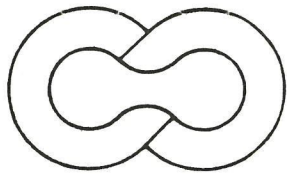


NEWSLETTER

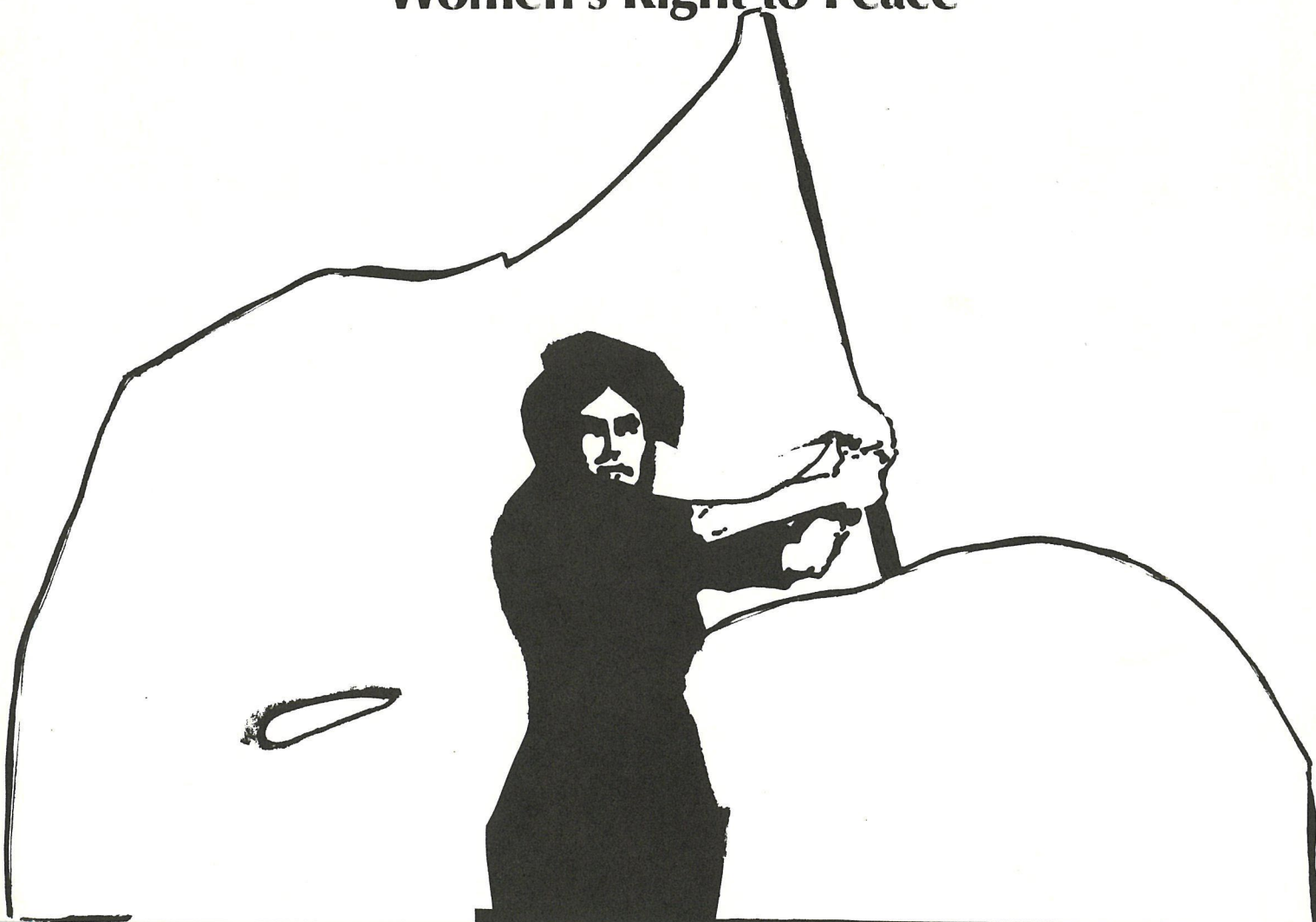
**YORK
WOMEN'S
CENTRE**



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**Women's Right to a Job • Women's Right to Choose
Women's Right to Peace**



EDITORIAL

In this last issue before we end the final term, we find we are still expounding the same, needed to be said, truths. Linda's article in this issue, on woman as a 'statistic', raised to be a dependent in this so-called independent age, explores a still current problem. The reward system of praising children when they conform to sexual 'norms', i.e., play with dolls and aspire to wife and motherhood, are still pursued within the family and in educational institutions as the only goal. The single mother, out of the protective mesh of the family unit, is ill equipped. She must maintain a self-esteem that has been battered from childhood, provide stability for herself and her children, and in keeping with this society's demands, present herself as a marketable commodity.

In a recent article in Excalibur covering the York film, "The Best Kept Secret," dealing with incest, Dr. Evelyn Challis pointed out that "We must eliminate the taboo of the intact family." The article cited one in ten as the norm for incestual activities within the 'sacred' family unit, and the chief problem as the conspiracy within the family to protect the guilty party at the expense of the victim. Children led to regard themselves as someone's property, whether it is their father's now or their husband's later, do not have the self-assurance necessary to speak out. Ideas of submission at any cost, implanted early, create crippled adults who truly believe that they

JAIROTID 3

have no rights, neither to the development of their minds,
nor to the sanction of their bodies.

We of the Newsletter Committee hope we reflect the
views of our members. We would like to thank the CYSF,
especially Judith Santos, for their support; the steering
committee members and co-ordinators for their contributions.
A special thanks to our financial contributors; Atlantis
Magazine, Canadian Women's Studies, C.A.R.A.L., Lesbian
Phoneline, and Women's Bookstore. To hit the high spots,
some of which included Women and Art, Women in Politics,
Persons' Day, films such as "Not a Love Story," and the
"Making of the Dinner Party," we have required and received
enthusiastic help. If you have an idea or time to contri-
bute, please let it be known. I would like to echo Judith
Santos' sentiments regarding the future of the Women's
Center, that it reaches out and touches more women,
especially minority groups and immigrant women. There is
so much more to be said, so many more truths for which to
fight--and win.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:

- Marilyn Marshall
- Franka Andriano
- Laurie Kruk

The Co-ordinator

We at the Centre have had a most enjoyable year of hard work and plenty of fun. The interactions of women with women creates a few moments of tenseness, yet in the long run a lot gets done in a short period of time. We have all grown this year because of our work.

Besides continuing our traditional and stimulating film series and "Speak and Meets", we have helped put on a series of programs with Judith Santos, Director of CYSF Women's Affairs Committee, such as "Women's Awareness", "Women and Art," "Women and Politics" and finally "Women and Music" (March 8). These events were well received by the York community and many attended. It is events like these that slowly raise the consciousness of both men and women.

Probably our most exciting time this year was Margaret Lawrence's reading in January of this year. World renown literary person, Lawrence helped to raise funds for the Centre. Although successful at that, we found Lawrence to be serious about the issues she cares for most, humourous with her uncanny wit, but also a warm, caring and receptive woman.

Besides our programs The York Women's Centre has continued to help women sort out their problems, find their materials on women in our files and library, provided the support each one of us continually need, and network with other women. Essentially, this is where we as a Centre, are most successful. Because women come and go there is not always the concrete evidence to confirm how effective we are to women. We just know in our hearts and gut reactions we do the best we can for women of the York community and others nearby.

by Louise Mahood

PROFILE: JUDITH!

Violence against women, and forums for women's expression are two of the issues that Judith Santos has attempted to raise this year in her role as Women's Commissioner for CYSF. Her work on campus this year follows many years of raising women and student issues both in Canada and in Chile.

Judith came to Canada when she was 22 after her university was closed by the Chilean military dictatorship. She cites political reasons and unemployment as the cause for the exile of one million Chileans out of a total population of ten million. "As a woman coming from South America I have left a society full of inequalities," says Santos, "and despite the fact that Canada is very developed beside Chile, they share the same future regarding women."

"This year emphasized women's awareness because most women are not aware of their rights, the problems they face when they leave university," said Santos of the CYSF Women's Program this year. Women and Violence, Women and Politics, and Women's Culture have been some of the issues Santos has assisted in raising this year. The position of Women's Commissioner was instituted just three years ago, and Santos says, "This year it has been the most active of all the positions."

"Women have played a minimal role in CYSF politics," says Santos, because there are only two women on the Executive and approximately 10% on the council. "By

getting women involved, by women running in their councils and participation," Santos hopes to change this situation.

Working with the Women's Center is an important aspect of the position, said Santos, and she would like to see this continue. "This year was a starting point, next year we should try to unite women," she said. Santos sees a few issues that York women could emphasize more in the future. "I would like to see the Women's Center more involved with immigrant women. It is important to reach the minority women's groups on campus," she said. Abortion and mature women are two other areas she cited.

Poetry has been a forum for Santos to express her concerns both about Chile and women. She read at the Women's Center poetry reading in the fall and was published in the Canadian Women Studies Journal last year.

Santos would like to encourage many more women to get involved, "to denounce the position that women face." Her goals are far reaching; "My concern is to achieve a society where there is room for everyone and that cannot be done without equality for men and women."

Barb. Taylor

**I don't want to be a Secretary
I should be a President**

women in politics ...

On January 20, Constanza Allevato from the Centre for Immigrant Women participated in York's Women in Politics Week, January 17-21, explaining the status and particular problems of women immigrating in Canada. In a well-researched detailed presentation, Ms. Allevato described how immigrant women stand at the bottom of the pay scale--lower than male and female native citizens as well as their male immigrant counterparts. Further, women speaking languages other than English fall into the lowest-paying, non-skilled jobs; the language barrier further hinders them from complaining about working conditions and harassment or discovering their rights on the job. Many of these women work as domestic help, a field lacking the power of strong unions. Domestic work is also particularly susceptible to sexual harassment: besides often being required to "live in," domestic workers, like other immigrants, depend upon their employers to renew their visas. Protesting sexual advances thus threatens a woman's chances of being able to stay in Canada, and the situation is even worse for illegal immigrants.

What makes the economic and social problems of these women a particularly political feminist issue is the attitude of the government toward women entering Canada. The language and job-related troubles of women in their new culture is intensified by regulations that entitle only the male "head of household" to job-training and language

programs. Besides not recognizing women as equal in earning power and rights, these official regulations also keep women in non-skilled jobs, thus tacitly reinforcing and approving the exploitation of immigrant women as a cheap source of labour.

Though the audience of Ms. Allevato's talk was regrettably small, the discussion afterwards was animated and concerned. The rights of immigrants entering the country illegally was briefly challenged, but the concensus of the group agreed with Ms. Allevato's opinion that no one living in Canada should have to live virtually as a slave, as some domestic workers do. A few York students in the audience recounted their own experiences of moving to Canada from their native lands. The audience seemed to agree with Judith Santos, CYSF Director of Women's Affairs, that the problems of immigrant women deserve much more recognition, both outside and within the women's movement.

Martha Mitchell

Atlantis

A WOMEN'S STUDIES JOURNAL REVUE D'ETUDES SUR LA FEMME

Atlantis is an interdisciplinary journal devoted to critical and creative writing on the topic of women. Now in its eighth year, **Atlantis** publishes articles, book and film reviews, photography and graphic work.

Atlantis is a refereed journal and is published twice a year. Subscriptions and all correspondence to:

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166 Bedford Highway
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3M 2J6
Canada.

\$10.00 a year for individuals
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*Somehow
Atlantis changed things.*

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION!

N.A.W.L. CONFERENCE

Last week, from Feb. 23 to 26 over 250 women from across Canada converged on Victoria, B.C. The occasion was the Annual Conference of the National Association of Women and the Law. Spirits were high because of the recent successes around the Charter of Rights and the growing credibility of N.A.W.L. as a powerful lobbying voice for women's rights. The National Association of Women and the Law is an eight year old organization concerned with the role which the law plays in controlling our lives and its potential force for achieving equality for women. N.A.W.L. is not a professional association; its membership is drawn mainly from those working in and studying law, but it is not restricted to them. Activities and feminists from other backgrounds make up an important voice in policy formation and N.A.W.L. activities.

The recent conference in Victoria focussed on pensions, affirmative action, parental benefits and the internal structure of N.A.W.L. Well attended workshops provided background material on these areas, and carefully researched papers were available for study. Later, N.A.W.L. policy on these issues was formulated in plenary sessions. Highlights coming out of these plenaries included: a stated lobbying position of pensions for homemakers, with the employers' contribution to be paid by the adult benefitting from the homemaker's work; amendment proposals to legislation dealing with parental benefits, including a provision that these benefits be available equally to same sex couples

raising children; and the N.A.W.L. Constitution of freedom of reproductive choice as a basic principle of any feminist organization.

N.A.W.L. promises to be an active group lobbying in the provinces and Ottawa for women's equality. Through procedures passed at this last conference, policy can be formulated between conventions, in response to new government activity. If you would like to know more about N.A.W.L., please call the Osgoode Women's Caucus, 667-3141, and leave your name and phone number. We would be happy to provide membership information and inform you of N.A.W.L. activities.

Susan Urse

The Campus Connection

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A PRIVATE MATTER

"The Best Kept Secret"--a film and a discussion about Incest

by Laurie Kruk

How do we talk about incest? Do we whisper it behind locked doors or do we instead ignore it completely? Sadly, more often the latter is true. Incest, usually referred to as society's last taboo, is really a crime of astonishing proportion. In "The Best Kept Secret," the controversial ten-minute film made and financed by York students Marshall Golden, Alexander Van Ihinger and Kathy Smith, we are told that "One in every ten women is an incest victim." And that is just an estimate; as you might expect from such a hushed-up subject, there are no official figures.

"The Best Kept Secret" was originally made by the three film students as a final project for their second year class. But while others made animated shorts and light-hearted vignettes, Golden, Van Ihinger and Smith decided to tackle a real problem and stimulate discussion with their approximation of an "average" incest situation. And stimulate discussion they certainly have. Presented by the Director of the CYSF Women's Affairs Commission Judith Santos and Franka Andriano (member of CYSF Women's Affairs Committee) on February 8 in SLH B at noon, the small room was quickly filled up, chairs brought in, and still many people were sitting on the steps. The film was run immediately; it

presented in simple but realistic detail, the dilemma of a sixteen year old girl who has been sexually abused by her father for the last six years. Fearful and confused, she finally manages to confront her mother with the shocking news and so defies her father with new resolve. The girl's fear, the father's authoritarian posturing and the mother's conflicting loyalties are all typical of the incest family, the panel of speakers present assured us. The speakers included: Charlotte Vale Allen, incest survivor and author of the book Daddy's Girl; Patricia De Courey-Ireland, an organizer of Incest Workshops; Barbara Chilsholm, Child Welfare consultant in private practice; and Dr. Evelyn Challis of the York Counselling and Development Centre. Vale Allen, the most vocal of the four women, said she was pleased to see so great a turnout for such an unpopular topic. Later on, she became more explicit and defined incest as "inappropriate sexual attention paid by an adult to a child." Chisholm agreed, adding that "sexuality is reall an adult function and the use of a child to satisfy an essentially adult function is wrong." The problem of "where to draw the line" came up several times in the discussion, with audience members using their own experiences to suggest varying situations. Several women actually confessed their own experiences of incest, to sympathetic reponses from the panel. Commented Chisholm, "We have blurred the line between what is acceptable and unacceptable.

We seem to want a society without boundaries. At the same time, we're still trying to contain the family within this and keep it." And the most totally devastating thing that can be done to a child, everyone agreed, is abuse in the name of 'love' (i.e., Daddy "teaching" his little daughter about sex). It is this coating of pseudo-love on his attention that most disturbs the child, causing him/her to wonder if they aren't bad instead of Daddy or Mommy. This can cause tremendous isolation for the child, making them "different" among their peers, or on the outside looking in. The incest victim's goal in life becomes henceforth simply "to get normal". Vale Allen confirmed this and added that from her investigations it is very rare that the mother doesn't know; often, she may be as frightened as her daughter or son, and feel as powerless.

"As soon as the father can no longer abuse one child he'll move on to the next child; it's a power trip he doesn't want to relinquish," Vale Allen told us, with understandable bitterness. She further drew for us a (general) picture of the incest father/mother as a very immature person with a damaged ego that needs boosting. And children, she concluded, ask for no credentials. De Courey-Ireland observed that "We get confused and upset by the fact that it is a relative so we shouldn't interfere in a 'family matter', when all the child wants is for the awful behaviour to stop--not usually to leave their

home" For a painful example, Chisholm cited the recent sexual assault and murder of little Sharin Keenan. "When the murderer is caught, the full force of society's wrath will be brought down on him. But if he was a relative--or Sharin's own father--then we would become confused and shift (our outrage) into 'second gear'."

Incest, as all the panelists pointed out, has only recently been discussable at all, thanks to the convention in our society not to interfere with other people's families, not to 'tattle-tale' or 'fink' (as kids everywhere know so well). Yet Vale Allen was adamant that "every adult is responsible for every child, and knowing the risks should not stop you from taking action" (i.e., asking a child who trusts you, "Is somebody in your family doing things they ought not to do?"). De Courey-Ireland assured those concerned about having charges laid against them by furious parents, that anyone reporting incestuous behaviour or sexual exploitation is protected under the Child Welfare Act even if the reports prove unfounded. As Chisholm noted, just before the film was screened for the second time, "It takes so long to risk telling the truth. We're just now at the stage where courage is paying off."

Anyone interested in further information on the problem of incest can contact Barbara Chisholm at 482-1412; Dr. Evelyn Challis at 667-3215; and Patricia De Courey-Ireland at 923-8592. If you would like to see "The Best Kept Secret" call "Mobius International" at 862-0255.

Poetry

I have decided to buy the riches of the city
In trade for a small closed space with a fence.

I will live above a store
And have a roof garden.

Perhaps the gen-sing has gone to my head and
my pleasure
In black bread is spilling out.
I cannot adapt to a broadloom world
Life must be more than a parade of couches.

My luxuries are what
I see and hear from my window.

My children are not attuned to this
They do not see as I do.

Since my pleasures are simple
And our souls are starving
Let me once
Feed this instead.

Naomi Levi

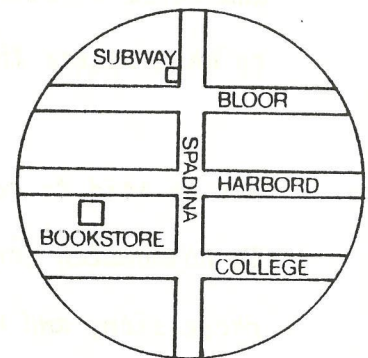


*The lake is frozen
a summer tree fell, its roots
twisted toward the skye
seem to reach in silent prayer
nature did not accept a tiny spangling
trapped between the root and crusty shore
the fish an offering to the angry Gods.*

*Effervescent waves lap against the inner ice
shallow nodules of snow make walking difficult
floating impossible. My heavy rubber boots
make crunchy sounds
I wore a parka, urged my thighs into flannel;
my arms into wool; my neck wound tight in heavy
scarves. Asexual, androgynous, aseptic, asea, I
walk upon thin ice, which does not crack, does
not give way
my secret,
nor does it take me under.*

Poem by Naomi Levi

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**I want to do
what I want to do
I want to be
what I want to be**



PORTRAIT OF A STATISTIC

This is the story of abuse. Not wife abuse or child abuse, but a more subtle form of abuse. This is the story of how a society dresses a girl child in pink and raises her to be passive, submissive and dependent. She is taught that her goal in life is to love, marry and have children. In return she will be taken care of. The ideal woman puts herself last and lives vicariously through others. Often her self-esteem is formed by what others think of her rather than having an independent self-esteem.

She is said to be emotional and expressive and her moods are thought to be hormonally controlled. If she is to work it is to be a job, not a profession, and not a job that interferes with her main role of mother and wife. If she internalizes her role well she is said to be "feminine" - a true woman.

Many do internalize these concepts and so attain adulthood and motherhood as dependent individuals. If we look at the statistics we can see that the myth often fails and the result is a high proportion of single mothers. The shock of suddenly being a sole support parent while in an unfinished state of maturity can be devastating. To be suddenly asked to be responsible for young children when one has never been truly responsible for oneself can be appalling. To find oneself under-educated in a world where women earn approximately 66% less than men and know that you have to be financially responsible for small lives is truly frightening.

Is the single mother a statistic? Is the way we raise girl children a form of abuse? I would say yes!

COMMENT:

UPDATE ON ABORTION IN TORONTO

Laurie Kruk

The history of abortion is a long, bitter one, dating back to when women first began to look for alternatives to a lifetime of childbearing. Birth control was the obvious result of that campaign, but the search for complete pregnancy prevention is far from finished. Birth control has played a massive role in the liberation of women; but that liberation is neither total nor painfree. Abortion is one of the most painful choices a free woman can make. And yet, it is a choice only made available to a minority of women with unwanted pregnancies. The Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL) is working to keep the right of abortion for women, and furthermore, open it up for all women in all circumstances, without the restrictions of law.

It is generally agreed by experts that induced abortion under today's medical conditions can be approximately ten times safer than childbirth itself, and that the earlier the abortion is performed, the easier it is on the woman. In Canada, abortion has been legal as of its reform in 1969 (along with birth control), but it is legal only under the following conditions: the abortion must be done by a qualified medical practitioner in an approved hospital; the doctor must get a written certificate from the therapeutic

abortion committee (TAC), deeming the abortion necessary for the patient's health of safety. And that TAC must consist of three members, each a qualified doctor. The doctor who would be performing the abortion cannot sit on the committee. Thus, abortion remains illegal in Canada, except in certain limited circumstances. And since Canadian hospitals are not required by law to establish a TAC, there are large areas of this country where there are NO abortions--by law.

This is where the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL) plays its very important function. Defending women's right to abortions, CARAL's stated purpose is "to ensure that no woman in Canada is denied access to a safe, legal abortion. "Our aim is the repeal of all sections of the Criminal Code dealing with abortion and the establishment of comprehensive contraceptive and abortion services, including appropriate counselling, across the country."

(From CARAL's Constitution) CARAL really supports the individual choice of every woman; her right to make her own reproductive decision. And the vast majority of Canadians agree with CARAL, as shown by a very recent Gallup poll (June 1982) when public support for the freedom-of-choice position was overwhelming: 72.1% of Canadians polled agreed with the statement:

A decision on whether or not to perform an abortion should rest with the consenting patient and should be performed by a licenced physician in conformance with good medical practice.

his figure is up from 57% three years ago! Yet, during this time, pressure from anti-choice groups (The 'Right-to-Lifers') has actually reduced the number of hospitals that perform abortions. CARAL is fighting to reverse this frightening trend and currently supports the establishment of a Toronto abortion clinic by two groups: Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) and the Committee for Establishment of Abortion Clinics (CEAC).

To be more precise, OCAC is a lobbying group, paving the way for groups like CEAC, the organization doing the actual setting-up of the new clinic. Both groups have had the idea of a Toronto clinic for years. CEAC, like CARAL, has until now been busy petitioning the Federal government to take abortion out of the Criminal Code, and persuading the Ministry of Health to approve clinics at public hospitals. Says CEAC member Michele Dore, "There has been a deterioration of the abortion situation and indifference to women's pleas." It was the famous Dr. Henry Morgentaler who first suggested the idea of a Toronto clinic when he spoke at a CARAL meeting last spring. Busy as he is with his Montreal clinic, Dr. Morgentaler supports a Toronto doctor named Leslie Smolling (male) who is willing to take on an abortion practice. So that all CEAC needs now is the space, and they've been fundraising since September in order to finance the purchase of some (private) property

for the clinic. Meantime, the broader-based OCAC has been circulating a petition across Ontario to thousands of women, in favour of abortion clinics. Both groups hope that with the solid support of the 1982 poll behind them, the Toronto clinic will soon be a reality. And if there is a legal skirmish over it, both OCAC and CEAC are determined to step up their fight for the legalization of abortion, being reasonably confident of what the results of such a case would be today. As CARAL puts it:

Approximately two-thirds of the world's women live in countries where abortion is safe and legal.... Why should we lag behind?.... Complete freedom to choose abortion when necessary helps us to have healthier mothers, children and families: A HEALTHIER SOCIETY.

ABORTION DEBATE

Wednesday, March 16

12 Noon

Osgoode Hall, Room 107

REPRESENTATIVES FROM:

- The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics
- Toronto Area Caucus of Women & the Law
- Right to Life

AND SPECIAL GUEST:

- Morris Manning, counsel in the Boravski case.

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a male feminist ???

Some friends of mine at the Women's Center have asked me "What is it like being a male feminist?" Finally one rather 'demanding' friend asked me to write it down, so I'll try.

Firstly, in most things I do I am very up front and open, and if need be, radical, and my feminism is no different. In short I believe feminism dictates the most important revolution/change which could ever happen to our world and would lead to many solutions with respect to world peace and the power struggles we are faced with today.

My feminist roots are not completely clear to me but I feel confident that at least it is due mainly to my present and future partner and our life together. Through her radicalism and dealings with the evils of patriarchy, I was able to see the root of women's problems from a true perspective. By making me listen she enabled me to see where the inequalities in our society stem from and what they become. I am talking about things such as males not "seriously" listening to women in peer groups and other gatherings, and the lack of respect women face dealing with men in the work and business world. In general I saw people being hurt by this inequality. In fact half of the population was at a disadvantage under this set-up. From all this has developed the radical stand I hold today. It has been one that's still strengthening and being educated. I

feel confident to take my feminist stand wherever and whenever I feel necessary.

Most of the changes that have taken place in my life are probably not much different from any woman who goes through the same consciousness awakening. I realized that most of the people who were my 'buddies' were now on the other side of the fence. My once very large peer group (the 'Boys') was now very small. But this was good because I didn't want to be with those people if they didn't want to listen hard. To my benefit I have met many beautiful people with the same ideals as I that I probably wouldn't have met otherwise.

I do feel there are a few problems being male and a radical feminist. It takes an extra effort to get people of both sexes to take me seriously, but I rather welcome the challenge. I supposed my only other problem is with some radical women who perhaps haven't met a male who feels like I or do not see it as my place. Personally I believe the battle for Feminism is a 'Peoples Battle' and this is why I see myself having a place alongside women in the struggle. I feel that in time an individual will see that I am honest and dedicated in my cause and will open up to me. If not, I do not hold it against them but feel they should give all a chance. I am not a woman and therefore it is impossible for me to truly feel the hurt, but over the years my sensitivity has become quite acute and I can

certainly see and act against the problems as well as anyone.

I feel that societal prejudice against women must be confronted with a hardline offence on all respects. Media, the education system, religious establishments, political and economical systems must be changed so that the patriarchal format can be a thing of the past and we can live as an egalitarian society. Men as well as women will benefit greatly from the change. We must remember that it is because of the radicals, both individual and movement, that changes have taken place in our world, and therefore I feel we, feminists, must take a radical approach in our battle, confronting and challenging all that needs to be. Consciousness raising and the growth of the movement can only lead to shrinkage of the inequalities and 'good riddance' of the patriarchal control and power. As a male I feel I play an equal role in the Feminist movement and hope that all will see the need and join in the cause. Change certainly won't come overnight but in time only good can come from our hard work. Peace.

- Rod Cohen -

WOMEN'S NEWS - read a quarterly-feminist perspective on economic, political and social issues published by the National Action Committee on the status of women. 1 year - \$8.00. Send to "Status", 40 St. Clair Avenue East, Suite 306, Toronto, M4T 1M9.

Of Interest:

1. *International Women's Day Celebration*
March 13, 2:30 p.m.
Trinity United Church, 427 Bloor St. West
2. *The Politics of Reproduction--lecture by Mary O'Brien*
March 13, 7:30 p.m.
Trinity Church, 427 Bloor St. West -- \$5.00
3. *The Youth of Today: Reaching Out for Tomorrow*
-- The 2nd Stage of The Women's Movement--What Next?
March 10, 4:30 p.m.
Rm. 1011 New College
free reception to follow -- all invited

OF INTEREST AT YORK UNIVERSITY

1. *March 8-12 - 8:00 p.m.*
GREASE - musical
Burton Auditorium - 4700 Keele Street
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\$4.00 -- York student
\$5.00 -- general admission
2. *Poetry Reading by Roger Kuin*
The Collected Works by Avery Field
Tuesday, March 15
McLaughlin SCR (140) -- 12:00 noon

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*compiled
by
Ananka
Ameliano*