

DEENA RASKY

Women in China: A Mural in Chongqing SEE STORY PAGE 6.

**FEATURE**

**SELF VS. STATE:** In a new China, women's interests often conflict with those of the dominant culture. Deena Rasky travels to China and visits with a Chongqing feminist; student Bin Ling writes about the rise of individualism and its effect on women; and a professor of women's studies looks at a crumbling tradition in China: marriage. Page 6.

**NEWS**

**SHARING SECRETS:** A recent conference on child sexual abuse went a long way towards establishing open social resistance to a secret, yet criminal, act. "Society's denial is evident in the sanctions placed on those who talk about it." Speakers included Diana Russell, Sandra Butler and Susan Cole. Helen Lenskyj reports. Page 3.

**COMMENT**

**NATIONAL ACTION:** The drama of the May annual meeting of NAC compels us to pause and consider: is there a 'feminist process'? "We are at a crossroads in our history," comments Constance

**INSIDE BROADSIDE**

Backhouse, and suggests better methods for feminist activism than "erecting national umbrella structures to pass complex technical resolutions for government lobbying." Page 4.

**ARTS**

**CINÉMA FEMME:** Montreal's fourth International Festival of Film and Video was a thought-provoking experience, combining highly experimental video, traditional narrative film and politically charged documentary. Though some familiar films were screened, Johanne Pelletier surveys "the festival oddities, which offer more challenging representational schemes." Page 8.

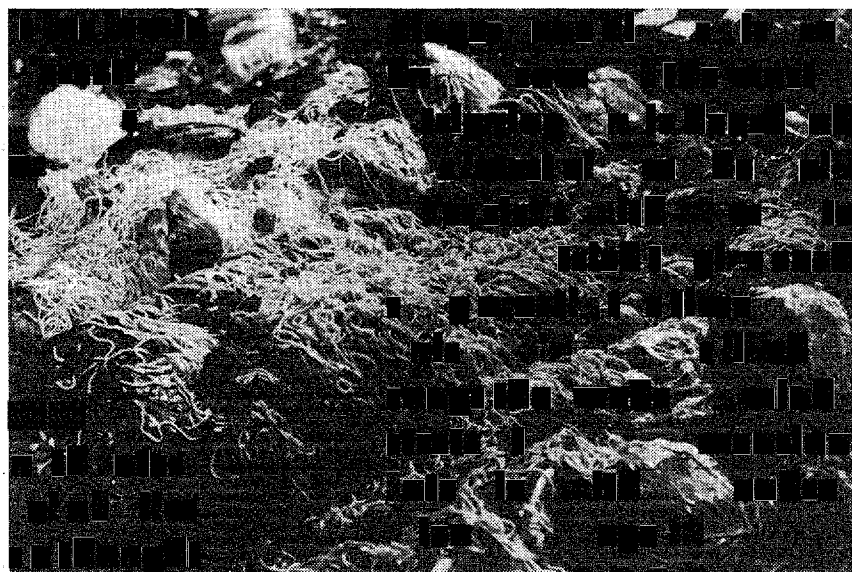
**BOOM, BABY, BOOM!** Baquta Rubess' new play at the Du Maurier World Stage Theatre Festival succeeds in its attempt to fuse jazz and theatre through exploring the people and mood of 50s Toronto: "a post-war, post-holocaust, post-bomb generation" into music and memories. Reviewed by Susan Feldman. Page 9.

**SIBERRY STRETCHING:** Singer Jane Siberry is producing some of the most intriguing music heard today. Her latest album *The Walking* takes risks, with 10-minute songs: "I tried to give each song exactly the time it required. I've always liked songs that made my mind stretch to a new dimension." Interview with Cassandra Nicolaou. Page 10.

**OUTSIDE BROADSIDE:** Don't miss this month's calendar of Toronto women's events, for July 1988. Page 11.



Jane Siberry



Cinéma Femme: 'The Food Affair'



Editor, Philinda Masters  
Books, Susan Cole  
Calendar, Helen Lenskyj  
Circulation/Advertising, Jackie Edwards  
Production Assistant, Amanda Jane Keenan

## EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE:

Susan G. Cole  
Brettel Dawson  
Jackie Edwards  
Lisa Freedman  
Amanda Hale  
Helen Lenskyj  
Philinda Masters  
Catherine Maunsell  
Deena Rasky

## THIS ISSUE:

Liz Cheung  
Caroline Duetz  
Martha Keaner  
Susan Power

## Address all correspondence to:

Broadside  
P.O. Box 494  
Station P  
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2T1  
Tel. (416) 598-3513

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

Manuscripts of articles should be typed on white paper, double-spaced (send us original, keep a copy) and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

*Broadside* is published 10 times a year by the Broadside Collective, P.O. Box 494, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2T1. (416) 598-3513. Member: Canadian Periodical Publishers' Association.  
This issue: July 1988, Vol. 9, no. 9

Typesetting: Walker Communications  
Printing: Delta Web Graphics

Second Class mail registration no: 4771  
ISSN: 0225-6843

*Broadside* receives funding support from The Ontario Arts Council.

*Broadside* is indexed by Canadian Periodical Index, and available in microform from Micromedia.

Next production date: July 23, 24  
Copy deadline: July 4  
Ads closing date: July 15

## Caucus criticized

## Broadside:

This letter is a response to the statements published by the "Popular Front-of-the-Bus Caucus" and the Women's Press (*Broadside*, June 1988). It should be understood that in no way am I denying the need for the Women's Press to develop an anti-racist policy; rather, I am challenging the tactics being employed by the Caucus to bring about such a policy. However, by expressing any opposition to the Caucus, there is the risk that one could be viewed as opposing an anti-racist policy itself. In short, one could be accused of being racist. I hope this risk does not operate as intimidation. Those of us opposed to the tactics of the Caucus must speak out.

At issue is the recent exercising of majoritarian politics by the Caucus. The consensual process for decision making, hitherto practised by the Women's Press, has been killed. Because the members of the Caucus now hold a majority at the Women's Press, they are in a position both to impose their particular agenda and to silence any members of the Press holding a different viewpoint.

Until this recent development, the Women's Press had encouraged the expression of various opinions, both within its organization and on the part of its authors, within the parameters of socialist feminism. This openness allowed for, and in fact encouraged, constructive debate and dialogue which furthered the thinking of Canadian feminism.

Surely within the framework of socialist feminism an anti-racist policy can be addressed, developed and published. However, I question whether the politics of the "Popular Front-of-the-Bus Caucus" (which is not clear) can accommodate issues of relevance to socialist feminism, other than those dealing with racism. A case in point is the Caucus's rejection of a work of fiction employing the literary structure of magic realism on the basis that the structure, not the content, is imperialist. What, then, do we do with works by Luisa Valenzuela, to cite but one example of a writer who employs such a literary structure to address issues of sexism and repressive regimes?

As a single-issue group using methods contrary to a feminist process, the Caucus occupies a dubious position as the new, self-declared leadership of the Women's Press. Its position is even more questionable when one looks at its political integrity, or lack of. First of all, to reject the entire 16-year backlist of the Press, which the Caucus has done, is to negate the history of Canadian feminism which has brought us to the point where we are now: the recognition of the Press to broaden its scope so as to include more work of women of colour. If the Caucus were to have any political integrity it would not reject the backlist on the one hand, and on the other plan to publish more "politically correct" material financed by the

profits and government grants achieved by this same backlist. Better to start its own press, free from any association with the Women's Press.

The major achievement of the Women's Press has been its 16-year success in publishing works with a socialist feminist perspective while operating within a capitalist society. To criticize the Women's Press as a capitalist enterprise, which the Caucus has done, is incredibly naive. Without a sound financial base there would be no publishing house from which to publish any material.

At this point I wish to declare my support for those individuals who have expressed their profound commitment to the women's movement through their years of work with the Women's Press. As long as the members of the Caucus remain at the Press, exercising their power to veto manuscript after manuscript, the viability of the Press continues to be increasingly jeopardized. In essence, the Press is being transformed from within as only manuscripts that fit the narrow prescription of the Caucus are being accepted for publication. The Women's Press will remain as such in name only. If the Women's Press is to continue to speak with credibility within the women's movement, those individuals who have committed years of work to the Press, and the authors they support, must not be silenced.

Heather Bryans  
Former feminist book buyer  
SCM Book Room  
Toronto

## NAC: Confusion

## Broadside:

Much has been said in the media about the events of this year's NAC AGM, particularly the debate on organizational change. Although I have six years experience in the women's movement in Toronto, I am a fairly new participant to NAC. This was my second annual general meeting and I attended as a representative of the YWCA of Metro Toronto. During the meeting I talked with many women from all parts of the political spectrum and a feeling of "frustration and confusion" was expressed by everyone.

After reading the media coverage, I feel even more confused. Conspiracy theories, suggestions of left-right political splits and "backroom" politics have dominated the coverage and have resulted in headlines claiming that NAC is on a path heading for self-destruction. Most confusing to me is the suggestion of a "plot" to obstruct the organizational review process and to impede organizational change at NAC. It is true that there were several hours of heated debate and discussion regarding organizational change, but whenever major changes are called for in an organization this seems both necessary and appropriate.

After two years of work, the organiza-

tional review committee at NAC presented the membership with two reports recommending major changes to the structure of NAC in order to provide more regional input and to decentralize decision-making. Two studies were undertaken, one of member groups in Québec and one of groups outside of Québec. Two separate reports were written from these studies which included recommendations for organizational change and how to implement these changes.

Most of the dissatisfaction at this year's AGM was with the process, the way in which we were asked to discuss and vote on these recommendations, not with the recommendations themselves. Many members expressed frustration at not having time to read and fully discuss these recommendations both in their own groups and in their regions. As well, women from Québec asked why, even though the report from Québec was available in English, it had not been distributed to the membership. If those outside of Québec are not fully informed about the concerns of women in Québec, how can we ensure that the recommended changes are fully implemented?

Finally, all of the recommendations of both reports were included in one resolution. As member groups, we were asked to vote "yes" or "no," either fully adopting both reports or not at all. I feel that this third issue was a concern to many women from a wide range of political backgrounds. Basically, we wanted more time and more discussion regarding all of the recommendations. Ironically, this request is in essence what the organizational review committee was recommending: more regional input and involvement in decision-making. Consensus and understanding must be generated from the grass-roots up in order to ensure that any recommendations for change are actually achieved.

Luanne Karn  
Toronto

## Quote of the Month

Gregory Sorbara, Ontario minister responsible for the status of women, when asked if he intended to expand a government committee on sexual assault, replied: "That is an important question. . . . But I thought I'd take this opportunity to advise my colleagues that as we debate these matters. . . the Blue Jays are trouncing the Cleveland Indians."

## EDITORIAL

## Birth of a Dream

Over three and a half years ago, a group of Toronto women began working on a dream: to create a space owned and controlled by the women's community, a women-only club with a restaurant, bar, lounge, dance area and stage. Early this year, the building was purchased, and finally, on June 24, the Woman's Common opened its doors at 580 Parliament Street and the dream became reality.

During those three years, the Woman's Common undertook a mammoth fundraising project, producing the \$300,000 needed to open the club—\$150,000 in loans and \$150,000 through donations, special events and the sale of \$250 lifetime memberships. Now that the club is open, annual memberships are available for \$30 or less on a sliding scale. While it is true that significant numbers of women in the community could not afford the \$250 fee, there were some, in fact about 600 women, who managed to do so, and they helped to make the Woman's Common happen.

The appeal of a woman-only space is not limited to the lesbian community. Years ago

when 21 McGill, a women's club in Toronto, began operation, straight women as well as lesbians were enthusiastic about the idea of eating, drinking and just plain hanging out in a place where they could be themselves and not be hassled by men. However, the prohibitive membership fees soon squelched the dream for most women.

But there is more to commend the idea of a women's club than simply the absence of men. A woman-only space is a celebration of women's strength and energy, women's friendship and woman-identification—and as such it cuts across the lesbian/straight distinction. And with its low annual membership fee and reasonably priced food and drinks, it is to be hoped that the Woman's Common will be financially accessible to all women.

The principle of women's ownership and control of the space is central to the Woman's Common. Certainly, Toronto women can eat, drink and dance in a number of locations in the downtown area, but these don't meet all women's needs. We all have heard complaints

about the smoke, the noise level, the awful washrooms, the push to buy alcoholic drinks, the poor quality food, not to mention the so-called ambience.

The missing element is women's control. Woman's Common members can have a voice in the day-to-day operation of the space, because Woman's Common members own the Woman's Common. Members can vote at meetings and work on planning committees to decide, for example, whether to have rock musicians or poets on the stage. We know that the money we spend when we buy a drink or a meal at the Woman's Common is going back into the women's community. Our dollars are not going into some landlord's pocket, nor is the markup on drinks making some opportunist rich at our expense.

In a homophobic and misogynist society, to stake out a space for women is a political act. It is a message of sisterhood and solidarity. It says that we support women's culture, that we are creating and recreating our community.



## Moving?

Send Broadside your subscriber's address label with your new address. Please give us 4 to 6 weeks advance notice.

# No More Silence

by Helen Lenskyj

**N**o More Secrets, a four-day feminist conference on child sexual abuse, was held in Toronto in May. Four hundred women, and a few men, came from across Canada, the US and England to hear speakers and panel discussions and to participate in a total of 38 workshops. While the success of the conference can best be measured by the new/renewed insights, analysis and energy that participants took away, the conference organizing committee deserves high marks in many key areas. There was a wide selection of workshops; a good balance of keynote speakers and panels; relevant book displays; appropriate pacing with ample snack and lunch breaks; and a sensitivity to participants' needs and to the disturbing nature of the theme, illustrated, for example, by the provision of drop-in group therapy sessions at the end of each day's events. No one could say she *enjoyed* a conference on child sexual abuse. Nevertheless, I was aware of a spirit of optimism among most participants, many of whom were themselves adult survivors now working in the field of child sexual abuse.

The opening panel discussion featured Toronto media consultant and journalist Susan G. Cole, Geri Crisci, a Massachusetts therapist and activist in child sexual abuse prevention, and Joanna Liutkus, a therapist and medical student at McMaster. The topic was feminist struggles and social resistance.

Cole began by identifying the "interlopers" who are increasingly involved in the child sexual abuse movement: R.E.A.L. Women intent on defending the traditional patriarchal family; fundamentalist groups using the occasion for gay-bashing (directed at male child-molesters who are, of course, overwhelmingly heterosexual men); and men's rights groups who are responsible for the "child sexual abuse backlash syndrome," evident in the proliferation of books and conferences on so-called false allegations.

To counter these reactionary movements, Cole called for renewed challenges to the hierarchical, patriarchal family, the continued examination of sexuality and gender roles, and the promotion of radical agenda within media literacy and family studies curricula in the schools.

Joanne Liutkus began by proposing that child sexual abuse is in fact the norm in our society, as evidenced in pornography, prostitution, rape and incest. Society's denial is also evident in the sanctions placed on those who talk about it, namely mothers of incest victims and feminists working to end sexual violence against women and children. Liutkus illustrated her claim with a case study of an incest survivor—yet one more example of how the court system fails women and children.

Liutkus urged workers and activists in the field to avoid traditional therapy approaches that are victim-blaming, misogynist and at times reactionary: the focus on family therapy that labels the family "dysfunctional" when it

is the problem of *male violence* that needs to be addressed; the victim-blaming medical model; the approach that preaches forgiveness; the trend towards silencing women and children; and any approach that fails to incorporate the feminist analysis of the family as the training ground for male power.

Geri Crisci also spoke of the backlash against feminist work in this area. Reviewing the history of the prevention movement since 1980, she noted public receptivity to the "stranger danger" component, even in such unlikely places as the toy industry, and the subsequent oversimplification of the prevention program. Crisci identified "stranger danger" as the most popular form of prevention program (in the US) with the focus on children in the classroom. It is essential that adults examine issues of power, male "ownership" of children and traditional sex-role socialization. Since only 11% of child sexual abuse involves strangers, public resistance to open discussions of familial abuse is obviously a dangerous trend.

**E**qually dangerous is the backlash against feminist prevention programs—and Crisci noted that virtually every major program has a feminist philosophy. The threat comes from groups such as VOCAL (Victims of Child Abuse Legislation); teachers' organizations that have held conferences on the "problem" of allegations; and policymakers such as those in Massachusetts who pledge to "keep the family together" (and, for example, permit only "traditional" male-headed families to serve as foster homes). In the US, even left wing groups have joined the reactionary right in alleging that "child savers" (feminists in child sexual abuse prevention work) are destroying the rights of families.

Crisci listed five "assaultive facts" that help us to understand the pervasiveness of child sexual abuse: each of us will know/love a sex offender; we cannot totally protect our children; we don't know why certain people commit child sexual abuse; current family and child rearing practices produce sex offenders; and our culture sexualizes children, most especially little girls, from a very early age.

For their part, the individuals and groups who oppose feminist work in this area allege that we are putting ideas into mothers' and children's heads; that we are making children anxious and distrustful; and that children cannot distinguish between fantasy and reality. In the face of this resistance, disclosure that takes place at the time of custody disputes puts mothers and children in particularly dangerous predicaments, as the next speaker, Diana Russell, made all too clear.

Sociologist Diana Russell is the author of several groundbreaking books on sexual violence against women and children, including *Sexual Exploitation* and *The Secret Trauma: Incest in the Lives of Girls and Women*. She began her keynote presentation with a detailed account of the sanctuary movement that is developing in the US as women take the protection of children into their own hands. She read

a letter from Elizabeth Morgan, a woman who is now in prison for refusing to give up her daughter to her former husband when she had medical evidence of sexual abuse; at least four other American women are in jail on similar charges. Writing to a South African friend, Morgan observed: "In the US, our political prisoners are mothers who object to their children being the victims of incest." The recent Gail Bezaire case amply illustrated that the situation is similar: in Canada (see *Broadside*, May 1987).

Morgan's story, and others, illustrated how heavily the (so-called) justice system comes down on these mothers, while (male) judges give the fathers free access to, or even full custody of, their daughters. In a strange twist of misogynist logic, an allegation of sexual abuse during a custody battle has the effect of weakening the mother's side. Even at the best of times, (male) judges are reluctant to convict a man of sexual abuse on the testimony of women and children. At the time of custody hearings, the woman is blamed for inventing the incest charge to get back at her husband. But for the child, this is an obvious time for disclosure, since her father, the perpetrator of the abuse, is no longer on the scene. The court's response simply reconfirms what her father had always told her: it's no good telling because no one will believe you.

In the face of this desperate situation, feminists have established regional networks evolving out of the women's shelter movement. A feminist organization called MARC (Mothers Against Raping Children) has networks in four US states, and there are five or so groups in other parts of the country. (The US national coordinator is Barbara Hart, 527 McKingin Street, Reading, PN 19601; tel. (215) 373-5697.)



In a 1980s echo of an underground railroad, women are hiding abused children in safe houses, getting them new IDs and helping mothers and children to start a new life. There are probably several hundred mothers in this situation in the US, as well as their Canadian counterparts. The system has been likened to hiding Jews in Nazi Germany; indeed, the lives of many of these children are equally precarious.

Russell concluded by presenting her multi-causal theory of incest, beginning with the two preconditions that people have to be predisposed to commit sexual abuse and that their internal and social inhibitions have to be undermined. For men, a history of child sexual abuse is a significant factor. Since males are socialized to be seducers and conquerors, and to blur the distinction between sexual and non-sexual affection, boys with a history of sexual abuse are likely to grow up to repeat the pattern as perpetrators, whereas girls are more likely to be revictimized as adults. Trends in the wider social context contribute to these patterns, specifically the availability of pornography and the sexualization of increasingly young girls in the advertising industry. Further disinhibiting factors include the perpetrator's belief that he can get away with it, borne out by the fact that adults in general, and the courts in particular, do not believe children. Therefore, Russell concluded, if prevention programs are to succeed, there needs to be a major shift in social attitudes and practices, particularly as they relate to appropriate sexual behaviour for men.

In a later workshop, Diana Russell spoke on incest and revictimization. She reported on recent research involving a random sample of women in San Francisco. All women in the household were interviewed, if willing, whether or not they had histories of child sexual abuse.

She reported that 68% of incest survivors were victims of sexual assault as adults, compared with only 38% of non-incest survivors. These and other findings made it clear that incest survivors were more likely to be revictimized in adult life; they were more often raped or beaten in marriage as well as more frequent targets of stranger rape.

Russell's explanations for these patterns focused on four areas: traumatic sexualization, betrayal, powerlessness and stigmatization. Following the trauma of incest, the child's sexuality may develop in inappropriate ways. For example, she may show sexually precocious behaviour, such as masturbating in public. This may act as a disinhibitor to the potential perpetrator of incest or rape, who reasons that he can get away with it because he can blame the little girl for "flirting." Alternatively, she may develop an aversion to sex, and, when she dates men or gets married, this may result in the higher incidence of acquaintance or marital rape, as well as physical abuse.

**T**he issue of betrayal has long-lasting effects on the incest survivor, especially when she is repeatedly betrayed by a close relative or a parent. As well, she may experience betrayal when her disclosure is not believed. In a predatory society, her subsequent distrust or tendency to trust the wrong people impedes her efforts to form long-lasting relationships, and thus she is at greater risk of repeated sexual abuse.

The child's powerlessness as an incest victim makes it difficult for her to say "No" as an adult, or even to believe that she has the right to say "No." She has a lowered sense of efficacy, less power to fight back. Finally, the fact that incest is a stigmatized activity for the victim (as well as the perpetrator) generates internalized feelings of badness, shame and guilt, as well as a low self-image. Sex is seen as a commodity valued by men; except for her sexuality, she feels worthless.

Russell proposed that potential abusers pick up these cues of vulnerability in the adult survivor. As well, knowledge of previous abuse may inhibit potential abusers, who believe that the girl or woman is already "damaged goods." It could be argued, too, that a combination of male bonding and male competitiveness makes the survivor a desirable target when the potential abuser knows the men who have previously abused the woman.

Sandra Butler delivered a moving and powerful plenary address, beginning by asking women in the audience to call out the names of the women who were not there—women who had not healed sufficiently, or women who had not survived. If there was ever any danger of decontextualizing or over-theorizing at the conference, all traces were removed as we experienced the grief, as well as the strength, of all these women.

Evoking the "the personal is political" axiom that underlies feminism, Butler observed that the personal is becoming personal again within the women's movement, and that this is a backward step. Consciousness raising in the movement's early days did not simply mean women with identical world views discussing safe issues—eager consumers of the "mental health industry" and willing collaborators in "the boutiqueing of issues." CR meant breaking silences, sharing secrets, acting authentically, bonding, developing theory . . . and revolution. Yet silences persist in the women's movement.

Turning to the issue of working to stop child sexual abuse, Butler spoke of the state of rage that we must live in as women in a community where sexual terrorism is the norm. She pointed out that by not allowing ourselves to feel the rage and to recognize the precautions we take on a daily basis, we live diminished and constrained lives. Again, CR allows the rage to be shared and channelled in revolutionary ways—a particularly important outcome as we find ourselves in increasingly reactionary times.

Butler concluded by drawing a powerful analogy between training in womanhood and the lessons learned by the incest survivor. We/they learn to put ourselves in the service of others (especially men), to be attuned to others' needs, to do the emotional work in the family, to be the "little mothers"; we have low boundaries and low self-esteem. So "we" are "they"; and we are all wounded. ●

## Journeys in Sacred Psychology

1988 SEMINARS IN ONTARIO

BY

*Dr. Jean Houston*

\* THE ART AND SCIENCE OF HUMAN TRANSFORMATION \*

OTTAWA - 15 SEPTEMBER 1988

SEMINAR FEE - \$ 125 EARLY REGISTRATION - \$ 100

\* MYTHS OF TRANSFORMATION \*

TORONTO - 16 - 18 SEPTEMBER 1988

SEMINAR FEE - \$ 295 EARLY REGISTRATION - \$ 275

for more information contact:

ICA Canada 577 Kingston Road  
Toronto, Ontario M4E 1R3 - 691-2316

# MOVEMENT COMMENT

## If I Can't Dance...

by Constance B. Backhouse

The crisis-ridden annual meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women in May 1988 has forced feminists to concede publicly that all is not well inside feminist organizations these days. Lorraine Greaves' withdrawal from the ballot for presidency has precipitated considerable discussion about how feminist groups are structured and how women operate within them. Most of us have known for some time that we needed to address these issues. The drama of the May meeting compels us to pause and consider.

Have we been running women's organizations with rules and procedures developed by middle- and upper-class white males? I recognize, of course, that the women's movement is not monolithic, and that some organizations operate more within the "malestream" than others. Some struggle, and some struggle successfully, to work within a non-hierarchical, non-racist, collective setting. But all of us, I think, would agree that the patriarchy has a habit of slipping in to infect the structure of our work more often than not.

The all-important question, then, is whether there is such a thing as "feminist process"? And how would a "feminist process" differ from the ways we have organized much of our political work in the past?

I think none of us really has a full answer to this yet, but it is endlessly interesting to speculate. I want to offer a few "off the cuff" ideas, and plead for others to jump in and continue the debate.

I believe that all feminists should plan their actions around two twin goals: to get the work out and to have fun doing it. Many of the organizations I belong to excel at the former but fail miserably at the latter. I can't begin to count

the number of boring, dreary hours I (like most feminists) have spent in meetings. Tired executives, dull agendas, lacklustre debate, half-hearted strategizing, not to mention the all too frequent sniping and venomous interpersonal rivalries.

I remember vividly the day I first met Nikky Craft, an anti-pornography activist from California with remarkable theatrical flair. I had long admired her work, and had managed to secure an afternoon of her time in Santa Cruz, California in 1983 to discuss her ideas and strategies. She began our conversation by stating flatly that she had taken an unrepentant position that she would not attend another feminist meeting. "Not one more, never again," she said. "I'm burned out on meetings. I'm committed to continuing activism, but if it can't be done in a small group through a few phone calls, count me out."

I secretly admired Nikky Craft's resolve, and watched with amazement at the amount of wildly successful political work she continues to put out. Five years later I'm provoked to wonder what would happen if we all followed her lead. Imagine a feminist movement with no more meetings. No more agendas. No more rules of procedure. No more votes. No more executives!

Of course there is a time and a place for large gatherings of women. But they should be "gatherings," not meetings. Most of these would be celebrations, parties, a forum for feminist entertainment and sisterhood. We could also devote some of these to the sharing of information—with speakers, workshops, and consciousness-raising sessions.

The focus of these large gatherings would be listening, sharing, exploring and most importantly, celebrating women. We would not be looking for the politically correct line on femi-

nist issues. Indeed, in such a setting, diversity would be preferred over unanimity. We would be working toward the inclusion of more women and their views, rather than the development of doctrinaire ideology and analysis. And the central part of this would be "process"—how to model our movement into a caring, healing space for women.

But, you may correctly remind me, what of the work? The gatherings sound like fun, but who will put out the research? How will we develop the feminist strategies? When will we organize political action?

I want to propose a rather anarchistic structure for actually putting out the work. My ideas spring from a brief experience I had with a "direct action committee" in Boston in the late 1970s. A group of women who wanted to fight sexual harassment offered to provide a picket—30 women strong—to any sexual harassment victim who wanted her harasser publicly humiliated. They promised to deliver the picketers to any location in the Boston area upon 24 hours notice. The group operated without any formal structure and could activate itself through a simple phone-tree when needed.

I often think back to the stream-lined efficiency of this group, and wonder if we might not have achieved more by following this model of feminist activism than by erecting national umbrella structures designed to pass technical and complex resolutions for government lobbying.

Imagine, if you will, "direct action" groups of women springing up all over the country. Some of these groups would be very small, others might be as large as 30. All would function autonomously, without hierarchy, without formal structure. Each member would take turns deciding what "action" should be embarked upon. Just for fun, try asking the

women at your next feminist meeting what they would choose to do with the energy of the women in the room. The creativity and hilarity that ensue should remind us that there are alternative ways of putting out effective political work.

The ideas I am tossing out here obviously need more thought and careful debate. Developing a feminist process for our movement will be a difficult and time-consuming task. But I do think that we sit at a crossroads in our history. We are trying to conduct a revolution that will undermine a patriarchy. We are participants in a shared struggle. We must undertake it with the highest spirits possible, looking to have the maximum impact with the least burn-out. How we fare will be critical to the future of all women.

I also want to challenge NAC to take one step toward the exploration of feminist process in its coming year. Why not do away with the traditional agenda for the Annual General Meeting? Forget the resolutions, the endless debates on points of order from Robert's Rules of Order. Why not devote the entire AGM to consciousness-raising groups, where women from across the country sit down to talk in small groups of 10. These CR groups might discuss open-ended questions about our experiences as women in a culture which denies women our reality and our dreams. From the richness of each woman's experience could flow understanding of our commonalities and our differences. In this lies the promise of fundamental revolutionary change.

*Constance B. Backhouse teaches at the University of Western Ontario Law School, in London, Ontario, and has written on violence against women and women's legal history.*

## Who cares about Carol?

Carol is a 30-year-old woman and mother of two who is trying to recover from repeated physical abuse over the last four years. She has now left her common-law husband, and even though her broken jaw has healed, she and her children are still trying to cope with the emotional and psychological wounds.

### The Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor/Advocate Program

trains students to provide the legal, financial, shelter, emotional and supportive counselling needed by women and children in crisis.

Of course, this kind of work is not for everyone. It requires maturity, commitment, hard work, specialized knowledge, assertiveness, and sensitivity to the needs of women and children.

But for the right people, it can be a very satisfying career.

## Is it for you?

Call 967-1212, ext. 4220. Ask for Judy.

George Brown  
As the City College, George Brown offers a unique opportunity for community services students to work and learn in Canada's largest multicultural community.



The City College

## CAREERS IN CARING



## CULTURE IN CONTENTION

BORDER/LINES

BORDER/LINES

is about exploring and contesting the boundaries between the social and the sexual, the theoretical and the everyday, the artistic and the political.

BORDER/LINES

is about cultures contexts and canadas, in all their configurations. That means everything from Alejandro Rojas on the ecology movement to Kay Armatage on feminist film theory to Richard Kostelanetz on the Grants Fix.

BORDER/LINES

is an interdisciplinary, multi-genre magazine produced and published quarterly by a collective of artists, writers and students.

Border/Lines  
Bethune College  
York University  
4700 Keele St.  
Downsview  
Ontario, Canada  
M3J 1P3

SUBSCRIBE

\$16.00 — individual  
14.00 — low income  
25.00 — institutions

Please make cheques payable to 'Border/Lines'. Outside Canada, please pay in U.S. dollars only. Air mail rates available on request.



# MOVEMENT MATTERS

## Lesbian/Gay Studies

TORONTO — Ryerson Polytechnic will be offering two courses in fall and winter of next year. One, "New Perspectives on Lesbian/Gay Realities," is the third presentation of this popular course. It examines past and present social, cultural and religious traditions and attitudes towards lesbians and gays and the process of establishing lesbian and gay identities. It will be presented jointly by Sharon Stone and Gary Kinsman, both sociologists and authors. There will be ten 3-hour sessions, Sundays 2-5 pm, October 2, 1988 to December 11, 1988. The cost is \$114.

The Other, "Homosexuality and Religion," is a new course which explores the nature of the tenuous relationship of lesbian women and gay men to institutionalized religions. It will be a lecture/discussion format with guest speakers. Eilert Frerichs, Chaplain, University of Toronto will conduct this course. There will be six 3-hour sessions, Sundays, 2-5 pm, January 29, 1989 to March 5, 1989. The cost is \$44.

For registration information, call (416) 979-5136.

## C.L.A.S.P.

NORTH YORK, ONT. — C.L.A.S.P. (Community and Legal Aid Services) is a legal aid clinic run by the students of Osgoode Hall Law School offering a variety of legal services through specialized divisions for different areas of law. The purpose of the Women's Division is to provide more effective service to the women who use the clinic by: informing women in the community and women's organizations about the Women's Division at C.L.A.S.P.; developing an effective referral list for women and acting as an information source for women in the Metro area; litigating cases which will serve to improve the status of women; and sensitizing the legal community at

C.L.A.S.P. to women's issues.

Over the past year C.L.A.S.P. has established criteria for women-specific cases to be referred to the program. C.L.A.S.P. tried to liaise with women's organizations and has become active in speaking to women's groups, shelters and drop-in centres, set up a satellite legal clinic at INTERCEDE (International Coalition to End Domestic Exploitation), and participated in various women's meetings and conferences. These efforts have resulted in an increased resource network for referring women who come into the clinic.

In the upcoming year, C.L.A.S.P. wishes to further its efforts to expand the profile of the Women's Division. It plans to update and diversify its resource information, vigorously pursue women-specific cases to litigate and run seminars for caseworkers on client counselling, to intensify its involvement with women's organizations at the grass-roots level and conduct a media campaign to let women know of its existence as the only legal aid service with a division for women in Toronto.

## Politics of Reproduction

An upcoming issue of Resources for Feminist Research is inspired by the work of Mary O'Brien, and seeks contributions which engage critically with it. Work exploring and debating O'Brien's philosophy of birth and critique of dominant Western intellectual traditions is invited. Papers are also encouraged that critique ideologies of reproduction in non-Western philosophy and theory. Writing in the following areas is also welcome: women and mothering in social and political thought; feminist epistemology and ethics; current or historical case studies on reproduction or ideologies of reproduction; and issues around the new reproductive technologies.

Some suggested general topics include: O'Brien's philosophy of birth and feminist

epistemology; motherhood and sisterhood; theoretical and political questions; debates in feminist politics and theory; O'Brien/de Beauvoir, O'Brien/Irigaray, O'Brien/Ruddick; and the politics of reproduction and feminist organizing.

Submissions should not exceed 3,000 words and must be received by February 1, 1989. Please send contributions, in either English or French, to: Somer Brodribb, Guest Editor, Resources for Feminist Research, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6, Canada; tel. (416) 923-6641, ext. 2278.

## Crime Prevention

OTTAWA — On May 26, 1988, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women released a comprehensive set of recommendations to address the problem of wife battering in Canada, and urged the federal government to move quickly to establish policies and programs to prevent this crime.

"Almost a year ago, the council released *Battered But Not Beaten: Preventing Wife Battering in Canada*," said CACSW President Sylvia Gold. "The shocking accounts of the violence being done to women and children, and the estimate that almost one million women are being battered physically, psychologically, emotionally, and economically in Canada today shocked both public and parliamentarians alike."

Since the book's release, the Council has focussed on recommendations to the federal government. "Council has examined the book's findings at length, and has visited a number of transition homes across the country," said Gold. "We have paid special attention to shelters and programs for battered women and their children; treatment programs for children, adolescents, and men who batter; the response of the criminal justice system; the

needs of women who are doubly isolated; and community support.

"The Council feels strongly that federal initiatives should recognize the devastating physical, psychological and financial costs to women, children, the batterer and to society as a whole," said Gold. "As well, there should be some recognition of the need for society to overcome the "machismo" aspects of our culture, which seems to condone this violence, and the need to work toward mutual respect and equality."

In particular, the Council's recommendations urge the federal government to:

- double the number of transition houses in Canada so that no woman and her child is turned away. The 264 shelters across the country in 1985 were not sufficient to meet the crisis.
- support shelters and services for the many women who face obstacles in trying to deal with this violence, especially women living in rural or isolated areas, Native women, immigrant, visible minority, teenage, older women and women with disabilities as well as women living on military bases.
- develop a secure funding base for transition homes. The current funding arrangements for shelters fail to recognize the diversity of services that shelter workers provide and the need for long-term planning.
- ensure that Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provides funds for second-stage or interim housing for women and children trying to re-establish themselves.
- provide funds for child care coordinators and for counselling programs for children in every transition house. The Council is particularly concerned about the plight of many children who enter the homes withdrawn, violent or suicidal.
- improve the response of the criminal justice system by establishing support teams to assist women and children in their dealings with the courts.

*The*  
**Highlands Inn**

PO Box 1188  
Valley View Lane  
Bethlehem, NH 03574  
(603) 869-3978

Grace Newman, Judi Hall, Innkeepers

### NEW ENGLAND COUNTRY INN

Bed and breakfast inn on 100 scenic, secluded acres. Spacious fire-placed common areas and charming guest rooms. Miles of hiking trails, hot tub, swimming pool at inn. Golf, tennis, antiquing nearby. Close to Boston, Montreal, Maine coast, Provincetown.

Great mid-week discounts!

**Diva**



Subscribe:

\$18/1 year - Canada

Rs. 60/1 year - South Asia

**Diva: A Quarterly Journal of South Asian Women**  
253 College Street, Unit 194  
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R4,  
Canada  
(416) 750-4007, 255-1844

**RITEs**

A magazine for  
lesbian & gay  
liberation with a  
feminist bent!

**SUBSCRIBE!**

\$16/10 issues

Box 65, Station F

Toronto, Ontario

M4Y 2L4 •



More than four million adult Canadians can't read well enough to fill out a job application or understand the directions on a medicine bottle. You can help. Give money, volunteer with a literacy group, write to your MP, and read to your children.

For more information, contact:

Canadian Give the Gift  
of Literacy Foundation

34 Ross St., Suite 200,  
Toronto, Ont. M5T 1Z9  
(416) 595-9967

The Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy Campaign is a project of the book and periodical industry of Canada, in partnership with Telephone Pioneers of America, Region 1-Canada.

### SUBSCRIBE TO WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENTS

a forum for feminist explorations  
of women's relationships with  
natural, built and social  
environments

4 issues a year for:  
\$13 individuals  
\$20 organizations  
add \$5 overseas

### WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENTS

c/o centre for urban and  
community studies  
455 Spadina Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2G8

Subscribe to . . .

**Broadside**  
A FEMINIST REVIEW



### PRINSTERN ACRES GUEST HOUSE

A delightful little  
Retreat for Women  
on the Bruce Trail  
with pool, 50 rolling acres  
and superb meals

Only 2½ hrs North of Toronto  
Open All Year Round

Call (519) 376-2111  
or write: R.R.I, Bognor, Ont., N0H 1E0.

## An Outside View

by Deena Rasky

A note last year in a Canadian feminist magazine from a group of women at China's Sichuan Institute of Foreign Languages was the beginning of my trip to China. They wanted to set up a Women's Studies program and requested donations of Canadian material because they have no access to foreign money. The idea of a Canadian Studies Centre developing a Women's Studies program sounded irresistible, so I wrote offering to personally deliver any material they'd like.

Friends who have previously visited China came back with glowing reports—great daycare, women working alongside men and being treated as equals, and didn't Chairman Mao invent the slogan, "Women hold up half the sky"? The Chinese women's request for material included the Women's Press's *Still Ain't Satisfied* and Penny Kome's *The Taking of Twenty-Eight*.

I arrived in Hong Kong on Easter weekend when almost every resident who had the day off was travelling. China has a population of over one billion and it shows. There was no flight directly to Chongqing (once known as Chungking) available, so I took the train to Hong Kong's border on the mainland, walked over to China and then waited 5 hours for a train to Gwanzhou (formerly known as Canton). The highlight of visiting Gwanzhou, besides a comfortable, inexpensive hotel, was a delicious dim sum made with fresh ingredients. From Gwanzhou I took a domestic flight with the Chinese Aviation Company, enjoyable only for its informative passengers, to Chongqing. After futilely attempting to use Chongqing airport's one and only telephone, a taxi driver dangled his keys at me. One can always get the point across when money is the issue. We haggled over the price and whether he was taking me to the Sichuan Institute or the Renmin Hotel. The taxi drive was typically harrowing. The driver zoomed around the hilly roads of Chongqing, honking at the overflow of pedestrians, cyclists, animals. In the middle of a long, unlit tunnel, the driver passed a bus. By the time I reached the Sichuan Institute, I was a nervous wreck. When I saw the foreign residence room—damp, musty, no hot water, no heat—I wished the driver had gone to the Renmin Hotel instead. But I was eager to begin talking to Li Xiaoping (pronounced Lee Showpang), the Chinese feminist I'd been corresponding with.

Li Xiaoping answered my many questions straightforwardly and earnestly. "It's very hard being a single woman in China." The government's solution to this "problem" was to set up matchmaking agencies similar to those in Japan. "Women must get married," said Xiaoping. "It's the way things are done here." The situation is worse in the countryside where the peasants forego some of their farmland when their daughters are married. With the slogan, "One child is better," the peasants are known to kill a girl child as an alternative to debt and reduced land ownership. Of course this is illegal, but China imposes a penalty on having more than one child. Even women in the cities are encouraged to become mothers and not get an education, since women should be kept inferior to husbands. Divorce rates are rising (see accompanying article).

"What about the All-China Women's Federation?" I asked. Women's magazines still deal with the usual food, fashion and marriage advice, reflecting the views of the Federation which is run by conservative thinkers. On International Women's Day, women take half a day off work and receive small gifts such as flowers or chocolates. It has become a modified form of Mother's Day. There's an absence of women coming together. When asked about lesbians and gay men, Li told a story of two men who lived together peacefully for a long time but who were thrown in jail when it was discovered they were gay.

### People get discouraged, but so many struggles are yet to come.

At least some improvements have been made for people with disabilities because Communist Party leader Deng Xiaoping has a disabled son, so now factories are encouraged to hire the disabled. The country has dealt with so many struggles in the past that the people get discouraged and tired, but so many struggles are yet to come.

The next morning we visited the huge red-granite sculpture at the Geleshan Cemetery of Revolutionary Martyrs. Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang had its headquarters here in Chungking during the 1940s. Initially the Kuomintang included the Communists and had a strong anti-imperialist stance but with Chiang Kai-shek's background of Japanese military school training and pro-Nazi beliefs, power by force instead of power by peasant uprising became the rule. Communist idealists were kept in a concentration camp and slaughtered on the eve of Liberation (November 1949) by their vindictive Kuomintang captors. The Chinese people built the monument to salute the idealists' bravery and spirit. Below the sculpture was housed a circular mural depicting the lives of the prisoners—the uprising,



Chinese feminist Li Xiaoping

prisoners dancing on New Year's with leg chains still on; secretly sewing a Communist flag; the mass slaughter. In the centre a chain hung from the ceiling and entered a pool of water signifying that peace can be found through struggle. The imagery was deeply moving.

We attended a foreign teachers' party that evening in a courtyard at the Sichuan Institute. An American who considered himself a missionary complained about his students' lack of motivation and about the Institute's satellite dish which was aimed at Hong Kong instead of the west, where "the students certainly would get the most benefit." Other conversations included much talk of illness, since out of 25 foreign teachers, 6 had to be hospitalized for chronic pneumonia and all suffered from a variety of bronchial and lung ailments. People talked of Chongqing's heavy pollution: the town is surrounded by mountains, which block any fresh air; the industrial smog—worse than Los Angeles because there are no controls here—obliterated the view of the sun and hills in the morning, and the stars and moon at night; the air was unbreathable; a steam-driven train passed through every morning to add to the congestion.

Somehow the sun did come out the next day and we could feel its warmth. We climbed uphill where we found gorgeous terraced fields and immaculately kept green gardens. The sight of emerald green crops waving in a slight breeze with rare sunlight strong enough to create shadows well deserved our silent awe.

Li Xiaoping remembered when she was sent out to work in the fields far from home at the age of 16. She felt she was denied a proper education because during the Cultural Revolution the teachers were punished, forced to wear dunce caps and do menial work while the glorified peasants became the teachers. The intellectuals and academics are still mistrusted and very poorly paid. The students are forced to live with absolutely no privacy, six or seven to a room. The peasants were exalted but not equipped or trained to educate the children and Xiaoping is still trying to make up for that lost time. It was an honour to have her as private guide and translator around Chongqing; most tourist guides complain that the sights here are explained in Chinese only. Through her guidance I recognized the photos of the heroic family with their child born in the prison, never to escape. In spite of the pain and suffering, the idealists wrote poetry even on their way to execution! One brave soul wrote the following: "Our failure fertilizes the land, our success liberates the people."

It's heartbreaking that the martyrs who were so oppressed by the Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-shek were to face similar oppression from their comrades during the Cultural Revolution. On display at the Revolutionary Martyr's Museum were books written by the few survivors who were subsequently interrogated by the so-called Gang of Four followers. "Why did you survive and not the others?" they were asked. Some committed suicide because of this questioning. No wonder women in China are disillusioned today. Who wants to be a hero only to have your motives questioned in the future? But somehow, women such as Li Xiaoping and our other Chinese correspondents find the courage to continue the struggle.

In spite of the pollution, unsanitary conditions and poverty, it was difficult leaving Chongqing. There was such a wealth of history, certainly overlooked by the North American school system. There was such respect for the idealism and bravery of their forebears and, most importantly, a cherished friendship had been made. I'm pretty sure the feeling is mutual as Li insisted on coming along to the airport and giving me a gift box of carefully painted miniatures depicting Chinese women. The friendly vibrations must have been in the air—even the driver didn't honk his horn so much.

## A New Stage

by Bin Ling

In 1978 a national conference of the Communist Party of China issued the directive that socialist construction rather than class struggle would be the primary goal of Chinese society. In the spirit of this pronouncement, the All-China Women's Federation (China's official women's organization) declared that women had an essential role in the economic reforms as embodied in the Four Modernizations (ie, agriculture, industry, science and technology, the military). For Chinese women, this statement presented few surprises as the official Chinese women's movement has always closely followed the Communist Party's political line since the formation of the Party in the 1920s.

But the new stage is no doubt one of the most exciting periods in China's history. After ages of class struggle, the Chinese government has come to understand that to build a strong socialist country, it must allow people to have a bit more freedom. There is a lot more tolerance and permissiveness in the country, varying from the freedom to choose one's own hairstyle to chances of becoming rich. Competition, regarded now as an effective means to remedy the economy, is more or less encouraged, creating opportunities for people to use their skills. A pragmatic attitude has been adopted by the central government. This approach is best demonstrated by Deng Xiaoping's saying: "It doesn't matter if the cat is black or white as long as it catches the mouse," where competence is sometimes put before ideological correctness.

The impact on women of the new political line is visible everywhere. Some women scientists have surpassed their male colleagues and have made important achievements in their research; women entrepreneurs have emerged as a noticeable group among China's manufacturers, and some women managers have reached important positions in business. Above all, China's 400 million rural women are playing a significant role in the economic transformation going on in the countryside. As happened in Canada around the middle of the 19th century, China's large surplus rural population is shifting to industry and commerce. Some young women have entered the newly-established township factories to earn wages. As men are leaving the farms for township factories or cities, women undertake most of the farming and household chores. By producing for the market rather than for home consumption, women participate directly in the market economy.

According to the *Women of China Gazette*, in those relatively more developed areas, about 50% of the female rural population is occupied in commerce production and their products make up more than half of the total output. These achievements are mostly due to the numerous workshops in which about 100 million country women have learned skills to improve their economic situation and more women are seeking such learning opportunities.

Yet in the family, women are given far too much responsibility. A Chinese country woman's life is unimaginably hard, for she not only works in the fields but she has to be a child-care worker, housekeeper, cook, and cattle-raiser, without any modern conveniences. In comparison, city women are somewhat relieved from housework by washing machines and refrigerators but it is still typical for them to spend four hours a day keeping the house. For the small number of professional women, household tasks are extremely burdensome and pose special problems for them in their pursuit of careers. A survey made in 1985 pictures the harsh realities of 1400 female scientific researchers: 15% of them have to undertake all the domestic work in the home. The others have 3.5 hours domestic work each day on average.

Most insidious of the obstacles facing women are the sexist conceptions still pervasive in the culture. Throughout the centuries Chinese culture has constructed a set of beliefs about women and men that clearly defines their roles. As early as 500 B.C., regulations in the Book of Rites (a Confucian classic) stated that a man should act in the public world, whereas a woman's place was in the home. Special virtues had already been fabricated by that time for women to practise. The philosophers in the later dynasties continued to add new rules to the female decorum, culminating in *The Commandments of Women* (c. 950 A.D.). In this scripture, women were taught to be weak, passive, humble, obedient, serving, and self-sacrificing. In the process of socialization, these assumptions have become what Chinese call "unalterable principles."

The other side of the coin is not so bright. While opening up opportunities to people, the new stage also presents a challenge. Freedom, even in a low degree, means one has to make decisions—one of the things Chinese people are not used to, owing to a long history of autocracy. Competition also means that some will succeed and some will fail. To be pragmatic means China is accepting ideas and things which were denounced before, and this will no doubt lead to confusion. On the whole, in China's drive for modernization, the society is becoming strange to Chinese. Keeping pace with change and relocating one's position in a new social context is neither easy nor pleasant.

Compared to men, women have greater difficulty in coping with the times. Because of traditions, as well as their present inferior status, women may find that as some of them have said,



# n and Change

"Our wings are too heavy to soar into the large space open to us." In education, women have received a lot less opportunities than men. The population census held in 1982 provides the first information in this respect: women made up 25.7% of the university graduates, 37.4% of the high school and 42.2% of the primary school graduates. What is more, statistics show that women count for about 160 million among China's 200 million illiterate or semi-literate people. Although the old China (China before 1949) was accused of being the chief culprit, it is hard to deny the fact that many of these illiterate women were born after 1949 and a large group of them are teenagers or even younger.

The problem of education has a direct influence on women's employment. The high rate of female labour force participation in China is often used as evidence to support the assumption that Chinese women are highly liberated, whereas an important question is overlooked—how are women distributed over occupations? 78% of women are self-employed in their farms, 12.8% are in manufacturing, 2.9% in service, 1.9% in teaching, artistic and recreational occupations. As for administration, management, scientific research and other attractive positions, the number is under 1%. Nevertheless, it seems that the most urgent problem is not to increase the number of women in highly skilled occupations, but to relieve the 30 million women

factory workers from job insecurity. A large number of them have lost their jobs as surplus hands because of reforms in the factory system. Investigations made by local Women's Federation branches found that the women failed to meet the new requirements of an advanced mode of production.

In the political arena, women constitute only 10.4% of all the delegates to political units at various levels; the proportion of female delegates decreases at successively higher levels of the government hierarchy, and most of these delegates are not assigned important and responsible positions. They serve as honorary office holders or vice chairpersons. Paradoxically, when the Party is enthusiastically talking about a change in the political structure and socialist democracy is loudly proclaimed, women are completely excluded from the central policy-making groups. The new Central Committee Politbureau offered not a single position to women. In a country where power rests in the Party, the absence of women delegates in the Politbureau may easily result in the neglect of women's future position in the society.

While the reforms of the Party's new political line are giving China a new look, the change in mental constructions has lagged behind. This has created a dilemma for Chinese women. If they are wise enough to seize the opportunities for self-development, they are sure to meet with resistance and be punished in various

forms: marriage breakdown because the husband can't stand a career woman, or the possibility of not being able to find a husband because men tend to marry women "inferior" to themselves. Apart from these problems, there is the warning that women risk losing men's protection and their place in the family if they seek liberation. On the other hand, if women stick to tradition in order not to lose men's "favour," they are surely unable to obtain a high social standing in the future of China.

Overall, the new stage means both hope and challenge. But if solutions are not worked out to address their problems in education, employment, politics, and family, and if changes are not made in the social constructions, the new stage may unfortunately weaken women's standing in the society. In this sense, new issues are presented to the Chinese women's movement. What must also be realized is that, either for China or for Chinese women in particular, the new stage is essentially a long march that is by no means easier than the one the Communist Party made during the 30s. In this long march, Chinese women will either lose their present foothold or reach a world with more equality.

*Bin Ling is a student at a major Chinese university.*

## A Tradition Crumbles

In contemporary China, divorce is no longer considered in negative terms. This is one of the new trends that have come into being since reforms were started in this country. According to the given statistics, last year there were over 894,000 couples who sued for divorce and more than 506,000 families broke down through formal legal processes. For the first time since 1949, the divorce rate is above 1 per cent; and Chinese attitudes towards divorce are changing. A recent, nationwide study provides the evidence: when asked about their opinions of divorce, about 52.5% of the people questioned agreed with divorce when love was gone, while 31.2% agreed with the statement that "no matter what situation, divorce is a bad thing." The former figure is surprising, because in the recent past a large majority of Chinese were opposed to divorce on any grounds.

These results reflect a tremendous change taking place in China. Viewed historically, the institution of family was regarded as sacred and inviolable. It is true that divorce was permitted by the Confucian ethical code and did occur often. However, the right to divorce belonged only to men, who could divorce their wives on the grounds of nonfertility, adultery, lack of filial piety, talkativeness, illness, and so on. Overall, divorce was thought harmful to the stability of society; both men and women were required to maintain a lifelong marital union. These ideas were first challenged at the end of the 19th century, and again during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Arranged, mercenary marriage and patriarchal divorce were criticized for being inhuman by a group of progressive intellectuals. However, this attempt to reform the family had a quite limited effect on society. The major task of reform remained for policy makers of socialist China after 1949. Soon after the liberation, the Chinese government promulgated its Marriage Law. A campaign against feudalism swept the country, closely followed by a high rate of marriage disintegration. After this period came a long period of stability in China's family system. Again, families were seen as the central element in society and carefully protected by public opinion—until the 80s, when another divorce surge shook the nation. In this context, it is understandable that divorce has been a major issue in contemporary China.

Unlike the family disintegration in the early 50s, the current divorce rate seems to be unreasonably high. There have been controversies over why this has happened. Some people associate it with the opening to the outside world, and advocate actions against the corrosive influence of bourgeois (namely western) ideas. To their minds, family breakdown is an inevitable outcome of capitalism, in which sexual promiscuity and selfishness have caused the end of countless marital relationships. Others have discovered the continuation of arranged marriage in rural areas and argue that the feudal ghost is the major cause. Some others suggest that the remnants of the Cultural Revolution still play an important role. During that time, marriages of convenience



Poster advertising film on open marriage

were once again popular. Arranged marriages for status and power underwent a form of reverse feudalism: workers, peasants and revolutionary cadres were important matches; intellectuals were shunned. However, the conditions which brought people together at that time are not sufficient to keep them together now.

In a sense, we are witnessing a unique change in the history of this country: the rise of individualism. To Chinese people, their experience during the Cultural Revolution is not entirely invalid. When Mao destroyed almost all that he and the Party had established, the destruction in turn created a new generation with a new social philosophy. A profound re-examination of the traditional culture and the leading ideologies has been going on, either through public discussions in the press or private talks among close friends. The Confucian idea of "maintaining heavenly principles and extinguishing earthly desires" has been criticized, the traditional emphasis on responsibilities with total neglect of rights is questioned; and what is more important, people demand to be treated as human beings, who do not merely live for a common ideal but also desire to fulfill themselves. The new reforms by the Party, the opening to the capitalist countries in particular, undoubtedly encourage the development of individualist attitude. It is on this background that subtle yet significant changes in respect to the family have taken place.

First of all, there has been a legislative reform in the Marriage Law. On the whole, the marriage law of 1981 adopts the basic principles of the old one, that is, monogamy, freedom of marriage, equality of both spouses, and the protection of the rights of women and children. In the section on divorce, it maintains that divorce is allowed if both spouses agree to end the marriage. In the case that only one spouse wants divorce, the law adds that "divorce should be made available if feelings of

attachment no longer exists," a clause which has had considerable consequences.

Society responded immediately to the 1981 Marriage Law. The divorce rate doubled that year. In addition, a divorce case in Peking caught the attention of the whole nation and thus started one of the most constructive debates in twentieth century China. The main character of the case was a young woman, a well-known writer of a famous short story, "A Fairy Tale In Winter." It is a story about political persecution, poverty, and patriarchal oppression based on her own experience during the Cultural Revolution. The young woman was from a "bad" family—with her parents labelled as capitalists and her brother shot as a counter-revolutionary. She herself was sent to the countryside to be "re-educated" by the peasants. There, she was forced to get married. In 1982 she went to court to divorce her second husband a factory worker she married after she had returned to the city, homeless and jobless. She used the divorce clause in the marriage laws as grounds, saying that apart from physical and economic relations, they didn't share any emotional or intellectual ties. For China, this was shocking and unconventional. A woman not only asked for a second divorce but also did not provide "reasons" for public scrutiny. Debates took place in the courts, in the universities, factories and other places.

People were divided into two groups. One group asserted that the husband had no fault, that responsibility should always be put above everything else, and that divorcing somebody who had once helped you because of "no love" was immoral. They believed that the liberalization of the laws would foster a play-boy mentality and bring about family disintegration. Therefore, they suggested amendments to make divorce available only on the grounds of adultery, ill-treatment, desertion, or separation. The opposing group took the

view that divorce was not necessarily a bad thing. Rather, in some circumstances it is a sign of social advancement. Historically, the stability of the Chinese family was obtained through suppression of humanity, fear of punishment, and sacrifice of many people's happiness. They answered their opponents by quoting from Engels—if only the marriage based on love is moral, then also only the marriage is moral in which love continues.

The woman won her case and was granted a divorce. This marked a turning point in Chinese conceptions of marriage and family. Since the debate was widely carried on, the influence was felt far and wide in the following years.

If in the past women were afraid of divorce because of its economic aftermath, now divorce for some is a kind of liberation. When analyzing divorce cases, people have found that of those who sued for divorce, about 70% were women. Some women wanted divorce as a result of family violence, some because of ill-treatment of the family for having girls instead of boys. Also, some women have sought divorce because they can't tolerate being treated by the husbands as a piece of property. Finally, there is a group named "Strong Women." These are usually successful career women or women with a strong sense of independence. Their ideas and behaviour conflict with convention and also with their husbands' demands. When they are compelled to make a choice between career and family, they choose the former.

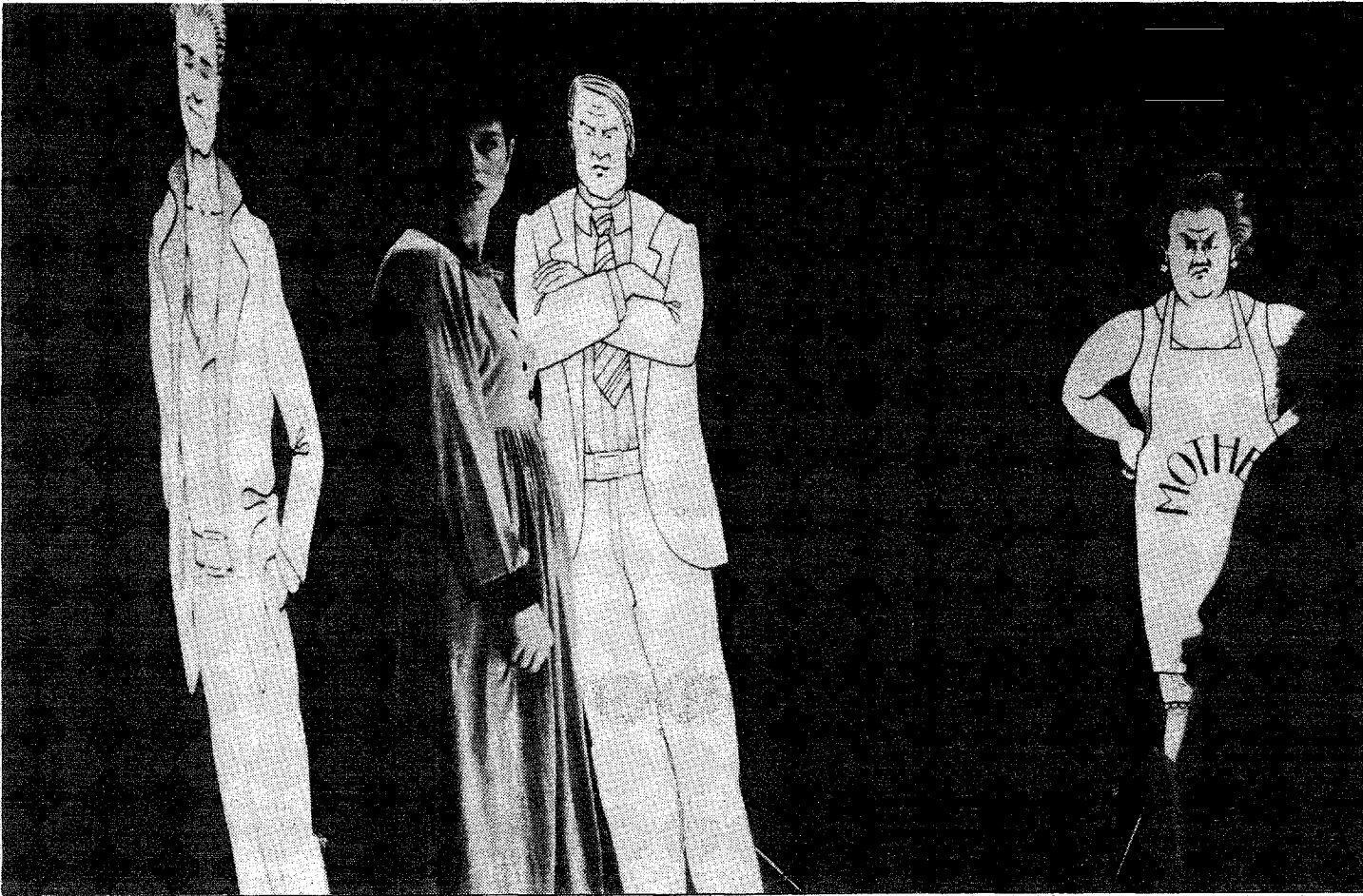
As a matter of fact, it has been widely recognized that in recent years an increasing gap exists between men and women. While most men stick to the traditional ideas of marriage and family, more and more women have rejected the subordination of women to men, and have chosen a new role: "I must be a tree, too, standing side by side with you," as expressed by a woman poet. The conflict has led to many open controversies between the sexes.

Taking all these changes into consideration, one can safely say that today the Chinese family is facing an unprecedented trial. Its old solid foundation is being weakened by the realignment of politics, economic reality and social values in the country. Furthermore, the opening to the West—the unquestioning embrace of technology—is an unpredictable influence on the future. When family experts suggest that the divorce rate may continue to rise by the end of this century, they obviously have difficulty in depicting the emerging family patterns in the future. Indeed, if individualism becomes more valued in this society, if the privacy of marriage and family receive more recognition, if women's longing for substantial equality continues to grow and men still refuse to give up their "divine rights," the traditional "placid and harmonious family" might become something that exists only in imagination.

*This article was written by a Women's Studies professor at a Chinese university. She wishes to remain anonymous.*

## ARTS

## Cinéma Femme: Film Frenzy



No escape: from El Glinoyer's 'The Food Affair'

by Johanne Pelletier

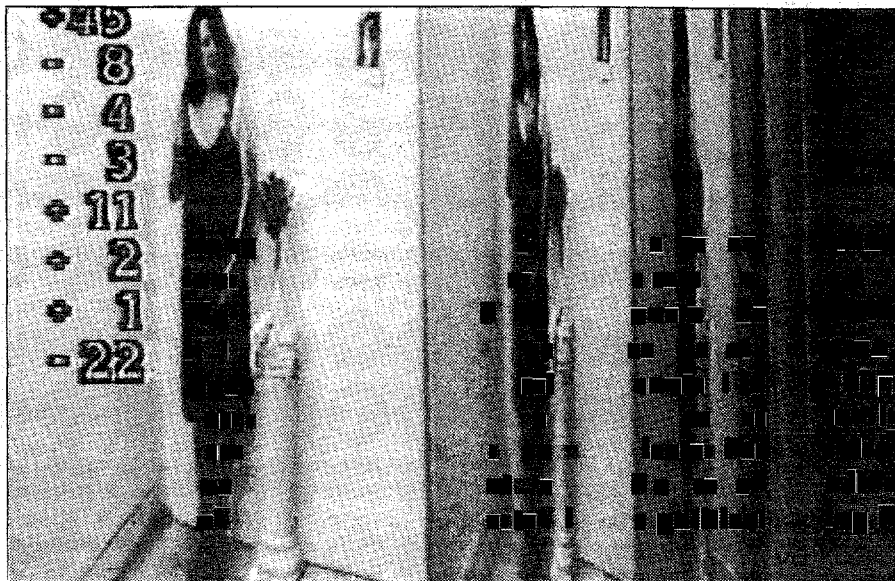
Midway through Cinéma Femme's 4th International Festival of Film and Video by Women recently held in Montreal, I realized that this overview could barely scratch the surface. With 33 feature length films, 50 shorts, 68 videos, 2 conferences, public discussions and competitions, this 10 day film frenzy was an overwhelming but thought-provoking experience. Cinéma Femme programs for the eclectic sensibility. Combining highly experimental film and video, traditional narrative forms and the politically charged feminist documentary, this festival encompasses the broadest possible spectrum of viewing tastes. A cross-section of screenings on any given day might have included anything from the obscure, hypnotic videos by artists Madelon Hooykaas and Elsa Stansfield, to the more familiar 1930s Hollywood classic, *Grand Hotel*. Films familiar to feminist audiences were also screened; Juliet Bashore's controversial *Kamikaze Hearts*, Suzanne Schiffman's *The Sorceress* and Sheila McLaughlin's *She Must Be Seeing Things* attracted large audiences and substantial press attention although the festival as a whole was largely ignored by the mainstream press. Rather than replay these feminist favourites in this overview, I have chosen to survey the festival oddities which offer more challenging representational schemes.

My festival pick is Sylvie Groulx's *Chronique d'un temps flou* (1988). This documentary is inspired by Groulx's own curiosity around the gap between her generation and 20-25 year old Quebecois/es. In interviews with three youth "groups" (Mario and the Bloodstones, a heavy metal band in the economically depressed Matapedia region; Danielle and Robert, lovers and visual artists; and Maryse, a Montreal based university student travelling to France), Groulx looks for a common political and social consciousness. The first half of the film is a traditional documentary, with Mario, Danielle and Robert responding to Groulx's off-camera questions. Their responses reflect a cynicism, suspicious of optimistic forecasts of the future. Disillusioned by high unemployment, inadequate social funding and a lack of political direction, these young adults are bored, listless. Groulx allows them to suggest that despite their comparative freedom from traditions that bound previous generations, any form of liberty is tempered by the limitations on their opportunities.

The traditional distance between filmmaker and documentary subject breaks down in conversations with Maryse, the only strong feminist voice in the film. A remarkably perceptive

young woman with an acerbic wit, her reflections on feminism, politics and her relationship with her mother change the tone of the film. As Maryse departs for France, Groulx appears to hand over the reins of control to Maryse. In videotaped segments and voiceover correspondences, Maryse communicates her loneliness and disappointment with a French student culture uninterested in her political

tional cinematic representations of young women. Seybold's film documents the interactions between teenage girls in their support group or "foyer." Their weekly meetings and daily gatherings at a youth centre are meticulously documented. The camera is occasionally intrusive, but generally follows the discussion without interruption. We have no way of knowing how the presence of the filmmaker cen-



Apparent victory: from Lynn Hershman's 'Binge'

idealism. The proximity of filmmaker to subject increases as Maryse's contribution to the film is self-directed. This shift of control allows Maryse an evolution of consciousness. Groulx reappears at the end of the film with Maryse, whose return home is marked by a renewed optimism characterized by an interest in graduate school and the end of her relationship with Jean. This evolutionary process is the film's strength. I am not, however, as certain of the film's message. Is Groulx suggesting that this group constitutes a "lost generation"? This film is certainly an attempt to recapture an era of youthful political idealism, a time in which Groulx herself came to maturity. I must applaud her realistic representation of these youth as individuals, not as the exceptional successes or youth in crisis stereotypic of mainstream cinema. This crucial difference is evinced by the absence of sexuality as an organizing theme in the film. As Groulx moves from social to individual questions, the notion of a sexual identity as singularly important seems to be irrelevant.

*We Are Strong and Tender* (1981) by Katrin Seybold and *Jeux d'enfants* (1985) by Leyda Layus and Arvo Ikho also challenge tradi-

sored the discussions. Did the girls self-censor before the camera? I was amazed at the fluidity between their exploration of "mature" themes and more recognizably teenage concerns. This group appears to be equally adept at collective problem solving as they are at sorting out desperately important teen issues around sexuality, boys and rock music. They claim a primary association with their girlfriends, without whom they could not sustain the isolating life of incommunicable teenage boys and unwieldy parents. *Jeux d'enfants* is a more traditional narrative focusing on the experiences of Marie, a 14 year old adolescent sent to an orphanage after her father's rejection. Much of the film is about child's play; the games, internal hierarchies, loyalties and sexual play of 2-18 year olds set the stage for Marie's own evolution. Marie journeys from victimization to a more self-confident stance, gaining the trust and loyalty of her friends. This sensitive portrayal of relations between young people without adult references doesn't fall prey to good-kid/bad-kid stereotyping. The "new" Marie emerges, not as a hardened caricature of the original but is simply more self-assured and comfortable with the childlike universe in which she resides.

There were two really outstanding works on women and food. *Binge* (1987), by Lynn Hershman, is a compilation of video installments examining the complex relationship between sexual indulgence and obesity. Hershman speaks directly to the audience, creating an intimate space between viewer and artist. The sensual association with food created by North American popular culture traps women. Overindulgence in food is liberating, in part as a sexual substitute, but also functions as a form of deprivation. Over the course of the video Hershman loses 15 pounds, illustrated by a weight chart on the screen. This apparent victory is temporary of course, as Hershman's struggle with food additions is a life long trial. I highly recommend this painfully honest treatment as an introduction to women's problematic relationship with food. A more humorous approach to eating disorders is taken by El Glinoyer's *The Food Affair* (1987). Attempting a portrait of an anorexic/bulimic woman, Glinoyer uses varied and colourful representations of food. The woman is tempted by food projectiles at every turn. With no escape, she succumbs to the mass of flying food, consuming ecstatically. Despite the humour in Glinoyer's representation of consumption and regurgitation scenes, this film is an unsettling reminder of the violent manifestations of food addiction. Women's relationships with other consumer-oriented temptations are explored in Paper Tiger Television's *Judith Williamson Consumes Passionately in Southern California* (1987). Paper Tiger Television broadcasts on cable television in New York City, inviting guests to dissect theory, an article, or advertisement in visual form. Judith Williamson's entry is a hilarious venture into the world of consumerism, in which a "revolution" is brought on by the introduction of a new shoe by Nike, and not by a social-political movement. Her examination of an ad claiming to have produced the ideal sock for every sport is a starting point for her analysis of the multiplication of products and functions in a capitalist society. Amusing segments of Williamson gleefully shopping for socks are cut with her marxist-feminist analysis, underlining the colonization of women's bodies by bouts of consumerism. This video must be seen to be believed.

Two very interesting entries on women artists are of note. Meg Partridge's *Portrait of Imogen* (1987) is a short film using Imogen Cunningham's own reminiscences taped by her son, Rondal Partridge. Combined with over 250 of Cunningham's photographs, this film immerses the viewer in conversation with this very articulate woman. Cunningham was self taught, one of the first commercially and artistically successful women in American photography. Perhaps best known for a self-portrait of an older Cunningham peeking around a tree at a naked younger woman, Imogen was labelled a renegade after photographing nude men in 1917. I find this artist's lack of pretence in regard to her work particularly refreshing. When asked to explain the thematic impulse behind her series on children and the garden, Imogen explains quite plainly that after having three children in two years she simply photographed what was her environment. The use of reminiscences rather than the authoritative voiceover in this film demystifies the artist and her work. A similar approach is



Imogen Cunningham, self-portrait: from Meg Partridge's 'Portrait of Imogen'



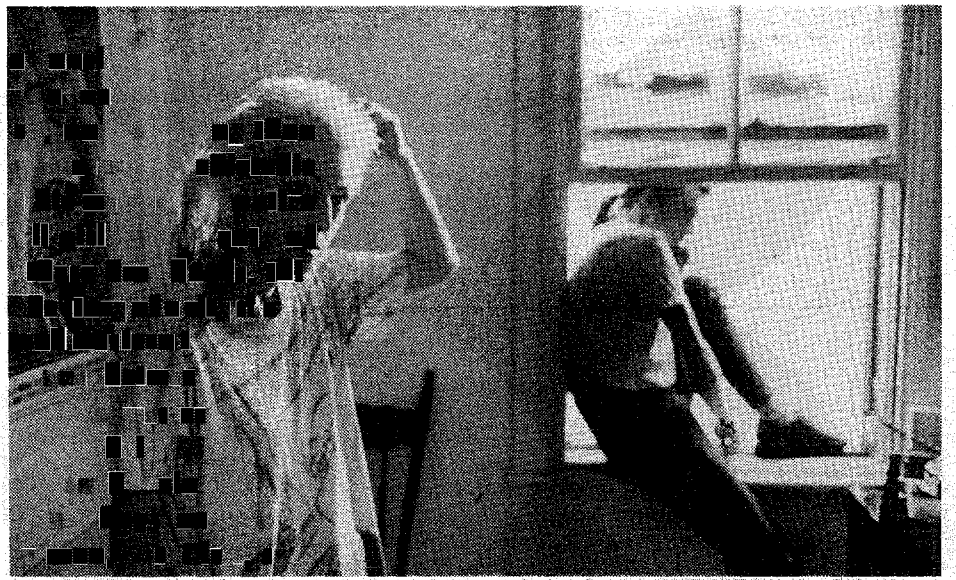
taken in *Instants de vie: portrait d'Hélène Arazon* (1987) by Claudine Lesselier and Jacques Vandemborghe. Arazon, a French visual artist born in 1910, reflects upon her life, painting and lesbian existence in 1930s Paris. The intimacy brought by the artist to this subject is revealed in her choice of vintage music for the film and in her reconstruction of the style and mannerisms of the lesbian and gay community.

**D**espite my promise to survey some of the festival's extraordinary feminist fare, I feel compelled to offer an update on Juliet Bashore and *Kamikaze Hearts*. In a post-screening discussion, Bashore mirrored many of the political contradictions and inconsistencies that are at the core of her film. I found little consolation in Bashore's epilogue to the film. Tiger, the porn industry insider, has kicked her drug addiction since the release of the film. Mitch's fate is less certain, though Bashore suspects she married soon after the film. As for *Kamikaze Hearts*, Bashore is seeking additional funding for a second cut which promises "more sex right where the audience needs it."

I must share two examples of those festival surprises that, while lacking in substantive feminist content, were interesting and a lot of fun. When a screening of Sheila McLaughlin's *She Must Be Seeing Things* was pre-empted, I

decided to sample Alla Sourikova's *The Man from the Boulevard des Capucines* (1987). This film is a Soviet western, no less corny than *Paint Your Wagon*, replete with predictable musical numbers, horrible western vs. native stereotyping, dance hall girls and plenty of whisky. Despite all of these drawbacks, this film is cleverly written. The story of a city slicker who revolutionizes a small western town with silent movies, this film moves between parody and tribute to the American western genre. Most of us intending to see Sheila McLaughlin's work were roaring at such melodramatic lines as, "art demands sacrifice" and "load 'em, Billy!" The cinema man, Mr. First, succeeds only temporarily in converting the town to milk over whisky, to gentle manners over saloon brawling. When he fails, he and two cinematic followers sally forth into the sunset, seeking towns to conquer with the cinematograph. This film has no discernible feminist content. It might, however, appeal to western film buffs and is certainly a novel entry by a woman filmmaker. A great disappointment was Nicole Giguere's *Histoire infame* (1987), an eight minute experimental work which illustrates "great women" in history to music by Louise Portal. I wasn't expecting a radical revisionist treatment of women's history in this short, but could argue against simplifying a crucial area as a rock video.

I would be remiss in not saying more about



**Bored, listless:** Danielle and Robert in Sylvie Groulx's 'Chronique d'un temps flou'

the organization of this festival. The coordination of film, video and conference sessions with an eye to accessibility is a tribute to Cinéma Femme's astute appraisal of the women's film market. Unlike other large scale festivals, this event focused attention on working sessions instead of star-studded galas. For working femi-

nist filmmakers, buffs and the casual film-goer, this festival makes significant contributions to an awareness of film and video production by women.

Johanne Pelletier is a graduate student at O.I.S.E.

## Beat ReGeneration

by Susan Feldman

Of the plays I saw at the Du Maurier World Stage theatre festival at Toronto's Harbourfront in June, none had a clearly perceptive women's voice running through it. Although in each play women's issues were a thematic centrepiece, the ultimate effect of the festival productions was widely divergent. In some cases subtext subverted text, and in others texts subverted themselves. In all the productions I saw women were a presence, but not always speaking with their own voice.

Baputa Rubess is an artist associated with Toronto's feminist Nightwood Theatre and has been centrally involved in many of the company's most powerful productions (*This Is For You, Anna*, and *Goodnight Desdemona*). Her newest project, *Boom, Baby, Boom!* was produced independently, with writer/director Rubess collaborating with composer/musician Nic Gotham. It is a play that attempts to fuse jazz, text and performance to create the ambience of the "beat" era in Toronto. Inspired by a photograph of Clement Hambourg, the man credited with being the father of Yorkville, Rubess set out to create a theatre piece that would explore the people and the mood of that time. Through this exploration, Rubess and Gotham have re-created a Toronto that is fascinating, though largely unknown, to a vast majority of us.

The story, told in short narrative bursts (sometimes atemporal), is a simple one. Clem Hambourg runs an after-hours jazz and poetry club, The House of Hambourg, where the "beat" intelligentsia meet to share their art and their despair. The club is continually being forced to move premises as development encroaches (a continuing theme for Toronto artists) and there's never enough money to pay the bills. Clem's wife Ruthie helps to make ends meet by sewing G-strings for strippers at the Victory Burlesque. Into this exotic setting drops (literally from a window) Austra Mednis, a Latvian war refugee, who is running away from her engagement party. In the haven of the House of Hambourg, Austra encounters a new world where she desperately tries to lose herself (she changes her name to Shirley Hepburn—Audrey being perfection) until found and lured back to her life by her sister and fiancé. The club is forced to close, after a botched attempt by Austra and a poet to raise money through a drug deal, and "real" life resumes for Austra, although forever altered.

With the theatre set up like a club, and a four-piece band almost continually onstage, the background to this play often becomes the foreground of our attention. Names like Don Franks and Hagood Hardy are intoned in the same breath as Ginsberg, Coltraine and Kesey and we're reminded that in the 50s, Toronto the Good had its own bad beatniks. This is a play

about dreams and mythologies. Austra dreams of freedom, Clem dreams of Schoenberg, and Ruthie dreams of having to pay the dentist's bill for a root canal. The people in this story are consciously acting out a greater mythology they truly believe in (the beat poet declares, "I have a life that Jack Kerouac imagines he did.")

*Boom, Baby, Boom!* is a play about coming of age. Austra is continually climbing in and out of windows—out of her bedroom window to escape her childhood, and into the club's window to find her future. It's a play about the immigrant experience of Toronto-Spadina sweat shops, unnatural food ("white bread, cheese wiz, and plastic sausages on a table without a cloth"). And constant English lessons ("Yellowknife is not everybody's cup of tea"). It's a play about the artists' despair (Mingus and Parker dead in the 30s; Schubert too). This is a post-war, post-holocaust, post-bomb generation that intones the same anthem as Johnny Rotten did in the 70s—No Future. And finally, it's a play about memories and

regrets; Austra remembers the war approaching her Latvian town and cries for her lost childhood, while Clem, who lives *with* the artists of his day, lives *for* the artists of the past.

The production partly succeeds in its attempt to fuse jazz and theatre. The play's structure is like a jazz composition where one player takes off on a variation, then returns to the central theme. But ultimately this is not an improvisational piece of theatre, and the production often needs tighter scripting, shaping and focus. With the music so cool, the performances need to be hot. Ann-Marie MacDonald as Austra and Martin Julien as the beat poet come closest to that unfettered sense of wild abandon that the characters need to have in order to bring this era to life.

While *Boom, Baby, Boom!* is not a play about explicitly feminist concerns (where was the women's movement in the 50s?), its women are central and strong, and their voices ring true.

Susan Feldman is a Toronto feminist.



**Austra dreams of freedom:** Ann-Marie MacDonald in 'Boom, Baby, Boom'

### Rose A. Wilson

Real Estate Sales Representative  
Committed to working with you.

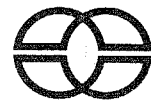


Home Life/Aces  
Realty and Ins. Ltd.

921 Danforth Ave.  
Toronto, Ontario, M4J 1L8

Tel. (416) 463-8888  
Res. (416) 463-8885

George Brown



The City College

### DIPLOMA COURSE IN COMMUNITY WORK

George Brown College offers a program in community work to persons with a strong commitment to social change, human rights and community development in a multicultural society.

Applications are being accepted NOW for September 1988  
(full-time, 2 years)

To arrange an interview, call (416) 967-1212, ext. 3424.

# Searching for Siberry



**Siberry:** innovative idiosyncracies

by Cassandra Nicolaou

"You know, you use words to define things, but there's a whole part of that object that exists out here a little bit, so the definition's not quite right... unless you put electrodes on someone's head, from your head to their head, you'll never be able to make that direct translation... But that's why some people call it art?"

When Jane Siberry talks about her art, she tends to sound a lot like her art. Often vague

and rambling, searching for a way to make you understand, she uses a sometimes alienating imagery that incorporates chairs, pink surfboards, geese, shoes and hats. At one moment we're discussing pop music, and before I know it, Siberry is talking about skies and boundaries and searching for a religious analogy.

Most people either love or hate Jane Siberry. Her detractors cite pretentiousness, unbearably silly lyrics, and an irritatingly whiny voice as supportive evidence.

Her fans know better. They know that, because of and despite her musical idiosyncrasies, Siberry is producing some of the most innovative and intriguing music that can be heard today. They know that comparisons to Laurie Anderson, Kate Bush and Joni Mitchell, while inevitable, are over-used and inadequate.

Siberry has now become a reference point herself. In February's *Rolling Stone*, new Irish sensation Sinéad O'Connor was compared to our Jane, whom RS labelled "one of the women pushing the boundaries of pop music." And while Siberry has been pushing musical boundaries for quite some time, she has just recently acquired the ability to challenge some international boundaries as well. Warner Brothers U.S. signed Siberry to a seven-album worldwide deal last winter and her *Speckless Sky* album was released in Europe this past spring.

Although Siberry will never have the mass appeal of a Whitney Houston (this is a good thing), it certainly seems that her reign as Canada's Queen of The Appreciated But Obscure might be coming to an end. Critics in *Macleans*, *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice* and *People Magazine* have all raved about our "fascinating eccentric." Her second tour of Canada and the US, undertaken a few years ago, helped to develop Siberry's slowly but steadily building popularity.

So, as a next move, Siberry might have been tempted to play it safe. But unlike another Canadian musical presence, she did not invite John Oates aboard as guest producer. Instead, Siberry released *The Walking*, an album even she admits "is very dense; it takes a while to absorb it." The woman has courage.

The first thing you notice about *The Walking* is that the songs are long. The reason you notice this first is because the song times are noticed right there on the back of the album cover for everyone to see. No shying away from it, no apologies for eight and 10-minute songs. And although some critics have suggested that Siberry could have used a good editor, she remains confident.

"I think it's a sign of maturity somehow to let things take the breath that they need to stand alone. With each song I tried to give it exactly the amount of time I felt it required, even on subtle levels like letting a groove happen a little longer than normal, or just letting the song sit there..."

Siberry can be very serious when forced to respond to critical comment. But throughout it all she maintains a sense of humour. She laughs when reminded of bad lines ("the tundra is my lover") from older songs and incorporates a subtle, self-deprecating humour into many tunes.

In *Lena Is A White Table* from the new album, Siberry is her own editor, commenting "Baloney, phooey... Oh come on!" in the midst of a few vaguely pretentious lyrics. There's always been an element of humour in her songwriting. Verses such as: "His card says executive / But it mumbles just a salesman / He's not sure just who you are / But you might be a good connection" (Extra Executives); and: "She didn't get him / He didn't really get her either / They got together / Not the stuff of

movies" (Ingrid and the Footman) reveal not only an offbeat sense of humour but an uncanny ability to comment on the ironies of everyday life.

"I watch, and a lot of my writing comes from what I see, people who fascinate me. I feel like a secretary sometimes; I'm not creating anything, just recording."

Much of Siberry's "recording" for *The Walking* happened on recent trips to Italy and Newfoundland. The landscapes of these locales recur throughout the album, which is her most visual yet. Accordingly, Siberry has already done videos for a number of the tracks.

"I'm really excited about doing videos, because many of my ideas are visual and sometimes translating them to words and music seems almost backwards?"

"But I don't like videos that are just literal, or seeing the song acted out... I'm pulling back a bit on being too obvious, so that the video will be a completion of the song." Again acknowledging the "challenging" nature of *The Walking*, Siberry hopes that the videos help to clear up any difficulties listeners encounter. But she has little patience for people who label her newest effort self-indulgent, feeling that it is definitely her best album to date.

"The indulgent thing... I think people sometimes just say that because they don't get it, you know, and I'm very aware of indulgence in other people's work and in mine; I just have to trust my own judgement." *The Walking* is Siberry's fourth album following the independent *Jane Siberry*, and *No Borders Here* and *Speckless Sky*, both on the Duke Street label. Those albums yielded top-40 hits (*Mimi on the Beach* and *One More Colour*, respectively), something which *The Walking* has failed to do as yet. Siberry edits all of her songs for commercial release, but once joked that she writes "the catchiest eight-minute pop song around."

"I don't know; I've felt really bored during three-minute songs, and really tired. Catchy is, well, there's catchy the first time you hear it and there's catchy the tenth time you hear it. I've always enjoyed songs that made my mind stretch. Stretch to a new dimension. Harder melodies, more difficult chord changes make it take longer to get to know a song. Those songs feel like a nice workout, it feels like you've stretched?"

Siberry is often construed to be the dizzy, eccentric, art-musician, which is funny, considering her conventional suburban-Toronto upbringing. Even when not being discussed directly, Siberry is the victim of this typecasting. Lawrence O'Toole, film critic for *Macleans*, described Sheila McCarthy's character Polly in *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing* as "a cross between Jane Siberry and Pee Wee Herman." Siberry's fear of being perceived as a "dumb girl" writing "bad poetry" (lyrics from *The Empty City*) still lingers.

"I hate to be cast as people who I criticize, but that's poetic justice, I guess. There are all sorts of perceptions about me. I think slowly, people sort of take an average of everything they hear about me and come up in the right ballpark?"

What Siberry says is true, because even the most stubborn critics have conceded that she seems to "spend most of her time hanging around the top end of the I.Q. scale." And her fans, who share more differences than similarities, are devoted and loyal. Asked whether she could cite a common denominator, Siberry laughs: "My audience?... I think they must be great, wonderful, interesting people... did I say charming too? But really, I feel like people trust me somehow; they might not necessarily like me, but at least maybe trust something about what I'm doing. I hope so, anyway?"

Cassandra Nicolaou is a film and music buff.



## TORONTO WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE

- Beyond Hope**  
A Helen Keremos thriller  
Eve Zaremba \$10.95
- In our own Words**  
Northern Saskatchewan metis women speak out  
D. Poelzer and I. Poelzer \$13.95
- Growing Up with Miss Milly**  
Sybil Seaforth \$14.95
- We are Everywhere**  
Writings by and about lesbian parents  
Edited by Harriet Alpert \$14.95
- The Sensual Body**  
Lucy Ridell \$17.95
- Feminist Organizing for Change**  
The Contemporary women's movement in Canada  
N. Adamson, L. Briskin, M. McPhail \$19.95

73 HARBOR STREET  
TORONTO, ONT, M5S 1G4  
(416) 922-8744 MONDAY  
THROUGH SATURDAY 10:30  
TO 6:00 FRIDAY 10:30 TO  
8:00 WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

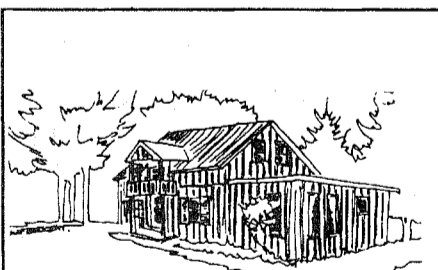
Subscribe to...



\$19  
individuals

\$30  
institutions

(see back page)



*Crossroads*  
R.R. #1 Hawkestone  
ON. L6L 1T0  
705-487-2169

Bed & Breakfast for Women

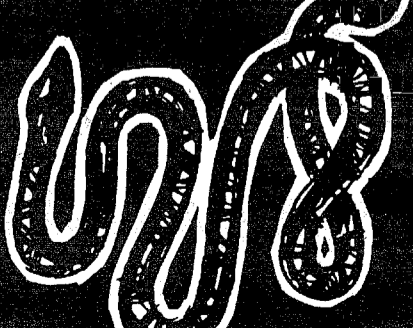
- Between Barrie & Orillia
  - Close to 3 lakes
- Homemade breads, muffins & jams
- Dinners on request
  - Open all year

Your hostesses:  
Maureen & Mary

333 BLOOR STREET WEST  
(BLOOR & ST. GEORGE)  
979-9627

Elly Danica *Don't: A Woman's Word*  
Carolyn Steedman *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of two lives*  
Christa Wolf *Cassandra: A novel and four essays.*  
Llona Karmel *An Estate of Memory*  
R.A. Sydie *Natural Women, Cultured Men: A feminist perspective on sociological theory.*  
Lynne Segal *Is the Future Female? Troubled thoughts on contemporary feminism*  
Sarah Schulman *After Delores: A Novel*

The Women's Section  
at SCM



renew for two

Save money and trouble  
— renew your sub for  
two years. Only \$34.

renew for two



# OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

----- JULY 1988 -----



• **Friday, July 1:** Voice Ensemble presents Fires of Transformation, written and performed by former victims of wife assault. 8 pm. Theatre Centre, 191 Lippincott St. Info: 927-7088.

• **Friday, July 1:** Bratty and the Babysitters will be performing at Lee's Palace. 529 Bloor St. West. 10 pm. \$5. Info: 971-5981. **To Saturday, July 2.**

• **Friday, July 1:** A multiple monitor video installation, "As A Wife Has A Cow," opens at A Space, 183 Bathurst Street, 2-4 pm. Info: 364-3227. **To Saturday, July 9.**

• **Friday, July 1:** Tarragon Extra Space Theatre and Grez Productions - The Nights of the Tribades, a thought-provoking look at the battle of the sexes with August Strindberg, his ex-wife and her female lover as the central figures. 30 Bridgman St. Tuesday-Sunday 8 pm. (Sunday PYWC). Info: 531-1827 or 925-0171. **To Sunday, July 3.**

• **Friday, July 1:** Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House presents an exhibition of Lori Goldbert paintings, "Out of the Blue." East Gallery. Info: 978-2453. **To Saturday, July 16.**

• **Friday, July 1:** Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House, presents an exhibition of Annette Francoise, "Quilts." West Gallery. Info: 978-3453. **To Saturday, July 16.**

• **Sunday, July 10:** The Rose Cafe presents "July Jam." 547 Parliament St. 5 pm to 9 pm. Featured performer: Boo Watson, plus special guest!! \$2 donation. Info: 928-1495.

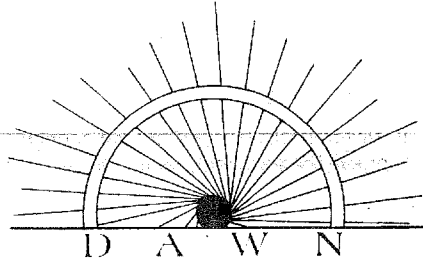
## ----- WEEK OF JULY 11

• **Thursday, July 14:** The Other Theatre of Toronto presents The Impossible Can Happen: "Let a New Woman Be Born." \$6/8. 8 pm. Poor Alex Theatre, 296 Brunswick. Info: 927-8998.

• **Thursday, July 14:** The Woman's Common presents Sandra Shamus in concert. 10 pm. 580 Parliament Street. Info: 975-9079.

• **Sunday, July 17:** The Woman's Common presents story teller Sandy Whiting. 3:30 pm. 580 Parliament Street. Info: 975-9079.

• **Sunday, July 17:** DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN) hold a picnic. Info: 755-6060 voice or TDD.



## ----- WEEK OF JULY 18

• **Wednesday, July 20:** Parachute Club performs at the Forum, Ontario Place, 8:30 pm. \$6. Also **Thursday, July 21.**

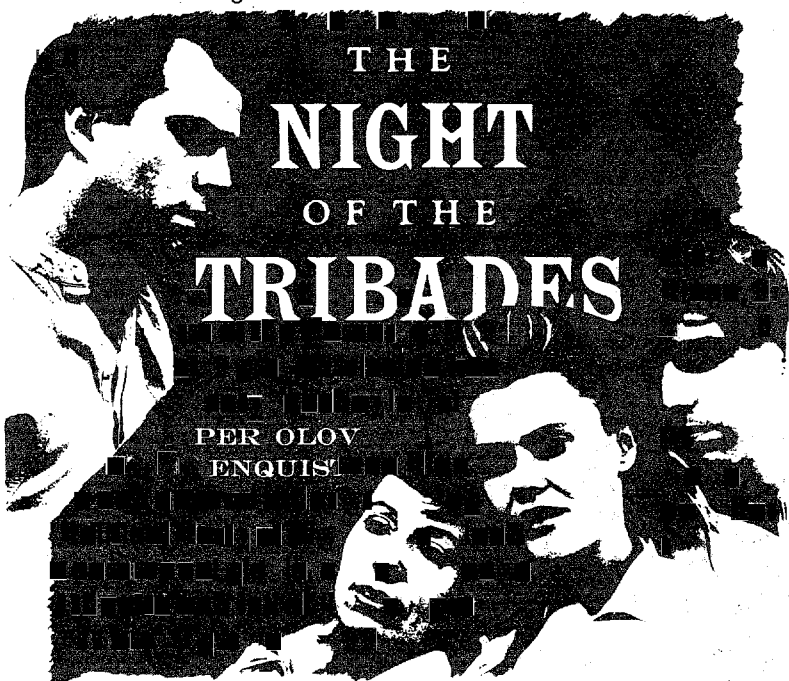
• **Wednesday, July 20:** The Toronto Women's Bookstore presents Valmai Howe, author of The Rights of the Pregnant Parent and The Birth Report reading from a new work of fiction. "The Dreams of Zoo Animals," at Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord St. 7:30 pm. Free. Info: 922-8744.

## ----- WEEK OF JULY 4

• **Tuesday, July 5:** The Nancy Sinatras perform at the Cameron. 408 Queen St. West. 8 pm. Admission free. Info: 971-5981. Every Tuesday in July.

• **Sunday, July 10:** Women Plan Toronto and several other groups sponsor a Political Party at Algonquin Island, with a communal picnic, skills exchange, street theatre and full children's program. 11 am-4 pm. Info: 588-9751.

Strindberg fears women... his wife loves them.



TARRAGON'S EXTRA SPACE JUNE 28 - JULY 3

• **Thursday, July 21:** Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy opens at the Centennial Gallery, 120 Navy St. Info: 844-4402. **To Sunday, September 4.**

• **Thursday, July 21:** The Rape Crisis Centre is holding a community meeting for those interested in planning this year's Take Back The Night at the 519 Church Community Centre. 7 pm. Info: 597-1171.

• **Thursday, July 21:** The Woman's Common presents Bratty in concert. 580 Parliament Street. Info: 975-9079.

• **Friday, July 22:** Women's Independent Thoughtz (WITZ), a feminist seminar/discussion group. Topic: E.M. Forster. Location and info: 234-5281.

• **Friday, July 22:** Women's Weekend Cycling Festival: three days of cycling activities at Elora Gorge Conservation Area, with camping. Info: Ontario Cycling Association, 495-4141.

• **Saturday, July 23:** The Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House, U of T, presents artists Patricia Wylie and Suzanne Morrison, 2 pm to 5 pm. Gallery showing Tuesday to Saturday, 11 am to 5 pm. **To Thursday, August 18.**

## ----- 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. 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. Interviews, reviews, commentary and chit chat. Tune in! Info: 595-0909.

• **Monday:** Women-only night at the Rose Café, with films and discussion. \$2 admission includes buffet. 8 pm. 547 Parliament St. Info: 928-1495.

• **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:** Lesbian fuck-the-discussion group meets for informal basketball, movie nights and other events. 7 pm, U of T Women's Centre, 49 St. George. Info: 978-8201.

• **Tuesday:** Running Wilde, gay and lesbian running club meets for a run at University Settlement House, 23 Grange (off McCaul), 6 pm sharp. Facilities available.

• **Tuesday:** Ontario Coalition of Abortion Clinics planning meeting every second Tuesday, 7 pm at Trinity-St. Pauls, 427 Bloor Street West. Info: 532-8193.

• **Saturday, July 23:** The Woman's Common presents its first Annual Picnic, 2-10 pm. Hanlan's Point, Firepit #1. Info: 975-9079.

• **Sunday, July 24:** The Other Theatre of Toronto presents a benefit performance of The Impossible Can Happen: "Let A New Woman Be Born!" 8 pm at the Poor Alex Theatre, 296 Brunswick Avenue, Toronto, Ontario. Tickets \$12. Proceeds for Jessie's Centre for Teenagers. Info: 927-8998.

• **Sunday, July 24:** The Woman's Common presents a special guest to be announced. 3:30 pm. 580 Parliament Street. Info: 975-9079.

## ----- WEEK OF JULY 25

• **Thursday, July 28:** Grassroots: Fifth International Lesbian and Gay People of Colour Conference at the 519 Church Community Centre. Organizers are calling for artists, donations, volunteers and performers. For further information contact the ILGPOCC Committee, PO Box 6597, Station A, Toronto, Ontario; or call (416) 532-9868. **To Sunday, July 31.**



• **Saturday, July 30:** The Grassroots Conference dance: Roots, co-sponsored by Sepia Productions will be held at The Centre, 316 Dupont Ave, Toronto, Ontario, 9 pm-2 am. Tickets: \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door. Info: (416) 588-2934.

• **Tuesday and Thursday:** The Lesbian Phone Line is open for calls from women. 7:30-9:30 pm. 533-6120.

• **Wednesday:** Womyn's Alternative Rhythms (WAR) at Show Biz, 3 Gould Street.

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

• **Thursday:** Gaywire, a weekly radio show on gay and lesbian issues. 6:15-7 pm on CIUT 89.5 FM.

• **Thursday:** Feminist self-help discussion group. Women and men welcome. 7-9 pm. U of T Women's Centre, 49 St. George. Info: 978-8201.

• **Thursday:** Lesbian and Gay Alliance at York. 5-7 pm. 107 Stedman. Info: 736-5324.

• **Thursday:** Zami, support and discussion group for Black and West Indian lesbians and gays. 8 pm. 519 Church Street.

• **Thursday:** Gaycare Toronto, counselling group for lesbians and gay men. 8-10 pm. 519 Church Street.

• **Saturday:** Running Wilde, gay and lesbian running club, meets for fitness and fun at 9 am at 519 Church Street. Come dressed to run.

• **Saturday:** Alternatives, drop-in for youth 26 and under, sponsored by Lesbian and Gay Youth Toronto. 1-4 pm at 519 Church Street.

• **Sunday:** New Women in Sobriety (NEWS), support group for lesbians and lesbian-positive women recovering from alcohol or drug addiction. 3:30-5:30 pm. Info: Mary, 653-8614 or Shirley, 920-0582.

Compiled by  
Helen Lenskyj

# MAVIS and THE BROADSIDE BANDIT

OUR HERO, MOLLY, BROADSIDE'S CRACK REPORTER, TAKES MAVIS TO DINNER IN ORDER TO EXPLAIN HER CUNNING PLAN TO EXPOSE THE BROADSIDE BANDIT.



## Broadside CLASSIFIEDS

**BED & BREAKFAST FOR WOMEN** — renovated Victorian townhouse in downtown Montreal — close to restaurants, boutiques, bars. Lindsey's B&B, 3974 Laval Avenue, Montreal, H2W 2J2; (514) 843-4869.

**BED AND BREAKFAST** for women near downtown Montreal. Close to absolutely everything. For info call (514) 288-9890.

**BED & BREAKFAST** in Toronto for women, centrally located, 601 Crawford Street, Toronto, M6G 3K1; (416) 588-4240.

**TORONTO 88** — Stay right in the heart of the Church-Wellesley Village in a beautifully restored Edwardian House. Mastercard/VISA. 10 Cawthra Square, Toronto, Ontario, M4X 1K8; or call (416) 922-6898.

**4 BEDROOM APARTMENT**—Port Elgin, Ontario on main street—beach nearby. \$300/wk. LR and DR, kitchen, laundry room, TV and cable, air conditioning, microwave. Call Helen (416) 832-6583 after 6 pm or before 7:30 am.

**FARM RETREAT FOR RENT.** 200 acres with private lake, forest and 3 bedroom house. Absolutely private. From \$400/wk. for 2. For details call evenings (519) 376-2111 (Owen Sound).

**LAKESIDE COTTAGE FOR RENT:** Winter and summer. Cozy one bedroom cabin in Haliburton Highlands. Call Mary for details (705) 754-2469, or leave message with "Lee" (416) 279-8998.

**DUPLEX FOR RENT:** Queen St. West. Sunny 2-plus bedroom, new bathroom, kitchen. \$1050/plus utilities. Large 2 bedroom, washer/dryer. \$950/plus. Nancy or Sylvia (416) 481-1296.

**WANTED: PAINTERS TO SHARE,** longterm, studio in Dundas/Roncesvalles area. No live in. \$145/month. (416) 588-1260.

**HELLO** all you wonderful friends & supporters of Villa de Hermanas. Yahoo! Thanks to all your financial and emotional help we were able to buy Villa de Hermanas. Now there is for sure a women's special place in the sun. We hope for many, many years to come. For those of you who don't know, Villa de Hermanas is a spacious 4-bedroom villa situated on a long, virtually secluded beach in the Dominican Republic with private grounds, swimming pool and terraces overlooking the ocean. In the winter months, we run it as an all women's guest-house. In the summer months, while we are in Canada, the whole house is available to any one of you who would like a beautiful, sunny, quiet, private retreat. \$600/month. If you are interested, call (705) 366-2220, b/n, 9-9, and leave a message for Barb and Stronach.

**FEMINIST (40+)** moving with job to Toronto August. Wish to sublet or share with one or more downtown. Call collect (704) 674-8393 or leave message (416) 977-2432.

**WOMANSPACE ON SALTSRING ISLAND.** Country cabin close to sea, lake and hiking trails. Take ferry from Victoria or Vancouver. Contact Gillian Smith, Box C 85, King Rd., R.R. 1, Fulford Harbour, BC, V05 1C0; (604) 653-9475.

**NON-SMOKING LESBIAN** seeks room in shared house for July only. Needs quiet in morning to write. Call Jeannie in London and I'll call you right back. 011-44-1-540-5789.

**FEMINIST AND LESBIAN BOOKS** by mail. English and French. New Book Bulletins published 3 times/year. Free. L'Androgyne Bookstore, 3636 St-Laurent, Montreal, QC, H2X 2V4.

**GOLDEN THREADS,** a contact publication for lesbians over 50 and women who love older women. Canada and US. Confidential, warm, reliable. Sample copy mailed discreetly, \$5 (US), or send a self-addressed envelope for free information. Golden Threads, P.O. Box 2416, Quincy, MA, 02269, USA.

**MAID FOR YOU,** a quality and affordable home-care service! Weekly and bi-weekly cleaning visits, professional carpet cleaning, floor sanding and refinishing. Any area of Toronto. Call Lee, (416) 971-8073.

**SUBMISSION TO SURRENDER:** Discovering Our Erotic Self. A day to celebrate the passion, pleasure and power of our sexuality. August 6, 1988 from 10:30 am - 4:30 pm at the Centre For Creativity, Knowledge and Change, 47 Cecil St., \$50 including lunch. RSVP (416) 591-9386.

**YORK UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF ARTS, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH:** The Department of English invites application at the Assistant Professor level, in the following fields: Renaissance non-dramatic literature, with interest in Milton; Medieval literature, with special interest in Old English. Appointment to begin July 1, 1989. Qualifications: comp. Ph.D. (or equiv.) in the appropriate field. Duties: teaching in both graduate and undergraduate programs and the development of a program of productive research. Appointments subject to budgetary approval. Requirements: Canadian citizens and permanent residents. Qualified women and men are invited to apply. Salary: Appropriate to qualifications. Send names of 3 referees, along with sample of applicant's work no later than October 14, 1988 to: Prof. Norman Feltes, Acting Chair, Dept. of Eng., York Univ., 4700 Keele St., North York, Ont., M3J 1P3.

### Broadside Classifieds

**Deadline:** The 20th of the preceding month.

**Cost:** 30¢ per word with a \$5 minimum. All classifieds must be prepaid.

**Method:** fill out the enclosed form and send with method of payment (cheque or money order) to **Broadside, PO Box 494, Station P, Toronto, M5S 2T1** Include a contact name.

Ad Copy: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make cheques payable to  
Broadside,  
PO Box 494, Station P,  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5S 2T1

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

city \_\_\_\_\_ postal code \_\_\_\_\_

**\$19/10 issues    \$34/20 issues**  
**Institutions: \$30/10 issues, \$48/20 issues**

new     renew

Clip and mail this coupon today.

# Broadside

P.O. BOX 494, STATION P.

TORONTO - ONTARIO - CANADA - M5S 2T1

Second Class Mail Registration No.: 4771

ISSN: 0225-6843