

DECEMBER 1985 • VOL. 3 • NO. 8 • \$2.50

# HERIZONS

WOMEN'S NEWS AND FEMINIST VIEWS



## MARION DEWAR'S VISION: EQUALITY, PEACE, AND JUSTICE



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AGORAPHOBIA**



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WOMEN OF THE  
REVOLUTION**

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and new President of the NDP.



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# HERIZONS

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When she moved out of the spacious Mayor's office at City Hall in Ottawa to become President of the NDP this fall, Marion Dewar walked onto a larger stage, reaching out to the whole country with her vision of a fairer Canadian society. Her philosophy "think globally, act locally" is, in many ways, also a spiritual vision.  
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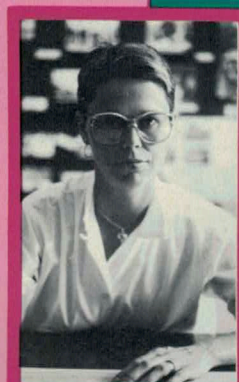
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# editorial

## Change purses and Piggybanks Beware

"Money changes everything," Cindi Lauper belts out lustfully, ringing a responsive cord in me. I hum this tune as I read, daily revelations of the many machinations of big banks, big corporations, and big brother Brian's budget deficit. It's amazing how they build up a looming mountain out of a chasm. The government puts the onus of this debt on taxpayers' shoulders, telling us we've overspent, but we've never even seen this money, never decided how we might want to spend it. The reality is that for most women in this country there is no cheque with their name on it.

One of the few cheques that women do receive, stamped plainly with their name, is the monthly Family Allowance cheque. We know where this money goes. It just holds us over, lets us buy those small necessities between paydays. But it's for the kids. We know it and they need it.

Now by de-indexing the family allowance, despite come-lately petitions from the opposition parties, Brian's budget will take \$20 million between 1985 and 1986 from women's change purses and promises to instigate the fall of many a kid's piggybank. Despite its meager proportions, women consider this allowance payment for motherwork. In a sense, de-indexing becomes a kind of wage freeze coupled with the prospect of a new parliamentary committee finding new ways of spending this reservoir of cash savings. Where corporations threaten massive layoffs, wage cuts or automation to temper labour demands, the elimination of the family allowance by no means suggests that women will stop doing motherwork. It would only serve to make the work and themselves more invisible.

The recent recommendations of the McDonald Commission provide a theory with a hefty price tag for another government slight-of-hand. In particular, the Commission found that incredible savings for government could be realised by coalescing all social service payments i.e., rent subsidies, welfare, unemployment insurance, into one guaranteed annual income. Although women's groups and anti-poverty organisations see some advantages in such universal income allocation, they do so with trepidation.

They are correct in their anxieties. Each of these social payments (that would be submerged into a guaranteed annual income) represents a fight won. Housing subsidies and rent controls come from government's having to witness rent strikes. Unemployment insurance comes from the defiance of workers excluded from corporate and government economic strategies. Welfare payments to single parent mothers come from sit-ins at social agency offices organised by black women. The guaranteed annual income renders these struggles non-existent as they now become only the problems of government accountants doling out their bosses' supposed largesse. And so, in turn, a sacred trust becomes women's responsibility for the deficit.

At the International Women's Conference in Nairobi, women already anticipated these very government measures. A significant resolution passed by delegates of the Forum stated explicitly that all nations of the world must see, and therefore tangibly recognise, women's paid and unpaid labour as work that contributes to the wealth of each country. Governments have never before included in their gross national product statistics which reflect the unpaid and thereby invisible work that women do in the home and in the fields. And because they've never wanted to see it, we women have always been seen as incurring only deficits. When Health Minister Jake Epp comes to the floor of the parliament to tell women to take a wage cut in their family allowance, he is in direct confrontation with the women of the world. We want the money. There's a lot of wages due!



Brigitte Sutherland

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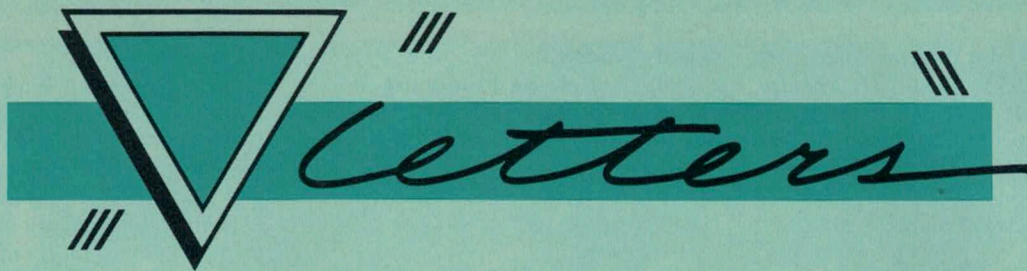
The aim of this magazine is to provide an alternative means of communication with a feminist perspective in order to stimulate, to inform, to effect change, and to unify women's strengths, serving as a forum for women.

HERizons magazine is located at 200 - 478 River Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3L 0C8. Phone (204) 477-1730. HERizons is published 8 times per year. Subscriptions \$17 per year for individuals; \$25 for businesses and institutions; outside Canada add \$6.00. Stripping by Lithostrip Winnipeg Man. Printing by Michalski Printing Service Ltd., Winnipeg, Man. 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 writers and do not necessarily reflect HERizons policy. Second Class Mail Registration No. 5899. ISSN 0711-7485

Canadian  
Periodical  
Publishers'  
Association

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Dear Editors,

We would like to clarify the information in your July/August issue (*HERIZONS* July/Aug. p. 17) on the Women's Peace Write, a project of West Coast Women and Words. Thirty-five selections of prose, poetry, dialogue, and lyrics are being sent to every member of Parliament, one each week the House is in session, from June 1985 to May 1986.

A reading from the Women's Peace Write selections was held in Vancouver in June, and local coverage across Canada in newspapers, magazines, and radio is planned for the coming months.

A spiral-bound calendar of all the writing, in order, is available for \$5.00 to cover printing and mailing costs. For calendars or more information, write to West Coast Women and Words, -210, 640 W. Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1G4.

Sincerely,

**Julie Emerson  
for the Women's Peace Write  
Campaign Committee**

Dear Friends,

I am writing to you to ask for your help in stopping Canada from exporting tritium.

Ontario Hydro, with support from the federal and Ontario governments, plans to market tritium (from the tritium removal plant being built at the Darlington nuclear station) around the world.

Many people don't know that without fresh supplies of tritium, most nuclear weapons would lose their destructive ability with age. Yet in just two years, Ontario Hydro will be producing, and attempting to market, more than 8 times as much tritium as the world's total civilian use. Without these huge new supplies, the world's nuclear arms industry will have difficulty producing enough tritium to meet their needs, and a tritium production cut-off could be an important step towards nuclear disarmament. If

Canadian tritium is sold around the world, it could easily end up being used in bombs, and it will surely allow the world's current supply of tritium to be dedicated entirely to arms. In either case, Canada would be contributing grievously to setting back the cause of global disarmament.

We are planning to write to all Members of Parliament asking them to stop these tritium exports (which have to be licensed by the federal government). We are asking you to support this effort in two ways: First, write letters to your MP, to other newspapers to inform them of this issue. Second, please have your organization adopt a position joining this effort upon and send it to us so that we can add your group's name to the list in our letter. We hope to show Parliament the broadly-based opposition to these exports. (It would also be helpful if you could send copies of this letter to other groups you think might want to support this campaign.)

Thank you in advance for your help.  
Sincerely,

**Marilyn Arons  
Energy Probe  
100 College Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5G 1L5**

Dear Friends,

Many thanks for my first copy of *HERIZONS*, I am only sorry I have missed it up to now.

Luanne Armstrong's account of the Halifax conference on Women's Alternatives to Negotiating Peace recaptured the rich atmosphere of that meeting for me. I can still hear the delegate from South Africa saying, "Don't applaud unless you plan to do something."

The story of Donna Smyth: Challenging the Nuclear Experts is a clear example of what happens when a woman is willing to do something and act boldly against the military industrial establishment.

We have to be prepared to be threatened and intimidated by the response of those we dare to question. Then we have to endure as Donna and her supporters did, the division and draining of our time, energy and money to defend our causes. The wonderful thing is that Donna did it so well and so many supporters stuck with her. This is why her story is so important — it gives us the courage and knowledge to challenge all those who claim to be experts in damaging and destroying the value of life. You have done many people a great service by printing that story.

All the best to you and I look forward to my next issue eagerly.

Yours,

**Terry Padgham  
Victoria, B.C.**

Dear *HERIZONS*,

Although I bought the July/August issue because of the article on feminist science fiction, it is because of the article on Sharon Stevenson that I write.

I think it is sadly typical of our society that you should publish a posthumous piece on a creative individual. Too many people have become "successes" as a result of early death, often due to suicide. Yet during their lives they have been ignored, or at best, received mild recognition compared to the frenzy after their deaths.

But it is not just "famous" people that receive this treatment. It is too often the lot of all suicide victims. Abandoned, in truth or in the mind, these people suddenly become loved in the aftermath of their death. But it's too late for them.

The time for caring about others is before they are dead, or hopefully, even before the point where they wish to be dead. It smacks of hypocrisy to see people ignore depressed and suicidal people (who certainly to a large extent would go out of their way not to "bother" others with their



problems — a far cry from the "jilted lover", or suicide as humor) yet turn around and make a big effort in their memory. I even understand that post-humous attention is often a fantasy of those who contemplate suicide. But if I killed myself I wouldn't want that kind of false caring. Once dead, the world ceases to exist.

It also strikes me as a joke to see all the "concern" in the media about the increasing number of suicides, while at the same time calling for a return to the three R's, and no abortions and other attempts to rigidize society. While there is a threat implicit in telling someone that you want to kill yourself, it is not a desire to hold society hostage. It is probably in most cases a simple matter of "There's no place here for me."

(name withheld on request)  
Montreal, Quebec

Dear Editors,

Many thanks for the excellent article, "Good Grieving" (Sept. *HERizons*). Betty Jane Wylie spoke to my experience of coming to terms with my losses, through stroke, at the age of 36 (partial paralysis and a whole life-style).

I have had four years of shock, merging into denial and a sort of acceptance based on better self-knowledge than I allowed myself in the past years of frantically seeking to "make it." Thank you, Betty Jane, for assuring me of the strength of that process.

But the anger remains, and was fired recently when I read in the *Globe & Mail* (Sept. 4th) a lawyer's opinion that "the Canadian Medical Association opposed the printing on packaging [of birth control pills] of 'direct warnings' [of possible blood clotting] that could confuse patients."

It's good to know that the C.M.A. expects doctors to inform their patients. Too bad my doctor didn't see fit to warn me of potential side-effects in 1980, ten years after this information was made available to the medical profession.

To all contraceptive-pill users of 35 years and over, both non-smokers and smokers, be warned by one woman's experience. Don't think "it won't happen to me". It may.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Beck  
Hamilton, Ontario

Dear Women,

**Your article on Producing Women's Art was excellent but would you please share the gallery addresses with a far away person who in turn will share and pass them along?**

Sincerely,

Ann MacGillivray

EDITOR'S NOTE: Here is a partial list of some of the galleries you may be interested in:

Gallery 940: 940 Queen St. East;  
Toronto, Ontario; M6A 2V8

The Sparkes Gallery: 1114 Queen St. West; Toronto, Ontario; M6J 1H9

Women's Spirit: 359 Dundas Street;  
London, Ontario; N6B 1V5

Women in Focus: 456 West Broadway,  
Suite 204; Vancouver, B.C.; V5Y 1R3;

Powerhouse: 3738 St. Dominique St.,  
Suite 203; Montreal, Quebec; H2X 2X9

Plug-In: 175 McDermot; Winnipeg,  
Manitoba; R3B 0S1

A-Space: 2045 Spadina Avenue;  
Toronto, Ontario; M5T 2C2

Latitude 53, Society of Artists:  
10920-88th Ave., Edmonton, Alberta;  
T6G 0Z1; Inquiries should be marked:  
Att'n Women's Programme.

People/Galleries that have stated an  
interest in showing women's work:

Rosemary Arbour: Museum of Contemporary Art, Cité du Havre; Montreal, Quebec; H3C 3R4

Barbara Fisher: Walter Phillips  
Gallery, P.O. Box 1020; Banff, Alberta

Jan Peacock: Nova Scotia College of  
Art and Design

Jemey Kelley: Dalhousie University;  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

HERizons Editor,

Recently I began some personal work on death and grieving. I spent three days at St. Benedict's Education Centre in silent retreat to begin a process of understanding and accepting the inevitability of my own death as well as the possibility of losing people I love. I read the *Overcoming the Fear of Death* and Elizabeth Kübler-Ross's *Living Until We Say Goodbye* thoroughly and repeatedly. I meditated, I did rituals, I grieved and wrote lengthy journal accounts of my feelings, questions and fears. In *Dreaming the Dark* I found a woman's description of her creative way of dealing with the grief she felt after an abortion. In *Mother Wit* I read an empowering description of death as a transformation — in the same way that birth and life are transformations. I feel that I have barely touched the surface in coming to terms with this aspect of my life.

I was very pleased to see that grieving was the topic for a *HERizons* article and looked forward to reading it anticipating that this article written by a woman with two books published — one for widows and the other concerning her brain damaged son — would add to my work and understanding.

I was very disappointed. The article's flippant tone was offensive and implied denial rather than acceptance on the part of the author. The content was superficial — there was no social analysis of our culture's attitudes toward death, no cross-cultural comparison of burial rituals, or even a discussion of the North American ritual; there were no insights offered and nothing to provoke. Only platitudes "Welcome to the club. Everyone who suffers a loss feels this way." and silly patter "Go ahead and writhe. It keeps you supple."

As a feminist, I would like to read how other feminists are discovering and exploring alternatives to patriarchal formulas for grieving. As a woman who is searching for spiritual awareness and connectedness, who is actively pursuing growth and ways of healing, I would encourage *HERizons* staff to publish a creative, sensitive article on the subject of death and grieving, one that reflects your policy of offering alternatives to current modes of thinking and ways of being.

Lynne Gibbons  
Winnipeg, Manitoba







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## WESTERN REGION

**WOMEN'S INSTITUTE —**

Of Manitoba Provincial conference will be held at the International Inn, Winnipeg, **April 24-26, 1986**. Something related to Family will be the theme. For information contact: Manitoba Women's Institute, 219-880 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, R3G 0P1

**CALGARY LESBIAN INFORMATION LINES —**

Offers peer counselling, community information, referrals, social events. Call (403) 265-9458 on Tues., Wed., and Thurs. evenings 7:30-9:30 pm. Drop-in nights are held on the **first and third Thursday of the month** and Coffee Houses on the **second and fourth Thursdays**. For information on other social events call or write: #314, 223-12 Avenue S.W., Calgary, Alberta.

**NEW OPPORTUNITIES —**

For Training and Development is a conference to explore new policies and progress for opportunities to be held in Vancouver on **May 19-21, 1986**. Sponsored by Vancouver Community College and Canadian Society for Learning and Development; materials and submissions for presentations should be made by **December 15, 1985**. For information: Miriam Bennett, Vancouver Community College, 1155 East Broadway, Vancouver V5T 4N3 (604) 875-1131.

## EASTERN REGION

**PROMOTING TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT —**

Opportunities for Women is a conference to identify the obstacles that prevent women from gaining maximum benefit from existing opportunities. The conference is sponsored by Dawson College, Montreal and the Canadian Society for Training and Development and will be held on **June 18-20, 1985**. Submissions deadline is **December 15, 1985**. For information: Miriam Bailey, Dawson College, Viger Campus, 535 Viger Street, Montreal H2L 2P3, (514) 931-8731.

**GRAPHIC FEMINISM —**

The upcoming exhibition will showcase a selection of graphic art from the women's movement in Ontario. The show is a project of the



Canadian Women's Movement Archives and is scheduled to open this **March, 1986** at Gallery 940, 940 Queen St. E., in Toronto. The deadline for all submissions is **December 15, 1985**. Send to Graphic Feminism, P.O. Box 928, Station Q, Toronto M4T 2P1; call for further information on Mon. and Tues. between 10 am and 5 pm at (416) 593-0058/597-8865.

**WOMEN AND WORDS/les femmes et les mots —**

Second Pan-Canadian conference will be held in Toronto in **June, 1986**. Currently, we are seeking women for membership on the conference committee and several task-oriented subcommittees. We seek the full participation of women of varied ethnic and racial backgrounds in every phase of the conference, from decision-making and programming to serving as panelists and to those attending. We are also striving to increase the representation of older women, young women, physically disabled women and poor women. All those interested in working with words. Call us at (416) 532-9868/925-1372 or write: Ontario Women and Words Society, P.O. Box 12, Station E, Toronto M6H 2X0.

**NATIONALISM AND FEMINISM AT A-SPACE —**

An exhibition is being organised to add some life to an important issue — nationalism — currently at an impasse. It is hoped that nationalism can be understood in its relationship to other social movements. Artists and writers active in diverse media are encouraged to submit proposals by **January 1, 1986**. A catalogue, including articles, will be published. For more information contact A-Space, 204 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2C2, (416) 364-3227.

## UNITED STATES

**WISCON10: SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION —**

In Madison, Wisconsin on **February 21-23, 1986**. Guests of honour will include Suzette Haden Elgin, author of *Native Tongue*, and Chelsea Quinn Yarbrow, author of *Time of the Fourth*

*Horseman and False Dawn*. Both writers explore alternative roles for women in their fiction. For information: WisCon, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624 or call (608) 251-6226 (days), 233-0326 (evenings).

## INTERNATIONAL

**WOMEN'S HISTORY —**

A variety of themes will be addressed at this international conference in Amsterdam on **March 24-28, 1986**, including women and work, and women and the third world. Contact: International Conference of Women's History, p/a vrouwenoverleg geschiedenis Universiteit van P.C. Hoofhuis, Spuistraat, 34, 1012 VB Amsterdam, Nederland.

**THE 8TH ILIS —**

(International Lesbian Information Service) conference will take place in Geneva from **March 28-31, 1986**. In the past, participants have come from Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S., but this year the organisers are trying to raise money to pay for the fares for lesbians from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. For registration, info. and list of workshops write: ILIS, 5 Bd St. Georges, 1205 Geneva, Switzerland.

**PLEASE NOTE —**

A listing of all correspondence courses in Canada offered by universities can be obtained from Distance Education, Canadian Courses by Correspondence, Career Services Branch of Alberta Manpower, 2nd Floor, Sun Building, 10363-108 Street, Edmonton T5J 1L8.

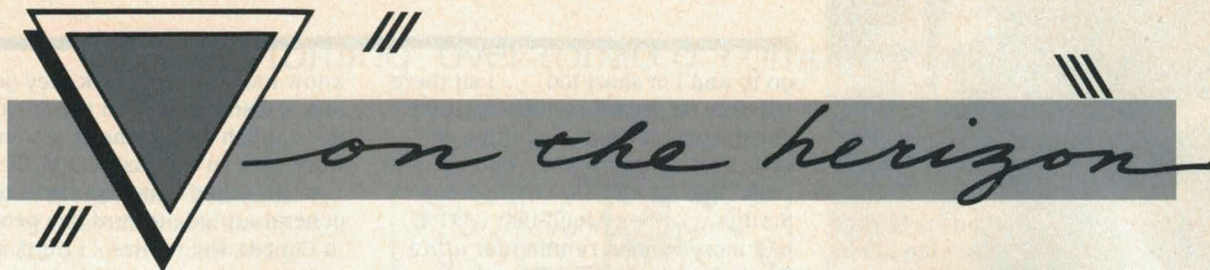
**SUBMISSIONS PLEASE —**

Women 25 to 35: Did you ever own a Barbie or other fashion doll? Incipient Crone is planning a study on the impact of such dolls on women's thinking/acting. If you are interested in participating, please write to: P.M. Ellis, Suite 211, 1120 Denman Street, Vancouver V8W 2L9.

**WOMEN'S WILDERNESS EXPERIENCES —**

Writing wanted for an anthology to be published on this topic. Please reply whether your perspective is as residents, travellers, hunters, herders, etc. Royalties will help low-income girls go on wilderness adventures. Send with SASA to Journeys, Rd. #1, Box 327 Tupper Rd., Spencer, NY 14883 by **January 15, 1986**





We are the strikers. We are from the  
Commerce  
We are the ones who need a better  
contract  
So let's keep striking  
There's no choice we're making  
We're saving our own jobs  
It's true we'll get a better contract for  
you and me  
(Tune: We Are The World)

Move over Anne Murray; the Bank Busters are coming through.

On strike against the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce VISA Centre in Toronto since early June, the bank workers stood in the autumn sun of a west-end Toronto park and sang, preparing a rally of 300 supporters for a walk down St. Clair Avenue and a surprise picket at a Commerce branch.

The Union of Bank Employees (UBE) Local 2104 (Ontario) began their strike June 12 when 70 VISA workers staged what bargaining committee chairperson Liz Fong calls a "fantastic" sit-in, a few hours before the official strike deadline. They stayed for 21 hours, until the bank refused to allow food or drink to be brought in.

From the workers to the issues at stake, this strike fits the familiar pattern of recent years. Of the 200 union members, 80 per cent are women, many in their 20s, many immigrants and many single mothers. Full-time VISA workers earn about \$14,000 a year. They are fighting a bank with 1984 after-tax profits of \$299 million, a bank which has offered them no wage increase, a continuation of the merit system, no improvements to a substandard benefits package, the hiring of unlimited numbers of part-time workers and the exclusion of part-timers from the union contract.

On their side, the strikers have the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), which is providing each person with \$300 a week, strike pay. United Auto Workers negotiators, and the support of the women's movement.

## Who can count on the Commerce?

Pat Daley

At the rally organised in late September by Toronto's Women's Strike Support Coalition, the VISA workers were buoyed by the walk-out four days earlier of Commerce mailroom employees. And they were able to look out on a crowd dotted with blue-uniformed Air Canada employees, members of the Canadian Air Line Flight Attendants Association (CALFAA), who set up picket lines in August, before reaching an agreement in late September.

CALFAA Toronto strike co-ordinator Donna Hendrick told the rally that like the UBE, 85 per cent of their membership are women. Like the VISA workers, they fought against compulsory overtime, increased hours, and a zero wage increase for 1984 leading up to four per cent at the end of 1986. Unlike the VISA workers, they have had a contract before.

Organising the banks isn't easy, as the Service, Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada (SORWUC) discovered when it set up its British Columbia-based United Bank Workers sec-

tion in 1976. SORWUC won a landmark battle in 1977 when the Canadian Labour Relations Board overturned a 1959 decision and made it possible to organise banks branch by branch rather than nationally. However, a year later, snowed under by legal costs, SORWUC applied to have its 24 member banks decertified. The banks had refused a master agreement and insisted that contracts also be negotiated branch by branch.

SORWUC blamed the CLC for many of its problems because the congress had begun its own bank drive — but the national labour body has had little more success than the tiny feminist union. Organising the Toronto VISA centre is a breakthrough, as is the CLC's decision to provide \$300 a week strike pay, making it possible for the workers to stay out.

The UBE has not called for a boycott of the Commerce. However, the VISA Centre is still operating with scab labour; they're the people who check your card and give merchants an authorisation number when you make a VISA purchase. You can tell the Commerce to make their workers a fair offer by calling the VISA Centre at (416) 862-2221.

As for the strikers, the banner they carry says it all: "We're banking on the union."



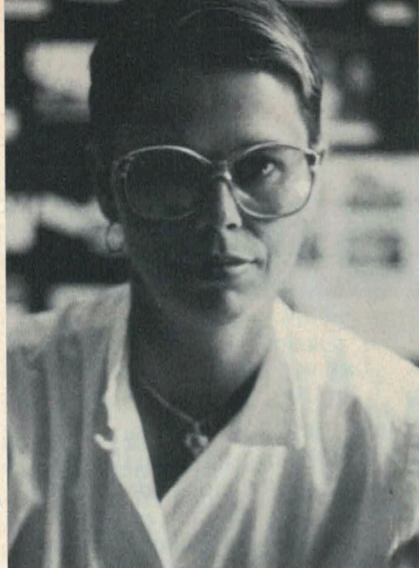
photo: Debra Pilon

## Bookstore bash!

The Ottawa Women's Bookstore celebrated its third anniversary on September 7th with an all-day party and sale at the store and a women's dance in the evening. Behind the cash, enjoying the day are (from left to right) Kim Nash, the store's full-time employee, Lee Fleming, co-owner and Peggy Harris, co-owner. With about 6,000 titles in stock, the bookstore is a popular intellectual oasis for Ottawa women. Community events are advertised and art exhibits also attract women to the bookstore.



photo: Stephen Leary



SUE HARRIS

## A story worth telling

### Betsy Warland

Thirty-three-year-old Sue Harris was elected to the Vancouver Parks Board in the spring of 1984. What makes her election particularly unusual is that she was the first openly gay person to become an elected city official in Canada. Her years of community work through D.E.R.A. (Downtown Eastside Residents' Association), the B.C. Coalition of the Disabled, L.I.L. (Lesbian Information Line) along with her studies in social work, teaching in C.U.S.O. and E.S.L., and involvement with the B.C. Solidarity Coalition all prepared her for taking the step to run for the Board. The support and prompting of sister Board member Libby Davies was also important. Throughout the campaign she received considerable support from the people she had worked with over the years. The campaign itself was "great . . . I'd love to be in a campaign all the time, it's so exciting! The unity is amazing and the issues become so clear."

During the time Sue Harris sought the nomination, she did have to assure some of her fellow and sister C.O.P.E. (Committee of Progressive Electors) slate members that she would not be "waving the banner" for gay people. Now her lesbianism is seldom referred to, yet she is quick to remark that "I fight social injustice and I think that's where I come from because I'm lesbian, right? I don't forget that. It's really deep."

Being a woman in this political arena can also make her feel unusual sometimes. "In some instances, I'm the only woman present at meetings I

go to and I'm short too . . . I sit there with my feet swinging because they don't reach the floor and think my god, I'm the only woman here . . . but I just pipe up and say what I'd normally say." She's proud that C.O.P.E. had more women running for office than any other group. Though there was considerable focus on women's issues, she maintains that there needs to be a lot more. "We'll only become more aware of women's issues and policies when more women become involved."

She acknowledges the hesitancy in many women to become involved in "mainstream" politics. Feminists particularly doubt whether "it's worth it, the effort, it's slow, it's plodding along and there is sexism and homophobia everywhere, but for me that's the choice (mainstream or women's movement politics) — I can't do both!" Sue's typical work week is filled with three or four meetings in the evenings plus a packed daytime schedule as well as frequent week-end commitments. Despite this she still finds time to write a regular column for Vancouver's gay paper *Angles* and volunteers some time for feminist issues and events.

"It's been quite a strain on my personal life . . . I'm out a lot and probably because I'm in so many intense meetings, my need for intimate company and support is more demanding now." Her relationship to the lesbian and women's communities has gone through adjustments too. "I feel vulnerable now because a lot of women know who I am and what I do but I don't know anything about them; it's really a strange feeling. I'm not sure who they're relating to . . ."

Her most pressing concerns as a Park Board member are: freezing the fees for the use of city recreational facilities (increased fees affect women and children most), accessibility for disabled people, and commercialisation of the parks. She is resolutely against commercialisation because privatisation is not working, and commercialisation threatens to take over too much green space. "It's going to be a constant effort to keep our parks green and not commercialised." It's not just going to happen." Vancouver is a city with parks that are still relatively safe. People regularly spend time in city parks. "Everyone I

know has a special park they go to." Sue is also involved in the movement to establish a much needed waterfront park in the east end of the city.

When asked what her sense of the general attitude toward gay people is in Canada she replies, "I think it's a lot more tolerant . . . it is not acceptance but it's . . . 'oh, I guess they're here to stay.' Generally, a lot of families now have someone they know (who is gay) that's a relative or a friend of a friend." Visibility. Presence. Parks seem a metaphor for our society and the state of our collective well-being. If we are to feel comfortable as women, children and gay people in our communal green space, we need people like Sue Harris.

Has the Canadian feminist and gay press written about Sue since she was elected? "Not much, not that I know of, just *Angles* and *Body Politic*." Some of the stories we need to be telling the most we overlook. ▽

## Goodyear goes for it!

When Henry Ford invented the Model "T", a stereotype was developed along with the horseless carriage — women and cars don't mix.

Goodyear is helping to eliminate this stereotype, by launching a program of national Car Care Clinics for women. The program kicked off in Toronto in last January and has since begun in other Canadian cities.

"The Car Care Clinics will not make students a professional in one night," says Nancy Logan, public relations co-ordinator for the program. "But what we hope to teach the women are the basic functions of their car; how to ensure fair treatment in mechanical service; safety tips and simple maintenance tasks that could prevent costly repairs in the future." ▽





# Women fuming over tobacco company book

Debra Pilon

Now that sponsorship of athletic events by cigarette companies is as unpopular as apartheid in South Africa, Benson and Hedges (Canada) has unleashed its advertising hounds onto a new playing field with plans to produce a slick book called *Women and Politics in Canada*.

The book will be an anthology (biographies and photos) of women politicians at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. In June, the cigarette giant wrote to women Members of Parliament asking for their co-operation in filling out a questionnaire that would guarantee their inclusion in the book.

Benson and Hedges claims "only a handful" of women politicians have protested the idea. In fact, Andrée McNamara, co-ordinator of corporate communications at Benson and Hedges in Montreal says three times as many women have written with comments like, "We're happy you're doing this." But what they lack in numbers the dissenters more than make up for in vociferous condemnation of the project.

"The tobacco industry is a death industry and this gimmick is insidious and deplorable," said Lynn McDonald, NDP M.P. for Broadview-Greenwood in a press release. A longtime foe of the tobacco industry, McDonald persuaded sister colleagues in the NDP, Pauline Jewett and Margaret Mitchell, to also refuse to participate in the project.

Senator Lorna Marsden (Liberal) is another Parliamentarian opposed to the project. "I believe that smoking kills you," she says. "And my friends who work in the health care field tell me that lung cancer and smoking-related cancers will overtake breast cancer as the biggest killer of Canadian women this year." Recent statistics also show how young women are taking up smoking at a much higher rate than ever and are outstripping young men in acquiring the habit. "The implication (of appearing in the book) is that you become a role model for them (Benson and Hedges) to use," says Marsden.

Conservative M.P.s who were solicited by Benson and Hedges gave "a very encouraging response" to the



book, says Andrée McNamara. Flora MacDonald, for example, approves of the project which is now 95 per cent complete. Benson and Hedges expects to deliver about 1,000 copies of the book to university administrators, women's groups and government department heads, probably within six months to a year. Not at liberty to

disclose how much money the company is spending on the project, she would only say it will be a "fair amount. . . it's not going to be stapled together or bound up with string."

Benson and Hedges is stressing that the book is an example of how cigarette companies want to be good corporate citizens. The intention is not to boost sales of cigarettes. "Our involvement will be subtle. . . there's not going to be a picture of a cigarette package on the cover (of the book)," says McNamara.

Senator Marsden admits the idea of producing such a book is a good one. "If it weren't a tobacco company doing this I really wouldn't mind," she says.

If you mind and want to make your views known before the book is published, write to women politicians to let them know how you feel and write to David Dangoor, president of Benson and Hedges (Canada), 2800, 600 de la Gaucheterie ouest, Montreal, Quebec H3B 4M1. ▽

## Vancouver lesbian centre opens

Marrianne van Loon

(VANCOUVER)—876 Commercial Drive is the home of Canada's only operating lesbian centre, the Vancouver Lesbian Connection (VLC). The centre opened September 5th, with two celebrations: one during the day which was open to men as well as women, and an evening party for women.

VLC collective member Brenda Gold said there was a lot of support from gay men and gay church groups during the afternoon opening. As well, several politicians sent telegrams of support.

Two hundred and fifty women attended the evening celebration, which featured entertainment by local women, a cake and a short introduction to the centre. Gold said the idea of a lesbian space originated a year and a half ago among several women talking at a bar. These women formed VLC, and began working towards a final goal of a building for lesbians,

which would house a dance hall, health and support services, as well as businesses and private enterprises.

As an interim step, VLC has opened a smaller centre, to gain new members and visibility in the community.

"After one and a half years of fund raising dances we felt we had to test it out," said Gold.

Already VLC has been working with other groups to build a lesbian coalition. Lesbians Autonomous, the Lesbian and Feminist Mothers Political Action Group, and Stepping Out of Line are all participating. And the Lesbian Information Line is donating a phone line, while the Gay Community Centre is creating a branch of the gay and lesbian library at the VLC centre. VLC also plans to hold coming out groups and workshops on public speaking. "Our focus is visibility, action and lesbian support," explained Gold. ▽



## Lost in the shuffle: Women and the Ontario government

Pat Daley ■

When Ontario's legislature resumed sitting this fall, many Ontario women found themselves wondering if the Conservative party's loss of their 42-year grip on the province's government was really worth cheering about.

While David Peterson's minority Liberal government started its term of office with the welcome announcement of its intention to introduce equal pay for work of equal value, it has not strayed far from Tory policy on reproductive rights and social assistance for single mothers. Wendy Joyce, special assistant to Ian Scott, minister responsible for women's issues, lists her boss priorities as equal pay legislation, changing the Ontario Human Rights Code to eliminate an exemption for single-sex sports teams (i.e., boys-only minor hockey), and the establishment of workplace childcare at Queen's Park, the site of the legislative buildings.

Certainly an equal pay law will have the largest impact on Ontario women, but there is already concern among women's and labour groups that the impact will be limited. "The problem we're confronting," says Laurel Ritchie of the Equal Pay Coalition, "is that they are, like other politicians before them, asking us to trust them. We have a lot of problems with the notion that women are supposed to trust a political party that has not put its plans in writing yet."

In the last Ontario provincial election, the Liberals were able to form a government with the support of the New Democratic Party, which with 25 seats holds the balance of power in the 125-seat legislature. The two parties co-operated to bring down the Conservatives after signing an historic accord covering several legislative initiatives and including a contentious agreement by the NDP not to move non-confidence in the government for two years.

On the equal pay for work of equal value issue, the NDP says it supports legislation extended to all workers in the province, public and private.

### Equal Pay

Despite 10 years of intensive lobbying by the equal pay coalition, which represents 25 organisations and

despite the New Democratic Party's move to introduce a private member's bill on equal value in 1980 and a similar Liberal initiative in 1983, little has changed for Ontario women. Ontario's Conservative dynasty limited equal pay to situations where women and men perform substantially the same work. When the Liberals formed the government, women looked to that party to make changes, since it had campaigned on its support for equal pay for work of equal value.

The first disappointment came in early July when Premier David Peterson announced that his government would introduce legislation aimed only at the public sector. He said the government would carry out consultations and bring out a green paper in the fall with strategies for regulating the private sector. This, from a man who, in 1983, told the legislature: "We have had enough public discussion on this matter."

"They're playing with fire in splitting up the private and public sectors," says Laurel Ritchie. She points out that introducing equal pay to the public sector only will "feed into the push to privatise government services if the wages of women in that sector are improved with a dramatic gap between them and the private sector." She also sees the attention the Liberals are paying to Manitoba's equal pay law as dangerous for Ontario's government employees.

In Manitoba, the government has said it will put aside an amount equal to one per cent of its payroll for four years, for a total of four per cent to be used to bring women workers' salaries up. "It's a pro-active approach," says Ritchie, "but what happens if the political climate changes?" It is not clear, she says, that there is anything enshrined in the legislation to allow employees to complain if a new political party should form the government and institute cutbacks at the expense of women workers.

But the most serious problem with the Manitoba model remains the exclusion of the private sector. "It's an insufficient model for our needs," Ritchie says. "In Ontario, only one wom-

an in six works in the public sector, with the broadest definition being used." To make matters worse, the Ontario Liberals have defined the public sector as including only the civil service, and not those employed by other public institutions such as school boards.

The decision to hold consultations with private sector employers and with the expanded public sector also worries proponents of equal pay. "We are very concerned that this is going to open up a Pandora's box with respect to employers who will want to debate the thing from scratch again," Ritchie says. "The Liberals are setting the stage for a debate in which they have already taken a position."

### The Choice Issue

Ian Scott, who is also Ontario's new attorney-general, has also been saddled with another major concern for the province's women — the Morgentaler Clinic.

David Peterson has made no bones about his opposition to free-standing abortion clinics, although he does acknowledge that women in Ontario have a problem with access to abortion. During an Ontario Women's Lobby Coalition meeting with M.P.P.s last December, Bill Wrye told coalition members that the Liberals believe the inequity in access is due more to administrative failure than failure of the law.

What CARAL wants is to have the health minister approve the clinic, which would then have to set up a therapeutic abortion committee in accordance with the Criminal Code. But, says Caroline Lindberg, national co-

Laurel Ritchie, of the Equal Pay Coalition in O

photo: Loren Williams





ordinator of CARAL, "Although Peterson recognises the access problem, he seems to have an irrational opposition to clinics."

Other issues of concern to Ontario women include family benefits, day-care services and midwifery. While the government has yet to take specific action in these areas, outside of establishing workplace childcare at Queen's Park, they do have stated policies.

In Ontario, many single mothers receive social assistance in the form of provincially-administered family benefits, rather than municipally-run general welfare. Family benefits provide substantially more money than general welfare and less interference in women's personal lives. The Conservatives, however, had set up a pilot project in several cities to integrate these two programs at the municipal level, introducing the possibility of welfare being maintained through property taxes rather than provincially-generated income taxes.

According to Scott's assistant, Wendy Joyce, the new government intends

to pursue the pilot project, although, she says, "there has been a lot of discussion of how best to do it."

Midwives in Ontario have been trying to have their profession recognised and certified, an issue that came to a head in the summer when a coroner's inquest into the death of a baby born at home recommended the legalisation of midwifery.

However, Wendy Joyce says the government is "still coming to grips with the coroner's report." Still, last December, then-Liberal health critic John Sweeney told the women's lobby that midwifery should be made an option, training standards should be set, and said that a range of locations in which midwives could operate should be fixed.

With regard to day care, Peterson told the Women's Lobby Coalition last December that a Liberal government would provide 10,000 subsidised daycare spaces, review the municipalities' eligibility criteria and lower their contribution to 10 per cent, and ensure fair distribution of spaces throughout the province, with

an emphasis on non-profit services.

In other areas where women have been working actively for change, the government has made some commitment to act. Opening the legislature in early July, Peterson said he will act "with some dispatch" to end extra-billing by Ontario's doctors. In the same speech, he announced that rent controls would be extended to all apartment buildings effective August 1, removing the exemption for units built after 1975 or renting for more than \$750, and that the limit on rent increases would be reduced from six per cent to four per cent. The government is also undertaking a review of the need for the controversial Darlington nuclear power plant.

Overall, the Liberals seem to realise that they were able to form a government partly as a result of women's lobbies and women's votes, but we have yet to see election platforms translated into action. What remains to be seen, especially in the area of equal pay, is whether it's riskier to have it done half-right than not to have it done at all. ♦

## Shelters face uncertain future

(VANCOUVER)—The Women's House Saving Action has occupied Vancouver Transition House and has been offering services to battered women on a volunteer basis, since the provincial government cut funding in June and called for contractors to submit proposals for the services.

In mid-August Minister of Human Resources (MHR) Grace McCarthy announced that the Salvation Army and Act II (a non-profit social service agency) were awarded contracts. McCarthy is a member of the Salvation Army's provincial advisory board but has stated there was no conflict of interest. Until Act II and the Salvation Army programs could become operational in October, the provincial government left battered women with little recourse, and MHR staff referred women to the occupied Transition House. In addition to running the house, the occupiers and supporters have organised four public meetings, a picket at McCarthy's office and meetings at city hall in an effort to ensure adequate services for battered women. As well supporters went to

### Marianne van Loon

City Council where a motion was passed to examine the feasibility of the city sponsoring a house with financial assistance from senior levels of government.

Supporters of Transition House and the House Saving Action are critical of the Salvation Army and Act II programs. They are concerned about the nature of the services, and fear the Salvation Army's religious nature will alienate the women.

Salvation Army Captain Christine McMillan says they have been working with the B.C. Society of Transition Houses and plan to offer short term service allowing a battered woman and her child shelter for two weeks to one month. The Salvation Army will be working with Act II, which will be a second stage facility where women can stay for a maximum of two weeks after they have exhausted their time with the Salvation Army. After this, women will be offered the option of taking part in supportive self-help groups. The Salvation Army and Act

II intend to improve the support groups as the service continues and as they work with repeat clients, says McMillan.

This, charges the House Saving Action, is experimenting with women's lives. Neither contractors have consulted or hired local feminists who have years of experience working with battered women. "The Transition House we have wasn't born out of thin air," says Ellis. "It was carefully developed over 12 years. Now these people, in this government-created crisis, are throwing together a service."

The Salvation Army, however, says that the reason they did not open immediately after being awarded the contract was that they wanted to take the time to ensure the best service they could.

Unconvinced, the House Saving Action has vowed to keep the occupation going indefinitely. "Our occupation continues to be a strong act of defiance," said Ellis. "The women's movement has shown the strength to sustain an ongoing protest."





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I'M SURE BEING DIVORCED IS ALL WE HAVE IN COMMON!

## Feminists speak to the future

Debra Pilon

The idea was to invite young women — aged 15 - 24 — to a conference about themselves and have them think about the way things will be as they move from the patriarchal family into the patriarchal world of higher education or jobs. Called My Future, My Challenge, the two-day conference was held September 27-28 at the University of Ottawa. It was organised by the university's Women's Studies Collective.

Ironically enough, according to Maureen Baker the author of *What Will Tomorrow Bring?* published by the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, it is younger women who are less willing to be sex-stereotyped in terms of potential careers. Baker's study of young Canadian women's aspirations showed that "the farther away they are from making choices, the more willing they are to aim

high." By the time a young woman is 20, Baker told an audience on the opening afternoon of the conference, "she becomes pressured by other people about what is appropriate . . . and she's often pressured to do what's easiest."

An invisible thread running through the conference was an uneasiness with the word "feminism", despite the fact that the older, established feminists who spoke at the conference were well-received. One young woman told a seminar she didn't like "extreme feminists who want to be like a man . . . I want to maintain my femininity." Another participant responded that a reason feminism is considered by many young women to be a "dirty word" is because "males have made it known they don't like feminists." Certainly, the myth of the humourless feminist must have been dispelled at the conference. Most of the older feminists used colourful anecdotes to spice up their message and the younger women were caught in the high-spirited atmosphere. Coming across as maternalistic to the audience was a danger most speakers managed to avoid, even though a lot of sentences began with "When I was your age . . ." or "I remember when . . ."

To be fair to the older women, what else was there to do? "There's nothing

in the world that I know that I wouldn't be willing to share with you," said Greta Nemiroff of Montreal during a keynote address the first night of the conference. "You're not stealing from us (older feminists), you're taking what is rightfully yours."

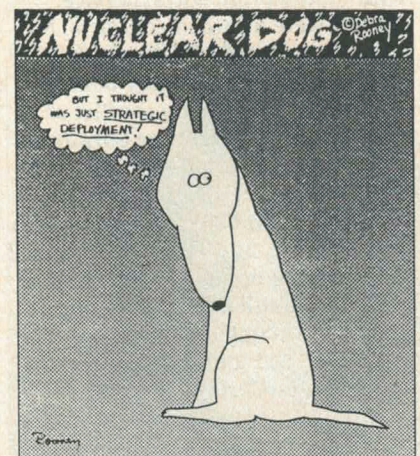
Nemiroff was free with her advice. "Don't let other people define the terms of your struggle because that's giving up," she said. "Don't waste your time trying to define yourself to those who are part of your oppression . . . and learn to get support from other women who will validate your experience."

Most workshops attracted about 30-35 women. With Diane Huberman, a professor of philosophy and feminist counsellor in Ottawa, the topic was sexuality. "I'm rather outspoken and plain spoken," she warned at the beginning. "I hope no one will feel nervous."

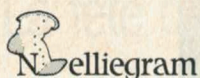
Her message was blunt. "If you don't feel right unless you remove every stray hair on your body, if you don't feel right going out without make-up, what does that say about who you are and who you're pleasing?" The discussion soon touched on other topics with questions and comments about birth control, abortion, lesbianism and the medical profession's attitudes toward women.

By the end of Saturday's workshops, the atmosphere was charged with excitement. Organisers were pleased with the turn-out and participants seemed energised as a result of hearing the speakers and talking with other young women.

Stimulating and well-organised, My Future, My Challenge succeeded in nourishing a large group of budding feminists.







**AN ARAB WOMAN'S BRIDGE** — An Egyptian feminist now living in New York has just published her memoirs, titled *A Bridge Through Time*, in which she describes how a religious backlash put her film theatre directing career on hold.

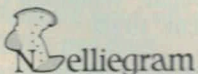
Laila Said was Cairo's foremost female director until 1979, when she travelled to Iran with a women's delegation hoping to protest religious dress codes before the Ayatollah Khomeini. Said refused to cover herself before meeting with the Ayatollah, telling her western friends, "If you wear a chador to see Khomeini, it becomes a fancy-dress costume for you. You can take it off when the party is over. But for Arab women, it is the condition of segregation."

As a result, when she returned to Cairo after being denied a visit with Khomeini, she discovered some people demanding her public execution for her actions. She promptly lost her job with the Egyptian Institute for Theatre, and government officials closed her own theatre "for her own good."

HER SAY

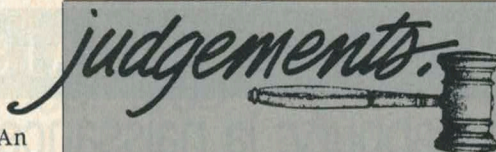


**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATISTICS** — Region IV Council on Domestic Violence in the U.S. reports the nation's 700 shelters provided safety to more than 91,000 women and 131,000 children and were unable to provide to 264,000 more. There are 3,000 animal shelters but only 700 shelters for battered women.



**STOCKS IN SEX FOR SALE** — Taking stock in prostitution may become the newest twist on the world's oldest profession, if the proposed sale of Nevada's Mustang Ranch is completed.

The firm Strong Point Inc. has made an \$18 million bid to buy the famous Nevada ranch. The bid will give investors 3.2 million shares, making it



Despite the new equality section of the Canadian Charter of Rights, the Nova Scotia tourist attraction, the Bluenose, will not be accepting female crew members. Although thousands of dollars were spent to refit the ship for mixed crews, the captain, supported by the tourism minister, has said he does not want female crew members.

\* \* \*

A California woman was recently convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to 15 years to life in prison after pleading she stabbed her husband in self-defence after 49 years of battering. One juror said they decided Frances Caccavale, 70, was not a battered wife because "except for her relatives, there was no corroborating evidence that she was battered." The case was reputedly a test of the "Battered Wife Syndrome" and was only the second time a Los Angeles judge has permitted even general expert testimony of the syndrome. However, the conviction doesn't reject the syndrome said attorneys and the jury.

\* \* \*

The A.H. Robins Company, makers of the Dalkon Shield Intrauterine Device, filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11 of Federal Bankruptcy Statutes despite the fact they continue to be solvent. The filing halts all pending and future Dalkon Shield lawsuits. About 5,100 cases and claims are pending.

HER SAY

\* \* \*

the first time stock in prostitution has been sold over the counter.

The sale appears to be a bonanza for everyone. Several of the prostitutes, who work as independent contractors, pay \$10 a day for lodging and split the profits with the ranch. They're considering putting all their assets in Mustang Ranch stock. And the chief of Strong Point, John Davis,

A wife and mother of two is worth about 420 Belgium francs a day, or about \$10 U.S. That was the ruling from the court of appeal when it awarded compensation to a husband who lost his wife in a road accident. The Belgian Homebound Parents' Association, while pleased that the court put some financial value on a housewife's work, pointed out that insurance companies pay the equivalent of \$11 a day for compensation when a car is off the road.

\* \* \*

New Zealand M.P. Norman Jones, attacking a proposed Homosexual Law Reform Bill, said that he did not condone rape or incest, but at least the acts were between members of the opposite sex.

Broadsheet



said the sale will help the public see prostitution as "just a business." But Priscilla Alexander, a member of the prostitutes rights group Coyote, isn't so enthusiastic. Alexander said that it "Sounds great if women buy all the stock and own the place." But otherwise, she said, "Anyone who buys stock becomes a pimp."

HER SAY



## RUBRIQUE FRANÇAISE

# Marie-Anne Gaboury: la naissance d'une nation Canadienne-Française au Manitoba

Mercredi, le 14 août dernier avait lieu le dévoilement de la plaque commémorant Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière et de Marie-Anne Gaboury; Qui est cette femme sinon la première femme blanche des prairies de l'ouest! A la maison Riel de St-Vital le souvenir de cette pionnière nous rappellera la source de la famille de Louis Riel, président du gouvernement provisoire du Manitoba, dont le centenaire cette année de ce chef métis nous oblige à honorer son aieule.

Marie-Anne Gaboury, la première femme blanche à s'établir dans l'Ouest, épousa un coureur de bois canadien-français, Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière, et, de leur sixième enfant Julie Ladimodière et de son union avec Louis Riel, leur premier-né s'appella Louis Riel.

Rappelons que c'est à la fin du régime français dans l'ouest vers 1757-1760 que l'on peut situer les origines de la nation métisse. Marie-Anne Gaboury naquit à Masquinongé, diocèse de Trois-Rivières en 1782 du mariage de Charles Gaboury et de Marie-Ange Tession. A quatorze ans, elle quitte sa famille comme ménagère une douzaine d'années au presbytère de sa paroisse de l'abbé Vinet. C'est à l'hiver de 1806 qu'elle rencontra Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière, visitant sa famille native de Maskinongé aussi. Au printemps de la même année, elle se maria en avril et le départ pour la colonie de la Rivière Rouge se réalisa la première semaine du juin: à la découverte des femmes autochtones!

C'est donc une première dans l'histoire du Canada: ce n'est pas avant 1806 qu'une femme accompagna une expédition de canot, portages, avec ses compagnons de long voyage dans la Compagnie Nord-Ouest. Imaginez ses longues heures en canot, assise à l'arrière, sans changer de positions durant ce voyage. Une carte retrace le trajet du couple, les premiers blancs à fonder un foyer et leurs descendants.

Quatre-cents vingt miles de long du Lac Supérieur jusqu'à Fort William pour un changement de canot plus petit jus-

NICOLE MORIN



## TABLEAU GENEALOGIQUE:

"Oublier ses ancêtres, c'est être un ruisseau sans source, un arbre sans racines" Proverbe chinois

Ascendance paternelle • Ascendance maternelle

## LOUIS RIEL

22 oct. 1844 - pendu  
le 16 nov. 1855

26 juil. 1820 - 22 mai 1906

Louis Riel (père)  
7 juin 1817 -  
21 janv. 1864

Julie Lagimodière  
mariage le 21 janv.  
1844  
6<sup>ème</sup> enfant

6 nov. 1780 - 14 déc. 1875

Mariage en 1798 de  
Jean-Baptiste Riel  
et  
Marguerite Boucher

Mariage 21 avril 1806  
Jean-Baptiste  
Lagimodière et  
Marie-Anne Gaboury

qu'à Pembina. Puis en 1811, vers la Rivière Rouge pour le Fort des Prairies (Edmonton). C'est en 1807, à la fête des Rois qu'elle accoucha de Reine Lagimodière le premier enfant à naître dans l'ouest, la descendance franco-manitobaine! Fin août 1811, à Winnipeg. Printemps 1812 à Pembina.

De 1812-15, elle resta seule à élever ses enfants sans aucun voisin ou ami; son mari partant pour la saison de la chasse elle dût même quitter le Fort Douglas suite à son absence de onze mois; c'est un chef Cris qui la protégea des hommes de la Baie d'Hudson reprenant le Fort. Elle vécut les rivalités des Compagnies, la solitude, l'ennui et les départs fréquents de son époux.

Après avoir traversé en canot tout son parcours, d'avoir saisi le vent, s'adapter aux différentes températures des étés chauds, des froids hivers, Marie-Anne Gaboury plus que courageuse éleva sa famille d'un fort à l'autre, d'une tente après sa pauvre chaumière.

Je remercie la Société historique de St-Boniface pour m'avoir dirigé à travers mes recherches.

*Petite histoire du Voyageur*, d'Antoine Champagne, Société historique de St-Boniface, 1971. Voyage des Lagimodière 1815-1816.

*La première canadienne au Nord-Ouest ou biographie de Marie-Anne Gaboury*, l'Abbé G. Dugas, Winnipeg Canadian Publishers Ltd. 1945

Une suggestion pour toutes celles intéressées à retracer nos pionnières dans l'histoire:

Pour enfants: *RUBABOO*, par Dorine Thomas, elle écrit et illustre les femmes Métis de 1812-1870, Pemmican Publications.

*Bases économiques des Métis au 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle*, par Nicole St-Onge, page 32 Centre d'études franco-canadiennes de l'Ouest. ▽



# La fête des femmes à Winnipeg, 31 août 1985

*The following article speaks of "La Fête des Femmes" which took place on the Saturday afternoon of The Canadian Women Music & Cultural Festival.*

*In addition, we have a survey in which we would like your ideas on violence against women; we would like also to thank all the women who participated in the "Take Back the Night" march.*

*In another issue we will be presenting you a review on Wondeur Brass's Music.*

Des compagnes anglophones m'ont fait sourire quand elles m'ont déclaré leurs coups de foudre pour Lucie "Blue" Tremblay! C'est sûrement à sa façon de siffler lors de ses chansons, de nous livrer d'elle-même son message de solidarité, comme un torrent nous envoie l'image de la force et de la continuité.

Dans une atmosphère de confiance heureuse (grand merci à Pierrette Boily de les avoir invité toutes: Christine Bernard, Wondeur Brass du Québec) Lucie nous a enchanté au Festival des femmes

canadiennes en cette célébration française. De la voix des femmes en prison, de mots doux comme son bouquet de balounes.

Christine Bernard, je l'ai adoré! De Québec, elle a apporté pour tout bagage son humour et sa vision de la vie particulière de la conteuse magnifique ainsi inventive: "Quand ma mère était sorcière on la brûlait très souvent; quand nous ferons la contrebande; les petites vieilles et Je ferai des bulles"... Des chansons dans nos têtes enregistrées, la mainmise de la révolution sur l'air de la découverte de nos secrets dévoilés.

Suzanne Campagne et sa gang ont aussi embarquées dans la Fête des Femmes par ce samedi ensoleillé; combien de fois est-il apparu cet été?

Une femme à la voix riche, pleine d'émotions de la chanson de la rue Provencher, et accompagnée d'une façon sans pareille. J'aime sa façon d'entrer en scène, de se donner à ses mots, à ses phrases comme à l'aventure, puissante, enthousiaste. ▽

## Petit conte a la traverse

### Deuxième épisode

Dimanche, 11 heures a.m., de Arnprior je me rappelle de la douleur au bras gauche, tendu, incapable de m'en débarrasser pendant deux jours, ressentant le stress j'essayai de faire circuler librement l'énergie de ma main gauche tenant le volant, à la suite des événements. Des kilomètres à kilométrage nous avons décidé d'un camping en pleine nature de Spanish; temps frais, route collineuse, conduire, tant de distance pour arriver en trois jours et demi, pas plus!

Des petits suisses mangèrent avec nous dans une halte à l'embouchure du lac Nipissing. Les hommes travaillant comme pompistes dans tous les garages me regardaient curieusement, je crois qu'ils saisirent l'inattendu de notre périple peu ordinaire, tant qu'à voyager ne les étonnons plus de se donner la satisfaction de prendre le large, suivre les errances de ces autres femmes qui quittèrent le Québec pour s'installer là-bas.

Ça pue à Sudbury: je ferme la fenêtre

sur notre pauvre humanité d'exploiter l'environnement de cette façon-là. Cette première journée à me concentrer sur la route, notre hâte de souper en plein air, courir, marcher autrement qu'assises, trop collées, de se retrouver ailleurs m'emballait. Nous mangions des fruits, du pop-corn, changeant les filles de place à chaque heure. Tout au long de ce paysage, elles dessinaient, écoutaient des cassettes dans un chemin jamais pris avant, nous diriger à quatre avec l'aide de la carte, suivre notre but d'un étape à l'autre. Rendues enfin à s'installer pour la nuit, au souper, quelques mouettes aussi gourmandes que nous de pain et des biscuits, nous encerclaient, trois musiciens nous offraient au loin leurs musiques de chansons folk, presque personnes, nous habitions cet endroit par notre aventure de jeunesse, dans la petite tente, réchauffées les unes contre les autres à l'étendue de nos corps ensemble, respirer l'odeur du feu à la rosée. ▽

## Eclatons le silence: parlons-nous

D'après l'étude Wolfe 1982, sur 106.00 Américaines, 1 femme sur 4 a été violée et brutalisée sexuellement, 46% par des amis, 22% par un homme avec un lien de parenté, 7% des maris, 73% avaient été contraintes à subir des rapports sexuels au moins une fois. L'étude Rush 1980 démontre que 80% du nombre total des incidents ne sont pas déclarés. . .

Ecrivez vos réflexions pour la protection de nos enfants et la nôtre; que pensons-nous vraiment de ce pouvoir à remettre en question: les rapports d'autorité sont-ils nécessaires à la vie communautaire?

En collaboration avec Louise Delisle.

## Poèmes gaéliques

Etre là, à voir les enfants grandir  
autour de moi,  
De l'énergie, du temps entre les lunes,  
les lectures.  
Jeunes âges de filles différentes,  
Un message de nos amours à  
connecter au fil et à mesure.  
Des instants à écrire nos histoires,  
Toutes mes pensées comme à une  
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# Marion Dewar's Vision: Equality, Peace and Justice

In 1980, four women from Interval House, a refuge for battered women, camped on the front lawn of Ottawa's City Hall to publicise their dissatisfaction with municipal housing policies. They remember the Mayor of Ottawa, Marion Dewar, arranging a meeting for them with housing officials in her office.

Another group of women remembers using that same office as an interim day-care centre when they came from across the country in February 1981 to make sure equality rights were enshrined in the Constitution. It was a heady time: Doris Anderson had just resigned as president of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women amid charges that Liberal Cabinet Minister Lloyd Axworthy had tried to talk the Advisory Council out of holding a long-awaited women's conference on the Constitution. Marion Dewar remembers that week when women's history was made as a highlight of her term as Mayor. "We had, right on the floor of this very office, babies that were sleeping and mothers that were breast-feeding," she recalls. As one of the "hosts" for the ad hoc women's constitutional conference hastily convened by outraged women, Marion opened City Hall's doors to women. "I think it was important . . . that I was in a position to say to the women of Canada: Come to your national capital where you will be welcome. And Flora MacDonald was able to do the same thing with the House of Commons and a lot of other women did it, too."

It's been empowering to live in a city with Marion Dewar as the head of state, so to speak. It's heartening to know that although she's Mayor, she likes people to call her by her first name. On her nights off she and her husband Ken frequent the city's alternative/leftist play-

DEBRA PILON

***Women in Ottawa are used to Marion Dewar and her humane style of politics. When she moved out of the spacious Mayor's office on the second floor of City Hall to become President of the NDP this fall, she walked onto a larger stage, reaching out to the whole country with her vision of a fairer Canadian society — a society where there's room for women, for the disadvantaged, for newcomers to Canada and for indigenous peoples. Debra Pilon interviewed Marion in her office during her last month as mayor.***

house, The Great Canadian Theatre Company. And no one was surprised, two summers ago, to learn that Marion had boogied for peace in her backyard as part of her son's anti-nuclear video.

Born Marion Bell in Montreal 57 years ago, Marion's family moved from her birthplace to the small town of Buckingham, Quebec (28 kilometres from Ottawa/Hull) when she was four. Her first job after high school was as a teller at the Bank of Nova Scotia in Buckingham. When she decided to attend Queen's University in Kingston, her preferred areas of study were physics and mathematics, but her father dissuaded her from following those inclinations. Instead, she entered the nursing program at Queens. It was as a nurse a few years later that she met an unusual and attractive patient, 26-year-old Ken Dewar. When he recovered from his illness they married and soon had their first child. "After having one, I wanted ten (children)," she told a reporter for *Le Droit*, Ottawa's French daily newspaper many years later when she had won the Mayoralty.

At age 39, with four kids of her own and a long tradition of being a foster-mother to many others, Marion began a new life as a university student. In the late 60s while working as a public health nurse in Ottawa, she threw herself into her first political campaigns. By 1971, Marion had been elected to Ottawa City Council and by 1974 she was deputy Mayor. Four years later, at the age of 50, she won the mayoralty with a healthy plurality that grew substantially during the last seven years.

Although Marion has been unbeatable at the polls, Ottawa City politics took on a certain excitement when Pat Nicol, a rambunctious former city coun-



cillor, challenged the Mayor's seat twice, in 1978 and again in 1980. Quoted in *The Ottawa Citizen* after her last unsuccessful bid, Nicol tells the bittersweet tale of Ottawa's love affair with Marion Dewar: "My own mother would say, 'Pat, don't do it, I'd rather vote for Marion.'"

When Marion announced this spring that she would not seek re-election in the job that currently pays her \$63,000 a year, she told the media: "I might be getting too comfortable in the job. And I'd like to spend more time with my family."

In June, at the New Democratic Party's national convention, she was acclaimed president of the Party. The job is a non-paying one to which she hopes to devote the next two years.

### Her political success

Marion Dewar is a socialist and a feminist. She's also an idealist and more than a bit of a philosopher.

"I feel very strongly that we're living in a country, in a world, that is endowed with a lot of resources as well as a great amount of wealth and that we as a free people have a lot of privileges," she says. "As I live on this earth, I hope I'll be able to pass through it working for justice for everyone. And I see feminism as just part and parcel of that and, certainly for me, it's not possible to be a true feminist without being a socialist. The two are just automatically on the same wavelength."

With courage to match her idealistic convictions, Marion Dewar has championed a lot of causes during the last seven years.

Just five months after becoming Mayor, in April 1979, she publicly disagreed with the Catholic Archbishop of Ottawa, Archbishop Plourde, who had called on Catholics to boycott the Metres for Millions walkathon because some of its proceeds were going to Planned Parenthood. "Personally, I disagree with what he's doing," said Marion, a devout Catholic who attends mass almost every day. "We (Catholics) can't go around imposing policies on other people," she told *The Ottawa Citizen*.

Barely two months later, the Mayor was under fire for agreeing to speak at the opening ceremonies of a five-day homosexual rights conference held in the city.

It was during that first year as Mayor that Marion also launched herself onto the national scene, diving into what was to become one of her most fervent causes — the right of minority cultural groups to a place in Canada's sun. It was

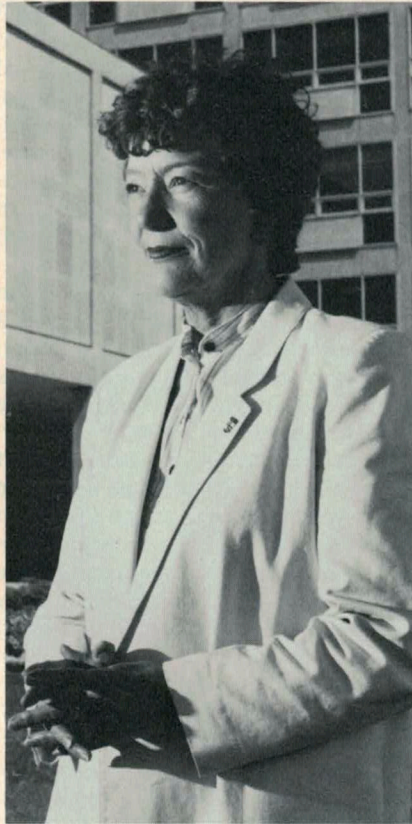


photo: Elaine Deschenes

the time when thousands of Vietnamese were fleeing their homeland and dying in makeshift boats while doing so. The Canadian government rose to the occasion by announcing it would accept 8,000 Vietnamese refugees. Incensed by that paltry gesture, Marion began writing letters of protest to government ministers. At the same time she mobilised Ottawa City Council to accept 4,000 people and challenged other municipal leaders across the country to match Ottawa's commitment. Mayor Ralph Kline of Calgary was the first to respond, agreeing to accept another 4,000 refugees. Within 21 days, the federal Liberals, overwhelmed by the response from municipalities everywhere, raised the refugee quota to 50,000. "That (chain of events) said to me that communities can make a difference and that people can make a difference," says Marion. "It wasn't me. It was Canadians saying we don't want people to die. We want to open our doors."

But not all Canadians agreed with Marion's initiatives. "There was a backlash," she recalls. "I got hate letters . . . tons of them."

Marion has taken other unpopular stands, as well. As the only mayor of a major Canadian city to oppose tougher penalties for prostitution, she has consistently lobbied federal justice minis-

ters to decriminalise prostitution. She appeared before the Fraser Commission on Pornography And Prostitution in 1984 and was wholeheartedly supportive of its recommendations for decriminalisation. And during Marion's term in office Ottawa acted quickly to fight pornography. A city by-law to restrict the sale and distribution of pornographic materials was applauded by feminists like Maude Barlow who rallied the Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography during the furor over the *Playboy* channel programmed on Pay-TV. [Ottawa's by-law has since been ruled invalid by the Supreme Court of Ontario.]

As former director of the City of Ottawa's Office of Equal Opportunity for Women, Barlow recalls Marion Dewar being in complete agreement with expansion of that office's mandate into the women's community. She recalls battered women's shelters and local rape crisis centres being included in fundraising activities organised by the City. "It was a bit unorthodox but she was behind me on it and with a lot of issues I think she believes, like with housing for example, that they're really women's issues because women are most affected by them." According to Barlow, Marion's way of looking at things means she fights for "an increased enhancement of not just the rights of women but also the rights of those who don't have power or who don't have money."

On the other hand, the Mayor of Ottawa could not be accused of being a narrowly-focussed idealist. Instead, Barlow says, Marion has gone to great lengths to deal with the concerns of all sectors of the community, including the traditional ones such as business. Barlow is indignant that women in politics are often viewed in stereotypical ways: they are seen as good on "soft" issues but hopeless at coping with "hard" realities like budgets.

"There seems to be this idea floating around that anyone who cares about the issues and looks at things like Marion does couldn't have a grasp of economics," Barlow says. "Certainly, the right wing of (Ottawa City) Council has always said Marion couldn't be a good mayor because she's a socialist, that inside she's a bleeding heart, all sort of soft and runny. Well, look at the small business sector in Ottawa, it's been thriving and growing while Marion has been Mayor, look at the city's balanced budget and at the fact that we're not overly taxed. I think she's a damn good administrator."





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When it comes to issues that extend beyond Ottawa's boundaries — indeed beyond Canada into the international realm — Marion's motto is "Think globally, act locally." And with her initiatives against the nuclear arms race, she has shown it's possible for municipalities to play an important role in educating national governments as well as individuals.

Ottawa was the first Canadian city to debate the question of declaring itself a nuclear weapons free zone in 1981; Marion supported the motion but it was defeated. Ottawa City Council was the first in Canada to agree to hold a referendum on nuclear disarmament as part of the 1982 municipal elections. Marion won even more respect from Operation Dismantle, the organisation which suggested the local referendums, when she went one step further by writing to every other Canadian municipality urging them to do the same. Many agreed. With more than 75 per cent of those participating in the referendums saying "YES" to an end to the arms race, this experiment in grassroots polling helped send a strong message to the Liberal government that Canadians were not in favour of testing Ronald Reagan's cruise missile.

As a woman, Marion is particularly committed to a women's peace movement. She was sought by the makers of *Speaking Our Peace*, a Studio D production of the National Film Board, to appear as one of the prominent women in Canada working for peace. She has accepted a number of invitations to speak to peace groups over the last few years; she attended the Mayors' conference on peace held in Hiroshima, Japan in August in order to help send a strong message to the heads of municipalities to the United Nations; she met with women from around Canada and the world in June at the Women's Alternatives for Negotiating Peace conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Marion's strong points include initiating discussion and helping the problem-solving process along. She has managed to broaden the scope of a mayor's duties, impressing the small business sector on one hand and arts' groups on the other. During her time as Mayor, she committed herself to "open government" and she has lived that commitment by refusing to engage in behind-the-scenes manoeuvring before important council meetings. She has been criticised both for being politically naive and accused of being a fixer by those who don't be-

lieve she doesn't engage in such activities. But she sticks to her principles. "There have been times when an issue has been very important to me and I've known that probably it's important to caucus and to get my friends on side," she says. "But it's been equally important to me that those debates take place in Council where the public is and they can hear it... then, it's honestly an open debate."

### The spiritual connection

Politically and philosophically, Marion is very much a Christian. "The teachings I have from my religion, which come from many other religions, too, and not just from Christianity, are very much about the strength of spirituality, the ability to not only love people but to allow them to have the dignity and the justice and all the things that are so important to an individual. But I don't see how you can be committed to that and not be a socialist," she says.

In her new job as president of the New Democratic Party, she is involving herself, full-time, in the work of building the Party she has always supported and once ran for (unsuccessfully in the 1977 Ontario election). She is determined to put women's issues front and centre in her work as Party president and she is prepared to toil with no remuneration to do so.

Ask her about the possibility that she might succeed Ed Broadbent as the next leader of the NDP and she replies with the evasive ease of a seasoned politician. "At the moment, it's not one of my aspirations," she says, "but I always hesitate to be absolute about things because it's dangerous to do that."

"My real aspiration is that when that time comes and there is a contest for the Party leadership that we have a high-profile, credible female candidate. It's part of why I want to get involved in the organisational structure of the Party because I think the policies (on women's issues) are there and we have to make sure that they're implemented. And I can't think of anything more wonderful than having the first female leader of a major political party to be a New Democrat in Canada."

Maude Barlow is convinced Marion Dewar is the right woman to succeed Ed Broadbent. Having worked with Marion and having watched her closely, especially in the last year, Barlow is convinced Marion has both the spark and the personal stamina she would need to

(Continued on page 32)



# LIVING WITH AGORAPHOBIA

EUNICE BROOKS

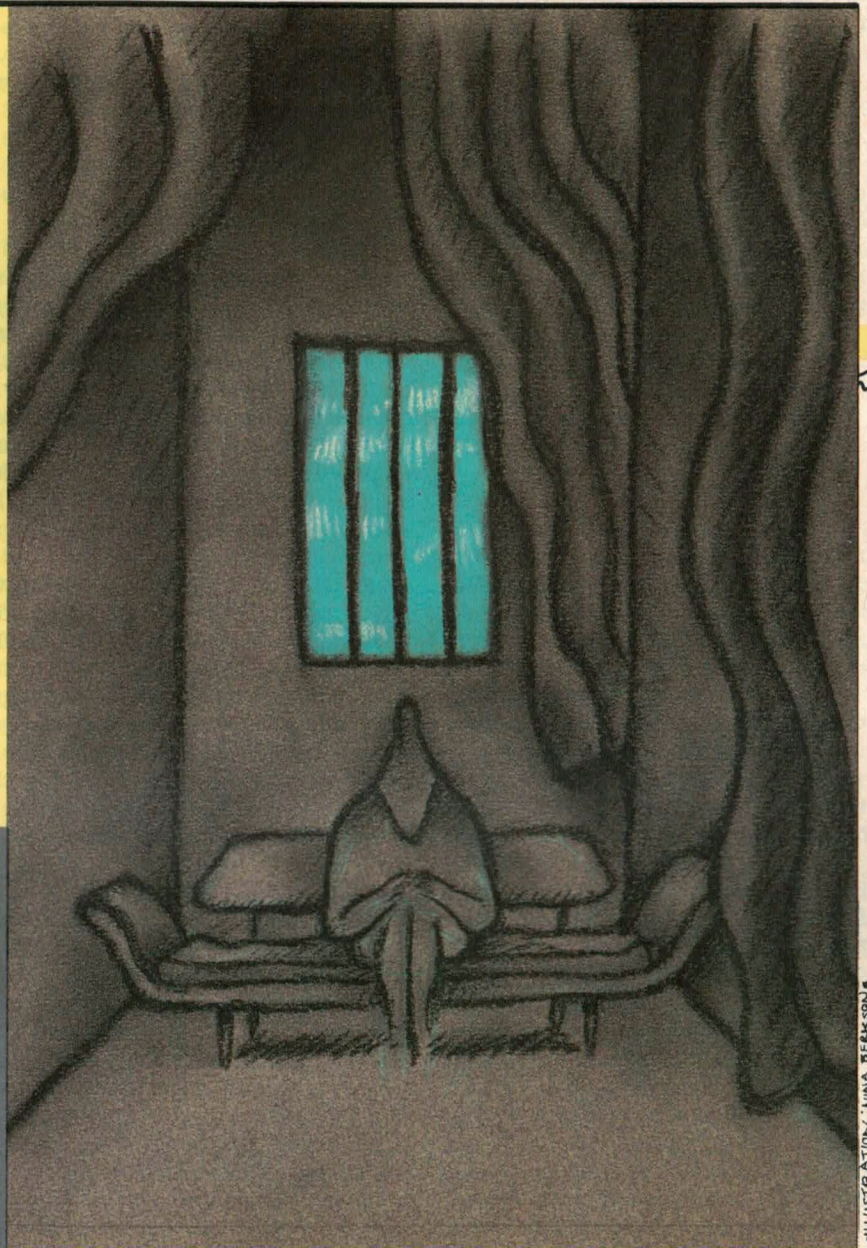


ILLUSTRATION: NINA BERKSON

I'm going to confess two things about myself, which may seem contradictory, until I explain. One, I'm a relatively happy woman. Two, I'm an agoraphobe. This means, among other things, that I have too much adrenaline. I know I'm happy, because most mornings I wake up looking forward to my day's work. I know I'm agoraphobic, because fear of panicking has kept me close to home for six years. When my symptoms first appeared I was only 25, and thought I was unique, now

at 43 I know agoraphobia is common.

Agoraphobia, like many other things, was first noted by the ancient Greeks, the sort of guys who would have choked to see a good woman in the agora, or market. The word phobia comes from the Greek *phobos*, which means fear and flight. In Greek mythology, Phobos was a grandson of Zeus, son of the war god Ares and the love goddess Aphrodite. Phobos was a bastard, it is said. So is my problem. But it could be inherited.



I've read in many places that agoraphobics are predisposed genetically. For sure in my family most of the women were stay-at-homes. One grandmother has suffered 97 years from chronic anxiety. It is true that not everyone who panics becomes an agoraphobe. We're special. We're more imaginative and sensitive to stimuli than average. Also most of us are at war with love. Phobos was well named.

When my grandmother was young, it was an asset for a woman to stay home. The world punished out-going women with rape, robbery, low wages, accusations of child neglect, and other horrible things. But today most women face the menace and survive.

Just now I can't.

Statistics on agoraphobes are hard to pin down. The ones I have in a fat file are contrary, but one pattern is clear. Most of us seeking help are married women who have unresolved interpersonal relationships with family. In a paper presented to a conference on agoraphobia in 1982, in Washington, D.C., Diane L. Chambless of the Psychology Department of the University of Georgia, who has been running a treatment clinic for phobics for more than ten years said, "In complex agoraphobia, fear of being alone is always a factor." I know this is true.

One must draw a line between simple phobias which have a high cure rate with exposure, and complex agoraphobia which follows no logical course. Many sufferers found as I did that the first panic came in a food store. (Sight of food causes glands to spurt insulin into blood, which causes low blood sugar and dizziness.) I was pregnant when it hit, at the back of the food store, near the meats. Nausea. Dizziness. Panic. I had one baby in the heaping shopping cart, and another approaching delivery date in my belly. I ran for the exit, not thinking what the store detective might think of me leaving with the unpaid-for food. He was a gentleman as he helped me into my car.

For the balance of the pregnancy I fled from church, theatres, stores, dinner parties, and then in the delivery room I came up against a panic I couldn't run from. There I suffered exposure to my panic.

Years passed and I felt great. Now and then in heavy traffic, when the kids were squabbling in the back seat, and when I was late getting Gary's supper started I might feel a twinge of panic. We moved from Ontario to British Columbia. We got a boat and went sailing. I faced freak

storms and anchor draggings with more tolerance than I did my abnormal panics. And at long last I found the job of my dreams as a reporter/photographer on a weekly paper.

★ ★ ★

#### Diary Entry: January 1, 1979

I long for amnesia. What was it Wordsworth said — about not being able to bring back the hour of splendor in the grass? He may not have grieved, but I do. As my boys and my job grow, the marriage shrinks. Gary and I have not spoken a civil word to each other in months. He suggests I make a resolution to lose a hundred pounds this year. I make one to lose one hundred-eighty: him.

I dread returning to college now that I have three A grades to live up to. And the boys always fuss on nights when I am out, so they usually go to bed with a spanking or a yelling. David is doing badly in school, but I will not give up and let them put him in a special class. He has to learn to cope with the real world.

★ ★ ★

In the beginning there is stress. Every agoraphobe can tell you that. And there is often guilt. I had it whenever I took time out to do anything not directly related to our family. In 1979, I was unable to express my feelings to anyone. I held myself responsible for making my family happy. No one asked me to, I just took it on.

Like most people experiencing stress, I ran to my doctor. I soon learned there are doctors who haven't read anything but the *TV Guide* since they graduated. My family doctor sent me to a Freudian psychiatrist, who told me I was suffering from sexual repression, and that I was failing to accept my feminine role. He told me, "Quit the job. Quit college. Stay home. Bake bread. Make your man proud of you." Well that seemed like a simple enough thing to do, so I did it for the next five years.

★ ★ ★

#### Diary Entry: May 5, 1979

If it's not pee pressure the minute I leave the house it's the dizziness. I can't remember when I last felt well. But I'm glad I stopped trying to go out. At least I'm sleeping well now, and the diarrhea

has let up. But I think about suicide. The most recent one is a plan to swim out to sea on a falling tide so the boys won't find my body. I worry someone will set the building on fire. What would I do. I really can't go out now.

★ ★ ★

I panicked whenever I tried to leave my apartment alone, so a friend drove me to the doctor and psychiatrist. Under hypnosis we explored my childhood traumas. On D-Day, when I was two, the whole town gathered in Montebello Park. Some boys on the flag pole overburdened it. The pole fell our way. Mom yanked me. Aunt Margaret, who had been holding my other hand, suffered a broken shoulder. When the war ended, our family, along with half of southern Ontario, went to fetch members of the family who returned. I got lost in the stampede. I was four. The first day of school, Mom was too ill to take me. I went alone, but once there I was so scared I forgot my name. I panicked and attached myself to the swing in the school yard. I can still remember them trying to peel me off that swing. Fifteen. I broke curfew and went to a wild party. Two guys started fighting. When I ran, I thought one of them was dead. By the time I learned he survived the impression of death still remained. So I had panics for good reasons when I was young. Now I have them for no reason at all.

I can't even write about agoraphobia without experiencing panic symptoms. Even now I have to stop typing every now and then and practice my relaxation and deep breathing. I love writing. I can really bury myself in creating a character and putting that character in a scene, but I have a list of other things I would love to do too, like visit book stores, flea markets, poetry readings, go skinny dipping, ski, sail, climb mountains. I live with hope, and with good reason. Many books have quoted total remissions that last for years with chronic agoraphobics.

Just this week I was talking with a woman who was housebound for 15 years in my home town. Now she's visiting British Columbia, and from here she plans to go to Bermuda for her grandson's wedding. She is almost symptom free.

It's not just ordinary folk who have agoraphobia. The American poet Emily Dickinson never left her home for 25 years. Queen Victoria went into seclusion after the death of her husband and



stayed in for 13 years. And they say both Winston Churchill and J.R.R. Tolkien were restricted in their movements.

Well, you must have guessed I broke up with that Freudian, but I have to admit I still carried on with my marriage. I got a new doctor, one who makes housecalls. He set me up with a list of books to take out from the university library on phobias, mostly anthologies with research papers. He put me on the way to being my own best doctor.

At the same time I found a psychiatric nurse/social worker who would make housecalls. Lylla, that's her name, is wonderful. I have learned from her about the food-mood connection, about relaxation and self-control, and about holistic medicine. With her I began to think about asserting myself. But there we ran into trouble. I no longer had any idea who my self was. For sure I wasn't a sailor, or student, or reporter. And I admit I was a lousy wife, because I now made my husband do all the errands, like grocery shopping, that I used to do.

When I began to think about who and what I am I lost some most unhealthy relationships, but as I was able to define myself the more I got friends who had things in common with me. At first I expanded my pen pal list to include other poets, and that was very satisfying for me.

**"As we sat I thought I finally knew how a farmer must feel when he realizes he's been plowing with a dead horse."**

I soon learned that the goal of even the best therapist is to get the agoraphobe out into the situation that caused the sit-down strike in the first place. I remembered how I loathed spending Gary's money. Shopping is a chore I never mean to do again, unless it is with money I have earned. I knew it was important for me to go out, but I lacked desire. Honestly. For months I never thought about things outside my own apartment building. I admit I was active there, always with a petition for better maintenance, or something, but I did not want to go out and do what I used to do. The terrors, pains, miseries, regrets,

vexations that preceded my retirement still existed in the same form.

Lylla is the most patient and understanding of therapists. She set me an example always working even when she didn't feel well. She never made negative comments about my progress. She liked me. I wanted to go out to please her.

Those long halls in the apartment building bothered me. Some days they seemed to have unfixed walls. Once I was in the stairwell when all the lights went out. I screamed as I crawled home and never went out for months. Finally, when Gary had been out of work for too long and we were driving each other nuts, shut up there, I ventured out. I knocked on the door across the hall.

The woman who lived there, Rhonda, welcomed me. She listened with interest to my story and showed no signs of shunning me as though I was insane. That first day I never got past talking to her with my door open and hers too. Before long she had loaned me a key to her place, and I was making use of it in the day when she was at work to sun myself. Our own place had northern exposure and for six months at a time sun never entered it. Rhonda's place became part of my safety zone. Rhonda became my friend.

Soon it was the lobby, then outside the door. Step, step, step. I dragged Gary along for support. For me, hanging on to him was a big help. I thought I was making headway, when he took all the wind out of my sails. He said the walks that thrilled me so were boring to him. Gary had never bought the endocrine theory. He said many a time, "The only reason you don't go out is you're ashamed of your fat." He was always on about my fat. I got to hate his lectures and theories. They pulled me down. It was a war. Lylla 'rying to uplift me, and Gary trying to keep me low. Or that's how I saw it, and still do. In some ways it must be useful to have a wife chained to the house. The meals were never late at our house when I was housebound.

I wasn't happy with David or Joe at that time either. They were just discovering fast cars, booze, drugs, and the necessity of birth control. They moved in and out of the apartment so often it seemed like we lived in one of those Swiss weather indicators. The manager, the one I used to take my petitions to in times past, got his revenge. He was ever at our door complaining about my boys. And the worse part was they were growing to hate sharing a room. I decided if we didn't move, I might lose them.

Around that time I found an ad in

*Kinesis*, a women's newspaper, that called for an artsy woman to share a big house in the university district with five others: My room — I began to think of it as my room as soon as I read the ad — had a skylight. I fantasised my books in it, and my stereo. I fantasised me living alone, writing my stories and selling them to support myself. Lylla had brought me to the point where I was gaining self-confidence again. But it wasn't to be. I have my priorities, my family.

We began to talk with real estate people.

★ ★ ★

#### Diary Entry: May 1, 1984

We have to move. Somehow I must overcome my terror and do it. I have asked Dr. Kothari to put me on a new drug called Xanax that is said to mask panic symptoms, even though it won't cure the phobia. Hope.

On the news tonight a woman from Seattle who had been housebound for 30 years came out with drugs and the help of a female therapist who took her out daily until the fear of fear had died away.

I've been dead here for eight years. I mean to reincarnate in a home with a fireplace and a yard. Apartments aren't normal. This one has warped me. I got a move.

★ ★ ★

In my reading on agoraphobia I had come to reject all the instant cures offered by various groups. Hypnosis wasn't very useful for me. I had to believe that moving would change me. I reasoned that if I left my safe zone I would be free. For years I had been eating a well balanced diet. I had tried mega vitamins on the theory that it can't hurt. I had tried and tried my daily walk, but I never overcame that fear. I never relaxed. By the time we moved I had not been in a car for three years. I hadn't seen a house in as long, as the building we lived in was surrounded by other apartment buildings and a mall. I found that I could fantasise about going into the mall, and control my panic, with practise. That was one of the methods of beginning therapy I read in my research.

Maybe you're wondering just how I occupied my hours and thoughts all those years in the apartment, when I wasn't

*continued on pg. 33.*



# GIFT GUIDE



Herstory 1986 continues a twelve year tradition of celebrating Canadian women. This calendar includes writings, art and noteworthy events. Available at Cdn. bookstores, Coles, Classics or for \$7.95 from:

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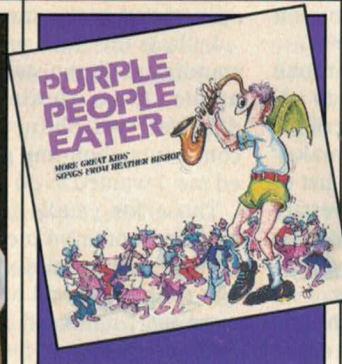
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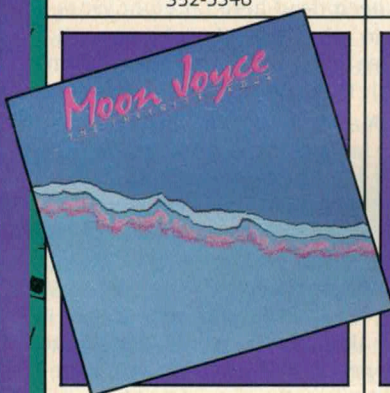
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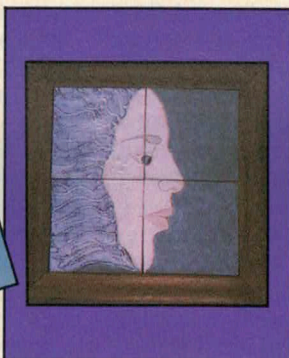


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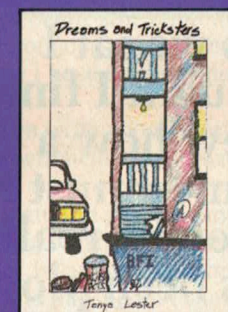
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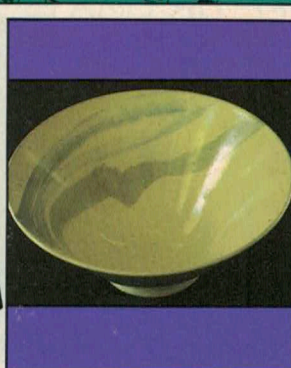


# GIFT GUIDE



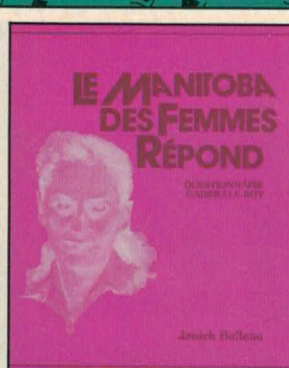
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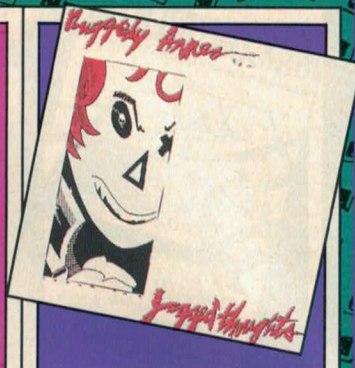
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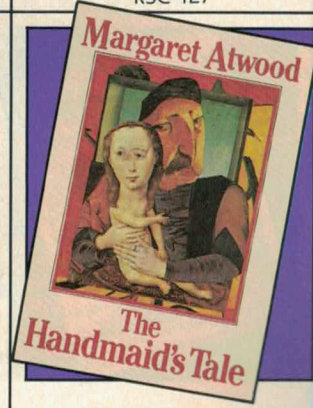
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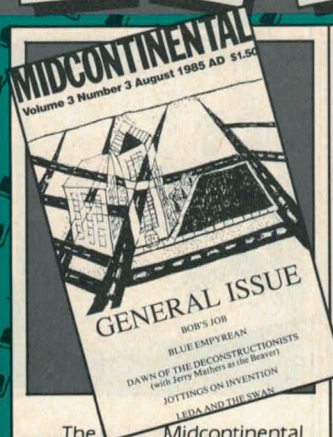
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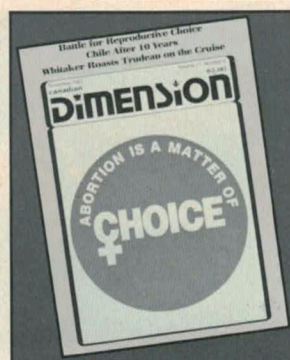
The Midcontinental is a Winnipeg based art and culture tabloid published by a collective of independent writers and artists. Consciousness for cash. Individual \$5.00 per year; Institutional \$10.00 per year.

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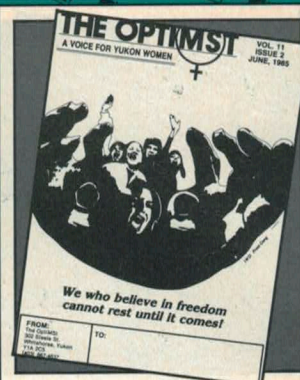
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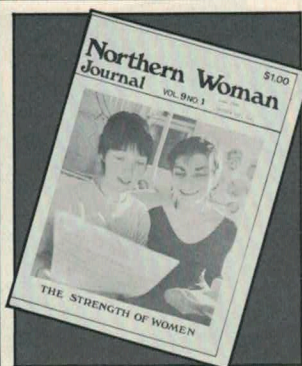
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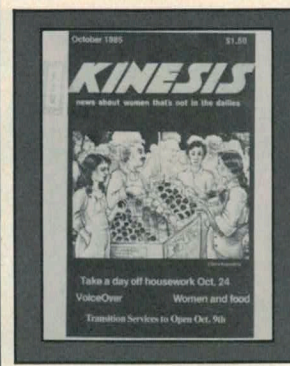
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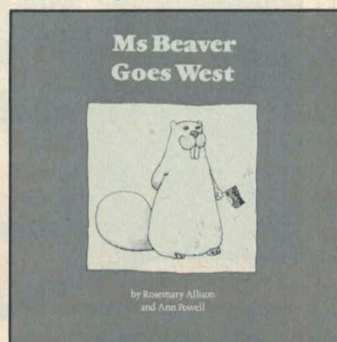
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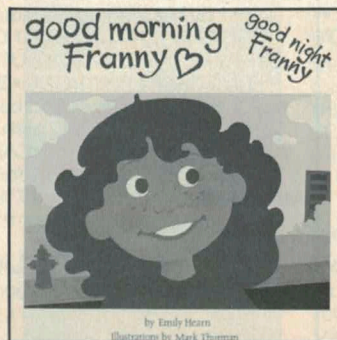
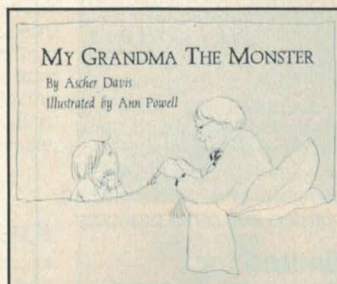
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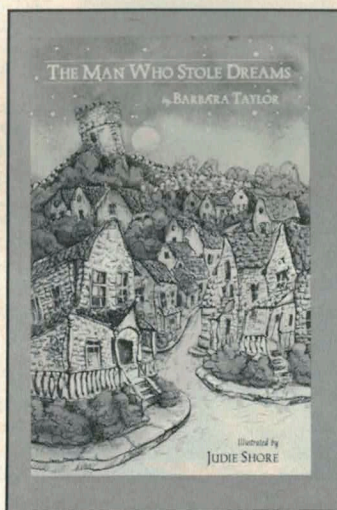
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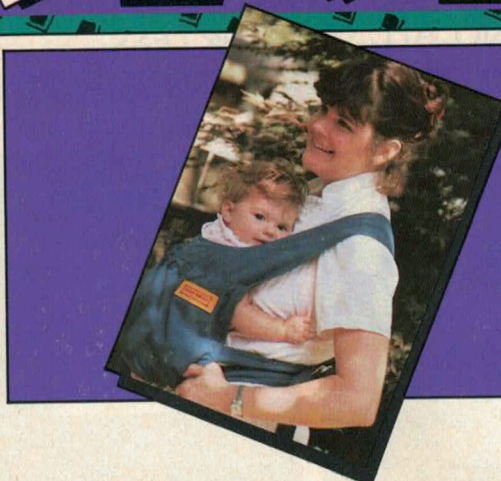
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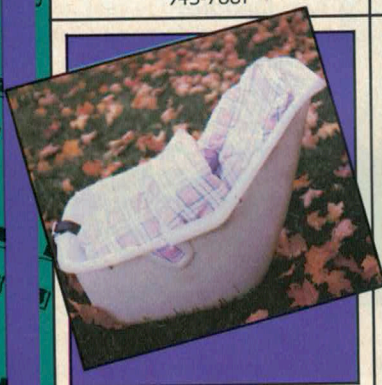
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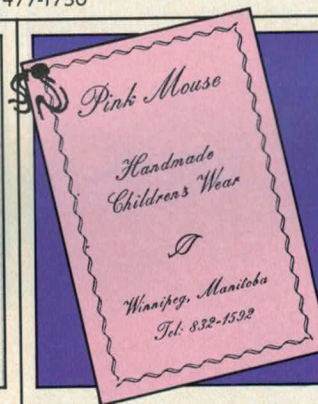
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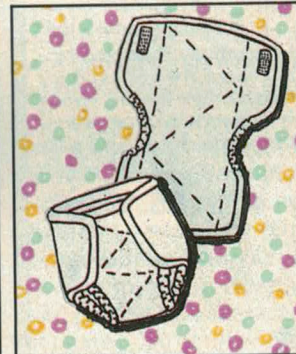
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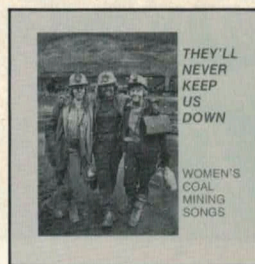
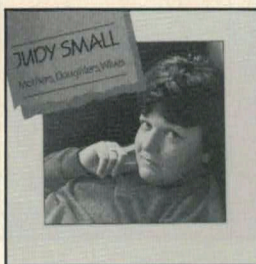


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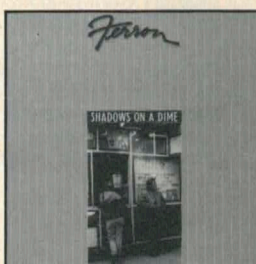
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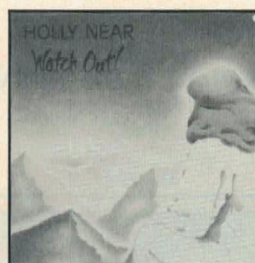
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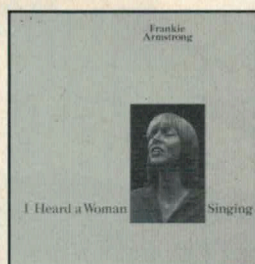
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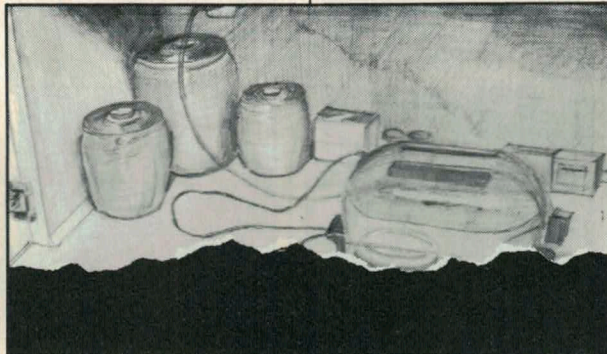
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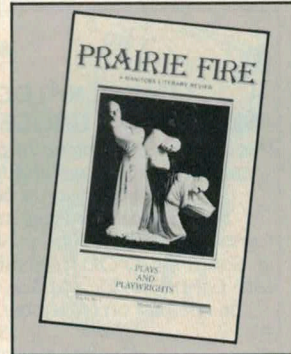
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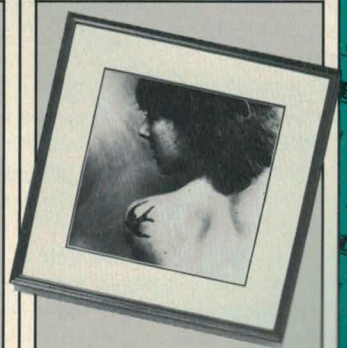
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(Continued from page 20)

catch the nation's imagination as party leader.

As a keen observer of federal politics, Marion believes that because many political institutions have evolved from a male-dominated organisational structure, women are having "a lot of problems identifying with any political party." Feminism's gains are "very, very vulnerable" today, she adds. "I think many of the things we've achieved are threatened right now. There is strong opposition to equal pay for work of equal value, at the provincial level. And if you look at what's happening in the U.S. . . . we know that there is some of that same

organisation taking place in Canada." In the last federal election, many women voted Conservative as an anti-Liberal rather than a pro-Conservative move, she believes.

"Now, this is a subjective and not a scientific analysis of what I think happened: I think women looked at the NDP and said, that's the Party for me and that's the Party I'd like to implement their policies. But right now, if I don't vote for the PCs, we're going to be stuck with the Liberals for another 20 years.

"My job now as president of the Party is to get the Party organised at the grassroots, out into every community in Canada to talk to women about what's

happening to them. . . . There is no question in my mind that women in Canada are saying this is not a sympathetic government. Now, I think we, as New Democrats, have to say to them: When are you going to wake up? You only have one option and this is it!"

Then, as either a visionary or a woman venturing onto a shaky limb, she says, earnestly: "I do think that a feminist party is what the New Democratic Party can be." ▽

*Debra Pilon is an Ottawa-based freelance journalist and a regular contributor to HERIZONS.*

## Charlotte Whitton: Ottawa's first female mayor

Marion Dewar is not the first woman Mayor of Ottawa. And she may not be the last since a current councillor, Marlene Catterall, will seek the post this November.

In the 1950s, Ottawa had a flamboyant woman mayor named Charlotte Whitton who must be credited with what is perhaps the most succinct feminist statement ever made by a Canadian woman: "Whatever women do they must twice as well as men to be thought half as good," she said. "Luckily, it's not difficult."

Comparisons between the two women are commonplace but they don't really appeal to Marion. "People often say to me that Ottawa has a real precedent for female mayors," she confides. "And I say, 'Yes, once every 30 years!'" As well, anyone who sees the women as individuals and not simply as generic "women" playing roles in the same political game will find most comparisons based on fantasy not fact.

At one point during her career as Mayor Charlotte Whitton flew at a male member of Ottawa's Board of Control, punching and kicking him until two other (male) controllers pulled her away. Ottawa's daily newspapers had a field-day with the story printing cartoons of the diminutive Mayor (Charlotte was 5'1") wearing gigantic boxing gloves and describing the "fight" as though it were a sports event.

The spat occurred in the Mayor's chambers when Paul Tardiff remarked that Charlotte had been less than enthusiastic about attending some official function or other. Always quick-witted and blessed with a sharp tongue, she shot back: "Under the growing pressure

of City business, I am getting less than four hours sleep a night. Unlike you, Tardiff, I have no child to carry on for me at City Hall (a reference to the fact that Tardiff's son was planning to run for city council.)"

"It's no fault of mine that you have no children," Tardiff is reported to have replied. "You could, if you were not so busy and had time for other things."

That remark triggered the assault. Later, the Mayor explained to the media that Tardiff's remark was "one of the filthiest . . . most obscene remarks that a person can say to a woman and there wasn't a man there to defend me."

Marion knew Charlotte Whitton and she followed the older woman's career, first as a private citizen and then as a member of City Council. When she was first elected to council, Marion was the only woman to hold a seat and she recalls Charlotte contacting her very quickly and talking to her often.

"I think that Charlotte had to do some of the things that we don't have to do today and because she did them, we don't have to," Marion says. "I've said to a lot of women, please don't berate Charlotte. . . ."

*Charlotte Whitton shortly after announcing her candidacy in October of 1954.*



Photo: City of Ottawa Archives

Charlotte Whitton was a Conservative all her life. Born into a Tory-blue family from Renfrew in the Ottawa Valley, she was also a brilliant student, graduating from Queen's University in Kingston at an early age, with a Master's degree in English and constitutional history, along with medals in English, history and pedagogy. As a pioneer in the field of social work, she worked to raise money for poor mothers and their children and became the first executive director of the Canadian Welfare Council. After the Second World War, she represented Canada on social issues to the League of Nations. Her entrance on the political scene came in 1950 when an editorial in *The Ottawa Journal* challenged her to break the all-male stranglehold on Ottawa's Board of Control.

Women worked feverishly to help get Charlotte elected, sporting her symbol — a sewing needle with a wisp of blue thread — on their collars as they campaigned. The needle and thread were needed, Charlotte said, "to patch up the hole in Ottawa's pants." And in 1952 when she sought the Mayoralty for a second term, her workers wore darning needles "because the job is bigger."

Charlotte Whitton has a special place in Marion Dewar's heart. "She had to take on the male role to get elected. She had to act very much like men did. . . . and I think she had to make her presence known because she was very tiny and at that time physical presence was very important. I don't think it's as important today. She also had a mind that far surpassed most of the people she worked with. And the wonderful humour and wit she had really kept her opponents intimidated." ▽



(Continued from page 23)

cooking or cleaning, or wiping noses. I didn't go crazy, although I constantly thought I might any minute. That is still a fear. I learned that a person is only a victim if they choose to be. I also learned that nothing is really bad. Everything can be turned to an advantage.

I took the time I didn't spend commuting to work, and used it to write not only my stories but letters. I became a lobbyist for feminist causes, for Amnesty International, and for writers. For five years I've been taking one university course per semester, and not only that but I read all the supplementary material, the stuff most students haven't time for. I've mentioned my pen pals. I just lived for the arrival of the mail every day. Hey, I still do.

People like to visit me I think, because they always come back. Agoraphobes are always trying to please. It's one of the traits. But I like pleasing people and have no intention of changing. I had learned after a few years to get home delivery of almost anything by phone with a credit card. I had also managed to find a home-visiting dentist who pulled out my wisdom teeth, and an assistant who scaled my tartar from my teeth. I'd always had a home hairdresser. The services are there, such as mobile labs to collect blood and urine samples, or the mobile heart testing machine. Sometimes it must have annoyed my out-going friends on a rainy day to lug their virus to a doctor, when I rated house calls.

For years I kept in daily contact with Kelly, a younger agoraphobe, and we gave each other positive encouragement. We lived just a mile apart, but it was three years before she got free enough to visit me, and I have yet to see her place. There I gave away the ending. I am not well yet, you see, But I feel useful and happy. I have learned to accept what may be a chronic condition, or what may have an instant remission of all symptoms one day.

Lylla and I talk a lot about goals. I never set any unreasonable ones, but I do make every effort to keep the ones I set, such as walking every day. I am saving from my earnings to buy a bicycle, which I expect to broaden my horizons. I have looked for and found part-time work tutoring grade 12s in English. So, last May, I set a goal to move from my apartment, and proudly carried the letter of notice to the manager, who was thrilled to get it.

★ ★ ★

## Diary Entry: May 30, 1984

I took two extra Xanax as prescribed, but still Gary and Joe had to drag me out. I was terrified of wetting myself. I lost all colour vision near the back door, where David had the car revved up waiting. I don't think I struggled. I was too weak from fear. Yet, as soon as the car turned into the street, curiosity took me over. I knew because last night Gary timed it, the ride would be only five minutes. The new place is well treed, forest almost. There is peace here. They chose well without me. I'm free. Maybe forever!!!

★ ★ ★

Nothing is that simplistic is it? My boys and husband were harbouring all sorts of resentment because of the suffering my phobia had given them. David was acting out by shoplifting, and Joe was increasingly rude to me. I got a home-visiting family counsellor. She was good at wringing out their feelings. I give her that. I took some nearly fatal wounds as I learned again how my 230 pounds was the only problem. I also learned I had been an over protective mom, and done damage to both boys that way. Mostly I found that my family shouldn't have to be responsible for my problem.

As we sat, I thought I finally knew how a farmer must feel when he realises he's been plowing with a dead horse.

I am freer. I visit the houses of my neighbours and enjoy myself there. I go shopping with Lylla, and with a volunteer who comes weekly. Most of the time I truly enjoy my little outings. Every time I go out, I feel the urge to press farther. Something dead is coming alive in me.

After all these years I still don't know what is true about agoraphobia, although I read every research paper I can find on it. I still have hopes of a total remission, and there is a basis for that in case histories. I know that for years I was depressed and stopped dreaming. Now I have ambition again. I neither want nor need sympathy. I have found a balance to my every day life that gives me pleasure. I know I am socially useful. And I don't get into much trouble. Not getting into much trouble is in itself quite an accomplishment. I know now that I like myself. I am no longer afraid of being alone. I have no fear of losing my family. Maybe losing that fear is the beginning to freedom.▽

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## NICARAGUA women of the revolution

EILEEN HALEY

The question always comes up, whenever we start talking about socialism and feminism and such; "And just what is the situation of women in Nicaragua?" Only one way to find out; go there. So I took a month off and went.

The first person I meet is Diana, a young Argentinian doctor, a political exile who, like many other Latin American exiles, has found at least a temporary home and meaningful work in revolutionary Nicaragua.

*Sophia Montenegro, a volunteer with the CDS (Sandinista Defence Committee) in a town near the Honduran border. Pantasma, Nicaragua. photo: Jim Hodgson*

"Ah, women!" she exclaims when I explain my quest. "You know, I love to talk to the nurse's aides in the clinic where I work. They tell me, 'Here in Nicaragua' — they always specify that — in Nicaragua — 'a man likes you to iron for him, cook for him, serve him his food, and then he goes out on Saturday night and gets drunk with his mates.' And I ask them, 'But does he come back home after getting drunk with his mates?' "Oh, no," they say, "he goes off with another woman. I know he does but I pretend not to. Because if he knows I know, then I'm lost. Because he'll say: 'There! She knows and she didn't kick me out!' And I'll lose his respect. So I pretend not to know."

"You know," Diana goes on warming to the theme, "I was talking to a Mexican journalist friend of mine about machismo."

"Look, there are differences," she said to me. "A Mexican does not abandon his children. On the contrary, he boasts of having a casa grande — a legitimate family — and a casa chica — an illegitimate family, and of the fact that he can maintain both. Whereas the Nicaraguan acts as though paternity doesn't exist; the woman's having a baby? What's that got to do with him?"

"Have you heard of the Nurture Law?" Diana asks me. I have. I know it's a draft law produced by the women's association, AMNLAE. I know it establishes family members' obligation to provide for one another and states that housework is one of the basic supports of the family, and that all members who can do so should participate in it, regardless of sex.

"It's got men terrified!" says Diana, "because it cuts at the base of irresponsible paternity and they've never heard of such a thing."

I sit in on the briefing session at the AMNLAE office for a group of visiting American women. Giving the briefing are Lourdes Anaya, director of AMNLAE's Legal Aid Office, and Rosa Marie Zelaya, director of the Family Protection and Guidance Unit of the Nicaraguan Social Security and Welfare Institute.

First we hear about the Legal Aid Office. It was set up, so Lourdes tells us, in response to the enormous groundswell of disquiet caused among women by their growing consciousness of their rights.

"The main problem the woman brings is maintenance. That's in over 50 per cent of the cases. Divorce is second place; then child custody; then physical abuse; and finally other legal problems, migration, things like that," Lourdes explains.

The law code currently in force is from 1904. It's based on the Napoleonic Code. Needless to say it's class-biased and discriminates against women.

One of the American women — obviously feeling that none of this smacks much of Revolution — asks just when they're planning to get rid of these Napoleonic laws.

It is Rosa Maria who replies:

"The draft of our new law code is ready for discussion. It's been ready since October last year. But where there's aggression, defense must take first place.

"But some laws have already been passed: laws promoted by AMNLAE. The first was the Adoption Law, and the second was the Law Regulating Re-



lations between Mother, Father and Children.

"In Somoza's time, the adopters had to be a couple of 40, married for more than 10 years, childless, and with proven sterility in one of the partners. Naturally, there were few adoptions made in Nicaragua. The result was a very lucrative trafficking in children, mostly to the United States. Our new Adoption Law allows any person over the age of 25, married or single, childless or a parent to adopt. The only requirements are that the person adopting be economically solvent, emotionally stable, and decent living. It's a qualitative change.

"And then there's the Law Regulating Relations between Mother, Father, and Children: this does away with the notion of Patria Potestad, which placed family authority strictly in the hands of the father, and establishes the notion of joint responsibilities exercised equally by mother and father.

"There's a third law, the Nurture Law, which obliges men to contribute financially to the maintenance of their children. It's been passed by the Council of State, but has yet to be ratified by the Junta."

One of the American women comments that everything that has been said is about women in the family. She asks what the revolution has done to guarantee the rights of single women who don't want to have children. Rosa Maria and Lourdes look at each other, a bit taken aback. A Nicaraguan woman without children? Not exactly something they come across every day of the week. Finally Rosa Maria rises to the occasion rather nicely:

"To talk about the family is to talk about women. Whether they're single or whether there's a husband in the house."

★ ★ ★

On to the Women's Office. Its director is Esperanza Hernandez, vivacious, thirtyish, in blue jeans, and clogs, her black hair in two quizzical little plaits.

I ask about abortion, the first of several conversations I'll have on the subject while in Nicaragua.

"The Government has no defined policy on it," says Esperanza. "And it hasn't been the subject of a grass-roots discussion in AMNLAE either, as far as I know. The most that's happened is to have sexual education included in the education syllabuses. Contraception is different: the pill is provided free, and it's understood that a woman has a right to decide how many children she wants and

when.

"Abortion goes on, of course, and at all levels of society, maybe most in rural areas. But it's not talked of; that's the reality. On the other hand," she concludes with one of the smiles of cheery optimism characteristic of her, "one day it will be legal. It's legal in Cuba, for example; one day it will be here, too."

I suggest to her that the main thing that puts a brake on women's participation in society is their husband's opposition.

"Well, it's a factor, but not the determining factor," she answers. "After all, in most Nicaraguan families there isn't any husband. The mother is the breadwinner and the head of the house."

I ask her about women's double working-day at a workplace and at home. What does the revolution say about that?

"A minority of couples share housework," she says. "Professional women solve the problem by hiring a servant. And so they're reinforcing their husbands' machismo, right? Letting them off the hook. But we can't do away with servitude yet, because there aren't enough employment alternatives. So it's not the right moment, historically speaking; it's another thing that has to do with the country's economic development. In the poorest classes the problem is solved through Grandma, or aunts, or older children. Perhaps it's the in-between strata where the pressure's really on. It's these women who are really making a big effort and obliging their husbands to participate more in the house."

What about women and military service, I ask her. The Military Service Law, passed in September, 1982, establishes obligatory military service for all males

between 17 and 40. "AMNLAE hit the roof when the bill was introduced," a friend of Diana's told me, "because it didn't even mention women. They saw it as another instance of discrimination."

"It was a very interesting controversy," says Esperanza. "AMNLAE proposed that no distinction be made on the grounds of sex. A good number of women were prepared to go, but others, no. A big question was: if it's obligatory for both, who do you leave the children with? Of course you can say: well, in the case of families, one parent could go, not necessarily the father, but being a soldier has never been part of a woman's traditional role. This would imply a level of consciousness we just don't have yet. The Junta proposed that enlistment in military service be voluntary for women, as it is for people over 40. And that's how it's ended up."

★ ★ ★

We are coming back from the Anti-Polio Vaccination Campaign. I went out with a team from the Hospital Workers' Union; Maritza the dressmaker, Adolfo the nurse's aide, Elsa the telephonist. Maritza has brought her 11-year-old son with her. The three-year-old is at home with — predictably — Grandma.

Her husband, a teacher, is off picking coffee with the Production Brigades. I ask her about her own participation in the revolution.

"My brother was in the struggle," she answers. "Through him I got involved. I was in AMPRONAC" — the women's organization that was the forerunner of AMNLAE — "and my house was used for the wounded and for storing provisions during the insurrection." And now? "I'm in the AMNLAE, and the militia. And, I work. Before, I was just a housewife. I started working at the hospital as a volunteer; now I've got training and I'm being paid." What does she think the main achievements of the revolution have been?

"Education, health — like this anti-polio campaign. The incorporation of men, now they have more to do with their children; they take them out. My husband has learned to cook; it's a necessity. The end to the discrimination against illegitimate children; now all children are equal before the law. And the markets," she says finally after a little thought, "they used to be awfully dirty. They're much cleaner now."

The women in the AMNLAE in Esteli take us to visit their dressmaking collec-

photo by Nick Fog



Young girl from Santa Rosa carries tortillas home.



tive, set up in 1979. There are 42 women working in it, sharing its problems and its profits. Its 35 sewing machines are a donation from Belgium. Most of the women are in their 40s, though the most articulate ones are younger. All of them are mothers. They stay behind after their working day finishes at 4:30 to talk to us. They tell us their big problem: getting cloth and buttons, scarce now because of the foreign exchange problem.

"But our main problem is the aggression," say Sorocco, a 24-year-old mother of two. "Every day another *compañero* is brought back dead. It's very, very grim."

At the end of our conversation, Maria Teresa, another young mother, thinks of something we can do for them.

"Could you tell us something more about the 8th of March?"

My American friend Ginny and I look blankly at her.

"You know. International Women's Day. When the seamstresses went on strike in New York in 1857, and the owner locked them in and set fire to the building and many of them were burned to death. . . ."

She knows more than we do. We hang our heads in shame at our ignorance. Especially Ginny, whose home is in New York.

On our way back, a group of women from the collective pass us in the street, hurrying along with schoolbooks under their arms. It would appear that everyone in Nicaragua is a student.

★ ★ ★

And what about women in the countryside? Luz and her husband Victor Manuel take us out to El Regadio, a small rural community an hour away

from Esteli, in a beautiful setting of the northern mountains. The AMNLAE coordinator of the place is Candida, the most memorable example I met in my travels of the archetypal Nicaraguan matriarch: large, brown, and solid. A great beaming smile and the heaviest hand I've ever been touched by.

"Why a separate organisation for women? Well, you know, there are things one can't talk about with men," she says. "Women were very afraid of their husbands at the beginning. I think we've made a qualitative change there. Now, women are in everything — in everything, that is, except the contra." They all laugh. "But men are in everything too — in health, for example. We don't want to be more than men but we want to be equal."

They show us their new achievements: the pre-school centre with 80 children, set up with UNICEF donations, and the health centre attended by a paramedic, a local woman. They had a mill to grind corn, they say, but it broke down some months ago and they haven't been able to get the spare parts — imported, of course — to fix it. I sympathise tremendously. Grinding corn by hand is a back-breaking job that requires a good four hours' work a day, usually performed between 4 am and 8 am. The existence of a mill in a village absolutely transforms the campesinas' lives.

"Write it down" says Candida, giving me a friendly slap on the shoulder that sends me flying. "Tell your people we need to fix the mill."

On the outskirts of Esteli we pass a house with children playing in the yard.

"Look, that's my sister's house: these are our children," says Luz, pointing. She goes on: "Victor Manuel used to be on the regional committee of the Sandanista Workers. But we saw that our

children were growing up and getting a bit out of control. They really needed more of our time and attention. We discussed it and decided that I would continue working full-time with AMNLAE, and he would resign from the regional committee in order to have more time to be with the children."

"That's my kind of guy," says Ginny.

★ ★ ★

A Saturday night fund-raising party for the Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs. Ginny and I are quite the attraction of the evening: we are surrounded by a flock of young beaux who want to try out their halting English, find out what we think of Nicaragua, tell us what beautiful blue eyes we have, ask us are we married, do we have boyfriends. . . . I extricate myself and go and sit with Francisca, a woman I've met before, in the front room. One of the beaux follows: Do I want a beer? Do I want to dance?

"The *campanera*," Francisca says firmly, "wants to talk to me."

The beaux goes off in a huff.

"He's annoyed," she says, and shrugs. "But mostly it's their *machismo* that makes them annoyed. A lot of *zanganos* in this country, you know."

"*Zanganos*!" says Diana. "It's the word they use here for *machos*. It means 'drones'. And it's exact! It's just right! Because they f--- the pretty ones and have the dowdy ones working their guts out for them. I'd say 90 per cent of Sandanista women, beyond a certain level, are by themselves. It's obvious. After all the things they've done and all the things they've been through, they're not going to put up with a *zangano* anymore."

Francisca has six daughters, ranging from 19 to seven; her husband, a musician in a tropical music band, left her because she was too involved in politics.

Next day I visit her at home, the same house that, before the triumph was a 'safe house' where guerillas stayed when they came down from the mountains to Esteli, and I see all her daughters. Carelia, the 16-year-old, is wearing a red headband with "I Demand My Right to Vote" hand-painted on it. (She is granted it a couple of weeks later. "Just as well," says Ginny. "Otherwise they would have had another insurrection on their hands.") Naomilche, the littlest one, a typically Nicaraguan child with dancing brown eyes and a bright smile, is limping about with one heel off the ground.

Francisca shakes her head. "She's

Young boys from Santa Rose, Nicaragua.



photo by Nick Fog





Photo by Nick Fog

Women and men participating in health seminars in Santa Rosa, Nicaragua.

afraid to put her heel down. She had a thorn in it, but it's out now; I think it's psychological."

Francisca is going to a school for cadres. She is also the AMNLAE representative on the Esteli People's Health Council, and is preparing for a forthcoming national congress.

Women are in and out of Francisca's front room in an almost constant stream: "Lend me that article." "What time's the meeting?"; "Are you coming to watch the coffee-picking brigades arrive?"

★ ★ ★

And so, what about prostitution in Puerto Corinto? I ask the AMNLAE women.

"There are still prostitutes here," says Jenny, the co-ordinator. "The brothels have been closed down, but there are still prostitutes. Street walkers."

"And some of them participate in the revolution," says Rosa. "Patriotic prostitutes. They're in the militia, the health brigades, and so on. They're not discriminated against. Before, yes! They weren't let into restaurants; respectable ladies would cross the street to avoid them. A doctor's daughter say, wouldn't be seen talking to a prostitute. Now they're likely to find themselves in the same AMNLAE work group or militia unit. Discrimination, ostracism; that's all over."

I ask if women are imprisoned for prostitution.

"No," says Katy, "because we understand they do it out of economic necessity."

"Prostitution's practically a necessary social evil here in Corinto," says Emigdia. "Because of the sailors. They think of it as part of the port facilities. Neces-

sary in order to ensure commerce. That doesn't mean we're in favour of it. We're against it; we're trying to change it."

How?

Off we go to the HOCASO Centre, located right next to the fuel tanks set on fire by the contras (or the CIA?) last October. Here the prostitutes are learning skills and earning money from their work. We are shown the doll-making workshop, the dress-making room, the shell handcraft workshop, the typing room, the adult education class.

I would like to talk more with Berenice, an ex-prostitute who runs the centre, but she is too busy discussing AMNLAE business with Emigdia: Have you got that speaker lined up yet?; When do you want that report by?

Instead I go round and look at the posters stuck up on the verandas of the centre. "We are still not what we want to be," says one, hand-made of course. "Nor are we what we ought to be; but we are thankful we aren't what we used to be."

★ ★ ★

One way or another we have had a lot to do with the Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs. In Esteli they show us their "gallery", as they call it: a sort of Museum of the Fallen, with photos of their children and some of their belongings. All of them are eager to tell us the story of their fallen son or daughter, sometimes in grisly detail. I find my capacity for sympathy strained.

One journalist accused the Nicaraguans of necrophilia. For all my approval of the Sandinistas' appreciation of maternal grief as one of the forms of suffering for the cause, I am starting to feel that the journalist was right. Or perhaps I am in the presence of some new way of living out the experiences of mourning and mortality that I am incapable of understanding? Perhaps, I decide finally, I would be satisfied with knowing that the Mothers were not solely and exclusively the Keepers of the Memory of the Dead. So what else do they do?

"They go," says Diana, "up to the frontier regions and go from door to door visiting the mothers of men who've gone with the contras. 'We know your son is with the contras,' they tell them. 'Go and tell him to come home. Tell him he won't be put in jail. Tell him he'll be able to work. Tell him he can live with his family. Tell him we want him home.'"

"These women are the highest moral authorities of our communities," say Emigdia when we meet the Mothers of Somotillo during our trip to the frontier.

"Whenever a woman's son goes to the front, or gets called up, or is killed, the Mothers go and talk to her and comfort her."

I try to explain to Emigdia my doubts about all this, 34 venerating women as long-suffering mother figures.

Emigdia thinks I'm being disparaging; she shakes her head indignantly.

"But you don't understand!" she exclaims. "It's a whole tradition of action that dates back to the days of Somoza, when the Mothers behaved like lionesses! They went to the offices and shouted and demanded. Long-suffering? No! They were the only ones who dared to make such a public act of defiance." She doesn't mention — though other people have talked to me of it — a more recent act in the same mould, when the Mothers took on the Pope himself, demanding that he speak of war and peace when all his sermon had to do with was obedience to bishops.

"It's been one of the great achievements of the Frente," Emigdia concludes; "Its ability to win the endorsement of the Mothers."

★ ★ ★

In Chichigalpa the Mothers arrive half an hour late for the meeting.

"It's cane-cutting season and the sugarmill works till six," Sara, the young AMNLAE organiser in the Chichigalpa, explains. "So the husbands don't get

Women at work: part of a mural in a Managua church. photo: Jim Hodgson





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home till then, and they won't give their wives permission to go out till after they've been served supper."

"No," laughs one of the few mothers present. "It's because Estefania isn't over yet."

I have had occasion to see Estefania. A Venezuelan production, it is the most popular TV soap opera of the moment in Nicaragua. It deals with the era of armed struggle against the Betancur dictatorship in Venezuela in the 1960s, and the plot is more-or-less as follows: Estefania, a woman guerilla with the face and hair of a Breck shampoo ad, is in love with the guerilla leader, played by Venezuela's No. One matinee idol, but — believing him dead — has married another man, whose sister is about to get married to the Chief of the Security Police, who lusts after Estefania. "You have to compare it with the kind of soap opera we had before which had nothing at all about politics in them. Estefania is so popular because it relates a bit to the kind of experiences women here went through in the insurrection."

While we are waiting for the Mothers I talk a bit to Sara. She explains that they are in the process of setting up a Committee of Mothers of Reservists.

"We're going to demand better organisation from the head of the brigades. Because these mothers have been without news of their children at the front for three months now. And of course rumours fly around; 'Your son's been killed'; 'Your son's been wounded.' It's a great problem, rumours. There's an urgent need for a trustworthy news channel."

"You mean the idea of the committee is for the women to organise around their own demands, ask for something for themselves?"

"And to participate in the tasks of the revolution. In proportion as they participate in the tasks of the revolution — militia duties, the health campaign, etc. — they earn the right and the possibility to have their own specific demands met."

Sara's words kept coming back to me later. I felt I had found the key to how the whole revolution operates. Sara had enunciated its great general principle.

Promptly at 6:30 the Mothers come trooping in, and the meeting begins. Precisely because of our presence, the meeting is not, perhaps, a typical one. At least I hope not since it consists almost entirely of instructions issued by Sara; you have to set up the Committee of Reservists' Mothers; you have to clean up the statues and plaques to the Fallen;



you have to start making handkerchiefs to give to visiting dignitaries like they do in Chinandega; you have to read such-and-such an article so you'll be able to give talks to the women on the Night Watch. Well, at least it gives an idea of their activities, I think.

Then comes what is supposed to be a dialogue between us and them. But they are silent. Not a word. Sara covers up by initiating some rousing slogan shouting.

"Without women prepared for sacrifices — there is no revolution!"

But no go. The Mothers sit like great brown stones.

"Right then, that's all," says Sara at last, "the meeting's over."

The Mothers come one by one to say goodbye. And the touch of flesh when they embrace us triggers their articulateness, an articulateness that overflows the discourse of meetings and of slogans. Tears well up in their eyes. They sob into our necks.

"We don't want any more war," they say. "Tell your people. We want peace."

They hug us tight, as though it is the closeness of our female bodies that will communicate their anguish, their yearning and their will. We hug them back, and find no words to say.

★ ★ ★

My last night in Nicaragua and my last episode of Estefania. On her way to join the matinee idol (who, she has found out, is still alive) she is arrested at the Colombian border by the Chief of Security Police. The last scene shows her writhing upon his big double bed trying to rid herself of her handcuffs before he arrives, at midnight, to take possession of her finally and at last.

I never did find out what happened next. ▽

Celebration: a rally marking the 50th anniversary of Sandino's assassination



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## GOING PLACES

## Travelling Through Time Zones

**A**s my plane circles Pittsburgh in preparation for landing, I picture in my mind what our reunion will be like. I've planned this trip for a long time, visualising how it will be to see her again after nearly 20 years. We'll talk for hours, sitting in her familiar front room, surrounded by objects remembered from my childhood. I am returning to the city of my birth to visit a grandmother I haven't seen for half of my life. To make the reunion complete, my sister will be meeting me there.

Driven by memory, armed with camera and tape recorder, I have travelled 3,300 km in hopes of hearing some good family stories. I imagine the old woman relating anecdotes of bygone days — recollections of my long-dead mother and grandfather — all set down for posterity on my cassette.

When I arrive, I find that the place has changed very little from the way I recall it. Pittsburgh is an old city, proud of its history and heritage. After World War II, it underwent a celebrated urban clean-up known as The Renaissance. Recently, a Second Renaissance has been launched, and the old landmarks look better than ever. Last year, Pittsburgh was chosen "America's Most Liveable City", a title visitors are not likely to overlook. You see it everywhere from billboards to T-shirts.

I fuel my nostalgia with stops at all the spots we used to frequent as children — places such as the Carnegie Institute Museum and Library and the Pittsburgh Aviary. I check out the new shopping complex at Station Square. I ride the recently opened "subway" — though most of it is above-ground. I catch the flavour of the women's community with visits to Wildsisters Restaurant and the Gertrude Stein Memorial Bookstore at 1003 E. Carson Street. I find it to be an incredibly friendly city. People go out of their way to be helpful to a stranger. On a bus, my question to the driver sparks a lively conversation involving all the other passengers. Everyone I meet seems genuinely interested in hearing about me, my trip, and Canada. By the time my sister and her two daughters arrive from Ohio, I feel like a native Pittsburgher — which I guess I am. I play tour guide, although they've been here many times before.

GAIL BUENTE

The next day, we all set out for grandmother's house. Her neighbourhood looks familiar to me, though smaller than I remembered it. I thought she lived in a rather palatial house on a huge hill, but in fact it's a modest brick bungalow on a small, steep slope. But the bush that used to be my hideaway is still growing in front of the house; and there's our grandmother waving a welcome from the door just as she always did. Suddenly, I feel like a child again. My sister and I rush up to the door, hug our grandmother, and hurry inside. We can't wait to get a start on the stories.

**"Memories are like corks left out of wine bottles. They expand and no longer fit."**

*-Harriet Doerr, Stones For Ibarra-*

Inside we run from room to room, saying to each other, "Remember the hidden stairway? I'd almost forgotten this porch swing. . . . I can remember playing with these little ceramic dogs." In all those years, nothing seemed to have changed in this house. Time stood still.

Then our grandmother brought out her photo album, and we all sat down to begin. But somehow, something seemed amiss. Something about this 97-year-old woman who looked the same to me

as she had 20 years before, was in fact very different. She was happy to see us, but clearly not as thrilled as I was to see her. I couldn't get out my tape recorder; it seemed like an intrusion. She could see I wanted her to talk, so she made an attempt to answer my questions. When I said, "Tell us about our mother's childhood," she responded, "What exactly do you want to know?" She was polite. She served us cookies and tea, and apologised that she couldn't offer us dinner. But after an hour, it became obvious that she really didn't want us there.

We were a disruption in her ordered life. And while we wanted to recapture the past, she was content to let it remain the past. It was a reaction I hadn't anticipated. It hadn't crossed my mind that she might not be enthusiastic about a reunion with me. After a while we left, with most of my questions still unanswered.

I phoned her several times while I was in Pittsburgh, trying to arrange another meeting. Each time she had an excuse. She wasn't feeling too well. Tomorrow might be better weather. Try calling me then, Gail. I never did get to see her again, and I never got my cassette full of stories.

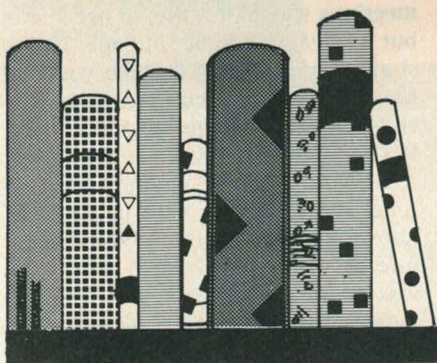
Later I tried to determine what had gone wrong. Was the past too painful to relive? Was her memory failing? Had she simply lost interest? It occurred to me that our concepts of time were quite different. To me, the 20 years between meetings was half a life; to her it was but a brief span in her old age. To me, she is a vivid memory from my youth; to her, I am one of a multitude of grandchildren and great-grandchildren she has, scattered across North America. And while I long foolishly to capture time, she is patient with its passing, knowing there is nothing there to capture. Ironically, I, still young in her eyes, was dwelling in the past, while she was looking to the future and living in the present.

But that old cliché, you can't go home again, never stopped anyone from trying. I had hoped to return to a city I remembered from long ago, and reclaim an important person out of my past. Instead, I rediscovered an old city and discovered a new person. And I'm glad I got the chance to meet her. ▽



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## POETRY

### HYM TO HERA

Sing, O Muse. Begin, Goddess, tell me the story

\*  
Herm ethic  
Her method  
magnetic

Her ad  
Her radical  
Her altar ego

Her edit  
airy hair easy  
Her wrist tick  
Hair ring  
Her mit

Her mit ages  
Her men who tick:

Her old Dick  
Heraldic-  
Her Ed, is he  
Her editor?

Her eddy quit  
Her row in  
Her easy arc

Herm Aphro dight  
Her medic call seals  
Her barium

Herb all  
Her peas  
Her macro diet  
He ate us

Herm ease  
Her knee, ah

Her adequate  
him to Her

Her cool ease  
herds Herefords  
herbivorus

Hare it ages  
Her cool aeon

Her rafter  
Her attic

Hereafter I managed my south air  
Hereafter imagined myself there

\*  
Tribe all  
Hera sees  
her race  
seize over  
seas

shoals on  
Sheol

Hera Clit (or) us

try bad is umm  
"to rub together"

when women stuck to  
women  
men to men

sake  
red  
Sara

money

sorry mummy

\*  
how she ages in his story's  
stages

his tory rages in her  
itinerary

his story call  
his stereo  
shibboleth

shoe repairs  
She reappears  
She bow-legged

Hera, who  
woo  
womb and  
woman

wears out work clothes  
wares out worth close  
wreaks out worse weeks

Exit Jesus

\*  
come on dear come rads,  
co-madres

con quest  
drag on

Man kills Dragon  
Woman rides her back

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# ENTERPRISING WOMEN

## Kids in 'em

In the fall of 1982, the Vancouver Island mill town of Port Alberni was suffering through the worst of the recession which had hit the entire province, and the lumber industry in particular. Unemployment was up to 24 per cent and the U.I.C. claims had risen from 1,361 to 4,567 that year. Wives of laid off workers registered for work, but unfortunately, the mill closures meant a drop in the sales sector and even in industrial janitorial work.

This economic environment was bringing social problems in its murky wake and the local Women's Resource Society, which had set up a Transition House the year before, began to cast about for positive solutions. Under the Local Employment Assistance Programme (LEAP), the federal government had targetted specific groups, including women re-entering the work force as eligible for grants, and the Society

special clothing for handicapped adults, outerwear that can be bought 'off the rack' instead of only by special order, as well as custom sewing for a variety of clubs and organisations.

Pivotal to the success of the venture is Barbara Konevich, the dynamic marketing and administration manager who brings a wealth of experience to her job. Raised in southern California, she attended the University of San Francisco for four years, majoring in mathematics with an arts minor.

From the beginning KIE had two objectives: to make practical and comfortable clothes that were easy to put on and take off, and to make attractive clothes that would make the wearer feel stylish and confident. While the first criteria is as important as ever, KIE has found style has almost no importance at all in children's clothes. Parents with a severely disabled child buy clothes for their practicality. For example T-shirts are made with sleeves that open from neck to hem and fasten with Velcro.

Now KIE is manufacturing children's clothing, with the focus towards adult clothing.

One of KIE's clients who has a managerial position with the Vancouver Tourist Bureau will soon give birth to her first child. KIE has designed a poncho which will not interfere with the wheels of her chair. KIE also mass produces clothing for dealers. With their new line of ponchos, leg robes and other accessories such as gloves, mittens and boots, all made from prairie-weight quilted fabric KIE is poised to expand into other Canadian provinces, and will go as far east as Manitoba this year. They also have plans to move into the American market where there is surprisingly little competition. Their poncho, for example, is especially adapted to the light weight Mulholland wheelchair which is manufactured from aluminum tubing in California. Since cold Canadian winters keep disabled people housebound for months at a time, KIE has designed a weather guard which covers the underside of the chair. When

the cosy poncho is snapped to the weatherguard, the person is securely protected from wind and cold.

The KIE team includes designer Sandra Lamoureux who learned her craft at l'Academie des Couturiers Canadiens in Ottawa, Sandra Heck who has extensive experience in production sewing, and Khauh Quach, an emigré from Viet Nam. Kathleen Harding is agent for the company in the Vancouver area, and agents are currently being arranged for the Alberta and Manitoba markets as well.



Company designer Sandra Lamoureux of Kids In 'Em.

received money for a feasibility study.

Three years later, 'Kids in 'Em' (KIE) is a thriving local business. The five women employees originally made clothing exclusively for severely disabled children, but have now branched out into

photo: Kids In 'Em



Khauh Quach, seamstress at Kids In 'Em.

KIE's product is not its only unique characteristic. It is owned 51 per cent by the Women's Resource Society and 49 per cent by the employees. This is more of a theoretical than actual fiscal arrangement, since in the past employees have come and gone with no money changing hands, but Janice Nairne, president of the Resource Society feels that the time is almost nigh for shares to be offered to the employees.

"The group currently working at KIE has a definite commitment to the business," Nairne says. "In order to ensure people's involvement, something will have to be set up where people can buy in and have a financial stake in the business."

Entrepreneurs are often urged to identify a need and then work to fill it. This determined group is proving the truth of the old business adage. For more information, or the Kids in 'Em catalogue, write to: Kids in 'Em, 4785 Tebo Avenue, Port Alberni, B.C. V9Y 8A9.



## REVIEWS

## FILM

## DESERT HEARTS

Reviewed by FRANCES ROONEY

*Desert Hearts* directed by Donna Deitch, based on the novel *Desert of the Heart* by Jane Rule.

## FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS

Toronto's Festival of Festivals is a hyped-up, glitzy, 10-day event that draws crowds of film-lovers and filmmakers. It boasts of galas and premieres and an incredible array of both national and international films. And while many of these are bound to show up at your local Odeon the majority won't; they are the foreign, low-budget and alternative films. They are the ones that out-of-town programmers cull for regional festivals across the country. And this year they included a large number of feminist, lesbian and gay films — a treat for those of us who tire of teen romances and macho adventure. But unfortunately these films get little exposure beyond the festival circuit. That's why the inclusion of *Desert Hearts*, a lesbian film, in the mainstream series was regarded as a breakthrough by feminist filmgoers. Next issue *HERIZONS* will have a review of Margarethe von Trotta's *Sheer Madness* (another feminist favourite) and Henry Jaglom's *Always* (a non-feminist touch of mainstream reality).

My companion at this movie said afterwards, "I'm the perfect audience for this kind of thing. I grew up on the romantic comedies of the 30s, 40s and 50s; I just get in there and suspend my disbelief." Many people responded that way to *Desert Hearts*. I had a harder time with it.

Take one stereotyped, two-dimensional Uptight Almost-Divorced Professor (Helen Shaver). Add one stereotyped High-Living, Free-Thinking Younger Lesbian Beauty (Patricia Charbonneau), who falls in love with the Professor, and one middle-aged, close to alcoholic Semi-Step Mother (Andra Lindley) who tries to break them up. Put them on a

ranch outside Reno in the mid-50s. Add several anachronisms in dress and language, and every now and again drown out the concrete dialogue with all the country and western music you can find. And what do you get? A stereotyped, heavy-handed, awkward two-dimensional chunk of film.

If you're not the kind of viewer who can suspend disbelief and launch dew-eyed into formula romance, what do you do with such a movie? You laugh at the funny parts, and at yourself in them. You drink in the tender parts. And if you live somewhere where the friendly neighbourhood censor hasn't butchered it, you hold your breath through the love scene, taking in the best part of the movie — the sights and wonderful

pseudo-step mother, had been left a little more of her dignity. You hate it that a wonderful lakeside love scene has been moved to a tacky hotel room.

This film will succeed, but not because it's a good film. It will succeed because it provides a little nectar for those of us who are starved for woman-identified, woman-sympathetic images. It will succeed in this country because it is made from a book by an acclaimed Canadian author who is the most established lesbian writer we have. It will succeed because of the lesbian sex.

It would be nice to be able to demand that all films that are women's films, in the many ways that this one is, be good films. It would also be utterly unrealistic. This is one of those times to take



DESERT HEARTS: Patricia Charbonneau (left) and Helen Shaver (right).

sounds of women making love. And when things go well for our heroines, you take a deep breath.

And because these parts are worth it, you overlook a lot, like the parts when it all becomes just too embarrassing to bear. You mourn the loss of Jane Rule's tender handling of people and their foibles and tell yourself that movies are never as good as the book they're based on. You try not to cringe when Rule's language, so graceful on the page, fails to translate to the screen. You forgive the script for making the characters out of cardboard, and you realise that the women in the film make the best of a bad job. You wish that Frances, the

what is good from an experience and recognise that the experience is remarkable simply because it happened.

As so often occurs, people who haven't read the book like the movie better than people who have. One woman said to me, "*Desert Hearts* has no heart." She's right. I was unable to warm to the women or the film, visually, emotionally, or technically. But I did spend an hour and a half in a theatre with hundreds of other people who had gone to soak up our own images of ourselves. The pity is that we need them so badly. The wonder is that, albeit not without problems, we got some of what we needed. ▽



# THE ARTS

## WOMEN'S MUSIC INSTRUMENTAL FOR CHANGE

Reviewed by MAUREEN MEDVED

Ever since ancient times, when the Greek poet Sappho took her lyre and sang, "Come now my heavenly tortoise shell: become a speaking instrument", women have met to communicate their history, passions and fears through the brace of music and poetry.

In that tradition, and for the second consecutive year, women have collected in Winnipeg's Kildonan Park for the Canadian Women's Festival. The three day event took place under tents during the day and outside under the big dome called Rainbow Stage at night.

The music spoke to everyone. Both national languages were represented and there was an interpreter for deaf people. Music styles were various and one could easily roam the entire spectrum of the music world, trolling the waters for any of the available species: rock, jazz, folk, experimental — or a fusion of them all.

Last year's festival did not speak to everyone. It found some young women, who used punk as their frame of reference, scouring the resources for something that could nourish their peculiar sensibility. This year the *Ruggedy Annes* were invited to fill that gap. Jackie Moore's voice has never been so potent: Margaret Fonseca's guitar never so hard, fast and impeccably controlled. The sound was blatantly punk and the style bludgeonly 1977.

In terms of straight rock and roll, festivalians responded with aisle prancing, to the combination of *Sherry Shute*, *Gwen Swick*, and *Catherine Ona MacKay*. This effective and mellow combo, most aptly described as "easy going rock 'n' roll", did nothing to tingle my spine, but appeared to send electro bolts through everyone else's. Material performed spanned the distance from soft rock to soft reggae. And they did have their moment: when guitarist *Shute* let fly a voice and guitar riffs mildly reminiscent of television's real rocker, *Suzy Quatro*.

Jazz lovers were not forgotten with *Louise Rose* (who studied with the likes of Oscar Peterson and "Duke" Ellington) joined forces with the *Swing Sisters*, a Toronto based, traditional jazz band. *Rose*, an affable performer and highly skilled piano player, has a thunderous voice that plays against the music, soft and relaxed. During her solo performance, *Rose* played and sang *Alberta Hunter's* "Remember My Name", appropriate because it was 1985 and "not a lot has changed". The *Swing Sisters* could have blown many of their contemporaries out the door with their renditions of "All of Me" and "Don't Blame Me", with *Louise Rose* doing vocals.

Folk music, as was expected, sprung up everywhere one looked. But it sprung in different forms: from *Christine Bernard*, whose voice sounded like a Sunday afternoon; to the pipe chomping Newfoundland tunes of *Anita Best*, who put across feisty odes to her mother, a crusty old tobacco addict and some toothless curmudgeon; and *Suzanne Campagne*, whose music wafted delicately and melodically across fields, as I chummed over the fence with friends who couldn't afford the \$15 entry fee.

The *Sea Cows* were Monique Mojica and Makka Kleist, a theatrical duo who based their most cohesive and effective piece on the encroaching of the white people on North America. They recreated an ancient prophecy, using a silver sheet as the single prop — transforming themselves into a variety of characters: from the "Tricksters" (Women, some call them Witches, who have magical powers) who cast the spell that spirited the Europeans across the sea; the Indigenous peoples of North America who were almost annihilated by the European explorers and settlers; the Europeans themselves, a society bent on destruction. The tragedy was presented and the full extent of the damage was accounted for: "the loss will destroy the rest (the ones who didn't die instantly)", they said. The *Sea Cows* didn't play to themselves. They encouraged audience participation, and got it. Tension mounted as the audience chanted "kill" — a requiem for the near death of Native American civilisation — and broke into frenzy when they were urged to "call back" the spell, which put the invaders there in the first place. The *Sea Cows* — animated and gregarious with kaleidoscopic drawings on their faces and neon bathing suits over their clothing — ended on a positive tone and advocated that the option for change is now.

Personal taste has always driven me to celebrate the weird and lesser known, esoteric type-performers without a category and those whose music was so oddball and innovative that they were forced to invent their own. Such a band was *Wondeur Brass*.

A six-woman unit from Quebec, this band could be called experimental but they were never strange enough to alienate. At their best, the music was an expression of urban anxiety and sci-fi neurosis. The trademark sound was redolent of science fiction cult film *Liquid Sky*. But unlike the *Liquid Sky* soundtrack, which turned flat after several listenings, *Wondeur Brass* were a sophisticated, mega-textured sound, combining a wide range of influences, from rock to opera. At times, beautifully chaotic voices interposed with elegantly discordant alto and tenor saxophones.

photo: Brigitte Sutherland



Monique Mojica at the SEA COWS' afternoon workshop.

During the festival there were no problems with on stage arrogance to obstruct the pure communication between artist and audience. And if women wanted to receive a side order of encouragement with their music, that is what they got. Singer-songwriter *Heather Bishop*, pulling the festival strings shut with the final performance on Sunday night, said something like this: whatever you see in us (the performers) is in all of you, as well. And just to prove she wasn't speaking in tongues, *Bishop* made an example of *Tracey Riley* — her partner on stage that evening, and an ordinary audience goer the year before. ▽



# WORDS THAT REALLY MOVE

Reviewed by HEIDI MUENCH

photo: Brigitte Sutherland



Lillian Allen, a leading exponent of dub style poetry in Canada.

This year's Canadian Women's Festival brought five writers to Winnipeg's Kildonan Park: Lillian Allen, Maria Campbell, Joy Kogawa, Zola Le'John and Dorothy Livesay. Unfortunately, Kogawa and Le'John were unable to perform Sunday and a reading on the theme of "Strong Women I've Written Of" was consequently cancelled. However, Dorothy Livesay and Maria Campbell alchemised disappointment into enthusiasm with an impromptu reading that was a testament to the strength of all women; a reading that strongly moved all present.

The work Livesay read spanned four decades: from a poem, "Serenade for Strings", written after the birth of her first child to a suite of poems, one movement of which was completed the week before the festival. As a writer and poet, I found witnessing the continuum of Livesay's creative commitment very exciting. Her openness, her willingness to share with her audience the life experiences and concerns that fed her poetry made listening to her an actively enriching experience.

Maria Campbell, the Saskatchewan-based author of *Halfbreed*, shared the stage with Livesay on Sunday. Her poems were strong indictments of a white culture that historically has robbed her people of their identity and that continues to deny them their true inheritance. Campbell introduced one poem by speaking of the way in which the White Man has recast Indian culture in his own patriarchal image. In the

poem, nature demands that her power be acknowledged and respected. She refuses to excuse the male offspring that have betrayed her, but she does not abandon them. Instead, she confronts them with the falseness of the white model they follow. Another poem, "For Dennis in Saskatoon", also deals with the betrayal of women. Dennis, a pipe carrier, refuses to allow women to touch the sacred feathers in his keeping. His scorn for the women exposes his own spiritual emptiness. The poem ends with two of the women Dennis has mocked as being fit only to serve the needs of men, preparing to fulfill their "sacred" duty on the street. All of Campbell's poems dealt with the need to recover a lost and plundered heritage and in all of them, this heritage was linked with women; most often a mother or grandmother figure, whose gifts (a vision, a hope and a prayer) are disparaged by those that have most need of them. Campbell's poems elicited support and empathy from the audience and I hope one day to have the joy of seeing them in print.

Lillian Allen, the Jamaican born dub poet now living in Toronto, brought the same vim and vigor to this year's festival as she did last year. She began her reading by asserting that everyone should be a writer, that writing is an activity as natural as walking. She followed this assertion with "A One Poem Town", a biting criticism of literary conservatism. "Belly Woman's Lament" exploded the class notion that social inferiors "breed" while their betters "are with child." "Nellie Bellie Swellie" dealt with the subject of child rape and the social shunning of the victim. But the poem did not end in despair. Instead, Nellie, forced by the rape into a premature womanhood and a graphic understanding of war, mines her garden fence and becomes a feminist. For me, the highlight of the reading was Allen's debunking of Anne Murray's cloyingly saccharine "Let's Have Some Good Good News for the People of the World Today". The reading ended with a rousing rendition of "Revolutionary Tea Party" that had everyone, including Allen's young daughter, joining in.

The reading left me with a heightened sense of how important it is to hear women's feelings, concerns and beliefs expressed. We empower ourselves and each other every time we share our words. It is uncommonly good to go to a festival and hear the power of women's voices. ▽



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LEGAL ACTION FUND. Financial support is crucial for midwives Sullivan, Lemay and to support the principle of a woman's right to choose her place of birth and her birth practitioner. Send cheques to: Maternal Health Society, P.O. Box 46563, Station G, Vancouver, V6R 4G8.

LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD. A special 1986 wall calendar produced in celebration of the 10th anniversary of Kingston Interval House, \$9.00 plus 75¢, mail cheques to Untitled Adventures, c/o Mrs. Dalloway's Books, P.O. Box 2056, Kingston, Ontario K7L 5J8

CONNEXIONS, a national information-sharing project that produces a quarterly Digest of Resources, is looking for volunteer regional contact people to join us in our work of locating, bringing together, and summarising the information, ideas, strategies, analyses, experiences, and visions of grassroots social change groups across Canada. Contact us at 427 Bloor St. W., Toronto M5S 1X7 (416) 960-3903.

THE BOOK WOMB, Winnipeg's elusive wimmin's bookstore will be selling books et al at Ms Purdy's **December 13th** from 4 pm to 7 pm. Great gifts for Christmas!



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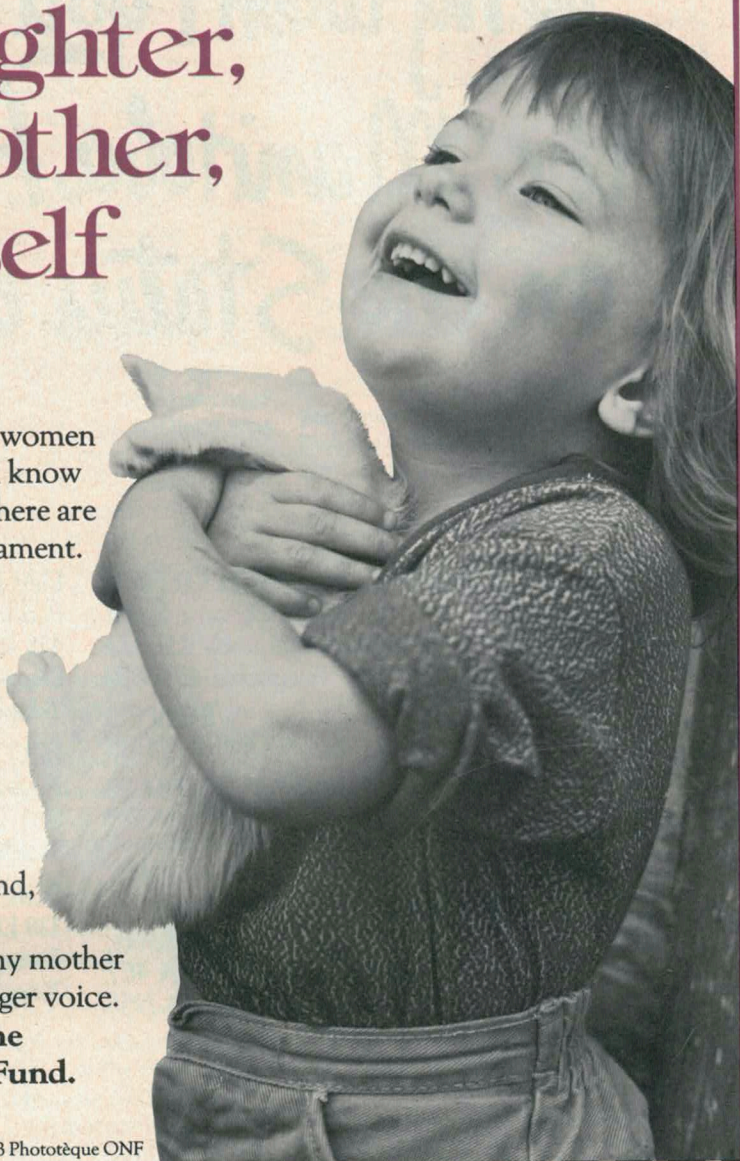
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