for supporting your children overseas and the luxury of an occasional chance to hug them. In order to qualify for landed status you will need to spend money on educational upgrading and you must build a bank account to show immigration officials you can be self sufficient. You will also need to clothe yourself and possibly buy your own food because your employer's diet is strange, and familiar foods are a link to home.

Welcome "foreign domestic worker" to Canada: your troubles have just started. We need you to do the job that pays poorly and has little prestige and that we don't want anyway. However we will make it very difficult for you to become a landed immigrant in case you get ideas about having paid your dues and moving on to better paying jobs that we may want. We want you to work long hours and not complain because you are "one of the family." We deny you the right to unionize and we will not legalize overtime pay for you. We expect you to be happy in taking care of our children, our house and our meals.

* * *

Approximately two-thirds of domestic workers in Canada live in Ontario and of this population of 65,000, approximately 80% are immigrant women. Many come from the Philippines and the Caribbean. In November 1979, concerned individuals in Toronto founded the

International Coalition to End Domestic Workers' Exploitation (INTERCEDE). Through their efforts, and the support of groups such as the National Congress of Black Women, the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues, the Ontario Federation of Labour, the YWCA of Metropolitan Toronto, the NDP, and others, the mood of the nation slowly changed.

INTERCEDE developed good relations with the mainstream and ethnic press and slowly some of the horror stories started coming out: the fact that domestic workers were isolated in the employer's home and unable to determine what their community support systems were; the fact that there were no legal support systems; the discrimination domestic workers faced as women and as immigrants; the desperation of being abused but being afraid to report it for fear of deportation, the punishment of perpetual poverty; the tiredness of waking with the children, caring for them all day and doing housework, and, when the employers came home, continuing with cooking and cleaning, with perhaps further babysitting in the evening while the employer socialized; the deplorable accommodation arrangements such as a bed next to the furnace or waiting for everyone to determine their bedtime before being able to go to sleep on the couch; the lack of privacy or dignity; the inability to make social plans, with the employer requiring your services on weekends; the worry that Immigration will deny you landed status because you have not had the time to develop community ties or complete upgrading; feeling torn with anger at the situation but love for the employer's children; feeling guilty that you are neglecting your own children; feeling despair that your dream for your family will never be realized.

INTERCEDE's continuous lobbying since 1979 has resulted in domestic workers coming under the protection of a number of laws in Ontario. In January 1981 they were included in some of the provisions of the Employment Standards Act with a minimum wage that was lower than that accorded the rest of the population. In 1985 they were finally given the right to be equally poor with the minimum wage. In November 1981, Immigration announced a new policy to allow temporary domestic workers to apply for landed status from within Canada, under relaxed criteria. In June 1982 the Human Rights Code recognized the need for a Service Unit to help domestics work their way through the bureaucratic nightmare, and in January 1986 INTERCEDE became eligible for regular funding for the Service Unit. In April 1985 the Workers Compensation Act extended coverage to domestic workers. These victories were in recognition of the fact that domestic workers were indeed workers, whether or not they worked in the home or whether it was traditional "women's work."

However, the stigma persists and numerous rights have yet to be won. In August 1985 Judith Ramirez, the ever patient but persistent coordinator of INTERCEDE, presented a brief to the Ontario Minister of Labour, Bill Wrye, addressing the following problems that have yet to be resolved:

- The weekly room and board deduction in Ontario is \$55 while in Manitoba and Quebec, with the same minimum wage, the deduction is 38% and 67% less respectively. Domestics often have little say in where they live or what they eat, and the Employment Standards Branch refuses to arbitrate disputes concern-

ing the actual quality of room and board. It was recommended that the deduction either be reduced or disallowed.

- The definition of a babysitter is someone who attends to the needs of a child more than 75% to 80% of the time. A section of the Employment Standards Act exempts employers from having to keep records of hours worked by their live-in help, and babysitters are totally excluded from the Act. Domestic workers who are actually hired under the term "babysitters" cannot prove that housekeeping is an integral part of their chores and through this loophole lose out on the protection of the Act.

- The Labour Relations Act specifically states that it does not apply to a domestic employed in a private home. Although it is unlikely that most domestic workers will ever have the time or energy to form a union and bargain with their employers, it is an affront that they are denied the right as it maintains the image that they are not real workers.

Domestics, while covered by the minimum wage provisions of the Employment Standards Act, are not covered by the overtime provisions (until recently, see Note). The regulation only requires 48 hours off per week, leaving 120 unregulated hours. Should a domestic worker be on call for all this time, her minimum wage in fact would not be \$4.55/hour but rather a mere \$1.60/hour based on the 44 hour work week. This exploitation could conceivably be mitigated if employers were forced to pay overtime, in which event they would probably be more

• continued page 14

Customary Bias

by Ingrid MacDonald

At our borders, graphic and written documents about gay and lesbian life, sex and health, are being detained by Canada Customs—an agent of the federal government—either temporarily for inspection, or indefinitely once inspections lead to the labelling of "obscene." In doing so, members of the civil service have found a form of harassment that is subtle, time consuming and costly to our community.

If material might be deemed obscene by a Canadian court, Customs can prohibit its entry into the country. Materials in question must go through three levels of detention before an importer, usually a bookstore owner or an advocacy group, can take legal action. In Canada, the Canadian Committee Against Customs Censorship (CCACC) has undertaken the bulk of the protesting and legal appeals against these claims.

This spring, *The Joy of Gay Sex* was only taken off the prohibited materials list after a lengthy and much publicized trial. This case demonstrated the fallability of declaring specific sex acts obscene, particularly anal sex. Justice Bruce Hawkins, who heard the *Joy* trial, suggested that an attempt to write about gay male sex without including anal sex was akin to writing a history of music omitting Mozart.

Pressure from community AIDS activists and the outcome in favour of *The Joy of Gay Sex* have resulted in an internal Customs memorandum permitting the depiction of anal sex for "educative" purposes only. Unfortunately the distinction between education and titillation will be decided at the first level by tariff and values administration, at the second by the Deputy Minister of National Revenue Prohibited Importation Unit at Canada Customs, and at the third level by the courts. Personnel at all three levels may well be skeptical of AIDS activists' claims that good titillating safer sex erotica is the healthiest way to educate about sex that prevents transmission of the virus thought to cause AIDS.

In other contexts we have already seen how mainstream and right wing resistance towards sex education slows down the process of preventing the spread of AIDS. Television condom ads, no matter how delicate, have been condemned as "promoting promiscuity." Furthermore, condom advertisers, while non-plussed by the morality issue, still find they have a difficult product to market. "We're trying to sell them as a fashion accessory," one marketer commented in *The Globe and Mail*.

Certainly the AIDS crisis has increased the need for clear and specific talk about sex, including descriptions of specific sexual acts. As one can imagine, such talk goes against the grain of many a Ministry of Health guideline. In a recent incident, AIDS Vancouver was threatened with the withdrawal of funds

those voided of sexually explicit material.

The definition of obscenity has been used in other contexts to impair different cultural perspectives. The version of Lizzie Borden's film *Working Girls* seen in Ontario is a censored one. A bookstore window display in Toronto by a women's art group was subjected to court trials to demonstrate that their work was not obscene. Apparently, the sanitary napkins splattered with red paint in that display certainly fell within the prosecuting police officer's definition of obscenity. It cost time, trouble and money to demonstrate the unviolable nature of those charges in court. Within the domain of Canada Customs, lesbian sex videos by Blush Productions of San Francisco have been declared obscene and prohibited.

Most of the titles detained are for a masculine readership (such as issues of *The Advocate* which are being withheld because they carry advertising which has been found obscene). But lesbian sexuality has been targeted as well, especially if the sex involves depictions of anal sex, bondage, or use of implements (sex toys). Among the lesbian-specific materials declared obscene and prohibited are: *Lesbian Sex*, about relationships and sex by therapist Joanne Loulan; *Sapphistry*, an instructive handbook about lesbian sex by Pat Califia; *Good Vibrations*, about vibrators; and two lesbian-produced sex magazines, *Bad Attitude* and *On Our Backs*. The two magazines have had a history of being unwelcome in Canada: in 1985, the Toronto Women's Bookstore, wary of pornographic content, refused to display either of them.

Although a majority of the materials detained are later released, clearly some are being prohibited by virtue of their lesbian and gay content. This decreases the availability of reading materials to an already marginalized body of work. It creates financial hardships for the bookseller who is obligated to pay the publisher for materials captured by Customs officials. Customs actions induce a climate of state interference that makes it easy for writers to censor themselves and to be reluctant about committing lesbian or gay sexuality to print. Canada Customs seems to want a lesbian and gay culture suitable for family viewing. Perhaps if Walt Disney studios made lesbian and gay movies...

The border stoppings are a disruptive practice, one which conveys a subtle and persistent message to Canadians that gay and lesbian materials must pass state inspection before we have permission to read them, that gay and lesbian sex is very easily found obscene and that obscenity is certainly not welcome in Canada. The seizures force the gay and lesbian community into a position of defensiveness, having to protest and ultimately argue in court for the literature that is our right to read. ●



because of the sexually explicit language of their safer sex pamphlet, a pamphlet which CCACC member Gary Kinsman describes as "the best safer sex guide in the country." As a consequence of the funding withdrawal threats, AIDS Vancouver has decided to distribute the remaining existent pamphlets, but not to reprint it.

The stopping of gay and lesbian materials at the border can not help but feel like unfair treatment. Virtually all shipments to Glad Day Books in Toronto and Little Sisters in Vancouver are examined, meaning that along with sexual materials, a variety of other books are detained. In April, for example, *The Letters of Sylvia Townsend Warner, Long Time Passing* (an anthology of writings by older lesbians), six titles by the Naiad Press and Women of the Left Bank—to mention only a sampling—were all detained by a commodities specialist and later released.

Varda Burstyn, of Feminists Against Cen-

sorship, addressed a group in January, calling Canada Customs actions "hypocritical." Gay and lesbian books are seized, delayed, or altered while a surge of mainstream heterosexual pornography, much of it violent, comes into Canada uncompromised. The issue at stake appears to be sexual orientation not sexual representation. "It's obviously not the sex they (Canada Customs) object to," said Burstyn, "but who is doing it with whom?"

For many women, reading materials often present the first possibility of living an alternative sexual lifestyle. One can read in private or, if necessary, in secret. But of course reading materials must be made available. As any 15 year old lesbian knows, the exercise of checking "homosexual" in the school dictionary is a fruitless one that only serves to emphasize the need for quality gay and lesbian materials available at all libraries, schools and stores. It would be far too patronizing if materials made available about lesbian and gay life were only

It's Only Sexual Terrorism . . .

by Melanie Randall

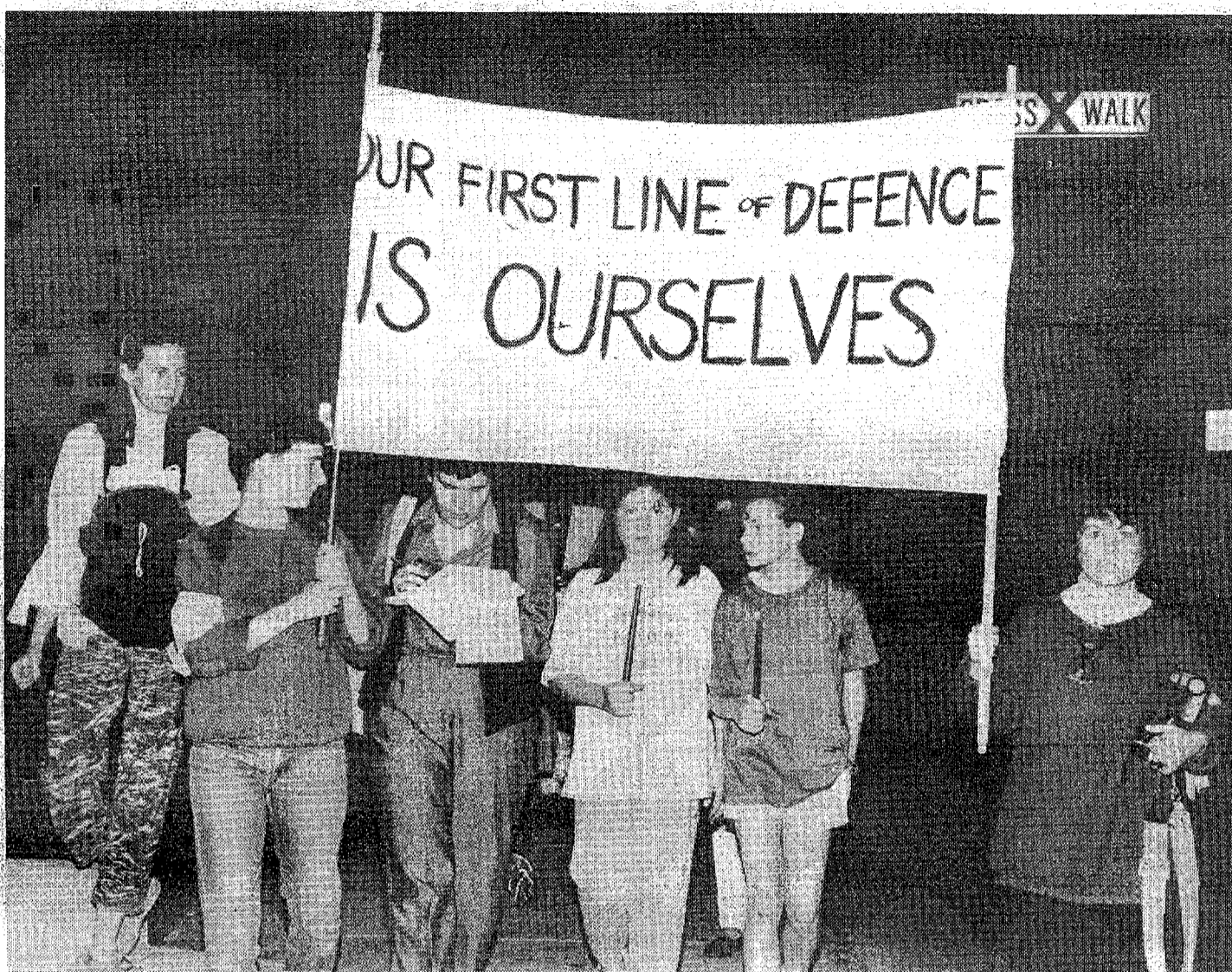
Sexual attacks on women appear to have escalated in Toronto this past year. In fact, it is only the media attention to a number of vicious stranger rapes and assaults, particularly but not exclusively those in the Riverdale and Scarborough areas, which has made salient what women working the area already know: sexual terrorism is a constant and real part of women's everyday lives. Some of us get attacked and raped on the streets. But for every sexual assault perpetrated by a man who is a stranger, there are perhaps ten or more sexual assaults against women perpetrated by men who are known to them, as husbands, landlords, bosses, co-workers, doctors, lovers, dates, friends. We can never be reminded enough that those rapes which women are brave enough to report to the police represent only the tiniest tip of the iceberg.

Last summer in at least three separate communities in the city—Riverdale, the Annex, and the Church-Wellesley neighbourhood—women organized to raise awareness about violence against women and to devise an empowering response to it for the women concerned. Again this year, women in the Riverdale area, as well as throughout the rest of Toronto, have been angry and concerned about the recent spate of stranger rapes in their communities these past months. Some of the most recent attacks have been particularly brutal; weapons were used in many of them. One woman had a fractured skull; another woman was so viciously beaten about the head that she had to undergo brain surgery.

Women from the Riverdale Women's Action Committee, working with women in WAVAW (Women Against Violence Against Women) and the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, organized three related actions to raise community awareness and to act against the acute fear of rape and violence which women in the community are experiencing and expressing. Two thousand flyers were distributed to homes in the neighbourhood notifying residents of the rapes in Riverdale, including composite sketches of two of the suspected rapists and the locations of the most recent attacks, all of which had occurred at knifepoint. The flyers also announced the "Walkabout," held on Saturday June 6, and the community meeting planned for the following week.

More than two hundred women, some from across Canada visiting Toronto for the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres conference, marched through the streets during the Riverdale Walkabout, holding candles and carrying signs calling for an end to rape. The march stopped at the ten places where women have been sexually assaulted on the street during the past year. At each location a woman's silhouette was spray-painted on the sidewalk with the words "Woman assaulted here" stencilled inside the figure, an eerie and graphic reminder of the violent sexual attacks.

At the same time we have seen the Toronto police respond with the by now familiar and fatigued myths about women and rape. In *The Globe and Mail* (May 25, 1987) a police officer



Riverdale "Walkabout"—June 6 in Toronto.

was quoted as saying that women's summer clothing was linked to an increase in sexual assaults. When a woman phoned Public Complaints to point out the sexism and victim-blaming in this type of comment, the officer she spoke to said, "No, we're not blaming women for rape. We're just saying they're the cause of it." The glaring contradiction in these statements aside, this officer is quite explicit in his identification of what the problem about rape is. Women are the problem. That so many men assault and rape women would appear to be normal and taken for granted in this world view. And men's proclivity for sexual violence and aggression against women is uncritically accepted.

Not only are the police revealing their profoundly sexist and woman-blaming attitudes regarding sexual violence through their public comments, they have once again revealed their trivialization of and ineptitude regarding incidents of sexual harassment and violence towards women through their actions. On the night of the Riverdale Walkabout a man antagonized women and disrupted the march by exposing himself and masturbating publicly. When several women flagged down a passing

police car, the first officer to the scene responded by chuckling. The police then further enraged the crowd of women, who had circled the man to stop him from fleeing, by refusing to lay a charge. Infuriated, the entire march stopped and began chanting "Cops, do your jobs," and "Men protecting men." In a neighbourhood where the issue of violence against women is so salient at present, it is shocking that the police were so quick to dismiss this act of hostility as harmless and irrelevant. We do not need to be reminded that recently in Scarborough, a man suspected in a recent rape case was later also seen exposing himself to women several streets over. We also know that even though the police have been quoted as saying that "It's only indecent exposure," some of those very few men who are convicted of rape and sexual assault have previous convictions which include such "harmless" offences as indecent exposure.

We need to ask ourselves what is going on when a group of women peacefully marches through the streets and some man feels compelled to respond by making a hostile and confrontational sexual gesture to them. More specifically still, what is the connection between this man's aggression and hostility towards women and the exhibition of his erect penis? Later on in the march another group of young men harassed women by shouting out "Suck this big one, lesbians." Aside from their misapprehension that calling women lesbians is insulting, these men clearly know that their penises are used to threaten and harm women. This seems to be the point that is missed when people trivialize what is going on with a man's "indecent exposure." Though it is not the most violent of acts in the continuum of men's intrusive and abusive sexual violations of women it is, nevertheless, intended to be an act of hostility and intimidation. And if a woman experiences a man exposing his penis as hostile and threatening, it is.

In this particular case, the police are saying that the onus is on those women who witnessed the man's exposure and masturbation to lay charges because, without being witnesses themselves, there was "nothing they could do." This, of course, used to be and is often still their response to wife assault. But the police officers at the scene clearly saw that the man had exposed himself and are obligated to lay charges against him for causing a public disturbance and making an "indecent exhibition" (under sections 169 or 171 of the Criminal Code). At the police station later that night, women gathered to protest this flagrant example of police inaction, and were told that the

man in question "could have had his zipper broken, or could have been relieving himself." The officer who had been at the scene continued to insist that the police were not legally able to lay charges.

But after consultation with several criminal lawyers, women in WAVAW and the Riverdale Women's Action Committee learned that the police, deliberately it would seem, had completely misrepresented the law. We were consistently advised that the police were indeed empowered to lay charges, and are able to do so whenever there are "reasonable and probable grounds to believe that an offence took place." What they are saying to us, then, is that the testimony of the many women at the scene, taken together with the fact that the police themselves saw the man with his pants open, does not constitute "reasonable and probable grounds" to charge this man. Furthermore, the police department's failure to take action against this criminal offence and act of hostility towards women shows us that they do not consider sexual harassment of women to be a serious problem.

Charges against the man who exposed himself in Riverdale have since been laid by one of the women on the march. In response to public pressure and media attention the police offered, not to lay charges themselves of course, but to "escort" her when she went to the Justice of the Peace. She declined their offer. On the morning she went to lay charges, two police officers decided to pay a surprise visit to her place of work, where they harassed a receptionist and the woman's boss as to her whereabouts. Incensed by this invasion of privacy, a Toronto rape crisis worker called later that day on behalf of the woman who had laid the charges and asked whether it was customary to go to an assaulted woman's place of work and advise her co-workers of the situation. A Staff Sergeant responded: "Look, this is only indecent assault and you women are the ones that are flogging this whole thing."

By insisting that the women who were "offended" take time off work to go to a Justice of the Peace to make a complaint in the first place, the police have chosen, once again, to make men's sexual harassment of women an individual woman's problem, instead of treating the issue as one which affects the community as a whole. Furthermore, the men who are police officers are themselves guilty of negligence for their refusal to lay charges, and of harassment for their intrusion into this woman's place of work. Clearly the police do not "serve and protect" women in this city.

• continued page 14

Sisterhood Watch

by Heather MacDonald

"RAPES IN RIVERDALE" read the posters in bold red lettering. "Who's next? Why aren't women safe? Break the isolation—attend a public meeting. Our best line of defence is ourselves."

We were full of anger and rage as we chose this wording for the poster. Ten reported assaults on women since last June, most of them sexual, three rapes at knifepoint. This is, unfortunately, not an unusually high number of assaults, but more attacks are being reported now than a few years ago. In other words, nothing has changed, other than some women's anger.

The police, in their usual insightful manner, were advising us to stay in after dark, be escorted by male friends and lovers, and simply let the rapist "have his two minutes of pleasure" rather than risk our lives by fighting back. Obviously no feminist can allow her lifestyle to be infringed upon in this manner.

The Riverdale Women's Action Committee, a group of feminists living in the area, decided to take action. Our first priority was to make women aware of the attacks, which are so poor-

ly covered by the media, and secondly, to bring women out of their homes and onto the streets. Our solidarity march took place on June 6 with a turnout of about three hundred women.

"Our first line of defence is ourselves": this will be the motto at the community meeting that we are now organizing. We have not invited the police to come. They have openly refused to cooperate with us after a year of effort on our part. We would have preferred to work in conjunction with the police, but I feel the time has come when women must learn to protect themselves and each other. We hope to organize a Sisterhood Watch to do just that. We already have a subsidized Wen-do course at our community recreation centre. Perhaps we can form a community model for sisterhood.

As a friend said to me after telling me that she had been violently raped: "Don't be sorry for me—be angry." It's time for women to start fighting back and not relying on others for protection. "Our best line of defence is ourselves."

Heather MacDonald is a member of the Riverdale Women's Action Committee.

MOVEMENT COMMENT

Video Vision Flawed

The Struggle for Choice
5 half-hour video tapes
Written and Directed by Nancy Nicol

Reviewed by Lynn Lathrop

I went to see the screening of Nancy Nicol's videos hoping for the first time to see a documentation of the struggle I've been involved in for so long. After all, it's no small victory for a movement to succeed in keeping a free-standing abortion clinic operating when so many forces like the police, two provincial governments and the anti-choice have tried their best to close it down. But when I left the theatre I certainly didn't feel any sense of accomplishment or illumination—just unbridled anger.

Nancy Nicol's condemnation of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) and of individual activists points to a profound disagreement about how we struggle for, and win, the right to abortion in Canada.

The five videotapes examine the 17-year period of the abortion rights movement in Canada and Québec from the liberalization of the law in 1969 until today. They present a particular analysis and formulate a vision of a way forward that many of us working in the movement don't accept. I'll get to some of the more contentious political disagreements in a bit. First I want to deal with something even more fundamental.

The video is dishonest. It sets up a false notion of OCAC's strategy and then proceeds to attack it. The devices it uses to support its main criticism that the organization is misleading the movement by capitulating to a legal strategy are incredibly deceitful.

In fact, OCAC does not have a legal strategy. We believe the only way to eventually win full reproductive freedom for all women is to build a strong and vibrant broad-based movement that will put forward its demands as visibly and as vigorously as possible. It is only when many people are persuaded to an idea and push hard for it that real change takes place.

Legal decisions create a situation in which it is easier or more difficult to effect that change but those decisions are not in and of themselves the end of the struggle; they will not win our demands.

We have learned some hard lessons from our sisters in the States. We understand that just because a law decrees that one has rights doesn't necessarily make it so. To truly have the right to abortion, all women must have full, free and equitable access. Without such access formal or legal rights are meaningless. Women who are traditionally denied this access are working class women, women of colour, rural women and young women.



Scene from "The Struggle for Choice."

To push for full access to free abortion, OCAC has organized demonstrations, public forums, rallies, and mass press conferences. Our activists have criss-crossed the country to give support and lend our expertise to any organization that has asked for it. We speak at union locals and schools and do outreach with community groups, as well as all the grassroots work we can. We do everything we can to politicize, persuade and get support for a woman's right to control her own body.

Nancy Nicol says that OCAC has confidence that the courts and government of the day will in the end give us abortion rights. We believe no such thing. We know the only way to get these rights is to fight for them. But sometimes when the state attacks us we have no choice but to defend ourselves in court. Nicol asserts that our organizational energies are focussed on this so-called legal strategy. We disagree. The point is, you won't find us anywhere in this film telling you what our strategy is or isn't or dealing directly with the criticisms that are made. That's because we weren't allowed to.

The documentary genre has some rules to it; one of the most important is that people be confronted with the criticism or accusations levelled against them and be given the right to respond. And one of the underlying principles of feminist process is that people be allowed the opportunity to speak for themselves.

But this just doesn't happen in "The Struggle for Choice." Information that does not support Nicol's political line is excised; extraneous information that fits the theory is incorporated.

So while it certainly fit the purpose to say that the escort service was discontinued be-

cause of concern that it might jeopardize some far-fetched legal strategy, nothing could be farther from the truth.

The escort service was disbanded primarily because the patients were no longer requiring it and also because it was such a huge task to organize it was burning out our volunteer coordinators. If the patients had required this service you can be sure we would have found a way to continue it.

But this is just one misrepresentation in a regrettably long list. What happened to Carolyn Egan's interview is another case in point. Egan is a long-time abortion rights activist, one of the original members of the Committee to Establish an Abortion Clinic (CEAC) and a counsellor in a birth control centre. We've heard her accounts of the early days of CEAC many times, about how feminist healthcare workers came together in 1982 to try to solve the deepening crisis of access to abortion. The strategy they finally chose was to open a clinic in contravention of the law. They believed that the clinic would become a focal point of struggle—something tangible that people could understand and rally around—and that it would therefore spark a broad-based movement that would push for repeal of the law and for abortion rights for women. Because no real history of the struggle in Ontario is presented in the videos it is difficult for the viewer to see the success of their decision. There was no organized movement in Ontario at that time. Now there is, and that's because the clinic strategy paid off.

We've heard about CEAC many times; it's part of our folklore. So we knew something was up when Carolyn Egan loomed on the screen speaking only of legal matters and hardly at all about movement building or our strategy. A few snips here, a few cuts there and presto! Egan no longer says what she wants to but rather what someone else wants her to.

The same thing happened to Judy Rebick. She and two other members of OCAC were the spokespeople for the organization. They gave Nicol a three-hour interview, not one word of which was used. Instead, bits and pieces of Rebick's responses to media questions were strung together and she ended up representing a perspective that was not hers.

Open and honest criticism is one thing, but purposeful misrepresentation is completely unacceptable.

What's left to be addressed is, where do we go from here? How do we move forward to win our demands? Nancy Nicol says we do not win by working on abortion as a single issue but by

building a strong working class movement of people demanding their rights. However, she points out that that movement is under attack and in retreat. So where does that leave us? Do we pack up our things and go away? Or wait until conditions substantially change and the get re-involved? Do we only work in the labour movement and nowhere else?

We believe we can win full access to free abortion. But even if we agreed with Nicol's analysis that it is extremely difficult to win anything during this period, we would still continue to raise our demands and push for change.

That's because the fight for abortion rights and for reproductive rights is not just a theoretical discussion. The concrete reality of not having access to abortion is played out a thousand times a day and has a truly terrible impact on the lives of real women.

The fight is also important because it serves to educate and politicize and helps keep the struggle for women's rights front and centre, well as continually showing the state for its opponent that it really is.

So we make no apologies about continuing the struggle even though all those external conditions might not be exactly as we would want them. Furthermore, we have always placed the demand for abortion rights in the broad reproductive rights perspective. That is, we continue to fight for abortion but we place it in its context by underscoring that women will never have real choice or full reproductive freedom until we have midwifery options, universal day care, employment equity, an end to violence against women, and an end to enforced heterosexuality so that lesbians and gay men can live openly and freely.

We see this video as an attack on our movement. Nowhere in it does Nicol credit the existence of a strong women's movement which we believe is the basis for what we have achieved far. Here was a chance to show a pro-choice movement in all its force and dynamism but what we are left with instead are distorted misrepresentations and some extremely vague proposals for the way ahead.

We really do need a documentary of the struggle, one that does not reconstruct reality in the interest of a political line and, hopefully one that gives some credit to the many, many women and men who have worked so long and fought so hard in the struggle for reproductive freedom.

Lynn Lathrop is a member of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC).

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MOVEMENT MATTERS

Archaic Airline Policy

The following is an open letter to the women's community, dated June 9, 1987, from Marilynne White, Chairperson of the CUPE Airline Division Women's Committee.

You may be aware that flight attendants at Wardair have lodged a complaint to the Human Rights Commission, alleging Wardair uses its female flight attendants as sex objects. The complaint is based largely on discriminatory grooming regulations: we must wear make-up, we must wear high-heeled shoes, we must maintain company specified weight and we must shave our legs and underarms. These regulations for females are laid out in the flight attendant manual and are strictly enforced.

We would like you to help us by writing to the company, as public pressure seems to be the thing to which Wardair responds best. If they think they may lose business, they may change their archaic and sexist policies.

We are not allowed to wear slacks, only skirts or dresses. Our job is physically demanding and requires a lot of manual work which we would feel more dignified and comfortable performing if we had the option of wearing slacks. Also, we would no longer have to show off our legs for the passengers.

Please help us by telling Wardair you would support other Canadian airlines, which do allow their female F/A's to wear slacks. Wardair is the only airline we know of which does not allow slacks for women.

Senka Dukovich, who filed the complaint and spoke on it to the media, has been disciplined by the company and suspended for two weeks without pay. We feel the company is trying to intimidate other women from speaking out and supporting the complaint when it is investigated by the Human Rights Commission.

Rest assured that the exploitation of female flight attendants by airlines has been documented and is historically sound. This exploitation continues today, as is obvious in Wardair's policies, and we are trying to right the situation step by step.

Coverage of the Human Rights complaint was on the front page of *The Globe and Mail* on March 21, 1987, so Wardair should expect to hear from women's groups. We are convinced it is only the public (groups like yours) who can change Wardair's mind. The suspension has also received media coverage.

Please send letters to Peter Bolton, Vice-President, Customer Relations, Wardair Canada Inc., 3111 Convair Drive, Mississauga, Ontario, L5P 1C2, and it would be helpful if you copied us: Women's Committee - Local 4015, Airline Division of CUPE, Suite 301, 5415 Dundas Street West, Islington, Ontario, M9B 1B5.

Daughters of Alcoholics

Submissions for an anthology of writing by and about daughters of alcoholics are currently being solicited. Writings may cover the following issues: recollections of being a daughter of alcoholic parents; and present day issues, such as struggles with personal addiction, relationships and healing. Poetry, interviews, short stories, diary excerpts, etc. are encouraged. Send material to: Natalie Zlodre, 303A Melita Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6G 3X1.

Mystery Manuscripts

The Women's Press, a feminist publishing house, has recently formed a manuscript group to solicit and review mystery stories. The press encourages writers to submit long and short mystery manuscripts for potential publication.

For more information, please contact Margie Wolfe or Michele Pause at The Women's Press, 229 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1R4; or call (416) 598-0082.

Women and Custody

The *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* is interested in receiving papers on women and custody to be considered for a special issue. This is a multi-disciplinary journal and papers are welcome from disciplines such as philosophy, social science, anthropology and history as well as law.

This special issue of *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* is an off-shoot of a conference on the politics of custody held in Windsor, Ontario in the summer of 1986. The participants of the conference agreed that the move towards joint custody is an anti-woman backlash that is a direct attack on women's hard won right to custody of their children—a right that was acquired in North America only 90 years ago and a right which is central to redressing the inequality of women. If you want to participate, please direct papers or inquiries to Arlene Mayers, 7601 Bathurst Street, Suite 901, Thornhill, Ontario, L4J 4H5; telephone (416) 881-9988 (h); 586-3456 (w).

Hot Flash

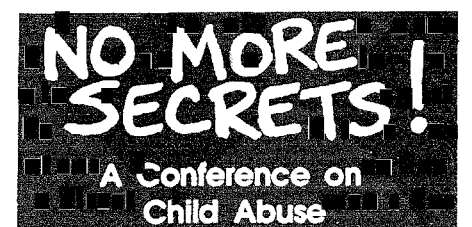
"Is It Hot In Here? A Film About Menopause," a documentary film about one of the least understood and most universal of women's experiences, is based on two premises: that menopause is a natural process, an inevitable part of the reproductive cycle of women; and that each woman's experience of menopause is unique.

Several women talk about their individual experiences of menopause, with humour, anger,

insight and intelligence. Through these women and through interviews with others—a doctor, a health activist and a workshop facilitator—the major aspects of menopause are explored. The process of menopause is defined and the medically recognized symptoms described.

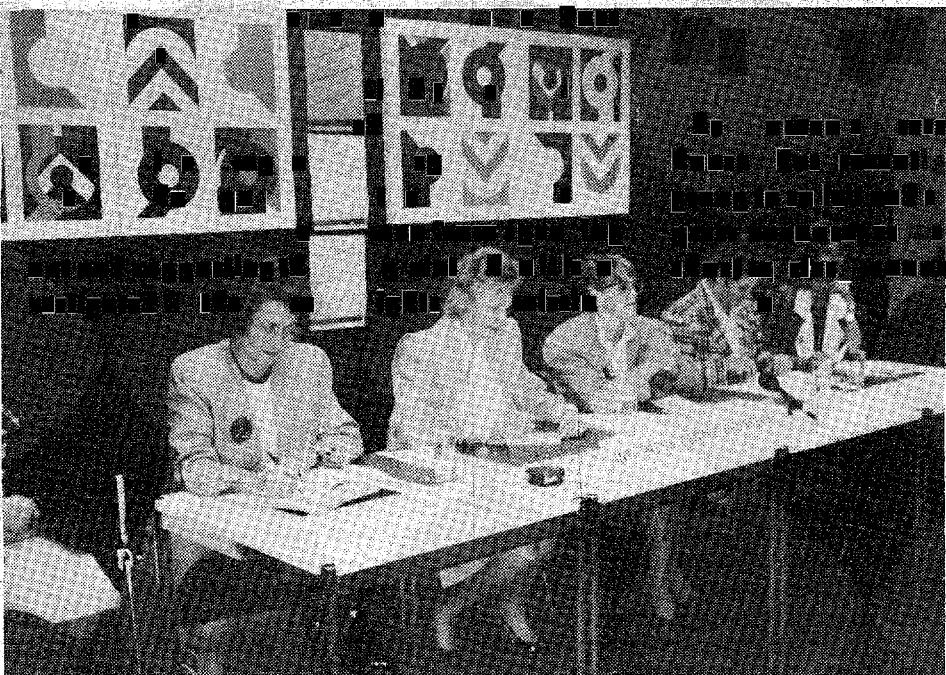
The film explores the historical attitudes underlying our society's approach to menopause. A series of archival drawings that depict women as frail and infirm reflects the paradox of past attitudes: a woman's reproductive cycle was believed to cause illness and at the same time it defined, through childbearing, her function and value. Contemporary social attitudes towards menopause are introduced through another series of powerful images: advertisements in medical journals designed by pharmaceutical companies to sell their products to doctors. The ads tend to portray menopausal women as dependent and in distress.

("Is It Hot In Here?" is available, free, from the National Film Board in 16mm, ¾-inch, VHS and Beta formats; running time is 38 mins.)



A national conference designed for professionals who work in the area of child abuse will be held in Toronto, May 24-27, 1988. Together women will share feminist theories, current practices and experiences. For further information, write to: Community Resources and Initiatives, 303A Melita Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6G 3X1; (416) 536-6340.

The Boys and Their Toys



At NATO Headquarters in Brussels: representatives from USA, Greece, 2 from Belgium, and the UK.

by Kay Macpherson

For the past twenty years, women of the NATO countries have been expressing their apprehension and concern about the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO's assumptions and policies have changed little since it was formed in 1949. The "enemy," a necessary item in military strategy, had been switched in Europe at the end of World War II from the Germans to the West's wartime "gallant allies" who became almost overnight "brutal communist hordes." NATO was established to counter this "perceived" threat, although the Soviet Union—devastated and with 20 million dead—was hardly in a position to overrun an already ruined Europe. The "threat" however was built up, and eventually the Warsaw Pact set up in response to the steady re-arming program of the NATO countries. The East created military forces capable of meeting the threat from the west. Thus, with alternating periods of detente, confrontation and the military jargon which goes with it—"deterrence, mutually assured destruction, first strike, theatre nuclear forces, ABMs, SALT, SAC, Star Wars, and the rest—the danger has become worse with every escalation.

My first experience with NATO was when Women Strike for Peace from the US, Voice of Women, and other women's groups in Europe organized a NATO Women's Peace Force to oppose the Multi Lateral Nuclear Force proposed by NATO in 1964. This arrangement would have made it possible for any NATO naval commander to press the nuclear button whenever he deemed it necessary. This appalling prospect brought 1500 women from western Europe and North America together at The Hague (NATO Headquarters at that time). Letters (and flowers) were presented to the NATO officials and a conference was held. Incidentally, Canada's NATO Ambassador at that time was George Ignatieff, now President of Science for Peace. A subsequent gathering of women, plus much more extensive demonstrations, took place in Paris the following spring. At that time the Paris police provided us with great press coverage by hauling a few of us off to a police barracks where we cooled our heels for a few hours, and got on the front pages at home. The MLF idea was later quietly dropped.

Since that time, Canadian women have been on official NATO promotional trips—which the peace women amongst them did their best

to use as a chance to raise questions and educate others on the trip. There have been demonstrations and visits by women's groups in the 70s and 80s. Always it is difficult to talk in terms of alternative non-violent solutions, collaboration not confrontation, and so on. The military men and the politicians who are supposed to make the decisions cannot comprehend any language which is not plain English (or French) and which does not include concepts of threat and force, good guys and bad guys, us and them.

The most recent women's visit, in early June, to NATO headquarters in Belgium, grew out of the strategies and plans of Women for a Meaningful Summit which aims to present alternatives to the Summit meetings and meet with the super-power leaders. At the invitation of Margaret Papandreou, President of the Greek Women's Union, 60 women from 35 countries met last November in Athens to plan action and strategy for the next Summit meeting and to follow up the Forward Looking Strategies of the Nairobi End of Decade Conference. The proposal that women of the NATO countries meet with their permanent NATO representatives had been followed up last winter. The meeting on June 1 included appointments with each country's Ambassador by the women from his country, followed by a meeting by the whole group (about 30 women) with Lord Carrington, the Secretary-General of NATO. The women spent the previous day, and much time before reaching Belgium, in reviewing facts and preparing questions to put to the officials. Each interview concentrated on asking two long range questions, and three calling for immediate response, and each spoke of the aims of the group and the thousands they represent in seeking political rather than military solutions to problems and potential conflict situations.

Madeleine Gilchrist and I represented Voice of Women, and both of us sit on NAC's Survival Committee. Our NATO Ambassador is Gordon Smith and his Military Adviser was General Pellerin. "No one would be better pleased than I," said Mr Smith, "if we could reach an agreement with the Warsaw Pact alliance." But many problems have still to be worked out. We had been warned the previous day that "verification" would once again be cited, and sure enough, "Both sides must agree on this process." Later we learned that the Six Nation Vice Continent Initiative nations, with assistance from Sweden, had offered to provide neutral verification monitoring on reduction of

nuclear and other weapons. NATO, it was understood, has not yet responded to this offer.

The women are seeking greater accountability of NATO to the people of Europe and North America, with fewer decisions made in secret by the military, or unilaterally by the United States, rather than by politicians responsible to their constituents. We want more openness, less secrecy and more attention devoted to seeking non-military solutions to political disputes. It is doubtful whether any NATO staff members are occupied with examining non-violent, trust and confidence-building means of negotiation, and we learned that no communication takes place between the blocs, other than at formal peace and disarmament talks.

The women wanted three immediate steps toward resolution of tension: (1) adoption of the Intermediate Nuclear Force Agreement; (2) acceptance by NATO of the Warsaw Pact's offer for discussions; and (3) establishment of a nuclear weapons free zone in Central Europe. We argued that political, economic and other conditions have changed fundamentally in Europe since NATO was formed, but overall military methods have not. The responses remain "negotiate from strength," nuclear and other threats ("deterrence"), continuous build-up of armaments with all the attributes of the arms race—nations being economically crippled, resources being used up, environmental damage, and ecological danger increasing.

When reporting to the press, Papandreou, Cora Weiss of the US and Scilla McLean of the Oxford Research Group (UK), backed up by Randall Forsberg and others, made the point that NATO is an obsolete monster, that its decision making is unclear and the Secretary-General, as he told us, has no power ("Je n'existe pas," said Lord Carrington). That Canada is locked into these attitudes with outdated military solutions has become abundantly clear with the publication recently of Perrin Beatty's Defence White Paper. What women have to do is to demonstrate on all levels that these new non-violent methods of negotiation and collaboration *do* work, and without risking the existence of our planet in working out solutions. What right have these "boys with the toys" to threaten us and our children's future so glibly and enthusiastically? We can stop them, and we must. No one else will do it.

Kay Macpherson is a longtime feminist and peace activist living in Toronto.

Sex Education: Tea

by Helen Lenskyj

- A teacher in a small Ontario town noticed children in the schoolyard playing a new game. The kids called it "gang rape."
- A 14 year-old girl told a North York teacher that her boyfriend hits her. She thinks it's her fault because she argues with him. She says she doesn't want to make a fuss because he would leave her.
- Almost half of female rape victims in Canada are under the age of 17.
- 68% of women were sexually assaulted by men they knew.
- Over half of convicted rapists are under the age of 25.
- Young people aged 12 to 17 are the primary consumers of pornography in Canada today.
- Sixty per cent of college-aged males reported that, under the right circumstances, they would use force, rape, or both, in sexual relations with women.

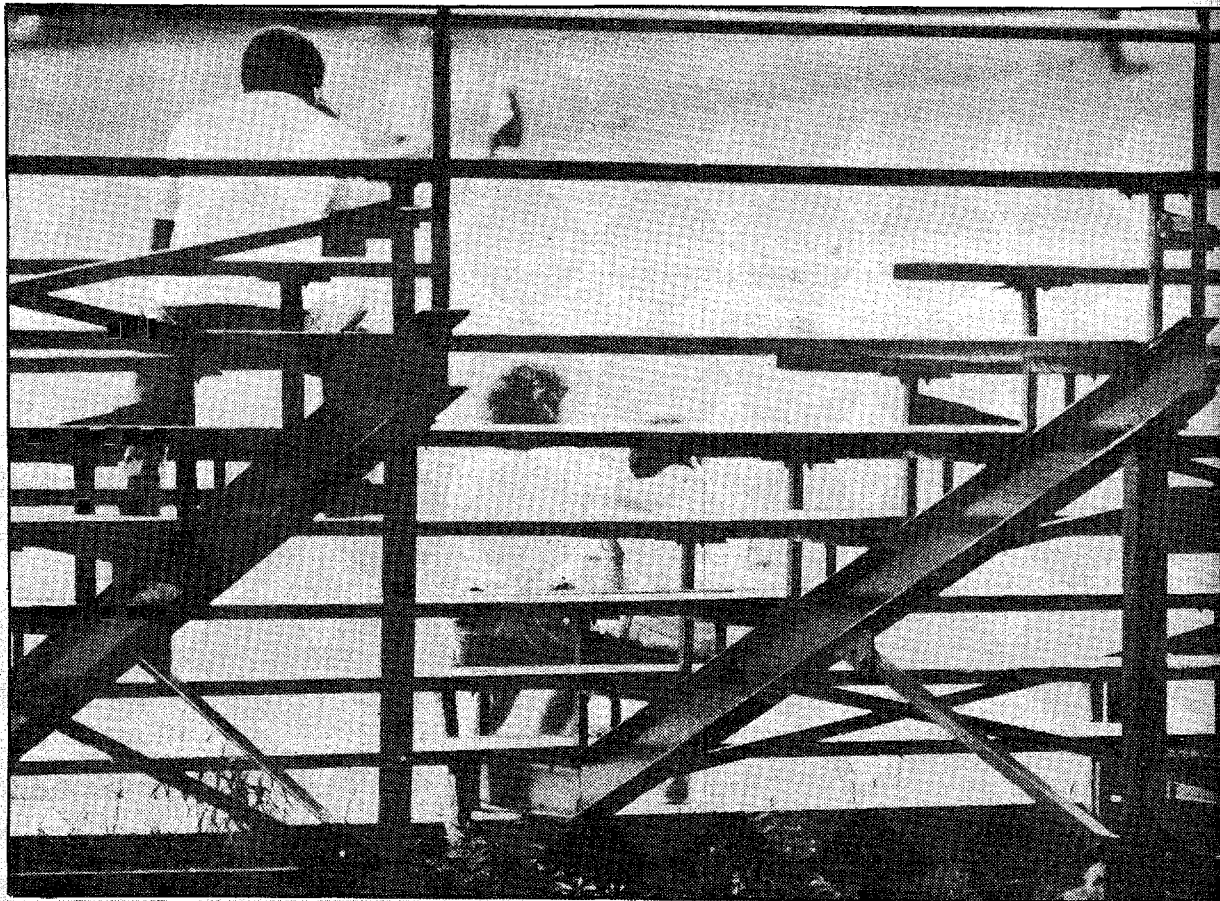
Tony is one of the 60 percent: good-looking, macho, a B student in high school, an A+ with the girls. He brags that *he* can get sex without using force—in fact, as he explains, he would never stoop to hitting a girl. He doesn't need to. He sees himself as cool, charming, persuasive, possessed of flawless form and perfect technique. But when he meets a girl who says "no" he comes dangerously close to hitting her, and that is what *Thin Ice* is all about: sexual coercion and date rape.

Written by Baputa Rubess and Beverley Cooper, and directed by Maureen White, Theatre Direct's production of *Thin Ice* has been touring Ontario high schools over the past year and is now taking bookings for the 1987-88 season. The Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) sponsored additional performances that were attended by over five hundred Toronto area teachers.

The idea of sex education through drama, performed by and for teens, is not new. A Toronto theatre troupe called STARR (Students Talking About Responsible Relationships) began to work with similar themes three years ago. Topics included birth control, abortion, homosexuality, pregnancy, divorce, dating, incest, rape and racism. This kind of theatre is accessible and meaningful to teenage audiences. One Toronto teenager described *Thin Ice* as "the most important thing that has ever happened in this school"—a statement unlikely to endear her to her hard-working English teacher or math teacher. Improvisational theatre is used by a New Jersey group called Teen Life Theatre, which presents sex-related dilemmas in skit-form: a boy with VD, a girl with a gay brother, peer pressure to have sex. In contrast to written assignments or class discussions of sexuality, the role play approach encourages emotional as well as intellectual responses. The issues are no longer "out there."

The four teenage characters in *Thin Ice*—Tony, Des, Trish and Jennifer—bring the date rape issue out into the open. Although the script does not call for offensive language or explicit sexual activity on stage, the characters are only too real, the situations only too familiar. All four characters spend hours talking about sex, thinking about sex and bragging about sex, but Tony alone seems to believe that sexual conquest is his *raison d'être*, basic to his self image today and the central feature of his vision of Tony the Man, ten years from now. His older brother Ron is his role model, and Ron, the Great Canadian Lover, is in fact an expert in sexual coercion.

Peer pressure prevails in the conversations between Des and Tony, and, despite some evidence of fledgling feminist consciousness, even Trish and Jennifer have communication problems. Recapping events for their best friends, all four characters indulge more in creative fantasy than fact. For the boys to admit they did not make it with a girl would be the ultimate embarrassment. For Des to admit that he had difficulty even with a first kiss would be sheer madness, given the hothouse climate generated by his buddies and fuelled by porn magazines and overactive male egos and fantasies. For the girls, the big humiliation would be to confess that they did not want or like sexual intercourse, notwithstanding the Ann Landers' readers who admitted their preference for other forms of sexual intimacy to "the act." (Any informal



survey will confirm that many women remember penetration as marking the end of sexual pleasure in their adolescent years.)

This play confirms every parent's worst fears. Yes, some boys leer at *Playboy* magazine and s/m porn, and talk about girls in meat market terms. Some boys exploit girls' willingness to be helpful, nurturing and caring. Some boys rape. Some girls drool over male bodies and spend all their waking hours talking makeup, hair, clothes, partying, boys, boys, boys. And some girls, like the North York teenager mentioned earlier, are so successfully socialized in traditional sex-roles that they have almost come to expect physical or psychological abuse at the hands of boyfriends. And the boys, of course, believe that it's their right to dominate their girlfriends, sisters, mothers—any woman.

But there *are* teenage boys and girls who actually like each other, enjoy talking and joking, share common interests, and want to explore each others' minds as well as bodies, and if there is a positive side of *Thin Ice*, this is it.

The difference between sharing and caring, persuasion and coercion in sexual relationships is the major theme of *Thin Ice*. The teenage angst is palpable, as both boys and girls struggle towards ways of relating sexually that feel comfortable for them. Both teenage and adult audiences can easily identify with this theme, and the play will no doubt prompt some young women to disclose their experiences of sexual coercion. Older women, too, will probably recall all their worst teenage moments, and may be surprised at the discomfort or the sadness that the play evokes. After all, many are also the survivors of sexual coercion. All the characters, male as well as female, show us different sides of our adolescent selves and our adult selves, and that revelation is bound to be uncomfortable. The issues that arise in *Thin Ice*—friendship, love, sex, lust, risk-taking, vulnerability, honesty, integrity, exploitation—affect women of all ages in all kinds of intimate relationships.

The Resource Guide on Sexual Coercion for Educators, an 84-page document prepared for Theatre Direct by Anne Smith, gives detailed guidelines for preparing and counselling students before, during and after the performance. Class discussions of sexual coercion, violence against women, pornography, alcohol and drug use are recommended and a comprehensive cross-curriculum project guide is provided. Background information for educators includes material on racism, violence and sex in the media, the mainstreaming of pornography, the eroticization of children, sexual coercion and sexual violence against women and children.

This degree of care and responsibility on the part of Theatre Direct in preparing audiences and educators is impressive. It confirms that successful sex education programs represent the work of committed, progressive women and men, including significant numbers of feminists. In such a sensitive area, these individuals do not

necessarily identify their politics, but the feminist perspective is in clear evidence.

For adolescents, the challenge of developing caring heterosexual relationships occurs in a social context that overwhelmingly opts for violent, coercive sex: men and submissive women. While Jennifer is reflecting that the women on "Dynasty" don't get bruises, she is probably thinking, "What's wrong with me? Do I like the wrong guys? Should I just give in? Why don't I like I'm meant to feel?" She is experiencing for the first time the great gap that separates heterosexual "romance" from "sex." But Jennifer is not exactly a Valley Girl. She is an A+ student who has taken a women's self defence class. She learnt how to hold her keys between her fingers to fight off a man in a dark alley, but this is hardly a technique that she could have used while Tony was marvelled at her beautiful eyes, kissing her passionately and trying to undo her bra. So she blames herself for not communicating clearly, for not saying "no" loud and clear, although in the end that is exactly what she does, and with a good effect.

Media models of adult heterosexuality presented to teenagers are of little help. Even when they are not violent and coercive, the images are unreal: ever-ready men, ever-willing women. Adolescents get the message that the first act of intercourse will instantly transform them into sexually competent adults, with no transition, no learning stage, no fumbling, no false starts. Now that they are "sexually active," they are presumed to be sexually mature. But as sex educator Sol Gordon stated, teenage sex is often a pretty grim affair. The girl does not get an orgasm, and the boy gets his three days later when he tells his friends about it.

For Des, the problem is not just performance. "You think you're weird if you try something, and they think you're weird if you don't." The allusion to homosexuality is not pursued in the play, but obviously Des sees his own than successful overtures to Trish as a possible reflection on his heterosexual identity. Clearly it is not a good thing to be a late bloomer, or a gay or lesbian teenager, in a school in 1987. And in the one out of two Canadian schools that offers sex education, the bias is unmistakably heterosexist.

It is not surprising that in the struggle to get any form of sex education into the schools, sex educators have taken an issue-oriented approach, focusing on the most immediate concerns of birth control, focusing on the most immediate concerns of birth control, focusing on the most immediately transmitted diseases (STD). Lesbianism and homosexuality do receive some attention, but are rarely, if ever, integrated into the curriculum. Like the traditional treatment of women in the social sciences, sexuality typically devote a token chapter to lesbianism and homosexuality. The fact that the length of the chapter has

ing the Right Stuff

Increased in recent years is more likely to be a function of the AIDS scare than a sign of raised consciousness. Ideally, discussions of topics such as sexual relationships, sexual response and STD would integrate lesbian, gay and heterosexual concerns, identifying common themes as well as the issues specific to one group.

Research in human sexuality shows the same heterosexual bias: "sexually active" is defined as "engaging in heterosexual intercourse." Presumably, variations on the heterosexual or the genital/genital components are of little concern since they do not involve birth control, pregnancy or abortion, although they do entail the risk of STD. One wonders why oral/genital sex is not on the sex educators' list of priorities: after all, it would certainly eliminate the problem of unwanted pregnancy. Clearly, genital/genital sex is part and parcel of the compulsory heterosexuality agenda that governs sexual relations in male-dominated society. The fact that even progressive sexologists define "sexually active" in these narrow terms attests to the taken-for-granted nature of this view. Considerable symbolic importance is attached to conventional heterosexual intercourse: the man on top, in total sexual and physical control of the woman. Presumably other sexual variations would not convey the same powerful image of male dominance.

For teenage sex education, the preoccupation with heterosexual intercourse is particularly inappropriate. If sexual pleasure were the goal, as teenagers usually say it is, they would be experimenting with every other possible variation, since there is ample evidence that women, young and old, are less likely to have an orgasm through "the act" than through other kinds of sexual activity. And, according to Sol Gordon, "the best kept male secret is the myth that every time a man ejaculates he has an orgasm." Yet only a very small minority of teenagers express interest in sex education classes that provide information about sexual arousal or techniques to increase sexual pleasure. Not only is everyone faking it, but every-

and the risk of pregnancy and venereal disease.

- A Quebec teenager asked a school social worker if he had to beat his girlfriend for her to have an orgasm.

Opponents of sex education, a very small but sometimes very vocal minority, claim that teachers are unprepared, that it is a parental right/responsibility, or that the school program is already overcrowded. There are parents of various political persuasions who are concerned that teachers are not adequately prepared for the task, or are too embarrassed about the subject matter to be effective. Years ago when the teaching profession was comprised mostly of unmarried women, it was common for critics to make snide comments about "old maids" who, it was claimed, were not exactly experts in the field. Some of that mentality still prevails, perhaps because parents realize that lesbians and gay men may be teaching their children. However, for some critics, a more pressing concern is the lack of teacher preparation in the values side of sex education, with the result that classes deal predominantly with menstruation and plumbing. And there is no question that teachers need to have a certain comfort level with the subject matter, although it is obviously unrealistic to require that sex education only be taught by those who are at perfect peace with their own sexuality.

New Right opponents argue that sex education cannot be taught without values education, and that this is the prerogative of parents. The belief that parents are the only force shaping a child's value system is of course naive, but there is more than a grain of truth in the premise that sex education cannot be value-free, even if only the mechanics are taught. Physiology texts provide a good example: remember "The big strong sperm swimming upstream against insurmountable odds to impregnate the passive little ovum"? (Remember the feminist rewrite: "The big strong ovum enveloping the little sperm.") Sex education is clearly an ideological undertaking, and that is probably why both progressives and traditionalists treat it with such caution.

The most common right wing argument against sex education—that it promotes teenage sexual activity, promiscuity and pregnancy—is totally erroneous. In fact, many studies have shown that teenagers who have received sex education are less active sexually, more likely to form responsible relationships and more likely to use some form of birth control. As well, sex education that is aimed at dispelling rape myths makes young men less susceptible to the harmful effects of violent pornography. They know that the message that women enjoy violent sex is false.

Of course, the right wing fear that informed teenagers will question the infamous "traditional family/Judeo-Christian values" so dear to their parents' hearts is well founded. Young women who are aware of other options will not necessarily choose the submissive barefoot-and-pregnant role. And young men who have experienced equal caring-and-sharing relationships with women (or with men) may question men's right to control and oppress women. Perhaps the very social fabric will crumble if sex education is taught effectively.

Last year, Britain's Education Secretary, in response to parents' complaints, tried unsuccessfully to force the Inner London Education Authority to ban *Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin*, a book about a girl whose father lives with his gay lover. In 1978, only nine years ago, a small fundamentalist Christian group in Queensland, Australia, was responsible for a purge of social studies materials used in high schools. In response to the group's lobbying efforts, the State Department of Education removed hundreds of books and instructional materials from classrooms and libraries. The offending literature dared to mention such issues as marriage breakdown, abortion and homosexuality. Assuming the favourite stance of most sex education critics—the ostrich position, as one writer termed it—the fundamentalists claimed that simply to talk about divorce, abortion, etc. was to condone it and to promote it. (If we don't talk about these issues, so the argument goes, our children will never find out about their existence.) High school principals were directed to ship the offensive materials back to the Brisbane head office immediately. Members of parent associations who had called emergency meetings to protest the move were not permitted to examine the materials before they were removed.

At that time, one of the most progressive elementary schools in the city of Townsville, North Queensland, offered one evening per year of sex education. Only children accompanied by a parent were admitted. Although it was very well attended, the program was hardly revolutionary: menstruation and pregnancy were the major topics. (There was one memorable moment in the entire presentation: masturbation, we were told, is something that boys sometimes do, but girls never do it.)

Could the New Right use these tactics to sabotage sex education in Canada? With feminism making inroads into school curricula through woman-centered literature (Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, for example), media literacy courses and women's studies programs, as well as through sex education, we may well see further right wing reaction in the form of book banning. This itself is an interesting phenomenon: obviously the Ken Campbells of the world would like to ban feminists, but, deprived of a human target, they settle for a book. However, on a more positive note, the Toronto Board of Education has a collection of over one thousand titles in its Women's Studies and Labour Resource Room at Monarch Park Collegiate. (Students, teachers and others may borrow books and materials—call the school or the Board for information.)

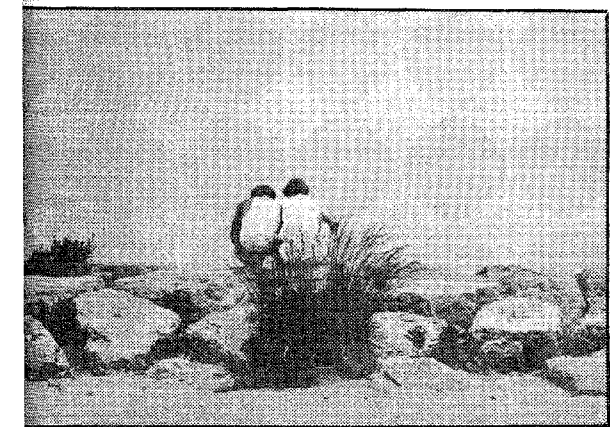
With the recent Ministry of Education guidelines requiring schools to deal with AIDS awareness issues, educational publishing companies are jumping on the bandwagon. Given the homophobia generated by the AIDS scare, curriculum materials need to treat these issues with considerable sensitivity, and there is no guarantee that mainstream publishers will produce gay-positive literature. Gay and lesbian organizations are leading the way in public education on AIDS, but the Ministry is hardly likely to endorse these groups' publications as curriculum materials.

At present, a loose network of government departments and women's organizations, in collaboration with boards of education, contributes to various aspects of sex education in Toronto schools. This is by no means a complete list, but will serve as an indication of the kinds of groups that are involved.

Public health departments are working with high schools in teaching sex education. METRAC is meeting with sex education consultants in the boards of education to develop curriculum materials on date rape and public violence against women. Physical education departments are considering offering women's self-defence in high schools. Theatre companies are performing plays that deal with childhood sexual abuse, street proofing, sex roles, date rape, drug and alcohol abuse. Various feminist organizations are called upon to provide speakers for high school sex awareness programs and teachers' professional development workshops. And the Ontario Women's Directorate is planning a public education campaign on sexual assault in the fall.

If feminists could plan and implement a complete sex education program in the schools, what would it look like? It would begin during early childhood and continue throughout the school years. It would validate the full range of human sexual preferences and practices: heterosexuality, bisexuality, lesbianism, homosexuality, celibacy, genital sex, oral sex, etc. It would recognize differences between male and female experience of sex, and between lesbian, gay and heterosexual sex, but it would also consider the common ground between all the groups. And it would not waste time asking what causes lesbianism and homosexuality, unless equal time was given to discussing the cause of heterosexuality.

A feminist sex education curriculum would take into account the contemporary social context in which males as a group have power and privilege, and females do not. Therefore, as an affirmative action step, it would be woman-centered, recognizing that girls and women are affected in distinct and significant ways by such issues as birth control, pregnancy, abortion, incest, rape, homophobia. A gender-neutral sex education program at this point in our history would not serve women's interests at all. For the same reason, a feminist model of sex education would include courses organized by and for women and girls, in addition to coeducational programming. And, while it would of course address the sex-related problems that are of immediate concern to girls and women, it would also focus on woman-positive images of sexuality—a celebration of our bodies and ourselves.



PHOTOS BY KATE MIDDLETON

one wants to keep on faking it. Apparently, few teenagers would agree with Germaine Greer that no sex is better than bad sex. For many teenagers, and many adults too, sex is a combination of status symbol and ego trip. Sex education that does not take this into account is unlikely to be effective.

There is a widespread myth that "the public" does not support sex education. This is not true. A 1984 Gallup poll showed that 83% of Canadian adults believe that the school should teach sex education, and 90% believe that everyone should have the right to use birth control. As well, 94% believe that sex education should also take place in the home. However, only one in five adults was given the "facts of life" as a child. Only 50% of schools in Canada offer any sex education, and only 25% offer a separate course.

There is evidence that public attitudes are changing. Radio shows such as Dr. Ruth's phone-in sex show attract huge teenage audiences, and the questions they ask range from the explicit to the bizarre. Surely no one would dispute the need for sex education, even if there is some disagreement on questions of content and approach. There is ample evidence of the ignorance, myths, and misinformation that abound on sex-related matters among teenagers, as well as in the adult population.

- Almost half of the teenagers in one survey believed that a girl could get pregnant only if she had intercourse during menstruation.
- Only about 30% of heterosexually active teenagers use regular, reliable contraception.
- There is a strong correlation between sexual ignorance

ARTS

The Last Word on Lolita



Banuta Rubess and Louise Garfield in "Lolita."

by Margaret Gail Osachoff

On the back cover of Marcia Resnick's *Re-visions*, a book of photographs that encourages us to have another look at Nabokov's *Lolita*, are statements (probably fictitious) by six men. Not content to let them have the last word, Nightwood Theatre and the Humbert Humbert Project (which consists of Louise Garfield, Banuta Rubess, Peggy Thompson, and Maureen White who wrote and acted in this multi-media production) in association with Theatre Passe Muraille have performed *The Last Will and Testament of Lolita*. For the present, this "vile pink comedy" is the last word on Lolita; and as the title suggests, it presents Lolita's last words to her four "heiresses."

Even if one has never read Vladimir Nabokov's 1955 novel *Lolita* or seen Stanley Kubrick's film of the novel, one probably knows who Lolita is. Her name has entered our consciousness and our language as the archetypal "nymphet"—the prepubescent temptress. The novel is entirely Humbert Humbert's confession of his pedophilia, but the confession is largely self-justification; this middle-aged man could not help his actions, he says, and regards himself as the victim of seduction. Hence is born the myth that young girls who are sexually abused are to blame for that abuse.

All we see of Lolita in the Nightwood production is a 41-year-old (but much older looking) woman, played on film by Jackie Burroughs, shortly before her (Lolita's) death. But what a shock: Burroughs looks nothing like Lolita! We all "know" what a Lolita looks like, especially since film clips from Kubrick's *Lolita* renew that "knowledge," and even at 41—we are sure—she would not be so gaunt, so childlike, and above all so unsexy. There she is chewing gum, eating potato chips, and drinking Coke, and saying with an off-hand but complete and heart-breaking sincerity, "All I wanted was a bag of chips." These pathetic words, spoken so many years after her encounters with Humbert, should make everyone reassess her or his view of a child's sexuality and a man's predation on her vulnerability. It's

perfectly clear and believable that Lolita was no child temptress thirty years previously. In every way except the aging of the body, Lolita has been frozen in time; what Humbert did to her has made normal growth and development impossible.

As narrator of the novel, he ostensibly turns Lolita and his obsession with her into Art, and as long as we never see the young Lolita directly and never know what her life is like "after Humbert," we might go along with this idea. Jackie Burroughs as Lolita, however, makes any such "artistic" accommodation impossible. Even more horrifying is the fact that there is no "after Humbert." Her persecutor is not punished and cast out of her life; he continues to make her life a nightmare and preys on a new generation of young girls. The time sequence in *The Last Will and Testament of Lolita* is not clear, but evidently at some point Lolita, probably with the help of her four favourite drama students, does finally kill Humbert. In any case, what is left of her life has been poisoned by her past, and Lolita opts unconsciously for the slow suicide of bulimia.

Thirteen years later Lolita's heiresses come together (in a set that looks like the pink marble of the best tombstones) to view the film which is their drama teacher's last words to them and compare the personal possessions that she gave them as a legacy. They reenact a bit of *The Trojan Women*, which was the high point of their studies with her, and which supplies the audience with one of the few purely funny scenes in the play. None of them have become famous actresses, but all of them have become "bad girls." And they are proud of it. Lolita herself was actually a failure as a bad girl, but these four have succeeded where she failed. Melissa, the wallflower who was always passed over because any other girl around was always more desirable, has "blossomed" into a beauty salon operator who makes sure that her customers look worse after she is through with them. Candace, a very ambitious careerist with a charming smile, has become first clarinetist in an orchestra by doing away with her predecessor. Delores, a starlet whose icon is a silver lamé bra, is willing to do anything to

become a star. Spike is a drug dealer whose customers are so young that they hardly know how to speak on the telephone. She justifies her immoral acts by saying that modern life is hard on kids and they need the help of drugs to survive. Obviously Lolita's influence on others has not been positive, but how could it be? Suffering doesn't necessarily lead to virtue or great insights; often the elements of a blighted life are passed on to others instead.

All the heiresses are nasty people, but each has a facet of her personality that an ordinary audience member can understand and even share. Haven't we at one time or another wanted vengeance for being passed over for someone more attractive and desirable, and haven't we all gone to ridiculous lengths to try to mask or correct some perceived imperfection of face or body? Our icons might not be as blatant or vulgar as a silver lamé bra, but they exist all the same. Also, when we think of vital, passionate literary heroines, the likes of Scarlett O'Hara and Anna Karenina (both mentioned in this play) come to mind. Both of these characters are bad girls: they are women whose ambition in the first case and sexuality in the second overflow the bounds of respectable society; they are women whose "immorality" we are meant to condemn but find darkly fascinating. Who even remembers the names of their "good girl" counterparts?

With Humbert Humbert having been killed long ago, there is no man on stage except the Sandman and the voice of Old Dad, whose admonitions are the same as those that mothers give, but both of them together mean that Humbert's spirit lives on. The image of the Sandman and accompanying texts are from Resnick's book (as are many other images and texts), and there is nothing innocent and childlike about either of them. We are told that, "She couldn't sleep unless she was thoroughly tucked in," but the image in the book and on stage is of a child so "tucked in" that she looks more like a corpse covered by a sheet than a child lovingly covered for a good night's sleep. The second text is more pointed: "She would rendezvous in her bed with the Sandman every night." The sexy and menacing Sandman,

played by Jim Warren, has sand sifting through his fingers that comes to resemble Spike's cocaine; clearly both are dead.

While individual images were striking and memorable, they never came together for me in a coherent pattern. I wasn't sure, however, whether this is a weakness in the writing of *The Last Will and Testament of Lolita* or evidence of major gaps in my reading and in my experience of popular culture.

The Last Will and Testament of Lolita ends with the middle-aged Lolita on film giving her heiresses five rules to govern their lives: (1) drink your milk; (2) comb your hair; (3) put your toys away; (4) be nice at all times; and (5) be true to your friends. What a let-down. Is this all that Lolita gained from her 41 years of living? The first three come from Resnick's book and echo the banal but threatening orders voiced by Old Dad during the play; they might be necessary in some circumstances but certainly aren't on the same level as the Ten Commandments or the Golden Rule. Niceness, on the other hand, can be downright dangerous if practised at the wrong time or with the wrong person, as Lolita should know.

Loyalty to one's friends is a virtue, and we can see how competitiveness for Lolita's approval has made the four bad girls hate each other. None of them has a friend because none of them is a friend. In Lolita's case, as with any sexually abused child, true loyalty to anyone is impossible once the relationship with a trusted adult is shattered by his abuse of power and the forced secrecy that results. But even in normal circumstances it would be unfair to expect something magnificent and profound to come from the mouth of an 11- or 12-year-old (which really is about how old Lolita is because of her arrested development), and it's not a certainty that mature adults could provide something better. In the meantime the undidactic Nightwood re-vision of *Lolita*, however, asks some tough questions about a common situation that many of us would rather not face.

Margaret Gail Osachoff teaches Canadian literature and drama in Saskatoon.

Popular Theatre Festival: Standin' the Gaff

by Amanda Hale

Sydney, NS, is said to be the cancer capital of Canada. The town is surrounded by tar ponds and enveloped in a haze of orange smoke from the steel company stacks. In 1925, the Cape Breton Steelworkers went out on strike against the British Empire Steel Corporation. BESCO Vice-President J.E. McClung said, "Eventually the men will have to come crawling to us. They cannot stand the gaff." Standin' the Gaff became a cry of solidarity amongst the strikers, and it was the title of the fourth biennial Festival of Popular Theatre, held in Sydney, in May.

Popular theatre is generally defined as theatre which promotes social change. It is a blend of art and politics—a tradition which, in the west, has grown out of the work of Bertolt Brecht, and in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, India and many other cultures is based on indigenous cultural forms and traditions.

I was at the Festival with Company of Sirens who represented Toronto with *The Working People's Picture Show*. We attended workshops and panel discussions with popular theatre workers from Canada, Nicaragua, the US, Jamaica, India, Zimbabwe, Brazil and Scotland.

As well, we saw several performances, including *Juan y Su Mundo* (Juan and His World) by Teocoyani, a Nicaraguan Theatre Collective, founded in 1980 as part of the Ministry of Culture's plan to create a rural cultural movement. Teatro Teocoyani works in the countryside, educating and supporting those under attack by the US-backed Contras. Their plays include elements of popular Nicaraguan tradition and indigenous history, reviving and affirming the cultural identity which was suppressed for years under the Somoza dictatorship.

Arts Exilio, a group of Chileans living in Montréal, presented a multi-media piece in Spanish and French. *Sur le toit de Pablo Neruda* explored the boundaries between personal and political exile. Using a style more reflective of personal indulgence rather than

political comment, the piece evoked strong audience response, and perhaps became the answer to some of its own cultural questions about exile and integration.

Sistren, a women's theatre collective from Jamaica, presented a reggae dance-drama called *Muffet: Inna Alla Wi*. Despite the difficulty of understanding the patois dialect, the packed audience at the University College of Cape Breton got the message that "Muffet is in all of us." Sistren got to the heart of women's experience of social violence, sexual abuse and economic exploitation. The music, strong visuals, and the vibrant energy of the performers combined to communicate beyond dialogue. The play shows four Muffets, each of whom experience life differently, from the bottom to the top of the social scale. The final realization is that Muffet #4, married to a wealthy man and playing hostess in a ridiculous parody of high society, is just as oppressed as Muffet #1 who had no opportunities in life, who was beaten and raped, and who struggled with hunger and poverty. The problems manifest differently but they spring from the same root—a society which oppresses women at every level of the social structure, and in every culture.

Sistren's work reflects a clear perspective on the hierarchical power structure, from white male colonizers on down. As well, they maintain a sense of humour in their portrayal of the sexual harassment of Caribbean women by dope-smoking Rastamen and the "rude boys" who hassle women on the streets. They also take some hilarious stabs at such imperialist cultural impositions as the consumer cosmetic industry and the beauty pageant tradition.

In a panel discussion on "Creating and Performing Women's Issues," Pauline Grover of Sistren described the group's process. Her lack of theorizing, analyzing and generalizing reflected the same refreshing, down to earth quality in Sistren's work and approach. Instead of imposing a theoretical feminist analysis, they politicize groups of Jamaican women

by working with them. For instance, when they went to do theatre workshops with sugar-cane workers they found the biggest problem for the women was their need for fresh water, so they worked together and managed to get access to fresh water from the bosses.

Grover described Sistren's approach to making theatre around social issues. For instance, they did a play about the plight of aging women. In Jamaica there was a government-run institution called the Eventide Home, where aging women experienced terrible conditions. In 1977 the Eventide Home burned down and the majority of the inhabitants died. When Sistren started to research the subject of aging they picked three characters who had lived at the Eventide for years. There was

Pearly, a notorious prostitute, originally from a middle class family who disowned her when she fell in love with the gardener and became pregnant. There was Hopie whose family could not afford to educate her but had high hopes for her betterment as a domestic for a well-to-do family. She ended up as a penniless drudge. And there was Queenie who was a bishop in the church, but was thrown out because she was a woman, and became a squatter. She also ended up on the street. The play began with three coffins on stage.

During their May/June tour of Canada, Sistren were in Toronto for the launching of *Lionheart Gal* by Sistervision. The book is written by members of Sistren about their work with the theatre group. ●



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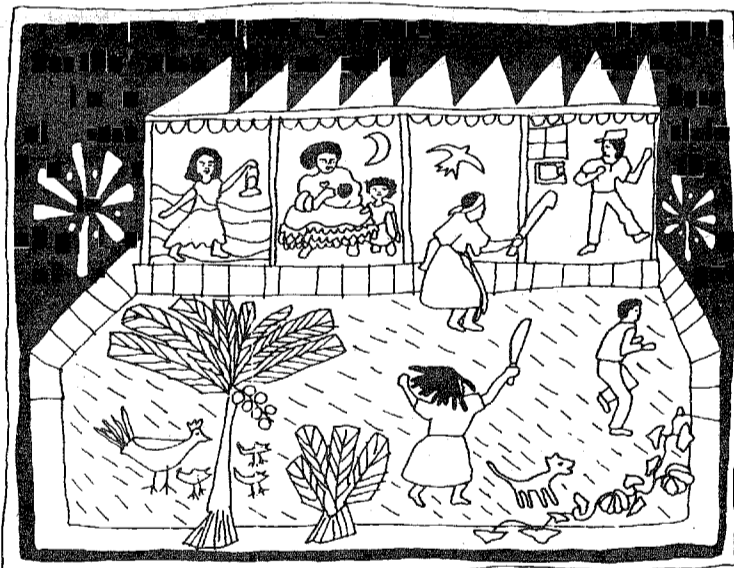
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Workshops in the Field



by Lina Chartrand

In Canada to participate in the Canadian Popular Theatre Alliance Festival in Sydney, Nova Scotia in late May, Jamaican theatre group Sistren has travelled to other centres on a tour of workshops and performances. I participated, along with over 30 other women, in a theatre workshop given by Sistren in Toronto in June.

Sistren is an independent, popular theatre collective made up of working class women from the urban ghetto of Kingston, Jamaica. The women in the company were initially part of a special employment program in Jamaica, designed to create jobs for thousands of unemployed women. Thirteen women from this program performed and presented a skit at Workers' Week Concert in 1977. Following this performance, they decided to continue their work and organized themselves into a theatre company. Since 1977, Sistren has become an internationally known theatre collective, known for creating awareness among audiences about the situations and struggles of women.

Over the years, Sistren has presented seven major productions on such issues as women's work, teenage pregnancy, poverty, rape, and the role of women in Caribbean history. In addition, Sistren has offered hundreds of workshops to women working in sugar-cane fields, factories, schools, prisons, and to urban unem-

ployed women. The workshops are dramatic problem-solving devices, which involve women in analyzing their situations and in collective discussions about possible ways of pressing for change.

The method Sistren uses to develop its work relies on the sharing of personal experiences, followed by analysis and research into the environmental influences on this experience. The group draws heavily on the techniques of improvisation and discussion, usually used together. The group also uses aspects of the traditional popular arts of the Caribbean, and develops them in a way which leads to critical reflection on the part of audiences and workshop participants.

The Toronto workshop introduced participants to some of Sistren's techniques, using theatre games, group discussion and improvisation, the group quickly developed a dramatic sketch, a poem and a dance piece on women and education, women's health and the cultural forces in our lives.

Although many of their methods were not unlike traditional theatre workshop techniques, Sistren's feminist and educational emphasis made the experience a valuable and empowering cultural exchange and increased our perception of theatre as an accessible and exciting form of communication.

Lina Chartrand is a member of the Company of Sirens theatre troupe.

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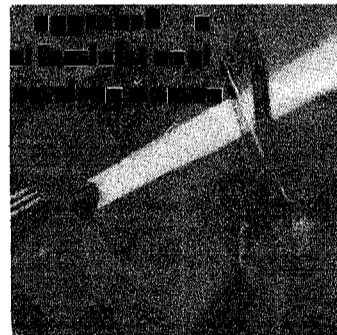


Illustration: Tony Hamilton

In the Spring '87 issue

PORN AGAIN

Feeling the Heat of Censorship
by Varda Burstyn

LESBIANS ON THE LOOSE

Sight Specific at A Space
review by Colin Campbell

SOCIAL BARBARISM AND THE SPOILS OF MODERNISM

by Marlene Nourbese Philip

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Suddenly Last Summer

by Susan Baillie and Gay Bell

"Every year the same group of women would meet to spend their summers together at Bluefish Cove. But the Cove was more than just a lesbian beach colony for them—it was family. This summer would bring surprises and struggles. A straight woman, Eva, has "invaded" their midst, unknowingly, while the family struggles with the impending death of one of their members, Lil. This play is a story of real romance, of women loving women, of living and of dying."

That is how the program notes describe *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove*, a play presented in May in Hamilton by Half the Sky, a feminist theatre company. This is the same group who made an all-too-brief appearance in Toronto with *Moontree* by Martha Boesing at the Groundswell Festival in 1986 (see *Broadside*, November 1985). In this, the fifth year of theatrical work by the community-based collective, they invited Ines Buchli from Toronto Free Theatre to direct five sessions in concert with Anna Allevato and Kathy Brown of the company who both did the ongoing direction. (Awaiting the golden word on funding, they hope to bring *Bluefish Cove* to Toronto this summer.)

The play is very funny. There is a delicate balance between the cajoling camaraderie of friendships and laughter as a release of tension in a painful situation.

Eva, having just left her husband, happens on a dyke haven entirely by mistake. Judian Shardlow handled the comedy of a naive but sincere stranger very skilfully, so that even when we were laughing at her to begin with, we had a hint of her potential strength. Then she grew, through the experience of her caring and passion, so that by the end of the play our laughter is replaced by identification with her grief and admiration of her new power as an autonomous woman. She is an example of what many of us believe are the valuable qualities resulting from lesbian feminist relationships. The lovers' scene demonstrates her transition—from initial silliness to playfulness. This may be the closest many audience members have been to seeing lesbians in bed. Although it misses what the power/passion dykes have been looking for in erotic depictions, it is very appealing nevertheless.

Where she was supposed to be funny, Duffy Foreman as Dr. Kitty Corcoran, was a scream.

She was uptight about her professional reputation being ruined by a stranger. The other characters keep insisting that once she relaxes she's great. And indeed, once she moved into her community role, no longer afraid of exposure, she was very steady and solid. Her relationship with her secretary Rita exposed her contradictions embarrassingly, but it was also quite convincing that they did sleep together and enjoy it. Rita's (Nancy Lilliman) wide-eyed belief in her boss/mentor/lover was exaggerated for comedy but not beyond many of our own experiences of dedication to our lovers' causes.

As a contrast to Lil's and Eva's relationship, which, as it develops becomes quite egalitarian, the relationship between Sue, the older lesbian with tons of money, and her young paid-for lover, is clearly oppressive. Dolly, the young lover, is played by Sally Leyland, who did a very good job of holding her own on stage. However, a few moments of their getting along well, if only in a bum-punching sort of way, might've given us a more rounded picture of that couple. Also, since there is now some feminist literature on the subject of menopause, the script might be updated slightly with a few lines to give a more helpful picture of Dolly's one-sided complaining that Sue is menopausal and never makes love to her.

As the healthy, long-term couple, Annie the sculptor and Rae the housewife, were relaxed and convivial. Rosalie Penner has not acted before, but she is an interpreter for the deaf and she uses those skills of projection on stage like a pro. Leslie Douglass was so hospitable she made the whole theatre feel like a big friendly space.

The play is presented in a naturalistic style. It was a real cabin with a real bench, even a live lobster for dinner. The dialogue was not abstract or poetic or disjointed or any of those avant-garde styles. The actors' movement and speech appeared to be natural, just like in somebody's kitchen. In fact, the blocking or movement of actors in the crowded kitchen area was very graceful and varied and it always conveyed the meaning of the discussion. Scenes changed by means of momentary freezes initiated by the last speaker before a blackout. These freezes were held with special style by Kathy Brown who played a minor part, Sue the rich lover, with the gusto and skill she usually uses in major roles of Half the Sky's productions.

The play powerfully portrays the needs of the group of loving lesbian friends as they care for themselves and for their friend, Lil. The



Lesbian love at Bluefish Cove.

play also addresses the needs of a lesbian who is dying. As Lil, Yvonne VandeWeyer did a credible job in a demanding role. She was funny, handsome, flirtatious as well as self-confident. Although the play only partly deals with the emotional pain of the dying process, a delicate lovingness permeates the interactions of the "family" and carries with it a number of poignant concerns: the question of creating community which ethically, legally and emotionally overcomes the boundaries of homophobia and lack of propriety at the time of a lesbian's death; and that as a community we have thought and spoken of but not yet created methods and theories of social support which will help provide us with transition through the dying process of our friends, our lovers, ourselves. We can have some helpful understanding of what the author, Jane Chambers, was working on in this play in 1980 and of her death from cancer in 1983.

However, lest we give the impression that this play is overwrought with gloom, we affirm that Chambers infused this play with vitality

and fun. She was an American lesbian who wrote extensively for mainstream and TV. One of her plays, *A Late Snow*, was produced in Toronto by Atthis Theatre a number of years ago. Chambers has won many awards such as the Drama Critics Award and the Villager Downtown Theatre Award, both for *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove*. When she won the National Gay Task Force Human Dignity Award in 1982, the woman introducing her said: "Jane's work, like Harvey Fierstein's, has proven to the potential producer that strong plays can include gay characters and still sell. She has done more in the last seven years to make work dealing with lesbian themes acceptable than any other woman playwright."

This play makes ordinary dykes accessible to the audience in an endearing way. Definitely worth seeing.

Susan Baillie and Gay Bell are Toronto-based feminists. Susan works in Community Development and teaches peer counselling. Gay is a popular theatre worker.

Essential Energies



Gynergy/L'Essentielle debut: (from left) Odette DesOrmeaux, Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, Nicole Brossard, Libby Oughton, Ariane Brunet, Martine Huysmans and Harriet Ellenberger.

by Betsy Nuse

An embossed silvery grey pearl seems to float on the sea-mist grey-green cover. Then words, embossed without colouring, surface around the pearl. This is the first book publication of *Sous La Langue*, a lyric, erotic poem by Nicole Brossard translated as *Under Tongue* by Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood.

The book is an exquisite production. French and English texts face each other, generously spaced on heavy cream paper. The poem mingles profound passion and precise speech—the earthy and heady cerebral and corporeal mixture that invigorates Nicole Brossard's lesbian poetry. This wonderful work is now made accessible to anglophones through Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood's careful and sensitive translation.

The publication of *Sous La Langue/Under Tongue* also celebrates the birth of its co-publishers, L'Essentielle of Montreal and gynergy of Charlottetown. It was launched at a bookstore opening and reading in Montreal in May. L'Essentielle opened its doors at 7 pm, "By 7:30," in Libby Oughton's words, "you could not move in the store, in the stock room or on the sidewalk. It was a sea of women!" Odette DesOrmeaux, a partner of L'Essentielle, estimates that between 300 and 350 women were present for the reading.

L'Essentielle is a new, fully bilingual feminist bookstore and publisher at 420 Rachel Street East in Montreal. Its partners include DesOrmeaux, formerly of les Editions du remue ménage, Harriet Ellenberger, one of the co-founders of *Sinister Wisdom*, Martine Huysmans, former owner of l'Aube-Epine, and Ariane Brunet. They welcome visitors to Montreal and are happy to provide French books by mail order. Two of the partners are also among the organizers of the International Feminist Bookfair which will be held in Montreal in June 1988 (not in India as originally anticipated).

The concept of *Sous La Langue/Under Tongue* was, according to Libby Oughton, "an idea that came totally from women's energy." When Libby first heard Nicole Brossard read the poem at a literary salon in Montreal she was "dazzled" and wanted to publish it. Nicole agreed to publication, suggesting the effort be co-operative between Libby and the women of L'Essentielle. They, in turn, knew a woman printer, Louise Gauthier, and a woman embosser, Monique C. Déchaîne, who manufactured the book from Odette and Libby's design.

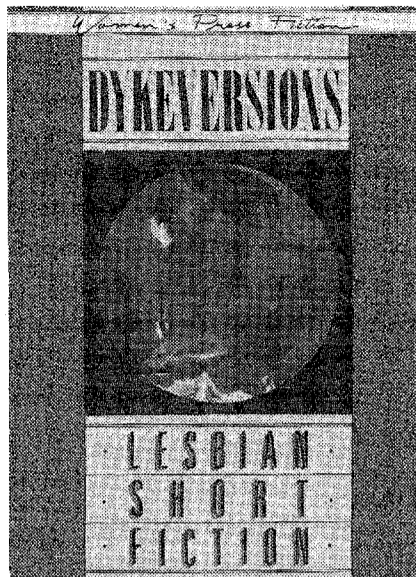
Gynergy is a new imprint of Libby Oughton's Ragweed Press. It will be devoted exclusively to publishing feminist and lesbian fiction and poetry. Libby has been interested for some time both in "new" women's writing—that is writing that relinquishes traditional structures for experiment with language and shape—and explicitly lesbian writing (see *Broadside*, August/September 1986). She conceived of the gynergy imprint as a place, in her own words, "to concentrate this writing": to highlight it, to cherish it, and to be certain it always has a forum in Canadian publishing.

Four other gynergy books already scheduled to appear are: *Unnatural Acts* by Marg Yeo, *The Breaking Up Poems* by Christine Donald, *A Girl's Album of Adventures* by Catherine Macleod, and *Double Negative* by Betsy Warland and Daphne Marlatt. Libby also hopes to publish an anthology of women's erotic writing about women on the occasion of the bookfair in Montreal in June 1988; she is welcoming submissions of short prose, prose poetry and poetry (maximum length 1000 words or 5 typed, double-spaced pages) from now through September 15.

It's not too late to share in the celebration of the publication of *Sous La Langue/Under Tongue* and the birth of L'Essentielle and gynergy. Be sure your local feminist bookseller orders copies of this extraordinary publication! The edition is limited to 1150 copies, all of which are numbered and the first 150 of which are signed by the author and translator. A special achievement in Canadian feminist publishing, it deserves a special place on our bookshelves.

Betsy Nuse is a Toronto feminist and bibliophile.

Dykeversions: Dyke Definitions



by Marilyn Murphy

When I picked up *Dykeversions: Lesbian Short Fiction*, edited by the Lesbian Writing and Publishing Collective and published by the Women's Press in Toronto, I was ready to be disappointed. I know I am supposed to be glad to see lesbians get their work published, and I am glad. And yes, I can appreciate the difference "lesbian sensibility" brings to a work of fiction. I also understand the confusion about the definition of "Lesbian Fiction." Is it fiction written by a lesbian, whether or not it is about lesbians? Is it fiction about lesbians

even when written by non-lesbians? Is it only fiction about lesbians written by lesbians? Most of us agree that the category "Lesbian Fiction" can include all three.

However, I confess to feeling unsatisfied and disappointed when "Lesbian Fiction" does not have lesbian life for its subject matter, especially when it is written by lesbians. The truth is that I give lip service to the liberal definition of lesbian fiction, while secretly harboring a narrow-minded approach to lesbian literature. I not only want literary excellence, I want lesbian writers, lesbian sensibility, lesbian subject matter as well! Is it any wonder I was ready to be disappointed again?

Now that my bias is known, I can write that *Dykeversions* is indeed "Lesbian Short Fiction." It is a collection of well-written lesbian short stories that satisfies my hunger to read stories by lesbians about fictional lesbians which illuminate the lives we real-life lesbians live. In fact, almost everything about the book pleases me. It feels good in the hand; the cover art is exquisite; the print is large and clear; the pages are smooth. More than that, I love reading it. The stories are varied, lots of love—falling in and out of—and loving and sex and relationships and friends and relatives and work and homelife. I can pick up the book and re-read a story or a page and smile, nod, grimace, yes, this is me, this is us, this is true. There's not a dull piece in the collection. It is essence of lesbianism.

Sarah Sheard's "Asta's Here..." is a juicy couple of pages of lesbian sex that I particularly liked. "A Figure Of Speech," by Mary Louise Adams, gave me an understanding of

lesbian battering that I lacked until I read the story. The pleasures and problems of monogamy and non-monogamy are detailed with wit and humour in "Polished & Perfect" by Ingrid MacDonald; and Naomi Binder Wall's "The Kidnapping" is lesbian irony at its best. If I could pick a favourite piece, and I cannot, it would be Anne Cameron's celebration of coupledom in "Just Another Day," which gives words for my own feelings about my relationship with my companion lover: "There is only her, only me, only us and this wonderjoy we help happen, have known and appreciated, shared and treasured all these politically incorrect monogamous years, those years which have been and still are my reward for all those other years before I knew her."

The Lesbian Writing and Publishing Collective have included two short "Notes About Racism," one by the Lesbians of Colour and one by white lesbians on the collective, and a brief general "Introduction," written by all the members. They describe their efforts to be inclusive in their selections for the book, to see that the various kinds of lesbians, and the various experiences of lesbians, are reflected in this, their first publishing effort, and in future projects. *Dykeversions'* excellence is a tribute to their commitment to feminist principles.

The one sour note in *Dykeversions* is more difficult to bear precisely because of the collective's commitment to feminist principles. At the recent Celebration for and by Old Lesbians in California, Barbara MacDonald (co-author with Cynthia Rich of *Look Me in the Eye: Lesbians, Aging and Ageism*) read a few examples of old woman/old lesbian hating written by

lesbians and asked, "Do they think old lesbians do not read their writings?" "Chemo Dreams," by J.A. Hamilton, is as insulting, infuriating, heart-breaking an example of old woman hating as I've ever read. Hamilton uses "old woman" as a metaphor for death, and describes her body thus: "Hag real with rotten teeth... Hag humping free and crackling. Jolting cripple walk... dirty six-inch fingernails... sly-backed bitch... shrunken chest... Sour nipple juice..." Who could love such a body? This is not Mary Daly's Hag, nor is she the sexual old woman in June Arnold's novel *Sister Gin*, nor is she the old lesbians I know and love and hope to become. The use of woman's body as a metaphor for evil, death, disease and the graphic description of woman's body parts as ugly, vile, dirty, are woman-hating practices as old as patriarchy itself. Because the body being used to evoke dread and repulsion is that of an old woman does not erase the woman-hating, it only intensifies it by the addition of ageism. May I suggest "Notes on Ageism" and "Notes On the Illusion of Ablebodiness" be included in the process/progress report next time.

Marilyn Murphy is an Irish/Italian-American living in California, working-class and Catholic-raised, middle-aged lesbian feminist and mother of a lesbian feminist and companion lover of a lesbian feminist who has been an activist, organizer, teacher and writer since 1969, and has written a monthly column for *The Lesbian News* for about five years.

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• **LETTERS**, from page 2

a necessary condition for finding solutions? Not only does this line of argument feed directly into that propounded by anti-feminist agitators, it also bears a strong resemblance to the "explanation" offered to the lesbian caucus of NAC, when that caucus was trying to work within NAC to develop an analysis and program for action around heterosexism. I wonder what purpose NAC serves, if not to advance dialogue around issues raised by the diversity of women who are all part of the women's movement: does NAC not take action around pay and employment equity, accessibility, childcare, sexual harassment and reproductive choice? Arguments such as those offered by Nemiroff do more to obstruct the process by which such dialogue might be facilitated than the organizational barriers to which she points: the latter are even now in the process of being worked out through NAC's organizational review, a process she overlooks.

I was equally surprised to find a stray sentence about pornography and prostitution, the only reference to these issues, which seemed totally misplaced in the article. The reduction of what were real and fruitful discussions regarding our developing analyses and strategies for dealing with these questions to complete insignificance in one sentence again suggested a deliberate attempt to distort the overall proceedings of the conference. It is not appropriate to reconstruct an event in order to accommodate one political agenda above another. By engaging in such selective oversight, Nemiroff has done little justice to the difficult and challenging work in which many women have been involved over the past several years around pornography and prostitution. There was real news there, but Nemiroff missed the boat entirely.

It is condescending in the extreme to tell us that "women are only beginning to understand the complexities of power." It is also condescending to hurl the label of anti-feminist at women who are actively and consistently working to develop a process in which diversity and discussion are accommodated and developed. Nemiroff states that, "Unless we women truly understand the nature of power we resist as well as the nature of power we wield over one another through our appropriation of patriarchal structures and discourse, we do not have a hope of changing the world;" and she is right. However, to provide us with that statement and simultaneously to distort political discussion suggests to me that Nemiroff has given us a testimonial to her timely self-criticism.

Jennifer Stephen
Toronto

Broadside:

In her article on the NAC AGM (NAC: Striving to Survive Sweet Reason,' *Broadside*, June, 1987) Greta Hofmann Nemiroff is able to reduce the diversity of feminist political approaches in evidence at the NAC conference to "personality conflicts" because she does not regard many of these approaches as valid expressions of feminist politics. Hence, she is

able to say that we should all be working together to fight patriarchy, instead of one another. A nice sentiment, but one that does not take seriously the very real differences within the women's movement which prevent us, for now, from realizing the vision of a unified sisterhood. She disregards the fact that NAC conferences are one of the few places where feminists of all political persuasions can come together and attempt to work these differences out.

Last year's NAC executive represents "sweet reason" for Nemiroff precisely because she agreed with their approach to political work, while those of us who have alternative approaches are regarded as "specific interest groups" foisting upon the "regulars" and "novices" "the terrorism of the politically correct." Evidently even organizations which have a long history of participation in NAC are considered outside agitators who have no business being there.

Nemiroff comments on the participation of women of colour at the conference were extremely patronizing. She appears surprised that they could speak with "eloquence," while mis-representing the position taken by the Immigrant Women and Women of Colour caucus: The proposal that NAC change the Committee for Visible Minority and Immigrant Women to the Committee on Racism and Ethnocentricity was ultimately rejected. To the women of colour who report feeling excluded from NAC, she replies that "it is not clear how these problems will or can be resolved." How many times do women of colour have to say that the first step is to integrate an anti-racist politics into every aspect of NAC's work?

Nemiroff managed to dismiss critical debates and resolutions on pornography and prostitution in one sentence, even though they indicated that significant shifts had occurred among delegates. In particular, the call for a rejection of Bill C-54 on pornography and the endorsement of a civil rights and remedies approach indicates that women are fed up with the federal government's attempts to come up with appropriate criminal legislation, and want to take on a different strategy for the elimination of pornography.

Finally, she over-simplified what was an important and productive debate on how to respond to the Mulroney government's intended snub of NAC's annual lobby day. It is because of the variety of response strategies adapted—the letter writing campaign, the Sunday protest at the Prime Minister's residence, and the protest staged by a number of women in the gallery of the House of Commons—that NAC was able to embarrass the Mulroney government and make its annual lobby a more powerful and effective event.

NAC provides a forum for feminists to put our politics on the floor and take them out of the back room. If we cannot do it there, then where? Our diversity represents our growth and our strength. We should not be afraid of it.

Debi Brock, Lynn Lathrop, Carolyn Egan, Mary Gellatly, Ellen Waxman, Nancy Farmer, Julia Barnett, Shelly Gordon, Judy Persad, Mariana Valverde, Cynthia Wright, Michele Paule, Toronto

• **INTERCEDE**, from page 4

considerate about the hours a domestic worker is expected to contribute. However it appears that the Ontario government may grant overtime protection by putting domestic workers in a separate category (as they used to be with the minimum wage provision) by giving the employer the option of paying time and a half or time off in lieu of payment. With no entrenchment of paid overtime it is unlikely that vulnerable domestic workers will ever receive any extra money from a demanding employer, and it is unbelievable that the employee will get extra time off when even receiving regular time off seems to be an impossibility.

In April 1987, INTERCEDE and the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) announced that they were proceeding with court action against the Ontario government. The charge is discrimination on the basis of sex, national origin and unequal treatment under the Canadian Charter of Rights. It is hoped that pressure from the ethnic and women's community will cause the government to reconsider its views, thereby avoiding a long and costly court battle. At its annual meeting in May 1987, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women adopted the following resolution put forth by the YWCA of Metropolitan Toronto: "Be it resolved that in this crucial pre-election period, NAC supports the LEAF Charter challenge of April 1987 by urging the Ontario government to extend overtime provisions under the Employment Standards Act to domestic workers." With New Brunswick and British Columbia also considering Charter challenges through

LEAF's help, the expectation is that a national profile of the issue will cause all the provinces to examine their labour laws.

In 1986, Judith Ramirez won the YWCA Women of Distinction award in the Business/Labour category for her long commitment to fighting discriminatory practices encountered by immigrant and visible minority women. Perhaps the Ontario government is looking for an award for its persistent efforts to preserve the status quo.

(Note: On June 9 the Ontario Minister of Labour announced a new policy on domestic workers. The overtime provision, as foreseen, will be extended to domestics. However, they have been "ghettoized" again, as INTERCEDE calls it. While other workers receive monetary compensation at the rate of 1.5 hours for each hour worked in excess of 44 hours/week, domestics may be granted either the pay, or the time at the same rate within the next 12 weeks. To the Liberals' credit, "sitters" who work full-time (more than 24 hours/week) and live in are now included in the Act, which means now they also must receive minimum wage and overtime. The room and board deduction has not been reduced. The changes are only related to the Employment Standards Act and not to the Labour Relations Act. They come into effect on October 1. LEAF/INTERCEDE's court challenge will proceed.)

Shirin Perston is an Asian European Canadian who always wonders if she will get deported for her feminist views.

• **SEXUAL TERRORISM**, from page 5

There is, of course, an inherent contradiction in feminists expecting, and working towards, improved police service, as we know from our experience with various institutions and agencies of the state. The police, in Toronto as elsewhere, represent an extremely male-dominated, hierarchical, conservative and, more often than not, oppressive force. As such, any political work around the police is fraught with serious, perhaps insurmountable, inconsistencies and problems. We can hardly expect the men who so very often typify the misogynist attitudes and practices of a patriarchal society to serve in any useful way when women are sexually assaulted and harassed. At the same time, however, when women do choose to report a sexual violation we are inevitably up against the institutions of a male dominant society, specifically the police and the criminal justice system. It is imperative, therefore, that we work to eliminate the "second assault" which women go through when seeking redress through the criminal justice system or demanding safety from continued violence. With specific reference to the police, this means, among other things, that a woman's claim that a sexual assault has been committed against her will not be "unfounded" by the police; this means that women will not be interrogated at length by many different officers about their past sexual history; this means that the police must no longer tell women at community meetings that they should not fight back in sexual assaults and should "let the guy have his two minutes pleasure"; this means that women who report rape will not wait for months on end to do identifications; this means that police must stop

blaming women for men's behaviour and must lay charges in all cases of sexual assault, wife assault, and indecent exposure. And this would be only a beginning.

In this way, then, we must insist that the police, like other institutions through which we at times must work, respond to women's demands. Specifically, this means that we must insist that the police and the courts treat men's acts of sexual violence, exploitation and harassment in a manner which is accountable and responsive not only to the women who have been directly harmed, but to *all* women. Otherwise, we abandon those women who choose to have no choice but to work within the system to the sexist attitudes and practices which continue to construct and reinforce our subordination throughout society as a whole.

As the recent organizing in Toronto demonstrates, women are determined to continue to organize and combat men's sexual intrusion, violations and often brutal assaults which are pervasive. Increasingly, women who have not previously considered themselves to be "feminist" or "politicized" are angered by and acting against the huge issue of our sexual vulnerability to men's violent and harassing behaviour. And the "second assault" to which we are subjected at the hands of the police at the courts continues to be exposed and combated by women who refuse to live in a world of sexual violence and inequality.

Melanie Randall is a member of Women Against Violence Against Women in Toronto and an editor at Resources for Feminist Research.

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OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

JULY 1987

Compiled by Helen Lenskyj

• **Wednesday, July 1:** Guerilla Tactics: An exhibition of new art works challenging the role of the electronic marketplace in shaping mass culture. A Space, 183 Bathurst St. Info: 364-3227.
To Saturday, July 4.

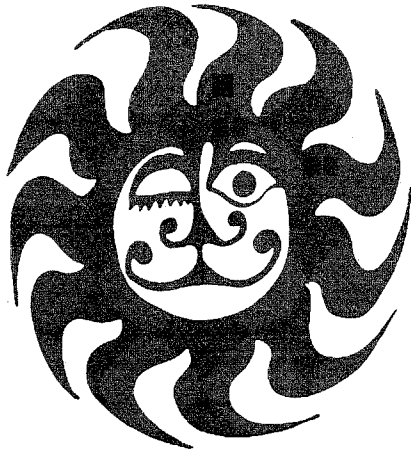
• **Wednesday, July 1:** Jessie Oonark: A Retrospective. Jessie Oonark (1906-1985) was one of the most original and innovative Inuit artists. Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas West.
To Sunday, September 6.

• **Wednesday, July 1:** Volunteering for peace. Toronto Disarmament Network holds a volunteer drop-in night for those interested in lobbying, organizing demonstrations, etc. 5 pm to 9 pm. 555 Bloor St. West. Info: 535-8005.

• **Wednesday, July 1:** "Showing Our Face"—a lesbian and gay portrait show. Wed.-Sun., 1-5 pm. Sparkes Gallery, 693a Queen St. West. Info: 862-0470.

• **Thursday, July 2:** Rebel Girls Reels: Women's Film Series, organized by IWDC, DEC and OISE Centre for Women's Studies in Education. "Concerned Aboriginal Women" and "Dene Nation," with discussion following. Room 2-213, OISE, 252 Bloor St. West, 7:30 pm. Wheelchair accessible. Donation at door. For childcare, call DEC at 597-0328. Info: Nancy, 531-6608.

• **Friday, July 3:** "It Ain't What You Think," documentary video on life in Regent Park, produced by Regent Park residents, filmed by Christene Brown and Junie Boudreau. Free. 7 pm, Regent Park Community Centre, 203 Sackville Green. Info: 863-0499.



• **Friday, July 3:** Mariposa Folk Festival, Molson Park, Barrie. Hear Holly Near, Joan MacIsaac and many more. Individual tickets, \$9.50 and up. Info: 363-4009. **To Sunday, July 5.**

• **Saturday, July 4:** Sunday in the Park, with storyteller Helen Porter and musicians. Free. 2:30 pm, High Park, east of Grenadier Restaurant.

WEEK OF JULY 6

• **Tuesday, July 7:** Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) meeting, Trinity-St. Paul's, 427 Bloor St West, 7:30 pm. Info: 532-8193.

WEEKLY

Sunday: Lesbians of Colour (LOC), a social and support group for Native, Asian, South Asian, Black and Latin lesbians regardless of age meets every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. 519 Church St. Community Centre. 3:45-5:30 pm. Info: Michele, 588-2930. (Out of town lesbians of colour can write for information: LOC, PO Box 6597, Station A, Toronto, M5W 1K4.)

Monday to Friday: "By All Means," a noon-time Women's radio magazine show. Every day at 12:15 on CIUT-FM, 89.5. Interview, reviews, commentary and chit chat. Tune in! Info: (416) 595-0909.

Monday: The Women's Group, an open lesbian discussion group, meets at 519 Church St. 8 pm. Info: 392-6874.

Monday and Wednesday: The Women's Information Line is open from 7-9 pm. Messages may be left any time, at 598-3714.

Tuesday: International Women's Day Committee (IWDC), a socialist feminist activist group, meets on alternate Tuesdays. Info: Nancy, 531-6608.

Tuesday and Thursday: The Lesbian Phone Line is open for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. 533-6120.

• **Tuesday, July 7:** Support the Midwifery Task Force of Ontario. Send a telegram **today** to the Honourable M. Elston, Minister of Health, 10th floor Hepburn Block, 80 Grosvenor St., Toronto, M7A 2C4. The telegram should say: "We urge you to implement the excellent recommendations of the Task Force on Midwifery."

• **Thursday, July 9:** "Homophobia and androgynous child rearing." Open discussion sponsored by University of Toronto Women's Centre. On lawn in front of Hart House, U of T (if raining, 49 St. George) at noon. Info: 978-8201.

• **Thursday, July 9:** Rebel Girls Reels: Women's Film Series, organized by IWDC, DEC and OISE Centre for Women's Studies in Education. "Orientations" and "Burning Bridges." Discussion following with Michele Paule, Lesbians of Colour. Room 2-213, OISE, 252 Bloor St. W., 7:30 pm. Wheelchair accessible. Donation at door. For childcare, call DEC at 597-0328. Info: Nancy, 531-6608.

• **Saturday, July 11:** Benefit for *Rites* magazine, featuring "Strangers," a new work by Lina Chartrand, and more. Special appearance by Delores del Emma. A Space, 183 Bathurst St. (at Queen), 8 pm. Money for childcare available. \$5/\$4 A Space members (\$2 unemployed).

• **Saturday, July 11:** "Good for a Girl" performs at the Cabana Room. 10 pm. Cover \$3. Spadina Hotel.

WEEK OF JULY 13

• **Wednesday, July 15:** Riverdale Women's Action Committee monthly meeting. New members welcome. Frankland Community Centre, 816 Logan Ave. 7 pm.

• **Saturday, July 18:** K D Lang plays at the Kingswood Music Theatre (Canada's Wonderland), 9560 Jane, at 8 pm. \$6 with admission to Canada's Wonderland. Tickets: 832-8131.

• **Saturday, July 18:** WITZ Baseball Barbecue. Come and join the WITZ team as it challenges the Over Thirties group to another fun, non-competitive baseball game. Or just come and cheer. Hanlan's Point Picnic Site #113, from noon on. Bring baseball gloves, swimsuits, food and drink. Info: 536-3162.

• **Saturday, July 18:** Lesbian Dance Committee's Summer Dance at the Concert Hall, 888 Yonge St., 9 pm to 3 am. Tickets at Women's Bookstore, Glad Day, sliding scale at SCM. Wheelchair accessible. Childcare money available. Info: 597-1171.

• **Saturday, July 18:** Fruit Cocktail Auditions. The Lesbian and Gay Community Appeal of Toronto holds auditions for the annual Fruit Cocktail '87 show. 519 Church St., 10 am-6 pm. Info: 323-1662. Also **Monday, July 20**, 6-10 pm, **Saturday, July 25**, 10 am-6 pm, **Monday, July 27**, 6-10 pm.

WEEK OF JULY 20

• **Tuesday, July 21:** Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) meeting Trinity-St. Paul's, 427 Bloor St. W., 7:30 pm. Info: 532-8193.

• **Thursday, July 23:** Take Back the Night planning meeting, sponsored by the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre. 519 Church St., 7:30 pm. Child care money available, wheelchair accessible. Info: 597-1171.

• **Thursday, July 23:** "Women and organized religion: hope for change or lost cause?" Open discussion sponsored by University of Toronto Women's Centre. On lawn in front of Hart House, U of T (if raining, 49 St. George) at noon. Info: 978-8201.

• **Thursday, July 23:** *Firewords*, presented by APUS and The Women's Centre at U of T. 6 and 8 pm. 140 George St. (at Sussex), Room 205. Wheelchair accessible. Info: 978-8201.

• **Saturday, July 25:** A picnic at Hanlan's Point. All women invited, by the Woman's Common, Notso Amazons and Pink Turfers. Bring your soccer balls, baseball gloves, food and beverages. 2-10 pm. Hanlan's Point, area 105, firepit #10. Look for the Woman's Common banner.

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—Kitchen Manager for seasonal University café, September-May. Fresh food luncheon menu, in pleasant working environment. Some catering experience helpful. Weekdays, Spadina/College. Salary commensurate with experience. (416) 323-3775.

BOOK STORE POSITION:

DEC Bookroom—full-time position beginning August 17, 1987. Position part of the DEC Collective. Salary \$21,000/yr, plus benefits. Complete job description available from DEC, 229 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1R4; or call 597-8695. Deadline for applications, July 31, 1987. Affirmative Action Hiring.

SOCIAL WORKER WANTED:

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CO-OPERATIVE taking applications for its 2-bedroom waiting list. \$676 per month, central location, supportive environment for women with or without children. Call (416) 865-1765.

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Four Seasons—one bedroom, secluded cottage on Haliburton Lake. Reasonable. Call Mary (705) 754-2469.

LESBIAN-FEMINIST

looking to share an apartment or co-op house with other lesbian-feminists for September 1st, 1987. Call (613) 231-2791.

WOMEN'S INFORMATION LINE

—new hours. Monday and Wednesday, 6-9 pm (for personal response). (416) 598-3714 (24 hour answering machine).

THE WOMAN'S COMMON

is a group of women who are fundraising to develop a place for women to socialize in Toronto. A club for lesbian women, straight women, all women. By purchasing a lifetime membership now, you will enable the club to look for a location. Your support is needed now to make this dream a reality. Call (416) 469-4859 or write Box 74, 275 King Street E., Toronto Ont., M5A 1K4.

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LESBIAN FEMINIST SUPPORT

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TORONTO COUNSELLING CENTRE

for lesbians and gays is seeking volunteer lesbian counsellors to meet the rising demands for service. A great opportunity to learn about the issues and for professional development. Contact Mary Trenholm or Rodd Nunn at (416) 977-2156.

FEMINIST AND LESBIAN BOOKS

by mail, English and French. New Book Bulletins published 3 times/year, free. L'Androgyne Bookstore, 3636 St-Laurent, Montréal, Québec, H2X 2V4.

"BYKES"

a bi-sexual women's group, meets on the second Friday of each month, 6 to 8 pm, at 519 Church Street Community Centre. Further questions: (416) 961-1335.

AMATEUR MUSICIANS:

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