



**toronto rape crisis centre**

VOLUME III ISSUE 3



I really believe I shall explode  
if some of you young women don't  
wake up and raise your voice in  
protest... I wonder if when I am  
under the sod--or cremated and  
floating in the aid--I shall have  
to stir you and others up. How  
can you not all be on fire?

---Susan B. Anthony

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With many thanks to our illustrator, Anita Lopes (Anna)

EDITORIAL COMMENT

This issue is certainly more content heavy than perhaps suits the season. However, the newsletter only comes out four times a year, and there have been many developments which the editors want to share with you. We have chosen to focus in this issue on the Year in Review, a year which has been characterized by rumours of change in the area of the law. From the Basford recommendations in May (Bills C51 and C52) to the Family Law Reform Act, (dealt with in previous issues of the newsletter), to the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission, it is a time of shift which will have inevitable consequences in the lives of women.

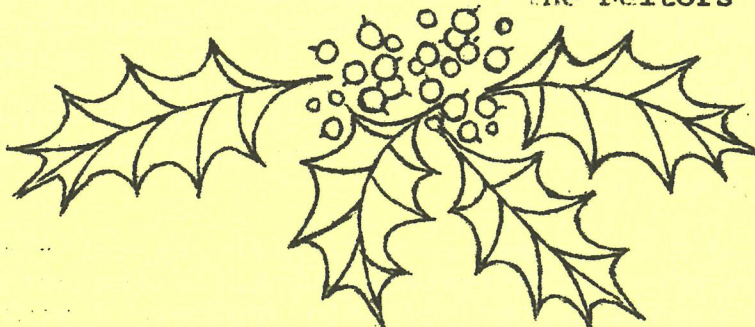
Also, the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre has been much involved, doing legal education, working in consultation with the Secretariat of Justice, and preparing a funding brief in cooperation with the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres. Hopefully, some of this work will result in at least partial funding of RCCs by senior levels of government.

The TRCC remains, however, very reliant upon the generosity of individuals and the private sector. Our funding is always transitional or transitory, based upon special project grants rather than core funding. We have applied to United Way for special project funding to work with the physically and mentally handicapped, and are hopeful that we will be given the opportunity to work in this much underexposed area. We continue of course to apply for permanent funding, from United Way and other sources.

In many ways, 1978 has been our best year ever. We are grateful to our supporters and subscribers for making it so. But, as we grow, so does the nature of our involvement in the community at large. It has been an incredible year, of increased demand by the community for information, speakers, and counsellors. Only you can help us fulfill that need, with donations and continuing support.

The Editors of the TRCC newsletter would like to take this opportunity to wish you the best of this season, and the wisdom to understand that injustice to any one is an injustice to all of humankind. We cannot appear to be immune to the suffering of others.

The Editors



### LETTER TO THE EDITORS

*Judy Posner's Letter to the Editors is a response to an article on pornography which appeared in Vol. III, Issue 2 of the TRCC newsletter. We feel that Posner confuses the word erotica with pornography. Even in its semantic root, pornography refers to an attitude of dominance and contempt towards women: porno stems from the Greek word harlot; pornography becomes a description of the manners of harlots. Erotica in its root refers to Eros, to sexual love. We feel that Posner reacted without analysing what in fact we stated clearly in the last issue. There is the world of difference between sexual permissiveness and sexual sharing.*

*We may live out our erotic fantasies; since they may offer some form of sexual liberation. But we do not live out our pornographic fantasies, attached as pornography is to violence and aggression.*

### PORNOGRAPHY MALIGNED

It has become increasingly common in feminist-related circles to see a variety of attacks on pornography like the one which recently appeared in Vol. III, Issue 2 of the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre Bulletin. While one can understand where such attacks are coming from in the context of current violence against women in our society, I think it is important to draw a distinction between pornography on the one hand and violence and sexism on the other.

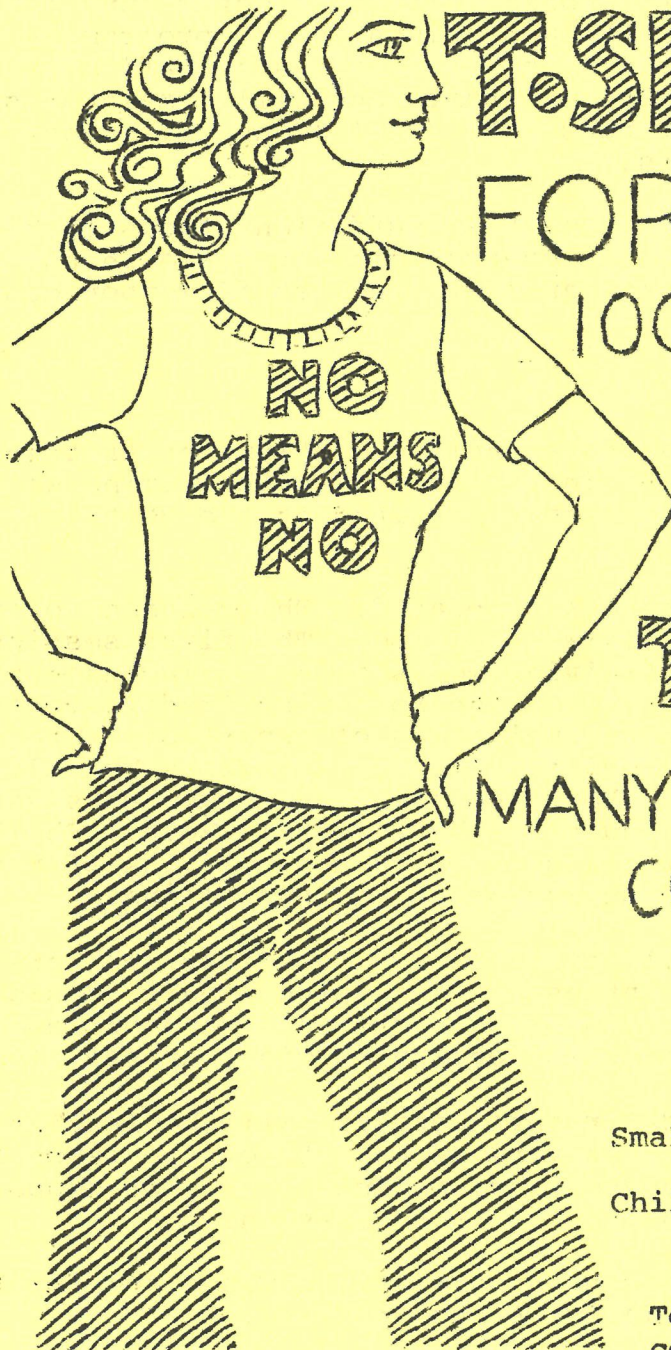
Very simply defined, pornography merely refers to the depiction of erotic behaviour (verbal or visual) intended to cause sexual excitement. In short, there is nothing perverted or nasty inherent in the notion of pornography. It is the various cultural expressions or manifestations of pornography that one might want to evaluate as either good or bad, healthy or unhealthy. I am not suggesting here, as some pro-pornography people have, that a liberal laissez-faire stand is the best one. Rather, pornography per se cannot and should not be evaluated in the abstract. It is the particular style or genre of pornography that is at issue here. In this regard, it is certainly true that North American pornography tends to depict women as subjugated. But it must be emphasized that pornography is not the culprit. Sexism and aggression are. Unfortunately, it is not surprising that a violent, sexist society like ours expresses itself in violent, sexist forms of pornography. But let's put the blame where it belongs. Bad-mouthing pornography is hardly going to make a dent in the pervasive patterns of sexism and violence endemic to our culture. On the other hand, perhaps an elaboration and expansion of pornography into new forms would help to unleash our softer side. Expansion of our pornographic fantasies could ultimately find their parallel in real life.

As anyone who has studied Eastern art or meditation knows, there are numerous forms of pornography which transcend both sexism and aggression. The authors of the Rape Crisis Centre Bulletin indicate a similar idea when they state:

... much of what comes under the guise of erotica is, in reality, anti-female propaganda.

... we must endeavour to develop a humanist erotica as a positive alternative to the current trends towards violent and sado-masochistic pornography.

I couldn't agree more. Unfortunately, however, articles like this one which harp about the dangers of pornography are not careful enough about distinguishing various forms of erotica. Thus they tend to sound like Victorian preaching in spite of themselves.



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## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

### STAFF CHANGES

Because this past fiscal year has been financially successful, relatively speaking, the Centre has been able to maintain a minimum of four staff with an additional staff member hired in June. At present, the staff includes three permanent, full-time women and one working on a special project grant. Diane Wiesen-Todd resigned her position as Volunteer Coordinator in June and was replaced by Valerie Varah. Darlene Chase was hired in January to work on the Police Liaison Program funded by a grant from the Law Foundation. She was joined on the program by Shelly Glazer in June. Darlene has since resigned as a staff member and Shelly is now coordinator of the program. She will remain on staff until mid-February when the grant runs out. Darlene and Diane have both remained as active volunteers.

We are hopeful that we will be able to raise sufficient funds to hire a fourth permanent staff member. The overwhelming increase in the public demand for our services makes an additional staff member essential.

### VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM

This year the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre held two volunteer training programs, one in the spring and one in the fall. In the spring we had the largest group of volunteers ever to be trained at the centre - 25 women.

In the fall the program was expanded and updated. The sessions occurred on Sunday mornings and ran for a six-week period. The first session was a Centre-directed, information-giving workshop which included police, hospital, and legal aspects of rape. On the following Sunday, guests were invited to speak on their individual areas of expertise. The speakers included: Diane Martin, Defense Attorney; Shirley Wheatly, RN; Jean Boyd, Staff Sgt. with the Youth Bureau. The next two sessions were devoted to counselling techniques led by Rosemarie Volpe, Shelley Glazer and Valerie Varah. Next was a session on the politics of rape led by Ilene Bell. The last session was again on counselling.

Also last year, in the spring, Gillean Chase ran our first speakers' training workshops. This was an intensive, 4-session program designed to acquaint volunteers with proper speaking techniques, and prepare them for both general and specific questions which might arise.

Starting in January, an in-service training program will be initiated. These monthly workshops will focus on various aspects of the issue of rape and will include: legal, counselling, medical, etc. workshops. Guest speakers will be invited to some of these sessions.

The volunteer training handbook has been partially revised and further revisions will be made under the Junior League project.

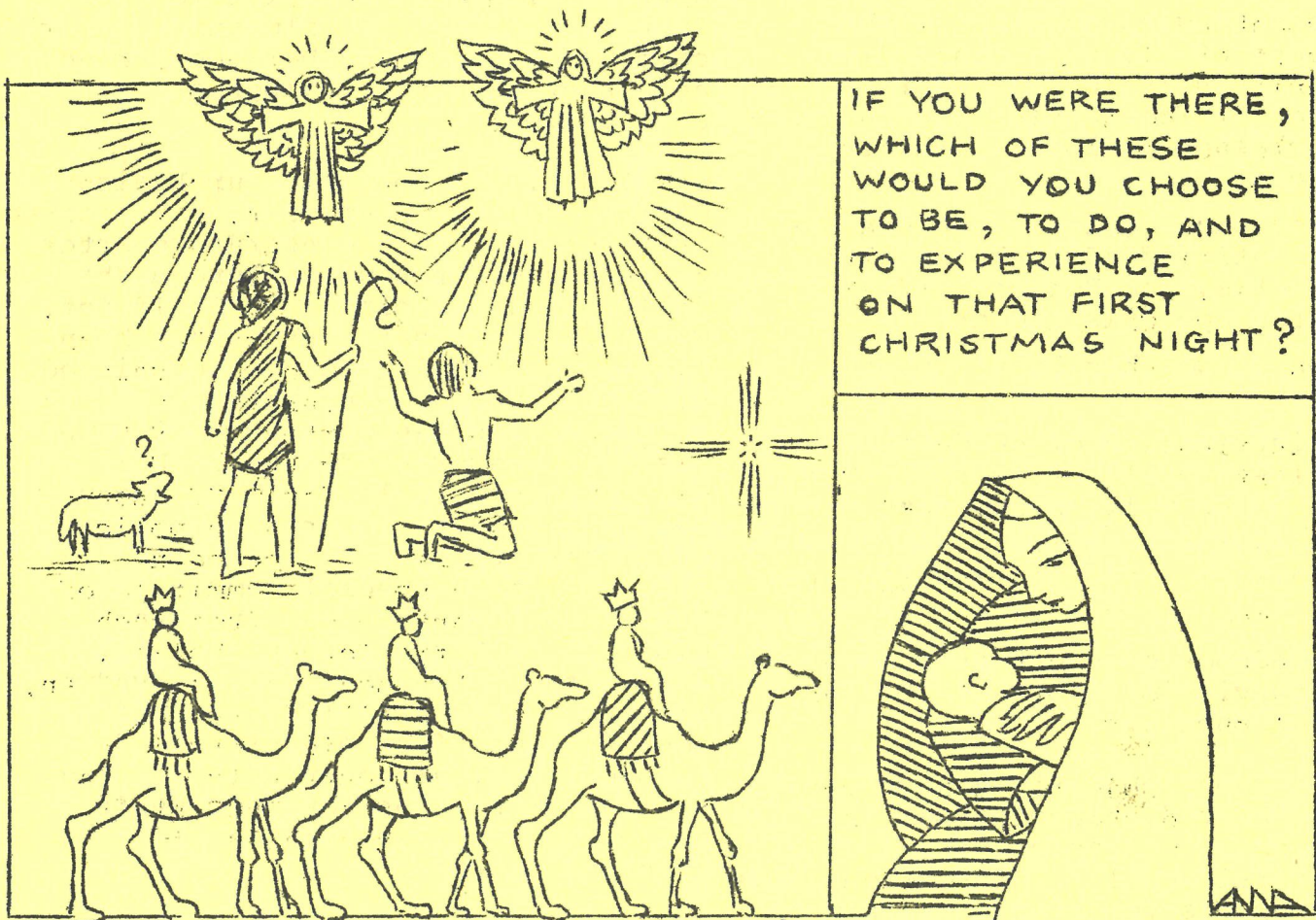
- Valerie Varah

SELF-DEFENSE: A SUMMARY

This year, the TRCC began offering women courses in self-defense. The first series of courses began September 19 and 20, at Doctors' Hospital between 7 and 9 p.m. It was originally designed to involve a ten-week period of instruction, and was taught by Susan Cockerton and Judy Abrams, both long-term instructors of women's self-defense.

The next series of courses will run January 9 and 10, for a period of eight weeks, between 7 and 9:30 p.m. It was felt by the instructors that this step would represent an improvement in the quality of instruction offered, since each class would be longer. Courses again will run from Doctors' Hospital (at College and Brunswick). Registration for the courses will be accepted until January 9 and 10. Advance payment can be made by cheque. For additional information or to register, call 964-7477 at the TRCC or ask to speak with Gillean Chase, the staff coordinator of the self-defense program.

Our thanks to Judy and Susan for agreeing to teach the second series of courses; and to the women who helped us make twenty-one whole dollars worth of profit on the first courses!



IF YOU WERE THERE,  
WHICH OF THESE  
WOULD YOU CHOOSE  
TO BE, TO DO, AND  
TO EXPERIENCE  
ON THAT FIRST  
CHRISTMAS NIGHT?



## POLICE LIAISON PROGRAM

The TRCC Police Liaison Program, originally funded by a LIP grant from November 1976 to June 1977, was reactivated in January for 12 months. This was due largely to the efforts of Darlene Chase, who worked on last year's program, and raised \$20,000 for its renewal -- i.e., \$15,000 from the Law Foundation of Ontario for "legal education" aspects of the program, and \$5,000 from the Atkinson Charitable Foundation. Darlene was appointed Coordinator of the program, and Shelley Glazer was also hired in June.

Endorsed by Metro Toronto Chief of Police Harold Adamson, the program features the following objectives:

1. speaking engagements with officers of all rank, including Community Relations and Crime Prevention Officers, plus law enforcement classes at local community colleges;
2. revision of last year's handbook, entitled "Sexual Assault: the Victim, the Police, and the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre";
3. one-page checklist (excerpt from handbook);
4. distribution of handbook and checklist to all officers in Metro Toronto, as well as selected others;
5. pamphlet on self-defence, including legal ramifications; free to the general public;
6. handbook on court procedures - free to victims; for sale to the general public.

Few of these objectives have yet been achieved, however, due to phenomenal increases this year in TRCC crisis calls, information calls and requests for speakers, as well

as the involvement of both Darlene and Shelley with the Provincial Secretariat for Justice "Consultation on Rape". Darlene is no longer on staff but has promised to continue working towards these objectives in a volunteer capacity, as an assistant to Shelley, who is in charge 'til the end of the year when funds are depleted.

Other objectives of the program - i.e., a standardized forensic kit for hospital use, as well as having some input re police training films, and films shown to the general public by Community Relations and Crime Prevention Officers - have been accomplished, not merely in Toronto, but on a province-wide basis, by the aforementioned Secretariat for Justice medical and film sub-committees, on which Darlene served, as either an active member or chairperson.

Staff Sgt. Bob Dougall, our Liaison Officer for the past year, transferred from General Assignments/Headquarters to the Crime Prevention Bureau this fall, and was replaced by Staff Sgt. Mel Dufty. To date, there has been little opportunity to get acquainted with Mel, but we sincerely hope he's as amiable and supportive as Bob and his predecessor Paddy Lynn. Mel will be responsible for TRCC anonymous third party reports to police, but other duties have now been allocated to a special committee of Liaison Sergeants - one from each District of Metro Toronto Police. Sergeants Ed Pearson, George Hyndman, Richard Collett, Bill Perry, and John Andrews, from Districts 1-5 respectively, are currently serving as contact persons for TRCC staff and volunteers, especially if grievances arise.

We are truly delighted at this arrangement, and thanks go to Janet Freedman, who worked on last year's program, and conceived the idea.

We are also hoping to participate in in-service training at the Charles O. Bick Police College. A

formal request to this effect was denied earlier in the year but, given the above developments, we are hopeful that our request will be reconsidered.

- Darlene Chase

THE TRCC  
WISH Y'ALL  
A MERRY  
XMAS  
AND A GREAT  
NEW YEAR!

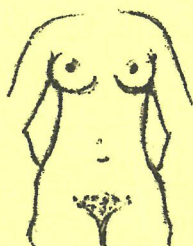
ONTARIO COALITION OF RAPE CRISIS CENTRES

The rape crisis centres in Ontario have had informal contact with each other for a number of years, mainly for purposes of information-sharing, helping new centres to establish themselves, and to discuss common concerns such as funding and legal reform. In July 1977, the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres was established with a specific philosophy, structure, and code of ethics. Since then, the Coalition has continued to develop and now includes 14 rape crisis centres in Ontario. The Coalition meets approximately three times a year and although a majority of the centres are represented at these meetings, many centres (particularly those in Northern Ontario) cannot afford to send a delegate. However, there is usually sufficient written and telephone communication to keep all centres informed of ongoing Coalition activities. At the present time, the only other province with a similar Coalition is British Columbia.

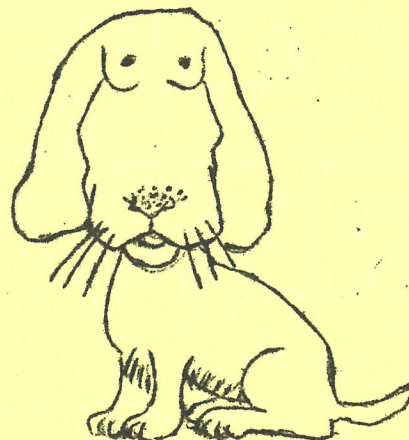
During the past year, the Coalition has been working on several important projects. One is input into the formation and constitution of a national association of rape crisis centres. A second large project has been the Coalition's extensive participation in various subcommittees set up following the Secretariat for Justice Consultation on Rape in February 1978. Thirdly, the members of the Coalition have been involved in the development of a Coalition constitution as well as continuing work on other important projects such as funding and legal reform.

Each year before the annual national conference, the Coalition elects a regional representative who fulfills many functions on both a provincial and national level. This year, two co-representatives were elected - Donna Slater from Hamilton and Shelley Glazer from Toronto. The other four regions of Canada (Maritimes, Quebec, Prairies, and British Columbia) also elect representatives on a yearly basis. The duties of regional representatives include: maintaining communications within their region; being resource persons for centres, especially new ones; working with the other regional representatives on national issues; and many other activities.

- Shelley Glazer



NO COMMENT!



Man's Best Friend....

...would you believe  
Agriculture, etc.  
they sell industrial  
cleaning supplies?

\* Industrial Equipment

...IS HIS DOG...

Raint

KC

## NO COMMENT

**"DON'T LET HER TOUCH YOUR TIE"**

Bachelors warned it's a sign woman's husband-hunting

Manchester, England (CP) - Bachelors who want to retain their single status should be wary of girls who offer to wash and iron their shirts, press their pants or adjust their collars and ties in public.

This sartorial concern is one of the "seven deadly sins" that the girl has marriage on her mind, says a leading shirt and tie manufacturer. By the time she starts buying shirts and ties it is too late for the bachelor to escape - the air is thick with betrothal and marriage, the manufacturer says.

"A woman's attitude to a man's clothes can tell him a great deal about her feelings towards him," the manufacturer says. "She starts by brushing away imaginary specks of dust from his coat lapels -- the first approach in touching and controlling.

"Washing and ironing a man's shirt expresses her desire to become an integral part of his life, demonstrating to the world that she has control over his appearance and therefore his success."

By the time she starts buying shirts and ties it is too late for the bachelor to escape - the air is thick with betrothal and marriage, the manufacturer says.

"Women have traditionally hated the sweat and strain of washing and ironing, yet they, as one of the main purchasing agents for men's shirts, have virtually rejected the drip-dry non-iron shirt in favour of the cotton mixtures," he says.

"Adjusting his collar and tie is part of the next strategy in gaining control. By the time she is offering to sew on missing shirt buttons, things are getting really dangerous.

- The Toronto Star  
November 7, 1978



## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAPE CRISIS CENTRES

The establishment of a national association of rape crisis centres has been an important activity for all Canadian rape crisis centres over the past three years. The purposes of such an organization would include: information-sharing on a national level; providing a clearinghouse for written material on rape and sexual assault; helping new centres to become established in their communities; lobbying for legal reform, etc. The third annual conference of Canadian rape crisis centres was held in May 1978 in Victoria, B.C. At that time, the initial sections of a constitution for the National Association were ratified. A committee of ten women, composed of two representatives from each of the five regions (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, British Columbia) was formed to finish writing the constitution which will then be ratified at the next national conference. This committee met for one week during October in Winnipeg and will be meeting again at the end of February 1979, in Toronto.

Another crucial issue this year has been obtaining funding for continuing activities at a national level. Since April 1976, these functions have been ably carried out by Joanie Vance, National Assistant of Canadian rape crisis centres. However, funding for this position ends in March 1979, and alternate funding must be obtained to hire staff who will carry on the important national component. There are now over fifty rape crisis centres in Canada and new centres are rapidly being established. The national association is an essential element in maintaining communication between these centres and in providing a way for more established and experienced centres to offer assistance and support to newly-formed centres.

Also, since the laws concerning rape and sexual assault are federal ones, it is important for rape crisis centres to have input on a national level to the federal government on the issue of legal reform. Another necessary national function is the collection of data on rape and sexual assault from centres across Canada. Many of these activities will depend on obtaining funds to hire national staff in 1979.

- Shelley Glazer

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SASSY SISTER: A 76 year old woman in Battleground, Washington fought off a rapist who broke into her house by telling him she was "too old for that sort of thing" and biting him when he attempted to grab her.

A poster with this story on it is being distributed by S.A.S.S. (Still Aint Satisfied Services) to Senior Centres and rest homes to urge women to resist rape. (Newsletter of the Rape Relief Hotline, Portland, Oregon.)

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PROVINCIAL SECRETARIAT FOR JUSTICE "CONSULTATION ON RAPE"

On February 6 and 7, the Provincial Secretariat for Justice hosted a "Consultation on Rape" at the Chelsea Inn in Toronto. Called by then Solicitor-General John MacBeth, it was attended by 50-75 representatives from police departments, ministries and helping agencies who might deal with rape victims; delegates from Ontario Rape Crisis Centres; and Lorenne Clark.

Panel discussions were held on the following topics: Initial Needs of the Victim and Problems in Meeting Those Needs, Problems Encountered in the Court Process, and Prevention of Rape. Donna Slater from Hamilton, Christine Blain from Ottawa-Hull, and Pat Finlay from Toronto represented RCCs on these panels respectively.

Guest speaker was Her Honour Judge Sandra Oxner from Nova Scotia, who spoke primarily on law reform, and closing remarks were by Don Sinclair, Deputy Provincial Secretary for Justice, who announced that we would reconvene in the fall - i.e., after finding some solutions to the problems outlined.

Tim Shannon, Policy Development Officer for the Secretariat for Justice, served as Chairperson for the Implementation Committee; and Darlene Chase from Toronto served as Co-chairperson, representing Ontario RCCs. Sub-committees were then formed re standardized procedures for educators, medical personnel, police, and RCCs. Sub-committees to investigate funding for RCCs, and to preview and evaluate films on rape, were also formed. Ontario RCCs were represented on each sub-committee by either Darlene Chase or Rosemarie Volpe, but others, such as Donna Slater, Peg Redden, and Shelley Glazer also participated.

The Consultation re-convened on October 16, again at the Chelsea Inn in Toronto. Progress reports were presented by each sub-committee, and a draft of their labours was made available to all in attendance, for feed-back before final publication, hopefully in February 1979. This draft (proposed title - Sexual Assault: Helping the Victim) will include victim-oriented guidelines for the above personnel, plus a tear-out section for victims re medico-legal procedures, follow-up, etc. In addition to the section on films already mentioned, the booklet also features a glossary of clinical and legal terms, and a bibliography of resource materials, i.e., books, magazine articles, etc. The booklet will be free to the general public, as well as the helping agencies involved, and will surely be a boon to all - including victims.

A standardized forensic kit (guidelines, test tubes, swabs, labels, etc.) is also being produced, paid for and distributed throughout Ontario by the Provincial Secretariat for Justice. As all materials - i.e., the kit and the booklet - have been approved by their respective groups, they are likely to be read and used!

But perhaps the best news of all is that provincial funding for RCCs looks very promising, and special thanks go to Rosemarie Volpe for all her work in this regard. Salary money for one staff person for each RCC in Ontario is contemplated - and, we hope, forthcoming!

- Darlene Chase

### CHRISTMAS MAGIC

Christmas magic  
is a yearning for a childhood memory.

My nostalgia is for tropic Christmas eves  
fragrant with oleander blossom.

What-- no Christmas trees? No holly?  
And no Santa Claus? How can Christmas *be*  
without the tinsel and the Christmas lights?

The lights that I remember all glowed soft  
violet and pink and orange ( no harsh reds  
and blues and greens strung in geometric symmetry)  
from hand-made tissue-paper stars  
hung in verandahs, porches, doors  
and trees. Tiny jewels, some; and some  
were five feet wide from point to point.

The carols I remember all had words;  
were given gently to my ears with human voices  
and soft-strummed guitars ( no endless plastic Muzak  
Jingle Bells, and Frosty Snowmen, and pathetic  
Disney cartoon red-nosed reindeer).

And neighbours, strangers, friends  
wandered from door to door, and lingered,  
( no painful frantic search for gifts  
to wrap in shiny paper, finished off  
with stick-on plastic-ribbon bows)  
love and laughter in glasses  
of fresh sweet lemon juice.

My nostalgia  
is for simple Christmas eves  
fragrant with honesty and love.

Anna

## BOOK REVIEW

The Curse

A Cultural History of Menstruation--Janice Delaney, Mary Jane Lupton and Emily Toth published by E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., New York 1976.

The Curse traces society's attitudes towards menstruation from the fear-ridden taboos imposed upon women in primitive tribes to the present day celebration of menstruation in feminist works of art.

The first part of the book deals with religious taboos and medical myths, and ends in an analysis of how these factors affect our lives today. The authors call this menstrual politics and examine its role in the oppression of women in our society.

A large portion of the book is about the image of menstruation as depicted by various media past and present. The authors cover everything from menstrual symbolism in fairy tales to the insultingly innocuous television ads for tampons and napkins. The authors used the term feminine hygiene products but I find it objectionable for a number of reasons, not the least of which being it is a term used to make some men and all manufacturers more comfortable.

The rest of the book concerns menopause, men's hormonal cycles and menstrual oddities like vicarious menstruation. The final chapter of the book is about a menstrual party the authors held. The "Pleed-in" was a celebration of menstrual experiences the women at the party had in common and a salute to the feminist artists, who are helping to "lift the curse".

The Curse is not a new book but it can be obtained at the Women's Bookstore in paperback for \$1.95 and it is a must on the reading lists of all women and enlightened men.

-Laura Rowe



## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION

RELEASED NOVEMBER 30, 1978

Definition of Terms: "Sexual Interference" to be charged against anyone who, "for a sexual purpose, directly or indirectly touches another person without the consent of that person." Sexual interference could be treated as a summary offence or incur a maximum of five years imprisonment.

"Sexual Aggression" would involve the use or threat of violence "for the purpose of sexual interference". The maximum penalty for sexual aggression would be ten years.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) that the offences of rape, attempted rape, indecent assault and gross indecency be replaced in the Criminal Code by new offences of "sexual aggression" and "sexual interference".
- (2) that the "spousal immunity" clause, which prevents a wife from charging her husband with rape or similar offences, be repealed.
- (3) that the law prohibit intercourse with boys and girls under age fourteen.
- (4) that males and females between the ages of 14 and 17 be protected against sexual interference by adults upon whom they are dependent --- parents, relatives, employers, teachers, and so on --- through a law providing a penalty of up to five years for "sexual interference" even with consent.
- (5) that family rather than criminal law deal with cases of sexual intercourse involving juveniles between 14 and 17 by other juveniles between 14 and 17.
- (6) that the mentally handicapped have a right to sexuality that should not be interfered with unless they have been taken advantage of and consent to intercourse is in question.
- (7) that incest between consenting adults no longer be an offence: that incest should be a matter for criminal law only when dependent children or adolescents are involved.
- (8) that the offences of buggery, bestiality and gross indecency be repealed.
- (9) that nudity be considered an offence only where it offends "public decency". The consent of an attorney-general would be needed before a charge could be placed.

## ANALYSIS:

The main problem with the recommendations of the LRC may involve a lack of clarity, particularly in the definition of "sexual interference". What indeed shall constitute touch of another person which is construed as involving a sexual purpose? Moreover, what is "indirect" touch? The definition becomes so broad as to include overtones of the ludicrous: the classic hysterical virgin of the misogynist stereotype, or the vindictive woman of another misogynist stereotype. It is not clear either, in early newspaper accounts, whether penetration, even if defined as oral, anal or vaginal penetration by either sex, is to be part of the actual charge or is not to be considered a factor prior to sentencing. It is apparent that penetration may constitute "sexual aggression", certainly involving the use or threat of force. The element of coercion must be established early in the trial and sentencing related to the degree of psychological and/or physical coercion used or threatened.

Other areas of the LRC recommendations are progressive: dispensing with spousal immunity will mean that a partner of either sex could be charged with sexual interference or sexual aggression. The difficulty will lie in convincing the court that such a charge is not part of a punitive divorce action or intended to discredit the reputation of the accused.

## WHAT AGE CONSENT?

The protection of boys and girls under the age of 14 from intercourse with adults poses the ancient problem of paternalism versus reality. Although one could wish we lived in a world where children could freely express their sexuality without the fear of exploitation, the element of consent must be based upon a level of information and knowledge not often available to people in this age group. Males and females between the ages of 14 and 17 are, further, to be protected against sexual interference by adults upon whom they are dependent-- parents, relatives, employers, teachers and so on; even where these adolescents have given consent. This presents something of a contradiction, in that juveniles between the ages of 14 and 17 who have intercourse with other juveniles in this age group are to be involved in family rather than criminal proceedings, where there is reason to become involved at all. Obviously the LRC is not considering cases where, for example, a 16-year-old girl may run away to live with a twenty-one year old man or woman, in a consensual sexual relationship. Ostensibly parents could lay a charge of sexual interference against the person involved.

In other words, if sexual experience with peers is "normal" for people between the ages of 14 and 17, is it "abnormal" to relate to adults where "dependency" is a factor? One is "dependent", after all, on whoever one loves, in whatever age group. What if, for another example, a 17 year-old "consented" to sexual relations with a father or brother? Might an argument not be made that sexual interference is not at issue, especially if the trial date coincides with the adolescent's eighteenth year?

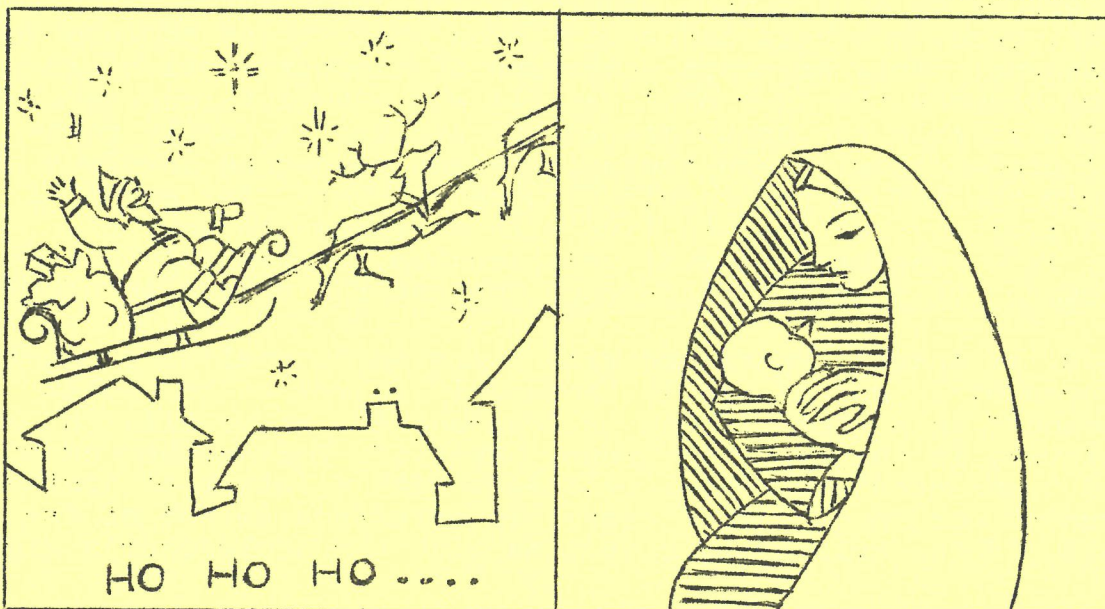
There are many reasons to be concerned with the safety of this age group. Bitter experience teaches many juveniles how vulnerable they are to the sexual advances of family or relatives. For many of them consent is hardly the issue. Coercion and emotional constraints may often pose as consent. The concern of the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre is for women who have been the victims of sexual coercion over a period of years. Suddenly at the age of eighteen they are to be given even less recourse to legal action. They may charge sexual interference by a relative or family member; the accused may argue that there was consent to the act. Proving non-consent may be extremely difficult in the absence of obvious physical coercion.

Several areas of the Criminal code are certainly in need of revision. The offences of buggery and gross indecency are indeed in need of repeal. Moral judgements here are inappropriate, especially as they have tended to apply to sexual acts involving consenting (same sex) adults. Nudity charges would apply only to cases which offend "public decency", and would have to be approved by an attorney-general. And lo and behold, at last the law is beginning to recognize the rights of the physically/mentally handicapped to an active sexual life, once again subject of course to questions regarding consent and dependency.

Further discussion of the LRC recommendations will of course occur in future issues. Once again may we encourage readers to write or phone regarding concerns and observations.

*The analysis in this article involves the immediate perceptions of the writer alone. It does not necessarily represent the stance of the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre.*

- Gillean Chase



## BACKGROUND TO B.E.A.V.E.R.

**BEAVER** (Better End All Vicious Erotic Repression) is an advocacy group for Canadian prostitutes. It was organized by Baba Yaga last year and is similar to COYOTE in the United States.

"Baba Yaga is the name of a Russian witch and I started using it as a stripper", Baba Yaga said.

When asked about how she became interested in forming an advocacy group for prostitutes, Yaga said through her contact with feminist groups she became aware of the need for a group representing prostitutes.

"When I first became involved in the women's movement I decided that I'd like to use the knowledge about dancing, that I'd gained as a stripper, to dance for women. I think a lot of what feminism is about is controlling your own life and in a professional sense your own work space. As a stripper I had very little control over my work space. There are a number of women's coffee houses so I knew that the opportunity was there but there was a lot of opposition to my performing from within the feminist movement. So I was thrust into the intellectual sphere of having to explain and justify my position. This led to my looking into and talking about the issue of prostitution", Yaga said.

Baba Yaga found that there was a great demand within the women's movement for information about prostitution and after trying to meet those demands herself she was urged to contact COYOTE in the U.S.

"I contacted COYOTE about a year ago. I knew I could reach more people if I organized. When you are a single individual talking about an issue people can say

'Gee she's a character isn't she' but if you are organized the women's movement will listen and hopefully make your issue part of their fight", Yaga said.

Yaga feels that she has been successful in making the decriminalization of prostitution a feminist issue.

<sup>1977</sup> "The group was officially formed last November when Margo St. James the head of COYOTE spoke in Toronto as a guest of the Wages for Housework group.

"I chose the name BEAVER with a poet-journalist friend of mine from Montreal. We experimented with a couple of different names and the names of different Canadian animals. We finally decided on BEAVER because I liked the anachronism (better end all vicious erotic repression), and because the people we asked about it seemed to like it", Baba Yaga said.

At the group's first press conference a morally indignant reporter complained about Canada's national animal being used to represent "this sort of group".

The group itself doesn't have a membership but instead is a loosely knit organization of associates.

"I am trying to attract more people in influential positions to support the group and give it the credibility it needs to get funding.

"Right now there is no way we can get established funding and to have a fund-raising organization you need members. It is very difficult to ask street prostitutes to come to a meeting. It makes them feel like sitting ducks", Baba Yaga explained.

The group's main goal is the

decriminalization of prostitution, which Yaga says is very different from legalization.

"Legalization has come to mean the regulation of the trade by the government. Nevada and Germany are the best examples of the practical application of legalization and government control", Yaga said.

"The women working in these government run brothels are not allowed to choose their customers, they can't socialize outside the house or sector in which they live, and they cannot have boy-friends. The government also takes the 50 per cent of the prostitute's income that used to go to pimps or be spent in legal fees and fines", she added.

"Decriminalization would be the removal of the soliciting laws from the criminal code but the laws concerning coercion and procuring would remain intact. Later on the government could regulate the industry like they do any other trade. They could regulate the percentages agencies like massage parlours could take from the women working in them and just generally supervise the trade without interfering with anyone's civil rights", Yaga said.

Recently a Supreme Court Judge set a precedent by saying that soliciting has to be "pressing and persistent" for the law to be broken.

"Very few prostitutes are being convicted because of that Supreme Court decision. Prostitutes don't have to be pressing and persistent because a demand exists for their services. They don't have to create a market, the market already exists.

"Justice Minister Ron Basford is trying to nullify that decision in his proposed amendment of the soliciting law. The new law would prohibit soliciting of any kind in any place by either sex. This law could restrict the sexual freedom of all women and it could be used to persecute homosexuals", Yaga said.

"To stop the Basford amendment from being passed in parliament we have to get to the people whose decisions influence the lives of street prostitutes, MP's, municipal politicians, lawyers, and judges. The only way we can do that is by pounding on doors, distributing literature, and staging street demonstrations.

"We will have to be pressing and persistent if we are to achieve our goals", Yaga said.

Laura Rowe  
(reprinted from  
Asylum)



## PROSTITUTES ORGANIZING

Although provocative behavior may identify a woman as a prostitute, it does not constitute soliciting, and is no more a crime than it is an invitation to rape. The federal supreme court recently ruled that soliciting must be pressing and persistent to create a public nuisance before it is a crime (Hutt case). Such an interpretation, when it is applicable to both sexes, as it is in Ontario, focuses on the real problem of street harassment. The fact remains that the law is connected to prostitution and is enforced through a method of police entrapment directed at street prostitutes and their clients, both the poorest of their type. Policewomen posing as prostitutes and encouraging men to solicit them do not protect other women from abuse. Why not use decoy policewomen to catch rapists who pose a real threat to our lives instead of men who want to pay us and are, in fact, some women's livelihood.

Limited job options plus the demand for sexual services prompt some women to work as prostitutes despite the risk of imprisonment and social casting. These women often view their work as a more honest form of classic female behavior. Unfortunately, any form of calculation or foreknowledge on the part of women sexually is seen as a lack of innocence, the ultimate female virtue. Abuse by pimps, venereal disease, unwanted pregnancy, and rape are seen by some persons as just punishment for any woman who should stray from the path of virtue. Although popular attitudes are changing - women probably have more sexual freedom today than at any other time in history - changes in law to support these attitudes have been slow in coming and often require arduous feminist lobbying.

B.E.A.V.E.R. (Better End All Vicious Erotic Repression) is a Canadian advocacy group for prostitutes and other workers of the flesh. Like COYOTE in the U.S., we are calling for the decriminalization of prostitution. Since prostitution is not illegal, decriminalization means removing from the criminal code the following laws that surround the act: soliciting, being an inmate of and/or keeping a common bawdy house.

Since few prostitutes need to press or persist to make contact, the police have had a hard time getting convictions since the Hutt case ruling. They demanded a tighter soliciting law which Basford has proposed in Bill C 52 (Soliciting need not be pressing, etc., and may be constituted by a wink or a smile). BEAVER is lobbying with Elizabeth Fry against the proposal. In addition to lobbying, BEAVER is here to make sure that the present laws are correctly enforced and that other legislation is not selectively used against prostitutes. In Toronto the police clean the streets and hotels of loitering or trespassing females. All unescorted women are suspect. Lawyer Priscilla Platt is running a criminal-law-for-women clinic one night a week at Elizabeth Fry with promises of future involvement from more feminist lawyers. On the personal side,

BEAVER is working with social agencies to provide adequate services for the prostitute who needs help. There is a limited amount of work that can be done under the auspices of established groups and our immediate goal is a 24-hour crisis line in our own space.

BEAVER wants the laws surrounding prostitution changed in a realistic way to prevent further injustice to women. Legalization through licensed brothels tends to institutionalize the profession and puts profit and control in the hands of management. Decriminalization credits women with the ability to run their own affairs, including the work of broadening their job options.

Persons wishing to assist in lobbying or staffing an eventual crisis line should call Baba Yaga at 532-4659.

#### NO COMMENT

Ontario psychologists are giving up trying to have the counselling practices of religious and other groups regulated and have withdrawn a proposed bill they submitted to the Ontario Government last year.

Instead, the Psychological Association has sent Health Minister Dennis Timbrell a new draft bill which would set up a college to govern the activities only of those with degrees in psychology or who call themselves psychologists.

Mr. Timbrell said in a news release yesterday that he will study the new proposals before deciding what, if anything, the ministry will do to bring them into law.

Last year's bill brought great controversy because of its provisions to licence all those involved in counselling. Clergymen, social workers and cults such as Scientology objected to the proposed restrictions on their activities. Some physicians argued that the definition the psychologists wanted to give themselves would allow them to practice medicine without a licence.

"The association is still concerned about charlatans and quacks and mind-bending organizations, but it has decided to look after its own," Barry Swadron, lawyer for the psychologists said in an interview yesterday.

"The association will regulate those who are members (professional psychologists) and anyone who calls himself a psychologist. We're still hopeful the provincial or federal Government will find a way to protect the public from others."

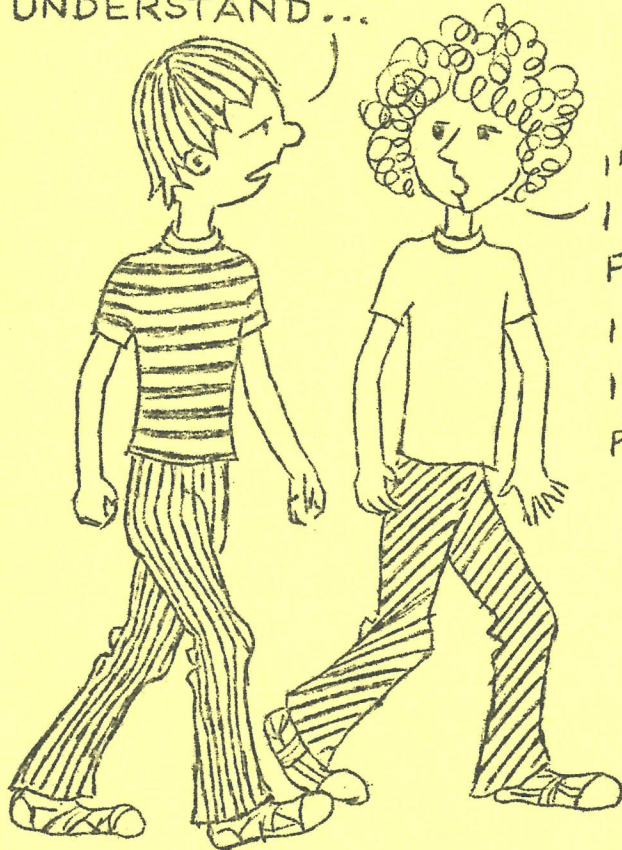
Since last year, Mr. Timbrell has been studying ways to control the activities of groups who offer counselling for money, but has not made any proposals.

The new bill would bring all psychologists under a college similar to that of physicians. The college would discipline its members and rule on what qualifications would be accepted for membership.

LITTLE DICK.....

....ANA..

BOY, DO I HAVE A  
PROBLEM! I'M GLAD  
I HAVE SOMEONE TO  
TELL MY PROBLEMS TO.  
YOU ALWAYS HELP ME  
UNDERSTAND...



OH DICK, I'M SORRY!  
I'D LOVE TO HELP YOU, BUT  
I CANT LISTEN TO YOUR  
PROBLEMS ANY MORE.  
IT'S ILLEGAL.  
I'M NOT A LICENSED  
PSYCHOLOGIST.



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OR IF YOU WISH TO VOLUNTEER.

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