

# WATER LILY

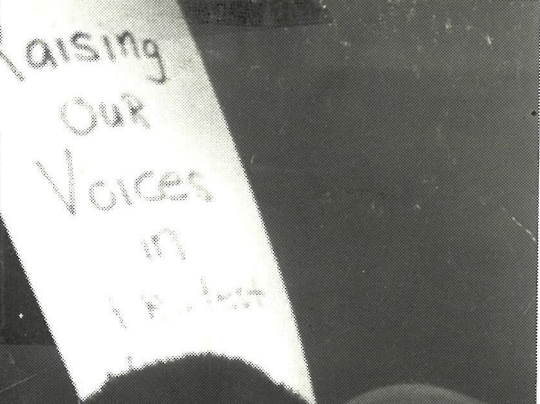


"The fight is not over. The federal government cannot cut the deficit by furthering the oppression of women... We refuse to be victims any longer; we're survivors. We refuse these cuts. The government must recognize the power of women's centres."

-Beth Lacey

"Women cannot afford this attitude. This is a blatant attempt to silence those groups which have challenged society's assumptions about poverty, violence and power. This is their method of control, which we resist."

-Martha Muzychka



"I'm appalled by their nerve, to deny women this outlet after all the work women have done. We are going to make sure this decision is reversed."

-Wendy Williams

"This demonstration is a show of solidarity that lifts my spirits. This demonstrates that most women are outraged."

-Marion Hopkins

"Does the government think our society is now perfect? They certainly didn't get that from us!"

-Helen Porter

"This is disgusting. Does Mulroney have any idea what he has done? I can't believe the government doesn't realize our power yet! For every voice there are a hundred that cannot be here."

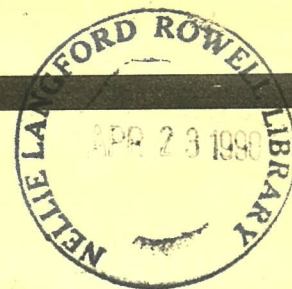
-Fran Innes

Inside:  
The Montreal Massacre

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# EDITORIAL



Waterlily: a flower found in marshy bogs. A plant normally found in more temperate climates, it survives this harsh environment and like Newfoundland and Labrador women flowers in spite of it. In the 1920s, there was a short-lived women's bulletin called "Waterlily". We would like to reclaim some of the history of our foremothers that was lost when that paper was destroyed. We're also reclaiming our right to evoke various connotations in words that are often considered too 'soft'.

*Waterlily*: a quarterly feminist publication run by a collective of Newfoundland and Labrador women.

*Waterlily* welcomes submissions from women all across the province - articles, poetry and short stories. We use Word Perfect 4.2 and 4.5 on an IBM-compatible system. All submissions should be typed, double spaced, where possible. Deadline for the Summer 1990 issue is May 10.

Annual subscriptions to *Waterlily* are \$10 individual, \$15 institutional. Write us:

*Waterlily*  
P.O. Box 367, Stn. C  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1C 5J9

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*Scarlet Letter*: readers' response

*Witch Hazel*: healing ourselves

*Red Sage*: news section

*Papyrus*: fiction, poetry, books

*Waterlily* is funded by ad revenue and a grant from the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission.

## Waterlily celebrates its first anniversary!

Waterlily has been steadily growing for a year and we are now visible enough for people to be responding to our voice. Some men are still bothered that we choose to focus on women's words, but then we continue to note their absence in other newspapers where their voice is the monopoly, and where they could address the many inequalities women face daily.

Waterlily's success as a forum for women can be measured by its growing subscriptions and sales. Because of the diverse voice of women, the content of Waterlily might appear uneven, yet we feel strongly that women should not be edited to suit only the educated. In the following pages we raise our voices in unison, for the common cause of equality, justice and peace.

Our spring edition is coming out while women's centres across Canada are feeling the cutting cruel winter winds of the Mulroney government set on pushing back the women's movement to the 1950s. This government used a fine sharp scalpel to find the 1.6 million dollars that represents funding to women's centres.

This government spends billions on military spending (there are no cut-backs in the guns and ammo) or on CSIS - the Canadian internal spy network. Its budget has grown by 28 per cent.

It took a trained right wing eye to find the small budget which assists the women's movement; a movement that is the heart

and soul of Canadian feminism.

What the Progressive Conservative party will find out is how much the rights of women are seen as mainstream by Canadians. The millions of Canadian women working to support themselves and their families are not going to turn back the clock to become the chattels of husbands, brothers and fathers. That dependency was far too punitive and capricious.

As women become more independent and self-sufficient as individuals, we must join collectively and let the government know how we want our tax dollars spent. Our money must not go to keep Brian and his colleagues in limousines and luxury hotels, but to keep women's centres open across this province and the country, helping women take the steps away from abusive husbands, away from poverty, away from job ghettos, away from the despair of unfulfilled lives. Please take a minute to send the inside cards expressing your concern over this injustice.

If the Tories are forced by public dissent to rescind their decision as they were in the case of cuts to seniors' pensions, we can expect that they will roll back the cuts to 50 per cent and that we will be expected to be very grateful.

No cuts are acceptable to places and organizations which provide the hope to women emerging out of relationships of servitude.

### Announcements

#### The East End Group of Alcoholics Anonymous

We're celebrating our 40th Anniversary on Tuesday, April 17th at 8:30 at St. Thomas' Church, Canon Wood Hall. A special invitation is extended to Alanon and Alateen members as well as the general public. This will be an open speakers meeting and refreshments will be served.

Narcotics Anonymous welcomes new members and meets each Sunday evening in the Deanery below St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church on Patrick Street at eight p.m.

#### The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women:

Wendy Williams has been appointed for a three year term as president of the independent, government funded Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. As a long-time feminist and activist for women's rights, especially in the area of reproductive rights and responsibilities, Ms. Williams comes to the position with a great deal of knowledge and experience. An important part of the council's function is to comment publicly on how government activities affect women in this province.

New members on the council are Joyce Hancock, of Stephenville, appointed vice-president; Patricia O'Brien, of St. John's; Hope Squires of St. Phillips; Theresa Baikie of Nain; Cheryl Hebert of Torbay; Mary Dawe of Manuels; Marilee Pittman of Cornerbrook; Josephine Budgell of Bishop's Falls; and Elizabeth Brazil Drover, of Gander....Patricia Kelsey was reappointed to the Council.

#### Eastern Edge Gallery, Baird's Cove and Harbour:

March 4-28: "My Mother/My Self"

This is a series of works by three female local and mainland artists, expressing the feelings and attitudes of, and for, mothers. The show is scheduled to coincide with National Women's Day. Curated by Kathleen Knowling, opening was Sunday March 4th.

April 29-May 30: "The River God Suite" Christine Koch

Christine is a local artist, and her exhibit is comprised of a series of paintings concentrating on a single image - a classical River God. Opening Sunday, April 29, 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

#### June 3-27: "The Machi-Ai: Waiting Space" Dierdre Chisolm

An exhibition in mixed media. Dierdre currently resides in Longueuil, Quebec. Opening tentatively scheduled for Sunday, June 3, 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

September 1-27: Rose Adams

Rose, currently living in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, will show pieces of oil on canvas, depicting the objects, people and customs of Mexico, with a specific focus on life and death. Opening is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, September 1, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

#### Action: Environment

This is a new group committed to taking an advocacy and activist role in restoring and protecting our environment, by establishing community based committees through setting up working groups on important issues and by involving concerned individuals. Please help to make this new organization truly province wide.

Annual memberships are \$10.00 with a reduced rate of \$5.00 for students, senior citizens, and those who are unemployed.

Send name, areas of interest, mailing address and phone number to Action: Environment, 9 Garrison Hill, St. John's, A1C 3Y7.

#### Imagine That...Productions

This is an advertising and career education campaign aimed at challenging and encouraging young women to consider all career possibilities. We will be producing a series of 30 second ads, which will later be combined to make a video, with a users' guide to go with it which will be sent to schools and public libraries all over the province.

We want to hear from all people interested in this project; its success depends on the full participation of individuals and groups like you and yours. Call Cathy or Evelyn at 753-7270.

#### Woman Healing 1990: A Cross-Cultural Conference/Gathering

May 28th to June 1st, Sunny Cove, Fort Frances, Ontario.

In isolated Sunny Cove, just east of Fort Frances, with cottages, camping facilities, two beaches, and gorgeous trees, is a beautiful wheelchair-accessible camp, the site for this second gathering. Included this year are many wonderful and varied facilitators, such as Merlin Stone and Starhawk. If you want more information, or to become a part of this gathering, please write Woman Healing 1990, c/o The Thunder Bay Physical and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre, 215 Camelot Street, Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7A 4B9.

#### "Addictions in the 90's: Challenges and Responses" Conference

This gathering from April 29-May 2, 1990 at the Hotel Newfoundland, St. John's, is hosted by the Alcohol and Drug Dependency Commission of Newfoundland and Labrador. For further information please contact Susan V. Reynolds, Conference Co-ordinator, ADDC, Suite 105, Prince Charles Building, 120 Torbay Road, St. John's, A1A 2G8, or call (709) 737-3600, Fax 737-3601.

#### Newfoundland A.I.D.S. Association

The Newfoundland AIDS Association is a community based organization, operated by concerned volunteers. Its present source of money is through donations and fund-raising events.

The Association's goals are:

\*practical and emotional support for people who are H.I.V. positive, and P.W.A.(Persons With Aids)

\*to gather information and to have it readily available to H.I.V. and P.W.A. persons. e.g. Nutrition advice, which would be helpful in promoting a better quality of life

\*to encourage the government in the area of research funding for the development of non-toxic drugs, unlike the currently prescribed drug AZT, for HIV positive people and people with AIDS.

For further information, please contact Betty Ralph, Chairperson, at 753-2914.

# SCARLET LETTER

## Congrats

Waterlily:

Congratulations on your publication. A friend recently brought me a copy and I'd like to subscribe.

From experience I know how much work goes into a publication of this quality. Best wishes for a prosperous and happy future for Waterlily.

Sincerely,

Grace Bavington  
Toronto, Ontario

## UPP centre

Understanding People's Problems  
11 Church Hill  
St. John's A1C 3Z7

Waterlily:

Thank you for the complimentary subscription to your paper. I'm sure it will be very beneficial to the members of our centre in keeping them abreast of issues related to women.

The UPP centre is a recreational facility providing services to individuals who have had psychiatric and emotional difficulties and would benefit from assistance with integration into the mainstream of community life. Our program is designed to assist members increase their leisure and recreational skills. This is achieved by providing encouragement, support and skill development in a socially relaxed environment. We advocate that members participate in existing activities in the community as well as provide activities within the centre in order to deliver diversified programs.

Again, thank you for this subscription.

Sincerely,

Kathy J. Hawkins,  
Executive Director

## Foster care

Waterlily:

In the winter issue of the Waterlily, Marian Frances White wrote an article titled "Foster Care Realities: Children Shuffled, More Workers Needed". There is no doubt the entire system is lacking in certain areas and more child welfare workers are required. However, the cry for more foster homes cannot be emphasized enough, particularly for "difficult teens".

I realize "being a foster parent is hardly enough" but it is essential in the lives of our children and teenagers in care. Foster families are the key! Not all persons are able or willing to be a foster family.

Fostering can be a very rewarding experience but at the same time it may be a terrible disruption in your own family unit. Foster families give a great deal emotionally and expect nothing in return.

They share "parenting" with the children's natural parents which is not an easy task. It is a demanding role requiring patience and utmost concern, and entails accountability in all aspects of the child's life.

Fostering is a job without adequate reimbursement and recognition. It may entail increased wear and tear on your own personal property due to the child's personal tragedy. Fostering is a powerful commitment in giving compassionate care to children and teens in need, however unappreciative they may appear. We need highly motivated people to deal with our children in a system that cannot possibly meet their every need.

If one were to ask Dorothy Clarke, president of the Foster Parent Association on the Avalon Peninsula, what personal satisfaction she derived from fostering, Dorothy would reply "watching the child come ahead". Dorothy is referring to the fact that she can see a child's rejection and loneliness turn to "belonging", the end result of such a feat being all aspects of that child's life have improved. Their fears dissipate, they settle in and begin to make their own personal achievements, however small. Foster families make a difference in their lives. Blank expressions gradually turn into smiles because you have made a positive impact on that child's growth and development.

We can all expend a great deal of energy discussing the deficiencies in the system. Now is the time to act. "There are other ways to help besides taking on the enormous task of foster parents". Be creative, but if you are a person with knowledge and understanding of children and teenagers, a great capacity for love, a generous supply of patience and tolerance, and a willingness to devote seven days a week, please inquire. Foster homes are needed for children of all ages but at this time, particularly for teenagers. Please call Pamela Rodgers, Social Worker, at 576-2334 from 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Yours truly,

Pamela Rodgers

## Widows' funds

Waterlily:

My suggestions may be of some help to your readers.

Older employed women who are widows, when they are calculating their income after retirement, should take into account that when they receive their own Canada Pension, paid for by deductions from their paychecks, their Widow's Pensions will cease, except where their own pension will not be a full pension, either through low wages or short work years to qualify, in which case the difference will be made up from the Widow's Pension.

For example, if your personal deductions over the years through employment allow you up to \$4 of full pension, then that \$4 will be paid as a monthly supplement from your lost Widow's Pension,

paid for by your deceased husband's contribution to Canada Pension Plan.

I personally lost money this way which rather altered my lifestyle although it seems a smallish amount. The government explains this as "no person is allowed to receive more than one Canada pension" or words to that effect.

My other pet peeve is bagging in supermarkets - all that unnecessary plastic. In the U.K. 5p. is added to the bill of many supermarkets to encourage you to revert to the European idea of shopping bags or baskets. I have started taking my supermarket bags back each time to be refilled. They are apparently not yet comfortable with filling your own carryall. Mary Jane's deserves a pat on the back.

One last point - Black marks to local governments who refuse to take garbage unless it is in heavy plastic bags - so much for environment friendly waste.

An accolade to St. John's City Council for recycling our Christmas trees and putting them back to work as chips for walkways, mulch, etc.

Enough is enough.

Yours sincerely,

Mary E. Vavasour

P.S. Please add my name to your subscription list.

## Exciting!

Waterlily,

I should really be out practising juggling flaming torches but something much more exciting has come up, the arrival of the third issue of Waterlily. First things first... here's my subscription money, a well as gift subscription money for the Everywoman's Health Centre. I think your paper will be a welcome addition to their waiting room literature.

One of the things that struck me reading these first three issues is that feminists everywhere face the same kind of adversity from traditionalist forces. I have been active as an escort of B.C.'s first freestanding abortion clinic, and over the past few months of operation, the anti-choice groups have been out in great numbers picketing the centre and trying to intimidate clients from seeking counselling or services. A court injunction has prevented further illegal activities like blockading the entrance and accosting clients and I'm pleased to tell you the clinic not only functions as it should, but that active support is growing in the lower mainland of B.C.

Much media attention lately has also been going to the Gay Games, scheduled for Vancouver in 1990. Ads condemning the games and what they stand for (which I assume means every person's right to be who they are!) were bought by a mysterious group of Christians who chose to remain anonymous, to no one's surprise. The organisers remain unperturbed and I suspect the anti-gay ads will have a positive affect on the games as very few people can condone hate literature

and consequently those who were sitting on the fence are now supporting the games more vocally.

Brava and congratulations for the birth of Waterlily. Keep up the good work!

In sisterhood,

Sand Northrup

Vancouver

## You bet I am!

Waterlily,

I have a friend who rolls her eyes whenever I talk about being with feminists or being a feminist. But I still accept her as my friend. She has not opened herself to issues the way that I have but I accept her, knowing her as I do. I have another friend who thinks that feminists are that group of women who dwell on the negative. She feels we should be really shouting and yelling about all the wonderful things in life. Does that woman need to have firsthand experience of the realities of the life of a single mom, for example, in order to believe that they exist?

I want to be and am very positive in my outlook generally, but I still know there is a lot to be done to do away with racism, sexism and especially homophobia.

We are all people of the earth, no more or less than the next person. Let's treat each other with more respect as individuals. Do away with abuse of power. But all these things are a long process. I count my blessings for what I do have today, but I also fight for the struggles that so many needlessly have.

One thing I can't understand is the hypocrisy that happens in the women's movement. While SMAP (Single Moms Against Poverty) is struggling to have a roof over their heads, I'm at a meeting at the Radisson, (St. John's newest and poshest hotel), with hot and cold hor d'oeuvres and red and white wines being served. There are less than twenty people in a large room that is being rented. As well, accommodations for the eastern vice-president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women have been provided.

Not to be insulting to Ms. Busque or her assistant, I think it is a bit hypocritical to on the one hand having a meeting with low income women and on the other hand to be playing into the hands of the wealthy hotel establishment. I want to know if we can change these kinds of mis-use of money or power or whatever you choose to call it.

Women have to start supporting other women. What is the fear and insecurity between women that makes them afraid to admit that we do not all have the same choices?

We're afraid of speaking some of our opinions for fear of being called feminists. I want to do away with the myth that being a feminist is something that is negative. I'm a very positive person. Am I a feminist? As Dorothy Inglis said recently on community television, **YOU BET!**

Waterlily reader

# RED SAGE

## Women respond to the crisis in the fishery at workshop



photo by Jeanette Launing

Barbara Neis offering her analysis of the cod stock crisis.

### By Jane Burnham

The current fishery crisis means women's involvement in the fishery must change once again. The time has come for women to have more input into decisions made about the fishery especially since these decisions affect women's lives. Many women and men, even those directly involved with the fishery, do not clearly understand all aspects of the fishery and are often intimidated about asking questions. For some reason we are all expected to understand a great deal about the fishery by virtue of our living in Newfoundland. That is not so.

One evening the women of NOW, the women's Caucus of the NDP, split into groups to examine issues we as women in Newfoundland want a voice in. I ended up in the fishery group with Jeanette Blackwood, Susan O'Brien and Evelyn Riggs. An outcome of our discussion was the organization of a workshop for women on the Newfoundland Fisheries Crisis.

It felt good as a woman to look at the list of speakers we quickly compiled: Linda Hyde, President of NatSea/FFAW local St. John's; Brenda O'Brien, NIFA and Seasonal Plant Manager; and Barbara Neis, Assistant Professor of Sociology at MUN. All these women are well informed, actively and professionally involved in our fishery. As a woman it was reassuring to know I would be presented with an opportunity to learn from and question these women. The organizing committee all agreed the purpose of this workshop was to have women inform women and for women to feel free to ask questions, no matter how basic or how

complex they might be.

We gathered at the Grad House on Saturday, February 10th. More than forty women attended. Seated in a large circle, an urn and coffee and donated donuts nearby, we began our afternoon. Following an introduction and an explanation of the purpose of the workshop we took a few minutes to introduce ourselves to the person next to us. Then each of us introduced our neighbour to the group and told what the other wanted to learn during the afternoon. Areas of interest included stock management, union strategy, the impact of the current crisis on women in plants, and foreign overfishing.

Linda Hyde was first to speak. This was the first time I have seen Linda in action, in "real life". Her strength of conviction and her easy sense of humour were evident. During the group's introduction she filled the room with laughter when she said what she wanted was "Dickie's job".

On a more serious note she quickly took up the question of why the union turned down NatSea's offer which is, of course, because they want to ensure more people remain employed. According to Ms. Hyde the number of positions required to operate the shrimp plant proposed by NatSea is exaggerated since that number also includes supervisory positions. Her solution to the NatSea problem is a positive one - 'work sharing'. I wonder if this solution is influenced by the fact the president of NatSea/FFAW local St. John's is a woman - a woman concerned about all union and non-union employees of NatSea, female and male, in St. John's and elsewhere.

Brenda O'Brien followed with an overview of the fishery and background on

fisheries management techniques. She brought the situation up-to-date by focusing on findings of the Harris Commission but pointed out the commission is only studying the northern cod stocks and the Newfoundland fishery depends on other stocks, including the Gulf stocks, which are also depleted. Brenda pointed out Harris' concern that the northern cod stocks may well be on the verge of extinction, particularly since the Commission called for a total allowable catch (TAC) which includes Canadian and foreign quotas, to equal 190,000 metric tonnes (MT) yet the government allowed 197,000 MT for the Canadian quota alone. This means the TAC is closer to 300,000 MT, and this could very well wipe out the stocks.

Barbara Neis asked "Why aren't companies willing to spread the pain?" She pointed out companies are taking advantage of the reduced quotas and are using this opportunity to reduce the number of workers needed. Companies are also getting rid of plants they do not want. As a result companies can set themselves up to acquire more new technology in the plants they do maintain. Further automation means when the stocks come back companies will not need to take the workers back. This change from a labour intensive fishery to a capital intensive fishery is one Newfoundlanders cannot afford.

Another point made by Barbara was that workers suffer the consequences of pressure to increase productivity. Because of pressure many workers experience stress and repetitive strain injuries. What we need, she said, is an environmentally conscious and worker-friendly industry.

A lively question and answer period fol-

lowed which included suggested solutions to the problem. It was a pleasure to see women's energy channelled in the direction of the fishery. A pamphlet with a focus on tried and true solutions to problems, retraining in aquaculture, diversification, and promoting co-operatives, were solutions the group offered for consideration.

An important outcome of the workshop is the formation of a permanent group to ensure women continue to learn about and have input into the fishery. NOW offered to take initial responsibility for organizing and all agreed the new group should include women from all facets of the community.

Four working groups were set up, including: Environmental Assessment and Impact (Barbara Neis, Brenda O'Brien), Media and Education (Cathy Young, Evelyn Riggs), Study Diversification (Jane Burnham, Marilyn Porter) and Recruiting (Linda White, Susan O'Brien).

A suggested name for the group is "Women for Tomorrow's Fishery". Other suggestions were "Hags for Herring", "Tarts for Turbot", "Gals for Gills", and "Maids for Mackerel".

There is a tomorrow for Newfoundland's fishery and women will be part of it. Anyone wishing to join one of the working groups please contact Evelyn Riggs, 739-5499 or Jane Burnham, at 739-0840.

Women outside St. John's wishing to form a group are invited to contact either one of us and we will gladly assist where possible.



# RED SAGE

## Interview with Audrey McLaughlin: NDP leader

By Cathy Young

**Cathy:** Why did you aspire to politics?

**Audrey:** I suppose it was an extension of many things I had done, working in Africa, in community work, in women's groups as a social worker and in other areas. It is very hard to work with those groups and not become politicized. Elected politics became an extension of that. Perhaps politics is the only way to address equality and economic justice.

**Cathy:** Did you immediately choose the New Democratic Party?

**Audrey:** Twenty years ago I was doing social work; I saw inequalities a lot. As a social worker I came to realize there are much more systemic problems we should address. At that time I wasn't thinking about politics in an elected sense, only about becoming active in a political party. I looked at the other parties but felt the New Democratic Party was the party that offered what is most in line with my philosophy.

**Cathy:** What does it mean to be the first woman to lead a national party?

**Audrey:** I hope it sends a message that the experience of women which I come with is a different kind than male politicians traditionally have had. Women's experience is just as valuable as men's when it comes to running a country, and we do have something useful to say. It is not only an exclusive group who have had all the advantages in life who can aspire to obtain those positions.

I'll tell you a story which may illustrate in some way the best thing about becoming a new woman leader. When I was home at New Year's to the Yukon, the premier of the Yukon, Tony Penikett, told me about how his twin seven-year-old daughters were with him in his office. He had to go out for a minute. When he returned one was sitting behind the desk and they said they were "playing Audrey." You know that is very symbolic, and in a political sense I hope to bring a more inclusive process.

**Cathy:** What directions or new initiatives do you think your party should take on the environment, or pay equity for example?

**Audrey:** One of the challenges of the 1990's is that we as politicians can no longer separate out the economy and the environment and put them in little pockets by themselves. The challenge for our party is to make those linkages. We all know about the global village. We are all connected now and it is very difficult to

enact a policy which does not affect us nationally as well as internationally.

My party accepts policies of equality such as equal pay. In the national context, we cannot build our economy if we keep wages for women at 65 per cent of those for men. That is oppressive economics, and can be translated equally to the developing world. We will pay the price if we try to build our economy in the context of the oppression of people.

At this point however we are just trying to keep what we've got, whether it be the issue of choice, or unemployment insurance which is being changed in a way particularly harmful to women. We are spending a lot of time right now just trying to keep up with many of the changes undermining many gains that have been made, but at the same time we are putting our energies into comprehensive structural problems.

**Cathy:** Recently on television the leader of the New Brunswick Progressive Conservative Party, Barbara Baird-Filliter, spoke of the new acceptance in Canada to the movement towards the right and increasing privatization. Do you feel women in this country are sometimes in a dilemma of wanting to support a woman but are against her platform?

**Audrey:** Here we are in a dilemma. I think it is a similar dilemma whether it is aboriginal people, minority people, any people who are powerless. Women are unique in this situation in that they are a majority. I don't want to sound victimized, but we have less power in our society than men, so it makes sense to support women.

We have to say we don't only look at it in gender terms. I will support a man who has truly committed feminist ideas and a democratic socialist conscience, but not a woman who is dedicated to the right-wing corporate agenda, who is not going to change things. We should not vote and support anyone on the basis of gender without looking at their goals. I would not vote for Margaret Thatcher.

I think it is a dilemma for the women's movement because we say let's get more women in politics and we'll change society. It won't change if those women simply have ideas determined by the right-wing agenda, R.E.A.L. women and other groups.

**Cathy:** Audrey when you came to Newfoundland in February you were briefed extensively on the crisis facing the fishery. Do you and your party have any solutions to the latest economic catastrophe that is affecting Newfoundland?

**Audrey:** There are a number of ways, all of which have to be developed in conjunction with the people who work in the



fishery, people who understand the local dynamics and culture. If the scientists had worked together with people who fish, there might have been better stock determination.

If you approach this crisis with the perspective that what is good for the company will be good for everybody, you have what is called enterprise allocation. But if you think there is value in maintaining the smaller communities, because everybody doesn't want to move to St. John's or Toronto, you therefore design a different kind of policy. You start planning from the perspective of preserving local communities and your decisions are not only determined by the marketplace, but with some community values also.

The other big issue is, this government has not put money into research and development either around renewal of the fish stocks or secondary processing and utilization. We've sort of skimmed off the top and thought we could get away with it. I have to say I was tremendously impressed while in Newfoundland. No one suggested the quotas should be raised; they were opposing John Crosbie raising the quotas. Everyone had a very common sense approach to this and that is very rare.

**Cathy:** In light of developments, and in light of what's happened in Eastern Europe I want to ask how you feel about the whole issue of the proposed NATO base in Goose Bay, Labrador?

**Audrey:** A poll just came out showing 73 per cent of Canadians support cuts to defence. This is a huge turn around from just six months ago. Canada is going to have to plan for peace. There are not many countries - maybe Japan - who have ever planned for peace. Most countries are always planning for war. We have asked several questions about this in the House of Commons. We want to stop cruise missile testing, stop the low-level flying which Germany and other countries refuse to allow at home.

Is the only way we can do economic planning in Canada through the military? That is so in the United States, and they are going to have to change. Why are we getting into something we are going to have to change? As a party we have to take seriously those people in Goose Bay who say what about jobs? I haven't read a lot of articles about people who say, "We really want a NATO base in Labrador." They want to work, and there are all kinds of things we can do to encourage development. If we get people working they will be paying taxes, it will reduce the deficit, they will be contributing to the economy, it is better for their mental health. There are many, many things we can do in this country if want to tackle unemployment. We can have full employment or as near to full employment as possible.

# Women's Economic Lives II: tellers' trouble in Grand Falls

By Elke Dettmer

As part of the Women's Economic Lives project I did research in Grand Falls from October 1988 to April 1989. While the main focus of my ethnographic observations was the hospital, the major employer of women, I was also looking at the overall situation of women working in the area.

Grand Falls is no longer just a mill town, where the well paying jobs at the paper-mill are traditionally reserved for men, but it has become the commercial and administrative center of central Newfoundland. As such, a greater variety of jobs is available to women than in any outport. This should imply choices and opportunities.

However, only very few women have made careers in Grand Falls, while the demand for 'typically female' jobs such as clerk, secretary, bankteller, and sales person far outnumbers available positions. This creates a situation that is in some respects worse and more stressful than in the outports. Women who have jobs accept any kind of working conditions knowing there are plenty of unemployed women out there only too eager to fill their shoes, no matter how bad the job. They also know that if they acquire reputations as 'trouble makers', chances of ever getting another job in this closed town are very slim indeed.

The most disturbing case I encountered while doing fieldwork involved a number of women working at the local branch office of a major bank. Trouble began when a new (male) manager arrived in 1987, "a real company man" who possibly had a mandate from above to turn things around at that bank. Within eighteen months, fifteen out of an original staff of nineteen women left their jobs. They left because of a deteriorating work environment, because of stress, and out of solidarity with employees who had quit earlier. It seemed as if they were systematically being pushed out to be replaced with part-time banktellers, often younger, inexperienced women who are cheaper and more expendable employees than the experienced, mature women who had once worked together as a friendly team.

In the context of Grand Falls, the position of a bankteller is a relatively desirable, well-paying job. Judy, the former Administrative Officer at the bank, estimates that she received about one hundred and fifty applications, 99 per cent from women, in response to a newspaper advertisement for a part-time bankteller. After twenty years in banking, Judy feels that being promoted to Administrative Officer was "as far as you can go being a woman." As part of career advancement men tend to be transferred from one branch to another whereas women are hired locally and stay put. Judy could not bring herself to treat her fellow employees according to the harsh,

cruel work ethics of the new manager, to "keep everyone on their toes; meet your targets". Eventually she had to choose between "salary or sanity" and she became one of the first women to leave the bank. It took Judy a year to recover from the strain and bitterness this experience created and to regain her self-confidence. She was replaced by a younger, less experienced man who, however, was willing to treat the women he supervised with the toughness required by the manager.

In April 1989 Diane, an attractive, friendly woman in her early forties became number sixteen to quit after she had worked at that bank for seven years. I met her a week later, when she was still shocked and angry. Diane wanted to fight back, if only for the sake of her own sanity. We tried to find ways to lodge a complaint or to start an investigation. However, because she had left on her own accord there was nothing she could do short of proving sexual discrimination. Finally she wrote a strong, long letter to the head office, signed by six other former employees of that bank, including Judy. Here is Diane's letter. The bosses' names have been changed.

Grand Falls, Newfoundland 1989  
Personnel Officer, Head Office  
"Central Bank", Toronto, Ontario  
Dear Sir/Madam:

I have been employed as a bank teller for twenty-one years, the last seven with the "Central Bank" in Grand Falls.

I can safely say that I was competent in my job and did enjoy the type of work I was doing however, on April 5th I became another statistic at this branch and was forced to quit because of what I believe was a personal threat by the Manager, "Joe Smith".

Changes at this branch started when Mr."Smith" arrived and staff turnover began almost immediately. For us tellers however, things really got bad when "Jack Brown" was transferred to this branch as the Chief Administrator. My first encounter with him occurred one afternoon, shortly after his arrival when, after the bank had closed at 3 o'clock, I balanced and went downstairs to the bathroom. When I exited, Mr."Smith" was waiting for me outside the door and told me that in the future, I was not to leave my post for any reason without first getting his permission.

During the next few months, working conditions deteriorated to an all time low. Morale was non-existent, the pressure constant. Mr."Smith" watched over us like a hawk and even after busy periods, if you so much as sat back to take a deep breath, he was over asking if there was nothing you had to do. Coffee breaks were almost unheard of and going to the bathroom frowned upon.

I, however, stood up for what I know is right and (although breaks were few and far between), many a day I went to the bathroom just to sit down for five minutes to clear my head. As I mentioned previously, I am an experienced and dedicated teller. I balance constantly and have had very few, if any, differences in my cash. This behavior - using the bathroom - was certainly to my detriment, and I'm sure gave me a reputation as a trouble-maker.

I believe this to be true. Because of this, I was very displeased with my evaluation, as is evident in my comments on that evaluation.

Since Mr."Brown" and Mr."Smith" joined our branch there has been, to my best recollection, sixteen employees who

have resigned or just walked out. Doesn't this tell you something? Don't you think something is wrong?

I don't blame Mr."Smith" completely, although he is a major part of the problem. He is young, inexperienced and struggling to climb to the top by whatever means he thinks is necessary. I believe his approach is terribly wrong, degrading and harmful to all who come under his supervision. I hope, for the sake of the "Central Bank" that he does not learn his philosophy at management training seminars.

I do however, blame our manager, Mr."Brown". He is the one who should realize that something is wrong and take the steps to correct it. A manager should not be there just for the company. He should also be there for his staff, to ensure their rights are met, that they are content and to motivate them to take pride in their work. At this branch, the only motivation is to work like a slave or get out.

Managers and manager trainees are a dime a dozen. You know that and I know that. Of course, so are tellers but, managers and trainees come and go continuously, tellers are the people who customers see and speak to day after day, year after year. I have had customers ask me what is going on, what's the problem in this bank. The bank is getting a reputation in this town and I don't think it's helping business one bit.

It started in December when I was temporarily assigned as head teller. One Monday morning there were in excess of thirty night deposit bags to be deposited when I started work at 9 a.m. Despite this, I was expected to have this completed and my booth open by 10:00 a.m. This was

*continued on page 8*



# RED SAGE

## We refuse cuts! Women's centre funding cutback protest

By Joyce Hancock

Provincial Representative for the National Action Committee on the Status of Women

Executive Director of the Bay St. George Women's Council

Divide and conquer may be an old military strategy, but this ploy is what the Canadian government is using to silence the women of this country. The recently announced cuts in operational funding to the Secretary of State Women's Program will have more serious repercussions than closed doors and staff lay-offs. Indeed this can only be perceived as an attempt to throw the feminist movement into chaos and force us to sell tea buns to pay for our physical presence.

I don't believe, no not for a moment, that "the boys in power" can stop the

**[They] are implementing a right-wing agenda... In rural parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, women's centres are the focal point from which all the work of our movement ensues. What happens to the rape crisis lines, the single parents groups, the incest survivors groups?**

social change implicit in the work of the women's movement. Furthermore, it is fundamentally unacceptable for "our" tax dollars to be abused by this government.

Five years ago the Canadian government signed a United Nations document called the Forward Looking Strategy for the Advancement of Women. Recently they were off to Vienna to report on the progress government has made in this regard. The irony is quite obvious.

No one ever believed that accepting government dollars to work toward the improvement in the status of women meant we would have to allow the "government of the day" to set the agenda. We have obviously fallen into dis-favour by not following their agenda.

Over the past ten years feminists have come to realize there is no way to convince those who are implementing a right wing agenda that there is value in the acclamation of an equal and balanced society. Many times we have reminded those who have co-opted our values that we will define and decide for ourselves what improvement in the status of women is really all about. We are certainly paying the price for such idealism.

We are all aware of the terrible implications for women's organizations the recent cuts carry. In rural parts of New-

foundland and Labrador, women's centres are the focal point where from all the work of our movement ensues. Every dollar provided by the women's programme funding equals hundreds of hours in volunteer efforts by the women involved. If our doors close, what happens to the rape crisis lines, the single parents groups, the incest survivors groups, the supportive counselling

women and children have come to expect?

There is a part of me that has real fear, but another part is so angry. The energy generated by the St. John's Status of Women Council as a reaction to the cuts was great. Our action and real effort to let government know we will not accept this has to come from throughout our province.

Active women's groups should call M.P.s, write letters, speak to the media, speak to our sisters, to anyone who will listen. This is no time for compromise or fear. Perhaps we can take courage from the early suffragettes: thanks to their efforts, we have the right to vote.

And yes, Mr. Prime Minister, we have long memories.

## Bank tellers problems in Grand Falls: cont.

*continued from page 7*

impossible, but despite some sympathy from the manager, I was still reprimanded.

In February, after returning from lunch at 1 p.m. the day was very busy and I had customers steadily up to 4:30 p.m. At that time I needed desperately to go to the bathroom. I put up my 'Next Teller' sign to go; however, before I could leave, Mr. "Smith" was over and said I could not go while there were customers in the bank. I remained for another five minutes however, the call of mother nature was too great and I just had to put up my sign and go. Despite the fact that I was only gone a few minutes, I was called aside by Mr. "Smith", reprimanded, and told that if I couldn't stand on my feet for a seven and a half hour day without a break or going to the bathroom, I couldn't do my job.

Although I did not know it at the time, I was a month and a half pregnant, pregnant for the first time after fifteen years of marriage. Unfortunately, a few weeks later, I had a miscarriage. I'm not saying this incident had any effect on my pregnancy but it possibly was the reason I had to go to the bathroom so badly.

On April 6th, I had just returned to work and was downstairs in the break room talking to one of the new part-time tellers. We were talking about how hard it was to have an eleven o'clock dinner hour and having such a long afternoon to put in when one of the loans managers, walked into the room. We immediately stopped our conversation and went upstairs.

The next day I was called into Mr. "Brown's" office as soon as I arrived at work in the morning. He told me that what he was about to say was very unpleasant. It had come to his attention that I was telling the new girl how bad it was to work in this bank. I asked if I was fired and he said no, but that he would investigate further and if the allegations were true, then I would definitely be fired. I started to defend myself and he abruptly cut me off. I am not sure of his exact words because I was almost in shock but, it was something to the effect that "another word out of you and I won't be responsible for the action I take".

I certainly could not stay with a threat

hanging over me like this. I decided it would be in my best interest, and probably safety, to put my keys on his desk and leave, which needless to say, I promptly did.

The next day I called this loans manager and confronted him on the issue. He admitted telling Mr. "Brown" the new girl and I were discussing salaries, contrary to what Mr. "Brown" had said.

The reputation of this bank is well known at the local branch of the Unemployment Insurance. Just mentioning that you worked there and quit is all the information they need to file your claim. As a matter of fact, one of the counsellors suggested that I appeal my waiting period because of my situation. I did so and a few weeks later received a reply rejecting my claim. Their reason was that the manager had told them that he had called me into his office to discuss my attitude. He had hoped that I would change and stay working at the bank however, instead I had just quit.

Now doesn't this tell you something about his character? He never even had the courage to stand his ground and tell it as it was. Little reason the prestige and respect once held for bank managers is at an all time low. A week after leaving the bank I received a call from another bank in this town offering me a job. They know me and they know the situation at the "Central Bank". I rejected the offer because I have no intentions of ever going back to work in a bank. I don't mind the hard work but I have had enough of managers and manger trainees who treat you like dirt, who use you for their own advancement, who will not tolerate anybody who questions their authority. That's where my bad attitude comes from. I believe I have rights and that is not a good attitude for a bank teller.

I left the bank on April 6th and received a pay cheque on April 15th. I guess I was overpaid but two other girls who had quit in a similar situation to mine had also received pay so, I assumed this was policy. A short while later I went to the bank to withdraw some money from my savings account only to discover that the bank had withdrawn a similar amount as that last pay cheque from my savings account. Why was I not informed of this

withdrawal? Why was it not taken from my chequing account. Is this the way the "Central Bank" operates?

I am writing this letter for several reasons. I want to let you know of conditions at the bank although you should suspect something because of the high turn-over. All the others, both those who have quit and some still working at the bank, keep saying that something should be done to stop this man, and most importantly, to clear my name, to stop this man from ruining my future plans of employment by his lies and deceit.

Several former staff have read this letter and agree with what I am doing. Many had several years of employment with the bank and have left because of situations or pressures put on them by Mr. "Brown". Their signatures are attached.

I trust this letter will not fall on deaf ears.

Yours sincerely,

Diane, Susan, Elizabeth, Glenis and Cindy, who worked seven years at the "Central Bank".

Two women signed and added the following comments:

Judy, Administration Officer at Grand Falls branch with approximately twenty years banking service - "forced to resign in November 1987 because of my failure to conform to Mr. "Brown's" work ethics which I believe were harsh, cruel, unjust and unwarranted."

Sandra - Former employee. "If you would look into your records you will find my letter of complaint in the first instant and my letter of resignation which explains my reasons for leaving at that time. I assume that Head office received a copy of this resignation and took the time to read it, however, just being a number and not a person employed at your bank perhaps the interest wasn't there."

c.c. Federal Department of Labour  
Human Rights Commission  
Status of Women Council  
Human Resources Department, the "Central Bank".

Diane eventually received a polite, half-page long letter from the bank as response. Young "Joe Smith" quit his job during the summer of 1989.

# Band-aid measures: rehabilitating seabirds is not enough

by Shelley Bryant

Seeing an oiled bird is an incredibly disheartening experience. The animal is cold, dehydrated, emaciated; it often cannot fly or swim or look for food. By the time we humans find an oiled bird it is either floating on the ocean, virtually helpless, or it has beached itself, making vain attempts at preening the thick brown-black ooze from its once beautiful, intricate feathers.

These sights are all too often seen along Newfoundland shorelines, so often that the Avalon Conservation Society and the Coast Guard found it necessary to organize an oiled bird rehabilitation workshop. This workshop was led by two women from Tri-state Bird Rescue and Research, Delaware. I and many others arrived at Pleasantville early Sunday mornings and stayed there until 10:00 at night - exhausted, depressed and angry. Thirty oiled murrelets, turrs and seaducks found on the south coast had been brought to St. John's for rehabilitation at the workshop. Many, many hours had been spent on the birds before the workshop and incredible amounts of time and energy have been spent since.

Oil affects the seabirds internally, externally, behaviourally and environmentally. However, we are only really able to treat the internal and external effects. The external effects are the most readily visible and the most immediately debilitating. Oil destroys the water-proofing ability of the feathers, resulting in the loss of insulation against the frequent sub-zero temperatures of the North Atlantic. Oil

clogs the nostrils and mouth, and the eyes may be irritated and ulcerated. Unable to fly or hunt for food successfully, the bird will make its way to shore, where, by preening, it will ingest great quantities of oil. The gastro-intestinal tract becomes irritated, losing its digestive and absorptive abilities. Haemorrhaging and ulceration may occur. The toxic effects of the oil impair liver, pancreas and kidney function. Secondary problems such as pneumonia, gout and parasitic bacterial or fungal infection may set in.

Treatment involves a brief medical examination, treatment of wounds and fractures, rehydration, removal of oil from the eyes, mouth and nostrils, and tube feedings of various combinations of liquids, nutrients and Pepto-Bismol are given every four to six hours until the bird has stabilized enough to be cleaned.

Cleaning of each bird takes at least 30 to 45 minutes and requires three or four people, 320 to 400 litres of hot water, and 4 to 6 litres of Joy dish liquid. The birds are moved to pens and then pools and individually monitored and fed for days, depending on their arrival condition. All in all, each and every bird requires thirty to fifty person hours, thousands of litres of water, and many dollars for food, equipment, medication, and housing facilities. That's all right, though; money and wildlife are impossible to equate.

In some fashion, partially rectifying environmental damage resulting from human thoughtlessness, by returning even a few birds to their natural (albeit polluted) environment is a worthwhile endeavour. The exercise also opens

people's eyes; it may even incite some people. My wish is that even a fraction of all the time, energy, and money spent on rehabilitating thirty oiled birds was spent on the prevention of oil spills.

'Oil spill' is not really the correct term when it comes to the situation in Newfoundland. 'Spill' implies an accident. Most of the oil in our marine waters is due to the deliberate illegal flushing of tanks at sea. It is estimated that up to 18,000 birds have been killed in our waters since early January. The tally of birds does not include the effects on marine mammals or our already over-stressed fishery. All this ruin from perhaps only one vessel en route to or from Come-By-Chance illegally flushing tanks.

The total number of seabirds already killed annually from illegal dumping off Newfoundland is estimated to be close to 100,000. The potential for a true oil spill in Newfoundland is tremendous. More than 70 million litres are carried around our coast every single day. In comparison, the Alaskan Valdez spill consisted of 43 million litres. The vessels carrying oil around our coast, especially the foreign vessels, are often antiquated, unsound environmental hazards. They often do not carry world class navigational charts for our complicated harbours and coves, and are outfitted with old or poorly functioning navigational equipment. Compounding these very fundamental problems, crews on board these vessels are often of mixed nationalities, creating difficulties in communicating with each other and between ships' crews and Newfoundland marine

officials.

Solutions to these problems are rather straightforward and attainable. To eliminate the illegal dumping of tanks at sea, vessels should be strictly required to use the on-land dumping facility at Come-By-Chance. At present, vessels are technically required to do so, however the fee levied deters them, and there appears to be some apathy in enforcement of the regulation. The tagging of oil would allow for identification and

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**The total number of seabirds already killed annually from illegal dumping off Newfoundland is estimated to be close to 100,000. The potential for a true oil spill in Newfoundland is tremendous...70 million litres are carried around our coast every single day. The Valdez spill was just 43 million litres.**

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prosecution of vessels which have ignored the regulation.

Safeguards against a Valdez-magnitude spill include: tighter control on the condition of vessels, a full-time tug to escort ships in and out of our waters, and officials to board the boats to act as communicators between ships and the port.

Because a large spill is really only waiting to happen, Newfoundland needs to develop a well-organized, well-thought out contingency plan. A clean-up fund needs to be established, with revenue from donations, or a tax levied on the oil companies that profit from oil transport. A mobile seabird rehabilitation centre should be established now to handle the current constant flow of oiled seabirds as well as in case of a major spill.

Clean-up funds and mobil rehabilitation units should not make us complacent. We cannot afford that. The real solutions lie in the avoidance of spills, not in "band-aid measures" after the fact. Rehabilitation measures can at best save only a small percentage of oiled birds. In addition we annually kill 500,000 to 1,000,000 turrs in the winter hunt, and approximately 100,000 birds are drowned in gill nets. We shouldn't continue to add 100,000 oiled birds to this death toll.

Even though I never want to have to clean another oiled bird, I would still do it again. Unfortunately I very probably will have to.

*Shelley Bryant is doing her Masters at MUN in biopsychology, studying seabirds.*



photo by Jeanette Laaning

# RED SAGE

## Educating women in a Nicaraguan union: lessons for Canada

By Theresa Walsh and Jane Robinson

Here in Atlantic Canada the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) is proud of its education program. This program is built on the belief that unions have an obligation to make their membership aware of important issues in their workplaces as well as broader issues that affect them as citizens of Canada and the world.

However, not all unions in Canada have

tired from the work we do at home, because we don't have anywhere to leave our children, and because we have to do everything at home."

By proving to the male leaders of the union that women were working twice as many hours per day as men, the women were able to win lower production norms on the farms, thereby getting credit through their collective agreement for work they do in the home. This is something women in Canada still only dream about!

The goal of the women's education pro-

separate educational program for women. But when men are present at get-togethers, the women don't talk - they become inhibited because they are afraid they'd say something wrong. In order to develop confidence among the women, the Women's Secretariat convinced the male-dominated union of the need to offer training in an atmosphere where women feel free to fully participate and learn.

When the union brings women together for a training session, it is called a "get-together" rather than a workshop. A workshop is seen as an activity where someone comes and tells them what to do, whereas at a get-together everyone speaks. Each woman who attends one of these sessions is expected to organize similar get-togethers with the women at her farm, in groups of ten, on her return. This is how the education is "multiplied" until it reaches all the women members.

The key to the education program is a series of popular education workbooks designed and published by the Women's Secretariat at the ATC. These use photos of their own members at work and pose questions to help the women analyze the situation on their farms, identifying their problems and propose solutions. The three themes in this year's education program for women are: the collective agreement, women's legal rights and sex education. There was a workbook on each of these themes.

As dedicated trade unionists we were fascinated by our visit to the union's school where a ten day training session for women was in progress. When we arrived, the women were studying the workbook on the collective agreement. The youngest participant was eleven

years old. It amazed us that the Nicaraguan society is so eager to educate people, no matter what their age - the main factors being their willingness and their capability.

Most of the women who become leaders stand out because of their exceptional work on the farms, often exceeding the work norms. For example, we were told that Rosibel, an elected union official, could complete four times her work norm - an absolutely daunting amount of work in the tobacco fields.

Our small group of four worked hoeing soil around the tobacco plants one bright sunny morning, when the temperature was 39 degrees Celsius. We completed one row in two hours. The norm for one worker is four rows per day. For all their toil and sweat tobacco workers earn about three dollars every two weeks.

The ATC aims to train over 8,000 women members in 1990. Because of the education program, women are developing the confidence to elect their sisters to local, regional and national levels of the union. There is also an affirmative action program to ensure one position on the executive at each level of the union is a Women's Secretariat representative.

Our group was really inspired by the achievements of the women of the ATC and returned home with a commitment to take their lead in motivating women to become more active within our union. We also plan to continue to support the work of the Women's Secretariat through this solidarity linkage which has been facilitated by OXFAM-Canada.

For more information, we can be contacted through the St. John's OXFAM Centre, P.O. Box 18000, St. John's, A1C 6C2, telephone 753-2202.



Jane Robinson photo

education programs for their members. And fewer still have education programs specifically for women, including CUPW! The low priority that has been given to women's concerns about working conditions has perpetuated the low participation rate of women in union leadership because their needs for childcare to attend union functions, for example, are not met.

Four women postal workers from Atlantic Canada went to Nicaragua last November to learn from the women in the Agricultural Workers Union (ATC) how they have resolved the problem of low women's participation in their union. The ATC represents 60,000 waged workers employed on state-owned and privately-owned farms in Nicaragua. About 30 per cent of the members are women. The ATC members work on the crops of coffee, cotton, banana, tobacco, basic grains and in cattle production.

What the ATC discovered in discussions with women members was they did not recognize the union as their own, because the union did not respond to their needs.

It used to be women were paid less for their work, partly because they didn't produce as much as men did. The ATC Women's Secretariat asked them why. The women who work in the fields replied: "We can't reach the norms because we come to work every day already

gram in the ATC is to raise women's consciousness about the discrimination they face in society and the workplace and to empower women to identify their oppression and to be able to address it effectively and confidently.

Some male union members object to the

## Who acutally benefits from Share the Light?

By Marie Curran  
Group Against Poverty

By now most everybody is familiar with Newfoundland Light and Power Co. Ltd.'s "Share the Light" programme, a programme sponsored by the Light and Power and administered by the Salvation Army. Simply put, the Newfoundland Light and Power asks its customers to contribute to a fund to help less fortunate Newfoundlanders through the difficult winter months with their electricity and heat bills. The programme was initiated in November 1988, and is, at first glance, a worthy enough project.

According to the pamphlet enclosed with each light bill at its initiation, applicants must clearly demonstrate they are in an emergency situation, are not eligible for assistance from any government agency, have not applied for

government assistance and been denied, and must fall within certain guidelines specified in the brochure. Who, then you may ask, can take advantage of this programme?

The Group Against Poverty attempted to get some answers to this question, and sent letters to both the Salvation Army and the Light and Power Company. The Salvation Army replied within short order but didn't enlighten us any further. They did state they were able to help in some cases. But examples of who they helped in what circumstances were not given. The Light and Power Company, however, chose not to reply.

This same utility company underwent some very bad publicity just a few years back due to price hikes and cutoffs. One might conclude this "Share the Light" is a face saving scheme publicized by a glitzy advertisement endorsed by actor Gor-

don Pinsent.

All of this tends to make the blood boil when one considers this is a huge corporation whose profits for the first half of 1988 were in excess of thirteen million dollars. Why is this company with these kinds of profits asking for contributions from customers to donate to unknown applicants? The truth is that this is a very well thought out public relations scam on behalf of this company, using the Salvation Army to legitimize it.

If Newfoundland Light and Power Company is sincerely interested in 'sharing the light', they could certainly pay for such a programme out of their own profits. Now that they have been granted another rate increase by the Public Utilities Board, it is clear whose interests they serve, and it is not those of unfortunate, cold Newfoundlanders.

# Managing a St. John's food bank: dealing with unseen hunger

By Debbie Redfern

A while ago I had the job of managing a new food bank in St. John's. I knew working in a food bank would be difficult, but I thought, since I was foremost an anti-poverty activist, I could bring about some needed changes. My vision was for an establishment that would reduce the humiliation for clients, to tell them it was not their fault they couldn't manage on Social Assistance. I wanted the food bank to be a resource centre, with free coffee, a place to sit and talk and to be heard.

Not only did I not get this type of centre, but with what I later learned, I doubt this vision would have provided the equality I sought.

I was expecting the majority of our clients to be single mothers. In fact, over half our clients were single men, most of them between the ages of eighteen to thirty-five. In the beginning it was heartbreaking to see young men coming to a food bank for help, and staggering to



photo by Marian Frances

realize there were so many seemingly able men not working.

But empathy soon gave way to a different emotion. As many of us know from experience, men have the most difficulty in accepting help, however much they need it. Men coming to a food bank are no exception. Most of them reacted the only way they knew how, with aggression. They looked through the bags of groceries they were given and complained if they didn't like what was in them. Some men would follow the worker in to the food room and supervise the filling of his bag, demanding certain items and rejecting others. And as they realized they were not being turned away if they came more than once a month, they started coming more and more frequently. (They were not turned away because we feared they'd get violent.) One man was given food on Monday and appeared again on Wednesday. Another, coming in drunk, reappeared a half an hour later, claiming he had been robbed. On the whole, they successfully intimidated us, so much so that my biggest fear was that one of us would be physically assaulted.

The women appeared to have less of a

struggle accepting help. They repeatedly thanked us, saying how much the food would help them. They rarely "abused" and apologized profusely when they were even a little short of the specified once a month visit, in spite of the fact that with children to feed they were likely in greater need. I wondered too, if the reason the women didn't complain was they were afraid the food bank would close down if they did. Although it was hard to see, the women suffered too, perhaps more than the men, because the pain and anger was internalized, hidden behind gratitude. It was this kind of client that make me feel we were doing something worthwhile.

I felt guilty for allowing myself to feel good about the gratefulness of the women. I was also, I came to realize, angry at their submissiveness. I was furious at the men for their antagonistic behaviour, and at the same time, I admired their survival skills. If I were hungry, I reasoned, I would want to push the system myself. Even though it would have been more of a problem for the food bank, I wished the women were able to stop complying with the rules and start fighting as well.

These dichotomies were difficult to deal with and tended to reinforce certain myths about welfare recipients. In trying to find a way to cope with this, I learned that aggressiveness could be quieted by returning it with abruptness and indifference. I was not proud of this new coping skill and certainly couldn't use it as my way of managing, while teaching new volunteers to be sensitive and patient. It was this signal as much as anything that told me it was time to move on.

For me, working in a food bank was so draining I felt my energy was being wasted. Even so, I do not believe closing down food banks is a good idea. Although such acts are meant to force government to take responsibility for hunger, the people who need this service would suffer. If food banks are not supported, thousands of people living in poverty will suffer starvation, rather than just the malnutrition they suffer now. The fact that food banks cover up this suffering must change, and we must acknowledge that they hide the underlying issues, those concerning basic human rights and the responsibility for poverty. Surely access to adequate nutrition is the most basic of all rights, yet government does not acknowledge any responsibility in ensuring equal access to food.

Food banks operate through individual and corporate donations, and those who give are generous, but we must evaluate the way in which we give. A commitment to giving people food without being as equally committed to eliminating poverty merely maintains the status quo. And a commitment to fighting poverty without

sharing food is equally damaging because people living in poverty cannot fight for themselves as long as their main concern has to be for their own survival.

In all, the anger sometimes shown towards food bank workers by people using the food bank is understandable, and even justifiable. Food bank workers have a great deal of power - they have the power to say whether a family goes hungry or not - and the only power the poor have is their ability to intimidate.

For this imbalance of power alone, we must work at eliminating the need for food banks.

Poverty and hunger has been with us so long we have developed a too high degree of tolerance, but I predict the next revolution will be the emancipation of the poor. But until the revolution eliminates the need for food banks, it seems likely to me food banks will have a hard struggle ahead.

## Successful school lunches:

### Bishop Field's lunch program

By Christine Chipman

The Bishop Field Lunch Program is a Godsend to some and a great convenience to others!

This program, which officially started in November, 1989 is now operating full time and is serving 115 meals per day to students at Bishop Field Elementary School in St. John's.

The idea for the program came from a report done by Ten Days Research Team entitled: "Poverty - The Only Thing Money Can't Buy" released in 1987.

A group of concerned individuals met at Gower Street United Church to study this report and they soon zeroed in on the recommendation that a school lunch program be instituted in the schools to address the problem of going to school hungry or staying home due to not having lunches.

A Committee for Hungry Children was struck. This group then spent months requesting and receiving data on other operating programs across Canada to determine what sort of model could be adapted to suit our province's school system.

Then through the help of Community Services Council a grant from the Laidlaw Foundation in Ontario was received to hire a researcher to do all the groundwork necessary to implement and devise a pilot project to see if it would work. Solicitations were sent out to the private business sector and the response was good. Then the provincial government responded with a grant from their Employment Enhancement Program allowing a staff of five to be hired which included a co-ordinator and four food service workers. The municipal government also responded generously to this project.

Because Bishop Field has no kitchen, the meals could not be prepared on site. Through the generosity of Gower Street United Church, however, a first rate kitchen was offered to the Committee for the preparation of meals for the students.

Today everyone's hard work, generosity and dedication to this project is reaping many rewards. The very nutritious and versatile recipes on the program's menu are being received warmly by the student participants. Parents who use the program have nothing but praise for it. It costs two dollars per lunch for parents who can afford it, and includes full meal, fresh milk and dessert. Generous discounts from suppliers such as Auntie Crae's, Stockwoods, Central Dairies, Halliday's Meats, and Surf and Turf Ltd. have kept the price for lunch low.

If parents cannot afford to pay all or any of the price, all they have to do is mark off meals they wish their children to receive, and only the program co-ordinator knows who can pay and who cannot. This is the key to the program's success and growth.

Now the committee is looking to the future and to the many other schools whose students could use these nourishing meals.

A federal grant has been obtained to provide the program with an administrator, secretary and evaluator. The pilot project will have a complete evaluation done to provide documented proof it is improving the health and presumably the education of children who participate.

Research will also be done on the needs of other schools and the format of the program will be packaged for use by rural schools across Newfoundland.

Child hunger is one of the most depressing facts of poverty. In our province where one in four children are poor, this kind of effort can only benefit the most valuable resource of Newfoundland - our children.

If you would like more information on the school lunch program, please feel free to call Christine Chipman or Wanda Abbott at 754-5323.

## The rationale for good child care services in Newfoundland



**By Margaret Anderson**

Did you know that:

1. There are 12,745 single mothers and 3,190 single fathers in Newfoundland and Labrador? (1986 Statistics Canada)

2. In 1976, there were 58,000 women in the workforce. By 1986, there were 91,000, an increase of almost 60 per cent.

Of the 91,000 women currently employed in the Newfoundland labour force, 59,410 have children.

11,580 of these women have children only under six years, while the remaining 47,830 women have some combination of children under and over six years of age. (1986 Statistics Canada)

3. Approximately 30 per cent of our adult population is illiterate and the gap between the Newfoundland rate and the rate of illiteracy for the rest of Canada has remained constant over the last 10 years (1986 Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment).

4. It has been estimated our school drop-out rate is 43 per cent (1979 Fagan and Rodgers).

5. Research has shown conclusively that for every dollar a society invests in quality early childhood programs, the return is seven dollars. This economic benefit comes through lowered costs for remediation, social assistance programs, correctional institutions and lifetime earnings of the individual. (1984, Schweinhart, Weikart).

With these statistics, you can talk about the philosophy of whether children are better off at home with their mother, as the former Minister of Social Services, Charlie Brett suggested, or in a child care facility. In reality, child care is not a choice any more. It is an essential support system for today's society. As for the privileged minority who can afford to have the mother stay home to raise the children, if you ask them you will find the majority enroll their children in a pre-school or nursery school program 2 or 3 half days a week. The reason is to provide their children with outside stimulation from caregivers other than the mother and have their children acquire valuable skills in socialization, sharing, responsibility and self-reliance.

Despite the obvious need, the availability of quality child care is very low in this province. At this time, there are 2,116 full time licensed child care spaces available, 745 part-time spaces

and 302 spaces in licensed after school programs. (January 1990, Department of Social Services). From the statistics you can make a conservative estimate that at least 15,000 children require child care spaces leaving 80 per cent of parents to find informal, unlicensed, unsupervised care.

Surveys have shown more than 50 per cent of parents are dissatisfied with their day care arrangements. Dissatisfaction is especially high among those using unsupervised family day care or babysitters. (Zigler and Gordon, 1982).

What is good quality child care?

Quality may be an ambiguous term. By quality we do not mean posh conditions with the newest and most expensive equipment and materials. Quality is a more intangible concept. To enter a child care centre that is bright, clean and airy and find happy, smiling children who are busy pursuing some activity would give you a good feeling. But a good program like that does not happen by accident. Factors such as the number of children, small adult:child ratios, the philosophy and content of the child care program all contribute to quality.

Training of child care workers in early childhood development is one of the most important ways of ensuring quality

in a program. Training also raises their self-esteem and helps them view their job as a real profession. The problem is workers in Newfoundland, with some training, earn on average between \$4.50 and \$6.00 an hour, or approximately \$8,600. - \$11,000. a year. Should a child care worker aspire to improving herself with more training when her salary is little better than minimum wage? In Manitoba, where the average child care worker already earned \$16,000. a year, they went out on strike last October to send a strong message that they expect government action in the way of salary enhancement grants.

Why is quality child care important?

It is now accepted that the care, stimulation and nurturing received during the child's formative years (0-5) are crucial to the development of adults competent to function in, and capable of contributing to, a modern post-industrial society. Moreover, researchers have found that children enrolled in quality child care programs as a group perform consistently better in social adaptation and intellectual and language measures than do children who are exclusively home-reared. (1986 Report of the Task Force on Child care).

Children who are not read books at

home can enter Kindergarten without the necessary reading readiness skills. They start school disadvantaged and become labelled in their own eyes and those of their peers, as not able to succeed. By grade eight they may have failed one or two years. The inability to achieve in school coupled with the fact they are older than their classmates leads these children to drop out as soon as is socially acceptable.

Well-constructed child care programs cannot compensate entirely for illiteracy in the home but it can provide enrichment and supplement the child's needs to give them a far better chance for a productive and satisfying life. If we ever hope to turn around the statistics I quoted in this piece, then we need to take child care seriously and put tax dollars into the development of good quality child care that is affordable and accessible to those who need it.

The Day Care Advocates Association is comprised of interested parents and those who work in the child care field. Our two major functions are to raise the awareness of child care issues and lobby government for improvements in child care. If you would like to join our Association or want more information, please call me at 753-7270.

*Margaret Anderson is the coordinator of the Daycare Advocacy Association*

## Mother's Day: what does it mean to you?

by Sally Davis

*(Historical material in the following is taken from M.W.Randall, 1964, "The Improper Bostonian: a Biography of Emily Green")*

If you were asked, what does Mother's Day mean to you, it could elicit any of a number of answers. Those with mothers might feel it is the thing to do - to honour one's mother on that day once a year. But there would be those who see no sense in being part of this pervasive commercial exercise - and don't even feel conscience stricken. Hopefully mother understands.

Credit goes to Julia Ward Howe, a nineteenth century pioneer feminist, for the origin of Mother's Day. At the end of the United States Civil War in 1865 when Howe had had her fill of nursing the wounded and watching many a young man die, she wrote:

"Arise all women who have hearts...say firmly: we women of one country will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to injure theirs. In the name of womanhood and humanity, I earnestly ask that a congress of women, without limitation of nationality, promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions, the great and general interests of peace."

A Mother's Day celebration, initiated by Howe, was held over the years. However, the lofty aims which were the original focus became lost in a cloud of commercialism. But what can one expect under a system which prefers commercialism to peace!

It was not until another war, World War One, took place that an international women's organization for peace and freedom was created. In 1915 a group of forty two American women, some of whom were feminists, braved the mine-infested waters of the Atlantic to attend a meeting in The Hague, Holland. They had been called, in the middle of the agony of war, to meet with other women from neutral and belligerent countries, to protest against the war, to stop the slaughter if possible, and to take counsel together on ways of preventing future wars. They had been invited to this congress by a small but distinguished group of European women - Dutch, English, German and Belgian. They called this gathering of stalwart women the International Congress of Women. Julia Ward Howe would have felt fulfilled if she had been alive at that time.

Four years later World War One dragged to an end, bringing together many of the same group of women, but meeting this time in Zurich, Switzerland.

The women of Zurich adopted the name Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). "Freedom" was included with peace for several reasons. They believed that only with freedom is permanent peace possible. Most of the delegates had long worked in social movements that aimed to free men and women not only from war, but from the restrictions of undemocratic governments, from discrimination against women, and from the tentacles of a competitive economic system.

I can personally vouch for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, having been a member for the past forty years. They publish a quarterly newsletter called "pax et libertas" which brings you in touch with women peace workers around the world. The "WILPF News" is the organ of the Ottawa Branch, which helps to keep subscribers in touch with the national scene.

In March, the international WILPF is initiating a gathering to mark International Women's Day. As in the past, the meeting will be co-sponsored by other non-governmental organizations and will be held in Geneva. Last year Dorothy Inglis attended this annual meeting as a delegate from the Canadian peace organization, Voice of Women. The theme for the 1990 gathering in March is the

*continued on page 13*

# The invisible woman in the DND's six million dollar lie

By Rose-Marie Kennedy

*Rose-Marie Kennedy is co-ordinator of the Mokami Status of Women Council educational outreach project to the women of Labrador on the issue of militarization.*

Nitassinan, Innu for Our Homeland, is currently undergoing a major environmental review to assess the impact low level military flying and the proposed massive military expansion have upon the people and environment of the region.

Low level flying in Labrador and Eastern Quebec is about much more than planes swooping down to one hundred feet or lower and sonic booms and NATO agreements. It is as much about aboriginal and women's rights.

In 1986, the Canadian government ordered an environmental review to assess the impact of military activity in Labrador and Quebec. The process is long and complex. A review panel had to be formed. Guidelines had to be established to produce the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Department of National Defence (DND) then had to produce a document that lived up to the guidelines before public hearings can be called. And in the end it's still the Government that makes the final decision.

The fairness of the process is questionable - especially for disadvantaged groups such as Native people and women who have traditionally been denied decision making power in elite, bureaucratic institutions.

In a submission to the review panel on the adequacy of the document, four Innu



women - Rose Gregoire, Martha Hurley, Elizabeth Penashue and Chaudale Napess wrote, "Our language is Innuaimun...We are at a real disadvantage when trying to talk about ideas which are not of our culture. Many ideas cannot be translated so we feel the unfairness of a process which is English and not of our culture."

Their questions are hauntingly valid in light of the EIS that DND has produced.

The Innu have taken to calling the EIS the "six million dollar lie".

It's an appropriate name for the 2,200 pages of unqualified, ambiguous statements, inaccessible language and

downright lies -- a document void of any understanding of the Innu as a people with cultural and social and spiritual lives.

Women are as inadequately considered as the Innu. There is no real mention of what the impact of 67,000 military men passing through Goose Bay in a forty week period will be on women. However, if you are both Native and a woman then you have just about no chance of finding your concerns recognized.

The women also wrote, "It is as if we Innu, who continue to use the land and the incredible variety of animals and birds and fish and plants which are of the

land, are all invisible."

As if this were not horrible enough, there has also been a conscious effort to edit women's concerns out of the document. Earlier leaked versions of the EIS talked about sexual assault as one of many serious social problems which would result from an increase of transient males in Labrador. In the officially released document sexual assault isn't even mentioned!

My work seems like a strange twist of fate when I think about a conversation I had with Bev, a Waterlily collective member, before I started this position. She asked what kind of books I had been reading recently. My response was "books by women".

The EIS certainly hasn't been one of those books.

In a presentation at a National Action Committee workshop on "Ecofeminism for Survival" Rose Gregoire pointed to the unique position that women have in rejecting colonialist oppression. She said, "In our new resistance to what is being done to our people, it has almost been easier for us Innu women to fight back because we were never really part of that system that has been imposed upon us, and what was paid for and controlled by our foreign rulers."

In many ways, women's exclusion from positions of power in both Native and Western culture has not been completely unfortunate. It gives us a stronger vantage point from which to re/vision destructive social institutions.

For more information, or to lend support to the women involved, contact the Sheshatshiu Women's Group c/o Innu Resource Centre, 497-0707; Camille Fouillard with Project North, 739-6178, or Rose-Marie Kennedy with MSWC, 896-2978; area code 709.

## Mother's day continued: peace and mothers

*continued from page 12*

Health and Environmental Effects of Nuclear Radiation from Weapons Production and Testing. While few official statistics are available, there is growing evidence that nuclear radiation generated from weapons production and testing, and the inadequate storage of nuclear toxic waste from these activities, is adversely affecting both human health and the environment. Dr. Rosalie Bertell, an expert on health and radiation, states we are irrevocably damaging the human gene pool. Dr. Bertell will be a keynote speaker along with others who have direct knowledge and experience in the area of the health and environmental consequences of nuclear radiation.

The task of developing peace and freedom at home and abroad has begun, as indicated by the cooling of the Cold War, but it has a long way to go. There is one thing that all of us can work on to one degree or another, and that is the "freedom" aspect not only for ourselves

but for society in general.

We all realize we are shaped in our attitudes towards others by what we learn from our Western culture. We find, if we stop and think, that our society categorizes, segregates and discriminates on every social level and in every institution. We have been socialized to see people of different races, cultures, religions, political persuasions and sexual preferences as suspect. Since such attitudes can lead to violence, all of us need to become aware of our present attitudes and to work towards changing the ones that may not be conducive to a new peaceful society. We should strive to develop new patterns of thinking in their place. Then we will be equipped to work towards the strengthening of international peace and security as the struggle moves forward against apartheid and other forms of racial discrimination, religious intolerance, foreign aggression and occupation, to name a few of the problem areas standing in the way of

making world safe and secure for our children.

More and more women of today are calling for the establishment of a Mother's Day for Peace to provide a time to say NO to the threat of global holocaust, NO to the arms race, NO to death, and YES to a world where people, animals, plants and the earth itself are respected and valued. We know we can't wait for the postulated holocaust of World War Three to activate ourselves since we need more than charred bodies to carry on the work of rebuilding the world.

If you wish to honour the memory of Julia Ward Howe on May 13th and think one day is not enough, why not join the peace movement?

There are local peace action groups who would welcome new members. Watch for announcements of their meetings in the media, or call The Peace Centre at 753-6441.

*thirteen*

# RED SAGE

## Necessity: the mother of invention, especially down under

By Helen

My girlfriend B. and I had travelled far. We had spent one and a half months driving up the east coast of Australia, thousands and thousands of kilometers

looking for sun, fun and adventure. When we finally rented a houseboat on Lake Tinaroo in the tropical Atherton Tablelands, we knew we had found it all.

Lake Tinaroo was once a large forested valley and is now, twenty five years after

it being flooded, used as a water reservoir. It has this mystical look, because trees are growing through the water's surface from deep below. They never were cut and didn't die.

Daily B. steered our houseboat safely

through this jungle of tree crowns to another bay and a different mooring. Peaceful and calm were the days on the lake. Soon we were sick of sun bathing and were looking for some other distraction. Fish were jumping all around the boat, teasing us constantly. "Let's try our luck at fishing" we thought, like so many others recorded in the guest book. Unfortunately we didn't have any fishing gear. So we went through our belongings and quite soon had an assembly of some sort together: dental floss, two security pins, my old sun glasses, a box of matches and an emery board. We used about eight metres of dental floss as our line. The matchbox was quickly attached as a float and out of the two pins we made the sinkers. Finally, after about thirty minutes of fiddling and filing, we even

## A wise word or two: career planning

By Carol Ann Rogers

Today my life is my own; sometimes it's up, sometimes it's down, but it is, all in all, mine.

It wasn't always that way. A few years ago, I was a slave to a job I despised, working shift work with two children at home and one on the way. I had just recently separated from my husband and felt trapped in a cycle of poverty and isolation.

My oldest daughter will never realize she alone started me along the road which I'm still travelling today. It was a typical morning; I worked the night before; the babysitter helped her with her homework, bathed her and tucked her in bed. As I pulled up to her school Andrea leaned over, kissed my cheek and said quite casually "See you tomorrow, mommy." Those words echoed through my mind all the way home. It finally

dawned on me, because of my work schedule, my oldest child saw me for one hour each day while she was hustled off to school.

That innocent statement convinced me my lifestyle needed changing. Within a week I put in my notice at work and began looking for alternatives.

Each day the newspaper listed jobs that appealed to my personality but not my qualifications. I was a hairstylist and a hairstylist I would remain. After all, what else was I to do?

One evening there was an advertisement that offered a salary, child care allowance, transportation and what appealed to me most, an opportunity to assist women who desired to change careers. This offer was presented by a program called Women Interested in Successful Employment (WISE). That was me, all right. I thought, if I can go through this program, then I'll just find a

new line of work and live happily ever after.

Life is never quite that easy. It sounds so simple now, but back then setting a goal consisted of buying my Christmas gifts before November. It had little to do with decisions which would affect the next five years of my life.

Participating in the WISE program has enabled me to see myself achieving the goals the goals I've set for myself. Instead of just wishing my life could be different I'm taking the necessary steps to ensure it will be different, not tomorrow but a few years down the road.

Everyone has dreams. We express them only when we feel sure those around us will appreciate our ideas. WISE created an atmosphere whereby everyone felt secure enough to explore areas of themselves never before realized. It becomes so very easy to search out your real desires, to satisfy your own needs as an individual when the basic family requirements have been met.

In my personal situation, my first priority, as for most mothers, is to the children. I needed to be sure I was capable of providing nutritious meals, adequate housing and a good stimulating setting for child care. When this was all organized, I felt I could afford to invest time in myself. When the obstacle course was simplified, and the pressure removed, all that is left is surplus energy. Every ounce of that energy is yours and WISE offers a place to work on some serious decision making and the tools to arrive at the best solution for you. The hardest decisions are never made easily, but when you have worked through the programme at WISE and developed a more systematic approach, the decision making process is not quite so overwhelming.

Today I'm still a single mother of three with all the trials and tribulations mothering entails. Along with that job I co-ordinate the Women's Resource Centre at MUN and through the centre Heather Chaulk, June Byrne and I are presently working on a support system for low income families.

Today I am a student, a social activist and a mother. When my son enters school in 1995 I will be a graduate of the MUN School of Social Work.

The words of a little girl changed my life. What will it take to change yours?

**"Let's try our luck at fishing," we thought, like so many others. Unfortunately we didn't have any fishing gear. So we went through our belongings and quite soon had an assembly of some sort together: dental floss, two security pins, my old sun glasses, a box of matches and an emery board...**

managed to turn the bridge of my old glasses into a sharp hook.

But as soon as one problem was solved another one appeared: We had no bait! While my girlfriend tried to lure some fish with raisins I swam ashore to look for snails and shells. After a short time I happily returned with a good handful of possible bait.

We fished and fished and fished. We got a lot of nibbles and also a few bites, but we were not able to pull a fish out of the water. We blamed it on the hook, but were too proud to give up, so when the night started to set in we were even more surprised to suddenly feel a strong pull on the line. With a lot of laughter, shouting and excitement we brought in - believe it or not! - a silver perch. Off the hook, guts out and into the pan! We couldn't believe it. This was probably the best fish I've ever eaten, mostly because it was caught with such inventive methods as two dykes in need of an immediate solution could think of.

Of course we couldn't wait to write this adventure into the guest book explaining meticulously our procedures and their result.

How true some sayings are: Necessity is the mother of invention.



### W.I.S.E.

**The Women Interested in Successful Employment Program (W.I.S.E.), in anticipation of a new project to begin April, 1990, is presently recruiting prospective participants.**

**W.I.S.E. is a Career Exploration Program for women.**

**Are you a woman who requires assistance in career decision-making? Are you willing to make a commitment to a program designed to help you identify your career goal?**

**You can find out about your eligibility for W.I.S.E. by calling the counsellor at**

**739-1369**

**739-1374**

**739-1375**

**Step one is the W.I.S.E. Information Session.  
Step two is up to you!**

# Karen Ridd: a story of Canadian bravery in El Salvador



By Marie Curran

Karen Ridd came to international prominence in November, 1989 when she was arrested in El Salvador during the recent several weeks of fighting between the U.S. backed right wing government and the rebel forces of the FMLN. She was not alone in this arrest; other foreign church workers and Salvadoran refugee centre workers were detained by the Treasury Police too. Their only crime, it seems, was giving aid and shelter to people displaced by the fighting, people whose homes were destroyed in the aerial bombardment and napalm attacks by government forces on the city of San Salvador.

Due to international pressure, Karen was ordered released after six hours of interrogation which included physical and verbal threats and abuse. If she had walked away, that would have been the end of the story. Karen, however, refused to leave without her co-worker Marcella. Marcella was from Columbia and there was no pressure for her release. Eight hours after her courageous act, which made news in Canada and around the world, Karen walked out of the prison accompanied by her friend Marcella. They were both advised to leave the country immediately and wisely did that.

Since returning to Canada, Karen Ridd has been on a gruelling lecture tour across this country. Her tour serves two purposes. She is trying to raise funds for relief projects in El Salvador and, equally important, trying to raise the awareness of Canadians to the situation in El Salvador.

On February 10, Karen Ridd spoke to a group of about a hundred and fifty people in St. John's at Gower Street United Church. She spoke of the sad history of El Salvador and of the struggle the people have waged for peace and justice in that country. She spoke of the peasant uprising in 1932 which was put down in a brutal fashion by the government of the day. She spoke of the 30,000 people executed after the uprising Salvadorans named La Matanza, or The Slaughter, and the psychic scar this event left in the minds of the people.

During the 1970's things had not im-

proved for the peasants. Just two per cent of the people control sixty-five per cent of the land and means of production. Discontent boiled over again and the government acted once more to protect the interests of the elite. This time, however, it was not politically possible to openly execute people, so a new method of suppression had to be found, and "disappearances" became the order of the day. People were picked up, tortured and disappeared. For the families this meant years of wondering if their loved ones were alive or dead. Human rights groups estimate more than 70,000 people have died in the latest decade of repression.

The armed opposition in El Salvador is made up of the FMLN, an armed rebel force, which has managed to hold large portions of the countryside and the unarmed opposition, i.e. unions, church groups, women's groups such as the Mothers of the Disappeared, and various human rights groups. These latter groups play a very important role in the struggle and it is with these groups that Karen Ridd and her friends were working. The armed struggle is virtually unwinnable due to the might of the Salvadorean armed forces and the \$1.4 million military aid a day from the United States.

Karen Ridd spoke of horrible things that happened to friends of hers in El Salvador. She spoke of Daisy, a Salvadorean activist, who was picked up, tortured, raped and released. Daisy went back to work immediately and was subsequently "disappeared". Her body later found by her friends.

Karen spoke of the courage of the ordinary people and their faith in change. She quoted one friend as saying "Despair is a first world luxury Salvadoreans cannot afford."

Karen spoke of her early involvement in the group which sponsored her project in

El Salvador and prior to that her project in Guatemala. Peace Brigades International assists local organizations but also

**Just two per cent of the people control sixty-five per cent of the land and means of production. Discontent boiled over again ... "disappearances" became the order of the day. People were picked up, tortured, and disappeared. Human rights groups estimate more than 70,000 people died.**

have been acting as witnesses to try and avert the arrest and murder of local activists.

When asked what we could do here to help in the struggle, Karen advised

people to put pressure on the federal government to stop bilateral aid to the Salvadorean government until the human rights record improves substantially. Canadian aid only enables the Salvadorean government to further repress its own people. People should write or visit their Members of Parliament to demand changes in Canadian aid policy. Non-governmental organizations such as OXFAM and church groups should be given more money to provide people-to-people aid. Local people were also urged to support the Latin American Support Group.

Karen Ridd found her faith in change challenged but strengthened by her experience in El Salvador and she remains convinced that individuals can make a difference. I suspect her lecture changed the majority of her audience in St. John's and that we can expect to see a lot more attention to El Salvador in the near future.

## Treat yourself to a lunch out

By June Hiscock

I feel at home here in the city of St. John's, even though I was born and raised in Burgeo, a small fishing community on the southwest coast of the island.

My personality has a love affair going on with St. John's - I love the heritage, the rich history/herstory, the unique shops that are scattered in the most unknown places. And there's so much I haven't seen, but I delight in knowing all these experiences are within my grasp.

Trying new restaurants and cafes have always been a passion for me. There's a part of me that wants to have the perfect bed and breakfast someday. I should add that I cannot afford to eat in restaurants very often but have discovered that you don't have to spend a lot of money for a reasonable meal in a totally relaxing atmosphere.

Aaron's Donair & Taco Cafe at 27 Cookstown Road (next door to Bridgett's Pub) serves an all-day breakfast consisting of two eggs, bacon, baked beans, hash browns, toast and coffee for \$3.95. Of course, donairs and tacos are a specialty. For vegetarians, Aaron has salsa & chips, burritos, salads, gyro cones, veggie donairs and tacos. Borscht and French Onion Soup are also on the menu. This new cafe is a friendly spot and is open from 12 noon to 12 midnight.

Cafeterias haven't done much for me in my travels but I've found one in St. John's that is really neat. It's on the fourth floor of the Fort William Building where I go to pay my phone bill. It has a balcony that overlooks the harbour and blue skylights

inside a huge dining area that is clean and most attractive. They have a salad bar that has fruits as well as veggies and two different areas for hot foods. What I liked about their daily special was that I could get a half portion. I tried the halibut which came with mashed potato and broccoli. Half portions cost \$3.49 and was plenty for lunch. This cafeteria is operated by Versa Food Services, is open to the general public, and the hours are 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for lunch.

Another lunchtime favourite is Michel's Bakery and Deli located at Water Street West. Michel's lunchtime is from 11:30 - 2:00 and there's usually a small line-up. There's only space for about a dozen people to actually sit down so there's a lot of take-out service. Three different specials run daily. One always consists of soup and a sandwich with other specials being jigs dinner, turkey a la king, cod au gratin, salmon in puffed pastry, etc. The food is mostly very tasty and always eye-catching. The staff are very reasonable when you do have a complaint, which isn't often.

So, now you have three affordable new restaurants to try. Treat yourself once in awhile, invite a friend along, experience some of St. John's tasty places.

And if you have constructive criticism about these establishments or others and can't express yourself in person, drop Waterlily a line and we'll allow you to AIR YOUR VIEWS!



fifteen

# RED SAGE

## Life as a woman in Britain: a society untouched by feminism

By Maura Hanrahan

For three years I felt under siege. I wasn't in Beirut or Belfast, though: I was in London, England, a place that most would call civilized, in a country that to some is the epitome of civilization.

Modern day Britain remains largely untouched by feminism. Feminism, the outlook that allows both women and men to make choices about their lives, seems for the most part, to have passed Britain by. There are feminists there (plenty of radical ones, too) but the culture as a whole hasn't been permeated by the movement that aims to give us freedom.

Most of the time I lived in poverty-stricken, working class areas of London (Newington Green, Stepney) and commuted in to my college, the London School of Economics. Usually I wore clothes that gave me away as North American: jeans and, especially, sneakers. I would be surrounded on the train by women dressed in uncomfortably tight black skirts, a load of makeup, and teetery stiletto heels. At the risk of sounding self-righteous, this is the stuff that makes guys like Hugh Hefner happy. The standard "working girl" outfit says, in the view of some men, "I'm sexy and I'm available". Real female beauty is buried underneath leather and black.

I saw hundreds of men harassing women on London streets and in London trains. As is the case for most women, hardly a day went by that I wasn't followed, commented at or even touched by male strangers, young and old, in groups and alone. Consequently, for three long years I couldn't relax, I didn't feel safe. I became conscious of my dress and behaviour, always checking to see if I was sending out the wrong messages. (Even the victim blames the victim!)

It wasn't me, of course; it was Britain itself. Perhaps the older a society is, the

more difficult it is to change it. In Britain, a married woman cannot submit her own tax return - her income is considered to be her husband's. In Britain you are most definitely a "miss" or a "mrs": there is little respect and sometimes even contempt for those of us who aren't interested in spelling out our marital status. In Britain, I stood by the bar drinking my pint of beer and was told by a stranger that: "ladies

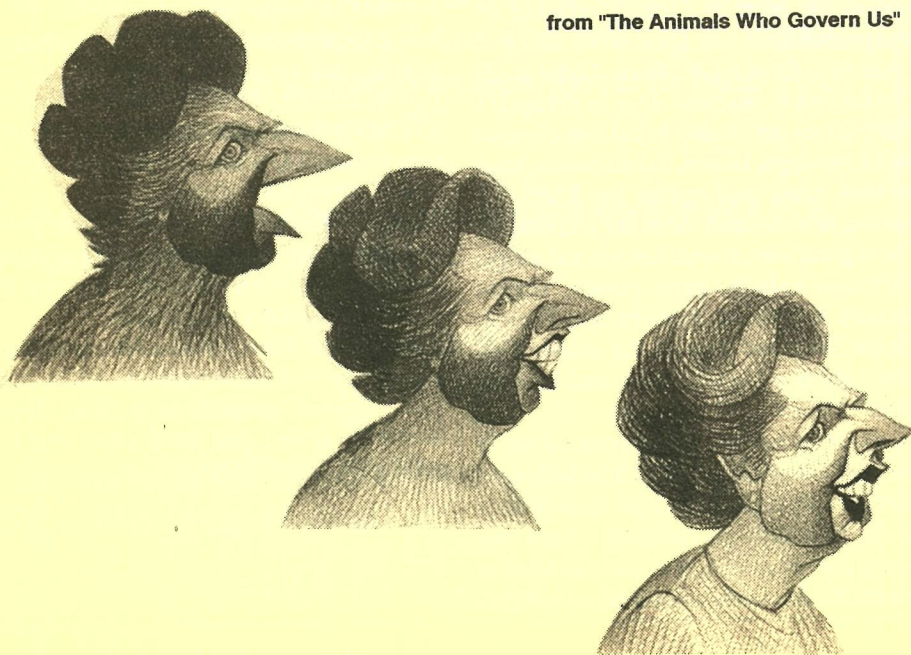
**Modern-day Britain remains untouched by feminism...I saw hundreds of men harassing women on London streets and on London trains...hardly a day went by that I wasn't touched by male strangers ... Consequently, for three long years, I didn't feel safe...**

don't drink pints". There were no British women in my department at college, despite its solid reputation and emphasis on the social (not natural) sciences. There were no women's studies courses, either. I knew female university graduates who worked as secretaries for male university graduates. The worst part of all this was the lack of debate, the widespread acceptance of the status quo, the fact that feminism is a dirty word.

### British Feminists

Perhaps because of this, Britain's feminists are very vocal and more radical than their North American counterparts. The country's best-selling feminist magazine, *Everywoman* (circulation: 40,000), is solidly left wing and active in its opposition to the Thatcher government and the mostly right wing press. Next in line is *Spare Rib* which caters especially to black women and lesbians.

from "The Animals Who Govern Us"



There are plenty of women's only (and often vegetarian only) hotels in Britain. The women of Greenham Common and their work against NATO's cruise missiles hardly need an introduction: for years, these women have camped outside the Greenham military base and use non-violence to help make the world safe.

Many feminist activists are involved in the growing Green Party and self-professed "environmental" groups like Greenpeace. Although Greenpeace is now accepted as mainstream in Britain, feminist were members in the early, struggling days.

In Britain there are "feminists" ("radical", as above and "in overalls") and there are "other women", who do normal things like leave secondary school with no qualifications, marry young, have several children and make their way on one low salary. These women are considered "normal" although they do not get the recognition they deserve. For example, despite the fact that their support services were crucial during the miner's strike, the National Mineworkers' Union refused to allow them associate membership. March 8 passes by each year with most people not even realizing that it is International Women's Day.

**...It wasn't me, of course, it was Britain itself. Perhaps the older a society is, the more difficult it is to change it. In Britain, a married woman cannot submit her own tax return - her income is considered to be her husband's.**

Prime Minister Thatcher and Prince Charles are both on record as identifying feminism as a negative force in society. Prince Charles says that feminism is responsible for destroying the family (and he doesn't mean this as a compliment!). The movement is occasionally used as a scapegoat by both Labour and Tory candidates to help whip up support.

### The Class System

There are other pervasive factors at work; class is extremely important and very slow to change while race is also something that divides people. Things are polarized in Britain: the right is very right and the left is very left. You are either this or you are that. The class system is still so strict that if you are born working class, you will die working class (class has a lot more to do with family background than it does with money, unlike in North America). Perhaps if people live in densely populated countries like Britain, classification helps them cope with the numbers. But the class system means that women's lives are mainly

predetermined (as are men's to a certain extent). If women's life choices are to expand, the class system must be eroded.

There are a couple of signs that this might happen. With 1992 and the Single European Act on the horizon, the influence of continental Europe on Britain may increase. Other European community countries, like France for example, have less stringent class systems and better social legislation. France, Germany and other member states have been pushing a social charter at EC meetings of the past few years.

Mrs. Thatcher opposes this, of course, partly because she is a British nationalist and partly because she does not respect workers' rights, as the charter does. In addition, Britain's status as an island restricts the influence of other cultures. On the other hand, "the grocer's daughter" deliberately introduced the American dream into British minds. In direct opposition to the class system, she consistently argues that the only barrier to success (as she defines it - in career terms) is lack of hard work. You can, she says, achieve anything you want if you try.

### The Status of Women

For now, feminism is on the outside of British life. Every day I was painfully reminded of this on the trains, the underground and the streets. And in the press - definitely in the press! If you are a female working class teenager from the north, your future is limited. But there is one way out of your fate: that is via page Three. Just ask Samantha Fox who was catapulted from Page Three into a modelling and singing career. There are full page pictures of topless women in most daily tabloid newspapers in the country - *The Sun*, *The Star* (both Tory papers), *The Daily Mirror* (a Labour supporter) and others. Most offensive is the commentary that goes with the big-breasted women on the page. It is full of words like "knockers", "cans", "naughty" and "delicious". It is patronizing, it ridicules women and it is in front of your eyes on the 8:30 commuter trains. It is on the paper that children use to make paper mache. To most people it is a laugh or a bit of fun. The House of Commons rocked with laughter when MP Clare Short tried to introduce legislation that would ban Page Three. Meanwhile, four million people buy *The Sun* everyday and life goes on.

I had some fun in Britain. I made a couple of very special friends and the London bookshops are top notch. But as a woman from the Americas and a feminist, I could never belong. I suppose it is hard for feminists to belong anywhere. But during my time in Britain I lost some of the basic freedoms feminism had given me, in North America, long ago.

## Feminism and motherhood: Sharing and caring for kids

By Nina Patey

Children are the responsibility of us all as indeed we are all the responsibility of each other. This is lost in the nuclear family. Cut off from friends and relatives it is an unnatural configuration which grew out of urbanization and industrialization.

The young couple moved to the city to find work estranged from their children's other natural care givers of grandparents, and aunts and uncles.

This is not to idealize the extended family. Women were confined in the old fashion family to innumerable pregnancies, household chores and little time to read and paint. Ha! Not that men had much time for the finer things in life either, but at least they didn't live in fear of yet another pregnancy from going to bed with their mate. Grandfathers and uncles were not always nurturing males who minded the little ones. A fair amount of violence and abuse is hidden behind the nostalgic traditional marriage and its extended family.

But we have lost what was good about these structures. National Geographic is not where I look for role models, since it is a somewhat white ethnocentric narcissistic journal which patronizes everything outside of western culture. However I did see a picture of small Tibetan girl kissing her grandmother in a nomadic encampment before settling to sleep in the communal tent. "Children are never left to cry in the Tibetan extended family because there is always someone to give them attention".

I don't believe this is necessarily how it works in Tibet all the time, as I doubt that it worked this way all the time in Newfoundland in the days of yore.

It is a nice idea and it is an ideal to strive for.

But I don't believe it has to be, can be or necessarily should be one's blood relatives who comprise one's extended family. Single parents, ninety per cent of them women, bear the greatest burden of our lack of collective responsibility for the rearing of children.

In our present culture parenthood is an all or nothing affair. Before I had children, at the age of twenty-seven I can remember thinking that I never saw, listened to or talked with anyone under the age of twenty. I was completely immersed in a world of adults.

And frankly I liked it that way. Some teenagers I did have 'access' to I never cultivated their friendship or company because I was too 'grossed out' by their appetites for television, video games, shopping malls and dungeons and dragons, all of which I saw as violent American mega-culture swamping and suffocating the good of bringing up a child in remote, rural, clear air Newfoundland.

So I stayed well away from my nieces

and nephews.

Too bad.

Now some my older friends are burnt out with child-rearing and I would not dare foist my darlings on them.

Serves me right.

But in our culture you are in child-rearing up to your ears or you have little or nothing to do with children.

I would like it if women and men could say "No I do not want to physically produce a child myself nor am I going to wait until some women's misfortune produces a nice little physically and mentally fit white baby."

Rather, along the lines of the god-parent idea but with more day to day or a least week by week involvement, friends of the mother and father should elect to

become goddess-mothers and goddess-fathers; goddess-parents as compared to god-parents. Essentially the 'god' parent was intended as a special person who watched out for the child.

I can't count the number of parents I know who would benefit from this. Single mothers who could use an evening out without the cost of a babysitter: couples who would like to remember they used to have a basis to their relationship besides the mega-work project of their offspring.

I cannot wait until the nirvana of this proposal becomes reality so here is an option. What do you need a living-room and dining room for when you have two little savages who will just strew it with toys, and plastic ice cream containers and pots and mitts and scarves. In September my partner and I advertised for a boarder and got a family from mainland China instead. Mealtimes are great because with four adults to three children there is always someone to hold the baby and our two three-year-olds play instead of driv-

ing us cracked with whining for their supper. Also our friends get to sleep in on the weekends while we mind their kid and we get to go for walks in the evening after our babes are abed.

Communal arrangements of this sort were very common in the 1960s but nowadays we are supposed to be our own upwardly mobile self-contained nuclear unit. The double family income often masks the double job that women do at paid work from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. and in the home from 4 p.m. until 12 a.m. And the nuclear family duplicates the patriarchy where man is the head of the house and the wife just bites her lip if she doesn't like his decision.

Families living together provide another dynamic besides the man-woman relationship. Parents influence each other. The goddess-parent arrangement would also provide opportunities for learning and the child would have someone else to look to for love and attention.

## Women and politics: a male framework

By Linda Kealey

Two and a half years ago, I had the unique opportunity to travel to Finland as a participant in a women's conference. There I met a number of Finnish feminists who discussed, among other things, the political role of women in Finnish society. Several of them bemoaned the small number of women in the Finnish parliament; upon further questioning I learned that women held just under one third of the seats, a figure we have yet to reach in Canada.

Naturally, as a historian I was curious about the historical background of Finnish women's political accomplishments. Finnish women and men won full political rights in the early twentieth century as part of the development of Finland as a separate nation; the vote was won in 1906 and Finnish women were the first in the Western world to hold political office when nineteen women were elected to the social democratic led parliament in 1907. Canadian women, in contrast, won the right to vote and hold office from 1916 on, first in the Prairie provinces. Quebec did not grant women these rights until 1940. Federally, the franchise was first offered to relatives of servicemen in 1917 and the next year extended more generally to all qualified by age and citizenship; eligibility to hold federal seats came in 1919-20. Yet few women have been elected to provincial and federal legislatures compared to men in Canada, as political scientists have documented in their studies of electoral politics.

Does this mean women have been largely inactive in politics?

The short answer is, of course, no. Women are the backbones of political parties and organizations, especially at the grass-roots level. Nominations and elections for women have been more of a struggle, however. It is common knowledge that women seeking political

office face more financial and political problems than men seeking office, and women with family responsibilities find running for office a minefield of conflicts and contradictory tensions. Electoral politics is and was structured around a male model.

There is also a problem in accepting electoral, party politics as the definition of politics for women. If we look at our history, the history of women as political activists, we find that women have been quite active in politics, if we focus on what women were actually doing, particularly at the community level. Here, there is a wealth of political activity to be explored, especially outside mainstream politics.

Where and under what circumstances have women been politically active in Canada in this century? Recent historical research suggests women were involved in the peace movement, in farm politics, in various ethnic communities and in labour and socialist politics as well. A few examples from our history help to illustrate this activism.

Women have been involved in the peace movement in Canada since at least the early 1900s. During World War One Canadian women like Laura Hughes of Toronto, ironically the niece of Sir Sam Hughes, Minister of the Militia, established a fledgling women's peace network which provided anti-war reading materials to women across the country. These women often used their journalistic skills for the cause of peace; Hughes and Saskatchewan suffrage and farm women's leader, Violet McNaughton, wrote articles on the arms trade, war profiteering, secret diplomatic negotiations and the women's peace movement for local newspapers, for example, as well as speaking out publicly on peace issues. In the 1920s and 1930s women joined and eventually dominated the League of Nations Society's branches in Canada and engaged in educational campaigns to

promote world peace. Women also joined the Canadian Peace Congress, founded in 1949, and in the late 1950s began to found Mothers' Committees to study the hazards of radioactive fallout; in 1960 the Voice of Women emerged and attracted many ordinary housewives to its ranks.

Women on the left, particularly those involved in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF, later the NDP) were also strong supporters of the peace movement. Within the party itself, women organized women's groups or caucuses to serve their own needs. Indeed, women had been involved in socialist political groups since the turn of the century, not only in the various socialist parties, but also in ad hoc study groups, the Women's Labour Leagues which were instrumental in defending and organizing women as workers, particularly during World War One, and in other groups.

Within the various ethnic communities in Canada, women immigrants often played key roles in political activity, although few were recognized as leadership figures. Within the Finnish immigrant community, for example, Finnish women socialists organized "sewing circles" which were actually public speaking training sessions for women; they also produced handwritten newspapers, called "fist papers", for distribution among Finnish women, a unique method of overcoming lack of resources.

When we examine our history more closely it is clear women played vitally active roles in politics. Perhaps rather than concentrating on the rather discouraging record in electoral politics, we would be better off to revise our definition of politics and to focus on what women have actually accomplished.

*Linda Kealey teaches history and women's studies at MUN. See Beyond the Vote, U of T press, 1989*

# PAPYRUS

fourteen women died this week  
were murdered this week  
were degraded this week  
and  
live

one man died this week  
murdered fourteen women this week  
killed himself this week  
and  
is dead.

an unknown number of men this week  
degraded women this week  
and  
an unknown number of women this week  
degraded women this week.

many tears were shed this week  
many weren't even thought

**Baptiste Neis,**  
age 13

## "I Wish The World Would Lighten Up So I Could Write Flowery Poetry"

I wish the world would lighten up  
so I could write flowery poetry

about the incessant flow of the river

about the wild herbs that heal me when all else fails

about the charm of the robins that nest just high enough  
so the cat won't disturb their flight

about the pigeons whose acidic shit eats at the eaves of my house

about the squirrels that have eaten a hole through the clapboard  
to make friends with a ceramic squirrel that stood all winter  
on the window sill

about the two women I saw embrace for the first time  
in Bannerman Park

Instead I look at the river  
but warn my child to not dip her feet in  
acid rain contaminates more than fish ponds

instead I find pigeons lying dead on the sidewalk  
I don't know which has killed them  
the wheel of the car or its exhaust

instead I pull my hand back when it subconsciously reaches  
for wild plantain, dandelion, camomile and yarrow  
that are determined to grow between the cracks of the pavement

instead I place pictures of wild animals from old magazines  
through the trees in the park  
a memory to draw on when the birds don't return north

instead I spend hours, days, years planning the revolution  
planning for a time when men will take responsibility  
for their "night on the town"  
planning for a subsequent time when there will be no need  
for abortion...rape and incest a memory  
of a sick time in patriarchal society

instead of crying for peace  
I want to cry with laughter  
that's the day the world will have lightened up  
and I will once again write flowery poetry

**Marian Frances White**

## One Woman's Solitude (Dedicated to Overeaters Anonymous) by Madeline Pitts Spurrell

The mirror reflected an overweight woman  
She looked very harassed.  
Her hair was dyed and her eyes were sad.

Outside the mirror, the woman stood dreaming.  
Dreaming about the woman inside her-  
The woman she really is-  
The woman who keeps running away from her every time she tries to bring her back.

This woman's body inside her is not overweight.  
Her posture is straight  
She appears full of life  
Her hair is undyed and her eyes are bright.  
Bright with hope and joy.

Inside -"Why is the mirror winning?" she asks herself.  
Why did she let her circumstances do this to her?  
She moans, for she sees herself, in spirit, dying.  
She must try again, even though she doesn't know how much fight is left in her-  
To pursue her goals and find a better image, of one that does not reject her from the mirror!

## Nostalgia for Spring, in a Newfoundland village. (excerpt)

I must away, where the wind comes down  
like a cunning wolf on a sleeping town,  
where the stars slip out on the edge of night,  
there is no darkness, just dark on light.  
Where the tall grass grows in a long green wave  
And the Northern Lights make a luminous cave  
of the whole blue heavens from earth to sea,  
where the wild geese soar in their ecstasy  
to their favorite haunts, to begin anew  
Creation's role, at their rendezvous.  
Give me the peace I crave  
In my own hometown by my native wave  
Where nature reigns in majesty  
and all things commune with thee.

**Kay Lynch**

## dead Indians

dead Indians are safer--  
in poems, museums,  
archaeological pamphlets,  
bone pendants and ochre--  
lament, monographs,  
no threat to our order

weeping walrus  
we mourn the Beothuk  
close the sky in  
on Labrador Innu  
the land wired  
and caribou fled

**Mary Dalton**

## plastic

heading for the cove  
running from ACOA  
and its grants for plastic trees

the woman from the city  
in Birkenstock sandals  
and handwoven dreams  
comes to play  
wants to play  
among bone stone and shell  
but the beach wants to tell  
her: styrofoam,  
beer nets,  
six-circled,  
bags from Dominion--  
their red-and-white drift--  
and tire rims rusting,  
tossed in at the shoreline

Javex bottles jostling  
in a rush to meet the waves

chilled, at a loss  
hunched in her fisherman's knit  
the beachwalker tells herself stories  
thinks she can hear  
the sea whispering:  
why did you shed your hair?  
can't you make clothes from the reeds?

thinks she can hear  
the screams of the dolphins  
their burning livers  
the lunatic cells

**Mary Dalton**

## A friendship

My friend flew into my eye  
trusting absolutely  
not knowing my fear  
of absolutes.  
I closed my eye  
against that perfect  
flight, felt the dark  
wash my friend away.

**Pamela Hodgson**

*eighteen*

# M A S S A C R E



## Women across Canada respond to the massacre

*Excerpts from The Centre of the Backlash, by Joan Baril, Northern Woman's Centre of Thunder Bay, Ontario, and Violence and Terror, by Women of Montreal*

Yesterday in the supermarket I saw their faces on a tabloid magazine at the check-out. I realized I was staring compulsively at them. They were very young and most of them were smiling. I also realized the women behind me was staring at them too. We just shook our heads at each other - a universal gesture of distress.

At a house party, the conversation turned to a Birk's ad in Macleans which was run along side the massacre story - the naked neck and shoulders of a woman with grey blue skin wearing a heavy gold chain around her neck. The caption said, "KNOCK HER DEAD". (I have been told that in a second printing Macleans moved the ad to a different spot in the issue).

It is also horrifying to experience the backlash which developed with frightening rapidity within hours after the kill-

ings.

Thursday, December 7. The day after.

The red light was flashing on the answering machine and both phones were ringing that morning. It was to be a day of phone calls for Anna Demetrakopolous and Tracey Cain who were working on projects at the Centre that day. Other women - some members, some not - and a few sympathetic men, came and went all day.

Later, we found out we were not the only organization deluged with phone calls. The Thunder Bay Physical and Sexual Assault Centre, the Ontario Women's Directorate and even the office of MPP Lynn MacLeod also had constant callers. I am sure the same was happening to women's organizations across the country.

Our phone calls sorted themselves into three types. Most were from women (and a few men) who were saddened and horrified by the terrible news and just wanted to talk, offer help or ask questions trying to make sense of it all. The emotion in the voices was palpable. I listened to some of these calls on the answering

machine later. Most voices were shaking.

But other women callers were much more distressed. Some were crying. Others said they were terribly frightened. Some related the violence that had been done to them in the past. The killings had triggered off powerful emotions of fear, rage, and pain. Everyone at the Centre was profoundly affected by these calls.

These distressed women were the first to speak of the need for some sort of activity to acknowledge the anguish. So did other callers and visitors. A United Church minister proposed a vigil be held at the United Church. By late afternoon, two local vigils had been more or less organized. The United Church was to have a public vigil on Friday Night (the next night) and the Centre would help publicize it. We would have a vigil of our own for women only at Unitarian House, a facility we have used many times for events in the past. To the women at the Centre, this seemed the best way to help meet the emotional needs of the women who were phoning in. Later a third memorial was announced to be held at Lakehead University Monday afternoon. The Centre would also help publicize it.

Creation of the backlash.

It started shaping up immediately the day after the tragedy. A horrified nation tuned to hear the full details on the CBC news. Barbara Frum, on the Journal, started with an analysis of the murders. Participants including June Callwood, expressed the view that the massacre was related to the misogyny and violence experienced by women. Frum would have none of it. As Melanie Randall later described it in the Globe and Mail, "Frum was bullish in her persistent claim that we should not focus on the fact that women were the targets; we should see the tragedy as something that "diminished all of us", men and women alike, and by extension, all equally.

"Apparently frustrated with the guests' insistence that the killings were a social expression of men's violence against women, Frum repeatedly posed variations of the same general question about mass murder, expressed in deliberately gender-neutral terms. In so doing she not only denied the specific significance of a man's decision to kill women because they were women, she directly challenged women's right to grieve...and to organize against this act of hatred against our gender."

Frum's persistent questions also denied women the opportunity to define the situation; she wanted to minimize the chilling words "You are women. You are feminists", to marginalize the ghastly last message which blamed women for all evils, the deliberate hunting for women from floor to floor.

The people on the panel seemed merely puzzled by Frum's insistence on this point. Except for June Callwood. Did I

detect a shadow of despair on her wise women face?

On a Montreal hot line show earlier, the men callers had blamed drugs, condom distributors, women who made men feel insecure, everything and anything but...

In Thunder Bay, late Thursday, a radio station (CKPR) phoned to ask what we were going to do in response to the tragedy. On air the bits chosen emphasized two points: 1) the fact that the vigil by being for women, excluded men and 2) Anna's discourse seemed jumpy and poorly thought out. She came across as a flake.

By the use of editing, the situation was defined as the media wished. Anna's meanings were simply disappeared.

Friday, December 8.

In Thunder Bay the calls to the Women's Centre continued.

Michelle Lansberg in the Toronto Star warned, in a piece titled "Killer's Rage Was All too Familiar", we would be fooling ourselves to label this crime the act of a madman - "in your town and mine ...violent women hating is a daily truth." Doris Anderson's article was titled "A Hatred of Women Thrives in Our Society". Patricia Graham of the Vancouver Province described Lepine as a "social aberration" and warned that "though beyond the abyss (he) was also a misogynist."

The editorials in the Globe and Mail after the massacre also focussed on a violent and misogynous society as the basis for the crime. It was suggested Lepine "absorbed his attitudes from the society around him" and stated bluntly "if the arrogance of male domination is to be found, naked and unashamed, at the heart of our democratic system and in centres of higher learning, it is evident that a deep seated fear and resentment is at work among many men." The paper called on men to talk with other men about their continuing oppression of women.

But the Thunder Bay newspaper expressed the backlash clearly. The shootings were caused by "the divisions created in Canadian society by the mere presence of the women's movement." By insisting on barring men from one of the three vigils in the community, the Northern Woman's Centre "invites the very negative attitudes against women it strives to erase."

The elements in the backlash shifted rapidly from 1) Frum's contention that women were not the target to 2) suggestions from many media sources that the murders were just the work of an irrational madman without wider significance to 3) the contention that radical feminists were using this tragedy as a platform against men.

The Toronto Star then wrote an article

*continued on page 20*

*nineteen*

# Action/Reaction: responding to the unthinkable in Montreal

By Dana Warren and Louise Moyes

Fourteen people dead. Killed by a "madman" who could have been my neighbour. It happened at the university, my university, where I walk, work and feel safe. A big gun. This is not the United States.

Marc Lepine was twenty-five years old, had tried to join the army, was crazy about computers. A movie buff, he liked all the box office hits: Rambo was his favourite. Like your normal guy, he had his problems; an abusive father, divorced parents, troubles with women and troubles realizing his goals. But he was an A student, a good neighbour, practically my neighbour.

Coming from Newfoundland, I was never really afraid in Montreal. That is, until our house was broken into. Our first Friday night in the big city and we go out for a beer. Arriving on our doorstep at 3 a.m., we stop to search for keys and notice lights on inside. "Didn't you turn the lights off?" "Yes!" But the lights are on, the back door wide open, and a cloud of flies buzzing in the kitchen. They didn't get much, but the size twelve footprint he left on my bed upset us more than the material losses. I dreamt of our apartment with no front and no back wall, open for all to do as they pleased. And for those following days of shock in December, a whole city felt that vulnerability, only there was nowhere to turn for comfort.

I went to the candlelight vigil. We started under a clear sky, bright moon, thirty below celsius, with candles in hand. Silence had been requested. Everywhere there were people crying, people complaining of the cold, people singing empty words to avoid the issue. I wanted people with whom I could mourn and be angry.

By the time we reached l'Ecole polytechnique we had swelled to several thousand, a blind mass waiting for deliverance. And we waited, but for what? The media to set up its lights, cameras, microphones. Bright lights invading a space created for candles. They took away any possibility of relieving our pain; instead they were packaging it for resale, putting us on display.

"We are here today to mourn these fourteen victims and this extreme example of the continuing violence against women." The crowd, men and women screamed "En francais! Ta gueule! Shut your face!" The same message in french in turn drowned out, this time by some male engineering students, "They were our friends! That they were women has nothing to do with it! We are here to mourn our friends, don't make this a cause for feminist propaganda!" "I don't want some stupid woman telling me how it is", said one guy to me. Women chanted: "Dead, dead, dead, they're dead, dead, dead."

Squabbling broke out throughout the crowd. No mourning and no catharsis; only more opposition and anger.

On my way to work, I take the metro and find myself hiding my body, cursing myself for wearing a miniskirt. I only wore it because I felt good about my body. I shouldn't have to hide it, should I? Doubting that makes me all the more aware of what's happened. It's not the first time I felt like this; its a recurring

ing there so uncomfortable we don't know where to look. I avert my eyes to the floor. A white sneaker arrests my gaze: "Tuez les toutes!" Kill them all. The feminine plural. Freshly written in black marker.

At work an old gentleman assures me Lepine was just a madman, that I shouldn't worry. If something happens in the metro, just scream, and if that's not enough then don't go out on your own. Yes, easy to say, but I don't want to live my life like that.

The incident incited conversation everywhere. Many of my male friends dismissed my fears as hysterical. They became defensive

when I talked about the violence, verbal and physical, shown towards women every day. "Don't become a neurotic feminist." These men were stopped dead in their eloquence, though, when I pointed out their ignorance of the fear of being alone on the street. They were never told "Be careful" each time they went out. Their worst nightmare had not become a reality.

The city is nervous, mute. But its time to bring things back to normal: buses on time, metros running. I'm on the bus home, finding a cautious camaraderie with the other women, avoiding eye contact with men. I stare out the window: a huge black shroud hangs in the distance, attached to the symbol representing women. Women in mourning. It hits me like an aftershock.

News reports, french and english, blare at me: "We mourn the tragic loss of fourteen achievers. Only the good die young" they say. "These women were outstanding, pursuing careers in the male world." The media scrambled for a sentimental touch, diverting our attention from the real issues. They created exceptional roles for exceptional people. What if it had been fourteen waitresses? Violence occurs against female 'achievers', housewives, all women, all the time; their pain is equal.

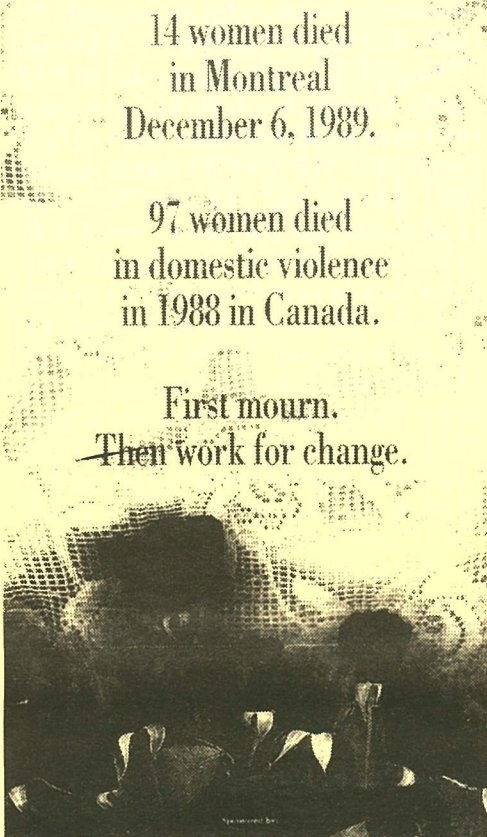
I'd never called myself a feminist before, a word I associated with man-hating. I like men and don't like polarizing arguments, pointing fingers. But this systematic separation of the men from the women and detached killing of these fourteen women smacked me in the face. I became angry and upset all at once at our horrific reality. It seeped in, flooded in, all the violence, physical and verbal, that women receive on a daily basis. Unfortunately, too often we ignore it, suppress it, accept it.

I called myself a humanist before. I thought I'd always had equal opportunities: I made it to medical school, could do whatever I wanted. There I realized being equal often meant being one of the boys. Now my viewpoint has changed. And when I talk to intelligent men about these killings and feminism and they dismiss me, I realize the feminist movement has its most difficult struggle to face, its targets more subtle, evasive, intangible.

Our society breeds aggression in men. The male image is of strength. Men never cry or show extreme emotion; they're always in control. And if something is not to their liking, they are taught to use force to change it. As our cities grow larger and towns dwindle in importance this tendency to use force increases with the dissipating sense of community; even friends become harder to find. Marc Lepine had few friends. We see increasing numbers of 'loonies' talking to themselves in public places, angry and lonely. Too often this frustration ends up being vented through violent acts.

This man killed fourteen women. Women who had broken into the patriarchal world and thereby "contributed" to his feelings of failure.

We have to help channel angry emotions into words and discussion instead of fists and guns, because yes, misogyny exists here in Canada too. We can't ignore that now.



experience.

Usually we commuters stay in our own worlds, are still sleeping or already thinking about the day ahead. We don't look at each other much and remain comfortably anonymous. But this morning we all feel like sore thumbs, not because of messy hair and odd socks though: a conscious feeling of fear and guilt radiates from each of us, making sitting or stand-

## Feminist analysis of massacre discredited

*continued from page 19*  
about "the confusion" caused by the killings and, forgetting a previous commitment to fighting misogyny, stated some men "find the entire feminist analysis of the mass murders irrelevant, if not personally offensive." The same article mentioned a male only service without comment. As one Centre member wisely put it, when men get together it is accepted it is for a serious purpose; when women get together it is to exclude men.

Two weeks later, on Boxing Day, the Globe and Mail asked questions about the validity of women's studies courses. Perhaps they are "divisive", the paper claimed. Silencing women is easy if it is generally agreed any discussions of women's issues reveals a hatred of men.

When we bring up women's problems we immediately have to go on the defensive, state that we do not hate men, etc. before any discussion can continue.

One prophetic Toronto Star article described neoconservatism in Canada as focussing on feminists as the enemy. Thomas Walkom pointed out that widely read magazines like The Edmonton Weekly Report blame feminism for the decline in education, the family, and all Canada's cultural values. He claimed this type of thinking is strong and spreading.

Melanie Randall (Globe and Mail, Dec. 12) noted that as early as the day after the killings, CFPL-TV (London) termed a rally at the university a "feminist diatribe". She says conditions have been created in which it is now "inappropriate" or "ex-

tremist" to view the killings as an act of violence against women. "How can we possibly account for this chilling display of threatening and hateful behaviour...?"

Three methods have been used for centuries to silence and oppress women. The situation is defined by those in control. All the language used, all events and responses to events are limited to the definitions of those in control. At no time is credence given to women's definitions and analysis, women's pain and fear, women's lives and experiences.

Nevertheless Randall is optimistic and hopes that feminists, progressives and profeminist men can work together towards an equal, peaceful world.

I hope she is right.

## Massacre in Montreal: men benefit from male violence

By Robin Whitaker

On the night of December 6, I was sitting in my room working on a term paper, when a friend called me to tell me that she was upset because she had just heard that a gunman had killed several students in Montreal. Within the next few hours, as more details were released, we were speaking to one another again: this time in even greater shock. As soon as we heard that the gunman - still unidentified at that point - had separated the men from the women and shot the women, we were well aware of the social significance of his actions. The women who were killed in Montreal are in my age and sex group and it is as a young woman reflecting on the crime of Marc Lepine, that I speak to you.

The whole thing is incredibly tragic; no one would deny that. However, it seems to me there are two paths that can be taken in the interpretation of the crime: we can reduce it to mere tragedy, call it the act of a madman, and judge it as politically neutral. Or we can read the cultural meaning contained in Lepine's act. The second position is the more difficult one to take, because it involves the possibility that we must take some responsibility ourselves for the present and future shape of our society. I believe it is morally irresponsible to deny there is meaning in the crime of Marc Lepine, though. To do so is to hide from the realities of the society we live in and to absolve ourselves of the task of making our society a safer place in which to live.

By anyone's standards, a man who can kill fourteen strangers in cold blood suffers from some sort of insanity. However, insanity often gets expressed in ways that mirror the culture of the insane. Evidently this was the case with Lepine; after all, he witnessed his own father's abuse of his mother.

I do not claim that we should now fear a huge number of crimes exactly like Lepine's; his act was certainly extreme, and fortunately, most men will never mimic it.

What does make me fearful however, not to mention angry, is the amount of denial going on about just how representative Lepine's act is of the rest of society. We obviously live in a violent society. Who could deny that? And when people do try to deny it, whose interests are they protecting?

Feminists have been accused of stereotyping men in their responses to the Montreal slaughter. "Most men are not violent, most men don't beat their wives or children" is the protest. Fine. That is quite right, and I accept it. But can anyone deny there is far too much violence being committed in this society? Any violence is too much violence, is it not? And while it may be unfair to stereotype men as being violent, it certainly is fair to stereotype violence as

being committed overwhelmingly by men. This is true whether the victim is a woman, a child, or another man.

And even if most men are not themselves the wielders of force, does this absolve them of all responsibility for working to change society? I would argue all men benefit from male violence in our society, whether they commit it themselves or not, and whether they realize it themselves or not.

How can I make such a statement? We are living in a society where women are still in an inferior position to men in spite of the alleged "equality of opportunity" that is now our constitutional right. How can this be explained? The answer is complex; however, one aspect of it is that women's voices have not been heard, and are still silent too much of the time. One means of silencing women is through making us fearful, and if knowing we risk

being violated or beaten by men doesn't make us fearful, what does? Although most men may never exercise violence against women, they benefit from the violence committed by other men as it acts to silence women's voices and works to prevent us achieving a true equality with men.

Unfortunately, violence has been labelled a "women's issue" by the popular culture. This causes two problems. Since "women's issues are already treated with less regard and less urgency than other issues in our society, it serves to push the issue of violence to more remote corners than the "important issues" we face, like the deficit and why Gretsky went to L.A., for example. This marginalization of the issue is cold comfort to those women and children who are the victims of violence on a day-to-day basis. Further, labelling it a "woman's issue" hides the fact men

have a responsibility to take up this issue too. After all, the actual violators are almost without exception male.

As a young woman, it makes me happy to see there are men who are questioning how it is that our society continues to condone violence, but I also want to know why so many men are absolving themselves of any responsibility. To those who accuse us of turning a tragedy into a political issue, I say that according to my definition of political, denying the meaning of Lepine's act is also political, in another direction. And I add I do not believe highlighting the problem of male violence in our society at this time means we are not properly mourning the deaths of fourteen women. On the contrary, it means we are working to try to prevent further tragedies from happening.

## Letter suppressed by Montreal dailies

Waterlily:

We are submitting for publication in your magazine a letter that expresses our opinion on the murder of fourteen young women at the Ecole polytechnique de Montreal on December 6, 1989. We do hope you will print our letter; it was submitted to the three Montreal French-language dailies, but none of them printed it. So much for the "freedom of the press"...

For political reasons, we have not given our surnames.

Jan, Celine, Danielle, Francine, Christiane, Helene, Jeanne-Mance, Louise, Ptrizia, Elise, Diane, Julie, Dyane, Ginette, Daniele, Dominique, Daniele, Contrance, Johanne, Pascale, Gerry, and Suzanne. Montreal, Quebec.

Violence and Terror

"Madman shoots 14 women" screams the headline of Montreal french newspaper La Presse on December 7, 1989, the day after the killing of fourteen young women at the Ecole polytechnique de Montreal. In trying to explain this action, the 'experts', journalists and male politicians insisted on treating it on a psychological level as the work of a 'crazy' and 'mad' individual. Lepine did not drink or smoke, was most likely not a drug user, and had no known psychiatric record. He was not known to be aggressive toward women. So why insist, after the fact, on inventing a psychological profile that the killer did not in fact seem to have? To reduce the killer to a case of deviant psychological makeup with no facts to back it up, seems a bit suspicious. To treat him as an individual case of psychological deviancy is to deny that he is a social being, which minimizes the impact and meaning of his action.

The murderer, Marc Lepine, himself revealed the political and social meaning of his action in a letter found on his body

after the massacre. "I hate feminists", he wrote. That is why he killed fourteen women. His action was motivated and premeditated. As well, he had drawn up a 'hit list' of nineteen other targets, all influential, pioneering and successful women. His action was, in fact, a terrorist campaign directed against women and lesbians.

Let's pretend for a moment that Marc Lepine was in fact mad, as everyone seems to want to believe. If this is true, why exactly was he mad? Simply because he went to extremes in his violence against women, killing fourteen of them at once. Every day, the Montreal newspapers and newspapers all over the world report the murder of women committed by men. In fact, the only crime of these men was in getting caught. By committing such extreme woman-hating actions, they attracted public attention to what must remain secret and hidden: the day-to-day oppression of women by men, in every way, shape and form. By being so careless in their action, they committed an unforgivable error: to risk blowing the cover on the ways in which the class of men ensure, hold and maintain the power of life and death over women as a whole.

These men are no different from those who "manhandle" their wives or girlfriends or who threaten to do so; they are no different from those fathers, uncles, brothers and family friends who rape their daughters, nieces, sisters and their friends' daughters, nor are they different from the husbands who rape their wives in the master bedroom every Saturday night; nor from those who rape their neighbours, co-workers, a woman they met in a bar or a stranger on the street; those who force their sexual fantasies or pornographic material on their partners, who force them to perform various sexual acts or to bear unwanted children; those who, at work and at play, harass women

with their sexual and other degrading jokes, their lecherous looks, sexual innuendo and disrespectful comments; or those who, either jokingly or dead serious, deplore the killer didn't kill more of those feminists.

It is only a question of degree and conspicuousness. In cases of extreme violence, brought to public attention through the media, the class of men is quick to disown, for appearances' sake, the individual member who has gone too far in acting on his hatred of women. The greater the risk of revealing the workings of the social system of oppression of women by men, the more extreme the method of dealing with the individual who has transgressed this unspoken rule: the class of men throws one of its members to the wolves in order to protect the rest of the pack. As the experts said on television, mass murderers are either shot down by police marksmen, lynched by other prison inmates or, when they realize what they've done and what punishment awaits them, they commit suicide. In any case, the result is the same: elimination of the careless member who endangers the other members' rights to continue to exert their individual and collective power over all women and to maintain, in doing so, the individual and collective appropriation of the class of women by the class of men. This is the technique used in the case of the 'madman' of the polytechnic school.

In the case of the murderers of women, the class of men makes an example of the man who has killed one woman, or fourteen women, in order that all other men may quietly continue to kill by inches the women they live, work or are in contact with, by the most ingenious, varied and subtle means.

twenty-one

# ARTS

## Female photographers' exhibit: "Click - people and places"

By Rae Perlin

An exhibition of photographs by five women and curated by Kathleen Knowling was shown at the Eastern Edge Gallery during the month of February.

On opening, Sunday, Feb. 4th, Marian White tentatively enquired if I would write about it for *Waterlily*. I equally tentatively replied that I knew zero about photography's technical aspects, and did not pay the same attention to the exhibitions as I do to other forms of art.

However, this one looked different and I might find it a challenge. Little did I realize how much! Having given up art reviewing some years ago, I contented myself with reading other people's reviews, but decided to write these thoughts thinking I might develop more appreciation for photography, which I did.

To get myself familiar with the work, I arrived at the Gallery, notebook stuffed in sac, on the most glorious afternoon I can recall this winter; the sky brilliant blue, sheets of ice in the harbour alternated with still water reflecting the ships, attracting the gulls who swooping to rest, grabbing whatever food was available and then soaring in to the great blue sky.

With some reluctance I entered the foyer to the gallery where I at least was warmer. I fumbled in my London Art Gallery bag for my notebook and sat back, first to observe; to relax, not to make judgments.

Rising minutes later, I turned to the nearest group of photos of Barbara Bradbury who attended Bay St. George Community College on Nfld.'s West Coast and obtained a Fine Arts B.A. at NASCAD.

Her five black and white portraits are of three men and two women who look quite congenial and conventional. That is, until you note that the two inch white matting across the middle of the photograph divides the top from the bottom, revealing a pair of legs and feet, out of all proportion to the above portraits. The effect is grotesquely comic, rather like that of looking into a funny mirror at the circus. One woman laughs outright, as her arms embrace the missing knees; her striped blouse at variance with the vertical stripes of her slacks. The people photographed seem to be enjoying the joke; obviously Bradbury has a good sense of humour. Too bad her cat Ebenezer wasn't included. (I recall Paul Klee's "Cat Divided").

Sheila O'Leary studied photography both at MUN Extension and Concordia University in Montreal. She states, "social perversities in varying degrees are the most interesting to me, though an idealist, my images are the art of sociology".

Some of these traits can be seen in her two photographs in sepia tones, "Peace A Chord" and "Lots of Fish".

The "Lots of Fish" photo shows a street



in the foreground and a two-tiered garbage can. The top one has "Lots of Fish" slapped across its white covering, while the lower one has the "People's Fish" sign. The street seems to be a shabby market area probably in Montreal's China town. The focus is on the two women in the rear who pause in their shopping to look back at the photographer. Both of these photos could be included in one of those books that concentrate on the anonymous human scene; sympatique, or perverse, and sometimes puzzling.

The second photograph shows a scene of people in a park area; up front a man with a hat juggling a dagger. The juggler is watched by a potbellied couple and an anxious looking small boy. Otherwise people seem relaxed. The man with a hat has a T-Shirt with Amnesty International printed on it. The title of the photo is "Peace-a-Chord", an annual peace day when bells peal out at noon, so that people can observe a minute of silence or prayer. The moment caught in the picture is entertainment; the daggers, which seem so dangerous, may be pointing to the unseen presence of the far more ominous weapons that we like to forget

are being produced and sold daily by all governments.

Gwen Lawson grew up in the Midwest United States, teaches at the Community College in Stephenville. The statement on her card reads: "after a two year hiatus from 'art', my boys are thriving while my violet collection is dying; these new pieces are my most personal work to date. I feel they are dealing directly with several contrasts and conflicts in my current life."

Lawson's series fills the left wall of the gallery; they are black, excepting the colour photo "family picture" at the end. The first photo, her nude self-portrait is purposely blurred as she sits on a high white stool holding wistfully her drooping violet plant in its pot; the frame is made up of small black rectangular blocks on which are tiny photos of the same plant. In the next photo the plant takes centre place on the white stool; the leaves are tinted and the live ones have a lovely texture. This time the artist's head becomes the frame. The next two photos are of the boys, the toy 'ecto' truck tops the high stool, while the youngsters, who are the real ghostbusters, have fun in the



photo by Barbara Bradbury

blocks that make the frame. The white stool in the next again takes centre stage, a little black machine on it, with one of the boys holding the switch with mischievous grin. The family picture, the only one not for sale, is also the only one in colour. From a distance the illusion of an arch over the heads of the three boys reminds one of a renaissance picture along with the elaborate mock-up frame.

Kathleen Sellers was born in St. John's, obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Mt. Allison University and is presently living in Corner Brook.

This is a series of six very small works. They remind me at first of mini old masters, dark, with some light and colour coming through. I needed some help here, since the technical aspects are new to me. I am told by the helpful women at the gallery that the images are between two polaroids on which the artist has worked, scraping and superimposing to create the desired image. The first three are called 'Dream'. I detect the figure of a man, then a moving figure. The second three called 'Prayer' are static. I find the dark head form which reveals no features mysterious. There's a sequence here, imagined or real; one is drawn back to it.

Jeanette Laaning attended MUN Extension and NASCAD. Her work began by documenting the redevelopment of the downtown area. Her card explains her progression from landscape to portraiture.

Now at home, I have a good day for writing about her series of window-scapes, (my term). Winter has settled in, making snow shapes against the fences and houses outside my own windows.

Lanning's photos; however, are more than scenery; they are beautifully controlled compositions. Contrasts of the homier inside to the wider winter landscape, carry the eye back to the inside where we notice details such as kitchen faucets, below the texture of a sash curtain. Against a plant-shelf which holds shells, the camera has caught a 'pouter' pigeon in profile, with startled eye. Is the pigeon real? It's quite wonderful! (See the back cover of winter *Waterlily*.)

In "Colin's Window", which brings poignant thoughts, we see a natural skating rink where small children cling to steadier adults, the air we feel is cool and crisp. My very favourite in the series is the one where the curtains are parted to show two pensive children as they walk by against the snow.

The work of these five women photographers are distinctive by their differences, despite the common denominator of the camera.

*Rae Perlin is a St. John's visual artist whose work is celebrated in many art galleries.*

# Star tricks! We can't take much more of this, captain!

By Jocelyn J. Paquette

Jocelyn, from St John's, is enroute to the University of Western Ontario in May to complete her Library and Information Sciences Degree.

As a fan of the popular 60s television series "Star Trek" I ignored the negative imagery being presented about women and their role in society. Captivated by the gadgetry and special effects, the shallow story lines and weak portrayals had little impact at the time. The detrimental characterization being made about women impinged little on my enjoyment and entertainment.

My initial questioning was innocent enough. How long can an image transmitted through television survive and work on the psyche? Though this is a rhetorical question, I feel confident you have shared a similar experience. Whether it was youth or the sixties themselves that hid from me those tiresome and dangerous reflections I cannot say. But if in fact today is a different place and time we must come to terms with those visions of the past and eradicate them from today's mass media.

The following are but a few examples of the imagery that is being transmitted, translated and directed into the psyche keeping intact the "stereotypical female". Whoever she was.

Janice Rand Yeoman Third Class holds a position "performed by a man or woman who would serve officers as a combination valet-executive-secretary-military aide". In "Charlie X" Rand is seen as a grown woman incapable of discouraging the advances of an alien in the guise of an awkward seventeen year old boy. Her quarters are pink with mirrors. Adding filters to create a dreamlike illusion and Rand's wardrobe of flowing see through gowns and body tights, completes the stereotype.

Nurse Chapel performs her Sick Bay duties well enough but let a crisis strike and this capable professional breaks first. She is continually confused about her feelings. Her affection for Mr. Spock is alluded to but only when drugged does she attempt to tell him. When sick bay is contaminated with a virus, Chapel gets it first, disabling her for the rest of the crisis. Interestingly, actress Majel Barrett had begun her career on the Enterprise as the Captain's Number One. The role was soon filled by the unflappable Mr. Spock.

What is wrong with this picture? These images have been sent out to millions of homes for over twenty years. Still the fascination for the series persists. Star Trek uses every stereotypical response to illustrate a weak minded, irresponsible female unable to perform her duties as an officer. These images are tied together in an opening that begins with to "boldly go where no man has gone before". What of the women? Female roles are typically in

positions of subordinate authority. These few examples have been selected in order to deal with three issues concerning the role of women in a popular television series. One, women are portrayed as ineffectual, irrational individuals ruled by emotion rather than logic. Two, women exhibit an inability for sound clear reasoning, and seem incapable of delegating orders or being objective. The roles go so far as to show these women derelict in their duties. Three, the lack of women in powerful positions openly makes the statement that the role of women is not to lead but to be led. Characteristics of the leader such as courage, single-mindedness and self confidence are absent from any of the female roles.

After examining these roles I am confused by the fascination for this series still prevalent today. As a fan of the early series I support their introduction of avant-garde special effects and scientific premises. It is the impact of the negative portrayal of women and their ability that is disturbing. In syndication for over fifteen years episodes continue to be broadcasted late at night and Saturday mornings. Could it be Tina Turner was wrong and we still need heroes? And if we do, why can't they be women of intelligence and confidence? Perhaps the women's movement and equal rights issues mean so little to the present generation of Trekkies that such disturbing images are of no consequence. After all, it's an old series that is being superseded by "Star Trek: The Next Generation". I mean, one must be fair. The opening has been changed to read, "Where no one has gone before". In many ways very little has changed in the twenty years separating the two series. In "The Next Generation" women still play subordinate roles; nurturer, confidante, empath. The men still hold the positions of power.

Statistics persistently show men continue to lead in the areas of science, mathematics, and business administration. Women, now fifty per cent of the work force, continue to occupy positions subordinate to men. We must accept responsibility for permitting sexist attitudes to pervade and persist in everyday life. Continued pressure must be put on the networks to stop the use of poor female images. Television is a pervasive and powerful tool that continues to wield all too familiar biases. We must protest the use of the emotional female, the weak, frightened, girlish persona as a tool to control and erode our self image as capable vital, resourceful members of society. Our demand for equality and fair treatment is an ongoing battle in a society that remains male oriented.

Nearly twenty-one years have passed since the original series left the airwaves; yet, thanks to syndication the episodes are still being seen and the stereotypes reinforced.



## Book review: Time of Icicles



*The Time of Icicles*  
by Mary Dalton, Breakwater Books, 1989. 80 pages, Cloth \$19.95.

*The Miners of Wabana*  
by Gail Weir, Breakwater Books, 1989. Paperback \$14.95

By Helen Fogwill Porter

The Time of Icicles is a collection of poetry. *The Miners of Wabana* is the story of the iron ore miners of Bell Island. At first glance these two books would seem to have little in common. Further scrutiny, however, reveals that Mary Dalton and Gail Weir share a deep attachment to their birthplaces. Dalton was

born and grew up in Lake View, Conception Bay, Weir across the water on Bell Island.

The sixty poems in *Icicles* are polished pieces of work. Mary Dalton has been reading, editing, teaching and writing poetry for a long time; she obviously didn't rush into print. The liberal sprinkling of mythological references put me off a bit; I preferred poems with titles like *The yellow silk dress* and *Empire's other flag* to *Polyphemus with his eye out* and *He calls me his Hecate*. The poems rooted in Conception Bay are generally successful; I especially liked *The Forties*, a meditation on the poet's parents:

They were seventeen  
Born in one parish-  
Separate coves, worn paths between.  
The forties had swept them away

To Argentina, silver city,  
The streets paved with Americans.

Some of the more memorable poems are those in which the poet turns a merciless searchlight on herself. *What sort of woman would you fancy, Nelson?*, *She counters Auden and others* and *You've noticed how stray cats get that way* will spark immediate recognition in the independent women of today. In many of her poems Dalton makes good use of colour; *The yellow silk dress* is a particularly fine

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# PAPYRUS

## Book review: recording the history of the Waterford



By Bev Brown

*Out of Mind, Out of Sight: A History of the Waterford Hospital* by Patricia O'Brien, Newfoundland History Series 5, Breakwater, 1989, St. John's.

Contrasting schools of thought about the social versus the biological nature and origin of psychiatric illness have dramatically altered the way patients in Newfoundland have been treated by the Waterford Hospital since circa 1800. O'Brien's account, not only of the Lunacy Asylum cum Hospital for Mental and Nervous Diseases cum Waterford Hospital, but also of changing diagnostic and psychiatric articles of faith in North America and Europe, documents the seesaw nature of these beliefs and the ways they affected patient care in Newfoundland.

What emerges from these pages is a picture of a government with a permanent blind eye and a deaf ear to administrative physicians' pleas for over hundred and fifty years, pleas to the government to do something about terrible overcrowding at the Waterford, the potentially lethal physical conditions there, and the continual need for more staff in this often custodial institution.

The picture is far from completely dismal, however, because the place has more than once in its long history been ahead of its time with treatment policies such as barring physical restraints, unlike the rest of Canada; patient participation in farming to provide fresh produce and meat for the hospital; and outpatient day programmes which preceded those in other areas of North America by decades.

The hierarchical social structure of hospitals is mirrored in her description: we hear all the news about the top level administrators and physicians, but not much about the few nursing staff employed, and little about the attendants, who for years and years lived on the wards with the patients. She does point to the inequity of pay between women and men who were attendants, but missing from the book is an account of the attendants' strike of May 30, 1920, when some male attendants were dismissed for refusing to finish disinfecting

bedclothes during a smallpox outbreak. Why does she write so little about the people who did most of the work there?

Also, although the poor Asylum functioned as a corollary institution, or back ward, of the hospital, with up to half its inhabitants from the lunacy asylum, the place is never described in any detail: we only keep hearing it was overcrowded and that conditions were bad.

O'Brien makes brief but startling enigmatic mention of some of the more cruel aspects of psychiatric treatment, such as that when pre-frontal lobotomies were given, disconnecting surgically the thalamus from the frontal lobes of the brain, "(s)ome less desirable side effects, unfortunately, proved irreversible."

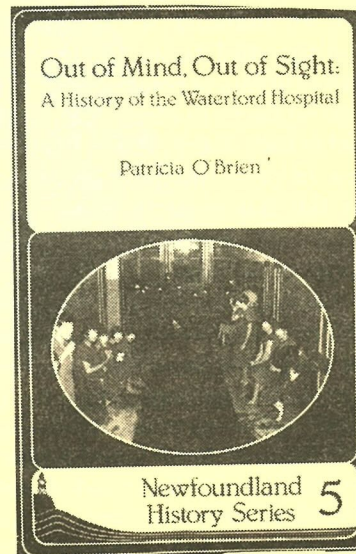
Go on, O'Brien! Tell us more than that "they could lead to such a marked and irreversible deterioration in personality"! People's lives have been ruined by these operations: I wanted some examples.

When she describes electric convulsive

therapy (ECT, or shock treatment), O'Brien does note it was used as a control measure for back ward patients, but she chooses not to indicate how many treatments or worse, courses of treatment, were typically given patients over the

years, although the term "maintenance ECT" implies more than one short course. In a footnote she explains ECT has been overused in the past at the Waterford: some would claim this is still the case. Why did she deem it necessary to refrain from this valid criticism in the main body of her text? People in Ontario now have the right to refuse ECT altogether; this is a recent law which I hope will be considered here in Newfoundland.

A few of the chart figures showing hospital records used in the book are faded and illegible. It would have been much more interesting to see a picture of one of the "variety of rotating machines" she tells us were used in the eighteenth century to treat mental illness. Speaking of which, I wonder if that is where the rotating finger gesture for "crazy" comes from?



## Book review continued: Miners of Wabana

*continued from page 23*

example. After reading it one longs to see the poet herself clad in "warmer than gold" creation.

The only colour given any prominence in *The Miners of Wabana* is red. Gail Weir's father Stanley Hussey, who was a Bell Island miner until his death in 1961, "came home every day covered from head to toe in red dirt". "When you come off shift", said one of the miners interviewed, "you had to wash in three different waters but then the red dust would be in your nose, mouth, ears, and throat".

And, after a week, the iron ore dust on a miner's clothes would be "like hard icing, red and greasy".

But red dust meant prosperity, and from the opening of the mines in 1895 men from all over Conception Bay and sometimes farther afield gathered to throw themselves into this backbreaking, dangerous work that had in its favour the security of a regular pay cheque. For years the miners commuted from their homes but eventually they brought their

families with them and created on Bell Island one of the most economically viable communities in Newfoundland.

Gail Weir's book, which began life as a M.A. thesis in Folklore, covers most aspects of mining life. I would like to have seen more about life in a mining town and about the miners' wives and families; for this kind of information one must read between the lines. Before I read this book if anyone had asked me what I knew about mines I'd probably have talked about darkness, dust and danger. I knew nothing, for instance, about miners' eating habits: "When you were eating a slice of bread you'd take it by a corner...grab ahold of one corner of the bread, and that's the way you'd eat it. Then you'd heave the corner away." There were no washing facilities underground.

Like most people, I had heard of horses in mines, but only in a vague sort of way. Many of those beautiful animals lived underground for most of their lives; in one

case a horse was finally brought to the surface after twenty six years.

"They (the horses) were down that long", said one of the miners; "they knew where to go better than any man".

And then there were the rats, often "big as cats". Some of the miners feared the rats, others ignored them; some tormented them, others made pets of them. In the 1950s, when new machinery replaced horses in the mines, the days of the rats were numbered. Without the abundance of appetizing horse feed around they didn't fare too well and they were eventually eliminated.

In *The old men are dying*, the opening poem in Mary Dalton's *The time of Icicles*, the poet asks

Who'll tell us now  
eyes dark, in pity and scorn  
my duck, sure you don't know  
what work is.

Books like *The Miners of Wabana* make some of us realize how soft and easy our lives have been. While the miners were digging and loading, some of them three miles from the Island under the waters of Conception Bay, their wives were at home bearing and rearing children, scrubbing their clothes, making bread and trying to feed their families on small wages that were gradually increased thanks to a hard-working union. Gail Weir has done an excellent job not only in providing us with a history of the Bell Island mining operations from beginning to end but also in helping us to know the miners as human beings, in their glad and sad moments, in moods devilish and solemn. She has brought them to life on the printed page.



twenty-four

# Reclaiming women's history

By Janet McNaughton

When most people think of history, we think of great events and important people. When this approach is taken, the vast majority of women are simply absent. The past seems like a place that was populated entirely by men who somehow managed to replicate themselves. If we are to reclaim our past as women, we have to acknowledge that the "great man" approach to history has limits, even if great man is expanded to great person. The lives of all our mothers and grandmothers have something important to say to us.

Women's experience has differed significantly from that of men, even those men they lived and worked with, loved and gave birth to. This is partly because of biological differences. Of course childbearing, menstruation and menopause are unique to our experience, as are the social positions of sister, mother, wife and daughter. An understanding of how women thought about and dealt with these uniquely female aspects of their lives is an important goal in women's history. Society also places expectations and limitations on women simply because they are women. In St. John's, for example, into the early twentieth century, a narrow range of factory jobs was available to women, and only unmarried women were permitted to do this work. Knowing what limitations exist and how women perceived and dealt with

them can help us to orient ourselves to deal with these limitations. Similar, less obvious problems are still before us, such as persistent wage inequality among men and women doing similar work.

Historical research is like detective work. Documents have always been important clues to the past, but most women leave few written records when they die. And, although documents can tell us a great deal, they cannot be questioned. When dealing with the distant past, issues that are not addressed in documents become areas that are closed, perhaps forever, to our understanding. Oral history is a relatively new approach which draws mainly on the memory of living people as a source of information about the past, usually through tape-recorded interviews. This is an important tool for feminists, because much of women's history is undocumented, and because we are interested in creating a more egalitarian history, in which the lives of ordinary women are important.

Oral history can be used at the most basic levels, as well as the most advanced, from elementary school to university. Paul Thompson, in his excellent book, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, describes a project involving twenty five-year-olds and

their grandmothers in England. Aided by their teacher, the children developed a questionnaire about life in the past which was given to their grandmothers. Then the teacher drew upon the replies to make a reader for the class, with head-

## Film fun with Auntie Anne

Mary Lewis, a local writer, actress and now filmmaker has spent the last few months collecting photos of her Auntie Anne and of people who knew her and combining these with interviews of her Aunt's friends.

A spinster, at least in the technical sense of the word, Lewis' Auntie Anne was by no means static or set in her ways. This tongue in cheek five minute film on the word *spinster* will be included in one showing with ten other Canadian films. Sponsored by the National Film Board, Studio D, *Five Feminist Minutes* is intended to highlight new Canadian women filmmakers.

Lewis and her crew travelled to Bell Island where her Auntie Anne grew up, to shoot 'things in motion' that Auntie Anne liked - spinning wheels, fishing rods, sewing machine wheels and, of course, bridge playing. There are recurring themes in the film - static photos, for example, her car, combined with the animation work of Ann McLeod who will make the car drive out of frame, making the work a little Monty Pythonesque, says Lewis.

With Dominique Gusset as cameraperson, Peggy Hogan doing picture editing,

Toni McGrath, as sound editor and Stephanie Squires doing sound recording, this is a fun piece of work.

Watch for its premier mid April.



Auntie Anne fishing.

ings like "What Grandma said about Clothes" and children brought in artifacts. The project ended with a gala "Grandma Day" when the grandmothers were invited to view the results and visit the children. The advantages of this project were many. The children helped to create their own reader, which motivated them to read. They learned about history and gained greater respect for their grandmothers. In his book, Thompson gives many examples of oral history projects for school children of all ages.

In Newfoundland, most of women's history remains unexplored. Hilda Murray's *More than Fifty Percent: Woman's Life in a Newfoundland Outport, 1900 to 1950*, based on her MA thesis in folklore is an important contribution. But most oral historical research remains unpublished, even valuable works such as Nancy Forestell's MA thesis in history "Women's Paid Labour in St. John's Between the Two World Wars".

The Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA) has many student papers about women's lives based on oral interviews. Linda Kealey and Gillian Martin helped to make these more accessible by publishing an annotated index, "Sources on Women in Newfoundland: the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA)" in *Culture & Tradition*, a journal published by folklore students.

These are good starting points for anyone interested in using oral history to study women in Newfoundland. But most of the research remains to be done and obviously, we are the ones to do it. The techniques of oral historical research are not difficult to master. Below are some resources for those interested in learning more about oral history.

## Ann Bell: feminist, humanist, friend and social reformer.

Sheilah MacKinnon Drover reflects on Bell's work

I met Ann in the early 50's at Girl Guide Camp, and renewed our acquaintance in 1980 when she became president and I a member of the newly established Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Our nine years together on the council have been rich for me. Ann's vision, energy, and commitment to women's issues brought our Council, and our province, to the point where other provinces look to us for advice and guidance, using our work as a model, and the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador has been advanced tremendously through work initiated by Ann. Nationally, Ann is well known and highly respected.

The Council was established in 1980 to advise government, a role which Ann took seriously and involved herself in constantly. Under her direction the Council has flourished, and although most women will never know the role the Council played in making progress in areas such as pay equity, matrimonial property rights, day care, maternity leave, protection against harassment, and non-traditional training for women, we owe a debt of gratitude to this wonderful woman who has been many things to many people: friend, mentor, nurse, wife, mother, grandmother, women's advocate, children's advocate, strength, inspiration, and, for many, the thorn in the flesh which pricked and made them think about social issues they would prefer to ignore.

It was Ann's foresight and energy which led us into partnerships with CFIC, the federal Solicitor-General, the Department of Justice, ACOA, and others. These partnerships, especially with government through job strategy programs, allowed the Council to develop in otherwise impossible areas. Non-traditional training was delivered through the colleges and institutes under Canadian Job Strategy programs in Painting and Plastering, and Entrepreneurial Skills.

Through sheer determination and perseverance during Ann's term, funding was found for the Women's Enterprise Bureau which opened on 10 January 1990 - a wonderful resource and support for women in encouraging them in entrepreneurial ventures and providing business counselling.

I am constantly impressed by Ann's totally unselfish support for and encouragement of women to make their own way, whether in politics - whatever their affiliation - work, or in any other area. Although Ann is undoubtedly a feminist, she is also a humanist, as can be seen by the initiatives and involvement of the Council, with issues that impact strongly on society generally. This concern has led the Council to be very visible throughout the province. The Council has reached young women and men with its publication of the Women and the Law series, and a special Careers and Equality student information kit which went into most high schools in the province. Researched material on Women and History, Reproductive Technology, Newfoundland's Suffrage Movement and other areas is also available at the Council's offices at 131 LeMarchant Road in St. John's.

Seminars and workshops have been held and briefs presented on such topics as day care, pay equity, employment strategies for women, women and the constitution, and women and political actions. During 1987 the Council was successful in setting up the Interagency Committee on Violence Against Women. This Committee now operates independently and is doing important work in dealing with some of our social problems.

Ann lit a small flame ten years ago, which she nurtured energetically and unselfishly, and often, by bureaucratic standards, unconventionally, for the improvement of the status of all women. Her goal was to create an environment where women's equality was assured, not only by the Constitution but by society in everyday life. There is no doubt that there has been a radical change in attitudes toward women over the past ten years, and there is no doubt in my mind that change would have been much longer in coming if not for the continuous work of the Advisory Council under the driving force of its tireless, optimistic, and visionary leader, Ann Bell. I wish her luck in her future endeavours and hope that she will be given other opportunities to influence social reform.

*twenty-five*

# WITCH HAZEL

## Sexuality: power and access are the keys to sexual abuse

By Peggy Keats

What do you think caused your heterosexuality?

Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you might grow out of?

There seems to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed to help you change if you really want to. Have you considered aversion therapy?

Do these questions strike you as being a bit ridiculous? Well, they are. But try replacing the word heterosexuality with homosexuality and ask yourself how many times you have asked these same questions either directly to a lesbian or gay man or maybe in the back of your mind. Point one made (hopefully).

Point two. Child sexual abuse offenders are predominantly heterosexual males. Victims of child sexual abuse are predominantly female. Why then, do homosexuals get blamed for all of this and much more besides?

It would follow perhaps that I would feel compelled to defend the lifestyles of lesbians and gay men. I will not though. Defending homosexuality would be playing directly into the tactics the media and others are using to portray it in the stereotypical manner that we have all witnessed.

My purpose is to explain as clearly as I am capable the difference between pedophilia- the sexual abuse of children, and homosexuality. My hope is that readers will have the ability to put aside prejudices and myths and make an effort to understand, for their sake and ours.

The sexual abuse of children by adults has nothing to do with sex. Pretty silly statement don't you think, considering that we're talking about sexual abuse?



twenty-six

The abuse of children whether it be physical, emotional, or sexual is the same as the abuse of women, is the same as the abuse of native peoples, is the same as the abuse of disabled people. Get it? The issue is not the uncontrollable urges of some over sexed men but the abuse of power and authority. Giving unquestioned and unchallenged power to anyone in authority is dangerous, whether it be priests and Christian Brothers or the Progressive Conservative party who have a majority government and are using that power to slash funding to everyone and anyone who dares challenge them.

The portrayal of homosexuality as the problem at Mount Cashel by the media and commission counsel has taken away from the real issue of abuse of power. The sex of the victims is completely irrelevant. Whether the children were female or male makes no difference to the events that happened there. The children were physically and sexually abused by adult males who had power over, the respect of, and most importantly, access to them.

The church must take an active role in helping dispel the myths surrounding who is responsible for the abuse. They helped create the atmosphere and conditions that are often attractive to potential sex offenders - status and authority, social acceptance, and secrecy and access to children. The church must also take responsibility for the part it played in doing nothing to prevent it from happening in the first place. I would even go so far as to suggest that if the brothers had access to young girls instead of young boys, then an inquiry the magnitude of the Hughes Inquiry would probably have never happened. And if there was an investigation it probably would never have been initiated on the word of one young girl as in the case of the Mount Cashel affair.

Often heard as one quick and easy solution to the problems of sexual abuse by members of the clergy is to allow them to marry. Giving members of the clergy the right to marry is not going to solve the prevalent problem of the rape, battering, and murder of women and children inside and outside the family. Giving men

the right to be sexually active doesn't solve anything, either. If it did there would be no violence against women and children anywhere. The issue is not sex. The issue is not the forced celibacy of clergy. The issue is the abuse of power. Why did they abuse their power? Simply because they could.

So, what's the solution? I don't believe there's going to be a quick and easy one. The problems go much further than the brothers at Mount Cashel. I only hope that the Inquiry spends as much time examining the failure of the legal system with regards to all women and children, as they have trying to blame the abuse on an already oppressed group of people.

Let's show our support for the people who were victimized by trusted adults, and at the same time examine our own ideas about the abuse of women and children and place the blame where it belongs.

## Reflections of a wild girl: struggling through

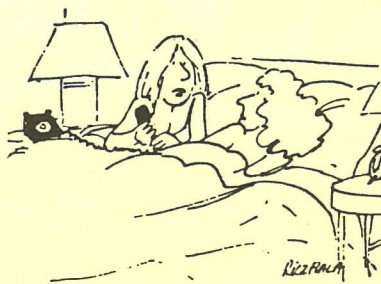
By Helen

When I was a child I was a wild girl. Playing, I always acted out the male characters. As I understood then, this meant being allowed to be strong, leading and of fiery will. It was my secret world all through my teenage years, only to be shown to my parents on walks and hikes when I would take over some actor's personality and be the leader and guide of our 'expedition', as I called it. Because I would clean out the path and help my mother over every log and rock, this was accepted by my parents. They didn't bother even though I sometimes would not stop acting through a whole day. As soon as I got into puberty big problems arose. Suddenly it wasn't okay anymore to act, to be wild. I should have fit in, should have become a "nice young woman". Probably to protect myself and to please my father, I turned around one hundred per cent, started to fall in love with my male teachers and to wear dresses. My secret life changed abruptly from being a strong leader to being a woman in chains, hurt and abused.

Me being seventeen years of age, my boyfriend wanted to make me the 'best and the most a female could be'. This mean to him dressing me in silk, silky panty hose and high heeled shoes. And this was too much for me. I threw him out. He was a strange sort of a guy, but I think to some extent I owe it to him also that I

was able to free myself from this stronghold my parents' morals had on me. For the next years I buried myself in work and led a great platonic friendship with my girlfriend.

Then my father died. Suddenly all I've ever lived for, all aim to please him, disappeared. I went through terrible years. I was always alone. I didn't want to fit in anymore. My whole self rebelled against its being and therefore I was in a constant fight with my mother. At the same time I grew extremely unhappy with my profession. I went through weight problems and depressions. I didn't yet realize that maybe I should look for a woman instead of a man, so I hunted my future husband in every man that came along. But as soon as a relation got started I broke it off. I



"It's my parents! Quick, help me think of something heterosexual to say!"

always felt I was suffocating. This I blamed on my egocentrism. I thought I couldn't love or give affection at all. It never occurred to me I might be trying to give it to the wrong gender. It took me eight years to find out I needed a woman lover.

I have found her as one would come upon a hundred dollar bill on the street: it was pure luck, with no intention or looking for her. It came easily and naturally. I had always perceived myself as being open to gay loves, but I had never imagined this could be for me.

Only since I've met my woman lover have I been able to step ahead, out of the old circles of depression and loneliness. When our love was young I used to think it didn't matter to me whether it was a man or a woman I had fallen in love with. As long as there is true loving and caring every love is a blessed love. Only later I realized it had to be a woman to set me free. I would always have been trapped within my own walls had I chosen a man, and my position would have been too defined by my own rules. I know now this actual relation is what I want and need.

My mother also grew a lot wiser since my father's death. She was able to rid herself of old patterns and has learned to accept that I go my own way and lead my own life. It makes me very happy to see she is trying hard to understand my love and to love me for what I am and what I do.

# WITCH HAZEL

## "Smarts" for using the health care system wisely and well



By Susan Kalma  
R.N., M.S.N.

The health care system: Perhaps we can't live without it, yet a vital question is: "How can we live *with* it?" For those (probably most of us) who view good health as our most important asset, illness or disability is to be prevented if at all possible, otherwise coped with as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Each of us makes health-related decisions every day. Ensuring balanced meals, adequate sleep, relaxation and daily exercise is something we can do to enhance our health. Avoiding alcohol, tobacco, excessive stress, and contaminated food, air or water also helps one stay healthier. We live in a society which pushes drugs - whether crack on the streets or antacids at home or Valium in the doctor's office or alcohol at the workplace party. Our decisions around the use of these drugs influence our physical and mental health. Let's look at this use of drugs to "cure" almost everything. Be critical. Remember, "in every pill there is an ill". Side effects can leave one worse off than before the use of even a prescribed medication. When a health caregiver or a friend recommends a drug to solve a problem, ask yourself and a reliable source of information "Do I need this? Can I prevent or lessen the health problem by changing some aspect of my lifestyle?"

If you decide to take the drug, be clear about its side effects and how to know if you have the correct, safe dosage of the drug. Once you have no further need of the medication, get rid of it by flushing it down the toilet. Never give it to someone else or use something prescribed for another person.

Consult alternative healing books and experts. Some common ailments are easily and cheaply treated with herbal remedies or relaxation techniques. Again, changing your lifestyle to prevent the problem in the first place makes the most sense.

Let's suppose you haven't been able to prevent a health problem or you feel you need a check-up. What are the sources of help? Doctors spring to mind because our society has been conditioned by them to regard physicians as the health experts. For some conditions or questions, this province offers alternatives. Public health nurses, for example, offer well-child clinics and provide screening, growth monitoring, and other services, in

addition to immunizations. They are an excellent source of information and advice and can help you anticipate changes you'll see as your child grows. Public health nurses offer clinics throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. In St. John's you can arrange an appointment for the clinic nearest you by calling

576-2685.

Planned Parenthood is a privately-funded organization which offers a range of health services for women. These services include internal examinations and Pap smears, birth control counselling, menopause education, and prenatal classes. Usually you will talk to a nurse or volunteer counsellor; women doctors sympathetic to the goals of Planned Parenthood are there for clinics each week. You can call 579-1009 for an appointment at the St. John's Centre. Most prescriptions written by clinic doctors can be filled at the clinic, at significant savings to you.

### **To have real choice about our caregivers, we need to lobby for their reimbursement under the MCP.**

Going to have a baby? There are several midwives in the province who can help you with check-ups throughout the pregnancy and provide labour coaching. Working with a physician and in a hospital, they can deliver babies.

Although Nurse Practitioners can handle most common health problems, there are such barriers to their practice you probably won't find one most places in the province. If you're choosing a family doctor or a doctor for yourself, do some shopping around. It's important to be able to talk with and trust the person to whom you turn for health care advice. Look critically at the waiting area. Are there sexist magazines around, or posters which promote artificial formula or proclaim an anti-choice policy?

Find out how this doctor feels about answering questions. One young woman, experiencing her first pelvic examination, wanted to know what the doctor was doing. She was told "I will tell you when I am done", suffered through the remaining five minutes of the examination, and never returned to that doctor. If you find it difficult to ask questions in a doctor's office, write them down on a slip of paper and show these to the doctor at the outset. Be assertive. Politely but firmly ask for an answer to each of your questions.

If you are choosing a specialist caregiver for reproductive health surgery, find out how she feels about alternative treatments. For example, can the patient make the final decision on how a sterilization will be performed or how a cancerous breast lump will be treated, assuming that various safe approaches exist for each operation or treatment?

Will the doctor you choose respect you as a person? Try this one: if you're addressed by your first name, reciprocate! A friend who replied "I'm fine, Bill, thank you" very quickly changed one physician's assumption he was entitled automatically to address women clients by their first names. Is your privacy respected? Except in emergencies or when you need special help, you should be able to dress and undress in privacy and have adequate covering (a gown or a sheet) during an examination. You should be able to be fully dressed when you discuss the examination results with the doctor. Find out the office's policy on confidentiality before you go for an appointment, especially if you are a teenager. Some doctors routinely notify parents when a young person requests birth control.

Suppose you are unhappy because you feel a doctor's treatment of you has been unprofessional. Report this at once. I'd suggest speaking with the doctor about it first, if you feel you can. If not satisfied, write to the professional association (e.g. Newfoundland Medical Association), sending a copy of your letter to the doctor. Use clear, objective descriptions of the incident and what was said. Then describe how you felt about it. Explain what you would like to see happen next: an apology, a change in policy, or the like.

Let's suppose you are hospitalized. This puts most people into a very vulnerable

### **...Each hospital should have a Patient's Bill of Rights, and it is important to ask for a copy if it isn't in your bedside table.**

position. They may feel they must put up with whatever the staff doles out because, as patients, they are unwell and helpless. Each hospital should have a Patient's Bill of Rights, and it is important to ask for a copy if it isn't in your bedside table. Larger hospitals may have an ombudsperson or volunteer whose job is to serve as an advocate for the patients. Interpreters should also be available.

As in the doctor's office, you'll want to keep yourself informed. Ask what the name of the medication is and why you are being given it. See if you can avoid invasive procedures. A friend of mine had the nurses worried after his hernia operation. They told me (a student nurse at the time) that they would catheterize him in about an hour if he hadn't urinated by then. When I told Carl that, he said "Oh, no problem. They kept asking me 'Have you voided yet?' but I didn't know it was that important, so I was just waiting." I had a similar experience. After routine surgery, I was lying in the recovery room when a nurse approached with plastic tubing. "What's that?" I asked. "We're going to put a tube down your nose to give you oxygen because

you're cold" was the reply. I asked if she could first just try putting a blanket over me. Thankfully, that quickly solved the problem!

Be sure to ask the nurses what you can do to best speed your recovery. Many of the measures they'll suggest (for example, blowing up balloons after surgery) may seem strange, even silly unless you get the full explanation. And if something "just doesn't feel right", be sure to ask about it. If you're concerned about any aspect of your care, be sure to report this to the appropriate office. Your family or visitors might be able to help you, if there's no patient advocate.

As good as Canada's health care system is, there is need for improvement. Our involvement is important in bringing about change. First of all, let's make it truly a Health care system. What's the difference between health care and medical care? Quite simply, medical care is care by physicians, while health care includes the actions of nurses, psychologists, dieticians, physical therapists and other allied health professionals. To have real choice about our caregivers, we need to lobby for their reimbursement under the MCP. Numerous studies in Canada and the U.S. show that nurse practitioners perform safely. They can handle independently 85-90% of the case load of a family physician, yet charge far less for their services. There are now some 25,000 NPs in the U.S. - in independent practice, in hospitals, and in health management organizations (pre-paid health plans). I feel Newfoundland's health care system would be significantly strengthened by inclusion of nurse practitioners in the reimbursement scheme. Likewise, Nurse-Midwives deserve permission to practise their full role here, delivering babies in hospitals, clinics or homes.

Organizations such as the Advisory Council on the Status of Women are interested in women's health issues. Let them know how you feel, and write to your elected officials. Many self-help groups meet regularly throughout the province. By joining a group of persons with needs like yours (e.g., Al-Anon, Arthritis Society, Alzheimer's Support Group), you could see how others cope with similar health problems. And at the same time, you can share suggestions based on what works for you. Bookstores offer a variety of books on keeping healthy. Some, such as the popular "fad" diet books, are to be avoided. The New Our Bodies, Ourselves is a real standby; Womancare, and My Body, My Health are two other excellent books for women.

In summary, your health is your responsibility. Take it in hand! By learning about your health and how to take care of it and whom to consult when you have questions or things go wrong, you could feel more satisfied you are doing all you can to invest in a healthy future.

*Twenty-seven*

# WITCH HAZEL

## You've only gluten to lose

By Carol Negrijn

Several years of general ill health and medical problems were resolved with my doctor saying: "Ah, confirmed!" I had Celiac Disease, perhaps a more comforting diagnosis than others which I had been given, but for me, rather devastating. It was going to mean some major changes in my life.

Celiac Disease is a permanent inability to tolerate gluten in the diet. Gluten is a naturally occurring protein found in certain cereals such as wheat, rye, barley and oats. When individuals with Celiac Disease eat gluten-containing foods they develop intestinal damage, and their ability to absorb dietary nutrients is affected. This chain of events results in chronic ill health with varying symptoms of malabsorption and even malnutrition.

I immediately ran into problems with hospital routine when I was told I had to wait three months to see the dietitian. Three months! I had a return appointment with my doctor in six months; during those months I was supposed to get better. What was I supposed to eat in the meantime? If I hadn't been so upset I would have laughed. By the time most people are diagnosed as having Celiac Disease they are seriously malnourished. I wasn't underweight, though most people are, but I was very anemic and always hungry. To not know what you can eat without causing further damage to your bowel is rather depressing.

The symptoms of Celiac Disease are variable, ranging from weight loss, lack of energy and general ill health to severe intestinal upsets with diarrhoea, bloating, pain and vomiting. There may be other not so obvious complaints such as bone pain and anemia.

Laughter didn't often come easy during the next few months but tears did, mostly tears of frustration as I realized how little food or support was available. I did manage to see a dietitian right away because of my contacts as a nurse. She dug me up some information and I left with a diet sheet listing what I could and couldn't eat - the latter seemed to exceed the former by a large margin - and with instructions to go to Mary Janes, the

St. John's health food store, to buy some rice or soya flour.

With the help of the doctor and the dietitian, and the support of my husband, I was very optimistic I could lead a normal life with just a little adjustment. My husband suggested I bake lots of the bread and we would all eat it - that way I wouldn't feel so left out. I envisioned lifting golden loaves of crusty bread out of the oven and all of us living happily ever after. This rosy view lasted all the way downtown. Then reality hit. What was this coarse heavy junk? It didn't look like flour!

"Oh no my dear" said the well meaning clerk, "it's not like regular flour" and "oh

no, it doesn't taste like regular bread" and with a sad look, "maybe you should try some muffins first."

Hence the tears.

The amount of bread and muffins I baked during the next few months which were either tasted first or simply discarded straight from the oven would have fed a small army, had that army been hungry enough to eat dry sawdust. I won't mention the cost of all this wasted food. I'm not sure how I survived without cheating on the diet, with the limited information I had on the disease, with no one to talk to, and no number to call and scream

"Help!"

One saving grace with this disease is the rapidity with which you feel better once you begin the diet and eliminate gluten from your system. The Celiac Handbook, my current "bible" states "In almost all cases treatment results in dramatic improvement in symptoms and the abnormalities of the small intestine." It also says: "One of the most difficult aspects of the treatment of Celiac Disease is the maintenance of a strict diet after the severe phase of the illness is over." After the child or even the adult with Celiac Disease forgets what it was like to be so ill, the dieting may become careless.

Some people become severely ill when they take small amounts of gluten while others, may experience only bloating and discomfort. This is where the danger lies, thinking it won't hurt to cheat just a little. Some professionals advise that "an occasional slice of bread can't hurt." But all the research done to date indicates even minute amounts of gluten can damage the small bowel causing problems - either a relapse, in which case the disease may never again respond to a gluten-free diet, or in rare cases, the development of malignant tumors of the small intestine.

In my case the response to the diet was dramatic. Within a week my energy level was greatly increased, my regular bedtime became three hours later, and I felt generally healthier than I had for years.

A few months after being diagnosed I was adjusting to the disease, learning to make a few tolerable baked products, and had survived a Christmas season without either cheating or committing suicide.

I received a frantic phone call from a friend I had worked with some years before. She had been having some of the same symptoms I had experienced, including abdominal pain, bloating, and severe anemia. We had both suffered miscarriages while we were anemic. She had been diagnosed as having Celiac Disease. She was desperate, pregnant, starving, and frantic. She begged me for a slice of bread so I invited her to lunch. She insulted my bread.

"It's o.k., but it's not like the real stuff. Is this as good as it gets?" But she was grateful for any information I could give

her. We had quite a few get-togethers after that, always with some food involved, and no, she didn't insult my bread any more.

This made us both realize the need there was for some sort of support group in this province.

My friend had been sent home with an outdated diet sheet and told to completely change her eating habits just as I had been. We both wrote to any address we could find and begged recipes and information.

Once she felt better, had her baby and got her diet adjusted - no small feat - we started working to form a Celiac Association in Newfoundland. Armed with valuable information sent from the national office, we have formed a core working group of four, all of us with the disease. Three of us are nurses and all of us are women. We hope to accomplish great things from our efforts; one man who called after reading our article about this organization in the newspaper stated "I've learned more from reading that article and from talking to you on the phone for half an hour than I did from anyone else in the six months I've been diagnosed."

There are two main points our group would like to stress. The disease can only be diagnosed by a small bowel biopsy performed in the outpatient department by a doctor. Nobody should try to diagnose themselves and start the diet. This could cause problems for accurate diagnosis and treatment.

The second point is all research to date has shown it is necessary to follow a strict gluten-free diet; in other words: No

Cheating, if you want to enjoy a long healthy life.

Another chronic disease, linked to Celiac Disease and which must be mentioned, is Dermatitis Herpetiformis. This disease is characterized by an intensely itchy, blistering rash generally found on the knees, shoulders and buttocks. The microscopic changes in the bowel are identical to those found in people with Celiac Disease but the bowel problem is usually asymptomatic. A strict gluten-free diet is required. Again, this disease should only be diagnosed by a physician.

We are now in the midst of forming an association, because we wish to help others who already have the disease, and to help those who are doing the rounds of various doctors needing a diagnosis.

We want to educate the general public, because most people have never heard of Celiac Disease, and many professional health workers are misinformed.



### Suggested substitutes for wheat flour in cooking:

\*For one cup of wheat flour, use any of these instead...

- 1 cup of purified wheat starch
- 5/8 cup of potato flour
- 7/8 cup rice flour
- 1 cup fine corn meal
- 3/4 cup coarse corn meal
- \*For thickening substitute for one tablespoon (T) wheat flour
- 1/2 T cornstarch
- 1/2 T potato flour
- 1/2 T rice flour
- 2/3 T quick cooking tapioca
- 1/2 T arrowroot starch

## An Instrument of Grace

By Marian Frances White

"(Solitude) is harder to find than it used to be because everything has become speeded up and overcrowded. So everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow cycles of nature, is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace.

from *Journal of Solitude*, 1977

by May Sarton

This one statement has charged me through Newfoundland's long winter and reinforced my desire to garden indoors. By doing this I can eat as much 'live' food as possible. What is live food? How do you garden indoors?

I was first introduced to this age old method of sprouting seeds in 1977 when I studied under Dr. Ann Wigmore at Hippocrates Health Institute in Boston. Her home, turned garden, was filled with layers of trays that housed thousands of tiny seedlings and sprouts.

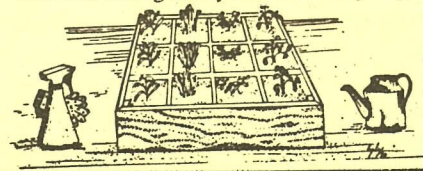
Yet, you don't have to go this far to attain the rewards of seeing tiny plants grow while the temperature outside reads -5.

Try this: Cut a half inch slice from the top of a turnip, onion or other vegetable, place it in a small bowl with a little water. Add more water as the water is used up and five or more days later you will have green turnip tops and onion tops. Snip off and add to your salad!

This simple experiment draws the line, for me, between live food and its opposite, dead food; that is, any food that cannot regenerate itself with added water. I feel strongly that much of our dis-ease stems from our dependency on processed and commercial foods.

Indoor gardening is an alternative to this situation and is a must in this province because of our long winter, late spring and all too short summer. It's amazing how many meals of lettuce and spinach you can grow with a little potting soil, water and a sprinkling of seeds. Thyme, oregano, sage, dill and basil all grow extremely well in this climate, if they are started indoors in spring. If you love homegrown tomatoes, squash, peppers or cucumber, as I do, and are tired of the plants not bearing fruit in your summer garden, plant the seeds in small peat trays. Using peat pots, which are available at a very low cost at most gardening outlets, allows the delicate seedling to be transplanted without disturbing its roots. While the seeds are germinating indoors, the snow will slowly melt, allowing you to get out and plan for the day when your tiny seedlings can be planted outdoors.

I love the feeling of clay underneath my fingernails. Gardening, as May Sarton wrote, is one way to reclaim solitude; it is also a way for us to redesign our home environment. It can reflect the need to get back to our roots, no matter what the ideal model of the interior of a home is supposed to be.





**The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women Newfoundland and Labrador**

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Newfoundland and Labrador, is pleased to welcome Wendy Williams as the new president and chief executive officer of the Advisory Council.

Ms. Williams is a nurse with an extensive background in community health, and an active advocate of women's rights in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Provincial Advisory Council welcomes briefs and submissions from individual women and women's groups on issues of concern to them.

Ms. Williams can be reached by phone at (709) 753-7270 or by fax (709) 753-2606.

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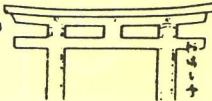
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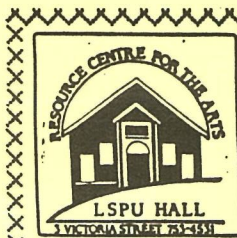
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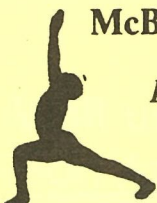
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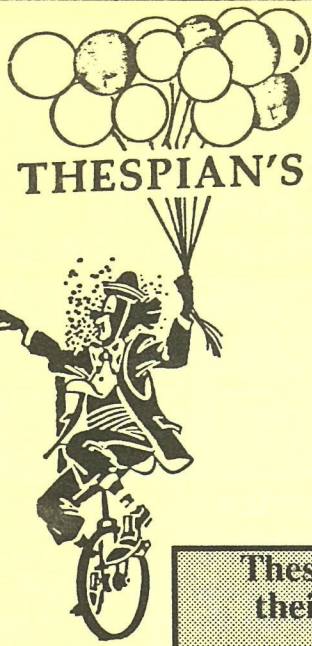
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The Women's Enterprise Bureau, the newly established agency assisting women interested in starting their own business, has opened three additional regional offices. These regional offices enable the Women's Enterprise Bureau to reach potential women entrepreneurs throughout the province. You may now contact the Women's Enterprise Bureau at the following locations:

**Head Office**  
85 Water Street  
St. John's, NF  
A1C 1A5  
Telephone: 754-5555  
Fax: 754-0079  
Contact: Anne Marie Anonsen

**Central**  
P.O. Box 456  
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Telephone: 489-1241  
Fax: 489-4560  
Contact: Marion Abbott

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Port aux Basques, NF  
A0M 1C0  
Telephone: 695-9690  
Fax: 695-9691  
Contact: Jennifer O'Quinn

**Labrador**  
North Star Building  
Hamilton River Road  
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, LB  
Telephone: 896-2978  
Fax: 896-2970  
Contact: Cheryl Butler

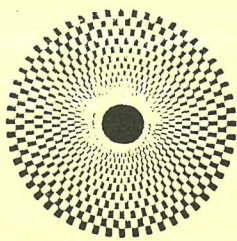


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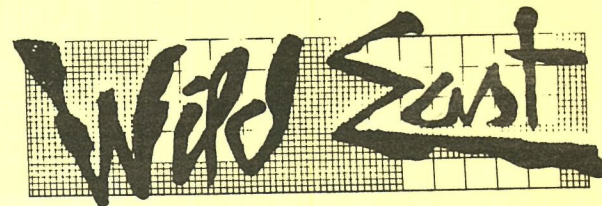
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## THE WRITERS' ALLIANCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY DAY AT THE WRITERS' ALLIANCE. Catherine drank coffee and pulled her hair. Shari studied the desktop - publishing manual. Michael sat on the fire escape. Suddenly the call rang out, "More writers need to know we exist!" Catherine turned to Shari and said, "Do they know we publish a monthly newsletter to keep them informed on workshops and readings?"

"Gee, I dunno," Shari replied. "And how about free use of our computer?"

"Or those low photocopying rates," added Michael who was not to be outdone.

"And our resource room for meetings. Yes!" cried Catherine and they all agreed.

"Writing in this province needs to be promoted." She lifted her arm for emphasis. "And we must establish links among writers in Newfoundland."

"Wow," said Michael and Shari in unison. "That's quite a mandate. What's our first step?"

"New members. We need community support and the interest of the writers we work to serve."

And so the trio rolled up their sleeves and returned to their work with mustard and relish. If you would like to be the 171st member of the Writers' Alliance, call us up at 739-5215, or drop by, 127 Queen's Road.

The Writer's Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador  
P.O. Box 1133, St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 5M5

### THANKS FROM MARY BARRY!

I would like to thank all those who helped make the "For The Record" Cabaret a success. The magic and support felt that night of February 23rd 1990 at the Star of the Sea Hall was a truly inspiring force for me to continue to realize my dreams in music. Thanks to all of you.

#### SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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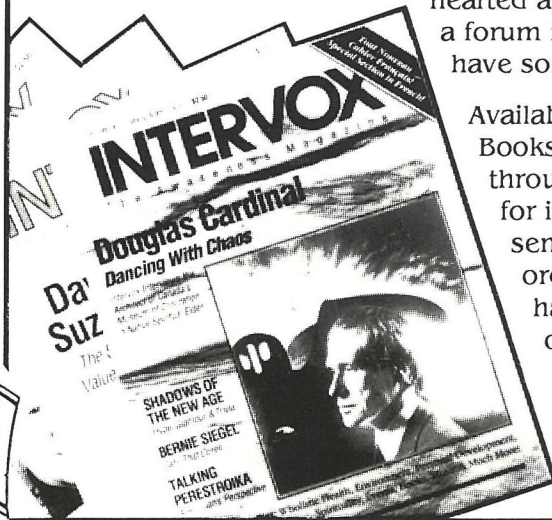
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### IN HER CHOSEN FIELD

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### TIME TO REAP

28 min. 1989

A look at several women who have led the movements to correct the injustices farm women face.

### PRAIRIE WOMEN

45 min. 1987

How women on the prairies of the 20s and 30s worked cooperatively to improve the conditions of their lives.

### CHANGE OF HEART

57 min. 1984

A compassionate drama about a farm wife's right to the family gains and mid-life divorce.

### PLENTY OF NOTHING

55 min. 1982

A documentary on farm wives seeking their fair share of economic value for their work.

### A SAFE DISTANCE

28 min. 1985

A look at shelters and services for battered women in rural, northern, and native communities.

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28 min. 1984

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## Some firsts for women

1920 Women were allowed to vote in Canada.

1925 Women over 25 were allowed to vote in Newfoundland.

1928 Lady Helena E. Squires was the first woman elected to the Newfoundland Legislative Assembly.

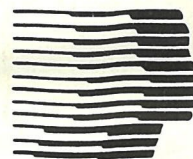
1929 Women became "persons" under the British North American Act.

1957 Ellen Fairclough was sworn in as the first female federal Cabinet Minister.

1979 Hazel Newhook and Lynn Verge were sworn in as the first female Cabinet Ministers in our provincial House of Assembly.

1989 Audrey McLaughlin becomes the first female leader of a national political party.

The goal of the Women's Policy Office is to achieve social and economic equality for all Women in Newfoundland and Labrador.



Women's  
Policy Office

### Aerobic and Endurance Classes

Workout with free weights

*Aerobics  
by Tara*

Cathedral Parish Hall  
66 Queen's Road  
738-1942

Walk from downtown or park in  
convenient well-lit parking lot  
at rear of building.

LUNCH HOUR,  
SUPPERTIME,  
EVENINGS,  
SUNDAY AT 3 P.M.

## Daycare Advocates Association

Box 1086, Station C, St. John's, Newfoundland, A1C 5M5

## Provincial child care conference

May 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 1990

Littledale Conference Center, St. John's

For further information call Margaret Anderson,  
753-7270.