

ST. J. STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER

HOW I BECAME A - FEMINIST!!!



**JULY
'84**

EDITORIAL: HOW I BECAME A FEMINIST

I first became aware of the difference of being a girl when I was about seven. My brother was going off with his friends on some great adventure and I wanted to go too, but my mother told me that they didn't want a girl with them, and I could stay home with her and help her make cookies. I cried bitterly. I didn't want to make cookies; I wanted to go with the boys on their exciting expedition. It seemed awfully unfair. And, why were girls regarded as such a drag?

This was my first consciousness of being socialized into a "feminine" role. I quickly learned with my brother - who was older, bigger and stronger than I - that tears were more effective than blows when we had a fight (which was often, I am ashamed to say). I couldn't hit him as hard as he hit me, but if I cried he would give in.

I first experienced the blatant and illogical injustice of patriarchal society when I worked in a factory one summer when I was a student. It was a plastics and glass factory, as hot as hell, and I was assigned to a plastics extrusion machine, which was much pleasanter than labouring over the gas burners making glass test-tubes. In fact it was a cushy job: all one had to do was to press a button - the two halves of the machine came together, the plastic was extruded into the mould, the machine parted and the finished product fell out. One would then trim the rough edges, while pressing the button again. I was paid four pounds a week, and another, male, student was paid seven pounds for doing the same job. I was penalised three pounds a week for being female. What was particularly exasperating was that my male coworker was terrible at the job. He was reading Doughty's Arabia Deserta and used to press the button without checking that the plastic product had fallen from the machine - the machine would come together and there would be a horrible smell of burning plastic; a mechanic would have to come and clean the machine, thus stopping production. Whereas I, of course, was very conscientious and never did that.

Although I was quick to spot the injustice of unequal pay, I was slow to become a feminist. To tell you the truth, I despised women (myself included), even though my best friends were female, because they were poor, the underdogs. They baked the cookies and wiped the kids' snotty noses while the men did the real things; men had the money and the power and the glamour. Also, women dithered, and nothing irritated me more than to go out with a group of girlfriends - no one would make the decision as to which restaurant to go to - it was "you choose...no, you". Then when the check came, each one would count out her pennies and haggle over the change. It was so un-cool.

When I was a student, I received another insight into patriarchal injustice and the double standard. A contraceptive was found under a woman student's bed. Shock, horror and scandal! The good name of the university was in peril! She was had up before the Dean of Women and the President. She refused to divulge the name of the man involved, though since she was engaged to another student it was not hard to figure out. For the crime of sexual activity she was "sent down", that is, expelled from the university, even though she was in her last year and was thus prevented from getting her degree. Her boyfriend of course stayed on. There was great indignation among the students, but we were all afraid to do anything, in case the powers that be decided to point the finger at us for "moral turpitude". At that time there was a moral clause in one's degree: one had to be certified morally fit to receive it, as well as intellectually qualified. Of course the boys could have women in their rooms all night and even all weekend and nothing was said. Boys will be boys, but girls must be chaste. The hideous hypocrisy of this disgusted me. Still, just to be on the safe side, I did not have sex with my boyfriend. Besides, I knew that if I became pregnant, not only would I be "dishonoured" but that would be the end of me - I would be relegated to the kitchen, eternally washing dishes and making beds, "down among the women" as Fay Weldon put it. I would be for ever cut off from any intellectual ambition, from the "real world" which was the masculine one, and in which I was allowed to participate, if marginally, as long as I was a good girl.

When I got a job at Memorial University in 1964, there was a clause in my contract which said that if I got married I would be immediately demoted to "sessional lecturer". As one of my married colleagues (Dr Helena Frecker) said, it was as if marriage affected one's mind and one had to be therefore lower paid. In the seventies when the second wave of feminism hit us I got involved in the Status of Academic Women Committee, fighting for maternity leave, equal pay (still ain't satisfied), equal pensions, and tampons in the washrooms. It was fun - one got to go to meetings at other Atlantic universities, all expenses paid. At one of these, a male head of department said that he would never employ a woman in his department because there were certain words you could not use in a woman's presence! "Fuck you, honey" I should have said, but was too ladylike to do so. One expected of course male chauvinism, but I didn't expect women to oppose the improvement of their lot. It was women professors who voted against paid maternity leave (i.e., the ones who had already had their kids), and who, later, voted against the establishment of the Women's Studies programme. I think it was that that really radicalized me as a feminist. It made me so angry, especially when one considers the long history of the oppression of women. One of my female colleagues in the English Department told me that courses in women's studies, like courses in black studies and jewish studies, dealt with "inferior literature". I was enraged! There is nothing like anger to

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ON PAGE 15, THE ARTICLE STATES
THAT THE UNESCO RECEPTION WAS
SPONSORED BY NSWC. THIS RECEPTION
WAS SPONSORED BY THE PROVINCIAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL

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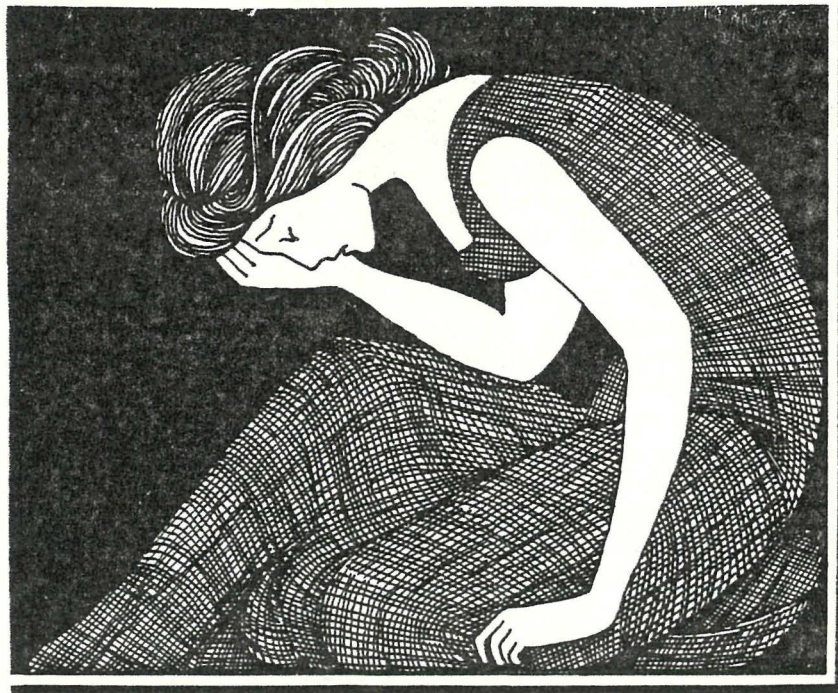
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impell one to action. I now teach a course in "inferior" women writers - such as Fanny Burney, Charlotte Brontë, Adrienne Rich, Virginia Woolf....

As a feminist, I would say that anger has been the greatest creative force in my life. I regard myself as a quiet rather wishy-washy person who hates any kind of conflict with others and will avoid it at almost any cost. But anger makes one take a stand against injustice, sexism and prejudice. Also, one is not alone, and sisterhood is powerful.

In sisterhood,

Roberta Buchanan



WHY I BECAME A FEMINIST

My father not only had financial power - he had brute strength. He effectively employed both. I was 7 years old when I first realized that women were oppressed under patriarchy. It was then that I discovered the true meaning of "sisterhood" - the only alternative to the "rule of the fathers". Through sisterhood women achieve power.

When my bedtime came and Dad had not yet come home, I'd leave my bedroom door open, just enough to hear, and sleep off and on until his car would pull into the driveway. More often than not, it would not be necessary to get out of bed, but sometimes....

I thought of myself as my mother's protector. I couldn't help but wonder what would have happened if I hadn't been awake. (Women must stick together!) Terrified, hating my father, I would run into the kitchen, or their bedroom, trembling and screaming violently. Usually his violent assault on my mom would stop once I was there. Although it seemed that I was always too late - there were always bruises and sometimes blood. He would plead with me, saying that it was her fault, that it was self defence. If only I could have looked him in the eyes and calmly said "Bullshit". Instead I ignored him and embraced my mother. In my narrow child's bed, Mom and I would curl up in each other's arms, drawing comfort from each other's strength - yet trembling. We nurtured each other through the good and the bad. We were comrades. A rare friendship developed between us that was further enhanced by our mother and daughter relationship. We were equals. This is sisterhood.

It was not until I was 13 that I experienced sexism as an individual. I discovered that, as a girl, the types of behavior that I was "allowed" to exhibit were extremely limited. One evening after a dance, an older boy of 17 privately took me aside to criticize the way in which I danced. He warned me, "for my own good", that if I didn't stop acting "crazy" and shaking my "tits" around like that, I'd get a "reputation". People would begin to think I was "a whore" or an "old bag". Having never even been kissed, I couldn't understand how I could be called a whore just by freely moving my body. Like Eve, the so-called perpetrator of men's downfall, I dared to express my sexuality, my womanhood - and for that I was blamed.

Ironically, my first sexual experience was with this "knowledgeable" young man. After we had had sex - which was terrible - he felt inclined to offer more advice. He

had informed me that every other girl whom he had "broken in" had somehow changed into a "whore" and that he didn't want this to happen to me. At this point I was really confused. First, I find out that I was "broken in", like a horse, instead of being made love to. Secondly, I discover that you MAY become a whore by moving your body in a certain way but that you'll definitely become a whore by having sex.

So, I became a whore and therefore became painfully aware of the double standard. Why was I called a whore, a slut, an old bag while my male counterparts were studs, good ol'boys? They supposedly sowed their wild oats while I engaged in "abnormal promiscuous behavior".

What no one had seemed to realize, including myself, was that I had been rejecting my womanhood. This fact becomes obvious in the self destructiveness of my behavior - promiscuity, suicide attempts, impulsiveness, running away from home. I had discovered that womanhood was not highly valued in our andocentric society - that within a patriarchal system to be a woman is to be of second class status. So, at the age of 14 I opted for maleness.

I soon found out that in order to be "one of the boys" I had to "put out". When it finally hit me that I didn't want to be one of them any longer, it was too late. They would not accept "No" for an answer. I was raped - not just once, but over and over again. The police laughed at me. My father was angry - at me, not at them. My mother believed me - I knew she would. Charges weren't pressed....

Believing that it was easier to say "yes", I remained sexually active. I still didn't know what an orgasm was, even after I discovered that I was pregnant. I knew who the father was and I hated him - so I pretended not to know. I also knew that I wanted an abortion. Mom was incredibly supportive - Dad pretended not to know what was happening, choosing to ignore it.

Every day for a week, Mom and I would go to the Health Sciences Complex to face "the committee". It was humiliating and degrading - a procedure designed to punish women. Being pregnant at the age of 15 was not enough to convince these people that I needed an abortion. They also had to prove me insane! There were 3 psychiatrists. The first decided to use a little mental "shock treatment" by asking me how many men I had slept with and what I had charged them, calling me a whore. He labelled me "manic-depressive" and recommended librium after I had broken down in his office. The second asked me to do the "Draw a Person" test. When I refused, she consulted with the first doctor and agreed with his "diagnosis". The third disagreed with the other two doctors and labelled me a "sociopath" - no drugs

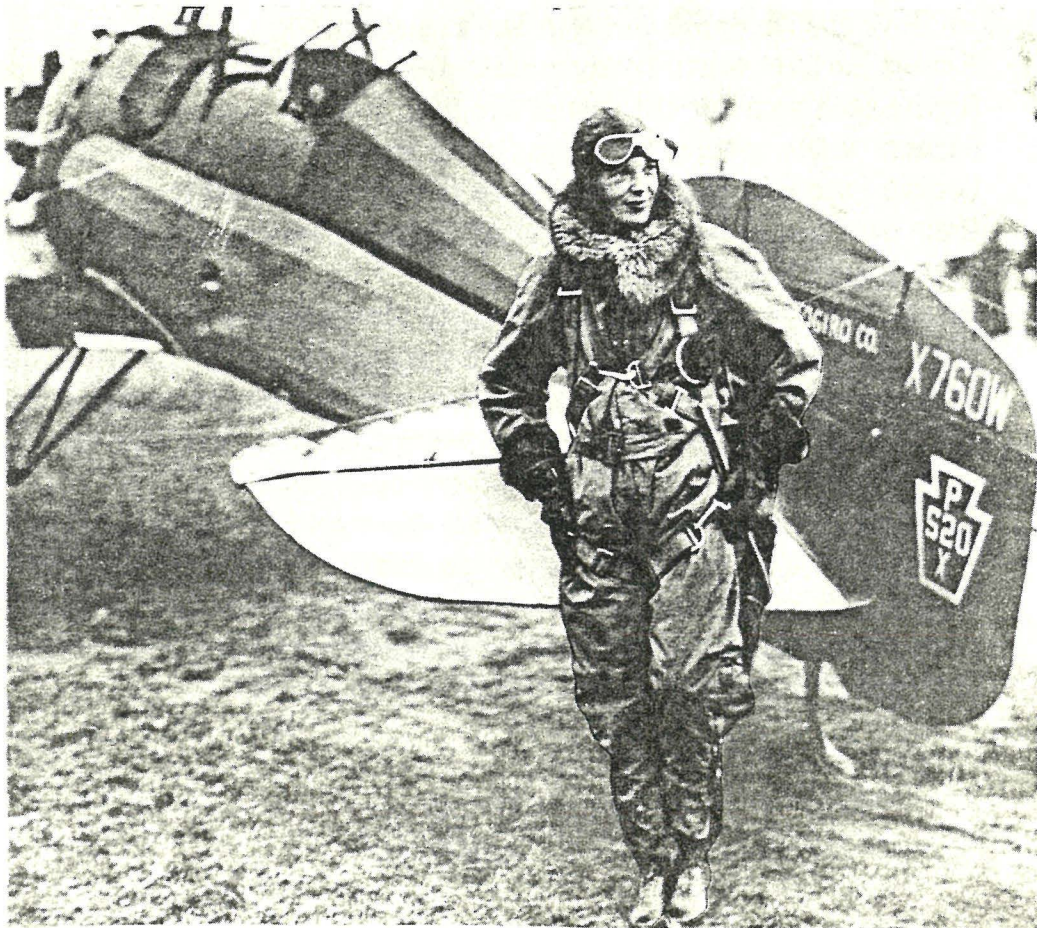
needed. When the committee finally concluded that I should have the abortion and scheduled the operation, I had a miscarriage.

Although I had been aware of oppression and misogyny since I was 7 years old, my consciousness was not fully raised until I was fifteen - after I personally experienced the archaic patriarchal laws which serve to degrade women and to restrict our freedom. I was raped by the system as was my mother and my foremothers. And people ask me why I became a feminist? Feminism is the opposite of androcentrism. To be a feminist is to overthrow the masculist value system and value one's own womanhood; to reject gender stereotypes and be one's self. It is only through feminism that we can liberate ourselves and humankind.

In sisterhood,

Anon.

FEMINIST BIOGRAPHY - Amelia Earhart



Amelia Earhart was born July 24 1898 at Atchison, Kansas. She and her sister Muriel were raised by their grandparents while their parents travelled the country on business. Both girls were fond of climbing trees, jumping off buildings and generally engaging in as many unladylike pursuits as possible.

When Amelia was in her late teens, her family was divided by money and other problems, and she moved to Toronto where she worked as a nurse's aid. It was here during the last years of World War One that she became interested in aviation.

At age 21 Amelia enrolled in pre-med at Columbia University, but once again family difficulties forced her to quit school and move to Los Angeles to live with her parents. Here she worked for the phone company to make money to pay for her flying lessons. Her instructor was Neta Snook who had been one of the first women in Canada to get a pilot's license. Amelia admired Neta's ability as a flyer and was thankful to be able to get lessons on credit when her cash was in short supply. The two women became lifelong friends.

Amelia was forced to go to Boston for an operation shortly after receiving her pilot's license. She stayed on as a social worker at Denison House. It was here in 1928 she was asked to be the first female passenger to fly the Atlantic, partially because she had a pilot's license and partially because she had a strong physical resemblance to Charles Lindberg.

In 1932 she repeated this trip but as a solo pilot.

Amelia Earhart world flying records for speed, distance and altitude on solo flights each year for the rest of her life.

Earhart wrote several books on flying, and in 1931 married her publisher George Putnam. They had a marriage agreement that they would keep their own homes, split their household expenses and not interfere with each other's work or play.

Earhart always advocated full equality for women in all spheres. She wrote numerous articles for women's magazines in the 1930's and was president of the "99's" women pilot's organization. She used her celebrity status to comment on the need for women to earn their own way and devote time to whatever they felt they did best.

Amelia Earhart attempted an around-the-world research flight in 1937. She disappeared somewhere over the Pacific. Before she left, she said, "please know I am aware of the hazards. I want to do it because I must do it. Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others."

June 24, 1984

Dear Newsletter Editor,

How I became a feminist? I read a notice in the paper (Washington Post) of a National Organization for Women Meeting of which the theme was Women in Religion. I have always been drawn to the mystery of the Universe being a Scorpio and the daughter of two Scorpios and now have a Scorpio Son very much like myself. We are a mysterious sign and the strongest in sexuality. Although I have all the same gripes about men and patriarchy, I don't wish to try to cut myself off from our common problems in understanding why we are here and what we should be about. I was fascinated by witches and all I could learn about Matriarchy, but I don't feel the answer lies in setting up a separate religion which explains femaleness anymore than the current patriarchal religions defines us as the "other". I have been disillusioned and hurt and abused and misunderstood by the churches I have attended and wanted to give up, but I cannot stay away. I am committed. To explain why I am a committed Christian Feminist, I just have to say I feel comfortable and accepted by the parish I belong to. I can be more of myself than anywhere else. Feminism is part of a self-liberating process, a call to wholeness and I am seeking a formal expression to participate in regularly which right now is at worship with my friends around me, to whom I am responsible and valued. I wish I could find this with my feminist friends but frankly I can't manage the cigarettes and the disregard towards our health which I am aware of as soon as I try to spend any amount of time with you. My religiousness is a base from which I can become the best Feminist and serve. It is a long journey but I believe in myself, and still raging at men or discover^{ing} the next ghastly revelation of what they have done to us as a goal in itself is self-limiting. That is not to belittle the problems or valid feelings of outrage toward Patriarchal Religion.

Phyllis Hoekman

THE WOMAN'S ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MYTHS AND SECRETS - A Book Review
written/compiled by Barbara G. Walker

I thank Barbara G. Walker for giving me back my spiritual history. After reading most of this dictionary it seems absurd that we all believe that our world was created by the male trinity, the father, the son and the holy spirit, and have been taught that this was the norm throughout all history. Absurd, because it seems so natural (once exposed to the concept) to believe in the mother creatress and to believe that this is how the ancients must have believed also.

I learned, amongst a million other things, that all the stories in the bible were a compilation of patriarchally twisted stories emerging from the far east, middle east, Europe and Ireland and that the root of the pagan/heathen religions was the female trinity, virgin/mother/crone; (creation birth, death). Christianity taught as its very basis, the sinfulness of women (remember the Garden of Eden). Salvation was needed because there had been a Fall, brought about by the archetypal Woman. Without Eve's defiance there would have been no sin and hence, no need for salvation or a savior. Church Fathers declared original sin perpetuated through all generations by every woman through sexual conception and birth giving. I also learned of Lilitu, Adam's first wife created as he was from mother earth, but who refused to lie beneath him and ran off.

I thank Barbara Walker for "giving back" my spiritual history for it is clear that it was "taken away" from me by the patriarchal society ruled by the church. "Among the Secrets in this book are many surprising historical secrets that were covered up, white washed, or otherwise falsified through 1500 years when the church maintained a monopoly literate records, and virtually wrote its own history." (Introduction.)

I found that there are historical records regarding a female pope (Pope John VIII, an English Woman 854 A.D.). "It was reported that this John was a female, and that she conceived by one of her servants. The Pope, becoming pregnant, gave birth to a child, wherefor some do not number her among the Pontiffs." Thomas deElmham's official list of the popes said "AD 855, Joannes. This one doesn't count; she was a woman." Certainly the church did not recognize her, as she has been stricken from papal records and further, the church punished those that tried to re(dis)cover her. In Emmanuel Royidis biography written in 1886, Papissa Joanna, he stated, "Every sentence in my book and almost every phrase is based on the testimony of (her) contemporary authors." The church immediately banned his book and excommunicated him. Ms.

(CONT'D)...

THE WOMAN'S ENCYCLOPEDIA (CONT'D)

Walker concludes the entry on Joan, Pope, by stating:

"Whether Pope Joan really existed or not, a curious Vatican custom arose in the wake of her legend. Candidates for the papacy had to seat themselves naked on an open stool, to be viewed through a hole in the floor by cardinals in the room below. The Committee had to make its official announcement: 'Testiculos habet et bene pendantes,' (he has testicles and they hang all right). It seemed important that the Holy Mother Church must never be governed by a Holy Mother".

I think any feminists viewing the Pope during his visit should carry signs with that lovely Latin phrase (above) inscribed in old English script. Imagine...

The Woman's Dictionary of Myths and Secrets, 25 years in the making, containing 1350 entries on 1103 pages, is a comprehensive sourcebook on mythology, anthropology, religion, and sexuality. The book contains a wealth of information on witchcraft, magic, fairies, elves, goddesses, gods, the mystical meanings of the sun, moon, earth, sea, time and space, ideas of the soul, reincarnation, creation and modern and ancient attitudes toward sex, prostitution, romance, rape, warfare, death and sin; and much, much more.

The dictionary is great for parties, busy mothers, bedside, or bathroom reading as one can read a few sections at a time, but mostly, it's as necessary for any women trying to re-dis-cover her lost/hidden past as a word dictionary is to a writer.

- Nancy A. Creghton

WOMEN AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY IS ASKING YOUR HELP BY
COMPLAINING TO NTV RE THE DEGRADING NATURE OF
MANY VIDEOS NOW BEING SHOWN. CHECK OUT HOW WOMEN
ARE PORTRAYED; IT'LL BE WELL WORTH THE TIME YOU
SPEND MONITORING!

CALL NTV AT 722-5015

REALITY (a song)

I had a dream last night about you and me
and we were as close as any two could be
I told you everything and you told me
Don't you know I had a dream last night
about you and me.

I had a dream last night about you and I
and everything that we do it was side by side
with the feelings that you gave to me I felt so high
Don't you know I had a dream last night
about you and I.

I had a dream last night about you and me
and I could feel that when I'd wake I'd face reality
I knew I wouldn't be the person that I used to be
Don't you know I had a dream last night
about you and me.

-Patti

TWO RECEIVED LIFE STYLE AWARD

CONGRATULATIONS to LINDA FITZPATRICK and MARILYN LUSCOMBE who
received the national Life Style Award for 1984.

This award was established in 1977 to honour individuals who have
made a remarkable and continuing contribution in promotion health and
social services in their communities on a voluntary basis.

Fitzpatrick has worked with the CNIB, children with Cerebral
Palsy, the Girl Guides, and worked to establish a club for the deaf-
blind in St. John's.

Luscombe has worked to establish a transition house for battered
wives and their children in Corner Brook.

FEMINISM IS TRULY - WOMENS' WORK!!

OUR MEMORY OF DIANE WHITE

Diane White died on May 18th, 1984 after a lengthy illness. Women who knew Diane realize the contribution she made to the Women's Movement. Her involvement with Transition House began during the planning stages of the policy committee. Shortly after Transition House opened Diane began work there as a counsellor.

She worked at Transition House not because it was just a job but because she really cared. She was committed to the work she was doing with the women and children. This caring and commitment was evident to women she counselled. We have heard nothing but words of respect, love and sincere appreciation from these women.

Diane was a very private woman and few people knew her really well. But in these last few years probably her dearest friends were women from Transition House. All of our feelings about Diane are best described in the words that follow:

Diane was a kind, warm, caring woman. She was loyal to her work, family and friends.

She never stopped giving. Giving of her time, energy, heart and soul. Even though she was ill in these last months she always asked about other women. She cared so much about everyone's problems.

We could always depend on Diane to be honest. When she disagreed she told you. But discussion would not end in outright disagreement because Diane would always work so hard to understand the other person's view or belief.

She had tremendous respect for people. When discussing problems we would be having with certain women at Transition House, Diane would always look at the positive things these women had to offer. It was important to her to accept people for what they were.

She had a very personal counselling approach. She was always open and understanding. Women saw her as a friend but also as a teacher. She taught women who had been abused to have respect for themselves and to not be ashamed of their situations. She pointed out women's strengths and encouraged them to look toward the future, not to dwell on the past or present. She showed women that their lives could be different and gave her full support in helping them make the changes they wanted to. She convinced women that the things they wanted to do could be done by sharing her accomplishments and hence transferring her strength to them.

Diane always remained unassuming in her work. She didn't expect credit for her efforts, rather, her satisfaction came from the accomplishments, changes and strides made by the women and children she helped.

Despite all the serious, unpleasant problems Diane faced at work she was able to maintain a sense of humour and recognize the joy women and children brought to the House.

She transmitted a feeling of youthfulness with her ideas, energy and enthusiasm. Throughout everything Diane always maintained hope - hope for the women and children, the continuing service of Transition House and in recent months that she would get well enough to return to work.

She made a great contribution to Transition House. We will all miss her.

Signed - FRIENDS AT TRANSITION HOUSE



RESOURCES FOR
FEMINIST RESEARCH/
DOCUMENTATION
SUR LA RECHERCHE
FÉMINISTE

(formerly the Canadian Newsletter of Research on Women)

Ontario Institute for
Studies in Education (OISE)
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Canada M5S 1V6

923-6641 ext. 278

ANNOUNCEMENT

RFR/DRF is planning to publish a special issue on "Women and Language" in November 1984. The editors would like to receive (by August 31, 1984) short articles of approximately 1,500 words, abstracts of published or unpublished work, and reports on research in progress which would be appropriate for the issue.

Please send your material to:

Marguerite Andersen, Ph.D.

RFR/DRF

252 Bloor St. West

Toronto, Ont., M5S 1V6

RECEPTION HELD FOR UNESCO WOMEN

About 40 people, mostly women, attended a reception on June 5th to mark the visit to St. John's of the Subcommission on the Status of Women of the Canadian Commission of UNESCO (United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization). The reception, sponsored by the Nfld. Status of Women Council featured women from across Canada to talk about the role of women and the image Canadian women have.

The gathering featured lively discussions on everything from the role of women in the Atlantic provinces, to the weather. Many delegates were anxious to meet Newfoundlanders and exchange views, and for many, it was their first trip to the island.

Dr. Norma Walmsley, Sub-committee Chairperson, said that any type of community development program affects women, but with offshore development on the horizon, and changing lifestyles on the Atlantic coast, the topic of "the Atlantic Coastal Zone and its Influence on Community Development (the theme of the meeting), is of great interest. She stated that the real role of the sub-committee is to ensure that women and women's issues are brought up at UNESCO meetings. It was, in fact, one of the topics discussed at the meeting the following day at Memorial University.

Ms. Noella LaBelle, commission member and a trustee of the Quebec School Board said this was her first active involvement with the Sub-commission, and her first visit to Newfoundland. "There's obviously a lot of work to be done" she said, "and really I'm quite new at this, but I'm getting a lot of co-operation from the other women; pity your weather is not as co-operative!"

Elayne Harris, director of MUN's extension service, gave an audio-visual presentation on community development in Newfoundland at the main meeting held on June 6th.

MCP AWARDS

MCP OF THE MONTH - goes to our esteemed Fire Chief John Cardoulis for his decision, in an effort presumably to cost costs, lay-off several highly paid men in Grand Falls, and replace them with women (doing the same work) paid several thousand less in salary. There is no justification for the breaching of "equal pay for equal work" - no matter how "innocently" perpetrated.

RUNNER UP is Barbara Amiel for her imitation of a female in her latest article in McLean's magazine "Pornography as a Feminist Tool", in which she states: "...The feminists are like the Moral Majority in that each would cheerfully use the government to make illegal every bit of art or entertainment that insufficiently reflects their views on how people ought to live." Perhaps we should show Ms. Amiel the porn film "Water Sport" in which a man gives a bound woman an enema until her intestine ruptures... a great bit of art and entertainment...

MINUTES OF NSWC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MAY 28, 1984

E.B. Foran Room

Present: 43 members

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of agenda: Bonnie James/Sally Davis CARRIED
3. Minutes of 1983 AGM
4. Approval of Minutes of 1983 AGM: Marian Hopkins/Nancy Creighton.
CARRIED
5. Business arising from the minutes
-none
6. First call for new business: none.
7. Reports from executive and affiliated groups: most reports were in newsletter and/or filed at the Women's Centre.
 - 7.1 Treasurer: Marian Hopkins: A new accounting system is being implemented at the WC so that all incoming cash will be kept track of and the next audit will be more accurate.
 - 7.2 Newsletter: Roberta Buchanan: The next one will be on Women and Religion. The newsletter is run as an collective. Is anyone interested in participating?
 - 7.3 Staff report: Highlights for last year- 300 women came to the WC for services and about 2000-3000 calls were received. Other important activities: preparation of the pornography brief, the Women's Festival, attendance by the staff at several conferences.
 - 7.4 Transition House: Debbie Sue Marten and Moira Buchans- House has been full during the past year. TH badly needs financial assistance and would appreciate any help people can provide.
-Astri Thorvik: There should be better communication between TH and NSWC now that there will be a board member from each group sitting on the board of the other.
 - 7.5 Kirby House: Barb Doran- Grace Ollerhead will be working at Kirby House for 6 months trying different ideas to improve the operation of the house. Grace and Barb will be doing an orientation session on Women and Violence for staff of TH, Kirby House and other interested individuals on June 7th and 14th at the MUN library.
 - 7.6 WHEP report: project is nearly finished. Health kits and final report will

MINUTES OF NSWC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

be available from Health and Welfare. A network has been established in Labrador to help co-ordinate women's health services.

7.7 NAC: Barb Doran- There are 14 member groups from NFLD in NAC. Barb is member-at-large for 1984-5 and Dorothy Inglis is vice president. A NAC election kit will be available to show women how to get the candidates to discuss their views on Women's issues. There is an important constitutional conference in the fall since any changes to the constitution must be made before March, 1985. After the meeting, NAC will meet the provincial members of the the House of Assembly as is done at the national meeting for the MPs.

Dorothy Inglis: important project to raise money for a laundromat for the native community near Happy Valley-Goose Bay

7.8 Peace Petition Caravan Campaign (P²C²): Sally Davis- A national peace petition is being distributed. There is a series of films on peace and related issues, starting on June 5 at the Canonwood Hall.

Motion to accept reports: Nancy Creighton/Ann Hart CARRIED

8. NAME CHANGE

Two options based on suggestions to the executive:

1. St John's Status of Women Council
2. Feminist Union of Newfoundland

Members suggested that the word 'union' be replaced by 'council' The first problem was in deciding the geographic area: of the three, NFLD, Avalon, St. John's, the latter was acceptable to most people. On the first vote neither option received the necessary 2/3 majority.

-Bonnie James suggested that we try a compromise: The Feminist Council- a status of women group of St. John's, Newfoundland. This suggestion was supported but still no 2/3 majority.

-Then we again debated the reasons for the various names. People argued strongly for inclusion fo the word feminist while others argued that we would strengthen our ties with the other SWC groups if we kept SWC as part of our name. Finally there was a 2/3 majority in favor of 'St. John's Status of Women Council'

9. New Executive: The following have been nominated for the executive (Diane suggests that we should revert to calling it the committee): Sharon Pope, Marian Hopkins, Astri Thorvik, Ann Escott, Roberta Buchanan, Lynn Murphy, Linda Kealey, Sheila Moore, Pauline Stockwood.

Motion to approve these nominations: Beth Lacey/Sandy Stavlo
CARRIED

10. New business

10.1 Auditor appointment: Marian Hopkins/ Beth Lacey move that Ella Cheng be appointed to do next year's audit.

11. Announcements

MINUTES OF NSWC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

11.1 WC needs a new typewriter

11.2 Personal and Professional Development Seminars: Last two weeks of June at the WC. Call the WC for more information.

LONDON TEA BREAK from PARIS

Time Square
races in circles
traffic roaring by
people seeping through metro gates
like sand pouring through an hour glass

time, one imagined
was different on foreign soil
but no, beneath this roar of survivor's chorus
rings a shrill bell
time to go
time for a break
time to wait
repetition
double decker busses lift you above the routine

soon, as the wheels scream to a halt
you rush inside
where time exists in your hour glass
your trembling hand lets it fall
pieces of broken fiber' shatter to the floor
discarded images of yourself
thrashed out, thrown into the garbage
behind the kitchen door
a spot of tea brews
and you find yourself a little refreshed

one among ten million people.

Marion White - Paris, May/84



THE NAME CHANGE WAS DEBATED.
MEMBERS ON THE "OTHER SIDE"
LISTENED INTENTLY.



SOME MEMBERS TRIED TO INFLUENCE
THEIR FRIENDS: SOME WON-



AND SOME LOST. ANYWAY, IT WAS
GETTING LATE.

MEANTIME, AT THE BAR...





AT THE TABLE, MEMBERSHIPS WERE CHECKED, DUES PAID UP, ETC.



AND THE VOTING GOES ON



... AND ON



AND THEY ALL LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER !!

BECOMING A FEMINIST - THE HARD WAY!

This week, I learned through the media that amendments have been proposed to eliminate discriminatory sections of the Indian Act. The amendments and the counter proposals address a section of the act that causes Indian women and their offspring to lose their Indian rights and honor on reserves if they marry non-Indians. As a feminist, this issue is not a new one to me as my mind wanders back 12 years ago when I attended the Feminist Symposium at McGill University in 1972, with my sisters from Ottawa. It was there that I listened to many articulate women speakers addressing areas which included women and labour, unions, violence and... Indian rights. Two Canadian Indian women were included in the guest speakers and gave a heart-rendering request for support from all Canadian women to assist them to regain their lost status.

A dozen years have gone by and finally I learn the Indian women may reach their goal. I remember with nostalgia my own awakening to feminism as the second wave was occurring in Canada.

I lived in suburban Ottawa in the late 60's - early 70's where I was a middle-class wife and mother of two. I was extremely discontented and, as only women know how to do best, I assumed the reason lay solely with myself as a woman who was difficult by nature in refusing to fit her role in an accepting and grateful manner.

My neighbors seemed to enjoy washing on Mondays, ironing on Tuesdays, baking for the church, going to showers (UGH!) and indulging in coffee and gossip as their daily sustenance. I was bored, bored, bored! I never got my washing on the line it seemed until the other women were fastidiously taking theirs in and preparing for supper. I would forget the damn stuff was hanging there until several days later when I would grudgingly retrieve them. To get through ironing I would do many strange things. For example, asking those nice Jehovah's Witnesses or nice young Mormons in. I would set up my ironing board and a wonderful, intellectual crossing of swords would occur along with the completion of the dreaded laundry. Eventually, I was ripe for and open to consciousness raising, and comprehended the necessity for support, and stimulation, of other women.

My first encounter (which came out of the depths of self-blame and solitude) was through an invitation (by a compassionate woman friend, Toby Brooks) to a first-time meeting of women at The Quaker House to discuss common problems. Many of these women were already politicized, highly articulate, late career types. At any rate, we began to form the first Women's Centre in Ottawa. I remember distinctly a usually very kind Quaker woman who unkindly suspected me of playing games because I verbally stated that I did not know what a Steering Committee was! I knew... that if the Woman's movement was to succeed it would have to include the average housewife like myself, who were not worldly in experience outside the home. I had the courage to persist and attempted to make these women realize that if they intimidate me, they would lose many more who were less self-confident.

Once the Ottawa Women's Centre was formed, I took part in C.R. groups, workshops, attempted to understand lesbian women, street demonstrations (which included my 2 female children) volunteer counselling and writing articles for the Newsletter.

I will always be grateful for the support I received from the women at the Centre while I painfully worked through my dissatisfaction with my limited roles.

(Cont'd.)

BECOMING A FEMINIST (CONT'D).

The Centre provided a marvelous refuge where many of us did not have to worry about image, but could sit or lie around in a natural state - braless, hair unfixed, etc. It allowed a lot of love. I will never forget where women laughed, rejoiced, cried, argues and learned - together.

Today I am still a feminist of conviction, and at age 42 I received a Bachelor of S.W. degree. The professional Code of Ethics and my experiential knowledge and approaches as a feminist have many commonalities. My stance on humanistic issues, particularly those concerning women is one of pro-choice and personal freedom. I am presently going through mid-life, and the the experience of battle fatigue. The latter is caused by the catching-up process and the hasseling, hustling, jeering, isolating, stereotyping I have received over the years from males, and in a lesser degree, from females.

After a very painful divorce (the lawyers had sexist overtones in their approach) I decided to break all ties. I sold my home, left the province with my younger daughter. In Newfoundland I gained a job as a Social Assistance Worker and recognized from inside the system, the need for feminism. With all the courage I could muster I left and went to MUN full time to finish a Social Work degree. I was terrified as I was never an academic by nature or philosophy. A couple of male teachers treated me shabbily on occasion , possibly because I was outspoken and a known feminist. I was tired of it all, psychologically and physically. I tolerated fears, blocks, fatigue, disgust and many crying jags which my daughter saw me through. I worried about my very ill father, the pains of my adolescent daughter, the struggles of my mother and the responsibilities of running a household.

So here I am, tired, proud of myself and still a feminist. As Betty Friedan writes The Second Stage, and Germaine Greer writes Sex and Destiny, I also try to evolve as objectively as possible into a perspective which strives to achieve freedom of choice for women, whether we choose marriage or career, or a combination of both. We must enter the arena politically with a big "P" and a small "p"; we must recognize motherhood as an important role as well as other careers; we must recognize that consumers of our services have much to teach us as well as our educational systems. I believe that feminism must never be forgotten on a gut-level basis. True Sisterhood must be practiced in everyday life as well as among professional, aware women. Oppression occurs with prostitutes as well as with female M.P.'s. Sisterhood must operate on ALL levels.

by JUDITH BURNELL

SEX AND MYSOGYNY IN THE CHURCH - PART II

According to Eleanor C. McLaughlin in "Women in Medieval Theology", Mary is depicted as the "typical female" in popular literature. She is the nourisher, the mother - always soft-hearted and often illogical. She is the "mediator between the punishing God and the sinner needful of mercy." It is a woman's role: "auxiliary, subordinate, marked by emotionalism, irrationality, sensuality, and ultimately a lack of dignity". She is an "inferior character of female personhood relative to the masculine man." Pedestalism, according to McLaughlin, was a conscious attempt to undo the evil attributed to Eve and to glorify the feminine principle.

What impact do these philosophies have on Christian women? Their spiritual role models are male authority figures while their same-sex role models are inadequate. On one end of the spectrum there is the evil, sinful Eve, and at the other end there is the original, submissive Mary. Psychological studies have proven that young girls who are encouraged to be passive, dependent, and rational - characteristics of the Eternal woman - have declining I.Q. s. IQ's tend to increase, however, if the young girl is encouraged to be self-assertive, independent, and dominant. Evidence also shows that women who are victimized by the myth of the Eternal woman "live in a perpetual state of intellectual and social impoverishment." therefore, "it is not unrelated to its limiting of women's creative potential".

In "Women in Vatican Documents 1960 to Present" Nadine Foley surveys selected tests from official Vatican documents of the past twenty-five years. Her survey revealed that they are informed by a distinctive "ontology of women" - one which is not in accord with "today's" woman and which is, in part, derived from a combination of the early Christian philosophies previously discussed. "This ontology is distinctive for one category of human beings because by implication women's nature has a specificity revealed through a unique set of personal traits evident in her behaviour." In his speech at Christmas time in 1974, Pope Paul describes the "natural" qualities of women which, not surprisingly, resemble Mary Daly's description of the eternal feminine - the Virgin Mary: "These qualities of intuition, creativity, sensibility, a sense of piety and compassion, a profound capacity for understanding and love, enable women to be... the creators of reconciliation in families and in society." The stereotype of women Pope Paul is presenting becomes clearer in a speech in April of 1975: "...the community expects much of your perseverance, of your generosity and of your humility. These virtues so well in accord with feminine psychology, and significantly developed in the Virgin Mary, are also the fruits of the Holy Spirit." These so-called unique feminine characteristics, "are interpreted as necessarily flowing from the woman's child bearing function in procreation which in turn dictated the her primary and indispensable role in nurturing children in the family. It is a role of complementarity with men whose educative influence in the family is necessary but secondary. The familial role of women is essential and nominative. All other possibilities which may open to women through socio-cultural development are legitimate for her to the extent that her complement of unique "feminine" qualities can be expressed in a nurturing supportive capacity. The rights of women are those compatible with her nature understood in this way." In this survey of contemporary Vatican documents, it is evident that the church emphasizes the roles of mother and martyr for women, placing all other roles secondary. The official Roman Catholic position is that there are fixed sex roles in the orders of creation. The male is the superordinate; the

female, subordinate. Biology determines the crucial shapes which masculine and feminine experiences take. This position is evident in the Vatican documents Nadine Foley presents. "Among human persons, women are singled out as a distinct category and described as such without allowance made for differentiation of the individual traits of personality which women experience in themselves.

That the laws of the Roman Catholic church are patriarchal and discriminatory against women is undeniable when one reads Clara M. Henning's article "Canon Law and the Battle of the Sexes". In its refusal to ordain women, the "operative law of the church is designed to grant men - specifically priests - the absolute controlling position." This is patriarchy at its finest - the rule of the fathers. In "Women in Relation to Orders and Jurisdiction", Katherine Meagher presents seven different arguments that are frequently applied as rationale for women's exclusion from the priesthood.

1. The "sacral-sacramental" position argues that since sexuality was thought to be unclean and improper in the sacral sphere of the minister and his liturgical actions, the priest had to be unmarried and women were excluded from sacral functions because of the "uncleanliness" of their menstrual periods.
2. The philosophic argument centers around St. Augustine's teachings that women are inferior to men - women's "natural" incapacity is the rationalization for excluding them to the official ministry of the church.
3. The subordination argument is based on St. Thomas Aquinas' assumption of the biological inferiority of women. "Aquinas argues that a woman cannot be a priest because she has a subordinate status - a subordinate status, of its nature, is incapable of rising through the various "orders" of a hierarchy." It is interesting to note that the teachings of St. Thomas are still the official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.
4. The sociological argument explains that the exclusion of women from the priesthood is linked to the beginnings of the Christian Church when the general status of women in society was inferior.
5. The "tradition" argument is based on the teachings of St. Paul, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and other early Fathers of the Church who are absolutely opposed to the ministry of women in the church: -"it would be an heretical error to admit women to the office and dignity of the priesthood."
6. The Ecclesiastical Law argument holds that the exclusion of women from orders is of divine law and can never be changed.
7. The hierarchic argument is based on Yves Congor's theory that man was made in God's image, while woman was made in the image of man. She is therefore dependent on him...

Institutionalized Christianity, particularly Roman Catholicism, is a patriarchal religion in which all authority is held by men. It reflects the misogynist and sexist attitudes of Western culture and tends to perpetuate stereotypes which are discriminatory to women. As feminists we must necessarily be anti-church. In supporting this institution, we would be perpetuating the oppression of women - keeping the patriarchy intact. As feminists, we are NOT counter religion, but counter to religion as patriarchal.

NOTES ON PORNOGRAPHY (Selected Excerpts from Readings & Correspondence)

"When I started doing presentations I found that it was the most threatening topic I had dealt with in talking with men. Using the graphics of course, makes a much stronger impact, but there was something more. I think that pornography is the heart and soul of male culture. It makes explicit much of what men think and feel.

They of course will talk you to death about free speech. But that is usually just a cover. They get to speak freely. While, middle-class and ruling class males. Women don't, children don't, Third World people don't. That's because in our countries speech isn't free. It's very expensive on a community level. What many men are really saying behind the free speech ploy is don't you talk, let us go on dominating public conversation... So if we call for censorship, who will they censor first? Women and children. But speaking out, demonstrating, educating and boycotting are NOT censorship, Censorship is when journalists refuse to cover a demonstration or a boycott in their respective papers."

- by RICHARD SNOWDEN

"Original meaning of the word pornography- Description of the life, manners etc. of prostitutes and their patrons... Traditionally males have obtained from female prostitutes what they could not or did not wish to get from their wives or women friends, who, because of the character of their relation to the male, must be accorded some measure of human respect. The female characters of contemporary pornography also exist to provide pleasure to males, but in the pornographic context no pretense is made to regard them as parties to a contractual arrangement. Rather, the anonymity of these characters makes each one EVERY woman, thus suggesting not only that all women are appropriate subjects for the enactment of the most bizarre and demeaning male sexual fantasies, but also that it is their primary purpose... Pornography lies explicitly about women's sexuality and through such lies fosters more lies about our humanity, our dignity and our personhood.

To suggest that the primary purpose of women is to provide sexual pleasure to men is to deny that women are independently human or have a status equal to that of men. This denial is especially powerful in an hierarchical, class society such as ours, in which individuals feel good about themselves by feeling superior to others. Men in our society have a vested interest in maintaining their belief in the inferiority of the female sex so that no matter how oppressed and exploited by the society in which they live, they can feel that they are at least superior to someone - a woman.

The social tolerance of these degrading and distorted images of women in such quantities is harmful, since it indicates a general willingness to see women in ways incompatible with our fundamental human dignity and thus, to justify treating us in those ways. The tolerance of pornography helps to create and maintain a climate more tolerant of the actual physical abuse of women. The tendency on the part of the legal system to view the victim of a rape as responsible for the crime against her is but one manifestation of this."

-by HELEN E. LONGINO

"But the truth is, as long as we have a patriarchal culture which encourages women to use their bodies to get male approval and which rewards young girls for being sexy objects, we can expect to see many females turn to pornography, prostitution and other forms of sexploitation to stay alive or even to earn prestige and social acceptance."

-by LAURA LEDERER

"Pornography is filled with lies, but it can be made to tell the truth. But also a word of caution. Graphics are very powerful and pornography is assaultive and toxic. Sometimes, in ways we are not aware... So take good care of yourself in dealing with it, and in dealing with the people who will oppose you."

-by RICHARD SNOWDON

HOW I BECAME A FEMINIST

I was thinking about my lot in life the first moment my father raised his hand and struck my mother, my sisters and me. I knew the most powerful feeling I'd ever experienced was the night I brought a cheap guitar, my prized possession, crashing down on his head. From that moment, I became, without knowing it, a feminist.

I don't bring guitars crashing down on anyone's head anymore; I've found a typewriter a more acceptable mode of expression, and perhaps as powerful. I've come to the conclusion that perhaps the violence men commit against women is a GOOD thing because I suspect strongly

THAT WITH EACH BLOW - A FEMINIST IS BORN...

-Sam

All About a Quilt

I

how many hours of unnumbered ins and outs
of a twitching silver needle have stitched
this crazy-quilt I sprawl on, toss under
into the definitive plot of me

poor philosophies are sown up in needlework
in this mad patching of generations
answers are heavy blue cotton, solid
as sure as stripes, detailed as a summer print

seventy years of wombs and tears are sown
into the security of this labour of love
that smells of clotheslines, dark corners
and an old woman

II

blocks are made of remnants of wars lost
over oceans or under other covers
comically connected to parts of aprons
worn by young and old, worn by worry
and the groaning sounds of spring

in four corners I see four parts of me
and fold them together, explaining myself

one woman's blouse I grew under and into
and now we are wound together like threads
pulling and wondering about the effects of blood
the rushing rivers of blood run red
over the slow crumbling architecture of bones

III

our skins are one here, we began together
down deep, a hidden spot, our lovers
can only hope to reach and we are one
when we sweat the beads of birth
moaning with thoughts of our own procreation

no wonder I wake drowning, a body flung
downstream, curled into a curious symbol
and cramped within this quilt, a bound thing
growing and splitting inside an egg
the only world it has ever known

The Animals Inside

There is a spot in an April wood
you must go a long way and not look back
or you'll stop, run from the dense scene
even before the boundary (you know is there
like the equator), and once you've crossed it
there's no going back.

As you get closer and it comes into focus
so ominous and green, you'll feel the weight
of memories, the weight of the hard shell
you had thrust upon you once
in a foggy wood, the subdued hell
you must struggle through now.

And like a bug you burrow
deep, into a hole.

The bridges you try to cross will take their toll.
No promises are made to keep you going
on the old, never forgotten overgrown road
through marshes, over fallen limbs
and around decaying stumps
as you shut out the rotten smells
of skunk cabbages, water-slime and piles
of wet brown leaves that cover up
winter carcasses, nature's omens.

Then you see in the mist, the tree
where you crouched under a hundred yellow skeletons
you knew would still be there, frogs hung
tormented and strung up with binder twine
from the ragged books of school boys
who took out four-wall frustrations.

You fall on your knees again beneath the tree
when you realize that time will not appease
the pain of living up to centuries
of playing roles assigned by society.
Such twisted teachings are like gossip that drips
more acidic from each new set of lips
or fire that festers when exposed to air.
Left alone, some wounds will only bleed.

As the child is the father of the man
he is the teacher too
and the desperate games of childhood
are later played with guilt, and higher stakes.
They are private crimes committed
against silent little girls that watch, crouching
under trees that have a hundred pairs
of hollow eyes.

Boys grow into men
and frogs become
the more dangerous animals
they hunt to kill, the animals inside.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Renovations are in progress at the WOMEN'S CENTRE. The office is being changed to a counselling area and FURNITURE IS DESPERATELY NEEDED. We welcome all donations of comfortable chairs, two-seat couch, small rugs or anything you feel would make the area "comfortable."
Contact Marian Hopkins at the Centre, 753-0220.

Roberta Buchanan will be conducting a JOURNAL WORKSHOP Tuesday July 17th and Wednesday, July 18th (7-10 p.m.)

For more info. call MUN Extension Services, Bond Street, 737-7979.

The FEMINIST WOMEN'S WRITER GROUP will meet on July 8th at 95 Monkstown Road, and on July 22nd at 91 Monkstown Road. (Both meetings are on Sunday evening at 8 p.m.).

ALL ARE WELCOME.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are of the writers and do not necessarily express the ideas and opinions of the Newfoundland Status of Women Council.

THE NEWSLETTER exists to provide a forum for women's opinions and an outlet for their expression. We welcome letters, comments, book reviews, poems articles and suggestions.

Our NEXT ISSUE will be on WOMEN & WORK. Deadline for copy is July 29th/84. Newsletter meeting will be at 8 p.m., 91 Monkstown Road, July 19th. If you'd like to attend, please call Pat Balsom at 368-1891.

This Newsletter was produced by Roberta Buchanan, Sandy Stavlo, Pat Balsom and Ann Escott. (Thanks to Pat for the muffins!)



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