

February/March 1986

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# IMAGES

Kootenay Women's Paper



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## Women and Development group formed

A feeling of international camaraderie and a sharing of some feminist concerns has sparked the formation of a Women and Development group in Nelson.

"The two founding members were interested in third world issues. We had a particular interest in Nicaragua and wanted to get a group together which could connect with a Nicaraguan women's group and do something practical," said Deb Thomas, an active member of the group.

Thomas said Nicaragua was important to her because, "It is a beautiful dream. They've made their mistakes, but it's a self-determined country and they are working towards equality between classes and genders. All this is in danger of being smashed by the U.S. and I think it's crucial that doesn't happen."

Women and Development are still working on a match with a Nicaraguan group but have been doing educational work and are presently considering some specific action concerning South Africa. Many products from South

Africa, such as wines, fruit, Rothman and Carling O'Keefe products are for sale in local stores. (See sidebar). The group is considering ways to encourage people to boycott these products, the purchase of which bolsters the Apartheid regime.

There are a lot of very powerful women's concerns in the third world. In many countries, such as South Africa, the men and women live quite separately. "The women hold the communities together," said Thomas. "Helping women with their struggles is helping with the struggles which are fundamental to the whole society."

Thomas recently attended a provincial Women and Development conference in Vancouver. "I gathered a lot of information there," she said.

"The most important thing that came out of the conference, which had workshops on various topics such as education, racism, agriculture, and health, was that a lot of people from all over the province went home with a greater understanding of the situation of women in other

countries," said Thomas. "That may stimulate some people to political action but more importantly people will go home and share that information."

She cited a poster she had seen at the conference which said, "Educate a woman and you educate her family." "I think that's true not only in the third world but here as well," said Thomas. "And I think it goes beyond family to the village or community."

A film, "When the Mountains Tremble," the story of a Guatemalan women's transition from peasant to revolutionary, will be shown at the David Thompson University Centre Library reading room on March 3, at 7 p.m.

The Nelson Women and Development group usually meets on the first Tuesday of every month at the Nelson Women's Centre at 7:30 p.m. The time or location may change if a special event such as a film is to be held. For more information or to confirm meeting details call Deb at 352-7510 or Sally at 359-7984.

## APARTHEID PRODUCTS FOR SALE IN CANADA

### CIGARETTES

- BLACK CAT
- CAMEL
- CAMEO
- CRAVEN A
- DUNHILL
- GAULOISES
- GITANES
- MORE
- NUMBER 7
- PALL MALL
- PETER STUYVESANT
- ROTHMAN'S
- SALEM
- WINSTON

### TOBACCOS

- AMPHORA
- AMSTEL
- DRUM
- DUNHILL
- VIRGINIA GOLD
- ERINMORE
- FLAGSHIP
- SCOTCH PLAID
- PICKET EDITION

### BEER

- BLACK HORSE
- BLACK LABEL
- BRADING
- BUCKEYE
- CARLSBERG
- COLT 45
- DOW ALE
- HEIDELBERG
- MILLER
- O'KEEFE
- OLD VIENNA
- RED CAP

### WINES & LIQUEURS

- Bonne Esperance (R&W)
- Fleur du Cap-Emerald Stein

- Paarl Chenin Blanc
- Paarl Late Vintage
- Paarl Riesling
- Paarl Cabernet Sauvignon
- Paarl Pinotage
- Paarl Roodeberg
- J.V.R. Liqueur
- Wonder Club
- La Residence
- Alton Rouge Red Wine
- Bertrams
- Golden-Cream
- Van der Humm Liqueur
- La Gratitude

### BRANDIES

- Paarl Five Star
- Paarl V.O.S.P.
- Rembrandt Brandy
- Richelieu Brandy

### SHERRIES

- Paarl Golden Medium
- Paarl Oloroso Cream
- Paarl Pale Dry

### SPORTS

- Paarl Old Tawny
- Paarl Rich Ruby

## Kimberley group seeks writers

The Kimberley Writers' Group invites Kootenay women writers to submit short stories, essays or poems to be published this year.

Sponsored by the Canada Council, the anthology project will give unpublished writers a chance to reach readers and gain self-confidence as authors.

"Isolation and a lack of marketing knowledge have hampered our development," said project coordinator Judy Winter.

"An anthology for Kootenay women, produced by Kootenay women, will provide a vehicle for exposure and draw out the hidden talent in this region."

The book will be distributed to B.C. booksellers and editors of Canadian literary magazines.

## Tools for Peace sails again in 1986

To close off the 1985 Tools for Peace (aid to Nicaragua) campaign, the organizing group is inviting everyone who worked in the campaign or donated things, either this year or last to an educational and social evening on February 16. The evening, which will be at the Kinnaird hall, will be addressed by Chrysa Gibson, a B.C. carpenter who has spent the last year in Nicaragua teaching at a carpentry school. "She just got back, so she will have very up to date information and can answer some questions about what's happening to the goods we sent down last year and what the Nicaraguan response to Tools for Peace is," said Ann Godderis, one of the organizers of the campaign.

Although the 1985 Tools for Peace Campaign was quieter this year than last, the organizing group was well pleased with the results. More than three truckloads of goods were sent and about \$700 in cash was forwarded to Vancouver where it was used to purchase medical supplies and drugs which are hard to buy in the Central American country because of the U.S. backed economic blockade.

The cash response was exciting given the state of the economy, it indicates people are willing to part not only with goods they don't need any more but with ready money," said Ann Godderis, one of the organizers of the campaign.

The foci this year were on school supplies, bedding and candles and batteries.

Because half of the Nicaraguan population is under 15 and the present government has a commitment to free education for its young people, which the former dictatorship did not, school supplies such as pencils, and

paper are in short supply.

The emphasis on blankets was for the people who have been resettled away from the border areas where fighting is heavy between the Nicaraguan troops and the U.S. backed contras. These 180,000 people have been moved to safer areas but it is straining the resources of the government to provide housing, clothing and food to the refugees.

The candle and battery campaign was to try to help overcome some of the effects of the U.S. backed embargo which has undermined the Nicaraguan economy and made consumer items very scarce.

Representatives from Tools for Peace showed slides and talked to social studies classes in Castlegar and Crescent Valley. "We got a good response from the schools," said Godderis, "From the teachers because of the educational value of our presentation and I think we struck a cord in the kids, they understood and responded."

There was also a good response from the Catholic community both here and in the East Kootenays, in part because of a visit last spring by a Nicaraguan priest to this area.

"Everything we shipped this year was on the list of priorities which the various Nicaraguan unions and community groups gave to Tools for Peace. There were a lot of things for AMNLAE, the women's organization there, mostly sewing supplies for the co-ops they are supporting," said Godderis. "The campaign this year was a definite success."



## Sarah's children

# Justice, long delayed, is done

"Sarah's" children (known as "Eve's" children in the last IMAGES issue) are home. Finally. After 172 days in foster homes, Judge Patrick Hyde ordered their release, no strings attached, from MHR custody on January 31 after an intensive four-day hearing. He agreed with Greg Stacey, Sarah's lawyer, that the apprehension had "obvious traumatic effects on the children" and that they had not been nor are now in need of protection. MHR wanted custody for another year.

The children were apprehended on August 13, 1985, by Sheila Bitschy and Kim Howes, two Nelson MHR social workers. They had decided that the children's well-being was endangered because of Sarah's difficulty in dealing with the stress around the children's forced access visits with their father. Since 1984, the children, a boy and a girl now aged 7 and 5, have consistently named their father as one of a group of four adults who abused them sexually for many years. Four witnesses testified that the boy didn't want to visit with his father.

Prior to the apprehension, Sarah attempted to find a therapist to assist the children, and continue the work started by John Napier-Hemy, the boy's Vancouver therapist. According to Sarah, the Nelson Mental Health Centre social worker whom she contacted was more interested in discussing her parenting skills than in working with the children. MHR did not offer to find a therapist for them, feeling that what the children needed was "a normalized home environment", i.e. away from their mother.

Carol Beauchamp, coordinator of the Nelson Women's Centre and Sarah's advocate, attended all the visits between Sarah and her children. She testified that Sarah had a "warm, loving, caring" relationship with her children and that their interaction was "very moving to watch". Much of MHR's focus during the trial was on Sarah's intense anger at MHR and Kim Howes, the social worker appointed to supervise the visits. Beauchamp insisted that Sarah's anger was legitimate and reasonably controlled and noted that the tone of the visits improved after Howes was replaced by Marcia Early. They were no

longer restricted to Howes' small office or the Women's Centre and started doing "fun things like tobogganing", stated Beauchamp. The mother could neither visit the children in the foster homes nor telephone them there, though the father could.

Access visits between the father and the children were also under MHR supervision and included dinners out, trips to Ainsworth Hot Springs and the Kootenay Lake Ferry. Supervising social worker J. McKay testified the visits went well.

Napier-Hemy, an expert in diagnosing and treating sexual abuse, said the boy should have no contact with his father unless the father admits the abuse, apologizes, and gets therapy himself. Otherwise, he stated, the child's healing process is stifled, especially if the visits are enjoyable. The child could think his father "not such a bad guy...maybe it wasn't as bad as I thought." He minimizes his trauma, represses and denies his feelings and could end up with serious disturbances as an adolescent, possibly becoming an abuser himself.

Judge Hyde relied heavily on the testimony of Dr. Roxanne Still, a local psychologist retained by Nelson MHR in October to do a psychological assessment of Sarah. Although Dr. Still found Sarah to have "idiosyncratic confabulatory ways" and was sometimes unable to separate her needs from her children's, she repeatedly stated that these were not protection issues but rather family therapy issues and that it was far more emotionally damaging for the children to be separated from their mother than not. Dr. Still had recommended to MHR in October that the children be returned and also testified at the incomplete hearing in November that they did not need to be protected from their mother. During that hearing she had testified for MHR. MHR did not retain her as a witness during the final hearing.

## Kootenay Child Protection League

The Vancouver City Police investigation last spring did not result in charges being laid against the father. The way the investigation itself was carried out is currently under internal review, according to Antoinette Halberstadt, spokeswoman for the Kootenay Child Protection League, which laid the complaints about the investigation. The KCPL is also sending a letter to Nelson MHR, criticising Lou Violini, District Supervisor, and Wayne Nickel, Regional Manager, for not keeping the "children's best interests at heart"; for sanctioning the apprehension in the first place and for seeming to take sides with the children's father. More than two years since the children's disclosures, the whole issue of their sexual abuse remains unresolved.

On February 12, Judge Patrick Hyde will set a date in Surrey for an access hearing. The court-ordered access visits for the father have expired.

The Kootenay Child Protection League is raising funds for the \$200 phone bill incurred by Sarah and the Women's Centre during the recent apprehension and for the upcoming access hearing. Supporters can contribute at the Nelson Women's Centre, by phoning 226-7283, or by mailing a donation to Box 134, Winlaw, B.C.

## Women need defense fund

At its January collective meeting, the West Kootenay Women's Association decided to set up a women's legal defense fund, to assist women to obtain better access to justice.

In its role as advocate, the W.K.W.A. has become increasingly aware of the lengthy legal battles faced by women seeking their rights through the courts. Women who are poor, as many Canadian women are, simply cannot afford the process, or at best can only obtain the most minimal legal assistance.

It is hoped that the fund will be of benefit to those women particularly who are seeking redress for abusive and unfair situations in the family or workplace or who are trying to get fair treatment from government bureaucracies.

The urgency of the case and the income level of the applicant will be taken into consideration in giving access to the fund.

Women living within the Kootenay region may apply to the West Kootenay Women's Association at 307 Vernon Street, Nelson, B.C. V1L 4E3.

Tax deductible donations to the fund can be made to the W.K.W.A. at the address above or paid directly into the Women's Legal Defense Fund account at the Nelson and District Credit Union.

## Women and Words

Women who work with words have a unique and exciting experience in store at the Kootenay Women and Words conference in Nelson on March 21, 22 and 23.

The weekend will be filled with a wide variety of workshops, exciting guest speakers and two performance evenings. Featured guests include Paulette Jiles, winner of last year's Governor General's Award for Poetry; Eleanor Wachtel, writer, broadcaster, and host of the CBC radio show, Arts Monitor; Lucie Macneil, host of the popular afternoon CBC radio show, Almanac; Daphne Marlatt and Betsy Warland, both well-known poets who were involved in organizing the first Women and Words conference in Vancouver in 1983.

Over 16 workshops are planned, including: Publishing Your Magazine Article, with teacher Sandy Watson; Surviving as a Woman Artist, with Paulette Jiles; Desktop Electronic Publishing, with Penni Graham and Susan Oliver, the producers of a monthly Revelstoke newspaper using a computer and a laser printer.

Also planned is a panel discussion, Being Heard: Women in Electoral Politics, which will feature Mayor Audrey Moore of Castlegar; Mayor Jackie Drysdale of Rossland; Mayor Lela Irvine of Creston; Alderwomen Sharon Heflin of Nelson and Joan Hillstrom of Warfield; and NDP organizer Celeste Culpepper.

Accommodations will be available on the beautiful David Thompson University Centre campus. Registration fee of \$70.00 includes meals and accommodation, workshops, films, readings, and Friday and Saturday night performances. Daycare and travel subsidies are available on request.

The Kootenay Women and Words conference will allow

women working creatively in the the field of communications to share ideas, skills and problems, and have a terrific time doing it.

Kootenay Women and Words, the conference sponsor, is a branch of the Pan-Canadian Women and Words Society. For more information, and to register, contact: Luanne Armstrong, Box 3, Sirdar, B.C. VOB 2CO, 866-5264 or Sherry Konigsberg, R.R. 1, Winlaw, B.C. VOG 2JO, 226-7654.

WRITERS continued from page 2.

Adjudicators Paulette Jiles, Irene Mock and Luanne Armstrong will review entries and select about 20 submissions for publication in the collection, tentatively titled, "Kootenay Women: A Regional Anthology."

Jiles, of Nelson, is the 1985 winner of the Governor General's Award for Poetry for her volume, "Celestial Navigations." Mock, also of Nelson, has published short stories in several magazines and was a creative writing instructor at the Kootenay School of Writing. Armstrong, of Sirdar, is a poet and freelance journalist who has published a book of poetry.

Judges will consider short stories and essays to a maximum length of 3500 words each, and up to five poems per entry. Contributors must be women living in the Kootenays who have not yet published a volume of work.

Manuscripts must be typed, double-spaced and include a brief biography and a stamped self-addressed envelope. Deadline is March 31, 1986. Mail entries to: Kimberley Writers' Group, c/o 205 Otis Street, Kimberley, B.C. V1A 1V4



# Male cheesecake turns sour

By Sally Mackenzie

I originally set out to write an article about the College Men's Calendar, produced by the Graphic Communications program at Selkirk College.

It features 12 young, good-looking, male college students with a brief write-up on each of them. The pictures are not overly sexual, there are no full frontal nudes, but the sexual tone is definitely there. This calendar is reminiscent of Playgirl although the men are all clothed. "It's a very tasteful approach to pin up art," Leni Normington, the production manager for the project, told me.

But some people both in and outside the college community questioned the kind of product they had produced.

As I talked to Normington and looked at the calendar, it became apparent to me that the story was not the calendar but the issues around it. Not the fact that some people found it objectionable but why. What kind of social values does this calendar and the hundreds of other publications like it project? What does it matter?

This calendar is not obscene in the usual sense. These pictures are trite, pretty images of men and one of their major purposes was to make the calendar saleable. They give us no real idea of who these people really are.

These 'typical college men' are not real people at all but pretty, ("nobody buys ugly,") images of what, for some reason, people want to look at or expect to see. These calendars have sold, quite well, and within the college community; it might be "I know him" or "He's my friend's boyfriend."

Are people flattered to have their sons, boyfriends or friends made to look like Playgirl models? Does this prove that we--the general folks--are just as sexy, appealing and good-looking as the professionally groomed glamour boys?

Is this the same surprise and small pleasure I find on those semi-annual occasions when I dress in my very best, apply my makeup and discover, "Why, I do look a lot like those culturally beautiful, culturally glamorous, cul-

turally desirable women who appear on magazine covers."

Why does this glamour, which I intellectually find objectionable, still stir a longing in my breast? I suppose it's because although I have an intellectual understanding of what objectification and glamour of people means, I am still a product of this society which lauds image over reality.

Image is a powerful word and a more powerful concept. And one which Normington used repeatedly as she talked about the calendar. I think this conversion of real three dimensional people into images is a destructive process. It leads us to carry in our minds images of what people should be. We know better. We deal with real, three dimensional people every day: our parents, lovers, friends and children. We know that they are far more than the image they project. We know they are people of great depth; strengths and beauties lurking within them, weaknesses and ugliness clinging to their edges.

The little girl beauty contest, held a couple of years ago in the Nelson mall, is a prime example of the dehumanizing turn this obsession with image can take. Three and four year olds were judged, not as whole human beings, but as images: cute, endearing, even sexy. And did the little girls in that amazing contest miss the significance of the event? Not on your life! They knew it: was image. They may have been quite unsure about what the desirable image was, but they knew it was image. And they were being judged and awarded on how well they fit it.

This experience of being judged on image is one that women have had to cope with for a long time. A lot of us, especially within the women's movement, decided we wanted none of it and dropped out of the races. We wear dark colours, loose fitting clothing, jeans and work boots. We avoid being noticed; we announce by our dress we are not in the contest. But still people look at us and assume, because of the image they see, that we are tough or pushy or castrating or correct or cool.

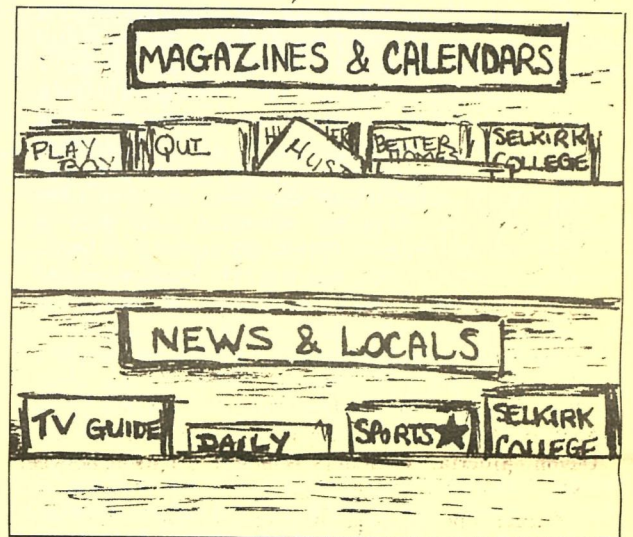
Men have, until quite recently, avoided a lot of the objectification, this portrayal of a three dimensional

human being as a two dimensional image, usually pretty, light, bright, trite, glossy and sexy.

Maybe part of the attraction the fantasy offers is simplicity, something dealing with a real human being never is. The fantasy has no unexpected corners, moods, insights and demands.

We are surrounded by these images all the time, in magazines, newspapers, television, novels, and it cheapens us all. We all grow up with it, although it is still much more pervasive for women than for men.

Some women, in their statement of their liberation from old prudities and constraints stand on street corners, judging men by their looks and image. They buy Playgirl and act debonair and then fail to find men like the images they admire. They have mistaken liberation for revenge. Treating someone as badly as they have treated you is not making anyone better off.



We women knew from our prepubescent days what we were to compare ourselves to; it surrounded us and we rarely if ever measured up. Our breasts were too small, our noses too big, our waists too large, our hair too curly, our arms too hairy. We were too fat, too tall, too shy, too loud. And so we judged ourselves: ugly, uncouth and undesirable. We sold ourselves short, we decided someone else was better than us.

And further, we judged ourselves constantly against other women: "Well at least I have nicer hair, at least I'm not as fat, at least I'm not so clumsy. She's so elegant (and I'm not); she's so well dressed (and I'm not)." This constant comparing makes it considerably more challenging to have an honest, close relationship with another woman. Because always there is the unspoken comparison based on image.

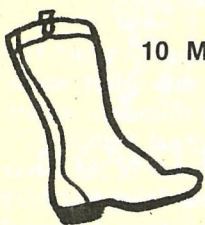
To begin to objectify men on the basis of their looks and image is not in any part a solution. It only puts men, who already have great difficulty having close relationships with other men or with women, except for their lovers, in an even more distant, competitive, comparing relationship.

We take these images of youth, cultural beauty and begin to believe on some level that this is who people really are. We judge ourselves and others against this model of beauty.

What is the matter with realism? "Do you honestly think frank pictures would sell?" Normington asked me. Maybe not; it's certainly not what is culturally normal but it is often beautiful, often fascinating, often inspiring and definitely more meaningful to us in terms of understanding ourselves and other real people around us.

*Sally Mackenzie is a soon-to-be journeywoman cabinet maker living in Crescent Valley.*

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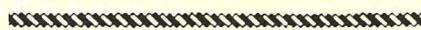
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# Women's Centres roundup

**Cranbrook:** Ruth Goodwin told IMAGES that the Centre worked with other community agencies on the Angel Tree Program, to provide needy children with a big Christmas party with Santa Claus, presents and food, through the collecting of donations from local businesses and individuals. The committee whose goal is to establish a birthing bed at the local hospital is actively involved in soliciting support and money from local organizations. Battered Women's support group provides women with practical information, assertiveness training, stress management and self-esteem enhancement. The Mom and Tot program provides children with good supervised play and food while presentations are made to moms on current issues of concern to women.

The Pornography committee recently surveyed local video suppliers to determine how videos are displayed and classified as to their violence and pornographic content. They found that videos are not classified at all and that pornographic material is displayed right beside children's videos. The committee has submitted a brief to Brian Smith, Attorney General of B.C., with the goal of having all videos rated as to their pornographic and violence content, as well as some direction that stores display these videos where they cannot be seen by children. (Note: at time of press, it appears that Smith has responded favourably). Phone Number is 426-2912.

**Golden:** Centre coordinator Peggy Chalmers and one other member attended a workshop sponsored by ASWAC (Alberta Status of Women Action Committee), in Devon, Alberta. Chalmers is now the liaison between ASWAC and B.C. feminist groups.

A recent open house at the centre was well-attended by parents and children. Chalmers reported that there is a lot of community support for the Women's Centre, with many people sharing their time and talents freely. A lot of energy has been directed toward obtaining funding to prevent the closing of their daycare centre. Chalmers and Wendy Lidstone are now on the board of the Childcare society. And Centre workers continue lobbying with the federal government around numerous issues.

The Centre sponsored a workshop, People Types and Tiger Stripes, on January 31. The workshop promoted understanding between people and taught communication skills, and was led by Tim Scorer of the Naramata Centre. The AGM, on International Women's Day (March 8) will include entertainment, food and drink. Phone number is 344-5317.

**Nakusp:** Coordinator Hilary Biten told IMAGES that 35 people attended a Depression and Suicide workshop sponsored by the Centre in December. Their next workshop, Living with an Unemployed Person, is on February 7, at the Bonnington Art Centre.

The Centre is about to start a film night, for women only. Call Shelly Borgnick, at 265-4951, for information. Phone number is 265-3727.

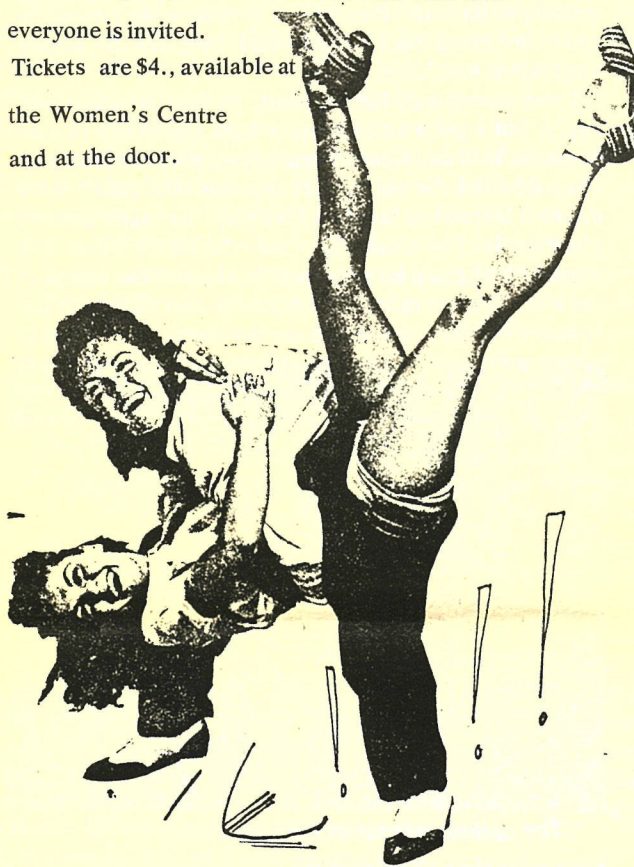
**Nelson:** Collective members are busy with planning for International Women's Day. A Welfare Advocacy group, to assist women who are in conflict with MHR, is in the process of forming. A legal defence fund for women has been established. Tax deductible donations may be deposited at the Nelson and District Credit Union, to the West Kootenay Women's Association Women's Defence Fund.

The battered women's and single parents' support groups continue. A new support group, for sexual assault survivors, has been started. A Human Services student

from Selkirk College is doing her field placement at the Centre. Phone number is 352-9916.

Women on Cue, a local women's theatre group, are sponsoring a Valentine's Dance, featuring music, dancing and performances by the group. The dance, on February 14, is at the Rod and Gun Club and everyone is invited.

Tickets are \$4., available at the Women's Centre and at the door.



**Salmo:** Donna Bishop reported that the Centre is still waiting for grant money, and expect to hear soon. They hope to be able to sponsor some courses and workshops. Phone number is 357-2017.

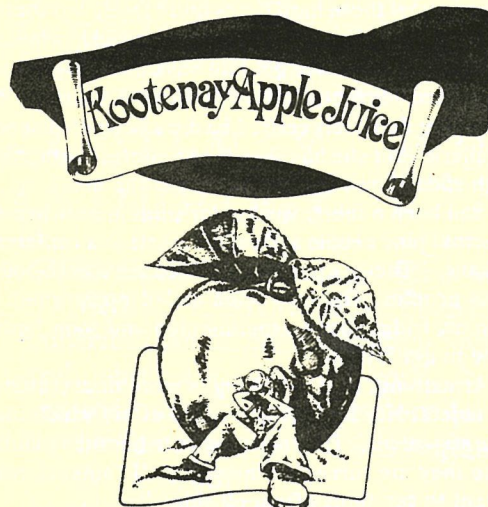
**W.I.N.S. Transition House:** Coordinator Mary Hamann reports that the board, staff and volunteers have been busy in 1985, assisting 171 women and children, taking 248 crisis calls and talking to 765 drop-ins. They also started a women's support group which meets Mondays at 1:00 p.m.

W.I.N.S. has applied for a community grant to hire two crisis workers. The crisis line is currently run by house staff and volunteers. They receive no funding for this, and were unsuccessful in their application for money for two childcare workers and a support worker. "Canada Job Development grant people are reluctant to fund non-profit societies because they feel we can't guarantee that the positions will continue after the grant ends. But we will still keep trying. Now that MHR doesn't supply any family support workers, our support is critical", Hamann said.

Tami Krepki, a Social Services student from Selkirk College, is doing her practicum at W.I.N.S. Hamann noted that the volunteers are doing a great job in assisting the coordinator and two house staff to provide 24 hour availability. A childcare worker is on call.

The house is "a great old house" with four bedrooms, eleven beds and three cribs, two bathrooms, a quiet room, office, big livingroom and kitchen, two porches, children's playroom, and two rooms where donated clothes and kitchen supplies for families who need them are kept. Hamann invites interested women to drop in and see the house. Phone them for directions. Phone number is 364-1718.

Compiled by Joy Green.



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# Kootenay artist up from under

By Wendy Hurst



Kathy with daughter, Jenni, and pine needle basketry.

For Kathy Armstrong life is definitely not boring. Her main complaint is insufficient time to get everything done.

Slightly out of breath from a lunchtime volleyball game, she grins cheerfully - "got to get my exercise in and keep my legs and back strong - that's very important to me. Sitting at a computer all day does contribute to square bottoms!"

An exploration of Armstrong's current activities shows why she needs to be fit. More or less singlehandedly she runs a "fruit and fowl" smallholding in Robson, parents her two children, writes books, attends a full time electronic publishing course at Selkirk College, breeds dogs, gives workshops on basket making, exercises her horses and once in a while gets away from it all by hiking or skiing up into the mountains.

Sometimes, it all seems too much, but mostly she feels confident that her life is well in hand and that despite the economic marginality of her subsistence lifestyle she is taking control of her own destiny. This is a far cry from the time a few years ago when her self-confidence was at

its lowest. Her marriage - "the biggest mistake I ever made - the second biggest was putting up with it for as long as I did" - had deteriorated into ongoing psychological and physical violence.

"He made me feel like a turd. Just so high, and with a bad smell. Finally one time he clobbered me in the face with a steel toed boot. It broke my glasses and a blood vessel. The whole side of my face went black. He went away and I sat and thought for a couple of days. I realized it was really affecting the kids as well as me. They were starting to hit each other when anything went wrong. So when he came back, I just told him not to bother unpacking, just leave.

I was scared stiff but he went. At first he was really angry, but I got a lot of support from the WINS (a safe house) in Trail and from a woman counsellor and I hung in. Then he tried the old suicide trip but that didn't work either. I learned to laugh at him when he made abusive phone calls. The more I laughed, the better I felt. The most difficult thing for me now is that he still has access to the kids. They go to him for Christmas and they go in the summer holidays, and those are the times when I would



The author gets taken for a ride.

have most time to enjoy them."

She stretches and runs a hand through dark curls. She has talked about these hard times quite freely but there is still a touch of tension which disappears quickly when she starts telling me how she got into basket making. This is probably what she is best known for in the Kootenays. Not only have her delicately crafted baskets been displayed in local galleries but she has shared her interest with others through slide shows and workshops in the area.

She had been a fabric weaver for some time when she came across pine needle and rafia baskets at a conference in Spokane. "Then a girl friend showed me how to boil up the pine needles. The first batch ended up in a mouldy mess in my fridge, but I experimented and soon figured out how to get it right."

For Armstrong, basket making is more than crafting a useful object. Her baskets are works of art which make definite statements. They mean more to her than painting because they are three-dimensional - "I think its really important to see things from all sides."

It is good she enjoys the creative process since basketmaking is certainly not lucrative. It takes at least sixteen hours to make a basket and she estimates her labour produces \$2 an hour.

Baskets and how to make them are also the subjects of the book she hopes to publish this spring through her own just created company Beargrass Publishing. It will be illustrated by photographs she has taken of baskets from all over the North West.

In contrast to the mind challenging activities of basketry, writing and the computerised world of the



An armful of golden retriever puppies.

electronic publishing programme, is the maintenance of the acreage in Robson where she and her children live, surrounded by fruit trees, chickens, dogs and horses. All of these help or will help to maintain her family. She grows and processes enough fruit and vegetables, eggs and chickens to keep the monthly grocery bills down to \$60. She sells surplus eggs from her ninety chickens, but finds she can barely cover the cost of chicken feed. "Definitely not a paying proposition - I'm planning to turn most of the chickens into stew!"

She has hopes that breeding golden retrievers may turn out to be a paying proposition, but is finding that the local market for purebred puppies is not big enough - and she ends up paying transportation costs if she sells them in Vancouver. Meanwhile she has trained her dogs to pull a sled - one of few teams in the West Kootenay! "Not very practical," she admits "though once in a while I use the team to haul hay up to the horses - but its great fun!"

Although Armstrong's teachers at the college keep telling her the jobs are all in the urban centres back east, she is determined to stay in the Kootenays. Here she feels at home in the community and the environment. She has survived here for four years on welfare and now has a small student loan, but is optimistic that eventually one of her many ventures will take off and enable her to realize her dream: to work as a self-employed woman and earn sufficient to stay in the Kootenays and raise her children.

Wendy Hurst is a geographer and member of the Images collective hiding in Thrums.



Breakfast time in the chicken house.

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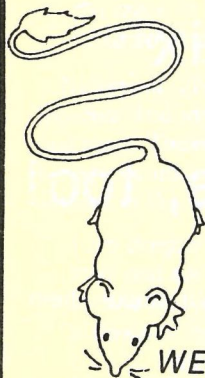
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# Uppity woman of the '80s

By Ria Tromp

I am often surprised at how I differ from my older sisters in the feminist movement. This feeling of being different comes from having worked at the Nelson Women's Centre for four months in 1985, and existing as a feminist for as long as I can remember. I have come to believe that there are differences in the ways we think and express ourselves. The following is an explanation of how I see myself as a "new-age feminist" and some rationalization for why I have arrived at this new definition of feminism.

I think older women tend to exclude men in planning and implementing strategies aimed at achieving equality. Men become the audience and are quite separate from the players. It might be argued that men have written the scripts for too long and have done nothing on their own in the name of equality. I say the only way women can have equality without male participation is by leaving planet Earth. And I don't think women want to live without men or leave Earth. I believe men need to be included in the process of creating an equal world because without their direct influence we still cannot achieve equality; the result of our work would favour women. Men have to be a part of the solution because they are a part of the problem.

I also sense a cynicism in older feminists that I don't feel in myself. Many women express a lot of anger because men have dominated our lives for so many years that our economy and social structure are built on a foundation of male power. I don't think women can afford to be angry for history. I'm not suggesting that we never look back, only that we look for motivation from what our sisters have achieved. I'd rather chip away at what lies before me with some optimism than continue with anger and frustration powering me.

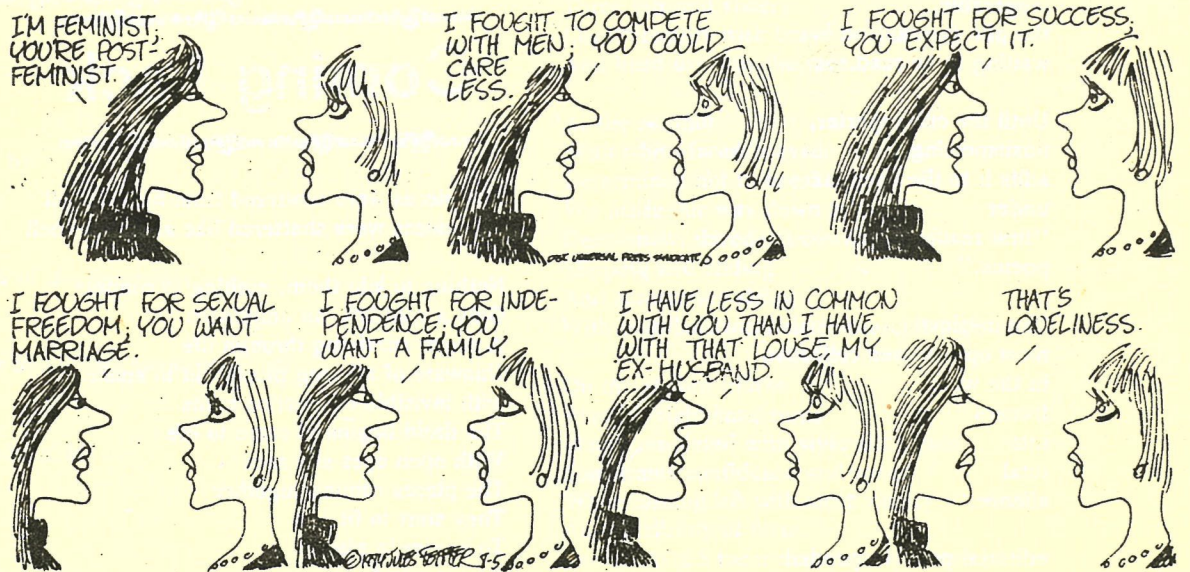
**Men have to be part of the solution - they are part of the problem.**

Women are often considered a minority group; less, I think, because of numbers and more because their potential is not always fully recognized. Minority groups are in the news almost every day. And when you add up which groups are considered minorities (mentally handicapped, physically handicapped, non-whites, religiously persecuted, youth, aged, poor, and so on) not much is left behind. I don't feel very alone. And because I fit into more than one category of discriminated-against people, I am not likely to blame all my troubles on the one fact that I am female.

Attitudes are not the only differences I believe exist. I look different from many veterans of the feminist movement. The stereotype of a feminist paints a masculine picture of a woman; braless, dressed in men's clothes, unfeminine. I don't think the stereotype is fair. Feminists do not necessarily look unfeminine, but I do think older feminists intentionally dress to look sexless.

Getting dressed in the morning is a game for me. I look in the closet and say to myself, "what do I want to say about me and the world today?" Some days I want to look feminine to say that "I like being female and if given a choice wouldn't have it any other way." Other days I wear bright colours, especially when the weather doesn't match my feelings about the day's possibilities. When I want to look like I mean business, I wear no-nonsense clothes so that nothing will distract from what I say or do. My clothes serve as an expression of my different moods.

I believe the reason for the differences between my older feminist friends and myself at 22 is in how we were



raised. I began elementary school in 1969. I vaguely remember major news events but learned most of what I know about the sixties in high school history classes. I learned about feminism from my mother after my parents separated in 1972. I was young enough that my mother's struggle to become independent only impressed on me that women can do or be anything they want, not that men held the power and women had to fight for it.

When I moved on into high school some teachers told me about women's contributions throughout history, even though the material wasn't in the history books or on the curriculums reading list. Shop courses were made available to girls and I played floor hockey with the boys in gym classes. I was encouraged to form my own opinions and to debate them in class. Between my mother, my mother's friends and precious few teachers at school, I grew up believing that it was okay to be female.

Besides gaining support from women in a variety of

places, some of the boys I went to school with also recognized and respected me as a person. I felt like a student and my sex was not an issue (most of the time). I did encounter men who expressed little faith in women and I learned that some men believe women should only be wives and mothers, and at the most secretaries or clerks. But those men were the exception, not the rule, and I didn't let them discourage me. I went on believing that I was not a lesser human being because of my sex.

I consider myself lucky. And I know that what I am, and the strength, dignity and pride I have in being female is a product of the goals women achieved before me. And if I assume that feminism will continue to evolve until we reach a state of equality, I can be sure that ten years from now some young woman will again have to define feminism, from her perspective, knowing in her heart that she is different from older feminists, and me.

Ria Tromp is a student in the Electronic Publishing Programme at Selkirk College.

## Oliver's BOOKS

BUS 9 TO PARADISE  
By Leo Buscaglia  
MAMMOTH HUNTERS  
BY Jean Auel  
WORLD OF ROBERT BATEMAN  
BY Robert Bateman

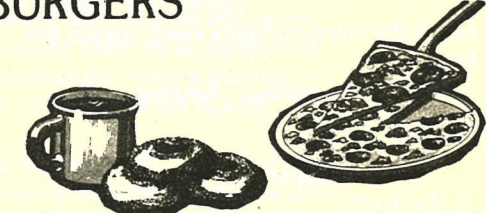
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# IMAGES' Dilemma

Unsolicited,  
inoperable,  
the pile grows,  
waiting to be read.

Until the cub reporter,  
unsuspecting,  
adds it to the agenda  
under  
"first reading--  
poems."

The noisiest,  
most opinionated collective  
in the west  
freezes  
into  
total  
silence,

editorial pens suspended  
unable to judge  
"confusing"  
"mis-spelled"  
"passive lead sentence"  
or even  
"politically incorrect"  
the tentative revelations  
of a sister's heart.

Wendy Hurst

# Coming back

The pieces were scattered from here to hell  
The pieces were shattered like a broken shell

Nothing to join them, nothing to connect  
Only a void left, an emptiness  
A droid, surviving through life  
Unaware of missing pieces out in space  
with invisible connection cords  
The droid begins to come to life  
With open eyes she sees  
The pieces coming together  
They start to fit  
To secure in place  
To come in focus  
She feels the pieces taking hold  
They have formed what they were meant to be  
The pieces of a little girl,  
That was meant to be me

A sexual abuse victim

# i thought

i thought  
if only i did  
a better  
job  
of being  
a wife  
a mother  
a lover  
you  
would love  
me  
more  
and would  
stop  
beating me up  
tearing me down  
ripping me apart  
so  
i  
tried harder  
and  
lost  
almost everything  
i  
thought i could  
forgive you  
i  
was  
wrong.

Elizabeth Penman

# Poem

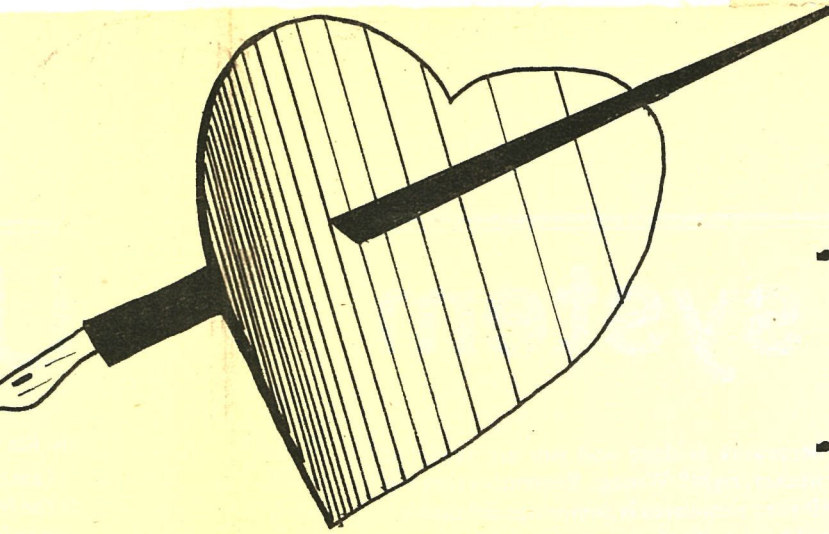
"full moon tonight"  
she says to her friend  
she watches it rise as  
she feeds her puppies  
then waits patiently  
until the children  
fall asleep  
bridle in hand she  
chooses her bitch  
and grey mare  
for company  
under the moon  
on the beach the coloured lights reach toward her  
dog at heels  
running, running  
over waves  
up over  
canter on  
caught in the spell  
the three  
become one  
horse/woman/dog  
thigh muscles  
holding  
back muscles

horse/woman/dog  
go higher  
through the orchard  
past arms of apple trees  
like beggars  
tethered in rows  
up a steep hill  
hands wrapped  
in mane  
legs urging onward  
same familiar path  
different illumination  
new perspective  
past skeletons of birches  
carpet of leaves  
past black stump  
immortalized by her poems  
past shadowy pines  
horse/woman/dog canters on  
on the rock above town  
she stops  
watches cars  
watches lights go out  
watches tunnel around moon  
hears dog in distance

aware of her watching  
mare chomps on the bit  
pulls the reins  
bitch drinks from a puddle  
"give me strength" she says to  
herself, the mare  
"give me courage" she says to  
herself, the bitch  
"for I am confused"  
horse tosses her head and moves  
toward home  
dog looks longingly from trail  
away from home  
"I see you understand.  
I will use your attributes  
for my growing."  
horse/woman/dog canters for home  
mare knows the direction  
woman holds neither mane nor reins  
urges her onward  
panting at heels  
under starlight  
under moonlight

Katherine Armstrong





## My flight was cancelled

It's seven o'clock  
Post Meridian  
Bored silly  
Watching trees go by  
Snow covered  
Still  
Silent  
Except for the hum of the bus motor  
Sway this way  
Sway that way  
Grinding my cheek bones into the window sill  
Knees cramping  
Can't stretch  
No way to get comfortable  
It's seven ten  
Post Meridian  
Bored silly  
Watching the trees go by

Ria Tromp

## Wonder

Does the earth rotate on pin or roller bearings?  
How long is the extension cord which powers the sun?  
Is it three pronged?  
And the deep black colander which makes the pin point  
stars at night  
Does it drain spaghetti by day?  
The clouds floating by on a summer's day  
Are they rayon or 100 per cent cotton?  
And when the sky develops leaks  
As it often does on the day of the picnic,  
Do they use transparent roofing tar to fill the holes?  
Or just another layer of plastic as I've been known to do?  
Is it a piston type or centrifugal pump which pushes water  
through those hidden pipelines to the tops of mountains  
Only to come cascading and rushing down again.  
And is snow a federal government program to keep the  
seasonally unemployed busy  
moving it about?

Sally Mackenzie

## The Calling

From the womb to the cave,  
In a cave of rage,  
From the cave to my room,  
My room of four walls of protection,  
From my womb to my room,  
The room, to the stage,  
Out of my rage!

Azul Pluvielle

## Seasoning

When I knew her in the summer,  
She woke me from my trance.  
But it was such a bummer  
'Cause I couldn't join her dance.

Very soon the lightnin' struck  
And sparks flew everywhere.  
Singed but smiling her hand I took  
And then grew back my hair.

When autumn came our colours blazed  
And love grew more intense.  
I stumbled through each day amazed  
That I had lost all sense.

The burning fire within me fed  
My urge to go around singing.  
Friends looked away, they shook their heads,  
Convinced I was a ding-a-ling.

Then winter's fingers took a hold.  
For me the flame was roaring.  
But she, she seemed so icy cold.  
What can I say? It was boring.

I ached for her with hungry need.  
She said, "I like it this way."  
'Twas as if upon me she had peed.  
She was gone by Valentine's Day.

Now Spring is near and we're apart.  
Oh how can I endure the pain?  
Well you seem neat. I'm sure my heart  
Will love and laugh again.

Lois Path



## Chutzpah

Suppressing second thoughts  
Three intrepid sisters  
Cover tremors with brave smiles  
And head towards the race.

At the summit  
With white-faced bravado  
Determined not to break a leg  
We made our way down into that  
Deep-snow, daredevil downhill  
Slipping and sliding  
And sometimes skiing  
With ever-backward sister-searching glances.

On the slalom course  
Parallel, right hand turns  
Were completed with style and grace  
Sometimes confidence and speed  
While turning left with more variety  
And flexibility of form  
One IMAGES racer occasionally retreated  
To earlier-learned, safer, slower  
Snow-plow stability.

And after three tags, many turns,  
tucks and tricks  
We skied down to the lodge  
One sore-ankled, hobbling,  
Another stiff-backed  
After somersaulting  
Smoothly over the finish line  
With on-snow head-banging precision  
and straight-out splat  
On thick, not so soft white stuff

Alas, not last in the relay race but seventh  
Our time double that of the fast  
And half that of the twelfth.  
"I've never thought of IMAGES as middle of the road,"  
Laughed an on-looker.  
Even prizes - petite, go-anywhere wine skins (for the team  
who came on the shortest notice)  
A successful day, I'd say  
For the IMAGES Ad Hoc Ski Team  
At the Media Cup Race.

Joy Green

## Fie, Fie

I'm older now, they're telling me.  
The family baby on an aging tree.  
Those younger women peering at  
This relic who's lived history.

Once big on "real" and "relevance,"  
My words inspired uncommon sense.  
Now youngsters hear these self-same cries  
And toss me from the present tense.

Fie, fie on thus transforming me.  
This someone new I'll never be.  
For though I'm older, time has shown  
There's sense that Youth can never see.

Bonnie Baker



# Through a crack in the system

By Alexa West

Interface, a provincial program set up between the Ministries of Human Resources and Education, offers an opportunity for women to return to school. Finally some of the rules are being broken or at least bent in the right direction. Now there is some individual choice of occupations as opposed to programs labeled "Welfare Available."

My own personal experience says this is unique. In 1982, while a student at Simon Fraser University, I went into the Burnaby office of Human Resources to ask for some end-of-the-semester assistance in getting food for my children. I was told, "Lady if you want to go to school that's your fault. Quit or starve." Today it's 1986 and I am in school taking a program that would have been tagged before as too academic (even though it is labeled vocational), too risky in terms of job prospects, too far above my intelligence or even worse as I have been told by Human Resources before, "You're a self starter. Take out your loans and go. If you can afford it." At the present time in British Columbia a loan taken out to cover a year of any educational program can cost you six thousand dollars; a four year program, twenty four thousand and the loan itself will barely cover books, tuition and part of your yearly rent. It will not cover the expense of raising a family.

It is still impossible to get assistance from Human Resources to take any program termed "academic." Human Resources will exempt you from looking for work

of less than two years, can be yours. Here you must be careful as interpretation of government policy can vary from office to office and that two years or less may or may not include the upgrading courses sometimes required in order to take the course of your choice. Make certain you have the entrance requirements by first consulting with the educational institution; see a counsellor, they cost nothing, or see the Program Head. Find out if you can be accepted and if there are spaces available in the course.

concern too.

Finally the homework is done and you are ready to approach your worker, right? Wrong. Remember that the "Human" in Human Resources is somewhat debatable. Your workers will have particular concerns and these may be based on their personal perceptions of you and your abilities. Often the issue of emotional stability is used. Keep the interview positive. Have some concrete examples ready of how you are the most stable and

**"If you want to go to school, that's your fault  
Quit or starve!"**

You have to do your homework. You must convince your worker that this course is the one that suits your needs and aptitudes, and that this course is the one absolutely necessary to make you employable. Aptitude tests are available through the Canada Employment Centre, take them, they are part of your ammunition. Is this an area you were good in at school? Dig up your old report cards or get a transcript of your grades. Know the costs of your course, the length of it, and if you can arrange the transportation necessary. Check out the daycare facilities. Human Resources will assist in paying. Does this course in any conceivable way fit in with any work experience, even volunteer, that you have done? Have this information documented. The primary concern of

together person on earth. For example, "I've always been reliable and well balanced and it's me that my family or friends turn to in times of crisis because I can be depended on to keep everyone else from falling apart." Don't get angry or ruffled, just keep calmly repeating your demands.

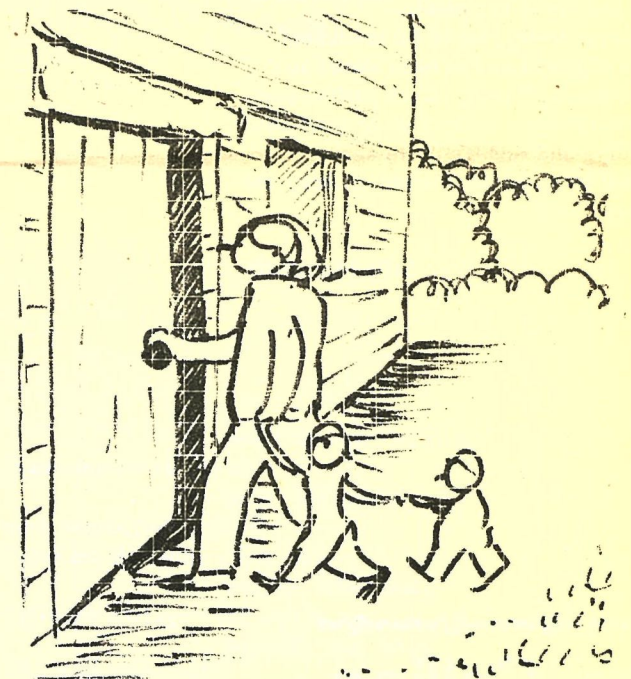
Hopefully you have done enough homework to convince them of your sincerity but if your worker says "Yes, but I would really like to see you try this out, or explore that angle," do it, but only to the extent that it suits your purposes. Also, your worker does not have the final say.

**Remember that the "Human" in Human Resources is debatable.**

while you are in school and they will work with you and help you get through school by supplying your living expenses as long as you are willing and eligible to take out a partial student loan, available from the provincial and federal governments, to cover the direct fees and expenses of the course you want to take.

What this means is that any course, vocational in nature,

Human Resources will be, can you get a job after finishing? If you want a particular college course go to the head of that department and inquire about the specific job possibilities. [Colleges would have difficulty in funding a course if they didn't have a way of proving that there were jobs out there for their students.] Check out the want ads, the C.E.C. lists; after all, getting a job is your prime



To be able to get approval for the course he or she must be able to present your case to a board who will make the final decision. The more information they have for your case the easier it will be to convince the board to give you the course you want. Be persistent. If they turn you down keep going back, as many times as it takes, and keep calm. Their decision can be appealed.

As I read these words I am reminded of the term "brown-nosing," or buttering-up the boss. It's hard to be compliant and calm when you feel your whole life is on the line. The point is that it is your life, your quality of existence that is important and inevitably it is your choice whether or not you are willing to pay for it, and fight for it. A two year program is still going to cost you money but your children won't starve while you are in school. You'd pay \$10,000 to buy a brand new car, you'll pay maybe \$3,000 to buy your schooling. To me that's worth it. And besides, they can't repossess an education.

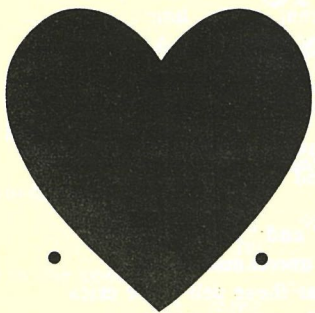
*Alexa West juggles single parenting, being a student and jumping bureaucratic hoops.*

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# "Purple" suits silver screen

by Bev Bradshaw

The Colour Purple may be the first book popular among feminists ever to have been made into a movie. And directed by Steven Spielberg, no less. He has made sure it is full of pathos and sentimentality, and indeed, the audience was tearful throughout. It opens with a scene in a ripe cornfield, where we can just make out the crouching silhouettes of two girls who are laughing and chanting a children's hand-clapping game. A stern man comes to order them into the house. As they stand up, we are shocked to see that one of them is very pregnant.

As we know from the book, the lives of Celie and Nettie are marred by rape, incest, physical beatings, emotional abuse, and a total lack of self determination and hope. The movie depicts these circumstances honestly and skilfully. And they are made believable by the superb acting of the cast, especially Whoopi Goldberg, who plays Celie. There is already talk of an Oscar for her performance. The solidness of the movie is reinforced by the very authentic set and the beautiful southern scenery. There is also some skilful and innovative photography in

this production.

But to me, the strongest appeal of The Colour Purple lies in Alice Walker's story line and the way it comes to life on the screen. We see Celie change from a frightened, illiterate, abused and hopeless child, into a happy, fulfilled and self-directed woman. These changes begin when Shug, formerly the lover of Celie's husband, moves into their house and finds in Celie something to admire and to love. No one has ever loved Celie before, except for her beloved sister, and Celie blossoms and blooms.

Here we come to one of the major departures from the book. The lesbian relationship between Shug and Celie, so central to the book, is merely hinted at in the movie. I found this quite disappointing and not very adventurous of director Spielberg. Instead, Shug becomes a sort of catalyst for the wonderful changes in Celie. And as soon as Celie realizes that she is a valid, worthwhile individual, it seems everyone in her family realize it too. Her new self direction is showcased in a very powerful scene in which Celie announces to all present that she is going to leave her abusive husband and states the reasons why.

There is a powerful subplot in the movie involving Celie's daughter-in-law, the indomitable Sophia. In the beginning, her assertiveness and spunk are a definite contrast to Celie's downtroddenness, but Sophia endures unbelievable humiliation for her pride. And ironically, it is Celie's liberation which leads to Sophia's jubilant "coming home." The other sub-plot, much more important in the book, concerns the adventures of sister Nettie in Africa. There are some magnificent sequences here, beautifully shot; but the fact that Nettie comes back into the story so near the end brings about a strange imbalance in the structure of the movie, as compared to the book.

The Colour Purple makes loud statements about man's inhumanity towards woman, about classism, racism and about women loving women in many ways. It depicts the strength of our love in a way that will warm your heart.

*Bev Bradshaw sings and arranges music for Images Ad Hoc Singers.*

## Letters

*This is an open letter to the members of Women & Words and to the community of women from the women of colour who were involved in trying to organize the 2nd Pan-Canadian conference of Women & Words in Toronto.*

Any organization that fights sexism must also confront racism. It was our understanding that the conference was to address the theme "Diversity is Strength", which in our understanding meant seeking the full participation of women writers (both self-identified and not) who have been traditionally excluded from the mainstream and ensuring that the conference address both the local and national concerns of women so that it would reflect our diversity of language, race, class, sexuality and geography. We were also committed to increasing the representation of older women, younger women, physically disabled women and poor women. The focus was not to be on women writers of the dominant race/class/language, but rather on the women whom the larger society has tried to mute.

In the interest of time, we will give but few of the incidents that led to our withdrawal.

1. That we sought to draw in black women and women of colour was seen as exclusionary rather than affirmative, with the result that, we were told we ought to have done more to make white women comfortable in participating in the committee.

It is an outrage that we who have been excluded from all levels of the dominant society since colonization began 500 years ago are now expected to make white women's comfort a priority.

2. We were criticized for not being "conciliatory", i.e., for challenging racist remarks, for not smoothing over "unpleasant" moments.

3. We were criticized about how slowly we worked, how information about the conference took long in filtering through the "white" women's literary community.

What was ignored is that in our efforts to preserve the vision of the conference most of the active work--the outreach, the phone calls, the rental of office space, the incorporation of the society, the raising of funds, etc. fell on the black women and women of colour.

4. There were complaints that white women in the community "felt like minorities," indicating that they believed their concerns would not be addressed.

To assume that we would exclude issues that did/do not

appear to affect us directly is a projection and an insult. 5. It was suggested that we were being unrealistic in wanting to address racism/multiculturalism and bilingualism.

What then was the conference about? Are we to believe that women's writing is divorced from these issues?

In withdrawing, we wish to point out that:

1. It is not our responsibility to comfort and reassure white women who are unaccustomed to working with black women and women of colour.
2. Racist remarks and attitudes are not open to conciliation and negotiation.
3. Any women's conference that does not seek to address a diversity of issues affecting the lives of women serves only women of the dominant race and class.
4. It is not the task of black women and women of colour to educate white women about racism.

In closing, we'd like to say, that just as we have worked successfully in the past with white women who are

confronting their racism, so too do we, in the words of Audre Lorde, look forward to working with "...all women who can meet us, face to face, beyond objectification and beyond guilt." Unfortunately, the Toronto Women and Words Committee does not appear to be the place.

We want to thank the women from across Canada who shared in the vision of the 2nd Pan-Canadian Conference of Women and Words and who sent in comments and suggestions for workshops. However, the black women and women of colour have withdrawn from the organizing committee, and we understand that there will be no Pan-Canadian Women and Words Conference in Toronto in the summer of 1986.

Makeda Silvera  
Sharon Fernandez  
Michele Paulse  
Stephanie Martin

## KOOTENAY WOMEN: A REGIONAL ANTHOLOGY

SUBMISSIONS are sought for consideration in an ANTHOLOGY of SHORT STORIES, ESSAYS and POEMS by KOOTENAY WOMEN WRITERS. contributors must be women living in the Kootenays who have not yet published a volume of work. A three-person editorial board will select approximately 20 submissions for publication in the anthology. Sponsored by the Canada Council, this regional anthology is a project of the Kimberley Writer's Group.

MANUSCRIPTS must be typed, double-spaced.

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ESSAYS to a maximum of 3500 words.

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# On quilts and dragons in Alaska

By Deb Thomas

*On Why the Quilt-maker Became a Dragon, A Visionary Poem by Shiela Nickerson*  
 Illustrated by Judy Cooper  
 Vanessa Press (Fairbanks, Alaska: 1985)  
 59 pages. \$7.95.

One of the benefits of living alone, besides letting the dishes sit for a day or two, is that you can read poetry aloud without embarrassing yourself.

*On Why the Quilt-maker Became A Dragon, A Visionary Poem*, which is one long poem, deserves to be read aloud, though its deeper meanings are best perceived by a silent, reflective second reading. Something between a chant and a ballad, it breathes the distinctive air of the North - the smell of a cold sea, the colours of a brief Northern spring - and resonates with the sounds of wild coastlines, sea birds, the exhilarating rush of melting snow and ice.

Quilt-making, as the title suggests, is a central metaphor in the poem, as is the dragon. The poem is strewn with the names of quilting patterns (which are rather loosely connected to the verse on either side) and pictures of these quilting patterns in the corners of the pages. The images of the dragon are also consistent throughout, surfacing and receding as the development of her message requires.

Quilt-making is represented as a particularly female art and as image-making, like poetry. Shiela Nickerson begins by establishing that she is tired of image-making, "tired of poems":

*Once quilt-maker, I now unravel patterns*

She then proceeds to sew a quilt of words, a composite of pictures and experiences, from the history of the North and her own fertile mind's purposeful wanderings - and to thus chronicle her metamorphosis from "Quilt-maker" to "Dragon".

While never denying that quilt-making is an art, Nickerson seems to see this art as a symbol of something that contains women rather than freeing them:

*No Colonial woman, no quilt-making woman  
 sewing over a fram of gossip  
 ever before became a dragon  
 taking the shape of clouds.*

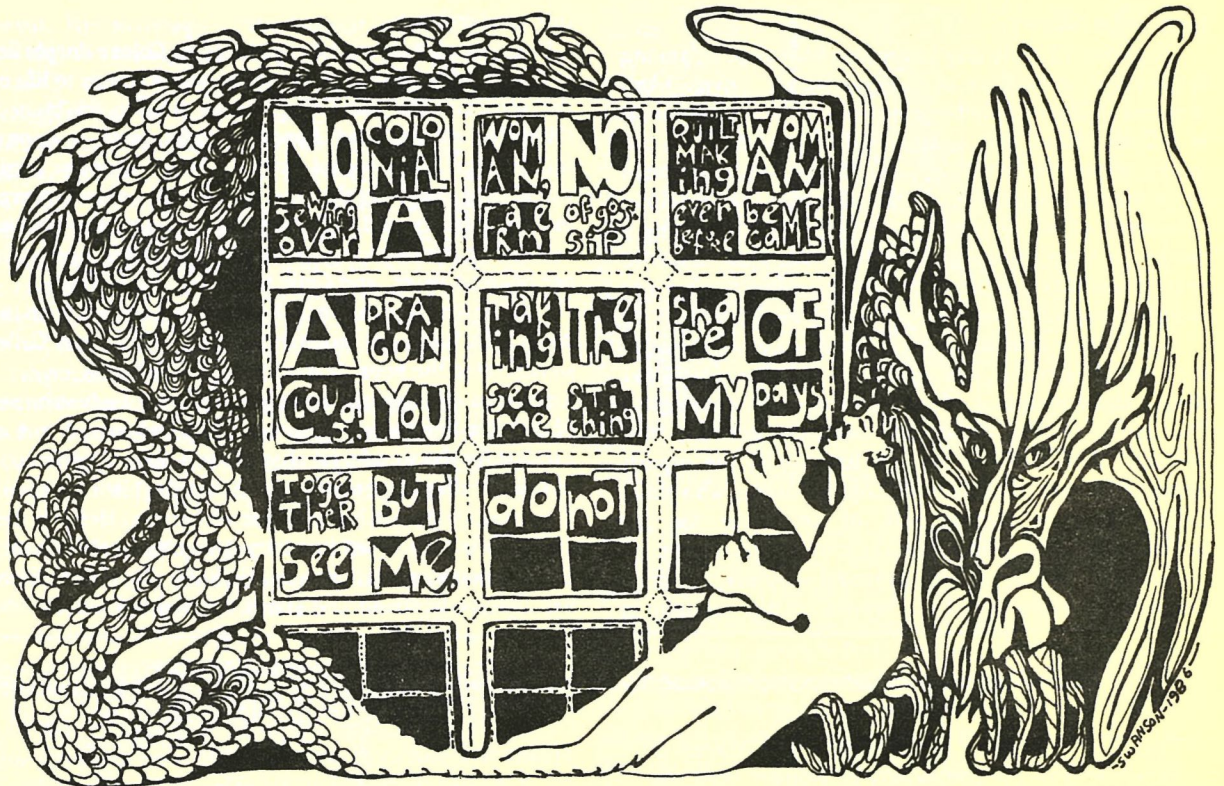
She sees the quilt-making as part of the cloak of traditional womanhood that blinds others to the dragon inside her:

*You see me stitching my days together but do not  
 see me.  
 You see me holding socks,  
 pants, plates--Blue Onion,  
 Viceroy--that is only  
 the crack in your eye.  
 I live beyond your field of vision.*

Nickerson gives us images of the secret flight of freedom and imagination welling from the bound mind and heart. These images take shape as the dragon which becomes a metaphor for the relationship of the unbound woman to the natural world:

*I am dragon and woman  
 mist and earth,  
 sorrow and joy,  
 a dance of negative ions.*

*I am confluence  
 When you enter my body,  
 you enter the waters of the world,  
 the flow of the stars.*



The poem has curiously few images of the harsh cold, long days of winter darkness, Inuit, dogsleds, and many of the other things we associate with Nickerson's native Alaska. Instead she brings forth image after image of colour and creation. These images become the poet herself, incarnate as nature's lifeforce:

*In March when colour creeps  
 quietly into the woods,  
 it carries my blood.  
 How else could the blueberry  
 blossoms find their pink  
 in the dark of the winter woods?*

and in a particularly lovely passage:

*As I breathe fire of creation,  
 lovers turn in their beds,  
 reach out from the sheeted flesh  
 to touch the sense of light  
 that ripples through their quilts.*

Her major departure from this is the centre six pages of the poem. Here she recounts the grim stories of Northern deaths - from freezing, shipwreck, exposure. In particular, she tells of a family found frozen centuries after their dying and of the wreck of the S.S. Princess Sophia from which none survived.

She leaves these dark passages, saying:

*You see why I couldn't stay:  
 No one wanted [especially the men]  
 Cemeteries, dsundered ships, sickness,  
 prison, deserted children  
 frozen in cloth.*

She questions why the full range of life, in its ordinary and extraordinary realities, in its sinister and beneficent forms alike, can't also be sewn into a quilt:

*Never have we quilted  
 shipwreck, disease, prison,  
 the story of the daughter  
 who ran away from home,  
 the failure necessary as rain,  
 the lessons dark as ravens.*

Nickerson has given us several interwoven themes which become one theme in this poem. She explores woman in her traditional role as wife, mother/nurturer, domestic, and reveals the dragon inside waiting to take flight.

Her theme of man's refusal to face the destructive nature of the North ties in here, as well as her representation of the dragon as creator, earth, mother, goddess:

*before the official religions  
 shrank me, made me shadowy  
 as the mists I inhabit,  
 made me gossamer and fey.*

and the deliberate suppression of the goddess/earth worship, of the turning away by the patriarchal religions from the dark, magic explosion of life that was "she", centuries before Christ, Buddha or Mohammed.

All these become one theme: the struggle of life, earth, darkness, femaleness against the patriarchal structures which deny them.

Nickerson uses the old bardic device of repetition to drive home her images and themes, and to give fluidity and substance to the poem. Lilies, ravens, comets, death, the sensuous discovery of self or another, the dragon as omniscient, omnipresent lifeforce - all occur again and again throughout the poem. These images are presented in successive contexts which gradually develop them. In the following passages, lilies and light in the early pages of the poem become lilies and ravens toward the end of the poem:

*Come lap the drinkable light  
 from the stream I now command.  
 It will fill your mind  
 with lilies till it breaks  
 then take you where I am.*

*consider the lilies how they grow:  
 they toil not, they spin not:*

*And according to Tlingit mythology,  
 God Raven was white in the beginning.*



**QUILTS continued from page 12.**

The poem does feel at times as if it could have been shorter and delivered the same messages. The image of dragon/self as earth/natural force, for example, is repeated often throughout. Though each mention is different enough to become another facet of a greater picture, they are not all so different as to give new meaning and so are not essential to that greater picture.

In the interests of succinctness, Nickerson could have cut the poem by a few pages, and not run the risk of losing the reader's attention, particularly in the last half of the book. On first reading, my attention definitely began to wander in the last half. By the third reading, I was held more firmly and Nickerson's reasons for each image were more clear. Not everyone will choose to read the book three times, however, to gain this understanding.

Nickerson's message about quilt-making is a curious one, too. My view of quilt-making and other fabric arts is that they have been, for centuries, an artistic release for women who otherwise would not have had one. Today,

they are, through the efforts of women like Judy Chicago and Vancouver's Persimmon, beginning to take their rightful place alongside other art forms like painting and sculpture. I am uncertain whether Nickerson grants this and says only that art is not enough, is not complete transcendence, or whether she sees quilt-making only as a containment and not release.

Nickerson suggests that transcendence can only come if you, too, can be "a woman who/finds new ways...if you dare walk in/to the quilt you have made."

The poem concludes with the fading of dragon and quilt into the very real people in Nickerson's life. She tells us that she has found those with whom she is:

*...not afraid to talk  
of flying from earth,  
my energy ringing behind me  
like bells in the minds  
of those I have known.*

She intimates a kind of enlightenment of seeing things and people vibrant in their essential life forces. But it is not the enlightenment of patriarchal religions, for it offers no absolute good, truth, or right, no perfect light. Nickerson suggests that she could succeed:

*in making you think  
you had heard a kind of wisdom,  
something you could cling to  
that would save you from foundering*

*but the decks are all icy,  
and there is only time to say good-bye.*

The poem is beautiful throughout and it is this that keeps one reading, as well as the sense of a tale of magic being told by a timeless bard.

*Deb Thomas is a writer living in Nelson who would prefer to write full time but can't, yet.*

# Tapestry and teamwork weave creation

By Eileen Pedurson

The Birth Project is Judy Chicago's second five-years-in-the-making work of art celebrating women's lives and experiences. The first was The Dinner Party which I saw in Calgary three years ago and whose beauty and symbolism nearly blew me off the face of the earth.

The Birth Project is a large series of works, eighty tapestries consisting of three basic images: Creation of the World, Birth and The Crowning. The images created by Chicago have been done in needlework and other tapestry techniques by women in their homes from all over the United States, from New Zealand and from Ann Gibson of Vancouver.

One of the six parts of the project was exhibited in Vancouver last summer. That's where I saw it. It was a long time ago, but I've never forgotten the feelings and awe that filled me as I stood rooted to the ground drinking in the beauty of the images, the stitches, the colours, and how they blended and melded together. Mixed emotions--ecstasy that Chicago took on another huge project and sadness that the process of birthing often has been traumatic, painful and isolating.

I think my favourite tapestry was Ann Gibson's "Thou Art the Mother Womb." She has embroidered the Earth Mother erupting, giving birth to life in the image of a volcano. The hot flaming lava is actually a group of people gently and intently squeezing up through the earth, arms outstretched, heads lifted upwards, being born. Two of the mountains in the background are spewing lava-breasts with food for life. It's incredible to me how Gibson blended the red and yellow threads to look like feathered strokes of a paint brush, and with a needle, no less.

The largeness of some of the images of women and even the crudeness of some was interesting to me. The largeness spoke of the immense beauty of the life-giving force; the crudeness of the intensity of the trauma of birthing.

I remember wondering how many millions and billions of stitches women's hands had singly stitched throughout the creation of this project, beginning with samples of their work initially sent to Chicago plus pieces that had to be redone. What commitment to us! The needleworkers worked as volunteers, as did the researchers and Chicago. There was a small core staff which was paid to administer the project with money raised by Through the Flower, a non-profit corporation formed during the making of The Dinner Party. Through the Flower owns, cares for, and circulates The Birth Project.

I didn't like everything about The Birth Project. One thing I hated was trying to get a sense of where the head

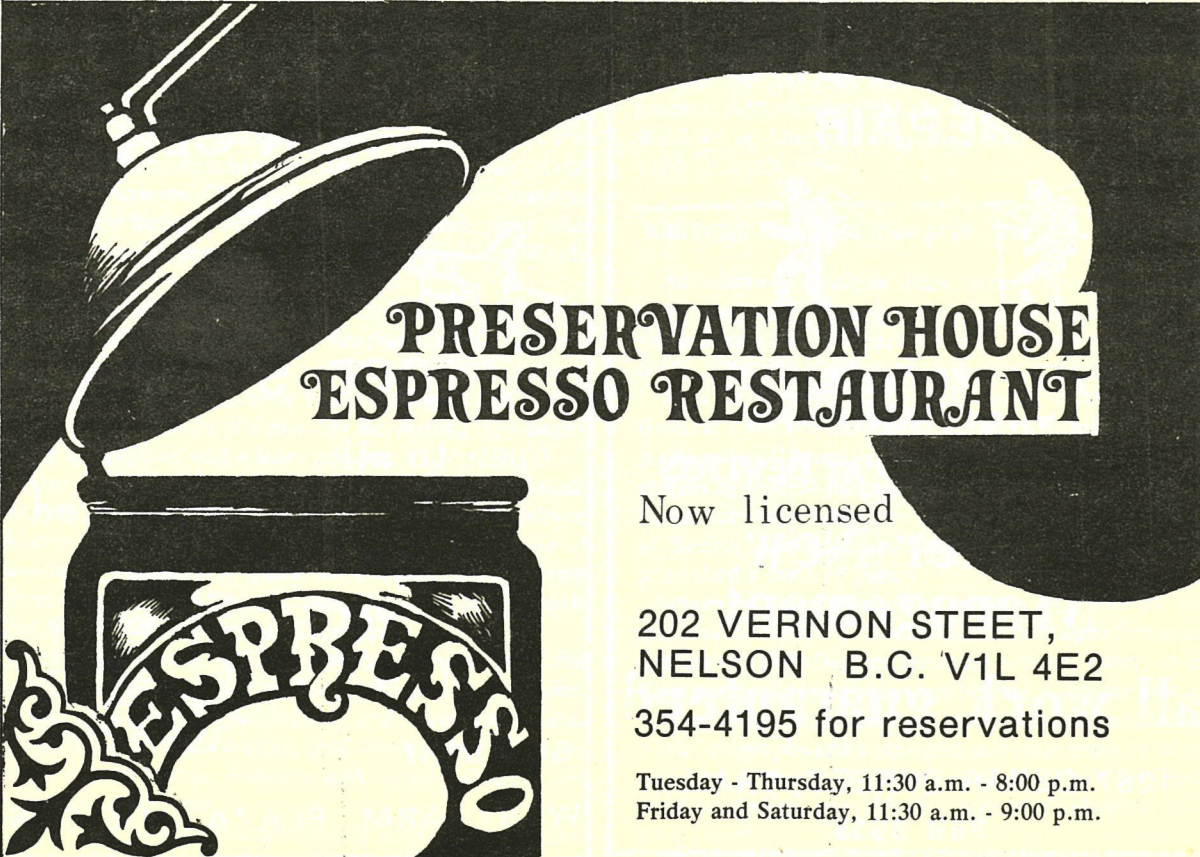
was on some of the images. And, while I read almost every write-up/letter/journal entry that Chicago included in the display and immensely appreciated that she included the communication process as part of the art form, I found it tedious after a while. I did value her honesty in recognizing and attempting to deal with her own limitations in relation to the women she worked with. She had to come to terms with the reality of their lives--that commitment to The Birth Project didn't necessarily mean devoting 16 hours a day to it; that some had children to deal with, these very children Chicago was celebrating, and that those children sometimes got sick; that they had their own dilemmas and depressions and other interests and commitments and that this took time. This struggle and others are documented in Chicago's journal entries.

Throughout the write-ups, Chicago took credit for what she did; that is, she bragged a lot. I felt slightly embarrassed about this and remembered that our society teaches us to downplay our strengths. She admirably

ignored that piece of unwisdom. She could have given the women who actually did the needlework more visible credit, though perhaps displaying the tapestries themselves along with letters from the needleworkers was sufficient.

I think Chicago takes on incredible challenges. "Attracted to the void, I plunged into the subject," she writes, about the lack of birth images in the libraries she researched. Instead, she got her information and images through learning about the birth experience and the nature of these women's lives by going directly to them. She wanted to dispel some of the secrecy around the myths, mystery, and stereotypes of birth that surfaced throughout the discussions. And she wanted "to introduce images of birth and information about the reality of women's lives to a wide audience of viewers. The Birth Project is meant to travel for years and be inexpensive and easy to exhibit and ship." And it is. Any one of us could bring it in.

*Eileen Pedurson is a long time supporter of Images and advocate for women.*



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# Homophobia debate Pamphlet provokes controversy

By Lois Path

The issue of homophobia, the unreasonable fear of lesbianism, has troubled the women's movement since its beginning. Here in the Kootenays, where lesbian and straight women have worked side by side for years, cries of homophobia have been heard again in recent months. There was a meeting at the Nelson Women's Centre to discuss this issue on January 22, the result of a series of events that started last summer.

Late last August, a pamphlet entitled "Mom, What's a Women's Centre?" appeared in several places around Nelson. It was subtitled "Myths and Facts about Women's Centres" and ended with the statement "Pamphlet provided courtesy of Nelson Women's Centre."

This pamphlet had been designed and distributed by some of the students who worked at the Centre during the summer. These students felt that they had learned something about how all sorts of women can work and grow together, so they decided they wanted to share their insights and try to dispel some of the myths and fears that surround the Women's Centre in the greater Nelson community. Apparently they discussed this idea with Carol Beauchamp, co-ordinator of the Nelson Women's Centre, then wrote, copied, and distributed the pamphlet without further approval.

The students believed that their pamphlet had been received enthusiastically when one woman asked for more pamphlets, reporting that all that she had been given had already been taken and read by interested persons. The students, who had distributed all the pamphlets they had produced, quickly made more copies to fulfill this request.

Soon after, Beauchamp became aware of "vague mutterings" expressing criticism of the pamphlet. She addressed the problem briefly in September's West Kootenay Women's Association newsletter, asking people to express their responses openly. Meantime, the students left Nelson to attend school.

At the September meeting of the W.K.W.A., some three weeks after the appearance of the pamphlet, Susan White and Marcia Braundy presented their criticisms and supposedly those of their absent friends. Their primary concerns centred around their belief that the pamphlet was homophobic and that the Women's Centre had alienated a large portion of the lesbian community. White revealed that the request for more pamphlets had been engineered by her in order to destroy them. Braundy added that she had talked to one of the students about her concerns. They both requested that the Women's Centre, as the party responsible for issuing the pamphlet, apologize for its error. (Note: the Women's Centre is one of several projects administered by the W.K.W.A.; therefore, the W.K.W.A. was asked for the apology.)

then we have a problem."

The following week, six women who found the pamphlet offensive met in a taped interview with IMAGES. Many specific criticisms were given, indicating that the pamphlet (see insert) was seemingly aimed at presenting a more "acceptable" image of the Women's Centre to the community-at-large; lesbians, poor women, and women who have anger at the patriarchy are portrayed in a negative, invalidating light, making them seem unwelcome at the Centre.

Other subjects came up for discussion in this interview, including the desire for the Women's Centre to be a place for all women, where we can all feel welcome and safe. Several articulated their compassion and understanding of the difficulty of sustaining one's energy in providing a

**"If being heard means being agreed with, then we have a problem."**

The members of the W.K.W.A. explained that the pamphlet had been distributed without their approval and agreed that it could have been done more effectively. There was disagreement, given the intentions of the students, about whether the pamphlet was homophobic or offensive.

White and Braundy believed that they were met with defensiveness and that they were not heard. White reported that she left the meeting by saying, "I am leaving now because it's useless to talk to you; there's no reason for me to be here."

According to Beauchamp, the biggest problem in handling the criticisms at that particular meeting was the delay in having opposing opinions brought forward. "Ideally they would have talked to us immediately," she said. Her view of the meeting was that White in particular was heard, responded to, interacted with, "even though we did not agree. If being heard means being agreed with,

place where women come to find other women and women's activities, only to move on after their needs are met. Everyone expressed cautious hope that our problems can be worked out.

Two nights later, in what was supposed to be a taped interview with the W.K.W.A., the collective decided not to make any statement at that time, but rather, asked that the newspaper story be delayed until next issue so that they could have time to work on the problem. Collective members made it clear that they felt that the pamphlet was no longer a problem, only a symptom of deeper conflicts; they expressed the desire for the Women's Centre to be a place where all women can feel welcome and safe, for everyone to listen to and hear each other, and to agree to disagree.

Along with October's W.K.W.A. newsletter came an "Open letter to all W.K.W.A. members and interested members of the women's community" (see insert), in which the W.K.W.A. stated "their regrets that anyone was hurt by the contents of said pamphlet." They also encouraged those interested in resolving these conflicts to contact W.K.W.A. members. Meantime, efforts were made by collective members to contact individuals and initiate discussions around these issues.

By early December, no one had called to express interest in having a meeting or doing anything to resolve the conflicts. IMAGES contacted some of the individuals who had offered criticisms to determine their responses to the open letter.

White said she was resentful that the open letter contained no apology, that the W.K.W.A. was "trying to duck responsibility" and "not seeing the problem." Consequently, she was reluctant to attend a meeting. She concluded, "This is a political disagreement. A feminist organization should have a public stance of embracing, not just denying, any accusations."

Braundy believed that the open letter "did not admit ownership" of the pamphlet. Of solving the conflicts at a meeting, she said, "There's only a small hope in hell. I would need some indication that there will be no defensiveness and they will be open to hearing criticism."

Other responses included: "The open letter had a poor tone. I felt hurt that it was unsigned; the personal touch was missing. This situation was not handled best in a letter;" and "the open letter did not treat homophobia as a valid issue."

At their December meeting, the W.K.W.A. scheduled January 22 for an open meeting to discuss homophobia

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and other issues of concern; Maggie Haley and Garth Greatheart co-facilitated. Those present agreed to bar IMAGES members from attending as reporters, but some individuals gave statements to IMAGES afterwards.

Comments ranged from, "It was a worthwhile meeting because of the great facilitators, and people did express their feelings," to "I think people were heard, but there's still a feeling of them and us."

White said, "Given the Women's Centre's willingness to give priority to the needs of heterosexual women, why oppose efforts for lesbian women? What if lesbian needs were the priority? Why aren't they?"

One observer pointed out, "There were courageous women on either side. It's hard to imagine being on a side."

Another participant described her impressions. "It was stilted most of the way through... The process was limited because one side wasn't there. They were represented by well-meaning friends. There will be changes, but not from an intrinsic understanding, even though there is positive intention and genuine caring. If there's a group who doesn't like the way the Women's Centre is run, we can join the collective and make changes."

Presently, the Women's Centre has put up posters supporting lesbianism, one of the requests made at the meeting. Regular meetings for the discussion of homophobia in the community have been scheduled, and several workshops on lesbian concerns are being discussed for International Women's Day.

*Lois Path is an IMAGES Collective member and regular contributor.*

*The following open letter was sent to all women from the West Kootenay Women's Association.*

On September 11, at our monthly meeting of the W.K.W.A. Coordinating Collective, two presentations were made expressing anger and hurt in reaction to the pamphlet "Mom, What is a Women's Centre". Criticisms and analysis of the pamphlet followed as well as clarification of the history and intent from several members. In the course of the meeting, W.K.W.A. Coordinating Collective members were informed that some members of the women's community feel that the Women's Centre is 1) homophobic and 2) not open to

## What Is A Women's Centre ?

Women's Centres have REPUTATIONS - You may have heard good things about Women's Centres, but you may also have heard bad things. Here are some things people say about Women's Centres which aren't true, and which don't sound very good.

**Myth # 1**

-Women's Centres are only or mostly for lesbians, and if a heterosexual woman goes to one, they will "come on" to her, or molest or harass her.

**Fact**

-this isn't true. There may be lesbians at a Women's Centre, but they are people just like you - you have probably met plenty of lesbians before and didn't even know it. No one at a Women's Centre will be molested or harassed by anyone - it's a place



where all women can go to feel safe.

**Myth # 2**

-Women's Centres are full of strident feminists who hate men and who want to break up your family.

**Fact**

-Feminists are people (some men call themselves feminists too) who are working for women to be able to make whatever choices are best for them, through learning and discussion. The feminists at your women's Centre may have husbands and families. They may not. But your choice will be respected. Opportunities will be given so that you can learn about other choices, and maybe you can teach other women about yours.

The reason that men aren't encouraged in the Nelson Women's Centre building except by invitation is because the work that goes on there is confidential.



The Women's Centre does work with battered women and rape victims. Women need a place where they are special - and where they can always find safety and security.

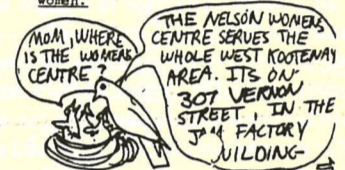


**Myth # 3**

- You have to be really down to use a women's Centre - and they even have a dress code - everyone has to wear T-shirts and jeans, or look like a hippie.

**Fact**

-Women's Centres provide help and services for all women. You can dress any way you like. You don't have to be poor, either - the Women's Centre is for all women.



criticism on that issue.

In reaction to these expressed feelings, the coordinating collective would like clearly to express their regrets that anyone was hurt by the contents of said pamphlet.

We would also like to clarify a few points:

- 1) The W.K.W.A. is a feminist organization and has always been pro-choice on issues of abortion and sexuality. Lesbian rights are recognized as a fundamental part of the range of basic women's rights.
- 2) The W.K.W.A. encourages open and direct criticism of any of our actions. If women feel unable to present criticisms, we see that as a serious problem that we would like to resolve.
- 3) The W.K.W.A. is the politically active arm of the feminist community. The Womens Centre itself is a drop-in centre open to all women, and that must include women who are not feminists. Apparently there are concerns that in making the services of the Centre

available to all women, the political will of the association has been lessened. These issues have been in some women's minds before the pamphlet came out, and again constitute a serious conflict that should be resolved.

4) The pamphlet was a genuine attempt to address women who fear women's centres and feminism. The pamphlet also was never approved by the coordinating collective.

The coordinating collective is very willing to be part of a process where feelings are made clear, where facts and opinions are clarified, where problems are identified and defined and ultimately solved.

There have been assumptions made on all sides about the pamphlet and the larger issue of lesbianism and the W.K.W.A., which need to be talked about with each other. If you are interested in coming to a meeting to try and resolve these conflicts, and to discuss the issues of lesbianism and the W.K.W.A., contact Tish at 352-7068 (home) or 352-3377 (work), or Marg at 352-7115.

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# The wrong kind of lesbian?

By Alice Holmes

I recently heard a charge levelled against a woman in the feminist community that she was the "wrong kind of lesbian." Being the wrong kind of anything is a difficult concept for me to grasp. I suppose if you were looking for a gynecologist, an ear, nose and throat specialist would be the wrong kind of doctor. Having the wrong kind of politics is a common affliction; it's hard to know who you might offend by sitting on the wrong side of an issue. Censorship is a hot one. So is reproductive choice. Commenting publicly that Joe Borowski might have a point could make you very unpopular in some circles. But politics don't make a person--or do they?

A person's politics can often be divined by the election sign in their front yard. Or their bumperstickers. We've all seen them and made judgments: Expo Sucks--she's alright; I Love My Cat--she's shallow; I Brake for the Hell of it--he's an asshole. Lifestyle is a more subtle political indicator and should be used with caution - it's easy to get trapped by stereotypes. For example, it is not true that all Subaru owners vote NDP, or that all the women in your t'ai chi class are feminist vegetarians. On the other hand, all pink Cadillac owners vote Social Credit and sell Mary Kay. All of which leads me to the question who, or perhaps what, is wrong here?

The obvious answer is, "it all depends where you're standing", but unfortunately, defining political correct-

ness is seldom so simple. Let's get back to the issue of sexuality. Many people would argue that your sexuality is out of the realm of personal choice, that your sexual preference just is, as in "I am a lesbian" or "I am heterosexual", or "I am confused". Of course, bisexuality offers more scope for the human sexual will, as does the virtue of celibacy versus sexual activity, but that's another can of worms. So, given the premise, "I am heterosexual", how can you be the wrong kind of heterosexual? if you are a rapist or commit other forms of sexual abuse you certainly earn my vote. If you suffer from

housework. Being the wrong kind of lesbian would mean for me things like... rigid sex-role stereotyping, subscribing to the Hustler and the Frederick's of Hollywood mentality, and not helping out with the housework. But what political line do you toe in the quest for sexual correctness?

If being the right kind of lesbian means choosing to be a lesbian because being a woman and a feminist demands it, I confess that I am the wrong kind of lesbian. If it means viewing lesbianism as the only enlightened route to our destiny as women, I'm afraid I'm on the wrong bus. If it

## She looks like anyone in the checkout line except for the eyeshadow.

severe one-night-stand syndrome I would say there's something not quite "right" there, though this phenomenon may be on the decline due to herpes simplex and the instinct for self-preservation.

It seems, though, that being responsible for the correctness of your sexuality depends not only on the moral choices you make, but the political ones as well. In political terms being the wrong kind of heterosexual would mean for me things like rigid sex-role stereotyping, subscribing to the Hustler and the Frederick's of Hollywood mentality, and not helping out with the

means loving women and being accepting of our sisters' struggles however unenlightened they may be, then maybe I'm on track. Even if they do insist on doing dumb things like taking off their shirts at women's dances, or really infuriating things like refusing to learn to fix their own cars, or outrageous things like only drinking organically grown coffee, or having babies, or getting tattooed, or having weird haircuts or not having any haircuts or...well, what I really mean to say is, black and white is not a very attractive colour combination this year.

It's difficult to write about the wrong kind of lesbian without really knowing what the right kind of lesbian is. I have this kind of romanticized picture of her as someone who looks a lot like Gertrude Stein without the poodle-- no hair, imposing gaze, with Kate Millet under one arm and Adrienne Rich under the other, *their books, not them*, you understand. She scorns monogamy as a bourgeois institution of the patriarchy and has curtailed all her dealings with men. My ideal lesbian has come out to her family, friends, neighbours, therapist and the women in her kung fu class. She works for a women's health collective, does backhoe work on the side, and makes potholders with lots of labia and feminist revolutionary messages stitched into them. When she's not picketing video stores and anti-abortion rallies, she spends her time writing erotic short stories and organizing her campaign to run in the municipal elections on the Freedom of Sexual Choice ticket. It goes without saying that she will win.

We can infer by process of elimination that the wrong kind of lesbian has lived with the same woman for years. She may even have a poodle. In fact, she looks like anyone in the checkout line at Safeway except for the eyeshadow. She has come out to her sister and several of her close friends but she's still trying to work up the nerve to tell her mother that she's a lesbian. She's not quite sure why falling in love with a woman necessitates public announcements at all. She works at a daycare centre, does bookkeeping on the side, and when she's not thinking about changing careers she's thinking about having another baby. It goes without saying that she might...someday. If the wrong kind of lesbian ever encountered the right kind of lesbian, which seems unlikely given their natural habitats, they would probably both spontaneously combust from the overwhelming air of mutual disapproval they'd emit.

As my imaginary lesbians disappear in a cloud of smoke, I can't help thinking that what we need is a lesbian guide to excruciatingly correct behaviour. The Lesbian Manifesto has a certain ring to it. Or maybe Real Lesbians Don't Have Babies. Or how about Ma, Can I Be a Lesbian and Still Like Men? In any case, until some intrepid woman decides to compile the rules (hm. I wonder if the Canada Council would go for it?), I ain't gonna worry about it.

*Alice Holmes expects shortly to disappear in a puff of smoke.*

# THE



# ENEMY WITHIN

A Political Comedy  
About the Premier  
his Cleaning Woman  
Restraint and YOU



Local actor Meredith Bain Woodward, a founding member of Theatre Energy, has taken a job as Bill Bennett's cleaning lady. Woodward is appearing in a new touring production of Headline Theatre Company's *The Enemy Within*. The play is a political comedy about the Premier, his Cleaning Woman, Restraint, and you!

Scheduled to appear in Nelson at the Civic Theatre on February 27, *The Enemy Within* will be seen in Castlegar on February 28, Winlaw on March 1, Trail on March 2, and Grand Forks on March 4.

During the summer of '85, Headline Theatre's latest hit play *The Enemy Within*, played to packed audiences throughout the Lower Mainland. Here's what the critics had to say: "a funny, incisive Sacred bash...Bracing!" - Jeani Read, the Vancouver Province. "scathing satire" - D. Simmons, Coquitlam Now. "...mixes its politics with comedy adroitly" - Kerry Moore, The Vancouver Province.

*The Enemy Within* is a play which proves that even if the Human Rights Commission has gone up in smoke, the School Board has gone down the toilet and food bank line-ups are going around the block, there is comic relief from Restraint. And where there is laughter, there's hope...and a game plan to fight back.

Meet Claire. Secretly in love with William, the Premier, she has been cleaning his office (and going through his desk) for years. Privy to the garbage of the Premier's Office, Claire is interested and secure in her job. Until, in the name of restraint, William throws Claire's job out the window and Claire along with it. Her mops and pails are now rendered redundant.

Follow Claire as she, like so many of us, personally battles the rinse cycle of B.C.'s unemployed: the U.I.C. office. The welfare interview. The Food Bank.

Follow William, as he like so few of us, revels in his own vision of *The New Reality: Pacific Rim Development*. B.C. Coal. The Site "C" Dam. The Coquihalla Highway. Expo. A flexible (!) work force.

Watch as Claire's love turns to revenge and William's vision blurs with too many Expo parties. And finally, join Claire as she invites us to help her take over the Premier's Office and we all become, *The Enemy Within*.





# Collectivial



It's 1986 (or 1985 plus 1, since Expo you-know-what tarnished the '86.) IMAGES hereby announces its position on this subject: boycott (or girlcott) the damned thing. Expo has already drained the Kootenays of some of its best people, and we don't want to pay it any more homage, thank you.

Since we are coming out almost on top of Valentine's Day, it seems a fitting subject for reflection. Love, the lack of it, the millions made on candy and cards, the romance...the images and fantasies that cloud our vision about real, three-dimensional people. Our story on Male Cheesecake (page 4) brings these images into focus.

And the Kootenay School of Writing's Valentine's Day poetry contest may have been what inspired two full pages of poetry in this IMAGES. Dreadfully "hard line" on the subject, the Collective has accepted self-criticism and, to further illustrate our new or at least modified "line", each of us has produced a poem of our own. "IMAGES' Dilemma" on the poetry page (pages 8 and 9) describes our problem.

Now that we have done it, we need the poets to tell us whether they expect criticism of their work, whether they want discussion of the "art" of their writing, or only a place to voice the content. The Collective finds evaluating prose and journalism an easier process in the context of feminist content; we expect form to be refined and edited to more clearly express the subject matter. Poetry, however, is or has always seemed, less "to the point." It is "art," and we, not being "artists," either treat it with kid gloves or hostility. In a workshop given by Deb Thomas, a contributor to the paper and a poet in her own right, "art" was demystified somewhat, but we really would like poets to bring their work to the Collective meetings so we can know on what level to approach it. Content is easy.

Due to our production schedule, we will not have an

International Women's Day issue, but we have heard that the West Kootenay Women's Association (aka the Nelson Women's Centre) is planning weeks of displays to raise Nelson's consciousness, as well as art, music and dance for women to enjoy. We know other women's centre and groups are planning for this event as well.

During the production of this issue, The Collective discussed the subject of splits in social movements, and specifically in the women's movement, trying to analyze the causes and effects of those splits. The collective article on this has not yet been written, but the incident that inspired the discussion can be read about on page 14. Let us know what you think?

Starting next issue, the IMAGES Collective will revive the practice of basing every other issue on a theme. We abandoned the practice a few years ago when we realized our slow production schedule was often due to difficulty accumulating thematic content by our deadlines. Now, due to better organization, and some feedback from our readers, we hope we can broaden our analysis around themes of relevance to women.

In this vein, our next issue will be about Unemployment - how it feels, what are its causes, creative ways to reduce it, creative ways to change the roots of its causes, and government funding. Please submit your articles on the subject by our copy deadline, March 27, 1986. In addition, for the first (and probably the last) time, IMAGES will pay a small honorarium to show our appreciation for women's work in the only form that pays for the groceries.

And finally, The Collective wants to thank the Common Typesetting Group for giving us it's assets, including the typesetting machine. In return, we agreed to make the machine available at cost to community groups. We also thank Moe Lyons, a founding mother of IMAGES, for sending us a used but excellent copy processor from

Dumont Press Graphics in Kitchener, Ontario. Together, our machines are working smoothly for the first time. Thanks.

Please let us know what you think of the paper; we sometimes get lonely and wonder what you out there think of what we're doing. And also feel free to join us in this work. Thursdays, 7-10 p.m. at 307 Vernon Street in Nelson.

Collective workers this issue were: Bonnie Baker, Joy Green, Wendy Hurst, Sally Mackenzie, Lois Path, Marg Tessman and Ria Tromp. Thanks again to Ann Swanson Gross for her artwork, Maureen Mitchell and Jane Lewis for typesetting, and Leanna Murray and Eileen Pedurson for their contributions.



IMAGES Kootenay Women's Paper, is published by a collective of women at 307 Vernon Street in Nelson, B.C. All articles are the responsibility of the Collective. We meet Thursdays from 7-10 p.m. Send your articles, short stories, graphics, photos (black and white only), letters, and poetry to Box 736, Nelson, B.C. V1L 5R4.

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