

HERizons

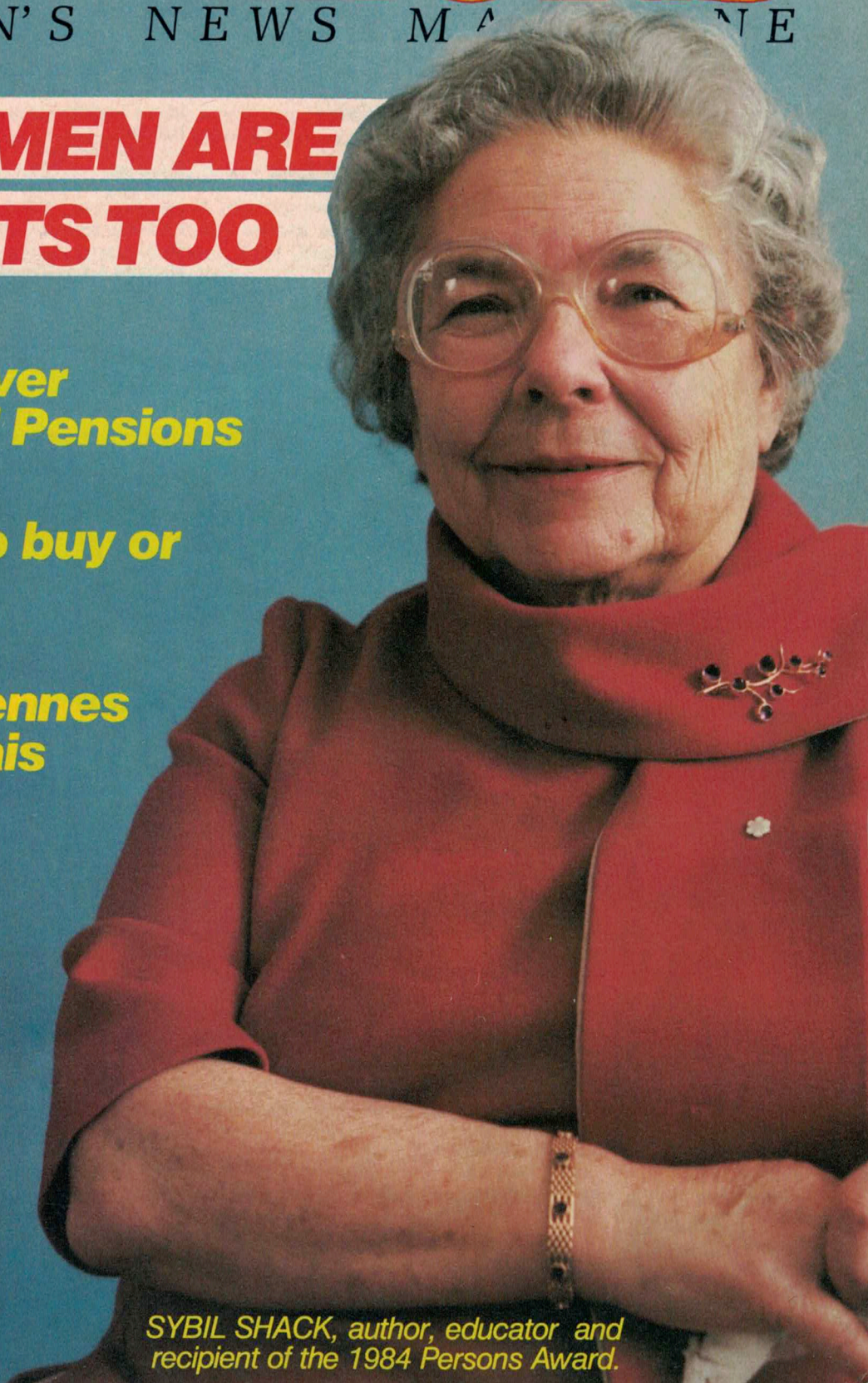
A WOMEN'S NEWS MAGAZINE

OLD WOMEN ARE FEMINISTS TOO

▼
**The Debate over
Homemakers' Pensions**

▼
**Computers: to buy or
not to buy**

▼
**Les Amérindiennes
Brimées, jamais
soumises**



SYBIL SHACK, author, educator and
recipient of the 1984 Persons Award.

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HERizons

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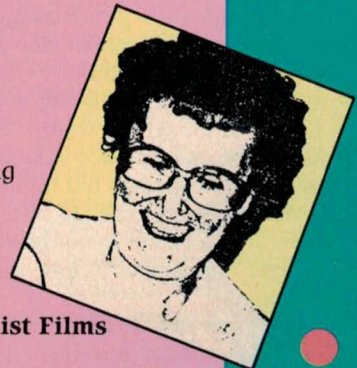
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editorial

Feminists and Old Ladies

Will it be harder to be a feminist as we grow older? If we listen to contemporary feminist elders — the answer is yes. We may joke about starting a feminist nursing home, knowing that as our bodies and relationships wane, we'll once again be subjugated to the full force of society's prejudices, but we have yet to come to terms with the prejudices of ageism *within* the women's movement.

In a review of the recently published Spinster Ink book *Look Me In The Eye: Old Women, Aging and Ageism*, reviewer Carolyn Heilbrun writes: "Nothing today, not even the love of a younger woman, prepares feminists for the harsh shock of ageism in our society." North American culture has never evolved the respect and valuing of elders which is common in older cultures. It has, however, developed a set of institutions (nuclear family, religious organisations and professional retirement plans) which administer to some of the practical needs of older people. As feminists, many of us have lived outside these institutions. This "outside" living has been essential in creating the woman-centred consciousness that generates new ways of perceiving and living. We've often lacked models and consequently, have made up our life-styles as we went along. This making requires considerable energy (as we all know) and strong bodies. It has meant that many of us have not chosen to invest our energy into one all-encompassing career, whether it be a profession or household organising. We have learned to earn our living through a variety of occupations and adjust to modest incomes in order to have time and energy to do our real work. This will perhaps prepare us for the fact that "six out of ten unmarried women over sixty-five live in poverty" (see Nelle Oosterom's article in this issue) but as one of my friends recently asked: "What will I do when I'm no longer able to ride my bike?" Take a bus? Maybe, if there is one. And if a transit system does exist and service your area, will it be affordable or amenable to the needs of the rider who is old?

We haven't really thought about it much; not only our own old age but also about the women who are our seniors now. Barbara Macdonald (co-author of *Look Me In The Eye*) who is 72, finds she has become increasingly "invisible" not only to men and women who are male-identified, but to feminists and lesbians as well. In her outrage she points out that in *Ms* magazine's "80 Women to Watch in the 80's" only six are in their fifties and one in her sixties. In Sybil Shack's article in this issue, Caroline confirms this absence, saying that although "she admires" the accomplishments of younger feminists in the women's movement, "at her age her priorities are different from those she reads about in feminist literature."

Barbara Macdonald is perhaps angrier because of the years of intimate relationships she has had with women. She writes: "I am angry at what it does to me and at what it must be doing to other women of my age. It also makes me distrustful of the movement itself, as it seems to me that such ageism, entrenched in the midst of the women of the second wave, must be some indication of the degree to which we have all internalised male values." Maybe we've learned to not hate ourselves for having hair on our legs but we haven't learned not to hate ourselves for growing old. We don't want to be old ladies. In our literature we are seldom able to encounter our aging except in our grandmothers — two generations removed. And in our concern and zeal for reclaiming women's history, why do we eclipse our long-lived among us?

Perhaps the first step we need to take is that of replacing the word movement with the word community. A movement is not a community, it has no intimate responsibility to anyone. It is a beginning — not a way of life. If we are a community we will naturally care for the well-being of all of us who have acknowledged our interdependence on one another. Issues of aging will become political priorities along with daycare and equal pay. It is not that long before we Second Wave-Baby Boom feminists will be part of the largest senior population ever to have existed, "reaching at least five million by 2021" (*Fact Book on Aging*). It is time we call a meeting of our elders and begin to "look them in the eye" and learn. These are our wisewomen.

Betsy Warland



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The aim of this magazine is to provide an alternative means of communication with a feminist perspective in order to stimulate, to inform, to effect change, and to unify women's strengths, serving as a forum for women.

HERIZONS magazine is located at 200-478 River Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3L 0C8. Phone (204) 477-1730. HERIZONS is published monthly, except for combined June/July and January/February issues. Subscriptions \$15 per year for individuals; outside Canada add \$5.00. Printed at Lawson Graphics, Winnipeg. Manitoba. HERIZONS is a member of the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association and is listed in the Alternative Press Index. Submissions are welcome. Editing rights reserved and submission does not guarantee publication. A self-addressed, stamped envelope will ensure submissions are returned to author. Views expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect HERIZONS policy. Second Class Mail Registration No. 5899.

Photo by Daphne Marlatt



Dear HERizons Editresses:

If I am to judge by your November issue of HERizons, I am left with the very uneasy feeling that your magazine may well be headed down the same slick sensation-seeking way of your American counterpart. I refer specifically to two of your feature articles, the first one being 'Mean Streets. Wolf-Whistles & Cat Calls' by Janine Fuller. Her message is loud and clear and coarse: if you should happen to be harassed by loud, vulgar, foul-mouthed men on the streets, then, as a gutsy liberated woman, your only recourse seems to be to respond in the same denigrating gutter type of language. (Ex. "F-k off squirrel dink".) I find it particularly ironic that the license plate on the car in the accompanying picture should spell out SNOOLS, a term borrowed from Mary Daly's last book: a moving and truth-proclaiming book in which Mary Daly exhorts women to be acutely aware of the inherent dangers lurking in the cutting, crippling, double-edged use of patriarchical language. It would make eminently more sense for Ms Fuller to suggest ways and means in which women could attempt to defuse and deconstruct this perpetual vile abuse we are subject to rather than joining the aggressor's obscene ranks.

I should also like to suggest that the article 'Prostitutes Speak Out' by Brigitte Sutherland be followed up by a more rational and objective analysis in one of your forthcoming issues. After reading this particular article, one is left feeling that somehow or other, solely on the virtue of their being women, these people should automatically be absolved of all personal responsibility for the grim situation they find themselves in. In the meantime, the majority of the rest of us are working as waitresses, shop-assistants, typists, secretaries, cleaners or factory workers etc, trying to earn an adequate amount of money so as to pay the mortgage of our homes in the residential areas which these very women are cynically tak-

ing over as their prostitution domain. May I suggest that HERizons let the ordinary common, normal folk speak out on this very complex issue as well in the near future?

On a more positive, glowing note, I should like to congratulate you for putting out this much-yearned after feminist Canadian magazine. I devour it greedily from cover to cover as soon as I receive it and then pass it on to my two budding feminist daughters. I am especially pleased that you have given full recognition to the 'French Fact' in our country by including some French articles. Particularly pleasing and vividly and vibrantly rendered was the French coverage of the Canadian Women's Music and Cultural Festival done by Lise Boily and Johanne Boily.

Thanking you sincerely,

**Colette Bishop
Halifax, Nova Scotia**

Dear HERizons,

My initial response to the articles regarding street harassment was to recall my days and nights living in a large California city working and attending university. I lived across the city from where I worked and attended classes, mass transit and walking were my main source of transportation. Talking with other women about night survival techniques I heard these suggestions: walk briskly, walk in the middle of the street, avoid dark streets, and doorways, carry house keys in hand, wear or carry a whistle, and always maintain that confident shoulders back "I-know-where-I'm-going" strut. There was yet another

suggestion give by a friend which was not in the common knowledge. I call it the mashed-potatoe thinking. This was simply to imagine myself immersed in a glob of mashed potatoes. Gradually this image of white mashed potatoes changed. Sometimes I would imagine myself within a light fluff ball like a dandelion seed pod, or in the middle of a ball of cotton candy, or just encircled by a white light like the northern lights of our winter skys. Moving along in my white cocoon I was still aware of the happenings beside, behind and in front of me. These images worked for me giving me the feeling of actively controlling the space around me. I believe we are in relationship with all we encounter. How we choose to act influences that relationship. I accept the fact that we as women have to deal with negative attitudes towards us. I do not accept that it's my responsibility to enlighten men who are crude, dense, boorish, and insecure. I choose not to give any more energy to meet negative attitudes negatively.

I am pleased to see articles on this subject and I agree with Ms. Chidley-Hill on many points. In particular when she suggests we can enroll in self-defense classes. Shortly before I left the city I was introduced to Tai Chi. I am still only a beginning student of the art. These exercises were excellent for me. When I was practising Tai Chi daily I felt strengthened and therefore more in control.

Ms. Chidley-Hill writes "Unfortunately the only ones who can stop harassment are men." When one takes a look at the problem from another perspective other choices present themselves. We can learn how to channel our energies to protect ourselves. We do have the strength within ourselves to deflect negative, limiting attitudes. We can assume our steps on the roads of the world fearlessly using the power of positive woman-wisdom.

**In Peace and Sisterhood
Judy Millard**

**Letters and responses
welcome from readers.**



**HERizons Magazine
200-478 River Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3L 0C8**

To Erica Smith and the HERizons editorial staff:

I am holding and shaking my head. i am muttering rage and frustration. this is in response to Erica Smith's review on *Stepping Out Of Line* in the Dec. 84 issue of *HERizons*.

Erica states: "That hoary old maxim the personal is political apparently doesn't apply to whom we go to bed with" further on she states " we need to start talking about sex in the same way that feminist theory was created . . ." Sexuality is one aspect of any persons life. i am really tired of being defined only by my sexuality. lesbianism is far more complex than this!

Erica says: the disagreements arise over how far we feminists should stick our necks out. We're afraid that our movement would lose a lot of momentum and credibility, (not to mention funding) if we allowed a too open association with lesbianism." Erica, you will never win the revolution needing or wanting the enemies' (patriarchy's) approval. you refer to "the women's movement", to "our (read straight feminists) movement." i suggest you stop calling it "the women's movement" until all invisible womyn are recognised. and that

you ask around, find out who the original organiser/workers were/are who provided the initiation, the energy, the momentum, and yes, Erica, the credibility (based on their invisibility). you will be surprised to find out that most group efforts, those started yesterday, today and tomorrow were started by dykes. perhaps those "unruly feminists" to which you refer.

i'd also like to criticise the editors of *HERizons* for letting such unknowing, anti-lesbian, hence anti-woman attitudes be printed. i suggest a retraction of the review in question would be a positive way for *HERizons* to deal with its error.

**in truth i remain,
jessekah**

Dear Jessekah,

I respectfully acknowledge your rage and frustration but it stems from misunderstanding my position which is profoundly woman-identified. Whether or not I have sex with women is irrelevant to our deep loving relationships and my commitment to sisterhood. I was conscious of my limitations and treaded warily around the many pitfalls in writing about lesbians. Friends and I talked a lot. I did some thorough research to clarify my own position vis-a-vis the lesbian

movement, (I recommend Mary Hunt's wonderful article in *A Challenge to Love*, ed. by R. Nugent) and presented what I felt to be an honest assessment of the book.

**Lovingly,
Erica**

To the HERizons staff —

Your magazine's great
The articles fine
I'm spreading the word
To friends of mine

The coverage you give
To issues of note —
The layout is pleasing —
You get my vote!

Your step to go national
Was timely but daring —
We need to know more
Than 'what to be wearing'

So thanks for your efforts
Your talents and skills
Here's my contribution
To cover the bills!

**Donna Lucas
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

more letters on page 45



FAMILY LAW FORUM —

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women is holding a Family Law Forum on **March 8-9** at the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa. The aim of this Forum is to provide a unique occasion for those with a special interest in family law to meet with experts and government policy makers to exchange and define positions on the new issues. There is no registration fee, but enrolment is limited. Family Law Forum, Enterprises Camylle Enterprises, 39, Goulburn Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8C7. (613) 594-8004.

THE BLACK WOMAN WRITER AND THE DIASPORA —

Hidden Connections and Extended Acknowledgements is the theme of the **October 27-30, 1985** conference to continue the reclaiming of Black Women's literary and critical herstory at Michigan State University. Dead-



lines for paper and panel suggestions is **April 15, 1985**; Copies of final papers: **September 1, 1985**. Contact: Prof. Linda Susan Beard, Dept. of English, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI 488241.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD —

The 8th Annual Human Sexuality Conference of the Manitoba chapter of Planned Parenthood will be held on **May 2-4, 1985** at Lakeside Camp, Gimli, Manitoba. This skills development conference is for professionals and individuals working in the field of human sexuality and family life education. Write for brochures: Planned Parenthood Manitoba, Inc., 1000-259 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2A9 (204) 943-6489.

THE RIBBON —

Come! Build a New Earth: Pieces to Peace. "What I cannot bear to think of as lost forever in a nuclear war" is the theme being preserved in needlecraft by women all across North America forming a ribbon to wrap the Pentagon. The wrapping is scheduled for **August of 1985**, the 40th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Individuals

and groups will create panels, 18 by 36 inches, illustrating the theme by quilting, embroidering, batikting, tie-dyeing or whatever. These panels will be assembled regionally and then into a large ribbon which after the Pentagon encirclement will be housed permanently in the Chicago Peace Museum. Panels are being made by church groups, peace groups and a wide range of women's groups. The deadline is **May, 1985**. For information contact: Jean Mackenzie at Box 68 Genelle, B.C. VOG 1G0 or Carol Gaskin at Box 13, Winlaw, B.C.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE —

U.N. International Women's Decade, July Nairobi, Kenya. Dates: Non-government organisations forum, **July 8-17**; U.N. conference, **July 13-26**. For information on the NGO forum, contact: Lyse Blanchard, Director, Women's Program, Secretary of State, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M5; tel. (819) 994-3202; and for information on the conference, contact: Lindsay Niemann, Status of Women Canada, 10th Floor, 151 Sparks Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1C3; tel. (613) 995-7835. The Simone de Beauvoir Institute is involved in arranging to transport women who wish to participate in the International Conference. Information: Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, Montreal, Quebec M3G 1M8. Several Canadian women are interested in setting up a Canadian Committee for the United Nations Fund for Women. They are seeking people willing to participate in organising such a fund. Information: Norma Walmsley, Box 68, Wakefield, Quebec, J0X 3G0; tel. (819) 459-2061, or Naomi Black, 28 Playter Blvd., Toronto, Ontario, M4K 2W2; tel. (416) 463-9252.

OUR TIME IS NOW —

The first Women's Festival (September 1-2, 1984) was an overwhelming success. We feel that promoting women's talents musically, artistically and culturally, in the context of an emotional and inspirational celebration can become an event for women across Canada to look forward to each year. To make this a reality we need funds to support salaries, mailings and administrative costs. Last year's festival broke even financially.

Now we need your support through membership in the Canadian Women's Music and Cultural Festival. Become a FRIEND by donating \$10-49; be a PATRON for \$50 or more; or SUSTAIN US with 12-\$25 post-dated cheques. All will receive regular mailing with news of the festival and related events. Members' names will appear in the '85 program and they can purchase tickets to the festival at bulk discounts. Send money or inquiries to Our Time Is Now, Canadian Women's Music & Cultural Festival, 2D-161 Stafford St., Winnipeg R3M 2W9, (204) 477-5478.

PORNOGRAPHY PROJECTS —

Canadian Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) received funding to conduct a pilot project on women's attitudes towards pornography. The project will involve interviewing women on a range of topics concerned with pornographic material, analysing that information and disseminating the results to interested groups. Information, suggestions, bibliographies, etc., from women interested in the subject are welcome. Write to: CRIAOW Project, c/o 6170 Pepperell Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 2N9.

PORNOGRAPHY: A WOMAN'S SURVEY OF THE ISSUES —

Videotapes, related discussion papers, and an annotated bibliography covering Canadian and International resources are available for education, research and special interest organisations. The three fast-paced videotapes were taped from the proceedings of the 1984 Conference on Pornography held at Queen's University at Kingston. These materials are available on an ability-to-pay basis by writing to: Pornography Project Collective, c/o Queen's Women's Centre, 51 Queen's Crescent, Kingston, Ontario K7L 3N6 or call Jennifer Stephen or Angela Smailes at (613) 547-6970.

FEDERAL DIRECTORY FOR DISABLED —

The federal government has published a directory of all programs and services it offers that are of benefit to disabled persons. For a copy write: Directory of Federal Services for the Handicapped and Disabled, Centre for Services to the Public, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5.

PUBLIC INQUIRY —

Marilyn Aarons of Energy Probe is seeking endorsement from a broad spectrum of groups (women's groups, unions, medical societies, professional organisations, churches, educational groups, business associations, municipalities, etc) to: "Ask the Honourable Pat Carney, Minister of Energy Mines & Resources to follow through on the Progressive Conservative Election Policy in which they advocate a public inquiry into the future of nuclear power. . . ." Can you help? Contact Marilyn soon at Energy Probe, 100 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M5G 1L5, (416) 978-7014.

WOMEN AND AGING —

Too Old Yet Too Young: An Account of Women in Limbo is a report recently published by the Council on Aging of Ottawa-Carlton. It explores the situation of single women between the ages of 55 and 65 in the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carlton. This report is a useful resource guide for all communities. Available at no cost from: The Council on Aging of Ottawa-Carlton, 256 King Edward Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7M1.

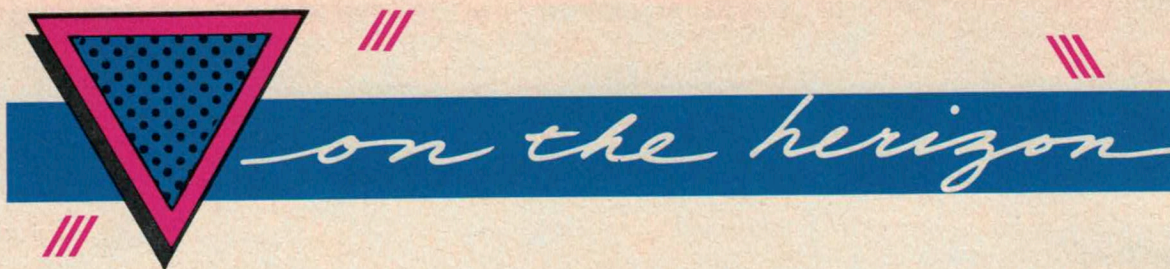
AUDIO-VISUAL RESOURCES ON SEXUALITY —

The Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada has prepared a comprehensive catalogue of a/v resources on sexuality. Resources are listed under such diverse categories as homosexuality, infertility, and sexuality and violence. A critique of each resource and a recommended target audience are provided. Available for \$5 from Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada, 151 Slater Street, Suite 200, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H3.

FREE INFO FOR CHARITIES —

Revenue Canada has just set up a toll-free telephone service for non-profit groups that want information on how to become officially registered as a charity. Existing charities can also use the service if they have questions about the department's other policies.

You can call from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM (Eastern time) Monday to Friday. The toll free number is 1-800-267-2384.



Late last November the B.C. Human Rights Council made a very unpopular decision when it dismissed a charge of sexual harassment. Less than three weeks later, the Council awarded \$2,000 to another woman who was sexually harassed.

In the first case, waitress Andrea Fields testified that her former boss, Wilhelm Ueffling, owner of Willie's Rendezvous in Victoria, had on several occasions tried to hug and kiss her, as well as punch or grab various parts of her body including her breasts. She also testified that Ueffling wrote many crude and offensive notes to her including requests to "make love" and comments on the sexiness of her body.

Council chair Jim Edgett dismissed the case on the grounds that Ueffling was a "habitual, even compulsive writer of notes." In his decision, Edgett did say that "two of these notes could, if taken out of context, be interpreted as crude or offensive." However, Edgett concluded that Ueffling was not guilty of sexual harassment. There is no way to appeal Council decisions, and Fields is currently attempting to raise \$4,000 for a judicial review. This will only test the decision on points of law. If successful, she will win a new hearing.

The second case presents a remarkable contrast. Following several weeks of intense criticism for its first decision, the Council decided in favour of secretary Gale Longevin. Longevin's hearing was chaired by council member Reverend Eric Powell. Powell described Longevin as "young, naive, inexperienced and badly in need of a job." She had complained of sexual harassment, including whispered obscenities, breast grabbing and leering from her former boss William Martin Niblett, of Engineered Air. As in the Fields case the decision basically came down to the

We win some We lose some

Marrianne van Loon

testimony of the complainant against that of her alleged harasser. But for Longevin the outcome was different, and she was awarded \$2,000 damages.

Alicia Lawrence, former Human

Rights Branch officer and founding member of the B.C. Human Rights Coalition (a monitoring body that has just begun a complaint registry) traces the success of Longevin's success to the public outrage which followed Edgett's decision, as well as to Powell's greater administrative ability. "There was so much criticism over Fields," she said. But the real problem is rooted in the legislation itself.

Since last April's annulment of the old Human Rights Act and dismissal of the Human Rights Branch staff, there is no provision under the new Human Rights Act for conciliation between the complainant and the respondent. Previously most decisions were settled in a non-confrontational manner, and never went as far as a hearing. Now complaints go directly to a hearing after passing investigation. As Lawrence says, "Who is going to complain when the first time you get together is a confrontation between you and your harasser? In cases that do go to boards it's devastating and disgusting," she said. And furthermore, there is no confidentiality at this level.

Lawrence also pointed out that the coverage of the legislation itself is reduced, making it more difficult to successfully complain. And, as Andrea Fields found out, there is no appeal process. The Charter of Rights, which guarantees equality before and under the law, may pose a challenge to the B.C. legislation, she said.

It remains to be seen what the implications of B.C.'s new Human Rights Act will be for the rest of the country, but there is no question that human rights in this province are severely diminished. However, public pressure did influence the outcome of one decision, and it is obviously important that this pressure continues to build to ensure no further loss of rights.

Taxpayers' foot the bill to fight equality

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) says the federal government is promising to limit the rights of women granted under its own policies by funding human rights appeals on affirmative action and sexual harassment.

NAC points out that Canadian National Railway is appealing the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision to impose an affirmative action program on CN Rail following action taken by Action Travail des femmes, but the federal government is paying \$50,000 towards Action Travail des femmes' legal expenses. While NAC is not critical of the government contribution, it does suggest that the federal government funding both sides of the court case could be avoided by dropping the appeal.

In another case, the Department of National Defence is appealing a Human Rights Commission ruling in favour of a North Bay woman who reported she had been sexually harassed by her employer at the Department. After enduring a court battle of several years, this means further costs for the complainant as well as taxpayers, who will be paying even more money to fight the decision.

Solidarity with Women in Southern Africa

NICHOLA MARTIN



"Superfluous appendages" is the name given to black women by the South African apartheid regime. Black women and their children are dumped in barren "homelands" where they are forced to eke out a living from the poor soil. Their husbands, lovers and sons work for poverty wages in the whites' cities. When black women enter the wage labour system they are funneled into the very poor paying female job ghettos, such as domestic service and farm labour.

"Black women in South Africa are the most oppressed of the oppressed. They are oppressed because of their colour, their class and their sex," were the opening words of Nomazizi, a speaker at Conference in Solidarity with the Women of South Africa and Namibia, held in Toronto. Because for black women in South Africa the oppression of the apartheid system is particularly cruel the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) declared 1984 as the year of women of South Africa. The Toronto conference was organised and endorsed by many solidarity and South African support groups in Canada and attend-

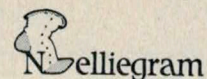
ed by approximately 150 people.

Canadian women cannot judge black women's feminism or involvement in women's issues from a Canadian or North American perspective, argued Ivy Matsepe, ANC representative to New York. We must learn about South African reality from a South African perspective because the black women's primary issues there are quite different from our own. They are not fighting for abortion rights, but for economic rights which will allow them to fight against, for example, involuntary injections of Depo Provera (a contraceptive which has been proven harmful and is illegal in North America), Ivy said.

One of the goals of the conference was to generate some concrete support in Canada for the struggles of women in South Africa and Namibia. Thus participants were asked to bring items such as tampons, diapers, soap and underwear to the conference in an effort to provide material aid. Another goal was to promote solidarity between Canadian groups (women's and others) and women struggling for liberation in South Africa and Namibia.

Energy was high at the end of the conference when ideas for recommendations and resolutions flew around the room. Telegrams were sent immediately to the ANC women's section and to the SWAPO women's council to inform them of solidarity with their concerns. Telegrams were also sent to the Canadian government with a copy to UN ambassador Stephen Lewis condemning recent South African acts of aggression against students and trade unionists in that country. It was resolved that an increased effort should go into the already existing economic boycotts against South Africa instead of starting new ones. Of special concern was the "dumping" of drugs by medical companies and the misuse of those drugs, for example, Depo Provera.

For more information about women in South Africa contact: African National Congress, Mission to Canada, Box 302, Adelaide Postal Station Toronto, Ontario, M5C 2J4.



POOR WOMEN/POOR CHILDREN — The oft-noted "feminisation of poverty" is proving to have dire consequences for the 12 million American children living in families headed by women. More than half of these youngsters live in families classified as poor; for minority children the poverty rates are even grimmer — 70.7 per cent for blacks and 71.8 per cent for Hispanics.

One of the factors contributing to poverty in female-headed households is the inadequacy of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the major welfare program for low-income mothers with children. AFDC provides some \$13 billion a year in federal and state funds for family support. There are wide variations in the amounts individual families receive because states determine eligibility standards and benefit levels. Thus, in 1983, a single mother with two children received \$96 a month in Mississippi while a mother in the same situation in Vermont collected \$530 a month. Even when combined with food stamps, the benefits in both cases were insufficient to lift the families out of poverty.

Ford Foundation Letter

Profiting from the poor?

The National Anti Poverty Organisation (NAPO) has discovered that companies that provide cash advances for income tax returns and charge a fee of 15 per cent are making millions off of poor Canadians.

According to NAPO, the number of Canadians who have their returns discounted is more than doubling every year and the majority earn less than \$8,000 per year; the median income was \$5,700. Nearly half of those who couldn't wait the two-month period for their tax rebates were women claiming the child tax credit.

NAPO figures reveal an average \$114 charge per return and a total profit of \$43 million for discounters — which NAPO charges a good portion of which "was taxpayers' money intended to help the poor;" and the organisation wants the federal government to ban or restrict tax discounting.

Positive Images of Women (for a change)

Tanya Lester

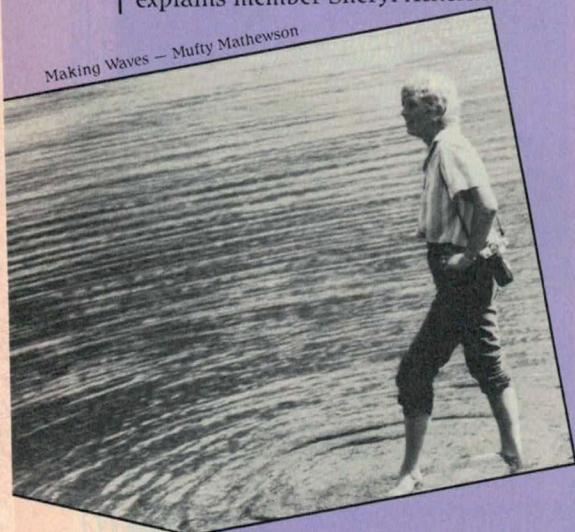
The photo creations of *Positive Images: Women by Women* is like being given a potion to heal the wounds inflicted by pornography.

Based in Edmonton, this photography group connected through the inspiration and networking skills of Mair Smith. She calls herself the "ultimate non-photographer" with "a lifetime commitment to working for a world in which we women will be valued for our power and intelligence, our strength and our beauty."

To date, the group has focussed on feminist conferences to display photo art which records women's lives at work, in play and alone. In between workshops, women can enjoy the *Jolly Kiss*, *Morning Stretch*, *Sharing the News*, *Drum Story*, *Gardening* and even *Giving Tickets*, a woman officer issuing a parking ticket to another woman.

"I see as unique a woman's perspective of women (in photography), and wish to explore that extensively," explains member Sheryl Ackerman.

Making Waves — Mufty Mathewson



Artist in Black Hat — Sheryl Ackerman



Drum Story — Sheryl Ackerman

Just as unique is the group's selection process when they put together an exhibit. The number of excited "yeahs" a photo evokes determines its inclusion in the display. Viewers can register their "yeahs" by filling out a feedback form available at the group's exhibits.

Other *Positive Images: Women by Women* members include Mufty Mathewson, who describes photography as her third career following Rehabilitation medicine and housewife/mother. The group gives her the "opportunity to focus on the wonderful way women really are rather than on the false images often portrayed by glamor and fashion photography."

Jennie Turner is a homemaker/photographer/student who "would like to see more women photographers recognised in what has always been a male dominated profession."

Marvel McLennan has been "seriously enjoying (her) camera for close to five years, beginning with a stay overseas where (she) chose to document (her) travels and experiences with photos."

Linda Lee Nicholls wants "women to appreciate themselves, to find their own individual images and be comfortable with it. Rather than comparing ourselves to the "ideal" images we have been bombarded with by tradition, the media, and our families, I would like us to question, to look at ourselves and others from our own perspective."

Cathy Dunn is an elementary teacher who has done extensive project and freelance photography including the "Teacher Initiated Project."

Together, Sheryl Ackerman proclaims, "The group has flowed. Mair connected women who are just flooding us with positive images."

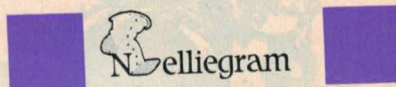
For more information on exhibits contact: Sheryl Ackerman; 27 Sundance Co-op Riverdale; Edmonton, Alberta T5H 4B4; or Linda Lee Nicholls (403) 451-2424 (evenings); Mair Smith (403) 424-3073 (days).

Non-sexist policy adopted on ads

The government of Manitoba's advertising audit office has issued guidelines to all government departments on non-sexist advertising.

The guidelines state that women are to be depicted as capable of filling the same wide range of occupations as men, that women should be depicted as authority figures just as often as men, and that there must be equal numbers of men and women voice overs in commercials.

The guidelines, which have been in effect since November, also state that language must be gender-inclusive and that women will not be used in "decorative or seductive roles."



WOMEN'S INSTITUTE BORN —

A group of 25 women from around the world announced recently the creation of an international organisation called the "Sisterhood is Powerful Institute."

Among the institute's founders are Robin Morgan, the U.S. author of a book by the same name; Marilyn Waring, a former member of the New Zealand Parliament; Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, former Prime Minister of Portugal; Palestinian social scientist Fawzia Fawzia; and Margaret Papandreou, long active in Greek feminist activities.

Some of the early actions the institute plans to participate in are: organisations of international campaigns on behalf of women persecuted for feminist activities; establishment of commissions on "Women in Crisis," such as women of colour in South Africa and the U.S.; an investigation of airlines, tourist agencies and hostels that promote international "sex tours;" and a boycott of any census or similar survey that does not count women's unpaid work.

The institute, which is not connected to any government, hopes to hold its first conference in 1985. Institute members are also looking ahead to the Nairobi World Conference, and say they will fight any effort to "sidetrack" the assembly on "ideological or other grounds," as sometimes happened at earlier women's conferences in Mexico and Denmark. Said Institute members last week: "In a world of many tragic divisions, we believe that women can find a common language."

Her Say

CN hotels say 'no' to porn

Magazine rack operators at CN hotels across Canada have been ordered to remove the most objectionable magazines and place remaining "adult magazines" out of sight from children.

CN hotels president Daniel Oberlander said the hotel will prohibit magazines that promote bondage, degradation, sex with children, violence and bestiality, as a result of complaints from the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The complaints resulted in *Hustler* being removed from all CN hotels last September.

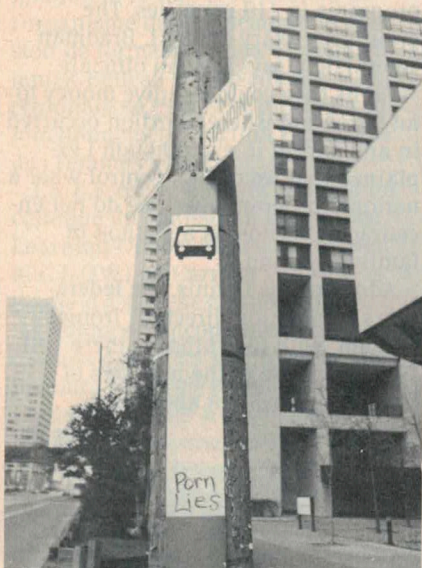


Photo taken near harbourfront in Toronto

HERIZONS

judgements.

MINNESOTA DISPLACED HOME-MAKERS FACE TWO MORE BLOWS — Two divorce decisions in Hennepin County, written by Judge Delila Pierce involved women in their 40s. Married over 20 years, each woman had four children, had earned B.A.s before marriage, neither was employed during the marriage, neither had training of any kind, both husbands had incomes over \$200,000/yr. Permanent maintenance was awarded. On appeal the MN Supreme Ct. overturned the decisions with Justices M. Jeanne Coyne and Rosalie Wahl dissenting. Wahl cited legislation written in 1982 in response to a similar case. Senator Linda Berglin's response, "you look at what was written in the law, and it appears they can't read." Senator Ember Reichgott: "Lawmakers also dictated that judges base alimony awards in part on the plight of the divorced women who would have a difficult time starting careers because they gave up careers to remain at home." They will pursue legislative changes. The Coalition of Midlife Women is looking for interested persons to serve on an advisory council concerning Divorce law. Call Marcella Mathias (612) 451-0612.

Women's Network of the Red River Valley

A Birmingham, Alabama jury acquitted a man who said he couldn't resist the temptation to pat a jeans-clad woman's rear when she was loading a dryer at a laundromat. Jurors said they didn't convict the man on the harassment charge because "the man had been punished enough."

★ ★ ★

A U.S. district judge ruled this month that a Rhode Island law requiring a doctor to tell a husband before performing an abortion conflicts with a woman's right to the operation and is unconstitutional.

★ ★ ★

A San Mateo, California jury found Alphons Johnson guilty not only of rape but also of great bodily harm, because he passed the disease of herpes to his victim. The finding could mean five more years in jail.

★ ★ ★

A federal court judge on November 19th declared unconstitutional an Indianapolis ordinance that defines pornography as sex discrimination and allows women to seek court bans on the material. City council members who backed the ordinance said they would appeal the decision of U.S. District Judge Sarah Evans Barker, who ruled the proposal violated the right of free speech.

HerSay

Problems with Pensions

Marianne van Loon

When Vancouver resident Joy Irving applied to the federal government under the pension credit splitting program, she found out she was 25 days too late. Under current law, a former spouse must apply within three years of a divorce to receive pension credits. As Irving well knows, the information is not automatically distributed to every divorced woman. She only found out about pension credit splitting because she is a clerical worker, and she discovered a brochure, by chance at work.

When she found out she had missed the deadline, Irving appealed to the Minister of Health and Welfare. After appeal and counter-appeal the case is

now adjourned until it is discovered how information on pension credit splitting is given out, and how many divorced women apply. Irving wants the law changed. Pension credit splitting should be automatic and mandatory, she says and the law is obsolete.

The Equal Pay Information Committee (EPIC) of Vancouver, has been assisting Irving with fund raising (P.O. Box 4237, Vancouver, B.C.) to fight this test case, and lawyer Gayle Raphanel will represent her.

In a public letter EPIC says, "Even though more and more women are now working at paid work, child rearing and low wages result in subsistence pensions for the majority of retired women. In order to provide justice and a better living standard for senior women, it is imperative that we win and change the law."

Nelliegram

AN END TO THE BROKEN-HOME BLUES — Don't stay in a bad marriage for the sake of the kids — you'll help them more if you split up.

More evidence is coming out — this time from the national institute of mental health — that divorce is often better for kids than life spent with quarreling parents. The institute, in a study currently underway, found children under 12 living with divorced mothers do better on achievement tests than kids from intact homes, and that adults with divorced parents get arrested only half as often as adults from homes that stayed together.

The study also reveals that adolescents living with dissatisfied parents are more anti-social than those living with a divorced parent.

Her Say

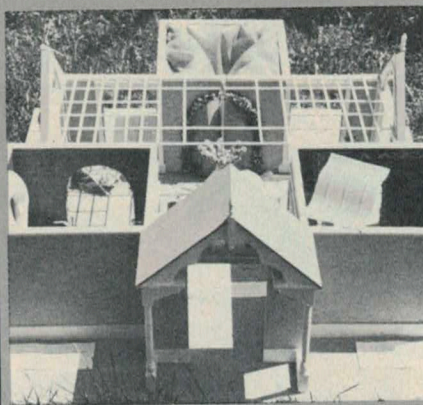
The Women's Research Centre

Since many status of women initiatives are relatively recent, or are recent additions to Canada's social policy and institutions, they are particularly vulnerable to being cut back or rescinded at the very time that the economic situation makes them especially crucial to women. The B.C. government's 1983 budget and legislation is a case in point, a case that is considered to have implications throughout the country.

The Women's Research Centre, established in Vancouver in 1976, is a community based feminist organisation with the aim of working closely with women who do not normally have access to research facilities. The Centre works with women's groups and individuals to assist them in acquiring the information, analysis and skills they need to take action on issues of concern to them. Information resulting from this research is distributed to women's groups as well as other interested or relevant organisations and governments across Canada.

Examining the impact of the recession and restraint oriented economic policy on women and families in B.C. is a major part of the research work of the Women's Research Centre (in 1984-85). Its final report, due in mid 1985, will include a framework for looking at an economic development policy including women and families, an analysis of trends and economic decision making on the status of women initiatives; and an overview of economic development policy.

Other work for 1984-85 includes completion of *A Guide to Evaluation*, — a publication which will provide guidelines and methods for group self-evaluation and evaluation by an "external" evaluator. The Centre developed the evaluation guide in recognition of the increased demands being placed on women's groups for assessment and evaluation of their work and in recognition of the need for appropriate evaluation methodologies tailored to their special situations. Violence against women is another area in which the Women's Research Centre has been involved for more than seven years, producing five studies. The most recent publication *A Study of Protection for Battered Women*, contains numerous recom-



La maison

Debra Pilon

Wanna buy some women's real estate real cheap?

That was the pitch Ottawa women attending Women's World '84, heard at the *la maison* booth set up by five women artists who have created *la maison* — a major piece of environmental art which reflects women's desires for a home of their own. (HERIZONS, August 1984.)

"Be part of a unique home. Buy a square foot of *la maison*" was the exhortation offered in a brochure designed to garner women's financial support for the artwork which will have 1,300 square feet of floor space when completed.

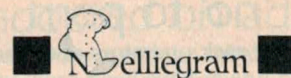
A square foot, by the way, costs \$20. Two square feet cost \$40, etc. Donations in any amount will be gratefully accepted by the five women artists. Make cheques payable to *la maison* and mail them to: S.G. Taylor, 170 Hickory Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 3T6.

Women who buy space to finance *la maison* will have their names inscribed, on the outer foundation. Upon completion, the art will travel from Ottawa to Montreal and the East Coast.

mendations and "models of protection" which have recently become the backbone of the B.C. Attorney General's new wife assault policy.

The Women's Research Centre is funded as a national group by Women's Program, Secretary of State, and is available for consultation by women and women's groups across the country. Write or call them for a publication list and more information. (Women's Research Centre, 301-2515 Burrard St., Vancouver, B.C., V6J 3J6, (604) 734-0485).

Diana Ellis



NO HAPPY NEW YEAR FOR PLANNED PARENTHOOD — The largest independent family planning group in the world is set to lose all its U.S. funding, all because one-fourth of one per cent of its funds go to abortion-related services.

If the Reagan administration does not back down on the funding cut, the International Planned Parenthood Federation will lose some \$17 million and will have to chop its budget by 30 per cent.

The London-based federation has programs in 119 countries. The group's secretary general, Bradman Weerakoon, says Reagan officials, "told us they could not give money to any program where abortion occurred in any part of it, even though I explained that we cannot control what a national program does. We do not encourage abortion as a method of family planning."

Adds Francis Dennis, the federation's information director, "Ironically enough, with the cutbacks there will be an increase in the numbers of women resorting to abortions."

Her Say

CANADIANS WANT SEX EDUCATION IN HOME AND SCHOOL — A Gallup Poll conducted in May, 1984 for Planned Parenthood showed that 83 per cent of Canadian adults believe that sex education should be taught in schools, and 94 per cent believe that parents should discuss sex and sexual behaviour with their children. The poll also found that 9 out of 10 Canadians believes everyone should have the right to use birth control.

But what is the reality for Canadian adults and children? Only 50 per cent of schools offer any sex education and only 25 per cent offer it as a separate course. Only one in five adults was given the "facts of life" when growing up, while 64 per cent would have like more information.

CARAL Newsletter

A.E.F: un organisme sans TRUCStures

Carmen Tremblay

Une trentaine de femmes de l'Ouest se sont réunies à Winnipeg les 16, 17 et 18 novembre passés. Sous les auspices d'Action Education des Femmes, elles ont assisté à une session de formation portant sur les trois thèmes suivants: "Développer vos stratégies en politique", "Définir vos besoins de regroupement", et "Améliorer vos techniques en animation."

Cependant, plusieurs participantes ignoraient le rôle et le mandat de l'organisme qui chapeautait la session de formation. Cela a permis à Janick Belleau (représentante régionale de l'Ouest) d'expliquer le fonctionnement d'Action Education des Femmes (A.E.F.).

L'A.E.F. est né en 1980, suite à un colloque du "Canadian Committee Learning Opportunities for Women" (C.C.L.O.W.) où Carmen Paquette (l'âme d'A.E.F.) s'est rendu compte que les femmes francophones avaient des besoins différents qui n'étaient pas toujours respectés dans la masse anglophone. Elle a donc fondé, avec l'aide d'autres personnes, Action Education des Femmes, organisme national (le Québec inclus) de femmes d'expression française, qui s'occupe d'un seul dossier, à savoir l'éducation des femmes.

L'A.E.F. est composé de quatre représentantes régionales — l'Ouest, l'Ontario, le Québec, et l'Atlantique — de représentantes provinciales (une par province) et d'intervenantes. Est intervenante toute femme qui agit dans le domaine de l'éducation des femmes d'une manière ou d'une autre. Ici, le mot EDUCATION est pris au sens large et non-institutionnalisé. L'intervenante peut donc travailler en milieu institutionnel, gouvernemental, communautaire ou privé.

Parce qu'A.E.F. a adopté une structure alternative, c'est-à-dire sans conseil d'administration hiérarchique traditionnel, sans employée à temps plein, sans carte de membre (membership) etc., certaines femmes qui participaient à la session de formation semblaient douter de la crédibilité d'un tel organisme et croire qu'un organisme sans structures orthodoxes est inefficace.

Cependant, Janick Belleau a

souligné l'importance pour les regroupements de femmes, de mettre en place de nouvelles structures qui feront échec à la tradition politique tout en initiant de nouvelles formes d'exercice de pouvoir qui soient plus égalitaires, plus coopératives et moins compétitives. Ainsi, l'exécutif (le "C.A.") d'A.E.F. comprend les quatre représentantes régionales qui se divisent équitablement les différentes tâches (communication, administration, trésorerie, etc.)

L'A.E.F., subventionné par le Secrétariat d'Etat, publie "Bulletin A.E.F." quatre fois par année. Cette publication est un moyen de communication et d'échange pour les intervenantes, au même titre que la session de formation de novembre dernier. Ces deux activités rencontrent les objectifs d'A.E.F. qui a pour but de décentraliser de plus en plus ses services. Et à en croire les commentaires des participantes à l'atelier de novembre, il était clair que l'organisme a atteint ses objectifs.

Le succès de cette fin de semaine était dû, en grande partie, à la compétence des personnes-ressources et à "la foire des ressources" qui a fourni aux femmes une multitude d'informations pertinentes sur la condition féminine.

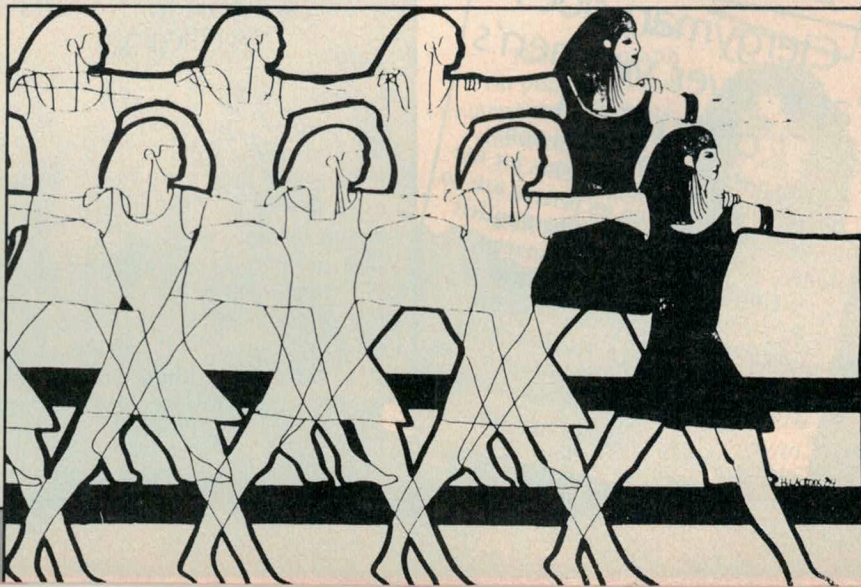
De plus, le regroupement par province a permis aux femmes présentes d'élaborer un plan d'action provincial qui assurera le suivi des trois ateliers offerts par Action Education des Femmes. Somme toute, une fin de semaine enrichissante, qui a initié un mouvement de solidarité entre les femmes de l'Ouest qui, nous l'espérons toutes, répondra aux attentes de chacune dans sa recherche d'un monde plus équitable.

Nelliegram

GAYS THE WORD FIGHTS ON — London's only lesbian and gay community bookstore, already besieged by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise officer, has been served notice once again of a confiscation of a shipment of books at point of entry from its United States supplier. On October 8th, a shipment of 132 titles, totalling 2,265 volumes in all, bound for Gay's The Word were detained as "indecent and obscene." This was the third confiscation since the April 10th raid on the store when over 2,000 volumes were seized. The attack on Gay's The Word is part of a growing clampdown on lesbian and gay bookstores and literature in England and Scotland. Lavender Menace, which is Edinburgh's lesbian/gay bookstore has had copies of Genet's *Querelle*, *Common Lives/Lesbian Lives*, and *Sinister Wisdom* seized. Five thousand gay magazines were removed from London's gay Zipper Store under "obscene publications" warrants.

Gay's The Word is in incredible financial difficulty with the books still held by Customs amounting to \$11,000-\$15,000 of the store's stock. Legal challenges to the seizures may cost the store up to \$122,000. The Defend Gays the Word Campaign has raised 6,000 pounds to date but much more is needed. To contribute, send donations to the Director, Defend Gay's The Word Campaign, 38 Mount Pleasant, London, WC1X 0AP, United Kingdom.

RITES



Getting imPATIENT

With sexual abuse

Julia West

Susan Harris always believed that doctors were caring people who knew what was best for their patients. Fatherly, considerate. A doctor would never knowingly do anything to hurt his patient.

But at 24, Susan learned that all doctors do not fit the kindly Marcus Welby stereotype. A student in Vancouver, she had been referred to a gynaecologist by the university health services because she wanted an IUD. On Susan's first visit, the device was fitted. But when she returned a few weeks later, complaining of painful intercourse, the doctor did something that even now, 12 years later, Susan recalls with a mixture of horror and rage.

"He invented some story about needing to see if I lubricated properly," Susan remembers. "Then he stimulated my clitoris."

Her response to this abusive action was to deny such a thing could happen. "I remember doubting my perceptions at the time, saying, 'Oh, he can't be doing this.'"

"I assumed that if a doctor conducted himself that way, he would be disciplined and that would be the end of his medical career."

Susan, not her real name, now believes her feelings paralleled those of a rape survivor. "I felt immediately that it was my fault, that I had let this happen. I felt tremendously violated and tremendously upset."

Reluctant to confront the gynaecologist personally, Susan reported the incident to the university-based doctor who had referred her to him. She is still outraged that this doctor, a woman, did not believe her and took no action. "The medical profession does close ranks and protect their own," she concluded.

Last spring, the gynaecologist who abused Susan Harris was charged by the B.C. College of Physicians and Surgeons with sexually abusing four women patients. The College had been aware of his activities for some years, and had been compiling a dossier.

Susan believes the gynaecologist was able to abuse her because she was so trustful of him. "Basically, it happened to me because I didn't think it could," she says. "I think the most important thing is for people to find out doctors can get away with this. If I hadn't doubted my perceptions, I would have whipped off the table and

that would have been that. But I just couldn't believe a doctor would do that.

"This could not happen to someone if she were aware. I think people tend to hold doctors in incredible reverence, and doctors do everything they can to maintain that awe. . . .

"Because you do entrust your body to them, you have to believe in them. That makes a patient incredibly vulnerable."

Sexual abuse of patients by doctors is not as unlikely an occurrence as many people would like to think, according to Dr. William Maurice, co-director of Shaughnessy Hospital's sexual medicine clinic.

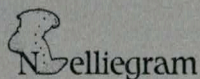
Most incidents remain unreported, says Dr. Maurice, who has spent the past two years interviewing and counselling women who report abusive sexual behaviour from doctors and psychiatrists. He cited a survey of 1,000 California male physicians, published in 1973. In that survey, to which 460 doctors responded, about five per cent admitted they engaged in "erotic behaviour" with patients.

According to figures obtained by Dr. Maurice from the B.C. College of Physicians and Surgeons, nine B.C. doctors were charged with sexual misconduct and underwent hearings before the College between 1976 and 1980. Charges against seven of the doctors, three of them psychiatrists, were substantiated. The doctors' names were placed on a temporary register.

Maurice maintains that erotic behaviour with patients by doctors is inexcusable and wrong under any circumstances. The impact on a woman is "substantial," he says. "We have not

Clergyman goes 'ape' over women's ordination

A British clergyman told London's *Daily Mail* that the arguments for the ordination of women as priests are so ludicrous that they could be applied to the ordination of chimpanzees. Rev. Andrew Reakes-Williams is quoted as saying "If you take the argument for the ordination of women to its logical conclusion, you have to agree to the ordination of chimpanzees to act as chaplains to the animals."



WOMEN'S WORK IS NEVER COUNTED — Homemakers in some U.S. cities walked out of their kitchens and onto the picket lines this month to kick off the national "Wages for Housework Campaign."

The campaign's petitions call on the U.S. government to include housework in the gross national product, a change that organisers say would increase the GNP by about 48 per cent

while also giving women more pull in the eternal tug-of-war over social spending policies. Says one campaign member: "When they give money to women, they call it charity, and it isn't; it's recognition for work being performed."

Adds organiser Rachel West: "The whole economy depends on women, but as long as women's work is kept outside the GNP, it is hidden and undervalued." The UN estimates women put in two-thirds of the world's working hours but get only one-tenth of the income in return.

Her Say

seen a case yet where it has been beneficial." In some cases, women terminated badly needed treatment because of the incident.

Sexual abuse is "an extremely serious problem in which everybody is a loser," he says. "This is not innocent (behaviour). There are sometimes superficial erotic feelings which can arise (between doctor and patients) which people have to recognise and deal with.

"But this is something of a different order," he says, drawing a parallel between father-daughter incest and physician-patient sexuality. Comparison with incest is apt, because "of the close relationship that often exists between the physician and the patient," and because of the vulnerability of the patient, usually female, seeking treatment for illness from an older, male doctor.

"In many instances, looking back at this afterwards, people feel guilt, and say, 'I was a consenting adult, I bear as much responsibility for this as he,' which to my way of thinking is a misperception . . . because of the tremendous inequality in the relationship."

Women's vulnerability is built in to the existing health-care system, says a worker at The Vancouver Women's Health Collective. "We are in such a one-down position, or we're made to feel we are," she says. Because of a patronising and distrustful attitude by many doctors towards their patients, health collective members encourage women patients to educate themselves and research diseases, drugs and treatments at libraries and in the health collective's files.

"We hope women will try and learn what they can about themselves," she

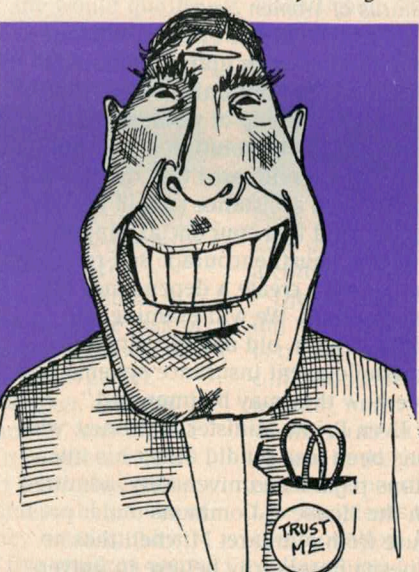
says. "That's what our work is about, to help women figure out how they can prevent situations which will force them to go to doctors."

She suggests that a person who feels uncomfortable with her doctor may ask a friend to accompany her into the examination room. "It's a good idea to call beforehand and say — not ask — that I want to bring a friend in," she says.

Lawyer Janice Dillon urges patients to learn their rights and exercise them, "so they aren't intimidated in the medical process." Dillon's interest in patients' rights stems from work she did with the Canada Law Reform Commission.

Patients' rights include granting consent to treatment, obtaining adequate information about treatment, and "care and treatment that is reasonably and competently performed," says Dillon.

Communication is the key to a good



doctor-patient relationship, she adds. "A lot of problems arise from a failure in communication, and a feeling by one party or the other that there hasn't been an adequate relay of information."

According to law, "any touching of the body" without consent constitutes assault, Dillon says. In most medical situations, consent is implied; surgical procedures usually involve written consent. Any behaviour by a doctor to which a patient does not consent should be reported to the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and in certain instances, criminal charges can be laid.

Dr. Craig Arnold, registrar of the B.C. College of Physicians and Surgeons, says women are encouraged to report such incidents, and will be treated with every consideration when they do. "That is the only way we can come to grips with doctors who are behaving this way. . . . Our policy is to encourage people, particularly women, to come forward."

The college will investigate any complaint, and a report is then forwarded to a lawyer to determine, "if there is sufficient information here to charge the doctor with unprofessional conduct," Dr. Arnold says. If so, a formal inquiry committee composed of doctors and one lawyer, will be struck to study the charge. At a hearing, the doctor is represented by counsel; the complainant is not represented because "she has turned the matter over to the college," he explains.

Until recently, findings of such hearings have been shrouded in secrecy, but the college will now make public the names of doctors found guilty in disciplinary hearings.

'Ideal' work mode discriminatory

The Japanese work model is often held up by Western countries as an ideal merging of the interests of industry and labour but it is also one which prohibits the full participation of women, and discriminates against them.

The average woman in the Japanese workforce earns half of the average male wage and only one in 50 holds what government statistics classify as an "executive" job with a non-family company.

Younger workers are expected to

work for only four or five years until marriage and are warned by 'girls' magazines about the dangers of choosing a career over marriage. The magazines carry articles about the miseries of women who pursue careers instead of marrying.

The political arena in Japan doesn't afford women a much better opportunity for advancement. Women have made up 3 per cent of the Japanese Diet, or parliament and represent 2.3 per cent of the membership of city assemblies.

ERRATA

The photograph on page 12 of the January/February issue should have been credited to Michèle Wollstonecroft.



Remember when the universality of social services was a 'sacred trust' and Brian Mulroney told Canadian women that their equality would be achieved through economic independence? Has it really only been six months since the courtship of Canadian women was divorced from the reality of Tory economic policies?

Were the election promises of the Tories really little more than sweet nothings to our skeptic ears? Today, many Canadian women aren't taking any chances. Already women's groups have begun to strategise on ways to oppose federal cutbacks to social services and programs which benefit women and their families. At a mini-summit attended by more than a dozen women's groups in Manitoba recently, the frustrations and fears women have of the Conservative government's plans for restraints and cutbacks were shared. At the end of the meeting, there was unanimity that the organisations would work together to pool energy and clout to oppose cutbacks and continue to push for legislation to improve the status of women in Canada.

Margaret Mitchell, NDP Critic on Women's Issues, attended the Winnipeg meeting and said in an interview that the Conservatives' answers to the problems of the Canadian economy simply don't work. She fears that women will be at the brunt of cutbacks and restraint programs and for that reason says women must lobby harder to be heard. Citing a recent incident where Employment Minister Flora McDonald told the House of Commons that technology would help women get jobs, Mitchell fears that the Conservative economics, combined with a lack of understanding of how their policies are affecting women, will likely mean tougher times ahead for women. As a British Columbia MP, Mitchell is already familiar with the effects of conservative policies on women, having witnessed Premier Bennett's cutbacks in her home province. But Mitchell remains convinced that the Mulroney government will not go as far to the right as U.S. President Ronald Reagan.

"Even B.C., which has a dumb-dumb for a premier, doesn't go as far as Reagan has," she observed.

British Columbia is already a case in point for critics of conservative economic policies. According to Don-

The honeymoon is over: Canadian women and Conservative economics

Penni Mitchell

na Stewart, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) B.C. representative, after a year of cutbacks in jobs, services and human rights, B.C. has the highest rate of personal bankruptcies and the highest unemployment rate in the country. (*Status of Women News*)

Finance Minister Michael Wilson has at times been upfront about his intentions to limit universality. In a speech to a group of women which hinted at the dissolution of universality, Wilson reiterated that those who really need assistance should receive it, but said that "our social support systems (must) encourage self-reliance rather than create a dependency on government. We will examine our child benefit, old age security and unemployment insurance systems to see how they may be improved."

Even Prime Minister Mulroney, who has been less candid about his intentions regarding universality, admitted in the House of Commons under pressure from Margaret Mitchell that he doesn't necessarily believe in universality of social benefits.



Margaret Mitchell

Carole Wallace, a Montreal feminist and member at large for the NAC explains why cutbacks in social services is a vital issue for Canadian women in an article in *Status of Women News*: "Because we live longer than men and our living conditions are more difficult, we have more health problems and consume considerably more medical services. As mothers we are the recipients of family allowances, and in most cases, of the child tax credit. We are the prime beneficiaries of social services, of legal aid, of subsidised housing, of minimum labour standards and of any number of other problems denounced as excessive by the likes of the Fraser Institute."

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women has also strongly criticised the federal government, for not including representatives from women's groups on its nine-member committee set up to advise the government on public program cutbacks.

Mitchell questions the effectiveness of the Conservative cut-back philosophy, and says that job creation stimulates the economy best by enabling people to buy goods and services; the federal government is cutting back on job creation programs while making unemployment insurance benefits tougher for some to get. The NDP recommends taxing higher income people, at the rate of 20 per cent or more, Mitchell says, instead of jeopardising the security of middle income and working class Canadians. Her party would also control interest rates as a means of stimulating the economy.

As the date of Finance Minister Michael Wilson's April budget approaches, many Canadian women are beginning to sense a siege mentality descending on their movement's psyche. Even with the prospect of a shrinking pie for funding the women's organisations though, most women's groups remain adamant that they will not be forced into a situation where they are pitted against one another for government funding dollars. As Roberta Ellis, chairperson of the Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women said at the Winnipeg meeting, "We will not fight other women's organisations for a slice of the pie. We want a larger pie."

Mitchell echoes that sentiment: "Women are in a position to be quite strong. They've got to be."

Donna Fulton spent the days over New Year plodding around the streets with her two children looking for a place to live.

Fulton, a single mother on welfare, whose home was burnt down December 28th, said she found the task (of finding alternate accommodation) almost impossible.

Meanwhile, another young woman on welfare, toyed with packing her bags and walking out on her landlord. Despite calling the Rentalsman, she had been unable to get him to put storm windows or kill the cockroaches. She was paying \$390 for rent which meant supplementing her provincial welfare rent allowance with \$40 from the remainder of her \$297 budget. This left her only \$257 for clothing; personal needs; food; and household expenses for the month.

If she had not been expecting her second child in a week's time, she said she would have left.

Fulton was beginning to despair (of ever finding accommodation) after five days of searching. Provincial welfare was allowing her \$350 for rent including utilities, and she just could not find anything for that price. She tried the newspapers, the realtors, the non-profit housing groups.

She worried about her January welfare budget which was rapidly going on bus fares to look for accommodation, and to visit her younger son who became ill during this period, and was hospitalised.

Even if she found a place, Fulton wondered how she would furnish it. Most of her belongings were burned in the fire. The welfare office advised her to get a furnished place, but they are even harder to find. Friends and relatives had offered her a few pieces of furniture. She had used up her \$150 annual allowance for special needs from



The roof falls in on rental housing

J. Proby

welfare, and was uncertain whether she would qualify for more.

She and her two boys were originally allowed to stay a week in emergency accommodation in a motel, paid for by welfare, but as the week drew to an end she began to panic. If the welfare department would only allow her \$400 a month for rent instead of \$350, she said, the task of trying to find somewhere would be much easier.

Grace Walker, another single mother, was unable to get a rent allowance increase to \$412 plus utilities so that she could get out of emergency housing. She and her five children were only allowed \$325 so she took her case to the Social Services Advisory Appeal Committee. In turning her down, the committee pointed out that \$325 was already above the departmental guidelines which allowed her \$296, excluding utilities.

She left her former accommodation because the landlord refused to do basic repairs, such as replace broken windows. This meant that her heating bills were enormous, peaking at \$183 for one month last winter.

Irmgaard Djekic, chair of

the Winnipeg Housing Concerns Group, says single mothers with young children have no choice but to put up with substandard rental units because of the bureaucracy they face. If they appeal to the Rentalsman or the Health Department, she estimates, it can take up to three years to get a conviction.

Djekic who is spearheading a tenant's group which is trying to improve living conditions for Winnipeg tenants, noted that with the vacancy rate at one per cent or less in the city, it is almost impossible for welfare recipients to find accommodation. People on welfare have to overcome discrimination from landlords and are often vulnerable to exploitation or harassment.

When landlords do rent to single mothers, Djekic said they are inclined to take liberties. She described how one of her former landlords always walked into her house without knocking, and when he caught her in the nude one day, he just laughed and walked out.

The housing concerns group wants changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act. It wants the Rentalsman replaced by boards, made up

of tenants and landlords and all houses and apartments to be inspected by the health department before they are rented out.

Garry Solkoski, assistant chief inspector of the city health department, said it would be an enormous task to inspect all units before they are rented out.

His department receives between 3,500 to 4,000 complaints from tenants in the inner city a year, he said. He added that his 12 inspectors are kept extremely busy, particularly as they try to investigate complaints within 24 hours.

He said part of the problem is that Winnipeg has a lot of older houses, and some of the blame lies with the landlords:

"There are certain individuals who own vast amounts of property within the city with whom we have continued problems," he said.

Stan Fulham, of Kinew Low Rental Housing manages 275 low rental units for which he has 1,000 applications, sees the problem slightly differently.

"Rents have gone out of reach of the lowest income earners because of the high cost of repairs and renovations," he said.

"There is very little money in the landlord business so the government has a big responsibility to provide public housing."

Garry Charles, general manager of Winnipeg Regional Housing, said the waiting period for his 3,000 low rental family units is between one and two years, and even longer for large inner city units. Charles expects the vacancy level to remain low.

Tenants' Handbook available from Core Area Residence Upgrading and Maintenance Program (CRUMP), 402 - 460 Main St., Winnipeg R3B 1B6 (942-7651).

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Activating rural women

Nancy Painter

Farm women must become more actively involved in Canadian lobbying, says a U.S. agricultural activist who attended a farm family seminar in Carman recently.

Keynote speaker at the seminar was Sister Thomas More Bertels of Silver Lake College, Manitowoc, Wisconsin, an active spokesperson for many agricultural organisations in the United States.

Bertels says that the farm community must stick together and put forth a more professional lobby if it ever hopes to get its case across to the large number of urban voters and policymakers.

Women have an important place in that process, she adds, because they control the demand for agricultural products in the marketplace. For example, if a woman decides against a product, her family usually doesn't get it. If women control product demand, then women should be in on the policymaking that influences the production of those products.

Women are the best lobbyists in the world, Bertels told participants. Women are more tenacious in their lobbying efforts — "they never know when to let go," she says.

In addition, she said: "You must have power to get things done — don't be afraid. Your sin is non-use of power. Power is the ability to get things done, the

ability to get other people to help you get things done. It's the production of intended effects. Use it."

Women are also more visible at public hearings and at other lobbying events, she said. Groups are more noticeable, simply because politicians see them as representing more votes. For this reason, she advised women to "travel in packs" and to have their presentations well-prepared with plenty of copies for the media.

Warning delegates not to underestimate the power of farm women, Bertels quoted her local Business and Professional Women's Club, which in a time of low membership decided to admit farm women. "They just took over the organisation," she said, and today it is a powerful tool in the education of the urban public towards farm issues and the importance of agriculture.

Women can be an important part of the infiltration process necessary to influence urban thinking, Bertels concluded. "Infiltrate the powerful organisations, the chamber of commerce or whatever, and get on their food committees," she advised. Women should be sitting on those boards and commissions to represent the agricultural community's viewpoint.

Bertels encouraged all farm women to participate, mentioning farm widows as another underused resource. All farm women can be invaluable to agriculture, she said, if they join in the lobbying and infiltration process.

ERRATA

The photograph on pg M7 of the January/February issue was incorrectly credited Prairie Theatre Exchange. The photograph was supplied by Actors' Showcase.

Correction

In an article in our January/February issue, we reported that Donna McLellan was program coordinator for Actors' Showcase. In fact, she is program director for Feeling Yes. Feeling No.

Célébrons la femme

Pierrette Gisiger

L'histoire du Canada français manquerait beaucoup de sa saveur et de son piquant si le rôle de nos ancêtres féminins ne se manifestait point. Considérons par exemple, Marie de l'Incarnation et Marguerite Bourgeoys qui figurent parmi nos premières institutrices. Citons aussi Anne-Marie Lagimodière qui, malgré les vœux de son mari, fit avec les voyageurs la traversée difficile et dangereuse du Bouclier Canadien pour devenir la première femme blanche du Manitoba. Comment oublier Gabrielle Roy, célèbre écrivaine dont les oeuvres méritent de nombreuses distinctions. Enfin, qui parmi nous, en écoutant les histoires de misère et de joie racontées par nos grands-mères, n'a pas senti une fierté profonde d'être issue de femmes si courageuses et fortes.

Aujourd'hui les Canadiennes-Françaises témoignent de cet héritage riche et noble, en partageant avec leurs confrères le monde des affaires, le domaine de la politique et des arts, les carrières professionnelles en plus d'être épouses et mères de famille. Nous avons bien le droit, nous les Canadiennes-Françaises, de célébrer notre existence et de la fêter, avec toutes les femmes du monde, le 8 mars, Journée internationale de la femme.

C'est au Congrès de la 2^e internationale socialiste à Copenhague en 1910, où les femmes de dix-sept pays se rencontraient afin de travailler ensemble pour obtenir le salaire égal et la paix mondiale, que l'on proclama le 8 mars "Journée internationale de la femme" en souvenir

d'une grève violente qui avait eu lieu à New York ce même jour deux ans auparavant. Les travailleuses de textile qui menaient la grève réclamaient leurs droits syndicaux, la journée de huit heures et le droit de vote. Donc c'est depuis ses débuts que la Journée internationale de la femme représente une solidarité internationale féminine qui prône la paix et les droits économiques, sociaux et politiques des femmes.

Cette année, nous célébrons notre journée le vendredi 8 mars au Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, grâce à "l'input" de plusieurs groupes féminins francophones. La fête débutera comme toute bonne célébration par un repas — un petit déjeuner organisé par Réseau. La Ligue féminine catholique se charge de l'atelier de la matinée et, après le dîner, Pluri-elles présente un atelier au sujet de la violence contre la femme. Le Conseil jeunesse provincial et l'Association des étudiant-e-s du Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface s'occupent du souper et sensibiliseront les participant-e-s à l'injustice perpétuée sur la femme par le moyen du théâtre. La soirée, organisée par Action Education des Femmes (Manitoba), s'amorcera par trois témoignages de femmes dans le domaine des communications et l'apport de l'éducation dans leur travail. Le lancement du livre "Questionnaire Gabrielle Roy/Le Manitoba répond" de Janick Belleau publié par le CEFCO ajoutera au plaisir de notre fête. La soirée se terminera avec un "Coffee house" où brilleront nos artistes canadiennes-françaises.

Sans aucun doute la Journée internationale de la femme sera une fête à ne pas manquer. Guettez les affiches publicitaires et soyez des nôtres le 8 mars. (Renseignements: 233-1735)

BULLETINS:

HELP! —

make it happen again! The Canadian Women's Music & Cultural Festival NEEDS DONATIONS for its upcoming **April 20** garage sale. For information call 477-5478.

Please come to the Garage Sale, on the afternoon of **April 20**, at the Broadway Optimist Club, 185 Broadway in Winnipeg.

MANITOBA BULLETIN —

Nominations for 1985 Y.W.C.A. Woman of the Year Awards accepted till **March 31**, enquiries 943-0381.

KRISIS LINE —

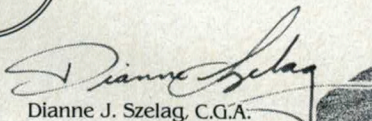
at the Indian Metis Friendship Centre at 251 Patrick Street is open 24 hours a day for all calls: 942-2929.

SUPPORT GROUP FOR BATTERED WOMEN —

will be meeting to share common concerns, interests and problems. This group is for women who have identified violence in a past or present relationship and who are working toward change in this area of life. Call Karen Schmidt at 269-6838 for more information. Group sponsored by the Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre, Southwood Mall, 1910 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg.

FARM WOMEN ON THE RADIO —

every Friday morning at 10:00 AM on CKY-Radio called "Topics Concerning Rural Families." If you have ideas for topics call Trudi Hemstad, Women's Directorate, Brandon, 728-7000.


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calendar

MARCH

1 POETRY READINGS — by Betsy Warland (*open is broken*, Longspoon Press, Edmonton, 1984, 56pp; *A Gathering Instinct*, William-Wallace, Toronto, 1981, 60pp.) and Daphne Marlett (*Touch to my tongue*, Longspoon Press, Edmonton, 1984; *How Hug a Stone*, Turnstone Press, Winnipeg, 1983) from their published works on **Friday, March 1, 9:30 PM** at Ms Purdy's, 226 Main Street, Winnipeg. Admission: \$3 members, \$4.50 non-members.

2 POETRY READINGS — Betsy Warland and Daphne Marlett will read their poetry (see review this issue) on **Saturday, March 2, at 3:15 PM** at the Winnipeg Centennial Library Auditorium. No admission. Sponsored by Gays for Equality and MACSW with funding from Canada Council.

3 POETRY READINGS — Poets Warland and Marlett will read from their works on **Sunday, March 3, at 8:00 PM** at Brandon University. No admission. Sponsored by the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women with funding from Canada Council.

7-8 STRATEGIES THAT MAKE THE DIFFERENCE — is the theme of the **March 7-8** annual conference at the Hotel Fort Garry featuring guest speakers to address the issue of practical ways of working with the Learning Disabled. For information contact Manitoba Association for Children (Adults) with Learning Disabilities, Room 201, 720 Broadway Avenue, Winnipeg, R3G 0X1, 774-1821.

8 HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY — reception on **Friday, March 8, at 6:30 PM** at the Manitoba Legislative Building. All welcome.

8 JOUNEE INTERNATIONALE DE LA FEMME — Venez célébrer au Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, entrée 196 av. de la Cathédrale de 7h00 à 24h00. Renseignements: 233-1735.

8-10 SMITHEREENS — is a powerful feature film debut of New York director Susan Seidelman. A new wave film classic starring Susan Berman as Wren, a wise-cracking, gum-chewing punker, out to make her mark on the New York rock scene. The film is presented by Film Furies and Manitoba Cinematheque on **March 8, 9, 10 at 8 PM** at Cinema Main, 243 Main Street. Admission \$2.50

9 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH AND RALLY — on **Saturday, March 9, 12:45 PM**. Starts at Encore Park (Portage and Carlton), and continues to hear speakers (location to be announced). The International Women's Day Committee invites all women's organisations to take part. Bring banners and slogans. For information call Meryl Cummings at 661-5895.

9 HELP YOURSELF TO HEALTH — 6th Annual Health Convention of the Consumers Health Organisation of Manitoba (CHOM) on **Saturday, March 9** at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. In addition to speakers there will be many workshops and commercial exhibits. For further information call Mrytle at (204) 661-2193 or write CHOM, 2685 Henderson Highway, Winnipeg R2E 0C4.

16 MAKING OUR OWN WAY — presents an alcohol and drug free evening of entertainment and dancing for womyn and children on **Saturday, March 16 at 8 PM** at St. Mathews-Maryland Church (this event is scheduled for the third Saturday of every month). Cost \$3 (more or less). For information call 975-2329/783-7418.

23 MEDIA CONTACTS FOR MEDIA WOMEN DAY — on **Saturday, March 23, from 9 AM-5 PM** at Lockhard Hall, University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Avenue (for childcare call two weeks in advance). This will be a day for women representing a wide range of issues to familiarise ourselves with and provide contacts and story ideas to mainstream media women. Speakers and brochures from women's groups are asked to attend. For information call Tanya Lester 453-4157 or Lydia Giles 453-3879.



OLD WOMEN ARE FEMINISTS TOO

I've spent a lot of time in the past year or two listening to Caroline, on the bus, standing in line in the bank and supermarket, at social gatherings, and at meetings.

— Sometimes her name is Mary Smith, or Marie Benoit, or Anne Kowalchuk, but always she is a widow, in her 70s, and in reasonably good health. She is not one to get up on platforms and make speeches, but in small and friendly groups and in one-to-one situations she is vocal and often vehement. If you ask her how she feels she'll answer in the Canadian way, "Not bad, thank you." She has lived through two World Wars and the Great Depression of the 1930s. She has experienced tremendous changes, technological and societal, and has coped with them in one way or another. She is a survivor.

Caroline doesn't think of herself as having much influence in this world. She has probably never thought of herself as being a member of a potentially influential segment of our society, the most rapidly expanding single segment: men and women — with women in the noticeable majority — over the age of 60. There are more Carolines, Marys,

Maries and Annes than there are female children, or female teenagers. Their numbers are overtaking the numbers of the young and middle-aged women. Their store of life experiences is worth tapping; their opinions are worth hearing. So I listen to Caroline.

The eldest daughter of a family of two boys and three girls, Caroline left school at 17, having completed Grade XI in the four room country high school where the principal taught all the subjects and supervised a correspondence course in French. There was nothing for her in the town where she had been born and raised, and so she came into the city, stayed with an aunt until she found a job selling ladies' wear in a small neighbourhood shop. She was nearly 30 when she finally married the boy she had "gone

S Y B I L
S H A C K

with" for several years. Like many young men of his generation he had left school at the end of Grade VIII. Even when he was able to find work he did not make enough money to support two people, and Caroline's job would have been forfeited if she had married. Besides she sent some of her inadequate wages home to her now widowed mother.

In those days there was no thought of living together without marriage. So they waited. Then Canada went to war. Her husband joined the army, and a year later was shipped overseas. Caroline went to work in a factory where she made a fair wage, though nothing like what her male co-workers were earning. With her allowance from the army and her own wages she was able to save what seemed to her a good sum, and when her husband was discharged in 1946 with a veteran's bonus added, they had enough for a down payment on a modest home, with a modest garden. She still lives there.

Two children were born to the couple, a boy and a girl. Caroline had higher aspirations for them than did her husband, and made sure that both the girl and the boy not only completed high school but went on to take professional training, the girl as a nurse, the boy as an engineer.

Their father, an honest, hard-working man, had never held a job that provided any real security for him or his family. When he died suddenly, he left Caroline with nothing but their home and a small life insurance policy which paid for his burial and the current year's taxes on the house. The children by then were married and raising their own families, the daughter in Victoria, the son in Hamilton. Caroline lived thriftily and on part-time work until she was eligible for the Old Age Security pension, when she became almost affluent, at least by her own perception. She is still working, now as a volunteer, taking her turn serving at the senior citizens' centre, visiting old people in nursing homes, helping out at the church, babysitting for young neighbours when they have medical or dental appointments and can't afford paid sitters.

Caroline's story is so common that you may wonder why anyone would be interested in listening to it. But its very commonness makes it important.

Because Caroline is cheerful, unassuming, undemanding and independent, no one pays much attention to her; that is, until she falls getting off the bus and breaks a hip, or is found lying on

her kitchen floor by the postman who missed her usual morning greeting, and took the trouble to investigate.

Caroline is an intelligent woman. She knows how limited the resources available to her are. She is also, she asserts firmly, a feminist, has been, she says, from the days her brothers were able to make \$5.00 a day during the summer hauling gravel for roadbuilding, and she had a tough time finding a job that paid 20 cents an hour, \$2.40 for a eight hour day. She still resents the inequality of pay between "men's jobs" and "women's jobs." "My son and my daughter spent about as much time, effort and intelligence preparing for their professions. Guess who's making more money today," she says more philosophically than bitterly.

"Oh, yes," Caroline tells me, "I'm a feminist. But maybe because I am old different things are important to me than to the young women I watch on television or read about. Sometimes they bother me because they're so pushy. But they sure get things done, I'll admit that. Maybe when I was young I worried about sex, though it seems to me that I was too busy living my life, earning enough money to keep our heads above water, worrying about my kids. I never even heard about orgasms or whatever. My husband and I loved each other; I still miss him terribly. But we waited to have sex until we were married, and didn't feel particularly good or bad about it. That's just the way it was."

"And lesbians," she says. "I never even heard the word until they got taken up on TV. Lots of my friends shared rooms and bed and no one gave a thought to their being lesbians. It was the sensible thing for working girls to do. Nowadays two girls can't share a room or an apartment without people smirking or raising an eyebrow. I think it's too bad."

"Sure," she says, "I think it's important for girls and women to be able to have abortions. To my dying day I won't forget the young girl who worked for a neighbour of ours, 16 hours a day, six and three-quarters days a week for miserable room and board and \$5.00 a month — yes, a month — when or if she got paid. The neighbour's son made her pregnant. No one knew about it until another neighbour found her bleeding in the lane. The dead baby, almost full term, was wrapped in an old apron in the garbage can. The girl was fired, of course; the son went on to the the university. I've often wondered whether his conscience bothered him. He was a leading light in the community in his later

life. Yes," Caroline says, "I believe in a woman's right to have a safe, supervised abortion."

"Wife and child abuse? Everyone in our town knew that Mrs. S. didn't walk into a door when she showed up at church on Sunday morning with bruises and two black eyes, and that Mr. J. regularly whopped the living daylights out of his kids. Mrs. J. was scared to say or do anything about it. No one else felt any responsibility to interfere. I remember Mr. J. joking with my father and quoting an Old Country saying that a good wife and a good carpet were both improved by a good beating. Believe me, though my husband never laid a hand on me in anger I've been around long enough to know what goes on. It's terrible and I'm glad women are at last doing something about it."

But what about the abuse of the elderly, sometimes by their own children, in guest and group homes and in personal care facilities, I asked her.

"Well," Caroline says with feeling, "I have friends stacked up in nursing homes, or whatever the fancy name for them is. They're just waiting to die. I haven't noticed my granddaughter and her friends getting excited about them, at least not until the old folks get to be a nuisance to their children or grandchildren. I kind of feel that the young people should be fighting against abuse of old people with just as much enthusiasm as I hear about wife and child abuse. After all, those young people are going to be old people themselves sooner than they think."

Caroline makes clear that at her age priorities are different from those she reads about in the feminist literature which occasionally — not too often — comes her way.

"You'll pardon me," she says, "if right now I worry more about money and health and what happens to me if I had a stroke or lost my mind. I am more interested in research into Alzheimer's disease than in the sexual habits of my neighbours, male or female. I want to know why clothing manufacturers don't take into account the needs of old women; we also would like to buy clothing that fits and is good-looking at prices we can afford. I want to know why architects of senior citizens' residences plan apartments where we have to step over a high sill to get to our balconies. I want to know what is being done to get pensions for people like me who have put in years of part-time work. I want to know why when I came home to an empty house with a cast up to my hip I was en-

titled to only one half day of home care; and the home care worker was not allowed to do for me the kinds of things I needed done. I want to know why my doctor tells me that I have to live with my aches and pains because that's all I can expect at my age. I have a feeling that my son gets more respect for a case of sniffles than I for my arthritis."

Caroline waxes most indignant when she speaks of the condescension with which she was treated at the hospital. "As if I were five years old and mentally defective, by young things younger than my granddaughter." Old people, she maintains, are people whether they are sick or well, male or female. "All I got most of the time when I asked questions was, 'There, there, dear. Don't worry. We're looking after you.' It never occurred to anyone that I was capable of understanding what was wrong with me, and that I was entitled to know what they were doing and why they were doing it."

As a contemporary of Caroline's I can understand her frustrations. She was saying that the most vocal of current activists in the women's movement are enthusiastic and dedicated. She admires their accomplishments. They are also young, at least in Caroline's terms. Their publications and their public statements stress the dramatic elements of women's

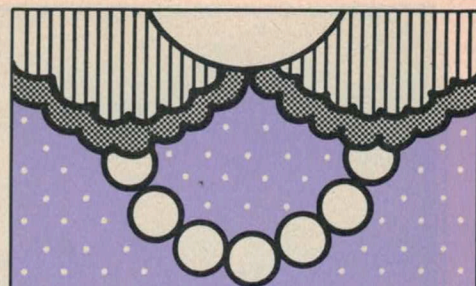
rights, and those that affect the young more nearly. Those elements also have most appeal for the media: pornography, abortion, sexual harassment, wife and child abuse, exploitation of women in advertising, lesbianism. Every one of these is important as a human rights issue; each one has its exhausting airing on television and then makes way for the next attention-getting issue, each re-surfacing periodically to make its bid for media time and space.

Caroline agrees that every one is vital not only to women but to all human beings. She is, however, concerned that other issues, less dramatic, more mundane, but just as important to women of her generation, receive less attention.

"Maybe we should be yelling louder and more often," she sometimes thinks to herself. Maybe we should, Caroline, Mary Smith, Marie Benoit, Anne Kowalchuk and I. If we don't speak up outside the feminist ranks, at least we should have our say within them. If we don't make our needs known, who will? If we don't recognise our lives as having been of value, how can we expect others to appreciate the contribution we have made, and like Caroline, are continuing to make? Perhaps the young need constant reminding that they too will some day be old. That is, if, like Caroline and me, they are lucky and survive.▼



Sybil Shack received the 1984 Persons Award for her contribution to the improvement of the status of women in Canada. She was also named a member of the Order of Canada. Two of her books, *THE TWO-THIRDS MINORITY* and *SATURDAY'S STEP-CHILDREN* deal with the condition of Canadian women in education and business respectively. A retired Winnipeg teacher, she co-chairs committees of the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties and the University of Manitoba Centre on Aging.



In my Grandmother's room

*in my Grandmother's room
I gained a way of seeing —
of taking in the light,
her warm silhouettes
of hypnotic form — as she
changed, back toward me,
from grandma dress to nightgown
or when she thought I slept
'paid no mind'; dismantling
herself without restraint
breasts, pendulums, brushing her knee
as she unfastened hose from garter belt
(like a gunslinger) to my small fancy
(slow to anger, yet true)*

*in my Grandmother's room
I learned silence
when she was in it
and presence
when she was not;
in mornings
she would round the room,
making her tall bed and
putting her husband's
slippers away, she'd bend
then lean up to pat
her pinned hair or
tug smooth her dress
in melodic readiness*

*in my Grandmother's room
I found love without
limit or reproach
and rewarded her, wordlessly,
as a child will do
by hoarding my quarters
for lavish gifts or
tossing myself with ferocity
into her pillowy chest;
she lived all of her life
in rooms, then died in one
at dusk —
holding my hand,
saving her tenderest smile for me;*

I miss you, Gram

© Cherie Geauvreau

Do W HOMEMAKERS' PENSION TO STAY ALIVE



Margaret had always worked hard to provide the best for her family.

So when she reached retirement after a lifetime spent raising children and keeping house, Margaret had little reason to think it wouldn't be a time for the travel that she and her husband John had promised themselves for so many years.

But when she reached the age of 66, tragedy struck. John suffered a stroke and she was suddenly alone.

But the cruellest cut of all was that she found out her husband's private pension plan did not provide survivor's benefits.

In fact, all her benefits added together put her on a financial razor's edge that slashed her income to a level below the poverty line.

And so Margaret was left to carry on with only a fraction of the money she was used to living on. There would be no travelling, no frills, no living on the dreams of a lifetime.

In Canada, six out of ten unmarried women over 65 live in poverty. For many of them, retirement marks the first time in their lives they have ever been destitute. While elderly women don't hold a monopoly on poverty — about 45 per cent of unmarried elderly men are also poor — their situation is an issue because of their unequal access to pension benefits.

Some people think the situation of women like Margaret would be vastly improved if homemakers qualified for a pension of their own. Others are not so sure.

The National Council of Welfare says homemaker pensions would provide too

little, too late.

"The traditional role of woman as homemaker is already out of date, and becoming more so with each passing year," says the council in a report on the subject.

Women's advocacy groups such as the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) might take issue with that view. Those groups are actively lobbying for homemaker pensions. Other associations, such as the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women (MACSW), The Vancouver Status of Women, the Saskatchewan Coalition for Women's Pensions and the Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women favour more wide-ranging alternatives to improve the lot of elderly women.

Among political parties, the Progressive Conservatives and Liberals favor homemaker pensions, the New Democratic Party does not.

The debate over an issue that on the surface does not seem debatable — what could be wrong with a pension that recognises the value of non-paid "women's" work? — has for the most part been soft-spoken and civilised. Most groups don't want to launder their differences in public.

But divisions do exist and there is a fear that disagreement may stall any action on improving women's pensions.

Last May, the National Council of Welfare came out with its guns blazing when it released a report that shot holes in a federal task force study that advo-

N E L L E
O O S T E R O M

WE NEED PENSIONS AFLOAT?

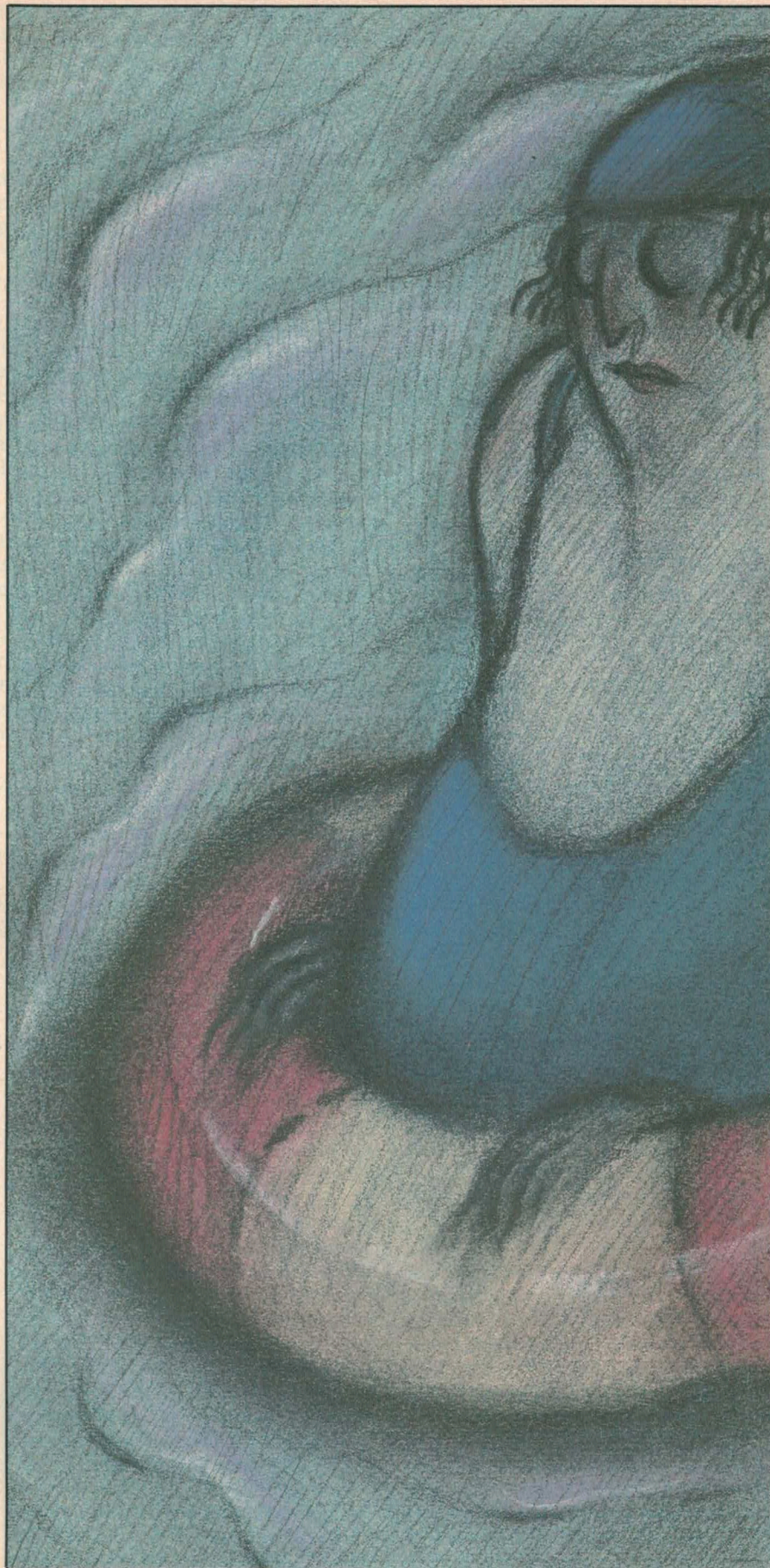
cated homemaker pensions. The council — an appointed body that advises the Minister of Health and Welfare — called the proposal inequitable, arbitrary and out of step with the times.

"The homemaker pension is not really a pension at all," said the 12-woman, eight-man council. "(It) is an additional income security benefit for families with homemakers."

The target of the council's paper was a report by a Parliamentary committee on pension reform released a year ago that concluded that "the problem of pensions is largely a women's problem." It proposed enrolling housewives in the Canada/Quebec Pension Plans, with contributions paid for by their husbands or subsidised if widowed, single or low-income. It also assigned a hypothetical income to full-time homemakers based on half the average industrial wage to determine benefits.

The reception to the task force report ranged from scathing to a little better than lukewarm. That's not uncommon for Parliamentary bodies that, in their attempt to accommodate conflicting interest groups, end up pleasing no one. Prior to the election, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney sent out clear signals that homemaker pensions would be a priority for his new government but silence on the matter since then indicates it's still under review. Some women, while recognising the practical deficiencies of the report, saw it as a moral victory.

"I never thought I would live long enough to see a government task force adopting the principle of recognition of work done in the home," says 60-year-

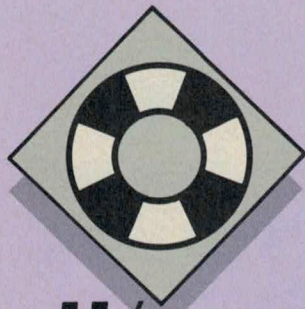


NINA BERKSON

old Bernice Sisler, a one-time representative on the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. "That in itself is a terrific thing."

But the Welfare Council, in taking the proposals apart bit by bit, concluded that the task force had a peculiar and capricious way of determining who is a homemaker and who is not. The bottom line, said the council, is that the traditional one earner couple with a full-time homemaker would be the clear winner.

Such couples would qualify for the



**Women
have
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pensions
for a lot of
reasons and
being a
homemaker
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one of them.**

proposed \$2,700 a year pension whether they were millionaires or paupers. They would qualify whether or not the "full-time homemaker" actually did any homemaking or hired a maid to do it. And they would qualify whether or not they had children.

The losers would be wage-earning women whose homemaking tasks would be assigned a lower or zero value. For example, in a household in which both partners pulled in a pay cheque and each had an income that came to

half the average industrial wage of \$22,800 (1984), there would be no homemaker pension.

The council also highlighted the inequities that would exist between single parents in the home versus those in the paid workforce. It presented a hypothetical case of two widows, one wealthy and in the home and one not so well off and working for \$11,400 a year — half the average industrial wage. The first woman's pension would be fully subsidised. The second would have to pay full contributions. Upon retirement, the wealthy widow would enjoy a generous income, most of it derived from her deceased spouse's private pension and some from a homemaker pension into which she had never had to make contributions. The low-income widow would probably rely on public pensions exclusively and her contributions to the C/QPP would have helped subsidise the wealthy widow.

Also presented was the scenario of a housekeeper who worked for an affluent single mother. Upon retirement, the latter would receive a fully subsidised homemaker pension. The housekeeper, if she didn't qualify as a homemaker herself, would end up with a smaller public pension than her employer. Also, her contributions would help pay for the pension of her well-off boss.

The Welfare Council's nit-picking approach to the task force proposals sparked a counter-critique by the CACSW, authored by Bernice Sisler. In essence, it criticised the council for throwing out the baby with the bath water just because the federal task force didn't satisfy all the wrongs of the C/QPP.

"To my view of thinking, getting the moon is not a difficult thing by comparison," said Sisler in an interview. Sisler was incensed at what she saw as the council's suggestion "that there are all these rich women that are lying around eating chocolates all day and they don't deserve this pension."

To Sisler, the important thing about the task force report was that it took the first step in recognising the status of homemakers as people who make valuable contributions to society. While the council proposes more sweeping changes that would benefit everyone — homemakers included — Sisler feels that denying homemakers a separate status perpetuates their denigration.

"It's very interesting, isn't it, that women's work, no matter what it is, is always the subject of criticism. It doesn't matter how we do, or what we do, it's fair

ball to criticise it. A man can go into the labour force and do a perfectly useless job as far as society is concerned and he gets the C/QPP whether he wants it or not."

The Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women (MACSW) would not quibble with that argument but it nevertheless does not support the principle of homemaker pensions. Some of its reasons echo those of the Welfare Council. And MACSW also proposes more sweeping changes but it does not close the door on the federal task force completely.

"Doing something is better than doing nothing," says Carolyn Garlich, who chaired a MACSW committee on pensions. "We are not saying homemaker pensions are an evil thing. They will help some women."

"But the unfortunate thing about putting a program like that into place is that you don't solve the root problem... women have inadequate pensions for a lot of reasons and being a homemaker is just one of them."

"Those reasons include the fact that women are paid less than men — 41 per cent less on average — and pensions, including C/QPP, are based on pre-retirement income. Women are more likely to work part-time, making them ineligible for many company pension plans. And they are likely to spend long periods of time outside the workforce raising children and/or managing a home, making it difficult for them to build up pension credits. Women who rely on their husband's pension are often shocked to learn that many private plans will not cover them if their husband dies. As for the C/QPP, it will return only 60 per cent of the benefits to a surviving spouse."

There is a feeling that homemaker pensions will somehow perpetuate inequities between men and women. That rewarding women for staying in the home is a step backward.

In Canadian society, full-time homemaking has become an increasingly rare occupation. It is estimated that about 63 per cent of Canadian women work outside the home. Some believe that by the year 2000, the proportion may be about seven out of ten women, with many of the remainder entering or re-entering the work force after short periods in the home. By comparison, in the early 1950s, only one woman in four was in the paid labor force.

However, the rapid disappearance of many jobs due to technological change — many of them traditionally held by women in clerical positions — puts a

new wrinkle on the employment picture. Will women be pressured to stay at home as jobs become more scarce? Will such amenities as homemaker pensions be used to entice them to do so?

Garlich suggests that's not so far-fetched.

"The homemaker pension is not so much a pension that recognises the work that a woman does in the home but is a pension that is awarded for staying out of the labor force," says Garlich. "It may sound a bit paranoid or something but I think it could be the future, as jobs get more scarce, that there might be pressure on women to get out of the work force and stay in the home. The first step is not really paying them to stay out of the workforce as paying them a pension to stay out of the work force. I feel that's a dangerous precedent."

Those who advocate homemaker pensions reply that if it's inevitable that microtechnology is making jobs scarce for women, it's better to be realistic about obtaining pension benefits.

Georgia Cordes, president of the Winnipeg YWCA and a pension activist for many years, says there is no proof that homemaker pensions would encourage women to stay home any more than there is proof that unemployment insurance benefits are a disincentive to work.

While few women may opt to be full-time homemakers all their lives, most will perform in that role at some point, making it essential for them to receive pension benefits for the time spent as a homemaker, Cordes says.

"We'll be wage earners at some point, homemakers at some point, full-time, part-time child-rearers," says Cordes. "And that's just a reality of our biology that says that will be what our career pattern will be like as opposed to men."

But women's career patterns — or men's for that matter — are irrelevant to those who want to tear down Canada's pension structure and start all over again. The system has been described as the worst of all Western industrialised nations — barring the United States.

The system operates at three levels. The universal Old Age Supplement is available to everyone over 65. The C/QPP pays workers who contribute and bases benefits on pre-retirement earnings. The Guaranteed Income Supplement subsidises people with little or no other income. Under the plan, a single person who has not contributed to C/QPP and has no other sources of income would obtain a maximum of just over \$6,400 a year from GIS and OAS.

That's well below the poverty line of most urban centres.

Garlich believes that MACSW's proposals would provide a better solution to Canada's thorny pension problem.

MACSW's position is that all pensioners, no matter what their pre-retirement income, should be eligible for 50 per cent of the average industrial wage upon retirement. That would come to \$11,400 in 1984 dollars. It also recommends scrapping the OAS and GIS in favour of a retirement rebate that would be administered through the income tax system. The committee's reasoning is that the income tax system would provide a more efficient means of administering the program, since all pensioners are already involved in filling out income tax returns. That way, the program would automatically reach everyone affected and the amount of rebate would most easily be adjusted to financial need.

"We think that the proposal we made is a better answer for all people," says Garlich. "It would provide an adequate income above the poverty line for all senior citizens, the majority of whom are women. It would provide that for people who are homemakers and for people who have been in the labour force who have been unemployed for long periods of time or people who have been working at low paying jobs and who end up with small pensions. A universal program would cover all of those people, and not just some of them."

When MACSW presented its position to the federal task force studying pensions more than a year ago, it was criticised by task force members for being too expensive to implement. However, the group countered that its proposals did address costs and suggested legislation that would force individuals to contribute to a pension plan or plans that would guarantee a retirement income of 50 per cent of their average annual earnings. Such legislation would minimise reliance on the pension rebate.

Garlich feels that a simplified, universally adequate pension system is the wave of the future. Homemaker pensions, while not a bad thing, would just prove to be another stop-gap solution.

"If you don't address the whole group of reasons and you only address part of it, it's going to be more difficult down the road to make the right decisions for everybody because once a program is in place you just raise a political storm if you try and remove it. If you offer homemaker pensions and down the road say,

'well, there's a better way of doing this,' people who have been paying into those pensions will resist and then you're just going to raise all sorts of problems.

"It's just virtually politically impossible to withdraw some of those programs once they've been introduced."

Until a few years ago, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women also favoured a more universal solution to the problem and opposed the idea of homemaker pensions. But NAC has reversed its position since then, largely due to the influence of pension lobbyist Louise Delude, who wrote a paper entitled *Pension Reform With Women In Mind*.

In it, Delude contends that the idea of a universal, basic pension for everyone looks good on paper but it just won't fly.

For one thing, the insurance industry constitutes a strong political lobby and would never accept it. Secondly, it would be difficult to establish how much is adequate for a senior to live on and in practice the amount would probably end up being quite low because of the high cost of implementing it.

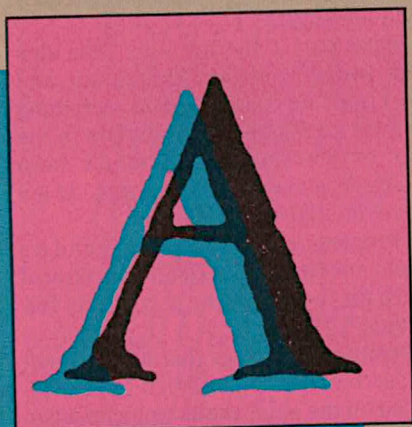
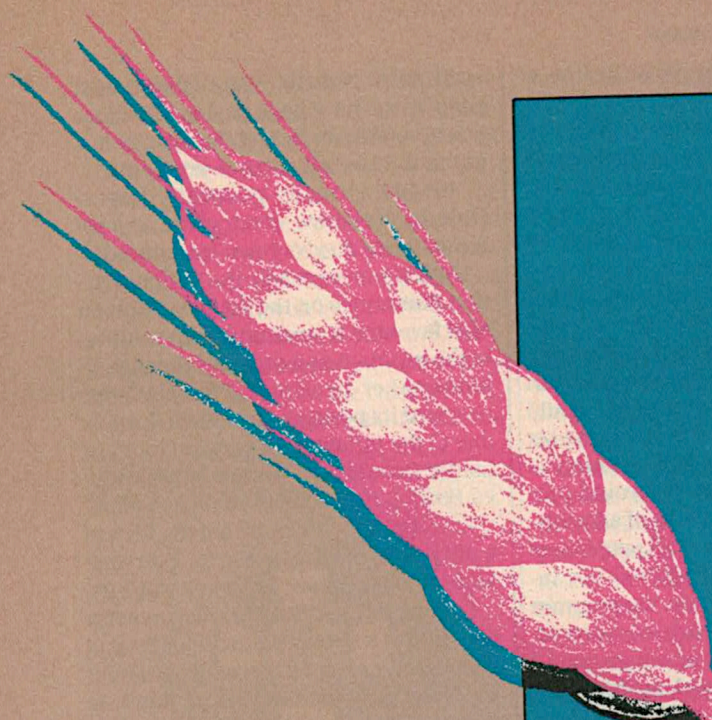
Delude concludes: "Women must unfortunately give up the idea of one simple and elegant solution to their pension problems. Instead, they must explore all the possible ways of using and adapting Canada's present pension system to their own advantage."

Sisler puts it another way: "The idea that you can blot everything out and start from the beginning and everything will be hunky dory is really pie in the sky to my mind... I might have subscribed to that 40 years ago. At my age, I no longer do."

"Progress is made very slowly and it's made only with concerted, concentrated work for change on the part of very few people."

Despite the danger that nothing will get accomplished if women appear divided on the issue, many women's advocacy groups hold fast to the notion that there should be room to accommodate everyone's views. (And most do not like to see themselves pictured as being at odds over the issue.)

"When you look behind the scenes, women's groups are trying to be a little more unified on this than it appears on the surface," said Cordes. "We just have to make sure that we learn to work in a spirit of compromise because we're not always going to agree on everything all the time. By realising that each of us is endeavouring to improve things for our sisters, with that in mind we should try and work together and not run each other down."▼



LETTER FROM THE C



COUNTRY

LUANNE
ARMSTRONG

It began, as so many social movements do, with a dream. This dream went somewhat as follows... move out of the city, get some land, establish independence and freedom from economic slavery by growing your own food and becoming self-sufficient. Along the way, viable small communities and alternative enterprises to sustain the movement would be created, along with a healthy free and alternative environment in which to raise children.

But women who followed this dream found, as women so often do, that there was a hidden price tag. For example, one

woman I know, found herself at one point in her life trying to care for a small baby, run a health food store, raise a garden, goats, and ginseng plants, cook a vegetarian-whole grain diet, and cope with living in a partially torn down and not-yet-rebuilt farmhouse. Her husband was quite disgruntled when she became seriously ill with colitis.

This woman and her husband, like so many others who used to live here, have moved back to the city. They say they're coming back, one day. They now have good jobs, friends, and a great place to live. The woman, my friend, admits how relieved she is to get up in the morning and go to work, knowing that is her only primary task of the day.

But other women who remain here, in this small rural area in British Columbia, find themselves caught, as rural women all over Canada are caught, between the changing role of women in society and the traditional nature of rural life, with its still current nineteenth century image of women who could get up early in the morning, bake bread, feed the pigs, weave some clothes, wash the floor, hoe the garden, go out and shoot a deer for supper, and then go to bed early to get up next morning and do it all over again.

Well, no, it's not that bad. Many rural women, while still leading fairly traditional lives, are managing to include feminist concepts in their lives, often while carefully not labelling themselves feminists. At a recent conference I attended, where the emphasis was on keeping fit and finding new cheap ways to cook, the talk quickly turned to a long debate on how to get men more involved in childraising and housekeeping duties. Many rural farm women's organisations are beginning to recognise the importance and economic value of women's work on the farm, but they steer away from the wider issue of women's role in society. The Young Womens' Institute in our area, which is a traditional home-oriented organisation, is now beginning to take very strong stands on pornography and child abuse, and is playing a leading role in bringing these problems to the attention of the community.

But many women are finding themselves unhappy, frustrated, and dissatisfied, without being able to articulate the reasons for these feelings. Here are three examples from my close acquaintances, all of whose individual plights mirror those of other women in similar circumstances.

Carol is a young woman from a large city who has finally achieved her dream of a house, a garden, a place in the country. She and the man she lives with have bought an old house and are rebuilding it. But after one winter at home, bored and restless, Carol is beginning to wonder if she has made a mistake. She has decided a job might help. Perhaps it will make up for missing the hustle and bustle of city life, her friends, her connections to a wider community. Looking for work, however, proves discouraging. Even clerking or waitressing jobs are scarce and heavily competed for, and they pay only minimum wage. Driving 20 kilometres to town and back will cost most of what she can make. She thinks of going back to school, but the nearest college is 100 kilometres away, over treacherously icy roads. The man she lives with is understanding, but also bewildered by her frustration. He likes his job, as a logger, which pays about \$20 an hour. He's worried about her restlessness, and hopes she finds "something to do."

Laura is ambitious, bright and getting into her middle 30s. The women she reads about in magazines, at her age, all seem to have achieved careers which pay fabulous amounts of money, and involve important and interesting work. She has given up all hope of getting a decent job, and instead, concentrates her considerable energy on gardening, housekeeping, and preserving food in an effort to save money. Her husband's salary just barely covers the expenses of raising four children. Laura knows she has intelligence and ability to offer, but feels these are of no use to her community. She's tired of doing volunteer work, which can be satisfying, but it costs too much in terms of energy, gas to drive to meetings, and time away from her family. Her dream is to become a child psychologist, to be someone respected, admired, and useful. She finds herself depressed much of the time, and wonders if some kind of therapy would help.

Eleanor is an older woman, a widow. When her husband died, she found out suddenly, how difficult life had become. Living miles from town and unable to drive, she is dependent on friends and neighbours for transportation, repairs to her house, snow shovelling, and simply keeping an eye on her. Since there is a strong tradition of "neighbourliness" in her community, this has so far not been a problem. She has put her house up for sale, but all the properties around her are also for sale, and nothing is



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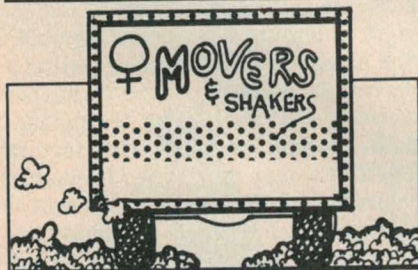
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moving. She has a bad heart and knows that in winter, if anything should happen, it would take almost an hour to get her to the hospital.

The problems are familiar... to move or not to move, to work or not to work, lack of daycare, low paying jobs or none at all, lack of support and connections with other people in similar dilemmas.

But these problems are exacerbated for rural women by several factors, the chief of which is economic. The recession hit longer and harder in rural areas and lingers still. Job opportunities are scarce, and traditional types of work, forestry, farming, fishing, are predominantly male.

Second, there is the traditional nature of rural life, a nature that is slow to change, and is in fact, supported and defended by the majority of people who choose a rural lifestyle. However, "tradition," tends to leave women stuck in the role of housekeeper, childrearer, etc. without giving this role any added value. Women who try to break out of this role find themselves without a network of support. The women's organisations that do exist are usually tied to supporting the family and strengthening women's role within it.

There is still a lot of defensiveness about, and support for, the Seventies

"back to the land" movement, whose ideals, while softened somewhat by the harsh realities of eighties economics, still seem applicable, (with a lot of hard work) to many people. So women who feel frustrated and exhausted by the demands placed upon them by those ideas may be unable, or unwilling, to articulate, even to themselves, what's wrong.

Another woman of my acquaintance, who, with her husband, seems the very embodiment of the Seventies idea, was, when younger, an extremely talented pianist. She admits, a bit sadly, that there has been little time for music during the past 10 years while they built their organic gardening and greenhouse business. She doesn't seem to regret her choice, but I wonder if she would willingly make the same choice for her daughter.

Even looking to outside sources for support can be frustrating. Women's magazines tend to be written by, and targeted for, urban women. While many of the articles are exciting and interesting, they occasionally leave me (as a rural woman) left out and irrelevant to the feminist movement.

The recession has hit harder at rural women by limiting their ability to move, to go to school, to make choices about their lives. It's getting harder and harder to "get by" and much of that getting by, often depends on the unpaid, and undervalued labour of women.

What is needed now, is the process of communication, dialogue, and discussion, which will begin to alleviate the frustration and depression felt by so many women, and which will give them the knowledge to begin to make more informed choices about where and how they want to live. Enough feminist ideas have spread into rural areas to let women know that something important is happening that they can be a part of.

Rural women who are committed to their lifestyles still need the energy and support to fight for recognition of their valuable place in rural life. Women who want to change their life need better understanding and arguments that give them the strength to fight for those changes.

The important thing is to begin the process of articulation which will allow women to feel free to make their own choices, rather than being pressured into a lifestyle dictated by the society they have chosen. ▼

*The recession has
hit harder at
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to go to school,
to make choices
about their lives.*



Should you get personally involved with your computer?

JULIA
VAN GORDER

If you are thinking of buying a personal computer, (not just a video games toy you attach to your TV screen), you are thinking of four pieces of electronic equipment — computer, keyboard, screen and printer — which represent the third largest purchase most people make in their lives. Be sure you know *why* you are buying a personal computer. What is it going to do for you? If

your answer is, *It's for my kids' education*, think again. You might do better to send them on a tour of China for the \$3,000 it will cost you. Kids do have access to computers at school, which school boards can afford to replace more comfortably than most individuals can. And the technology is changing so fast, that what you buy today may be outdated in five years. Hold off as long as you can.

Also there are health hazards. Like TV screens, microwave ovens, and the sun, computer screens (called monitors) give off low grade radiation. We won't know for 20 years or more what the full health hazards of using these screens are. Workers tied to terminals for long hours doing dull work seem to suffer side effects in a way that professionals who can move away from their machines do not. Some theorists say professionals tire less because doing creative work at a screen uses both hemispheres of the brain. (Eyestrain, my doctor tells me, is really neck strain from thrusting the chin forward with bifocals. I had to get reading glasses.)

So why have I spent thousands of dollars on a computer? Because I know what it can do for me, I need what it can do for me. I'm a writer who types poorly. My neighbour, an academic, used to say to me: "You know, Julia, for less than \$4,000 you can get a computer." I used to laugh at him. Who but an academic could afford \$4,000 for a computer? Then one day he said, "You know, I have written four books in the past two years. And I now jump out of bed in the morning to get to my computer. It takes the drudgery out of writing."

Yes. With a good instructional word processing program the computer, (an unthinking servant without that instructional software), will delete and insert in an instant. It will move blocks of text from here to there, center titles, set margins, headings, tabs. It will search for words and replace them with others. It will check spelling, and create a dictionary of words unique to the user. And there are programs that will check punctuation and style. Imagine a machine pointing out your sexist remarks, your wordy phrases, your clichés, and suggesting fresher ways of writing.

I do most of my editing on the screen. When I am satisfied, I type **kd** and the computer moves the final draft to a disc for filing. (One disc will hold up to 1,000 pages of print.) I then tap **S**, and go to pick scarlet runner beans for supper while the computer checks my spelling and gives me a word count on my article. Then I correct my errors, and ask the computer to add to its dictionary the words that were correct which it did not recognise. The spelling over in minutes, the noisy printer prints as many copies as I need of my text, while I wash the breakfast dishes in the kitchen.

Sound easy? It's not. It's like learning a new language, or bringing a first child home from the hospital. You are fascinated, but also frustrated and incompe-

tent. And you always have a manual in your hand. We are going through a revolution in human activity. It takes energy and thought and time, but in the end it saves time.

Before going the computer route, I went to a Women and Words workshop for writers. The instructor, Rochelle van Halm, likes jumping out of bed to her Morrow, just as my neighbour Ken Onley does to his Apple. In 18 months Rochelle has written fifty articles on her computer. She uses her computer for filing, business accounts, personal accounts, mailouts.

Rochelle's Morrow serves her well, but it has dropped in price from \$4,000 to around \$2,000. Why? It has 64k of memory. The new machines have 128k (book length) or more of memory. Hers has 8 bit capacity; the new machines have 16. (They work at twice the speed). The new machines tend to use DOS software, not CP/M, and to be completely IBM compatible (able to talk to IBM machines around the world). They also have two disc drives that require double-sided, double-density discs. (Some new programs are put out only for double-sided discs.) The 5¼ inch floppy disc, double-sided, double-density, seems here to stay for the personal computer. There are 8 inch and larger hard discs for businesses which need a huge filing capacity.

Over lunch the class discussed the impact of computers. Annie said, "But what is to happen to the quality of life when we are all in our separate homes working at a machine?"

"The quality of my life has improved," Hannah said. "I get my work done in my own way. Then I am free to do things I care about with people I care about."

"You're right," Jessie said. "At work my relationships are casual, sometimes stressful. My real life is lived with family and friends in and out of our homes."

Personal computers seem most useful to writers, to researchers who want to be in touch with libraries and data banks around the world, to graphic artists, and to overloaded accountants. I predict that in two years my computer will be sending my copy to *HERIZONS'* computer by telephone. Brigitte and Penni will read it on their screen or printout, and tap out suggestions. I will make revisions and phone them back. The *HERIZONS* computer will print the magazine, keep track of subscriptions, inventories, accounts and payroll. It will free the staff to do the creative work.

In the United States, writers are now mailing their books on disc to their

publishers. Coach House Press in Toronto is helping writers and other publishers to use the new microtechnology to cut costs and reduce repetitions in the industry. The future is now.

Buying a Personal Computer

To buy a personal computer intelligently, you need to set aside two to four weeks for footwork between libraries, bookstores, and computer shops. Then you'll need the same kind of time, free of deadlines, to accustom yourself to your new microtechnology.

Let's assume you want a computer for word processing, graphics, research, accounting, personal finance, spreadsheets, education, telecommunications, data management, games, or all of these. Most good computers will do all of these if they have the appropriate software programs to tell them how to do your task. Some software packages come with the computer, saving hundreds of dollars. So you start with the software. You ask friends which programs they like to use, then you read consumer reports to find whether there are updates or if better programs have been developed since your friends bought their software. Follow the same procedure with computers, monitors, printers.

It is of prime importance that you find a unit that you are physically comfortable with. For instance, the Periodical Writers Association of Canada researched computers and recommended to its members the Kaypro ("the workhorse of computers"). It comes with a choice of two good wordprocessing programs — Wordstar and Perfect Writer. But I am sensitive to glare. The standard green screen makes my eyes sting within twenty minutes. Yet I can sit for five hours without discomfort at my amber Amdek monitor with a glare screen attached. And I need the screen to be detached from the computer, so that I can move it when the sun hits my skylight. And I need a large screen with large print. It is also important to me to have a detached keyboard so that I can wriggle around as I work. (Having visions of typing in bed, I was tempted by IBM's PCjr, with its completely detached keyboard. When I did some research, I realised that the PCjr is a converted toy, with out-of-date cassette slots, one disc drive, and poor capacity to connect to a serious printer. IBM is unlikely to make its cheaper models competitive with its

more expensive ones.) Some people miss the click of the typewriter keyboard; some computer keyboards have a click built in. Still others have to play music. The noise level is too low for them. Personally I don't mind the whirr of the fan on my Columbia, although it can't compare with the racket of my electric typewriter.

Most people start reading with Peter McWilliams' simple *The Word Processing Book*, *A Short Course in Computer Literacy*. In it McWilliams discusses the pros and cons of computers. He evaluates software, computers, and printers. His book is constantly updated, and you can send for his regular update letters. *A Buyers' Guide to Home Computers* by VanTrees and Wolenik is also written in simple English. And Dona Z. Meilach's *Before You Buy a Computer*.

There are hundreds of magazines written for computer users. Many are available at public libraries, such as: *Computer Buyers' Guide and Handbook*, *Interface Age*, and *Personal Computing*.

I didn't find magazine consumer reports on computers useful, except to alert me to



model numbers and changes. Some new models have been on the market only long enough for a writer to try the keyboard and list the specifications from a brochure. I was seduced by consumer reports into choosing the latest Sanyo. "The best buy on the market." It had everything except performance. When I returned it to London Drugs, their store model lay apart on the counter, awaiting repairs. I did remember that at no time had my helpful salesrep recommended the Sanyo. The store gave me an immediate refund, but after doing the rounds of computer stores again, I found the London Drugs staff most honest, knowledgeable, and service-oriented. I bought their recommended top-of-the-line Columbia, an expandable IBM PC clone, 16 bit, 128 k, software included. (Perfect Link is well reviewed for telecommunications.) And I bought their Okidata M92 dot matrix printer because it is fast, the least noisy, and has the option of correspondence quality (not letter) printout. If you want letter quality print you have to look at the slower daisy wheels or very expensive laser printers.

It is not a good idea to look for bargains in computers. You may be getting an out-of-date model, or one made by a fly-by-night company. Nor is it a good idea to buy your computer in one store, your printer in another. They have to work together. Whose responsibility is it if they don't?

You must also find sales staff you can trust and understand as you will be relying on them for help in the first few weeks.

When you decide on a computer, dicker with the store for the software you want, and ask them to set it up in working order in your home or office. They should also show you how to boost your system up, how to format your discs, how to make copies of your master discs. (The markup on computers is 30-50 per cent. You're entitled to service for that.) You might even go for a discount on the price. The competition is stiff.

May you leap out of bed every morning to your personal computer.



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De l'enthousiasme des plus jeunes...

Les Amérindiennes Brimées jamais soumises

par Josette Picard et
Hélène Lévesque

HERizons tient à remercier LA GAZETTE DES FEMMES de lui avoir accordé l'autorisation de reproduire l'article "Les Amérindiennes Brimées, jamais soumises" (paru dans LA GAZETTE DES FEMMES de novembre-décembre 1984), texte de Josette Picard et d'Hélène Lévesque.

HERizons tient à remercier également Louise Bilodeau pour l'autorisation de rephotoser.

Ever since Whiteman set foot in Canada 450 years ago, the Spirit of the North-American Native woman has been left to die. She has not only lost the influence she once had within her community, she has also been raped of her Indian Status when marrying a man of Non-Indian Status.

Last summer, while we celebrated the arrival of Jacques Cartier into Canada, the Native Woman's Spirit mourned. These festivities only reminded her of the poverty and discrimination that she has had to deal with for the past 450 years.

... à la réserve pleine d'expérience des aînées, une même volonté d'améliorer la situation des femmes et des nations autochtones.

Évangélisation et fourrures

La perte a bien commencé avec l'arrivée de l'homme blanc. Débarquant en terre de Canada, celui-ci dut éprouver un sacré choc culturel! Il arrivait d'un monde où la ligne de démarcation était clairement tracée entre dirigeants et dirigés, où l'homme était la figure dominante de la famille. Rien de commun avec ce qu'il découvrirait.

« La femme amérindienne vit selon un mode jamais vu par les Français de l'époque. Les Huronnes et les Iroquoises en particulier ont dans leur organisation sociale une place qui leur confère des pouvoirs politiques et économiques qui surprennent les Européens (...). Mais c'est surtout la grande autonomie des Amérindiennes en ce qui a trait aux moeurs sexuelles, au mariage et au divorce, qui provoque le scandale chez les éducateurs. »¹

Le monde à l'envers, pour un Français! Il y avait pire: de nombreux chercheurs croient en effet que c'est la femme, et non l'homme, qui transmettait son nom aux enfants. On sait aussi que chez les Iroquoiens, si les chefs étaient masculins, ces chefs étaient créés par les femmes, qui pouvaient les maintenir au pouvoir ou les destituer.²

Inconcevable! On allait y mettre bon ordre en entreprenant l'évangélisation de ces « sauvages ». Le processus d'acculturation commençait. Et parce que c'est souvent par les femmes que la culture se transmet, on allait d'abord tenter l'entreprise sur elles.

« L'Éducation des filles constitue une part importante du programme d'assimilation des Amérindiens et de réforme des moeurs françaises. Ce sont elles en effet qui, en tant que mères et maîtresses de maison, feront l'ordre dans les foyers français. En 1664, Marie Guyart écrira: Il n'y en a pas qui ne passe par nos mains et cela réforme toute la colonie et fait régner la religion et la piété dans tous les foyers. »¹

Parallèlement, avec les profonds bouleversements économiques engendrés par la traite des fourrures, l'influence des femmes décroissait. Jusque-là, les tâches qu'elles exécutaient étaient aussi valorisées et essentielles à la survie de la communauté que celles des hommes (cueillette, pêche en eau douce, production domestique et chasse au petit gibier pour les femmes, chasse au gros gibier et négociations extérieures — entre autres — pour les hommes) puisqu'on pratiquait une économie

de subsistance. Avec la traite des fourrures, le travail des hommes, rémunéré par les Blancs, acquérait une nouvelle dimension, une valeur prépondérante.

« Les rapports historiques entre la société amérindienne et la société dominante ont résulté en une reproduction du modèle patriarcal propre à cette dernière. Ce modèle réduit le pouvoir tant économique, politique, qu'idéologique des femmes en les subordonnant à celui des hommes. »³

La société blanche accentuait avec le temps son encadrement et sa définition de la communauté amérindienne. En lui imposant son système de valeurs, sa conception de la famille nucléaire, en la sédentarisant. La première réserve fut créée à Sillery en 1637, les autres devaient suivre. Les Indiens, de peuple autonome semi-nomade, devenaient des pupilles de l'État, qui poussera le protectionnisme jusqu'à définir lui-même le statut d'Indien.

La loi sur les Indiens, et l'identité des femmes autochtones

En 1869, l'Acte de l'Amérique du Nord britannique introduit le premier et seul article de loi portant sur le statut des femmes indiennes qui se marient avec des Blancs ou avec des Indiens d'une autre bande, et 23 autres articles réglant le statut d'Indien. Ces clauses, entre autres, nieront les règles de filiation et de résidence après le mariage ayant cours alors chez les différentes communautés indiennes du Canada. Et pas question de s'arrêter en si bonne voie: en 1876, le gouvernement fédéral instaurera dans la Loi sur les In-

diens, le système de filiation patrilinéaire et la notion de légitimation des enfants indiens. Cette Loi sera refondue en 1951. Elle aura, pour les femmes touchées, des conséquences dramatiques. Elle en aura également, à long terme, pour la survie de la communauté amérindienne.

Que stipule-t-elle? Que l'Indienne qui épouse un Blanc doit, dans les trente jours qui suivent son mariage, rendre ou céder toutes ses possessions sur la réserve; elle doit aussi abandonner tout droit à un héritage de parent indien. On lui demande de signer un papier par lequel elle renonce à toutes les rentes ou annuités qui auraient pu lui être versées dans le futur. Certaines femmes, mal informées ou ne comprenant pas le texte rédigé en anglais, signeront sans savoir qu'elles se lèsent du même coup. La Loi prévoit aussi que les enfants des personnes « non statuées » (n'ayant légalement pas le statut d'Indien-ne-s) ne peuvent participer aux programmes d'éducation, ni percevoir les allocations versées pour les fournitures scolaires, les équipements sportifs, etc. (Notons que quelques communautés ne sont pas touchées par les articles discriminatoires de la Loi sur les Indiens.)

Ironiquement, alors que la femme indienne épousant un non-Indien encourt une perte de statut, la femme non-indienne accède au statut d'Indienne en épousant un Indien!

On évaluait en 1982 que depuis 1951, 15,744 femmes indiennes et 40,000 enfants avaient été directement touchés par l'article 12.1.b (perte de statut suite au mariage avec un Blanc) de la Loi sur les Indiens. *suite à la page 39*



Bibiane Courtois, présidente de l'AEAQ. « On m'a enlevé mon statut de femme indienne, mais je suis toujours indienne et mes enfants également ».

POETRY

Old Wild Oats and Prairie Boys

*I used to believe in golden summer fields
past barbed wire fences
where individual shoots overgrew limits
moved by a wind full of self-awareness*

*but now I see summer fields of wheat
vulnerable, to be harvested
rolling into golden waves, and moved
by an air blowing self-conscious,*

*as the sky turns its darker side
and to my amazement, flying down
pellets of hard cold glass rain, and the golden shafts cower
close hugging, heads bent together, in the mud,*

*with the old wild oats, summer fields and prairie boys
I used to believe in,
at first I was disappointed, now I smile in the all together
believing in rocks, the earth, water, and wind-shine,*

*you and I
you alone, apart from
me and I.
and us.*

© Margot T.A. Macaluso

EVENSONG

We are old now

and lie so quietly, side by side.

We used to come together

like two magnets,

reaching and clinging in the warm dark.

Now we sleep lightly

listening to the rise and fall of breath

listening waiting wondering

what will fill the silence

when one is gone.

© Johann E. Polberg

RULE

*More and more often
the dead gather
round my bed*

*they come uninvited
but they come
regardless*

*Nan comes, and Dora,
Alden, my first lover,
Mother and Father*

*they take my heart in their hands
and squeeze it
roughly roughly*

*sometimes
in the night darkness
I have to cry aloud*

*how plainly I see their hands
palms open
pale empty shells lying on the dark coverlet*

*my desire is to fill them
fold fingers over many gifts
words promises acts of love*

*but the rule is
one can only give
to the living*

© Elizabeth Gourlay

Charlynn Toews

Skipping Song

Oh, Lucy had a baby
She didn't want a bit
She asked for an abortion
But all she got was sh. . .

Shame on wicked Lucy
You really must be sick
Not to want a baby
To provide you with a pri. . .

Pristine satisfaction
Fulfilling women's role
Freud said men have libido,
And women have a ho. . .

Holy obligation
(Which it's a sin to duck)
To bring to term the eggs and sperm
of every casual f. . .

Fornication is a sin
For women the most dastardly,
for which you serve a nine-month
term
And the child becomes a ba. . .

Battered baby's syndrome
The judge recoils in shock
And sentences our Lucy
To seven years of c. . .

Call the baby market
Adoptive babies sell
Unless they're black and ugly,
For which they go to he. . .

Help stamp out the murders,
As League for Lifer's do
Not the victims of abortion laws.
We'll teach them not to scr. . .

Screams of napalmed babies
For the holy church no issue
It blessed the fascist murderer
But draws the line at tissue!



Millie Lamb, founder and

past director



utrageous

Feminist theatre

This irreverent skipping song is one of the original efforts of the feminist theatre group started by Millie Lamb and a number of university women in 1969. News of the women's liberation movement had reached Winnipeg from points east and south via disgruntled women who were treated as inferiors even in such progressive groups as the civil rights and anti-Vietnam war movements.

Scandalous! Shocking. Have these women no shame? No sense of decorum? They most certainly do have a sense of humour.

About twenty women gathered at Millie's home in 1968 to discuss goals, theories, and philosophies of women's liberation. These were the days of consciousness-raising, as well as "guerilla

theatre, underground, Brechtian, open, and street theatre. As many of these women were involved in one way or another with drama (Millie was a high-school drama coach), it was decided that such theatrical methods would be effective in getting the message across. Current director Loa Henry says they continue to use a minimum of props, lighting, and costumes, and incorporated a Brechtian "love song" into earlier works.

Over the years over a hundred people have taken part in the troupe, and The Nellie McClung Theatre's history reflects that diversity. In the beginning, the two issues focused on were child care and reproductive choice. In 1968, there was a total of 131 spaces in three day care centres in Winnipeg, and the "liberalised" abortion law of 1969 was not yet in place. *Who Killed This Woman?*, a sombre and saddening piece about illegal abortion was created at this time, wherein a back-street abortionist, the school board, pro-life people, the church and state all refuse responsibility for a young woman's death due to illegal abortion.

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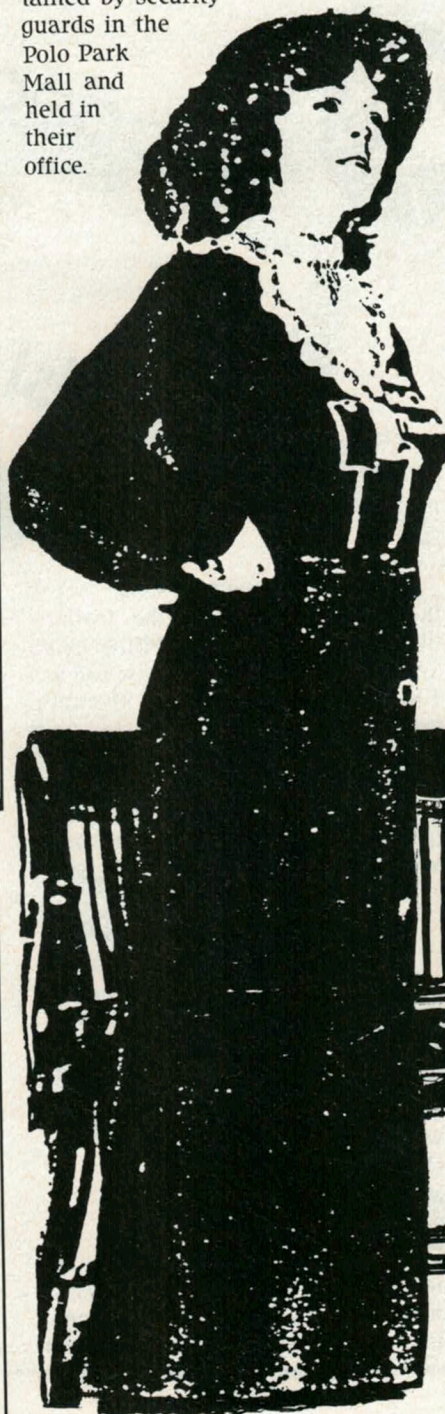
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Nellie McClung's stages have included shopping malls, mass meetings, the street in front of City Hall and the Princess Street police station in Winnipeg. Since security guards and other representatives of officialdom didn't take kindly to their performances, skits were designed to be short — about one or two minutes. About ten years ago, a high-school student's women's liberation group staged satirical skits in malls where local "Miss Teen" beauty contests were being held. They wore masks, and had planned a quick exit, but were detained by security guards in the Polo Park Mall and held in their office.



The group decided upon Nellie McClung, the Manitoba suffragist, to be their name-sake. On January 28, 1914, Nellie and other members of the Winnipeg Political Equality League staged *How the Vote Was Won* in the Walker Theatre (now the Odeon cinema). Actually, the title was a bit of a misnomer, as the male delegation asking for enfranchisement was refused. Neatly reversing the roles, "Premier" McClung echoed Premier Rodmond Roblin's words of the previous day:

We wish to compliment this delegation on their splendid gentlemanly appearance. If, without exercising the vote, such splendid specimens of manhood can be produced, such a system of affairs should not be interfered with. . . . Oh no, man is made for something higher and better than voting. Men were made to support families. . . . Politics unsettle men, and unsettled men means unsettled bills — broken furniture and broken vows — and divorce. . . ."

The modern Nellie McClung Theatre group performed *Votes for Men* several times (as a musical), following the script left by Nellie's memoirs, notes and fiction. In their early days they also borrowed ideas for scripts from the feminist playwright, Myrna Lamb. Usually, however, the group creates their material in a workshop method, each individual of the collective contributing talent and ideas.



Nellie McClung Theatre performing at The Museum of Man and Nature Conference, "Old Ghettos, New Ghettos and Alternatives", on January 22, 1985.

Member Janet Sprout says the skits are usually written by several women, then fine-tuned through rehearsal. A common framework is using a popular tune and changing the words. Among the troupe's current repertoire are several Beatles tunes, including a modification of *When I'm 64* (about women, pensions and poverty), and *Yellow Submarine*, that deals with Trident submarines and other nuclear hardware.

Since most organisations requesting a performance are aware of the troupe's feminist philosophy and material, they have not had negative responses. They will delete skits and songs on abortion, however, if this proves to be too sensitive an issue for some audiences, and performers sometimes choose not to participate in some skits. They have also had occasion to turn down requests from men's groups who had heard about a women's cabaret group doing "racy" material. (Nellie McClung Theatre, though entertaining, has consciousness-raising as its main goal.)

Although advertising for the theatre group consists mainly of word-of-

mouth, the troupe is kept busy; it performs weekly, and up to three times a week. They have travelled throughout Manitoba, as well as to Regina and Calgary. The performance at Winnipeg's Gas Station Theatre in December was their first independent production since 1975.

Skits included some old favourites, including a most unlady-like finale which graphically challenges male beauty-contest officials to publicise their own lengths and widths, as well as the premier of *Women of Latin America*, a sensitive portrayal of strength and bravery in the face of oppression. Paula Fletcher was outstanding in the singing of the reggae-beat *Grenada Song*, accompanied by the ever-present and sometimes monotonous congas, and Jane Gray was a most effective Ronald Reagan in the square dance, *Cancel the Cruise*.

Ladies Against Women also made an appearance at the December performance. The skit is a take-off of an irreverent U.S. group which satirises anti-feminist leader Phyllis Schlafly. *Ladies Against Women* makes public speeches,

with slogans such as "What do we want? Nothing! When do we want it? Now!", and "Phyllis, you're our father!", while wearing buttons proclaiming that they were "Born to Iron." The ever-proper ladies announced that no-one should be women, especially men, and further, that a Mrs. Chester Bigelow would be starting up a local chapter. (And none too soon, with such boisterous, brash, and unabashed feminists spreading the word in a most unlady-like fashion.)



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
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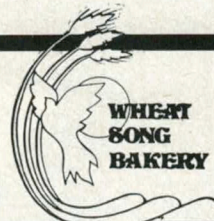
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INTERVIEW

Gert Beadle: The Resisting Spirit

JOAN BARIL

Gert Beadle looks like the cookie woman from a childhood fairy tale. Round and twinkling, with a witching laugh, it seems she should be living in a tiny, magic cottage in the woods rather than in a modern Thunder Bay apartment with pictures of children and grandchildren on the walls, a big desk by the window, a typewriter and a six-inch high pile of typed poetry. An ardent feminist since the mid-seventies, a poet and activist, Gert is working on her third book of poetry. The proceeds from her first two books were donated to the Northern Women's Centre in Thunder Bay.

More recently Gert had a hand in the birth of the Faye Peterson House, a hostel for women. The idea of the shelter, nurtured by a group of northern Ontario women for seven years, passed through many stages of intense labour and is now a reality.

On October 18, 1929 when Gert was 14, she and every other Canadian woman and girl became legally recognised "persons" under Canadian law. Fifty-five years later, on October 18, 1984 Canada's Governor General, Mme Jeanne Sauvé awarded the Persons Award (an award given in recognition of improving the status of women in Canada) to Gert and to four other Canadian women (Sybil Shack, Dorothy Livesay, Azilda Marchand, and Norah Toole). Here, Gert speaks to Joan Baril about her experiences and about the women's movement in general.

Joan B.: Tell me about getting the Persons Award.

Gert B.: I wrote a poem about it.

The Award

*From time to time, the powerful find
it convenient to reach down to the
grassroots of the underprivileged to
dispense a taste of what, to them,
is perfectly ordinary.
as we walk on their carpets and drink
their wine from the finest of crystal,
while our sneaker-loving feet
protest their leather bondage
and the girdle we have sworn to
banish
is back on the saddle again. It is a*

*rush from time to time to accept
the vanities life offers*

*and give yourself over to joyous
hedonism*

*with all the grace the occasion
warrants.*

*To pull it off takes only a little
chutzpa*

*and the true deviousness of the
survivor.*

*It is amazing how these good folk
warm to the peasant they have
honoured, engendering a like
response*

in the worst of us.

*I shall remember the way the light
fell from the chandelier, and the
twinkle*

*in Madam's eyes that told me I belong
to that secret society that permits
us to be amused at the spectacle
while appreciating the gesture.*

Gert B.: Yes, Madam Sauvé took both my hands and we smiled at each other. Such a lovely warm face.

Joan B.: Did you get a chance to talk to any of the other women who got the award?

Gert B.: I threw a party in my suite — Thunder Bay style. Dorothy Livesay said that it was so wonderful to see that poetry is becoming recognised as part of the movement. I told her about my new book. I'm going to call it *The Resisting Spirit* and I'm going to put an eagle on the cover with a women's symbol in its beak. The proceeds will go to the Faye Peterson House. To tell you the truth I have no mind for financial details. And I really feel I have some sort of gift, and if I ever commercialised it, it would stop.

Joan B.: *The Resisting Spirit* is a fine title.

Gert B.: That's what the women's movement is about and that's what I am about — nurturing the resisting spirit of women. You know I distrust dogma, even feminist dogma. I'm not a feminist because I read the books and learned the secret. I am a feminist because I am female to the bone! I'm a finished female. It has nothing to do with theory. Theory has its place in that we need to be informed and we need to understand but there is no one who needs to be persuaded by someone else that she is oppressed.

Joan B.: You once said that when you were living on the farm you muttered

things under your breath that you did not dare say out loud until you went to your first women's conference in Thunder Bay. Did you think you were oppressed then?

Gert B.: I knew it but I always thought I could cope with the oppression. I believed I could cope and what was so frustrating was I had to cope with somebody else's limits. That was real oppression — to cope with poverty, extreme poverty, with isolation and with booze.

Joan B.: Yes the Northern booze problem blackens the lives of so many women. I also remember that coping feeling. It was like a game or a contest with myself.

Gert B.: Exactly. Playing a game to see if you could do it and watching yourself at the same time. The third eye thing, being a spectator at your own life.

Joan B.: But you did go to the conference and pulled yourself out of this self dissociation.

Gert B.: Maybe this poem will explain it.



Photo by Joan Baril

Birth of a Person

*Giving birth to yourself after a long
gestation
in the belly of your old woman
is hard labour.
There is nothing holy about this
birth.*

*If you want to live,
you must be prepared to kill.
Years of betrayal and denial will set
her bones against you, close her
womb like the tight lips of a
methodist minister.
She is a bonded servant, sold and
sold again*

*your own mother whom you despise
for a lifetime of apology and
humiliation.*

*This biblical good woman would deny
your conception as an aberration, an
evil spell that took her
while asleep*

*but you are beyond term, raging for
the light*

and you render her into mythology.

*You will forgive her finally for her
dependence on the old laws of
survival*

*and begin to mother this new life.
This is a healthy child worth dying
for.*

Joan B.: I don't know how much you can look around you when you are doing a poetry reading. Part of the thrill of listening to you read is watching people who have never heard you before. First, the poetry reading is announced. How the facial expressions stiffen. When you were introduced in Dryden (at the North-western Ontario Women's forum with the Ontario Advisory Council on the Status of Women, September 1984) I could almost hear women's minds saying, "Oh my God, poetry. It will be over my head and artsy-fartsy but I'm here and I'm stuck." Then you read your first poem about the husband who got up in the middle of the night and pissed on his wife's plant. The audience was shocked; then there was a recognition. I think, of absurd petty harassments and they exploded into laughter. They knew the story was true even before you told them so.

Gert B.: Yeah, I miss all that. And that story was true. But there are so many truths which women create themselves. I'm talking now about the power of the imagination, the power of the spirit and the power of myth which is a lie until it becomes reality. "To carve a new state in our potential/To imagine we are powerful in reality/And powerless only in our imagination." And this ties in with my wanting to nurture that spark, that resistance, to "think in technicolour/boldly throwing blood on the carpet, even our own."

You see we often get it mixed up. We're tarred with the men's brush when we think we have to be bitter and cruel and hard. What we have to be is stubborn and determined. When you're fighting for the right, you've got more power than when you're fighting against the wrong because you are only reacting then.

Joan B.: And the women's movement as a whole?

Gert B.: I sometimes think that the movement gets punch-drunk wasting energy on petty details, for example, who does what or who gets credit. I think what matters is that women, wherever they are, have got to realise they are capable and intelligent and they don't have to settle for the kinds of life they have settled for. I sometimes think I have a working class mind like my Gramma. She was always talking about getting to the nut of the problem, the kernel.

Joan B.: Do you know what the first rule of warfare is? "Maintain the aim."

Gert B.: Yes. That is not a bad motto. It's the way I try to live my life now. If you can disregard the garbage around the aim you are bound to get there.

And I think women are moving; they are changing the myths. I found it very interesting that a recent survey said that people believed the women's movement has made great changes. You know we put something in process here and all we have to do is keep doing it. We have started it and, although we can't sit back, the process is inevitable. The process is our security.

Joan B.: But wasn't there a great women's movement at the beginning of this century which has been to a large extent forgotten, yet, at the time, they felt as you do, that they were part of an inevitable historical process. Their books are out of print and author Dale Spender (see upcoming interview in *HERIZONS*, April '85) says they were deliberately consigned to silence, suppressed.

Gert B.: I think it's impossible to suppress us now. Each of us does something (pointing to the pile of poems). This is my little bit. I hope that a woman will read these and be able to say to something in her life, "Bullshit!"

I said in Ottawa that feminism was relevant from the pedestal to the pit. It disturbs me that some people are comforted by thinking of the feminist movement as a middle-class intellectual exercise. My feeling is that the movement will take on a completely new surge when the grass-roots woman becomes energised to fight her oppression. I think it's got to go to the grass-roots because, you see, the middle class woman is fighting for equality half way up the ladder and half way up the ladder is often compromise and self-interest. At the bottom of the ladder is desperation and pain.

Joan B.: I had a meeting with several women who were on welfare. I don't think they ever sat down with other

women before to talk about their lives. It was wonderful. They were all set to get up a delegation to protest low family benefits. I felt they should meet together all the time.

Gert B.: I found in the Faye Peterson House, when I worked there as a volunteer, that when three or four women got around the table with a cup of coffee, you could spark them into tremendous energy.

I can't help thinking that the feminist movement has roped itself off from this group of women and it has not allowed something to happen that I have been persuaded for years would happen eventually. There are all sorts of women out there. I have people coming to the apartment all the time just to talk. I hate to think that feminists begin to think they are so influential that they could be watered down by a little grass-roots. Unfortunately, I get the feeling that there are some who just don't love women; they just love feminists.

However, I think this is changing. The feminist movement now includes circles within circles. I saw that at the Dryden Forum where there were so many groups and so many wonderful women.

Joan B.: So you would say our main focus should be to concentrate on the grass-roots?

Gert B.: Yes. We are a movement and a movement should move. It's not supposed to take root.

Joan B.: Sometimes energy gets low.

Gert B.: Yes. And we've got to find that spark or... I've said it from the beginning that unless you're getting a bang out of the struggle, get out for a while because all you've got is negative energy.

There is also a certain timidity about going public, coming out front and centre. Many a feminist organisation, if they put a straight-forward ad in the paper, might find people turning out to their meetings that they had never seen before.

Joan B.: So, you have a vision of a mass movement, a mass political movement whereas other people think in terms of small groups.

Gert B.: How much of that is vanity? How much of that is "We have our little group here and we are all happy with it and we can have our little feuds. We want to be the ones to get the credit for the big movement." It is very seductive. Power is a very seductive thing, even teeny little bits of it.

I have seen that in various projects designed to "help" people. You see that

when a woman is talking to another woman as client-counsellor and you see how being the helper enlarges her feeling of satisfaction. It's a paternalistic kind of thing. Even in feminist counselling there is a jargon. The woman whom the "counsellor" is talking to can't even understand it. She disappears in the jargon. Sucked in and there she goes — shumpa! — and she's gone.

We need a new model of helping. At the Faye Peterson House I had the feeling the place would run itself almost with the women that came in there because I could see that with very little urging they took on the nurturing of each other. It would have been an interference to have a person who knew the jargon to take over and analyse the situation.

Joan B.: You worked there as a volunteer for six months, you donated your own money, you paid part of the rent and groceries, you raised money and, in a town where raising money is almost impossible, you raised over \$10,000 in cash along with all sorts of other goods. How did you do that? And are you still volunteering?

Gert B.: No, I'm all finished. As soon as I knew the house was a reality and had some funding, I resigned. I was house mother for six months but I wanted to get on with my writing. I couldn't write. I was out speaking and bumming money.

Joan B.: I think in Thunder Bay that is the best bumming of bucks I've ever seen. You and the other women had some original ideas. You revived the concept of the shower and had a party with gifts, not for the bride, but for the house. You have had afternoon teas. And, I hear an open house will happen soon after the renovations.

Gert B.: And you know when I got the award in Ottawa, the churches and the people in the churches were phoning me and congratulating me and claiming me as their own. And you know I never asked anyone for money.

Joan B.: How did you do it then?

Gert B.: I went out and talked and Lennie (Lenny Untinen, board member) talked. I tried to make them want to help by talking about the house. I sold them the spirit of the house by selling the dream behind it. I talked about wanting to keep it non-institutional. I just caught them up with me about keeping it non-institutional. I did not talk about battering in terms of a social problem. I talked about it in terms of people — the people who came in. I brought it home. I

told them the truth and the feelings of the women.

I went to all the churches, all of them — the Catholic Church too. St. Agnes had me to their annual meeting. I was invited to so many annual meetings and heard so many treasurers' reports.

One of the evangelical churches invited me and instead of talking to a women's meeting, there I was in front of the whole congregation and down in front were three rows of children. They wanted their kids to know about battering too.

I spoke to the Legions, the service clubs. I met many wonderful groups of kids. One church decided to make us their missionary work for the year. So I had them over to the house for cookies and milk. I had the boys one night and we sat around the table and talked about violence and how they handled it and what made them angry and then the next week, I had the girls. There were about 30 in each group and they contributed about \$65 a month. It was absolutely wonderful. I certainly changed my opinion about the city and the people in it.

Joan B.: You could start a new career as a fundraiser.

Gert B.: Well we weren't shy. Lennie went to talk to an all-male service club. After a week or so nothing happened so I phoned up the contact person. He said they had decided they weren't going to give us anything. Our Lennie must have hit a few guilty consciences. (Laughs) There were probably a few that needed to feel guilty. I said, "We have this old fridge here that is leaking all over the floor and as housekeeper of this place it's a real pain. It's not even big enough to hold the milk and we have 22 people in the house right now." The first thing we knew, a big fridge was delivered.

Joan B.: After you had been open for a

while you moved. Why?

Gert B.: We couldn't get the zoning. It was a struggle. It took the city about a year and a half to decide we weren't going to go away. We weren't going to go away because the people wouldn't let us go away. The Correctional Farm just loaded us up with vegetables. The Ministry of Natural Resources gave moose, moose, moose. Two hundred pounds of pickerel fillets at one time. It was fantastic. A service club bought us a freezer, a church gave us another, a local paper mill has pledged much more than we expected and so on.

Joan B.: And you were always in the public mind, always in the newspapers.

Gert B.: Yes, I was. If I wasn't in the paper, I wrote a letter to the editor about the House.

You know, we had meetings about the house for seven years. Nothing was ever right to open. So I said, "Let's just do it. We have \$2,000. We'll rent a house and run it as long as the money lasts and if we can't run it any longer we'll walk away from it." So we opened. And I thought "Oh my god. I voted for this. But I know when you risk, power takes over. I never had a doubt. Everything fell together. It was miraculous. It was really a spiritual experience.

I spoke to the Unitarians. I proposed a theory of a universal spirit or mind which moves the process and that all thought from the beginning is in the universal mind. All of it. Everybody is there and I praised the thoughts of women, the tears, the love that has been betrayed — all of this is in the universal mind and we are adding to it which makes the process inevitable.

Joan B.: How do you prevent yourself from being silenced?

Gert B.: I think it would be pretty hard to shut me up now. Things have changed in my life. I don't feel the least pressure any more to be quiet. As a matter of fact I feel as though I'm presenting thoughts to other people that they are not quite comfortable with and the conversation that goes on from there is very interesting. I'm often giving them little electric jolts.

Joan B.: So briefly, what's your vision of where we should be going?

Gert B.: We have to move into action because too much reflection solves nothing. We have to work for the expansion of the movement into the grassroots. We have the history. We have the theory. We have the analysis. But that is only the map. Now we have to move into political action. ▽



Photo by Joan Baril

PROFILE

Ann Gibson: Bringing Birth to Art

Ann Gibson, a Vancouver artist, is currently working on a new medium — embroidery. This, however, is stitchery with a difference. It all started on New Year's Day, 1982. It was then while visiting a friend that Gibson noticed a calendar featuring a picture of *The Dinner Party*, Judy Chicago's perspective on the history of women. There was a paragraph on the back of the calendar requesting volunteers for Chicago's latest work, the *Birth Project* and it gave the address of Through the Flower Corp; in Benicia, California.

Gibson recalls "I went home and thought about it." She then wrote a letter to the corporation in Benicia, not even expecting a reply. She imagined that the sort of skill she would be able to contribute (i.e. research, graphic art, fund-raising), had probably already been resolved. She received an answer three weeks later, together with a package from Through the Flower. Judy Chicago's art centre in Benicia. Inside the package was a stitchery sampler of a stylised uterus with a fallopian tube and small embryo. Gibson completed and returned the sampler. "All I was risking was someone, at this point, saying: 'Sorry, you're just not good enough', or, 'OK that's fine, please go ahead.'" Chicago was impressed with Gibson's work and invited her to Benicia to meet fellow workers on the *Birth Project*. All the other volunteers with the exception of a single New Zealand stitcher, were from the United States. Gibson, who became the only Canadian working on the *Birth Project* describes the work as a catalyst in finding another side of herself as an artist.

In addition to discovering the medium of stitchery she states that working on the sampler was "a really nice feeling. I liked the quietness evoked by it." Gibson, who mothers three children, feels that birthing is central to many women's experience yet sees few images of birth in Western art. In addition, needlework, a traditionally feminine art form, has never historically been given credit as art. The coming together of the two in Judy Chicago's *Birth Project* will hopefully change this.

The *Birth Project* is a panoramic series of needlework paintings and drawings by Judy Chicago on the theme of birth and creation. Needlework was chosen



Ann Gibson

MAUREEN CAIRNS

as the art form because of its unexplored art potential, its unique combination of softness and precision, and its traditional association with women. It was started in 1981, and is now completed with 80 pieces. The smallest is five inches by nine inches, and the largest is 20 feet by 8 feet. From 1985 to 1987, selections of the work will be suitable for an array of environments: museums and galleries, hospitals and birthing centres, educational institutions and confer-

ences. The work will be on display at the Vancouver Museum in July, 1985. In May 1984, 20 of the pieces were exhibited at AKA gallery in New York City, and from July through August, at the University of Seattle, Washington.

In recent material, Judy Chicago explains that our culture's oldest myths identify birth-giving with creativity itself. Her images convey the joy, pain, and energy of birth, experiences shared by many women, but rarely seen in art. All the work on the *Birth Project* is exhibited with documentation that illuminates the sources of imagery and the art-making techniques. The series of powerful images are all worked in fabric, using both old and new techniques in embroidery, quilting, applique, and bargo.

The volunteer stitchers didn't have to move to Benicia to work. They qualified as participants after an extensive exchange of information about their interests and skills. They then worked closely with Judy Chicago through letters, phone calls, and visits.



Crowning Quilt #2. © Judy Chicago. — Fabricated by Chico Ca. Group

NOTIONS AND POTIONS

for Women in the Prime of Life. . .

Strictly speaking, the word "menopause" refers to the cessation of menstruation. Because this definition implies a specific point in time, most textbooks and most doctors will explain that if you haven't menstruated in twelve months, you've experienced menopause.

What other major event in our lives is marked for us a *year after it occurs*?

For most of us, menopause is a time in life which involves irregular menstrual periods with eventual cessation, greying hair, a thickening waist, hot flashes (or flushes) with or without night sweats, interrupted sleep (or early awakening), changes in sexual appetite, possibly painful intercourse, itching of the vagina and/or surrounding area, gas pains (and occasional embarrassment!), more frequent urination, perhaps the onset of migraine headaches, unexpected episodes of nausea or dizziness, the sprouting of occasional chin whiskers, the eerie sensation of something crawling on the skin, and trick knees or aching joints (diagnosed as bursitis, frozen shoulder, tennis elbow, etc.). In addition, some of us — more than we're prepared to acknowledge — are already suffering from "brittle bones."

There may or may not be emotional symptoms as well — feeling similar to premenstrual tension, inexplicable bouts of breathlessness (sometimes a panicky sensation of suffocation), heart palpitations, strange dreams, an occasional sense of being unusually flighty or dithery over some minor issue, nervousness about undertakings once viewed as "fun", and the uneasy feeling, as you lie in bed at night that you have said or done something incredibly stupid.

These symptoms are to be found in books and in conversations. They are not imaginary and they are rarely neurotic. The *good* news is that about 10 per cent of women will experience none of them; the *bad* news is that 85 to 90 per cent of women will experience at least one. (Doctors may tell you that only about one woman in three experience discomfort in menopause. This is based on women who seek medical attention. The figure I have chosen to use is based on women's self-reports.)

The essential point is that what we commonly refer to as "menopause" is not always signalled by overt changes in



JANINE O'LEARY COBB

There's a lot going on
before most of us
even begin to consider
ourselves "menopausal."

menstruation, and many of the symptoms listed may be experienced years before any interruption in menstruation. There's a lot going on before most of us even begin to consider ourselves "menopausal." This is just one indication of the

colossal ignorance which most of us share on this topic.

And it really isn't surprising that we don't think of menopause. After all, even those of us who have had consistent and predictable menstrual periods have experienced some irregularities. Most of us have a 35-year-old habit of attributing such irregularities to temporary stress, changes in diet, or other non-routine events. If we are waiting for a recognisable change in menstruation before we think of menopause, no wonder we are so painfully slow in relating *other* symptoms to menopause. We are much more likely to find an environmental rationale for headaches, gas, or minor aches and pains.

And, if this is the case for those of us with relatively stable menstrual cycles, imagine the plight of those who live with irregular cycles, or those who have had partial or complete hysterectomies. It becomes difficult to recognise the signs when it is a topic that most women would simply prefer to avoid.

Why Talk About It?

Our great-grandmothers rarely lived past the age of menopause; our grandmothers found the subject too intimate for discussion; our mothers may discreetly mention it to sisters or very old friends. With such a heritage, it is not surprising that many of our own generation would rather circle the subject: we discuss the pros and cons of tinting our hair, of this or that diet, of lubricating lotions and tricks to prevent our lipstick from "bleeding" into upper-lip crevices. We are denying and masking the fear of aging.

Attitudes towards wrinkles, greying hair and half-size clothes are, however, closely linked with attitudes towards menopause. Do we view it as a natural process or as a "condition" to be hidden as long as possible? Too often the current and pervasive social ideal of the young and ultra-slim makes us feel that menopause is unnatural, unappealing and somehow unfeminine. This concern with the appearance of youth is thoughtfully explored in *Mirror, Mirror: The Terror of Not Being Young*, by Elissa Melamed (N.Y. Simon & Schuster, 1983). As the title suggests, menopause is not the central concern of the book, but the author convincingly links the denial of

menopause to the fear of aging. Melamed says: "By affirming the importance of menopause, we validate the second half of our lives."


And, in a book directly related to menopause (*Menstruation & Menopause*, N.Y. Knopf, 1976), Paula Weideger says: "Girl children will have everything to gain when they grow up in a society in which the menstrual taboo is discussed. When women are no longer affected by the taboo — and for this to happen, they must talk openly to one another — the great differences we now perceive before and after menopause will disappear. If menopause is to become an integrated part of life rather than the separate crisis it now is, women must define and share their own experience."

This is an excerpt from the first issue (April 1984) of a monthly newsletter of information, exchange, and support about menopause and midlife. To obtain information and subscriptions and/or back copies, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to A Friend Indeed Publications, Inc., 4180 Wilson Avenue, Montreal, Québec H4A 2T9.

HOT FLASHES!!

- There are three common kinds of estrogen supplements: two are synthetic and one is natural. One well-known trade name for this latter form of animal, or conjugated estrogen is Premarin — a word formed from its source, PREgnant MAres' uRINE.
- Eight out of a hundred women experience menopause before the age of 40, but the average age of menopause is 50. However, menopause is occurring later and later (by four months each decade) and no one knows why.
- In a comparison of women at an average age of 48 with women at an average age of 58, it was found that children being at home had more to do with state of happiness than did age. In other words, the departure of the last child was followed by an increase in positive self-concept. This seems to contradict the well-known "empty nest" theory.
- Despite all rumours to the contrary, estrogen production does NOT totally cease at menopause. Nor does it cease after surgical removal of the ovaries.
- According to one reputable study, the average hot flush lasts for three minutes and thirty-one seconds.
- It is suspected that at least one woman in four may suffer from brittle bones and that broken hips which old women frequently experience may result from a sudden fracture which causes a fall, rather than the other way around.

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La résistance

La résistance s'est organisée. En 1967, Mary Two-Axe Early crée le mouvement Equal Rights for Indian Women et soumet un mémoire à la Commission royale d'enquête sur la situation de la femme. La même Mary Two-Axe Early se trouve à Mexico pour une rencontre organisée dans le cadre de l'année internationale de la femme, lorsque le Conseil de bande de Caughnawaga, outré de son militantisme « voyant », décide de l'expulser de la maison qu'elle occupait sur la réserve. Du coup, Mary y gagne des appuis, toutes les femmes présentes (il s'agissait d'une réunion convoquée par l'ONU) prenant position en sa faveur... à l'exception, très remarquée, de la délégation canadienne.

En 1974, création de l'Association des femmes autochtones du Québec (AFAQ) qui regroupe des femmes indiennes, avec le statut d'Indienne ou non, et métisses. Objectifs du groupe: lutter contre la situation de discrimination faite aux femmes indiennes, bien sûr, mais aussi travailler à l'amélioration de leurs conditions de vie.

Les femmes amérindiennes recevront, dans leur lutte, des appuis directs ou explicites de groupes de femmes non autochtones. La Commission Bird se prononcera pour l'abrogation de l'article 12.1.b de la Loi sur les Indiens; ce que fera également le Conseil consultatif canadien sur la situation de la femme. D'autres déclarations publiques de solidarité viendront notamment du Conseil du statut de la femme du Québec (1979) et des parlementaires canadiennes qui endosseront une déclaration de principe en 1980.

Le gouvernement fédéral finit par réagir aux pressions. En 1982, un sous-comité sur les femmes indiennes et la Loi sur les Indiens est formé. L'AFAQ interviendra pour demander l'abrogation de tous les articles discriminatoires en

raison du sexe contenus dans la Loi: l'égalité pour les femmes indiennes; la réintégration des femmes et de leurs enfants de la première génération sur les réserves; l'attribution de compensations financières pour les bandes, de façon à faciliter cette réintégration. En mars 1983, lors de la première conférence constitutionnelle canadienne sur les autochtones, les bandes amérindiennes présentes en arrivent à un consensus sur le principe d'égalité entre les sexes par rapport à la Loi sur les Indiens. Enfin, en juin 1984, un projet de loi est déposé pour refondre la Loi sur les Indiens. Il sera rejeté par le Sénat juste avant l'ajournement de la Chambre.

Le gouvernement fédéral est dans une impasse. S'il ne légifère pas avant le 17 avril 1985 dans le sens des revendications autochtones, il risque de se retrouver au centre d'un bel imbroglio juridique. C'est en effet à cette date fatidique qu'il devra annuler toutes les dispositions des lois fédérales qui comportent un aspect discriminatoire en raison du sexe, l'article 15 de la Charte des droits et libertés entrant en vigueur. Le même gouvernement devra également garantir l'égalité entre les sexes pour les autochtones selon l'Accord constitutionnel garantissant les droits ancestraux et droits issus de traités (1984). Sinon? Sinon, toutes les personnes qui s'estiment discriminées par la Loi sur les Indiens — et il peut y en avoir des milliers — pourront porter plainte à la Commission canadienne des droits!

Misogynes ou stratèges, les conseils de bande?

Misogynes, les conseils de bande, dans toute cette histoire? Certaines positions qu'ils ont prises publiquement, et certains gestes posés pourraient le faire croire. Ceux des conseils qui ont harcelé, menacé et même expulsé des Indiennes dépossédées de leur statut, ont prouvé qu'ils avaient bien intégré des normes qui leur avaient d'abord été imposées de l'extérieur, par le cadre législatif. Un cadre législatif contre lequel leurs ancêtres s'étaient pourtant érigés.

« Le gouvernement (fédéral) a refusé d'écouter une délégation de chefs de l'Ontario et du Québec en 1872, qui voulaient que cet article (12.1.b) soit rayé parce qu'ils croyaient que 'les femmes indiennes devraient avoir le privilège d'épouser quand et qui elles veulent sans être exclues on encore bannies de la tribu. »⁴

Ces protestations se sont peu à peu estompées, à mesure que le processus

d'acculturation faisait son chemin. Gardon-nous cependant de mettre tous les chefs et tous les conseils de bande dans le même sac. Des dirigeants progressistes ont appuyé la lutte des femmes. D'autres, nombreux, ont refusé cet appui pour des raisons stratégiques. Ils admettaient que la Loi est discriminatoire, mais alléguaient qu'il fallait la maintenir pour confronter le plus longtemps possible le gouvernement fédéral à l'odieuse de cette discrimination. Ils s'opposaient, par ailleurs, à ce que ce soit ce gouvernement qui détermine qui est indien, revendiquant que chaque bande puisse édicter ses propres critères d'appartenance. Cette dernière position est soutenue par l'AFAQ, qui ajoute que ces critères ne devraient être ni sexistes, ni discriminatoires. L'association remet cependant en question la stratégie de la « lutte par l'odieux »:

« Nous sommes arrivés à une impasse. Cette question n'est plus maintenant gênante pour le gouvernement du Canada, mais plutôt pour le peuple indien. »⁴

Nous avons été divisés trop longtemps, plaide l'AFAQ, qui croit que c'est bien plus la crainte qui retient les conseils que des motifs stratégiques. Une fois réintégrées dans leur statut, ces Indiennes, pourraient regagner les réserves avec conjoints et enfants et ce retour en masse, coûter une petite fortune à certaines communautés déjà mal nanties. À quoi l'AFAQ rétorque que cette « invasion appréhendée » est plus un épouvantail dressé par le législateur pour retarder les réformes, qu'une menace réelle. Ce que veulent les Indiennes qui en ont perdu le statut, disent les leaders du mouvement des femmes autochtones, c'est d'abord et avant tout la *reconquête de leur identité*.

« Nous croyons que la crainte d'avoir un grand nombre de gens qui retournent dans les réserves peut être exagérée délibérément. Depuis quelques années il y a eu une tendance croissante chez les Indiens à quitter les réserves pour chercher de l'emploi ou pour poursuivre leur éducation. Annuler 12.1.b ne signifie pas pour autant que cette tendance va se renverser. »⁴

L'AFAQ ajoute que les réserves ne pouvant offrir que très peu de services et d'emplois, et les communautés blanches fournissant plus de facilités et de services sociaux, « il est fort probable que seulement celles ayant de très fortes attaches culturelles y retourneront. »

Cette question n'a toutefois pas fini de diviser profondément les bandes

amérindiennes. Au delà des réticences des chefs, il y a encore celles d'une partie de la population autochtone qui considère la tendance croissante au métissage comme une menace pour la survie de la race.

Afficher sa différence

La Loi sur les Indiens est aujourd'hui au centre de toutes les discussions, mais il s'agit d'une bataille qui pourrait bien trouver bientôt, avec les contraintes qui s'exercent sur le législateur fédéral, une conclusion heureuse. D'autres aspects de la réalité des femmes autochtones referont alors surface. L'énergie focalisée depuis des années sur la lutte contre l'article 12.1.b pourra être canalisée ailleurs. C'est ce que souhaite très ouvertement Bibiane Courtois, la présidente de l'AFAQ. Cette belle femme de 37 ans au regard direct, à la parole concise, sait de quoi elle parle quand il est question de discrimination. De type amérindien très marqué — « même si plus jeune j'avais voulu chacher que j'étais amérindienne, ça aurait été difficile », plaisante-t-elle — elle n'est pourtant plus Indienne officiellement depuis son mariage avec un non autochtone. Infirmière, préoccupée des questions de santé, madame Courtois rappelle que l'AFAQ a décelé, par ses travaux de recherche des dernières années, des besoins criants chez les femmes amérindiennes dans ce domaine, mais aussi dans les domaines du développement des services communautaires, de l'information, etc. Elle parle d'urgences.

« Il faut voir le climat actuel dans les communautés, avec les taux de chômage, avec le départ des jeunes. Dans nos groupes, les discussions portent d'abord sur la *survie*. Nous en sommes à cette étape-là. Des jobs, survivre économiquement, et comme peuple. »

Déracinée bien malgré elle, déposée de sa langue — « on nous tapait sur les doigts quand nous parlions une langue indienne à l'école » — elle souhaiterait que l'association qu'elle préside soit plus présente dans les régions pour aider les femmes à se réapproprier leur indianité, à développer des services dans leur langue et selon des modalités qui leur conviennent; en les prenant là où elles sont. Elle sait que la survie dont elle parle est fort précaire, qu'avec la détérioration des conditions économiques, l'alcoolisme et la consommation de drogues ont grimpé en flèche avec, comme corollaire, l'augmentation de la violence familiale, dont les femmes sont souvent les cibles.

Cette violence, elle n'est souvent pas rapportée. Dominique Collin, une chercheuse qui s'est intéressée à la question, signale que toutes les femmes rencontrées, lorsqu'elles acceptaient d'en parler, mettaient l'accent sur sa fréquence, et que les infirmières des dispensaires confirmaient l'importance du problème.⁵

Il faut voir ce qui se cache sous ce silence. Peut-être la crainte que la discussion publique de ces problèmes ne vienne exacerber les préjugés blancs sur l'Indien « buveur et brutal »? Peut-être le réflexe de repli sur soi des petites communautés isolées qui ne peuvent compter que sur elles-mêmes et ferment les yeux sur les écarts de conduite de certains de leurs membres? En attendant, des femmes vivent seules ces conditions de violence.

Pas pour longtemps. L'engagement et la détermination des femmes autochtones de plus en plus nombreuses devraient contribuer à briser cet isolement. La bataille contre les clauses discriminatoires de la Loi sur les Indiens aura été un déclencheur. Aujourd'hui, des femmes qu'on avait réduites au silence, recommencent à dire leurs quotidiens et leurs besoins, à affirmer leurs différences. Elles disent qu'elles ne veulent plus quitter leur réserve trois semaines avant l'accouchement pour accoucher seules, dans un milieu étranger; elles disent que les Amérindiens ont aussi droit à des services de santé de qualité dispensés par des professionnels autochtones qui comprennent la dynamique du milieu. Elles s'organisent. Par exemple, des femmes sont très impliquées dans le processus d'implantation de conseils de santé autochtones dans les communautés de la Côte-Nord, processus enclenché par le Conseil Attikamek-Montagnais.

« Nous rencontrons les femmes chez elles, dans leur village. Nous les informons dans leur langue. Saviez-vous que la plupart des documents officiels ne sont même pas traduits. » (Caroline Basile, animatrice)

Les femmes ont été fort actives lors du Colloque « 450 ans après » organisé l'été dernier par les centres d'amitié autochtones. Réunies en atelier, elles ont appris à dépasser leurs différences pour établir leurs aspirations communes. Elles ont déploré que les calendriers scolaires ne tiennent pas compte de leur mode de vie et les confinent chez elles tandis que les conjoints sont en forêt à l'automne ou au printemps. Elles ont parlé de la nécessité économique qui les

pousse sur le marché du travail, ajoutant des tâches supplémentaires au travail domestique déjà lourd. Elles se sont demandé pourquoi leurs enfants devraient quitter la réserve pour aller désapprendre ailleurs ce qu'elles ont tenté de leur inculquer: la fierté de leur appartenance. Elles ont affirmé, enfin, qu'il est possible de rester attachée à ses coutumes sans être pour autant une traditionaliste bornée et qu'on peut étudier une langue indienne... sur ordinateur, comme on le fait à Kanawake.

Leur parole chemine, et va porter plus loin avec le temps.

1. Dominique Deslandres. « Marie de l'Incarnation et la femme amérindienne ». *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, vol. XIII, n°4, 1983.
2. Norman Clermont. « La place des femmes dans les sociétés iroquoiennes de la période du contact ». *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, vol. XIII, n°4, 1983.
3. Christiane Beaudet. « La division sexuelle du travail et les modalités de transmission des connaissances chez les femmes montagnaises de la Romaine », Université Laval, 1983.
4. Association des femmes autochtones du Québec: Présentation au sous-comité sur la discrimination sexuelle à l'égard des femmes indiennes. Comité permanent sur les Affaires indiennes et du Développement du Nord. 14 septembre 1982.
5. Dominique Collin. « La discrète émancipation de Talasa ». *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, vol. XII, n°4, 1983.

* Durant une recherche menée par Diane Morissette, en 1982, des communautés crie de la Côte et des villages inuit visités ne possédaient pas d'eau courante ni de système d'égout communautaire. Pour en savoir plus, voir: « Vitalité et regroupements chez les femmes autochtones du Québec. » Direction régionale du Québec du Secrétariat d'État. 1982.



SATIRICALLY YOURS

Closet Commies

The last few months have been difficult for me. I've discovered I'm a Communist.

It all started when Joe Stewart, media liaison officer for Brian Mulroney said that Cruise missile protesters are communists, nuclear disarmament buffs are equally suspect and the NDP is full of closet pinkos.

I'm guilty. On all three counts. I object to testing the Cruise in Canada, I'm an advocate of nuclear disarmament and I'm a longtime socialist.

Once my suspicions about myself were roused, I started remembering other incidents which ought to have warned me.

For example, earlier this month a big business executive in Toronto made a speech in which he stated that pinko conservationists and environmentalists are attempting to ruin free enterprise in this country.

Guilty again. I do not believe in the sacrifice of our environment at the altar of profit. And sometimes, I even suspect that free enterprise is only "free" for big business.

A letter to the editor of my local paper two weeks ago should have shown me the error of my ways. The author of this missive pointed out that people who advocate prison reform are undermining law and order, a well known communist ploy. Coddling criminals by offering them education and recreation instead of meting out stern punishment only encourages crime, he said.

I can't wriggle out of that one. I've long believed that locking up criminals, especially the young or the non-violent without providing opportunities for educa-



LYN COCKBURN

tion, recreational facilities and access to psychiatric help only creates hardened criminals and ensures repeat offenses.

"Feminism is communist backed," thunders Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority. He goes on to explain that feminism is designed to undermine the Christian family and is therefore suspect.

Oh, am I guilty. I think my husband is in trouble too. He stole my "Sexism Can Be Cured" t-shirt and regularly wears it to work. What's even worse, he does all the vacuuming and insists on hemming

his own trousers.

Officials of the American Rifle Association tell us that the right to bear arms is an integral part of democracy and that anyone who disagrees is a communist. What more proof do I need? I am barely comfortable with the idea that the police carry guns, let alone anyone else. My idea of shooting is that it's something best done with a camera.

"These damn women who agitate against pornography are nothing but a bunch of communists" says the owner of a video parlour, as members of Women Against Pornography picket his shop. "They're advocating censorship, a known communist tactic," he continues.

Hey, is it possible that I have stayed in the closet this long with evidence like this? Even now, I am unable to give up the idea that pornography, sexism and racism are the same thing. Try as I might, I can't rid myself of the belief that the degradation of another person for sexual, racial or religious reasons is not our god given right and therefore, getting rid of such rubbish does not constitute censorship. It is more like garbage collection.

If communists are for nuclear disarmament, conservation, socialism, prison reform, feminism and gun control and are against pornography and testing the Cruise missile, then I must be one.

Now that I have come out of the closet, I still have a problem. What do I do next? Do I rush out and join the Communist Party or do I wait for my Canadian Security Intelligence Service to pick me up? ▽

REVIEWS

FILMS

THROUGH HER EYES: FINE FEMINIST FILMS

Reviewed by JUSTINE PIMLOT

Through Her Eyes, an International Festival of Women's Films, held in Toronto last November temporarily filled the cultural void in terms of making women's films accessible to general audiences. The festival was a major step towards generating a strong awareness of the number of talented women working in the film industry. For 11 days the festival featured over 50 films made by women from Canada, USA, and many western European countries as well as from Australia, USSR, Phillipines, and The People's Republic of China.

In addition to screening the films, audiences had the chance to meet with participating directors to discuss their films as well as their financial, technical, and political experiences as women film-makers in their country. From the discussion I participated in at both the

the world.

In terms of the actual films I screened, Canadian highlights included the familiar *Hookers on Davie* by Holly Dale and Janis Cole, Gail Singer's *Abortion: Stories From North & South*, and the new NFB Studio D production *Behind the Veil* an exploration of the lives, history and religious influence of nuns. Another potentially good film or at least one I was looking forward to seeing was *Laure Gaudrault*, a dramatisation of the Québec union organiser's struggle to unionise the province's women teachers during the depression. The film directed by Iolande Cadrin-Rossignol disappointingly fell victim to a bad projector and the screening was cancelled.

German director Margarethe von Trotta's films were a major presence at the festival and included her first film *The Second Awakening of Christa Klages* (1978), *The Balance of Happiness* (1979), and one of her best and more recent, *Sheer Madness* (1979). (Watch future issues of *HERIZONS* for reviews and a focus on von Trotta and other women film-makers.)

Other interesting European films were *A Woman Like Eve* by Dutch film-maker Nouchka van Brakel and *A Question of Silence* made by Dutch director Marleen Gorris. *A Woman Like Eve* is not van Brakel's best work but its strength lies in the decent portrayal of its subject matter. The film is a real and sensitive por-

ren, begins to piece together her life and gradually realises the inherent contradictions and institutionalised power and privilege of heterosexuality.

Overall, *Through Her Eyes* was a great success. Audiences were satiated with many excellent films and women working in the industry around the world had the chance to network and share their experiences. My only regret is that a festival of this calibre was not accessible to women across the country. Perhaps it's time for some of the cultural funding bodies in the country to dust off the cobwebs, wipe the sleep from their eyes and finance a tour of some of the works screened at this festival! ▽

PLACES IN THE HEART/COUNTRY

Reviewed by LOUISE WORSTER

The film *Country* is the story of an Iowa family facing the prospect of losing its farm and livelihood. Jessica Lange and Sam Shepard play Jewel and Gil Ivy, two farmers who have lived in more prosperous times.

At the beginning of the film a tornado overturns a truck and buries their son (Levi Knebel) with the recently harvested crop. This scene was one of the most emotional moments in the film, during which director Richard Pearce coordinates some impressive sound effects. The audience can actually feel the awesome force of the tornado moving across the field. As fear passes across Jewel's face, I felt her connection to the country — the power that nature can give to her and all farm people as well as the chaos that it can inflict on their lives.

Another disaster looms when later the local Farmers' Home Administration tells the Ivys that unless they can repay their government loans of \$100,000 on their farm within 30 days, the FHA will foreclose.

As Jewel and Gil realise the full implications of the crisis, Gil loses faith in himself and his community. He expresses his humiliation by striking out against his son and his wife. Gil's resignation was not entirely believable in light of his previous close interactions with Jewel. Rather, his character chang-



general screenings and the smaller workshops with the directors, it is clear that cross-culturally the majority of women have difficulty securing financing for their work, as well as adequate distribution to get the films "out there." Little wonder, with the exception of *Film Furies*, in Manitoba, and some small repertory cinema houses in urban centres we rarely get the chance to see films made by women that reflect our life experiences and the way in which we view

trayal of a woman (Eve) who leaves her stable yet stifling marriage after she falls in love with a woman. Her husband, on first learning of her love for a woman, laughs and trivialises her feelings by equating them with a male voyeuristic and pornographic view of lesbianism. When he fully realises the impact of Eve's love for Lilliane, Eve finds herself in a fight for the custody of her two children. She, like many other lesbian mothers loses custody of her child-

es seemed more a vehicle of the script to allow Jewel to come into her own. By the end of the film, however, the director manages to show that Gil's actions have, indeed, permanently altered relationships within the family. The Ivys feel both sadness and love as Gil makes his awkward entrance back into their lives.

Facing the impending loss of land that has been in her family for over 100 years, Jewel is empowered by the struggle. She gathers together her community in a fight against the bureaucracy. She crosses miles of frozen land to rouse the affected farmers, yet we are not let in on her conversations with them. I would have preferred the film to have shown how she breaks through the fears and mistrust on the part of some farmers as she urged them to take on the bureaucracy. Since this dialogue was lacking, the resultant victorious turning-point was unexpected.

Despite this flaw, *Country* is a moving film that gives its viewers a sense of sparseness and the power of the land, and of the warmth of the people who gain their strength from it. Jewel Ivy's struggle for continuance is enhanced and made believable by Jessica Lange's intense performance.

Places in the Heart, another film about a woman who has to rely on her own resources to keep her farm and family together, is set in Texas in the 1930s.

When Edna Spalding's (Sally Field) husband is shot accidentally by a young man she must make a living for herself and her two children. Having depended on her husband for love and support, she is helpless in grief.

Knowing her precarious financial situation, the local bank manager forces Edna to take in his relative, a young, blind veteran of World War I. When shortly after that he threatens her with the loss of her farm, her fear turns into indignation and she begins to take some risks.

She accepts the offer of Mose (Danny Glover), a black itinerant worker, to be her farm helper. Set within the context of the racism of the 1930s, film viewers might feel her ready acceptance of Mose as unrealistic, but Field manages this part with a convincing hesitation, then a change of heart.

From the outset of the film the director, Robert Benton, uses the camera and music to explore the racial divisions. The hymn sung by the black mourners silhouetted against a dark sky also accompanied Royce's sunlit burial across town.

Dramatic acts of violence after Edna

and Moze successfully harvest the season's first cotton crop contrast sharply with the pastoral scenes and the supportive household of Edna's farm. These sequences give *Places in the Heart* a lyrical quality and a sense of humanity that will not be denied. ▽

BOOKS

I HEAR THE REAPER'S SONG

Reviewed by JANE RULE

I Hear the Reaper's Song, Sara Stambaugh, Good Books, Intercourse, Pennsylvania, 1984, 221 pp.

The dedication in the novel, *I Hear the Reaper's Song*, by Sara Stambaugh, reads as I imagine her grandfather's head stone does: "Silas N. Nershey b. Mar. 22, 1881. d. Nov. 20, 1970. Aged 89 years, 7 months, and 29 days." Silas Hershey, an old man in a home as the book opens, is the narrator of this story which takes him back to the year 1896. He was fifteen, the youngest child of a family of thirteen children, Mennonite farmers in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

At the centre of the year is the death of his 17-year-old sister, Barbie, and her young man, Enos Garge, their buggy hit by a train at a dangerous crossing when they were on their way home from a party. It is an accident Sara Stambaugh has heard various members of her family talk about all her life. When it became her own preoccupation as well, she did the research and asked the hard questions which would enable her to write about that community, the Hershey family within it, how they were challenged and changed by what had happened.

The building revival movement within the church, fired by traveling preachers, went against the conservative members of the church, among whom the Hersheys counted themselves. They believed neither in missionary work nor in being "born again" into the church. Their habit was to raise their children in family prayer, in church going, as children of God, who, when they reached adulthood, chose for themselves to be members of the church, usually about the time they married. Infant baptism was

alien to them as were the emotional conversions at mass meetings.

Those who favoured the revivalists thought of themselves as forward looking, supporting services in English rather than German, involving young people earlier in the commitment to the faith as a way of combating the restlessness of adolescence. Most of the young people were drawn to the meetings more as a place to meet on week nights than as a religious experience.

After the accident, the revivalists brutally exploited the young couple, who were not yet members of the church. One preacher claimed at Barbie's funeral, attended by over two thousand people, that she had not been saved. Numbers upon numbers of people were rushed into church membership.

How the exploitation of the death of the liveliest and most loved daughter affected various members of the family and the community is shown against the background of farm rituals, the planting, tending and harvesting, the slaughtering of animals, fruit picking and preserving, against also the natural rhythms of human fertility and mortality.

In Silas, Sara Stambaugh has created a narrator who can be both young witness and old man reflecting. She has found him a language which is colloquial and unselfconscious, yet rich in feeling and insight. He watches the conversion of his pious, frail sister Martha, his brother Henry's rage and refusal to join the church. He observes, too, the somewhat older married children, divided in their attitudes, yet all are drawn together not only by grief but by an abiding love, legacy of loving parents who must transcend the judgments of preachers and their bitterness toward the careless monster railroad which killed their child.

Communities religiously defined can be too easily dismissed as role and rule ridden, stifling of the individual. This one, endangered by changes which may enliven or destroy, as all communities are, is an affirmation of people's ability to withstand, survive, forgive, skills of the soul which the men and women of this book share and teach.

It is the community in which Sara Stambaugh grew up. Though she has been teaching at the University of Alberta in Edmonton since 1969, she has not been cut off from those roots; she has written her first novel nourished by them. An historical novel with deep personal resonance, it is a model for the value of the past in each of our lives. ▽

BOOKS

OPEN IS BROKEN/ TOUCH TO MY TONGUE

Reviewed by JOY PARKS

open is broken by Betsy Warland
Touch to My Tongue by Daphne Marlett
Longspoon Press; Edmonton, Alberta;
1984.

In *open is broken*, Betsy Warland has chosen to follow in the experimental tradition of writers such as Nicole Brossard, Hélène Cixous and Mary Daly. Like these writers, on finding her experience "un-nameable," Warland found it necessary to abandon conventional language and to begin fresh from the source, from sound and ancient origins. Drawing on the original meanings of commonly exploited words, she sifts etymologies, fracturing and re-forming the language. In doing this, Warland has developed an exciting new way of portraying the female sensibility in language. Also, much like Nicole Brossard, a writer Warland names as an influence, she has dissolved the limitations of specific literary genres. The first two poems in *open is broken* are "essay poems" in which she instructs us in a revolutionary way to examine writing by women. It is in this quest for origins and re-naming that women writers/poets can begin to see how their experiences are alien from the (male) mainstream and therefore, how they are unauthentic in patriarchal language. It is also possible to see the freedom that could be achieved in the re-creation of female forms in language. Part of this is the freedom to name the body, to write from the body and *open is broken* demonstrates how powerful this freedom can be.

Betsy Warland notes in her introduction "untying the tongue" that:

"the language itself does not reflect women's sensual experience... when i abandon a word, i relinquish the experience it calls up. yet, how

can i use the word "intercourse" as a lesbian? and what do i say as a feminist when in my deepest erotic moments words like "surrender" pulse in my head?"

This refusal to be anything less than totally authentic to her own experience means that it is necessary for Warland to make new the words she needs to share her experience as a woman/lesbian/ explorer. It is in this connection that Betsy Warland demonstrates the need for the woman poet to connect the female body and mind, to write from the knowledge of the body, and to respect the "wholeness" of female experience. In rejecting the mind/body split of conventional writing, Warland has not only shown the power of wholeness — of writing from the body — but she has also bravely moved into a rich, exploratory ground where few English Canadian women poets/writers have dared to tread. By taking this risk, her poetry is marked by a brilliance and



originality similar to the writings of language reformers such as Gertrude Stein and contemporary American poet Judy Grahn. Like the work of these innovators, *open is broken* will no doubt help to expand the perimeters of women's writing.

Daphne Marlett's previous poetry has been marked by experiment and originality — her distinctive prose poems, her strong, long poetic line, her dedication to remaining true to the often forgotten interpretation of words. Still *Touch to My Tongue* is much different than any of Marlett's work so far. First, it is the most woman-oriented collection

ever attempted by the poet. Like Warland, Marlett also emphasises a need to re-develop a language that will illuminate the essential "femaleness" of her experience. Her continuous forms that disregard linear sequence and her exploration of the roots of a culturally-imposed male bias in language serve this need well.

Touch to My Tongue is also distinct in that it is Marlett's first book that openly and joyously celebrates the power and deep personal/political implications of erotic love between women. In this, it is reminiscent of many of the first books of lesbian poetry that appeared during the early years of radical feminist publishing, particularly in its sense of newness and wonderous discovery in the recognition of one's own lesbian sexuality and a breaking of self-imposed limitations. And yet, unlike so many "coming out" works, *Touch to My Tongue* is the articulate work of a seasoned poet who brings to these explosive new experiences a wealth of craft, a confidence that allows her to take great risks and a learned knowledge of ancient female archetypes that add dimensions to her poems. Marlett has written in her wonderfully insightful essay "Musing with the Mother-tongue" that the only way to write honestly of woman's experience is to surpass the limitations of our male-oriented language which "mis-represents, even miscarries and so leaves unsaid what we experience" to chip away at the patriarchal sediment that has obscured our language and robbed it of its full meaning and to "(shove) out the walls of taboo and propriety, kicking syntax, discovering life in old roots." According to Marlett, "putting the living body of language together means putting the world together, the world we live in: an act of composition, an act of birthing, us uttered and outered there in it."

This "birthing" of a language and its connection to the physical/sexual experience of women is at the very core of both *open is broken* and *Touch to My Tongue*, collections of poetry that are bold, powerful and sexually dynamic. Hopefully the innovation and vision of these two remarkable poets will spark a much needed literary revolution that will open the door to new and exciting possibilities for women's poetry in Canada and elsewhere. ▽

An open letter to our readers:

Lately, we've been making the news, not just reporting it. You may already be aware that over the last few months, Herizons has been under fire from pro-life groups. The Catholic Women's League, and a few other pro-life individuals have gone so far as to harass our advertisers, and while they haven't given in to the pressure, we feel that they could use the support of our readers, now more than ever.

We understand that the Catholic Women's League is also trying to pressure the federal government, to discontinue a portion of Herizons funding. The Catholic Women's League stated that we should be taken off newsstands because of our pro-choice bias, and anti-choice crusader Joe Borowski sent our advertisers letters saying that Herizons is pro-abortion and advocates violence against men.

Soon after all this began, the media picked up on the issue and finally, we found ourselves on the CBC National, defending freedom of speech and a women's right to choose abortion. Some of our advertisers received letters quoting Biblical passages, signed by pro-life advocates promising never to patronise their store or service. Their reaction has been one of annoyance and some went as far as to publicly defend their ad placements in Herizons. Our stance has been that the technique of harassing our advertisers, rather than boycotting the magazine, is an unethical means of boycott, and one which makes the premise of the pro-life argument contradictory. (On the one hand they say we shouldn't get government funding and should be autonomous, and then they try to stop us from getting advertising). We have maintained our right to qualify for government business start-up grants on the same grounds as other businesses, not on the grounds of our editorial philosophy regarding the choice issue.

It's been a busy, fast-paced few months around here and we hope we can count on your continued support for our advertisers who count on you to bring them business. You might even want to drop them a note to let them know that you're glad they advertise in Herizons. And, if you or someone you know is involved in an organization or business that isn't currently advertising with us, you should think about Herizons as an advertising vehicle.

Thanks again for your support.

The Herizons Staff

P.S. The extra publicity hasn't been too bad for business at Herizons either...keep those subscriptions coming in!

cont'd. from page 5.

Dear HERizons,

I would like to comment on the Sculptures in your December issue. Why does a feminist magazine present sensationalist images of women cut up and stabbed? The night after reading the issue I had nightmares of abuse. It is not OK for men to sculpt and display sculptures of women cut up and battered, nor is it OK for women to follow this easy, destructive and anti-social pattern. Visuals are very powerful and these visuals, though done by a woman, create the same residue as a cheap detective magazine.

I've been disheartened to find mannequins with kitchen knives all over them ("sculpted by women") in publicly funded "alternative" galleries. I do not need to see this regardless of so called political intent.

Find the images of women in strength or women as multi-emotional creature. Women as women.

Stop using these images! Please. These images are initially engaging — but so is *Playboy*!

Marguerite Smith

Greetings:

Just a brief note to congratulate HERizons on going National! The magazine means a lot more to me, living up here — keeps me in touch. Although I really enjoyed going from store to store to bug them for HERizons, I thought I should get my subscription before the crazies get it banned here. (The Pas does have more than its share — for example, a local committee opposed to revising the sex education curriculum of sex ed without the "Christian" values, had its spokesman suggest that it (sex ed) was a communist plot — getting kids minds off religion and onto sex. Too bad I missed that part when I read Marx and Engels!)

I also really enjoy the bilingual nature of the magazine — keeps me brushing up the high school French, and brushing dust off old textbooks.

What I'd like to see in future issues: more reports on smaller communities (i.e. our struggle in northern Manitoba to keep shelters/crisis lines going); more reports on women-operated businesses (e.g. Danielle Ethier is co-owner and only welder in DCR steel designs in Winnipeg who's making efforts to hire more women)

so we know where to shop and, of course, keep up the pro-choice reports, and peace issues.

Best wishes/Merry Christmas/Happy Hanukkah/Blessed Solstice/etc.

In sisterhood
Dawna Pritchard

Dear HERizons

We are Christian feminists who are "pro choice" and we wish to respond to Ann McKenzie's letter in the November edition of HERizons.

She indicates that she is a feminist, but as a Christian "cannot condone therapeutic abortion, except for medical reasons where the mother's life is endangered by her pregnancy."

We believe than an unplanned pregnancy may not adversely affect a woman's physical health, but it can affect her emotional, mental and spiritual health. We need to consider a holistic definition of health when determining if a woman's health is endangered by pregnancy. We believe that in some circumstances choosing to have an abortion may be the most responsible decision that a woman can make if she is not able to provide proper care and a loving environment. We also believe that a woman should not have to carry and bear children for other families unless she chooses to.

We share Dr. McKenzie's concern about the difficulties of a woman facing an unwanted pregnancy, the need for contraceptive education, and the need for support for mothers and children.

However, women do get pregnant while carefully using contraceptives. Contraception is not yet 100 per cent effective, risk-free, easily affordable, easy to use or accessible to all women. Girls and women do get pregnant when they are victims of rape and incest. Unfortunately, increased contraceptive education will only help some of the problem. Women will still get pregnant when they do not plan to.

We believe that God calls us to be partners in the creation of a world of justice and dignity for all persons and that as co-creators, we are called to make responsible decisions. We believe that the focus of God's and justice is not limited to only the fetus, but is extended to every individual in all of life's stages, therefore the woman's life must also be considered.

We believe that we are called to be responsible about our sexuality. We

believe that choosing to have an abortion should not be taken lightly. Counselling should occur before and after the abortion to help the woman (or couple) to work through her (their) decision and to further educate her (them) about contraception.

We wish that abortions did not have to occur. However, unplanned pregnancies are a fact of life and women need to be able to make choices around this issue.

We respect people who have doubts about abortion. We respect that this act goes against some people's beliefs.

We also respect freedom of religion and conscience. We believe that persons should not impose their views of morality on anyone else. It is for these reasons that as Christians, we believe in a woman's right to choose to have an abortion.

**Gladys Pavo
Catherine Barnsley
Margaret McKechney
Susan Sorensen
Carol Stevenson Sellar
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**

Dear Madam,

Just this afternoon I bought and read my first copy of *HERIZONS*. I was undecided about ordering a subscription.

Tonight I heard on the news that the Catholic Women's League is calling for a boycott of your magazine because of your pro-choice stand.

Consider this one catholic woman's response to that call and accept my cheque for \$15.00 for a year's subscription.

Thank you.

Rosemary Lepen

Dear Sisters,

I support your stand on Pro Choice. I don't want the Catholic Women's League telling me what I can read and can't.

Next time I am in Winnipeg I plan to have lunch at "The Fork".

**Continued success
Joyce Harrison**

Dear HERIZONS,

Just a quick note of support for your pro-choice article on therapeutic abortion. Gallup polls show the majority (72 per cent) of Canadians believe that the decision whether to terminate a pregnancy should be a private matter between a woman and her doctor. Four juries have acquitted

Dr Henry Morgentaler of any criminal offense, although he acknowledged performing therapeutic abortions. In my opinion, your pro-choice position does reflect the wishes of the majority of Canadians.

**Yours truly
Penney Kome
Toronto, Ontario**

Dear HERIZONS,

It would seem that if the Government can pay for the Pope's visit to Catholics and all the ideological proselytising that entails, they can surely support HERIZONS.

Good luck.

**Nena Hardie
Toronto, Ontario**

Dear Readers,

This fall we completed four years of continuous publishing as a lesbian-identified journal. We are writing now to appeal for financial aid to continue.

Our WINTER 84-85 issue has had to be postponed because:

1) VOICES is \$356 in debt, and there is no way that we can single-handedly raise the \$200 more that we need to put out another issue. We have always operated in the belief that, if we are meeting a significant need, the dollars and other support will arrive to keep us going.

2) Because we are very tired. One of us is quite exhausted from trying to stand almost alone in Northwest Ontario to insist publicly that women have a right to love other women. We have to draw back from the struggle for a time to rest, and winter is the most appropriate time to do this.

If we receive enough support in response to this appeal, we will begin to publish again in March.

If you write, please use the following address:
VOICES, c/o I. Andrews, R.R. #2, Kenora, Ontario P9N 3W8. (PLEASE do not use LESBIAN in our mailing address; WE are out publicly but OUR MAIL is not!)

Make cheques payable to VOICES. Post-dated cheques are fine. We know very few lesbian activists are rich, and we'll appreciate any amount you can send.

**In struggle and in hope
Doreen Worden and
Isabel Andrews
Co-editors, co-publishers, of
VOICES FOR LESBIAN SURVIVAL**



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WOMEN IN TIME 1986 CALENDAR produced by the P.E.I. Women's History Project features twelve notable women who contributed to the social, political and cultural development of P.E.I. To order send \$10 to Women In Time, Box 2271, Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 8B9.

COMPUTER NETWORK FOR FEMINIST COMMUNICATIONS is in the planning stages. May connect micro-computers or mainframes. Will be run as a collective. Contact: K. Watkins, 1140 Illinois, Sheridan, WY 82801.

LUNATECHS is a lesbian computer group soon to publish an anthology of women's writings in data processing, information theory, and how it affects our lives. To get on mailing list contact LUNATECHS, POB 266, 206 W. Barry, Chicago, IL 60657.

A WEB OF CRONES. Are you a "Courageous Crone" or Far Out Older Lesbian, or do you aspire to be one? If so, I would like to communicate with you and maybe could form a network? Write, call, visit c/o Pennyroyal, R.R. #6, Millstream Road, Victoria, B.C. V8X 3X2.

FREE LIST! Out-of-print books by and about women. Boudicca Books. Write: Attention: HM, Box 901, Station K, Toronto, Ontario M4R 1X4.

LARC is the new name for the **LESBIAN ARCHIVES OF MANITOBA & NORTH-WEST ONTARIO**. Please use this address: LARC, c/o Isabel Andrews, R.R. #2, Kenora, Ontario P9N 3W8; Ph. (807) 548-4325. All lesbians and allies welcome by appointment.

VOICES, c/o I. Andrews, R.R. # 1, Kenora, Ontario P9N 3W8. A lesbian newsjournal focusing on healing (personal, political, spiritual). Priority to lesbians of colour. Subs \$6 for 3 issues: groups \$12; sustaining \$20; sample \$2.

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And you won't miss these exciting articles in upcoming issues:

- ▼ **Women in Prisons**
- ▼ **Birth Control Technology**
- ▼ **The Pinawa nuclear research project: future nuclear waste site?**
- ▼ **Interview with Dale Spender**

Yes!

I want to subscribe to HERizons. Enclosed is my cheque/money order for \$15.

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