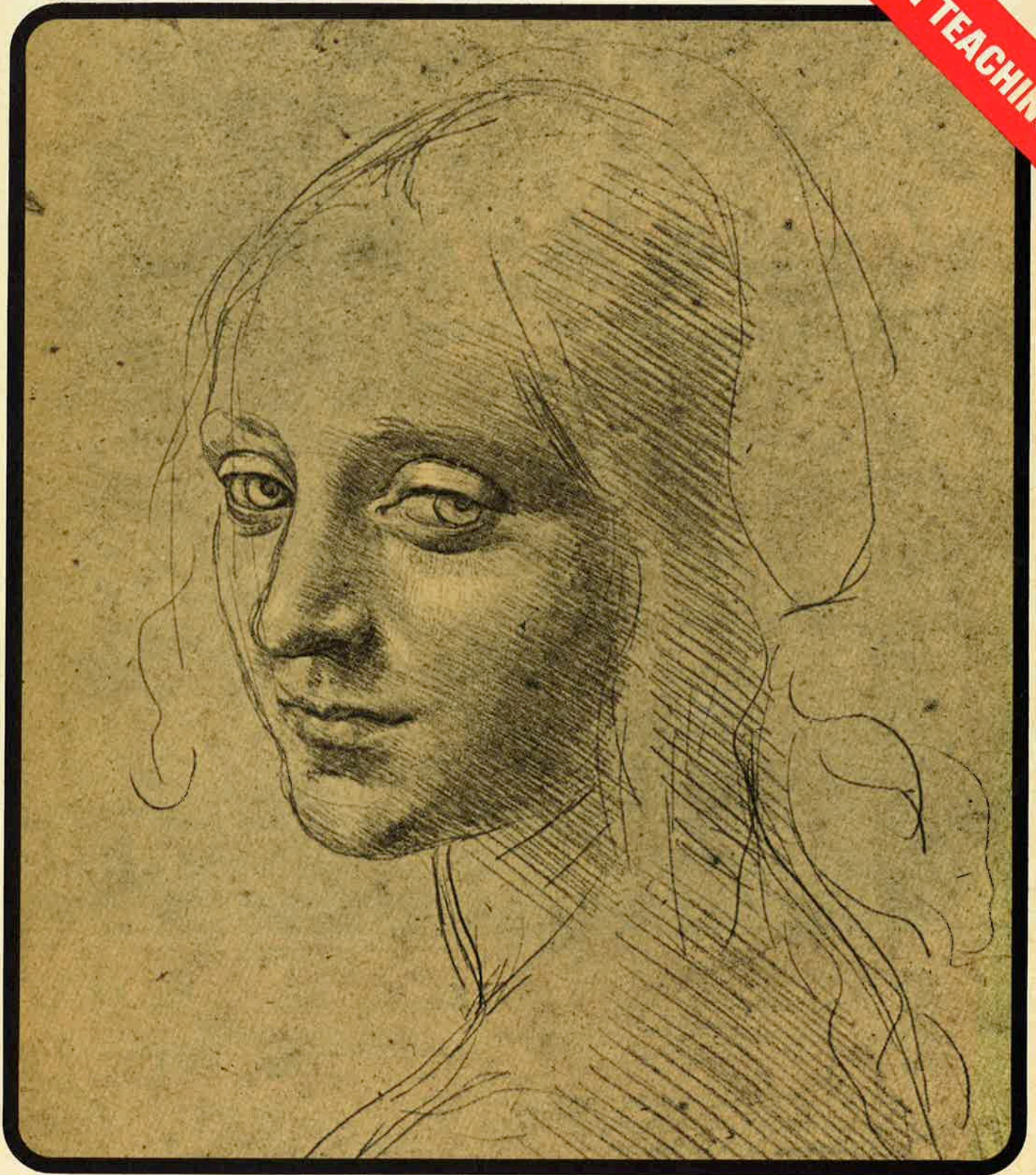


FORUM

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WOMEN IN TEACHING



STATUS OF WOMEN: *Luka*. **SEXUAL HARASSMENT:** *Daigneault*
POWER TO CHANGE: Posen. **WOMEN'S STUDIES:** Ellis.

THE STATUS OF WOMEN

in the teaching profession



by Shelagh Luka

Teaching—Isn't that the field that's dominated by women? Isn't that the field where equal pay, equal access, and equal participation exist for women? Isn't that the field which provides women with a full and satisfying career, and an equitable pension at retirement?

If you believe these myths, you're not alone; unfortunately for women teachers, however, they are just that—myths. In fact, women are starting to disappear from our high schools, and from our Federation.

One of the background papers prepared for the Commission on Declining Enrolment (Working Paper No. 24, by Dr. Dorothy Smith of OISE), found that:

- *between 1972 and 1976, the percentage of women teachers in Ontario (elementary and secondary) decreased from 52% to 49%;*
- *in spite of a net increase of 496 secondary jobs, the number of men increased by 796, and the number of women decreased by 300.*

Presently, about one-third of the high school teachers in Ontario are women: that translates into about 12,000 OSSTF members.

While it is certainly true that pay scales do not discriminate, the hidden fact is that women's average salaries are considerably lower than men in teaching as they are in other employ-

ment fields. Two factors account for this:

- *interrupted work patterns (for child-bearing) combine with definitions of seniority as continuous experience to keep many women at less than maximum. (In 1976, an OSSTF Task Force reported that fully 64% of the women members had nine or fewer years' experience.)*
- *the higher-paying positions of responsibility are virtually monopolized by men. (Over 90% of all Ontario leadership positions are held by men, according to a Ministry Memo of April 25, 1980.)*

It becomes immediately apparent, then, that this income disparity will continue through the retirement years, since superannuation benefits are directly tied to the number of years of service as well as to a percentage of income.

With declining enrolment, teacher firings, and decreasing numbers of promotion opportunities, the prob-

lems facing women teachers become even more serious. Teacher firings based on seniority ensure that a disproportionate number of women lose positions. A clear example of this occurred in 1979, and again in 1980, when about 75% of the secondary teachers whose contracts were terminated by North York were women.

It suddenly becomes possible to envisage schools with no women members in several departments, and it suddenly becomes possible to envisage large groups of students, at least half of whom are female, going through high school without ever having a woman teacher.

It is very difficult indeed to know these facts and their implications and still see teaching as an equal opportunity profession. The Federation received ample documentation of the existing problems in the spring of 1976, when the task force commissioned by the Province submitted its report entitled "The Effect of Sexism on the Career Development of Teachers". In the section of the report which discussed "Future Directions", very specific and well-thought out recommendations were made to ensure improvements, and to prevent further deterioration, of the professional status of women members.

Since the publication of that report, little has been accomplished at the provincial level, although there are now a number of Districts which have organized formal committees, or informal groups, within OSSTF and with groups outside the Federation, such as elementary teacher groups and non-teaching employee groups.

In spite of this grass-roots activity, it is still difficult to look at our own internal structure and see much evi-

A major concern of mine is the lack of involvement and participation in Federation activities by women members, and I believe that an important reason for this may well be that women do not perceive that the Federation has represented their needs as effectively as it has represented the needs of their male colleagues. I also believe that one way in which more women can be attracted to Federation work is through such groups as Status of Women committees.

Shelagh Luka

STATUS OF WOMEN

(Concluded)

dence of the fact that this Federation is representative of both male and female members. At all levels, it appears that women are under-represented. A glance at the composition of the following four groups shows that:

- On the Provincial Executive, one of the seven, or 14.3%, is a woman;
- On the Provincial Council, sixteen of the sixty-three members, or 25.4%, are women;
- Of the OTF Governors, three of the ten, or 30%, are women;
- On the Secretariat, two of the twenty-two, or 9.1%, are women.

Even in such areas as Federation publications, one can rarely find articles, columns, pictures, or even cartoon characters which suggest that women play an important role in secondary education in Ontario, or in OSSTF.

Some will say that this situation has developed because women in general are not interested in long-range

career planning, nor in promotion, nor in Federation activities. It is possible that this was the case in the past. It no longer is true, and one can find confirmation of the increasing desire of women for full participation in the work-force almost daily in newspapers, magazines, and other forms of the media; in political groups; in unions; in all kinds of training and apprentices programs; and certainly in our own profession, for more than half of the full-time post-graduate students at OISE are women, and close to half of the candidates in Part I of the Winter Principals' Course are women.

There is a two-fold need which must be addressed. Women need the Federation to speak out strongly in areas of concern to women, whether it is women as teachers, as students, as employees, or as members of society in general. As well, women need to perceive that there is the kind of visible concrete, effective action being taken by the Federation which will assure them that it is indeed *their* Federation. An obvious first step would be the establishment of a pro-

vincial committee concerned with these issues, such as now exists in almost every major teacher organization in Canada. It should be remembered that women's specific needs have not been recognized as valid only in a context where men's needs are understood as normative.

The other side of this picture is the need the Federation has for the support, involvement, and active participation of all its members. Any organization, but especially ones which depend to a significant extent on voluntary commitment of time, talent, and energy, must be able to call on all its resources; women are a resource which the Federation needs in these critical times.

There are many women, from many different parts of the province, who are ready to work together for common goals for women, and indeed for all secondary teachers. They expect that the Federation will recognize their strength and unity, and that it will be wise enough to welcome this willingness as a new source of strength for all of us. ●

by Shelagh Luka

EXAM

Yawning hands
claw heathered hair
squeezing the subconscious
of fragmented facts.
Stuttering pens scribe
rhythmically to the beat
of cerebral coughs.
Eyes tired and shifty
cut left and right under
damp armpits.

Some fighting the enemy
for the love of knowledge
others leaking containers
at the door.

J. Di Leonardo

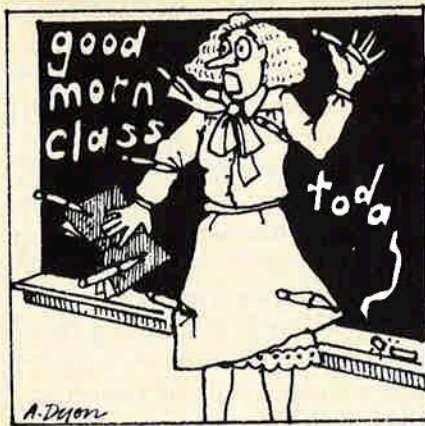


SMALL DIFFERENCE? (a problem in arithmetic)

In its orbit around the sun, the earth deviates from a perfectly straight line by only one ninth of an inch every eighteen miles. If it changed to one eighth of an inch we would all be fried by the sun. If it were to change to one tenth of an inch we would all be frozen solid. Not much difference? Using this information, and assuming the orbital path to be circular, calculate the three distances from the sun.

*I'm not one for tempering justice
with mercy . . .*





ATTITUDES

by John Melady

I am not so sure that the editor of this magazine realized what he was doing to me when he asked for my views on women in teaching. Fortunately, I had a preview of the excellent article by Shelagh Luka that is printed elsewhere, so rather than repeat some of her finding myself, I asked a number of people how they

- would answer the question: "What do you think of women in teaching?" The printable answers are as follows:
- They obviously should be in teaching. If teaching is their thing, then they should be in it.
 - As long as they're pretty.
 - Every staff should have a good balance between men and women.
 - My best teacher is a woman.
 - They should be at home minding house.
 - That's a broad question.
 - My first teacher was great. She was my mother though.
 - They're not so special.
 - I think women teachers are treated unfairly. If we have a baby and stay at home, we can lose seniority. If we don't stay at home, we're accused of being poor mothers.
 - Why aren't phys-ed heads ever women?
 - There are only one or two directors who are women. Is that fair?
 - There are good and bad *teachers*, not good and bad women teachers.

- Any answer I gave to that would get me into trouble.
- They're the cause of declining standards, increasing vandalism, and so on. They can't control kids.
- There would be no unemployment if women didn't work.
- Women don't need teaching as much as teaching needs women.
- They are all right I guess.
- There's no difference really.
- Women teachers have a tendency to panic when a class gets out of hand.
- They're fine. They don't bother me.
- I don't think about them. They're no different than men.
- Let's keep them working. They help to pay off the mortgage.
- Women have a pretty good deal. They're on the same grid as we are.
- I'm in love with my English teacher, and she's a woman.
- Let's keep them around. They're colourful.
- We're stuck with them, I guess. ●

ASK ABOUT OUR SUMMER COURSES WHICH START ON JULY 2, 1981 THROUGH JULY 31 (9:00 A.M. — 1:30) THESE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS COURSES (PARTS I, II & SPECIALIST) MAY ALSO GIVE CREDIT TOWARDS A B.ED. (IN-SERVICE) DEGREE.

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- Teaching French as a Second Language
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or telephone (416) 667-6305



Sexual Harassment

... it does exist in our workplace!

by Lynn Daigneault

Sexual Harassment is a very emotional issue, eliciting the most personal of reactions from both men and women. It is a problem that is not easily understood, often requiring a personal confrontation with one's own value system. Not all people are sexual harassers. But the kind of person who harasses exists in every workplace, including the educational system.

Sexual harassment has always existed. Only recently has the topic come out of the workplace closet. You may be harassed or you may be someone to whom a person comes for help and advice in dealing with an harasser. Either way, you should become informed about this current issue. It is the intention of this article to describe what sexual harassment is and make suggestions for dealing with the problem.

Sexual harassment can be defined as a form of economic coercion practiced by people who have the power to hire or fire, promote or demote, give raises or deny them, give passing or failing grades. It is the abuse of power of one person over another and it is not limited to any particular stratum of society.

Age is no protection from the harasser nor is one's physical appearance. An harasser is not paying sexual compliments nor expressing sexual desire. He—or she—does not discriminate when it comes to a show of power. In sexual harassment, the

harasser overpowers, or tries to overpower economically and in doing so, threatens loss of livelihood or transfer to a different job.

Can women sexually harass men? The answer is yes. Both sexes can harass. Men, however, who admit to being sexually harassed also admit that the harassers are not in a position to jeopardize their job. Most often, it is men who hold the positions of power or authority in any corporate structure, including education.

An excellent reference for those interested in understanding sexual harassment is *The Secret Oppression, Sexual Harassment of Working Women*, (Backhouse and Cohen), published by Macmillan of Canada. This book provides an excellent overview of the problem in Canada today and is a widely-cited resource in the area of sexual harassment cases.

Sexual Harassment has many definitions:

- Any sexually oriented practice that endangers a woman's job, that undermines her job performance and threatens her economic livelihood. (Alliance Against Sexual Coercion)

The author is currently Consultant, Affirmative Action and Women's Studies, North York Board of Education. Prior to 1979 she was President of District 13 and Provincial Councillor.

- Any repeated or unwanted sexual comments, looks, suggestions, or physical contact that you find objectionable or offensive and causes you discomfort on the job. (Working Women United Institute)

It has also been defined as:

- Any male action that makes women feel uncomfortable at work, including sexist jokes, leering and lechery.
- A technique used by men to deny women real power in the business world because women upset the traditional and understood bases of power.

Michael Korda in his book *Power: How to Get It—How to Use It*, says that sexual signals are a means of controlling women. He goes on to say that the main thing is to establish one of the existing social female-male relationships as a basis for a business or professional relationship. For example, men flirt with their secretaries in order to make it difficult for them to ask for a raise or refuse to perform an unwelcome chore.

Sexual Harassment can be psychological—relentless proposals of physical intimacy to subtle hints or overt requests for dates and sexual favours. It can be physical—pinching, grabbing, hugging, patting, leering, brushing against and touching.

The key words, however, to describe sexual harassment are "unwanted behaviour." Talking about sexual harassment does not mean restricting normal everyday male-female relationships. It does, however, mean that where behaviour is unwanted, it should cease.

Sexual Harassment is not just a heterosexual problem. Sexual Harassment can be the abuse of power by a member of the same or opposite sex over another.

Since most "victims" are women, however, reference will be made to women in the examples that follow. Sexual harassment occurs when:

- a waitress is groped on the job.
- male eyes follow a woman employee up and down and around all day.
- dirty jokes are told in situations that destroy a woman's credibility or erode her authority.
- a woman is treated as a sex object instead of a serious employee or committee member, thus closing the door to advancement in non-traditional fields.
- a woman deliberately dresses down for work or acts in a boring manner to discourage passes.
- a woman becomes so afraid of being touched or hearing physical comments about herself that she cannot concentrate on her work and her health in some cases is affected.
- the superordinate promises a raise or a promotion or a good recommendation in exchange for a little "co-operation."
- an employee requests a transfer or has to leave a job to escape pinchers and chasers.
- a student's grades go down because of the pressure of listening to comments about chest sizes and contraception.
- a secretary puts off going to the stock room, to the photocopying room or to the school vault because

there is only one door in and no other door out.

- a male colleague, after hearing a female colleague give a serious report, says, "it's always nice to hear from such a pretty young woman" and makes no comment about the report.
- implied requests for "co-operation" are made to a student teacher by an associate teacher in exchange for a good grade.

What can you do if you feel you are being harassed? Read on.

In May of 1978 The Toronto Star published an article on Sexual Harassment and included a route of complaint. Some of the suggestions appear below. Others have been amended:

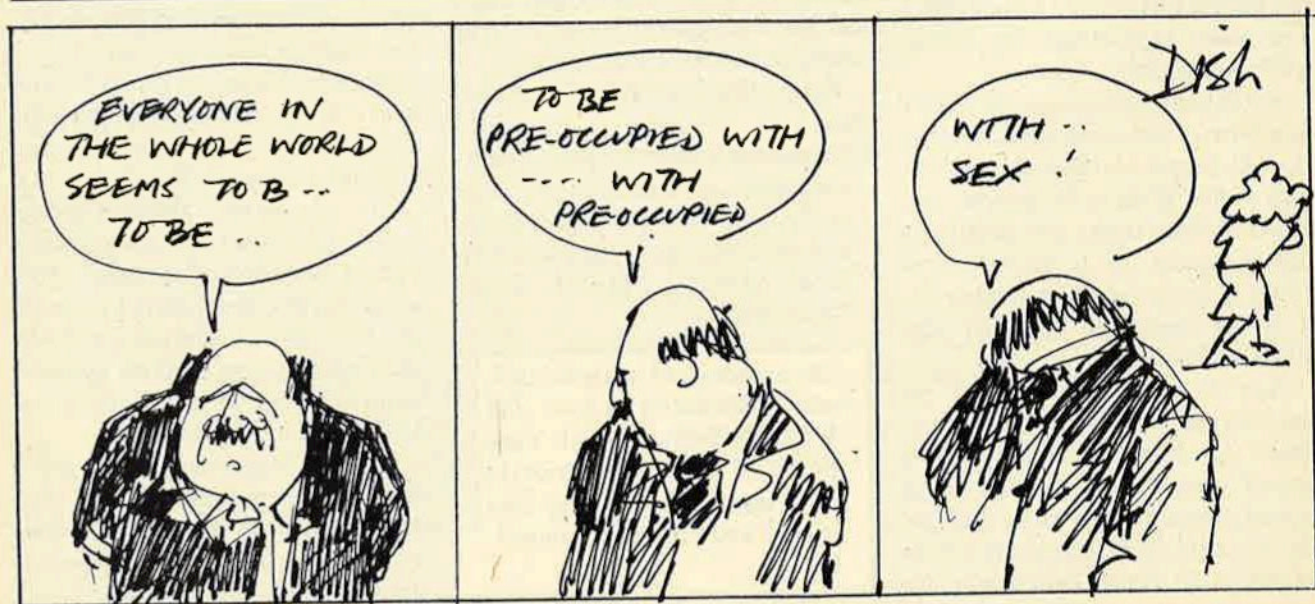
- Do not ignore sexual harassment. It does not go away.
- Do not be flattered. Anyone can be harassed and most people try it as a power play, not because they're "in love."
- If someone at work makes a play you are not interested in, tell him so *firmly* and *politely* and put the relationship back on a business level. Remember a harasser needs to be told that you do not like and will not accept certain behaviours.
- If this message does not compute, talk to other women about it. You are probably not alone.
- Keep a written record of the details of each incident. Try to find a witness.
- Once you have made a complaint,

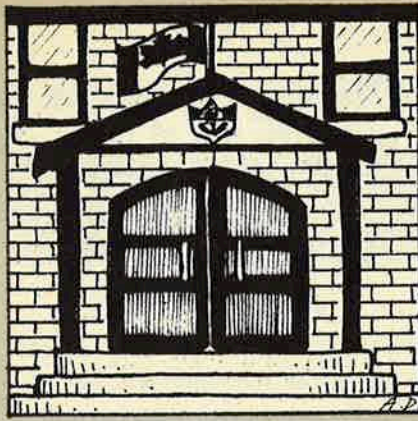
don't give the boss the least little excuse for firing you, demoting you, or giving you a poor recommendation, particularly if you have accused a member of the "Old Boys' Network."

- Hire a lawyer to send a letter of warning to the alleged harasser.
- **Complain to your federation or union. Sexual harassment should constitute unprofessional behaviour.**
- **If your school board has an "affirmative action program" for women—and so far only two boards do (North York and Toronto)—go to the affirmative action officer.**
- If you feel you are being treated unfairly at work because of sexual demands, complain to the Ontario Human Rights Commission—400 University Avenue, 965-6481.

At York University in Toronto, a process has been established for dealing with sexual harassment. The total extent of the problem is not known. What is known is that sexual harassment does exist in every workplace and that there are some organizations in the private and public sector that are willing to recognize the problem and take preventive measures.

Teachers' federations have never tolerated unprofessional conduct. Sexual harassment in education is, in my opinion, unprofessional conduct and cannot—where it exists—be tolerated. ●





The Power to Change

by Gail Posen and Joyce Peterson

Last May, the Board of Education for the City of Toronto approved a motion stating that two full-time teachers would be released for the 1980-81 school year on a half-time basis to rewrite the secretarial-clerical curriculum. This was the first occasion when curriculum was allowed to be written during the school year. Most curriculum writing projects in the past have been done by teams hired for summer writing, a kind of one-shot deal.

What was the rationale for such a project? What steps did we take to ensure that the project would be approved? What convinced the Toronto Board to experiment with this more expensive plan?

For more than ten years, the initiators of this project have been teachers of secretarial subjects. From our experience in the classroom, from what we have studied and researched in university courses, from conferences we have attended, from what we saw happening in the business office, from a clear development in our own consciousness, we came to realize that the curriculum in the clerical/secretarial area was sadly lacking in many areas. It did not prepare our students, who are almost entirely young women, to survive in the labour force, nor to improve their conditions of work. How can we teach typing and shorthand and business communications divorced from the need for secretaries to establish a more dignified wage and image? Can we teach the latest office trends, microelectronics and word processing, without teaching the human uses and abuses of computers and the new

work organization of the office which is now required by management because of automation? Most of our graduates will be secretaries, word processing operators and administrative assistants, not managers, executives and presidents. The content of the present curriculum comes nowhere near what young women need to know to train them for a career in today's office or in the office of the future. The curriculum we were looking for would hopefully redress many of the shortcomings we found in the secretarial curriculum.

more women work

In addition we looked at the statistics. They told us that there are more women in the work force today than ever before (by the end of 1970, almost 57% of adult women of working age—between the ages of 20 and 64—were in the paid labour force), and the numbers are increasing all the time. It is now predicted that by 1990 women will make up 50% of the work force. Most families cannot survive on one income, and women are forced to work out of economic necessity. Still others are sole support mothers, widows and single women. Besides, women no longer work for only a short period of their lives. Marriage does not necessarily mean the end of a career. Women can expect to work up to 30 years of their adult lives. Even if the economics of the family does not necessitate it, many women are now choosing to work outside the home because they want the rewards and satisfactions of a career in their chosen field. The curriculum material we use with our students today should be very different from what it was 20 or even 10 years ago. It must, we thought, address itself to the changing needs of today's working women.

On this basis, we took our proposal to the Board's Status of Women Committee as a first step where it was well received. A motion was passed recommending to the Board that this curriculum be written during the 1980-81 school year by the two teachers proposing it on a half-time basis. From this committee, the recommendation went to two more Board committees, the Personnel and Organization Committee (for approval of the two half-time releases) and the School Programs Committee (for approval to write the proposed curriculum). It passed both of these committees with little trouble and then went on to the full Board for final approval. Only one trustee questioned the proposal and therefore it passed the Board with very little dissension. One thing should be added here. Just before the School Programs Committee meeting, the Superintendent of Curriculum and the Business Co-ordinator for the Board interviewed us carefully and asked some hard questions. We believe it was a combination of: 1) relating our students' interest and enthusiasm for topics we had tried which were included in the proposal; 2) our research into and knowledge of the topics proposed and 3) our own convictions which convinced the Superintendent to recommend to the Trustees that the proposal be accepted at School Programs. The fact that we are fortunate enough to have a perceptive and progressive-minded Superintendent certainly helped the situation as well.

colossal task

Since September of this school year, one of us has been off half time every day (this will continue until the end of June) and one of us has been given full time off from February 1 to the end of the year. (In both cases, it

was a personal choice.) Up until now most of our time has been spent on researching, collecting materials and interviewing people in business. We have given one workshop to secretarial teachers (in November) and hope to do another before the year is out. Part of our general overview has been written and, at the time of this writing, we have completed our first unit on Health & Safety in the Office and are starting on our second.

We didn't realize what a colossal task we had undertaken. About three months ago, we mapped out a draft outline which suggested 12 units. These could be used in any secretarial course from Grade 9 to Grade 12 and in many other courses as well. Our inexperience has taught us that writing a unit, especially in the technology area where everything is so new and in constant change, takes a lot longer than we had anticipated. The research alone is a huge task. But when we locate good material and make good connections, it is both exciting and rewarding.

need to respond

What kind of units are we writing and why? Since 82% of clerical workers are women, secretarial teachers should now be looking at how changing technological conditions in the work place may very well deskill and downgrade the office worker. The educational system needs to respond to this situation by making changes in the curriculum which will facilitate understanding the technological and human implications in this automated process. This means that along with Typing and English skills, which are already in the present curriculum, secretarial students should be prepared with the life skills necessary to survive in rapidly changing conditions. We proposed that secretarial students need to have an understanding of the issues which will confront them as working people. Some of the skills and topics we included in our proposal were:

1. an opportunity to improve analytical skills and strengthen communication skills

Gail Posen teaches Secretarial subjects and a Women's Studies course at Central H.S. of Commerce.

Joyce Peterson teaches Secretarial subjects at Monarch Park Secondary School.

2. a short course in assertiveness training
3. learning to cope with stress which will increase with automation
4. development of self-confidence and group decision making
5. an understanding of:
 - employer/employee legal rights and obligations
 - job health and safety
 - personal financial planning
 - Affirmative Action programs
 - sex role stereotyping
 - the internal organizational relations of business
 - daycare
 - sexual harassment in the work place and how to deal with it
 - the role and function of employee organizations

Topics we have added since the proposal include:

1. Career Paths in the Automated Office
2. New Skills and the Changing Nature of Work in the 1980s Office
3. Female Labour Force Statistics and their Implications
4. Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value
5. Effects of Job Evaluation Schemes

We may not have all the units done by the end of June, but we hope to have enough done to start field testing them as soon as possible. It might be a monumental job, but we think it's well worth it. ●

For further information, please feel free to contact us either by telephone or by writing:

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New series on Canadian Art funded by C.P.

TVOntario executives are delighted with today's announcement by Canadian Pacific that it will provide funds for a new series designed to fill the need for a high-calibre production focusing on Canadian art.

"I'm very pleased about Canadian Pacific's support," says Gene Lawrence, general manager of Educational Services, English. "It's doubtful if we could have considered a series of this magnitude and quality without it."

According to Diana Orris, director of Revenue Development, Canadian Pacific's commitment represents a new trend toward corporate support of TVOntario's educational programming. "Canadian Pacific's financial support is the largest received by TVOntario to date and the first that will allow a series to have a single underwriter. We sincerely hope other corporations will follow the path established by Canadian Pacific."

The new series of 13 30-minute programs will examine Canadian art, and through art, Canadian culture. Canadian Pacific's underwriting extends to the creation of support materials for the series, including a fully illustrated book and an educator's guide.

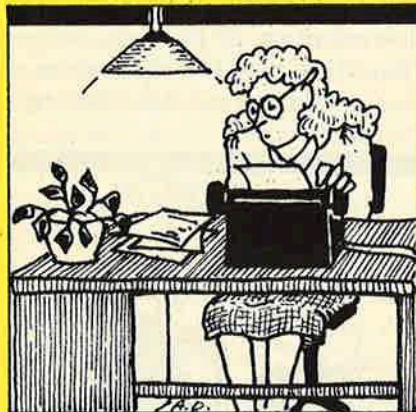
"I'm excited about the basic design of the series," says Lawrence. "We are still in the research phase and have not made our final decisions about which artists will be featured. In order to find the mosaic of Canadian culture, we are determined to make the series representative of Canadian art from coast to coast and across the years."

It is anticipated that the series will be completed in 1982. TVOntario will supplement Canadian Pacific's funding of the production budget. ●

INTRODUCING

WOMEN'S STUDIES

IN OFFICE PRACTICE COURSES



by Audrey Ellis

The author is a teacher of business practices who finds herself in the French department at Clarkson S.S. (Mississauga) as a result of staff changes brought about by declining enrolment. She has also taught English as a second language, Business English and Office Practices in Northern Zambia.

Each year that I teach Office Practice, I become more convinced that if all I do is teach the basic skills of typing, shorthand, and office procedures, I am doing my students an enormous disservice.

The girls I teach today will be young working women within a year or two. I am sending them into a working world where they will earn 56% of what men earn, where 90% of them will find no government-licensed day-care for their children (Fact Sheets, Women's Bureau, Ontario Ministry of Labour), where they will not have the same access to jobs, training programmes, and promotions that men have, and to add injury to insult, where many will be sexually harassed. Most of these girls will marry and work outside the home for at least 30 years. Those who do not marry can expect to work for 45 years. Approximately 74% of these girls will have to support themselves at some point either because they have never married or because they have been widowed or divorced. (*Women and Poverty*, National Council of Welfare, October 1979)

unprepared for reality

Yet, most of these girls are totally unprepared for the reality of their lives five or ten years hence. They have not been brought up to see themselves financially independent from a man and have, therefore, given very little thought to their education past secondary school. They do not envisage careers for themselves, but rather see work as something to do for a few years before the children come along.

As a teacher, I have the responsibility of helping these girls to prepare for their futures. This is especially true precisely because it is secretarial skills that I teach. The largest section

of the female labour force is clerical, and of all clerical workers, 77% are female. (Fact Sheets, Ministry of Labour) I do not think there is a more logical place in our curriculum to integrate the study of "working women's issues."

In thinking through and designing my office practice curriculum over the past three years, I have come to understand some of the basic attitudes which I believe have impeded us from introducing these issues. Before I go on to discuss ways of integrating "women's studies" into Office Practice courses, I would like to explain the process I went through in arriving at this understanding.

* * *

I began my career as a business teacher plagued with doubts about the value of what I was doing. On the one hand, I knew that it was important to teach students typing skills, yet on the other hand I realized that at the senior levels of secretarial practice and office procedures courses I was, in fact, training young women to take their places among millions of other women in low-paid, low-status, dead-end clerical jobs. I realized that I was expected not only to teach skills but to train my students to accept their role in these undervalued jobs. To add to my doubts there were the reactions of friends and other teachers who conveyed the subtle message that the teachers of commercial subjects are not as bright, qualified or valuable as those who teach academic subjects.

The source of these reactions and my conflicting feelings was an elitist attitude. I felt conflict about teaching secretaries because I did not value the work that secretaries did. Neither, obviously, did my friends and colleagues. How many times have I heard, or said myself, "Why would a bright girl like that want to be a secretary?" As a society, we believe that

those people who do manual labour or who work in service jobs are not as intelligent or as valuable to the society as those who have a university education.

A bit of serious thinking about the extent to which society was dependent upon clerical work led me to the conclusion that clerical work was extremely valuable. We couldn't keep the wheels turning if all the clerical workers went out on strike; we need their services. Yet we don't value clerical workers precisely because they are women. I have for a long time been aware of the fact that the value of work that women do is not recognized—not because the work lacks intrinsic value, but because women do it; I had just never consciously applied this knowledge to clerical work.

Here, then, are what I believe to be the two major reasons for which we have not hitherto dealt with "women's issues" in Office Practice courses:

- the belief that students taking Office Practice courses are not very bright and can only cope with the learning of skills;
- the insidious sexism and elitism in our own attitudes which impeded us from even considering the introduction of such issues.

integrating 'issues'

Once I understood the source of my conflict, I became convinced that I could not justify teaching straight skills. I see it as an essential part of my job to deal with these issues in class in an attempt to help students learn to deal with them. Having arrived at this conclusion, I began thinking about how I could integrate issues into my courses. I decided to begin with the unit "Careers and Applying for a Job". This unit traditionally covers such topics as resume preparation, appropriate interview dress and behaviour and completion of application forms. The potential for this unit, however, is almost unlimited. I like to use "The Marriage Game—What Are You Doing with the Rest of Your Life?" (Donna Hunter, YWCA, 1978) to introduce students to some statistics concerning women. This is a simulation game in

which students examine through a number of case studies how time and circumstances change women's lives. It can be played in two 40-minute periods. As a follow-up, a group of students can give a seminar on the findings of the *Women and Poverty Report* (National Council of Welfare, October 1979), and another group can gather information for a bulletin board comparing pay differences between traditional men's and women's work and between salaries for men and women doing essentially the same work. These three activities tie together beautifully to give students a realistic picture of women's place in the working world and help students to see the necessity of beginning to consider themselves responsible for their own financial survival. The development of this attitude is an essential prerequisite for any career discussions.

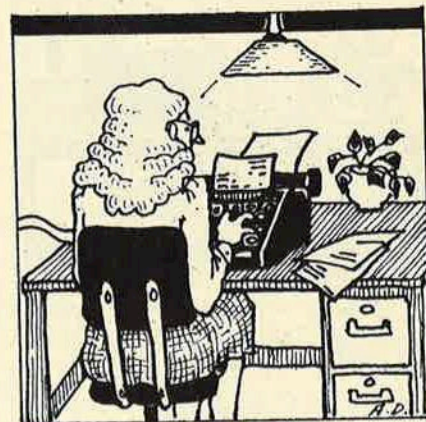
At this point in the unit a search of the classified section of the newspaper can lead to the teaching of resumes and covering letters. Students' observations of the classified section are quite different from what I used to find before I introduced the above topics. They have become much more aware of the kinds of jobs available for males and females, and the pay differences in favor of the males, despite in many cases, the higher educational requirements for females.

The unit on careers can also include the study of laws relating to women in the labour force. The Women's Bureau of the Ministry of Labour has numerous free publications concerning discrimination in hiring and promotion, sexual harassment and general regulations of interest to working women. Filling out of sample application forms should come after the study of these laws. The students will find many discrepancies between the law and current practice. This can lead to discussions concerning what one can do when confronted with application forms requesting prohibited information or employers asking prohibited questions during an interview. Students should be encouraged to explore the various responses and to discuss their implications.

assertiveness training

This unit also provides an excellent opportunity to introduce assertiveness training. Role playing activities can help students learn how to present themselves for an interview, how to ask for a raise, request a promotion or admission to a training programme. Students can also practise dealing with on-the-job personnel conflicts, employee-boss conflicts and sexual harassment.

Many of our students already have part-time jobs and have experienced first-hand sexual harassment, and discrimination in pay and promotions. They have lacked, however, a forum to discuss and share their con-



cerns. Many feel these things are happening to them alone and they are afraid to discuss the problems with anyone else. These issues can be explored individually or in groups of students through researching and writing reports or essays. Most Office Practice courses include a section on the use of reference materials. This unit can be expanded to deal not only with those reference books which are specifically business/secretarial, but with the use of the library in general. Students can be assigned research topics, to be done primarily outside of class time, on a variety of issues related to working women. Their findings can be presented either in written form or orally to the class as a seminar. Either form gives the student needed practice in communication skills. Following is a list of some of the topics which my students have researched:

- Equal Pay Legislation
- Availability of Child Care Facili-

ties

- Pension and Insurance Plans for Women
- Sexual Harassment on the Job
- Women in Management
- Poverty Amongst Working Women
- Organizing Clerical Workers
- The Changing Nature of Clerical Work (Word Processing)
- Affirmative Action Programmes
- Advancement Possibilities for Women

I have found this to be an extremely valuable exercise for a number of reasons. First, it exposes students to a variety of issues which will affect them as working women, and encourages them to begin perceiving themselves as working women. Although each student only researches one topic, she learns about the other topics through the seminars or by reading the reports of the other students which are distributed on dittoed handouts. Second, the assignment gives the students needed experience in using reference books and in doing general research, and third, it gives them experience in analyzing information and organizing and writing or presenting it in their own words.

I have briefly explained the two most important ways in which I have integrated issues of interest to working women into my secretarial courses. They can, however, be included in almost any unit in the course. When teaching Word Processing, discussions can focus on the changing nature of clerical work and what this will mean to office relations in general and to women in particular. The units on filing and handling the mail can include discussions on the routinized nature of clerical work and what this means to one's job satisfaction. Short readings can be assigned from books such as *All the Livelong Day* (Barbara Garson, Penguin, 1977), *Pink Collar Workers* (Louise Kapp Howe, Avon, 1977), and *Not Servants, Not Machines* (Jean Tepperman, Beacon Press, 1976) which discuss the nature of clerical work and the frustrations involved in doing work which is undervalued and underpaid. Throughout

the year, discussions can focus on the changing roles and expectations of men and women both inside and out of the office. A "Women At Work" bulletin board can be maintained throughout the year simply by posting newspaper and magazine articles relating to working women.

The most important element in successfully integrating these issues into a secretarial course, or any course for that matter, is the attitude of the teacher. If you bring to your classes a non-sexist/feminist attitude or perspective, it can't help but permeate your lessons. If you believe in the value of your students and of the work they are training to do, they will sense it and learn to have pride and respect for themselves. Instilling this pride and respect is our responsibility. We cannot forget that most of our senior students will be working in a year. They will be faced with numerous situations ranging from lack of appreciation for their work to overt discrimination and exploitation in the forms of poor wages and sexual harassment. **If we do not bring these topics out in the open for discussion, we are sending out students into the working world totally unprepared.** ●

This article was originally written in June 1980 for the Ontario Business Education Association's newsletter and first appeared in *Mudpie*, a Toronto magazine written by and for teachers, parents and students. It is reprinted here with the permission of the author.



"Nobody minds a mixed marriage any more, dear—even category one with category four!"

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WAS MARCH 8, 1981

International Women's Day arose out of the early struggles of working women in the industrial countries, for recognition of their rights as workers, citizens and mothers.

It was on March 8, 1908, that the women textile workers of New York, grossly underpaid and working long hours in fire-trap sweatshops, went on strike, against intolerable working conditions. Joined by immigrant mothers of the slum tenements of New York's East Side, and by the socialist women, who were campaigning for votes for women and for women to join the new needle trade unions, they gathered on the streets in a huge demonstration.

With placards bearing such slogans as "Higher Wages for Women", "Votes for Women", "We want Bread and Roses", they announced that they wanted their just rights. So overwhelmingly successful was the demonstration, that its organizers decided to make it a yearly event.

Later, women in two of these shirtwaist factories went on strike for better pay and working conditions. One of the factories was the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, which had the infamous responsibility for raising the conditions in the textile factories to a national scandal, which resulted in the international recognition of the struggle of women workers. This occurred at the Copenhagen Congress of the Socialist International in 1910. Clara Zetkin, the great European champion of women's rights and of peace was leading the Conference. Inspired by the example of the women of the USA, she proposed that March 8 be set aside each year as International Women's Day. This would be the day when women everywhere would unite against militarism and war, for full equality for women, and for the security of the family.

International Women's Day is celebrated by millions of women all over the world in their struggle to overcome sexism, as well as political, economic and social oppression. ●

Moira Armour

from the president

The question of the leadership role of women in secondary education—or rather, the lack of significant numbers of women in leadership roles—continues to trouble women as individual teachers and is a matter for strong debate within the Federation. As Sheila Luka points out elsewhere in this edition of FORUM, even the percentage of women teachers in the profession is declining. Although I do not agree with some of Sheila's causal analysis it is a fact that, according to Ministry Statistics, women represented 31% of secondary teachers in 1975 while in 1979 their numbers had dropped to a little over 30%. The proportion of female to male in OSSTF has hovered around this mark since the birth of the Federation. What one might question is the reason for any decline rather than growth in a period in which the participation rate of women in university education, and therefore in basic qualifications to enter teaching, has skyrocketed.

While some school boards have affirmative action policies which encourage upward mobility among women the percentage of women in the three major positions of responsibility is growing at a snail's pace. Women represented 3% of the principals in 1979 as opposed to 2.1% in 1975. The growth in vice-principals may indicate some real effort out there with a positive change from 5.2% to 7.5% despite the effects of declining enrolment on these positions. The department head ratio has also moved positively if minutely from 19.3% to 21.1%—and we now have two female directors of education in the Province, our small contribution to proving that God is a woman. Thus the situation for the woman who is interested in promotion is slightly better than it was a few years ago. This in itself will influence the perception of role models whether the viewer is a teacher of either sex or a student.

But what of other methods of demonstrating that women can do their jobs as competently as men, albeit often differently? My real interest at this point is in the role of our women members in the Federation itself.

When I first joined the Provincial Executive I was one of three female members. I am now the lone female. No female candidates have declared themselves interested in the Provincial Executive as I write this—and role modelling, we are told, begins at the top. I cannot blame the male members of our organization for this dearth of female candidates. Indeed, were I to look around the Province I could name several women who, without question, have the talent to do the job. Many of these women are already officers of the Federation at the local level so they have already decided to take the risky route of politics. Where are the women involved in OSSTF and are they gaining suitable experience? At the district and division levels we have 168 female executive members (only 24 of whom are "secretaries"). In 56 districts, 25 women hold the office of vice-president, surely an indication of willingness to move to higher office. This is in contrast to only 8 female presidents and 16 female provincial councillors. Be that as it may, there are clear indications of increasing involvement in Federation affairs, not only on affirmative action committees, but in general membership welfare activities. Four women chair standing committees at the provincial level and another 31 women are members of standing committees. But the OSSHC Board of Directors has no women members, and, of course, principals' attitudes are often blamed for the small number of women who are encouraged to seek advancement.

So what is my point? Not to brag about the number of women involved in OSSTF. The number is too small. Rather, to say that the quality of work done by our female colleagues in the Federation is such that they are educating our diminishing number of chauvinists and paving the way for increased involvement. But we need more women who are willing to take the risks of electioneering since this is the logical "step-up" in our activities from the intellectual comfort of committee work. For too many women, action is still committee oriented rather than leadership oriented, and



committees advise, they do not, of themselves, create change. The exception to this is, of course, negotiating committees, the one impregnable bulkwalk of chauvinism in many of our districts and divisions. In recent weeks I have had two highly competent female chief negotiators complain of their treatment by their male colleagues, who seem to assume that women can't count. These are, naturally, teachers who are not members of the negotiating team. I intend to send both women the latest fad in buttons in Toronto. In small print are the words which should be the motto of every ambitious woman "*He's cute, but can he type?*"

The challenge remains to increase the amount and level of involvement. It is my personal view that action, not further committee work, is what is required, and that women who wish to be involved must understand that part of the risk lies in the choice of activity for they may have to choose between political office and promotion in the school board. We know what the problem is. If more women who have the drive to gain support for committees (local or provincial) would, having established the committee, leave its work to the less energetic and turn their personal energies to elected office in OSSTF, the Federation would be better for it. We need candidates of equality from both sexes at every level of the Federation. In my experience though the political arena is not for the faint-hearted. At every level of the Federation, elected office is determined much more by ability than sex.

One last comment. Ask your delegates to this year's Annual Assembly how many of our all-male roster of hopefuls had female campaign managers. In my experience, anyone who can survive that task with coherence, integrity and good humour can "manage" the Federation. **Things may be looking up.**

Margaret Wilson