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breaking down stereotypes

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Pandora

Volume Four Number Four June, 1989 Halifax, Nova Scotia



Danabylph.

Pandora calls her sisters.

Is
this
the
last
issue
of
Pandora?

Come to a public meeting
June 19, 7:30 pm
Veith House
3115 Veith Street

(see editorial page 4)

Affirmative action strategies only way to achieve social, economic equality

Mary Lou LeRoy

Discrimination, harassment, racism... powerful forces that create barriers to full economic, political and social equality. In February, CUPE members from all over the country gathered in Calgary for the third CUPE National Women's Conference to discuss these issues. The delegates tackled equality issues head on and focused on the barriers faced by all women, women of colour, native, disabled, and lesbian women.

It wasn't easy. Some women came face to face with their own fears and prejudices for the first time, through guest speakers, films, a panel discussion and the 17 workshops.

It's hard work to come to grips with these issues, and this same hard work has to be repeated at the local, district council and provincial division level.

In the workshops, people who said that they had never experienced or seen discrimination in the workplace began to realize just how insidious it is and how often it hides behind a naive word or gesture.

Delegates openly discussed their feelings about sexual orientation and had the opportunity to explore why some of them felt uncomfortable at work with someone who is gay.

There was no shortage of examples of discrimination:

- A police woman was harassed twice on the job, but when she complained, she was discouraged by her supervisor. Soon after she received the mumbled apology, she was transferred to another department and the harasser was promoted.

- The fearful men who wore pink rubber gloves when a gay gardener appeared for his first day of work.

- A native woman stood up, in tears, and asked the panelists to describe how they were beaten in the residential schools if they didn't learn English fast enough, or worse, were caught speaking their own language.

Panelist Muriel Collins told delegates the best way to overcome obstacles that prevent us from working together is to make it clear in our unions and our workplace that there is no room for racism, no room for discrimination.

Delegates discussed how economic factors reinforced by political and social power are the root cause of discrimination in our society. Women, natives, visible minorities and disabled persons form a large percentage of the poor in Canada.

We are oppressed because discrimination is a form of social power that is firmly built into the institution of society. Historically, women have always recognized that as long as there is any form of discrimination in society, we will never achieve full equality.

The most shocking statistic discussed was for native women. It showed that the average age of death for the national female population is 71 compared to 48 for native women.

Delegates discussed the inequitable experiences women and minorities have in the labour market:

- Departmental seniority often discriminates against women by barring them from non-traditional jobs.

- Often uniforms are not designed for pregnant women.

- It is difficult, if not impossible in some provinces, to find safety shoes in women's sizes.

- In a situation where two clerical workers have the same job, the male worker is usually assigned tasks that

improve his skills and create opportunity for promotion, while the woman is assigned the traditional tasks like typing and answering the phones.

At the union level, many barriers can discourage the participation of women and minorities. These barriers can take the form of sexism and racism, inconvenient union meeting times for women with children, meetings held in places inaccessible to disabled members, and language difficulties.

When men make up a majority of the negotiating committee, it is often difficult to keep women's issues on the table, and in the final stages of negotiations, women's issues may be dropped

in favour of "more important" issues.

Delegates confirmed that affirmative action was the most comprehensive strategy for eliminating systemic discrimination and improving the status of women and minorities.



Five steps are necessary for an effective affirmative action plan:

1. An analysis in the workplace and union should be done to establish what barriers to equality exist.

2. Identify the policies, practices and working conditions that deny the target groups access to equality.

3. Replace discriminatory policies and practices with special measures to achieve equality.

4. Special measures should be put in place to assist women and minority workers to compensate for the effects of discrimination and improve their status and representation in the workplace. This could take the form of

outreach and educational programs.

5. Establish goals and timetables to monitor the progress to know if equality is being achieved.

In the workshops, delegates dismissed the effectiveness of voluntary affirmative action plans and decided that mandatory legislation with teeth and affirmative action clauses enshrined in collective agreements were the cornerstones of equality.

Strategies for change have to embrace our union experience in all areas, delegates concluded. We can effectively achieve change through collective bargaining, changes to the workplace, changes within our locals, networking with other unions, working with community groups and on the political and legislative level.

Some bargaining strategies include negotiating a non-discrimination clause; an affirmative action clause designed to bring women into non-traditional jobs; across-the board increases, the equalization of base entry rates, the elimination of lower level pay grades and other economic justice moves; improved benefits and hours of work; accessible training and bridging programs, with child care and transportation costs paid for by the employer; language training and equal rights and benefits for part-time workers.

Changes to the workplace should include better access for the disabled; improved recruitment by employers, including a review process to eliminate any biases; an orientation program for new employees on discrimination; education programs and the encouragement of respect, dignity and acceptance for all people in the workplace.

Delegates determined that it was necessary to create support among other unions, labour councils, federations of labour and community groups in order to effect change. Once an issue is brought into the public arena, it becomes more "winnable," they decided.

On the political level, delegates advocated mandatory affirmative action and pay equity legislation, changes to existing human rights and health and safety laws, better enforcement, and changes that address economic justice for all women.

Although some of these strategies sound like the stuff dreams are made of, it is important to remember that hard work, commitment and taking control of our own lives is what gives workers the power to effect change.

"It is at conferences, such as this one, that we renew our strength to carry on with the struggle before us, united by a vision we all share," said Diane Jolly, National Women's Task Force chairperson in her opening remarks.

"We are working toward a future where all women are full equal partners in a caring society. We can only achieve this together. We all know that it is not enough to legislate economic and social justice, we have to build it."

Women in unions: Why they don't make it to the top

Groups	People affected	Job choice	Union activities
Group 1 People who look after the needs of others	Mothers, women with dependent relatives, a few fathers	At home, or part-time job, or highly-stressed with full-time job	Very little time. Almost impossible in evenings, at weekends or overnight
Group 2 People who see to their own needs	Women without dependents, childless couples who share housework, some single men	Can usually manage a full-time job	Can find some time. Weekends and overnight may be difficult
Group 3 People who have someone to see to their own needs	Most married men, rich people who can pay others, some young people living at home	Full time job	Can manage heavy involvement, including nights and weekends away from home

The above grid highlights an important reason for the absence of women from the higher levels of unions.

Being a full-time official or a national executive member involves nights and weekends away from home and many evenings out. In other words, it demands a lifestyle only easily achievable by those in Group 3 — the lucky ones who can arrive home after a meeting to find the kids tucked into bed, a meal ready and clean clothes for tomorrow.

Even people in Group 2 may find this lifestyle difficult. Who is going to do the shopping, clean the house and feed the cat while they are away? It may not be enough to be free of dependents; you really need someone to look after your daily needs for you. The only women who are in this position are the very few who can af-

ford to pay someone to look after the house or the children.

Many trade union posts are too demanding for most people to cope with. This is especially true for women. Perhaps executive and official posts could be job-shared and more effort made to negotiate time off for meetings during working hours.

This grid should also make it clearer how women's struggles grow out of women's lives. To women in Group 1, it is more important to defend childcare and welfare services than to boost differentials and overtime rates. Many women in Group 2 rely on birth control and abortion facilities, and on equal pay at work, to maintain a degree of choice about how they live their lives. It goes without saying that there are hardly any women in Group 3, yet our society relies on this group for most of the decision-making in indus-

try, government and the trade union movement. These high status positions are only realistic for people who do not have to spend a lot of time looking after their own, or other people's, basic needs.

It seems crazy to regard this as the norm. Yet that is the hidden assumption behind the pattern of men's work: the idea is that men do the real work while women service them. Our real challenge must be to turn this assumption on its head. We need to stress the value of participation to share them out more equitably. We also need flexible working time to make this possible. Finally we need a trade-union movement that realizes the importance of these issues and is prepared to fight for them

(Reprinted from Bread and Roses, newsletter of PSAC, AFPC)

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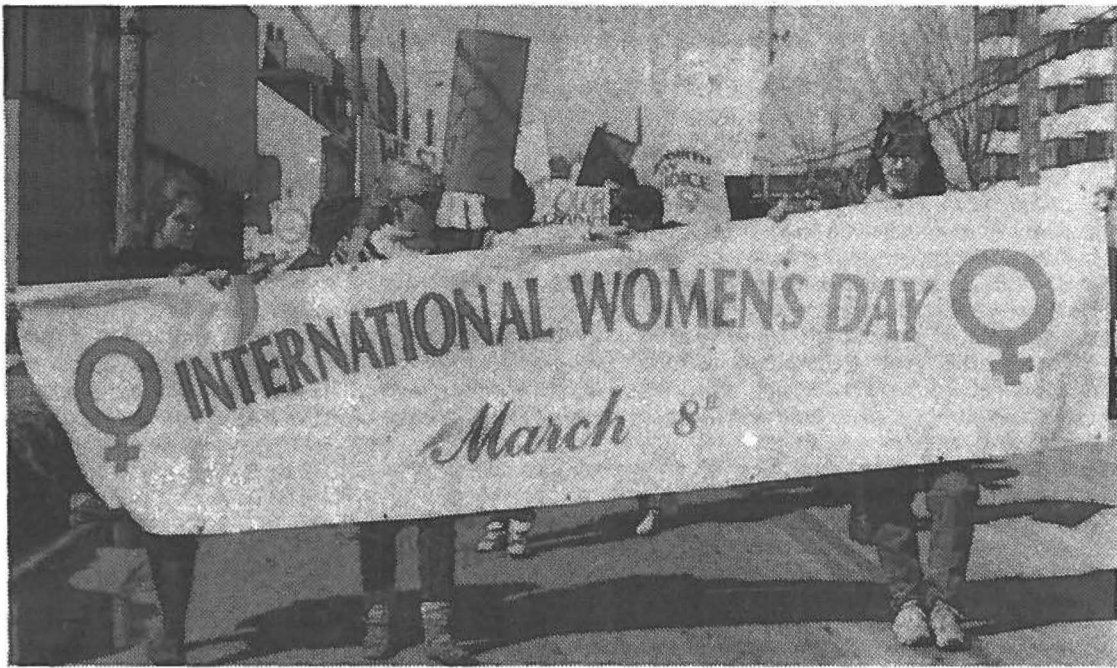
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(Photo by Brenda Conroy)

Organizing IWD events tiring but exhilarating

Nancy Hay

"Don't worry, it always works out." This became a familiar phrase when organizing International Women's Day for 1989. It all began for me with a phone call to Marie Paturel who, with convincing, allowed her name to be used in Pandora's advertisement for an initial meeting.

From then on, the phone became our constant ally and foe for ideas, feedback and decisions. Shortly after my first call, I wanted to scream, "Yes, IWD always works out but with tremendous effort and energy and this should be acknowledged."

Planning for the one day of the year that recognizes women is peculiar. This is partially due to the traditions built around the event and to the turnover of organizers; when an organizer is gone, her knowledge goes with her. However, over a period of three months, a large group of women brainstormed, debated and planned a successful week of activities.

The difficulty for the organizers was in trying to design a celebratory but political day that would simultane-

ously meet personal wishes as well as the expectations of the women we were trying to represent. There is no blueprint for this!

With limited time, we endeavored to address issues of racism, accessibility, involvement of men, environment, and whether or not to take a stance on pro-choice. The organizers' method of operating, using consensus as well as feminist theory and analysis, resulted in a mini-women's consciousness-raising and support group.

The questions, "who is IWD for?" and "who participates?" are crucial for us to ask—we being mainly white, middle-class, heterosexual and lesbian feminists. Through the experience of coordinating, I discovered the compoundedness of outward oppression and how it permeates a women's organization that is trying to be politically conscious. While we as organizers were attempting to be totally representative in grappling with major issues, we often silenced ourselves and our own needs. I continued this silence by flippantly describing a women-only dance to a male reporter as a "time to

have fun and kick up our feet."

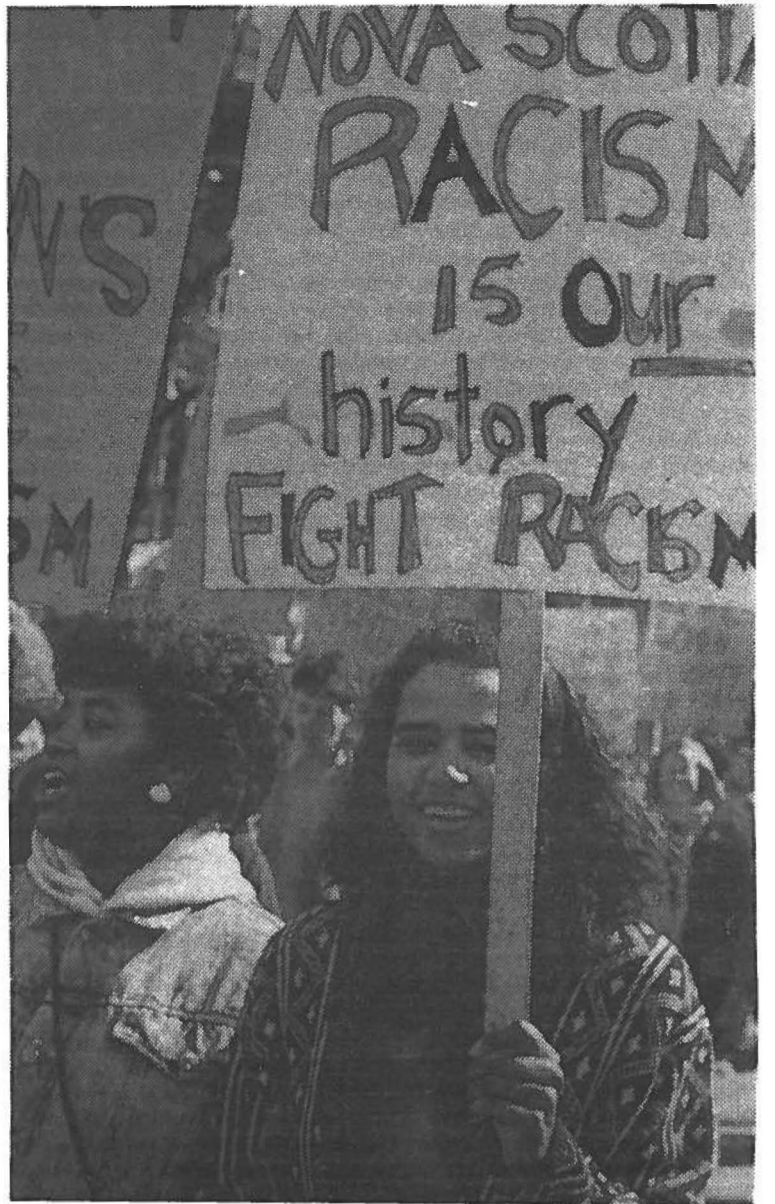
The energy and time of the committee members and supportive friends contributed to a celebrational week of spiritual, comical, musical and enjoyable activities. With the enthusiastic response, it was reassuring to be part of the learning experience of working with a large planning group

Our experiences will be documented in a booklet currently being compiled to assist future IWD planners—possibly a blueprint! The knowledge gained from this year's IWD will encourage us to begin preparation earlier, perhaps in September, and to reflect upon our own needs as women and organizers.

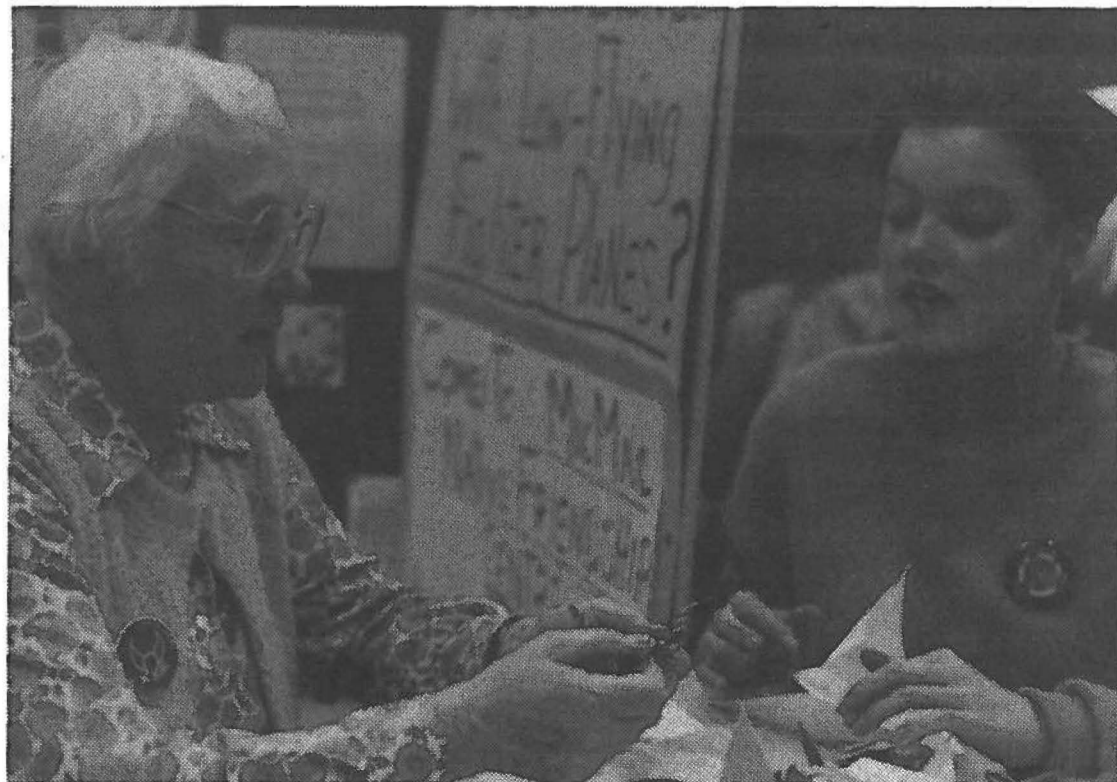
Among the right-winged tide of anti-choice and R.E.A.L. women, it is a pleasure to have participated in women-run and women-positive events and, as our t-shirt logo says, to be a woman with many sisters!

♀♀♀♀♀

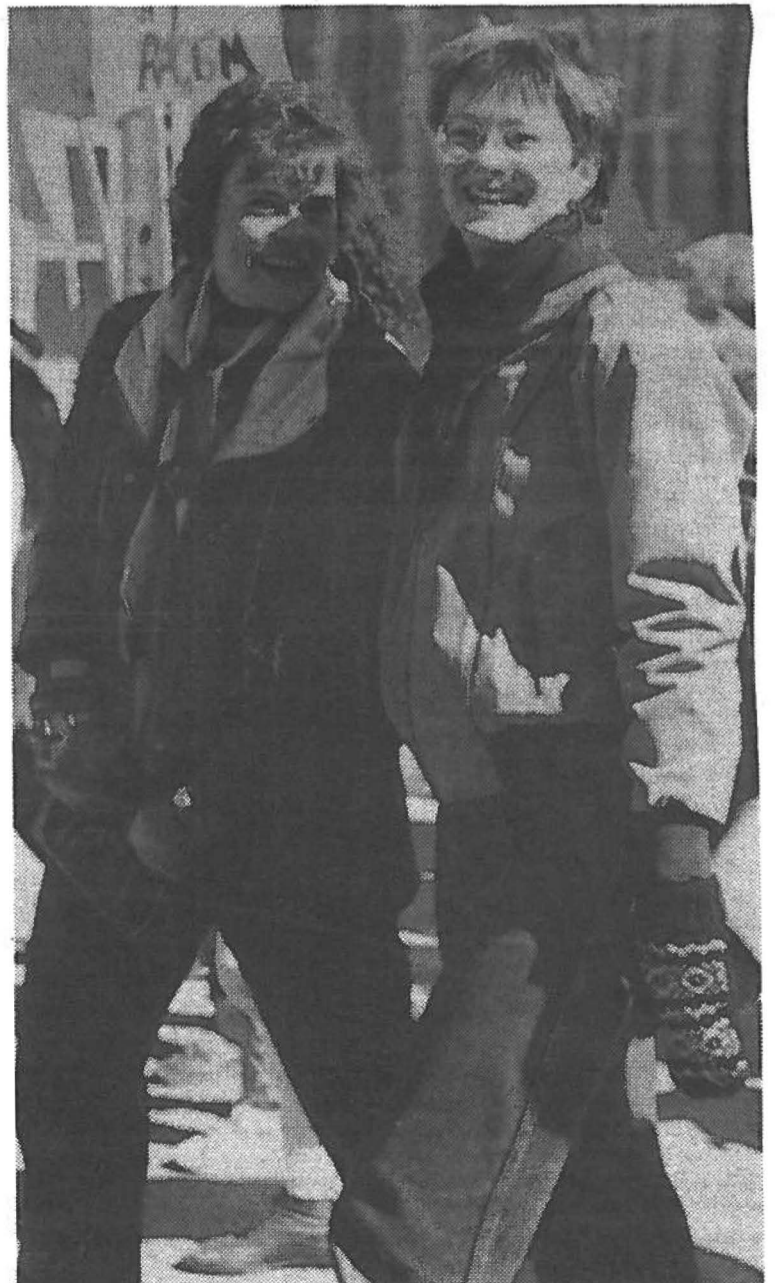
Nancy Hay has been involved with IWD for the last two years and was the co-ordinator for this year's event.



(Photo by Brenda Conroy)



(Photo by Anita Martinez)



(Photo by Anita Martinez)

Pandora

Pandora is published four times a year by Pandora Publishing Association, a non-profit organization of women in Nova Scotia.

Pandora is a newspaper produced by, for and about women. We actively seek participation on any level from women who do not have access to mainstream media. We welcome submissions — written and photo/graphic. We cannot accept material that is oppressive or intolerant. We are, however, committed to working with women to help them express their experience in a non-oppressive way. We encourage women to tell us when we do not meet our own standards. Not everything submitted can be included and we reserve the right to edit, especially for length. However, we will let you know if we make substantial changes. Please write to us.

Our editorial guidelines continue to evolve. See Issue 2-4 (June, 1987) for more details and let us know if you have concerns about material that appears in the paper. Our letter policy is printed on page 5.

This issue was produced by:

Brenda Conroy, Debbie Mathers, Sharon Myers, Marie Paturel

With help from:

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Nancy Wright (Guysborough), Oona Landry (Antigonish), Alex Keir (Pictou County), Debbie Trask (Bridgewater), Dianne Crowell (Yarmouth), Carolyn Emerson (Newfoundland) and many, many, others. Betty-Ann Lloyd, Co-ordinator.

Contributors:

Beth Abbott, Charlene Brown, Myrna Carlson, Barbara Cottrell, Jill Davey, Janet Doucette, Nancy Hay, Amanda LeRougetel, Mary Lou LeRoy, Darlene Levy, Jocelyne Marchand, Anita Martinez, Carol McLeod, Morrigan, Marie Paturel, Holiday Tyson, Debra Westenburg.

Thank you, one and all!

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NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS:

Pandora is now being distributed free to various locations throughout the province, due to a lack of womanpower to do the distribution to and follow-up of bookstores. The editorial committee also felt that free distribution would allow us to make the paper available in other outlets such as libraries, health clinics, etc. (If any of you women out there would be willing to do distribution in your areas, please let us know.) This is in no way a statement that Pandora has so much money that it no longer needs to charge for the paper. We are, in fact, hoping to get more subscribers this way. If you want the paper mailed to you, subscriptions are \$5.00 for four issues (see detailed information on the calendar page). There is a sliding scale. Women on limited income, send what you can. We ask women who can afford more to provide a contributing or sustaining subscription to help support the paper.

Cover: Graphic by Dawna Gallagher

Presswork by Kentville Publishing

Broadside has folded; will Pandora be next?

Right now, Pandora is being put together by a core group of only four women and we're finding it a difficult task.

Financial constraint is not the problem. Part of the difficulty stems from the lack of feedback from the community in response to the articles, but mostly it's due to a lack of new volunteers who would be willing to take some of the pressure and responsibility for putting out Nova Scotia's only feminist newspaper.

Not only must the technical work of put-

ting together the newspaper be done, but also handling and making what seems like thousands of phone calls, liaising, doing administrative work, typing, getting ads, soliciting material, doing photography, etc.

We have had a few women volunteer to help but found that we were so burnt out that we didn't have the energy to train new volunteers and produce a newspaper at the same time. So, we are considering postponing an issue, taking a vacation from publishing, to allow us time to train other women (maybe you?).

Learn skills, get in contact with the women's community, learn about publishing, organizing, working by consensus, learn computer skills without paying hundreds of dollars in tuition fees (and without babysitting fees — Pandora pays!).

We're holding a public meeting on June 19 at 7:30 p.m. at Veith House, and will provide transportation and money for childcare (425-8349, or 454-4977 answering machine). At the meeting we'll be discussing how we put out the paper, and all the different jobs there are to do. **You are under no obligation.**

In any case, keep subscribing! We don't believe our loyal readers will let us down. Surely we'll continue.

So come along on June 19th and meet us. See if you are interested in getting involved. If you don't come forward, maybe Pandora can't go forward! We'll see you there.



*Pandora
calls her sisters.*

Pandora's letter policy

Pandora's policies are constantly shifting and evolving to effectively meet the needs of our paper. The following is an outline of our present policy relating to letters submitted for publication.

Pandora reserves the right to publish only letters that fall within the guidelines of our editorial policy: letters must be written by women and be women-positive; we do not accept material that is intolerant or oppressive.

We prefer that letters are in direct response to an article or current concern. Should it refer to an article appearing in Pandora, the author of the article will be contacted and given an opportunity to respond.

We will print letters anonymously, but at least two women in Pandora must know the woman's real name and have a contact number for her.

Pandora reserves the right to edit for length; however, the writer will be notified should this be necessary. We request that all letters include a phone number so we may contact the writer should it become necessary.

Letter to CBC makes waves

The following letters are in response to a letter from Betty-Ann Lloyd to the CBC published in the March 89 issue of Pandora.

Pandora:

Congratulations to Betty-Ann! With her letter to CBC-TV concerning their item about Dartmouth City Council and strip clubs, she has provided us with a mini-course on feminist analysis/critique of television news.

I am keeping this letter close at hand as a resource for seeing more clearly through what a good friend calls "the red mist" which descends when I see (oh, so often) items such as the one with which Betty-Ann takes issue. She provides us with the sharp questions to ask. She gives us the critical eyes to really "see" what is happening.

Her excellent analysis of the issues involved in television images of women make it more difficult for those responsible for negative images to trivialize this concern with ridicule.

Her questions and ours will only be addressed by the CBC and others if we are persistent in demanding answers and changed behaviour.

Thanks to Betty-Ann for expending her emotional and mental energy and bringing this experience to the fore to provide us with such a good tool to do this. Let's follow her example and insist on better performance from, at least, our local CBC-TV station.

Barbara Rumscheidt, Halifax

Following are excerpts of a letter from the Regional Director of CBC:

As briefly as I can state my position, we were right to cover the story and there was much that was wrong about the way we covered it.

I will make no attempt to defend the visuals used to illustrate our report. There was no need for that much nudity in pictures supporting the item. The result was that the item was unnecessarily graphic and sexually suggestive.

I also won't attempt to make excuses for what happened. It was a late edit and, frankly, the checks that should have been in place to ensure proper editorial control of even the latest edits fell down.

There was an immediate review fol-

lowing the program and you may be aware that the item was recut for that night's late news.

As a result of all this, we have reviewed our procedures with reporters, editors and producers. Your letter has helped stir useful debate and your message has been received loud and clear. I can assure you.

Thank you.

Betty-Ann:

Thanks for your letter describing the February 2, 1989 CBC clip. I am appalled, not only as the M.P. for Halifax and as the official Opposition Critic on the Status of Women, but also as a woman.

I understand that the CBC excerpted some of your letter and publicly apologized for their poor taste. At the very least, your letter rattled their cage! I'm sure they'll do a great deal more thinking the next time the opportunity arises to degrade social justice issues.

Should your call for a meeting take place, contact my office. If my House of Commons' duties permit, I will certainly attend. Best wishes and keep up the good work.

Mary Clancy, M.P.

Amnesty International clarifies its policy on work for homosexuals

Pandora had heard rumours that Amnesty International would not agree to work for people who were imprisoned because of their homosexuality. We wrote to them to ask them to clarify their policy—following is their reply.

Pandora:

Thank you for your letter of October concerning Amnesty International's position of homosexuality.

Amnesty International works on behalf of prisoners who have been detained anywhere for their beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin, language or religion, providing they have not used or advocated violence.

In this regard, Amnesty International remains ready to adopt individuals who have been imprisoned for advocating homosexual equality. The advocacy in this context is associated with the right to freedom of expression.

Amnesty International will also adopt prisoners when charges of homosexuality have been used as an excuse for imprisoning them for expressing their political, religious or other conscientiously-held beliefs.

Furthermore, the organization recommends the cessation of all medical treatment employed to modify the homosexual orientation of any individual while in detention, without his or her agreement. In all of these circumstances, the detainees would be considered prisoners of conscience.

The organization does not adopt as prisoners of conscience those individuals imprisoned because of their homosexual orientation. At Amnesty International's last council meeting in

Brazil in December, 1987, the organization discussed the possibility of extending the mandate to include as prisoners of conscience individuals who had been imprisoned because of their homosexual orientation.

At that time a resolution was passed asking that a newly-formed mandate review committee consider and report on the implications of including in Amnesty International's mandate per-

sons imprisoned because of their homosexual orientation. An interim report of the mandate review committee is expected in early 1989.

I hope that this information clarifies our organization's policy on homosexuality. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Erika Rosenfield,
Communications Officer

We get rave reviews (and subscriptions!) from new readers

Pandora:

Please find enclosed a cheque for my subscription to Pandora. I have been meaning to subscribe for a long time. Tonight I picked up March's issue at a Women's Day pot luck supper at Conserver House in Fredericton and asked what better time to send my subscription off.

Keep up the good work. I enjoy the magazine as a link with the other women in the Maritimes.

Barbara Buchanan
Fredericton

Pandora:

I'm renewing my subscription for a two-year period. My main reason for renewing is my respect for your publication due to the regular articles by and about lesbians.

I have been encouraged all along at how you have responded to letters complaining about lesbian content by gently but firmly reminding heterosexual women who complain, that we are here, that we are active and that we will not be censored within the women's movement.

Given the on-going prejudice that we lesbians face, connecting across the miles remains crucial. Thanks for being there and making your presence known.

In sisterhood,
Tamarack
Ottawa

Pandora:

Hi! You have a terrific newspaper! I found my first issue of Pandora at the Calgary Women's Resource Centre while doing research for the Calgary women's paper, *perspectives*.

Pandora is very exciting. I was first attracted to the strong title graphic and cover design. Without intending to, I was then drawn into your paper, and before I knew it I had really got involved.

Thanks for a good read! ... Put me down for a subscription.

Dianne Bersea
Calgary, Alberta

Pandora:

Having just moved to Halifax from Montreal, I went down to my neighborhood library (North Branch) to peruse the pamphlet shelves and found you. I've read the December issue cover-to-cover and with this donation (wish it could be more) would like to help make Pandora a consistent part of my life here.

I hope to contribute more in various ways, in time.

I'll keep in touch.
Dianna Young
Halifax

(P.S. Distributing free paid off in my case. I hope it pays off in the long run. Good luck.)

She's coming home — but who will be here for her?

Pandora:

I am a native Nova Scotian who's been away from home since 1974. During that time, I've slowly become politicized — a feminist, a lesbian, a mother. But London (England) has increasingly become hostile. I want to come home.

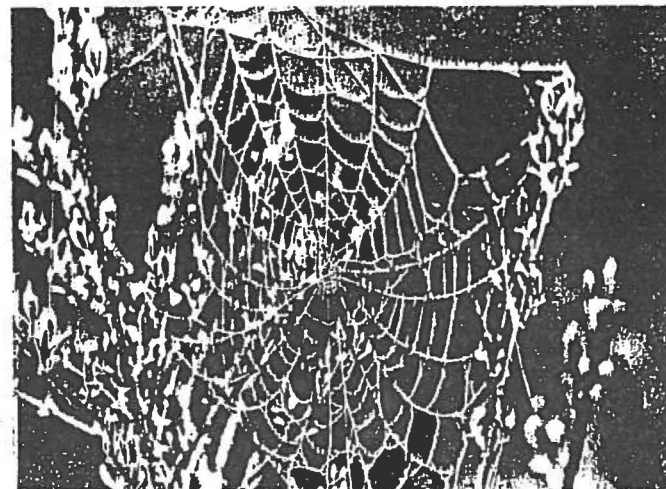
My fantasy is that there is a

women's community (group) with arms outstretched to welcome my daughter (age 8) and me, with all that we have to offer. I'll be in Nova Scotia late July to August 1989 on holiday.

Please make my fantasy into a reality by writing to me.

Joan MacLeod
London, England

Get entangled! Buy a sub.



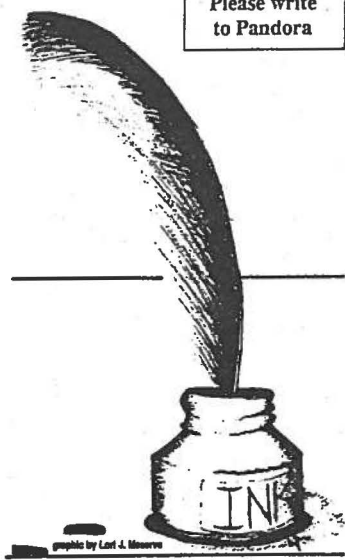
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We may be asked for our subscription list by groups interested in passing on information. Each request is discussed by the editorial group. Please indicate if you do not want your name included. _____

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Please write
to Pandora



G.A.L.A. meetings lead to greater involvement

Darlene Levy

Two years ago my partner and I decided that we would "get involved." Up until then we had lived a fairly secluded life: having been together less than two years, we still took great comfort and pleasure in each other's company. With each other's help, we began to see past our individual needs, and realizing that we had more than enough caring between us, we decided to divert some of it to "the cause." Here begins our story.

We began by attending things, women's events mostly, and a select handful of demonstrations: Anti-apartheid March, International Women's Day, Lesbian Conference, Wild Wimmin Weekend, Veith House events, stuff like that. We became two of the people that events like these are "organized for," and we had fun, made friends, were educated, and developed opinions.

Then, one day, armed only with our newly-formed ideas and our strength of conviction, we attended a G.A.E. (Gay Alliance for Equality) meeting. We sat, we listened and we were amazed! Such rhetoric, so many whereto's and here as's and forthwith's — G.A.E.'s by-laws were being revised!

We managed to live through the revisions, although now I wonder why we came back to meeting after meeting of whereto's and where as's. Perhaps it was our wish to uncover the obscure meaning and intent behind these words, or maybe it was our feeling of responsibility — nevertheless we continued.

Not long after, we became "card-

carrying, voting members" of G.A.L.A. (one of the revisions was a name change — G.A.E. became Gay and Lesbian Association of Nova Scotia.) We were considered "new blood" and other members, especially the women, welcomed us with enthusiasm. How could we refuse? There seemed to be a need.

Our newly-felt responsibility was soon to become hard fact. As coordinators of Lesbian and Gay Pride Week, we learned the meaning of such phrases as "red tape," "budgeting," "clearing it with the membership," "clearing it with the Board," and "democracy." But all in all the week's events were a success and a sense of community and good will prevailed.

Another of the phrases we learned

once a month, is a tough job! These women may even have attended one of our Tuesday nights, but they probably found the music too loud, the disco beat too pronounced, and the lyrics too sexist for their tastes. But like I said, progress is slow, and there are women who do appreciate this type of entertainment, and of course, there's always the male clientele to be considered.

One of the main draw-backs the committee faced was the Liquor Licensing Board's ruling that private clubs could no longer hold specific gender events on the grounds that doing so would discriminate against other members. This meant that Women's Night could be attended by men. We hoped that the male clientele would respect our need for a space and time for ourselves.

Unfortunately, most of them believed that the new ruling was a step forward,

that the cultural gaps between lesbians and gays would consequently dissolve and that we would become one community with one collective goal. What these men failed to realize was that lesbians have nothing to gain from this arrangement, not at this point in time. Our main concerns now are to determine our weaknesses and strengths, discover and rediscover our culture, and define our own values. Not until then will the notion of a united community with one collective goal be conceivable.

And yet the Women's Program Night Committee, a handful of dedicated women, my partner, and myself, continue our involvement with G.A.L.A. We persist in our view that both cultures can exist side-by-side, working, if not as one, then as two communities brought together by the conviction that gays and lesbians have the right to their own separate life-styles.

With the recent political atmosphere in Nova Scotia, and the question of whether or not sexual orientation will be included in the Human Rights Act, the need for a strong united effort from both lesbians and gays is crucial. L.G.R.N.S. (Lesbian and Gay Rights Nova Scotia) have done a great job of doing just that. Their hard work and dedication must not go without gratitude or applause. However, the struggle's not over yet and they cannot be expected to carry the responsibility alone.

Many people don't differentiate between the words lesbian and gay and don't understand that they are two separate cultures

the meaning of was "There's no rest for the weary." My partner became the Secretary of G.A.L.A.; I concentrated my efforts towards the activities of the Women's Program Night Committee. The month-to-month organization of Women's Night was an effort, to say the least. Our objective was, and still is, to provide a night at Rumours for the lesbian population of the community, with special emphasis on the needs of those who do not attend the bar on the regularly scheduled nights.

However, progress is slow, and convincing women that an organization that they believe to be run for and by gay men really does welcome women and women's music into its bar



(Photo by Susan Graham)

Darlene Levy and Gail Watterson

The foremost objective of G.A.L.A. is to educate the public on gay and lesbian issues and to work towards ending public discrimination. Unfortunately, from time to time, internal conflicts and Society business deters our undertakings in this area, but no matter how time-consuming or distasteful, these affairs must be attended to. Nevertheless, the will is there and with an increased personal involvement and better networking with other lesbian and gay organizations, G.A.L.A. has the potential of providing us with the strong united force we now

need, and to accept the responsibility of representing and attending to their needs.

G.A.L.A. is a democratic Society. This means that all members take part in policy and decision-making by voicing their opinions and casting their votes in agreement or disagreement with the motion on the floor. There is also a hierarchy known as the Board of Directors, consisting of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Male Without Portfolio, and Female Without Portfolio. The latter is the position that I presently hold.

The positions of Male and Female Without Portfolio are designed, in part, to prevent the lack of male or female representation on the Board should all the other positions

We became two of the people that events are "organized for"

need.

Other objectives of the Society are to provide and operate a community centre for gays and lesbians; to assist other organizations or individuals who share the aims and goals of the Society; and to promote a general understanding between gays and lesbians. The way I see it, lesbians have much to gain from their involvement in G.A.L.A.

Many people do not differentiate between the meaning of the words lesbian and gay, and subsequently do not understand that there are two separate cultures involved when they speak of "the gay and lesbian community." The public and the media often categorize us as one group, referring to us as "gays" or "homosexuals." Changing the name from G.A.E. to G.A.L.A. was a conscious decision on the part of the members to acknowledge that differ-

be held by all male or female members. My job is to represent women members, and it assures that lesbian issues are considered; however, it does not assure that our concerns are carried out.

I have the power of one vote, and though it may be one of six on the Board of Directors, it is only one of many within the general membership. My partner, who holds the position of Secretary, also has one vote, and so do the other lesbian members.

Involvement in the Women's Program Night Committee has grown and its activities improved, but as it stands men outnumber women approximately three to one.

Though most male members do agree that there is a difference between gays and lesbians, they cannot always be expected to understand, respect or even be aware of our concerns. If we want representation, we must represent ourselves.

There are a number of existing organizations in Nova Scotia that do cater to some of our needs, and through individual and group endeavours we manage to accomplish things like Pandora, Lesbian Conferences, and Wild Wimmin Weekends. A lot of hard work and ingenuity go into these productions, and the truth of the matter is that G.A.L.A. would benefit greatly from the participation of these women.

In conclusion, it would seem that it would be in the best interest of all to combine our efforts, but we continue to focus our attentions on our individual needs and short term goals.

Perhaps the rift between our cultures is too vast to transcend, or perhaps all that is needed is for someone to make the first move and provide an invitation. I am doing just that.



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For members and their guests

Letters/telegrams needed to change inhumane Canadian refugee policies

Beth Abbott

Over the past ten years, El Salvador has suffered greatly as hundreds of thousands of Salvadorans have fled their homeland to seek refuge from military forces and right wing "death squads" that routinely torture and kill civilians. While Canada continues to receive a steady flow of refugees fleeing El Salvador, there has also been a popular movement by Salvadoran peasants in refugee camps to return to their communities.

Dina Mejia is one of 4,300 Salvadorans who recently returned to their homeland after many years as refugees in the Mesa Grande refugee camp in Honduras. She now lives in the small community of Guarjila in northern El Salvador, where she is the only woman member of her local community council. Dina was selected by her community to represent them on a speaking tour of 22 locations across Canada this winter, sponsored by OXFAM-Canada and the Jesuit Centre. The tour focussed on the human rights situation in El Salvador, Canada's aid policy to that country, and our new refugee policy which denies asylum here to many Salvadorans.

Dina's community of Guarjila lives, works, and plays in the shadow of the Salvadoran military, which threatens and intimidates at every opportunity. The military routinely delays humanitarian aid and building materials destined for the resettled communities. Since Dina returned from her Canadian tour in March, the military has occupied the village and conducted manoeuvres nearby, including aerial bombing and strafing by machine gun. Fortunately, the villagers were able to prevent the army from kidnapping two young people in the community.

In the past ten years, 20 members of Dina's family, including her husband, have been killed by the Salvadoran

military. Dina left her homeland in 1980, when her village was attacked by the army and more than 100 residents were killed in a bloody massacre. The survivors fled on foot to the Mesa Grande camp, just across the border in Honduras.

The years in Honduras were hard. As refugees, their lives were "on hold." They were dependent on international aid. They were not free to leave or work outside the camp. On many occasions, Honduran soldiers entered the camps, killing and kidnapping some of the refugees. In recent years, living conditions for the refugees worsened steadily.

In 1987, the Central America peace plan gave strength to the refugees' dreams of returning home. While recognizing that little had changed since they were forced to flee El Salvador, Dina and the others, the majority of them women, worked for nine months planning their return. They notified the international community, hoping for some protection. They made an official request to the Salvadoran government for permission to return.

Yet no one took the refugees seriously. They heard nothing from their government until two weeks before the date they selected for departure. The word from San Salvador was that they were not free to return home, and that to do so would contravene the Central America peace accord. (In fact however, the accord gave the government the responsibility to assist the refugees with repatriation!)

Despite these obstacles, the members of Dina's community, along with thousands of others, left the refugee camp and made the trip back to El Salvador in October 1987. As they were well aware, the country they returned to remained in the hands of the military and the "death squads." Americas Watch, an international



Dina Mejia and Beth Abbott

(Photo by Brenda Conroy)

human rights organization, refers to El Salvador as a "nightmare revisited," while Amnesty International speaks of "Death Squads: A Government Strategy." It's not surprising, therefore, that many Salvadorans continue to flee for their lives.

In spite of this horrendous picture, Canada's new refugee policy (January 1, 1989) is turning away Salvadorans at our own borders. On March 9, for example, the Canadian government deported a 19-year old Salvadoran man

directly back to El Salvador. Barbara McDougall, the Minister of Immigration, personally reviewed the case and signed the deportation order. The Department of Immigration even notified the Salvadoran government of this action, and many observers now fear for the life of this person. This deportation breaks a long-standing policy of not sending refugee claimants back to dangerous countries like El Salvador. (Interestingly, the Canadian government has just announced a decision not

to return unsuccessful immigration applicants to Haiti and Lebanon because of political instability in these countries.)

Other Salvadoran refugees in Canada are also at risk. On her tour of the Maritimes, Dina met with one such individual, now in St. Stephen, N. B. This refugee claimant is not considered by Canada to be a "genuine refugee," despite well-documented union activity (a dangerous occupation in El Salvador) and a letter from the United Nations stating that he is a refugee under the U. N. Convention. For such cases, in which the person passed through the United States on their way to Canada, deportation means a return to the United States—which casually deports over 95% of refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, countries considered "friends" of U.S. foreign policy.

Dina's Canadian tour encouraged refugee support groups across Canada to launch a massive lobbying effort under the name "VIGIL" to stop deportations to countries like El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. In addition, they are requesting that Central Americans from these three countries not be deported to the United States.

There are many powerful constituencies in Canadian society which have no interest in protecting and assisting refugees. Your voice is important! Pandora readers wishing to support a more just refugee policy can send letters or public opinion messages (15 words or less for \$3.50 through CNCP) to Barbara McDougall, Minister of Immigration, House of Commons, Ottawa, K1A 0A6 and Gordon Fairweather, Chairperson, Immigration and Refugee Board, Headquarters, Ottawa, K1A 0K1.

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Beth Abbott is Outreach Coordinator at OXFAM/DEVERIC and a member of the Latin America Information Group. For more information about refugee support work, call 454-4874.

Wen-Do Women's Self-Defence needs women to speak out in court case

Wen-Do Women's Self-Defence Corporation is fighting a complaint of sexual discrimination before the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The complaint was brought by a male black belt in judo who is a representative of a men's group called "In Search of Justice."

The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) has agreed to assist Wen-Do in its response to this complaint. LEAF believes that Wen-Do's women-only policies are specifically designed to promote women's equality and therefore do not violate human rights legislation.

If we win, we will have successfully protected our right to remain a women-only organization and will have strengthened the interpretation of the Ontario Human Rights Code as a protection of traditionally disadvantaged groups, such as women.

If the Human Rights Commission rules against Wen-Do and allows women-centered education and support groups to be forced to admit men, men may also gain access and rights to run women's shelters and rape crisis centres... We need your letters of support.

These are some of the issues you

may wish to address:

1) Violence against women:

- describe your own assault or that of a close friend or relative;
- describe how the fear of assault or violence against women has an impact on your daily life.

2) How Wen-Do deals with violence against women:

- refer to #1 above and tell how Wen-Do has helped you to deal with the fear, release a hold or choke, gave you skills to cope with the threat of violence;
- tell how sharing information and resources about violence against women helped you deal with the fear;
- write about the confidence building and empowerment you achieved from completing a Wen-Do class.

3) Why you selected Wen-Do as a result of having only women students:

- some women feel more comfortable about talking about sexual assault, sexual harassment and wife assault when there are only women present. The presence of men in a class would silence some women from disclosing their

experience;

- some women feel weak or self-conscious about their ability to be able to defend themselves and want a comfortable atmosphere to try out these new skills;
- some women have been attacked and cannot cope with the idea of a male grabbing them in the same way. They need a safe environment to put control back into their lives;
- describe the negative consequences to you if men were present in all self-defence classes as students.

4) Why you selected Wen-Do knowing it was taught by women only:

- role model: Some women feel that seeing a woman about the same size successfully releasing a hold or choke makes it easier to believe that they could defend themselves, too;
- empathy: Knowing that the instructor has had the same fears about being a woman alone at night and/or has experienced some form of violence makes some women feel more secure about talking about their experiences;

c) any of the reasons you chose Wen-Do because of women-only participants.

5) How Wen-Do has changed your life and the lives of those around you:

- you feel less likely to be harassed because of stronger body language or more confidence;
- you have an increased awareness of your environment and can avoid potentially dangerous situations;
- you have used a verbal or physical Wen-Do technique to get away from an attack.

6) Invite other women to write support letters and describe their experience in their own way.

Caution: This "evidence" in the case before the Ontario Human Rights Commission may become public and therefore available to the men's group. Note on your letter whether your name and address may be used. If not, we will not release your identity, but we will duplicate your letter using your initials and city only.

Write letters to: Wen-Do Women's Self Defence Corporation, 2 Carleton St., Suite 817, Toronto, Ont, M5B 1J3, (416) 977-7127. (Charitable registration number 0749556-09-13.)

We are everywhere...but it's easier when we're wearing name-tags

Amanda Le Rougetel

I went to a fabulous dyke conference in Halifax in March called Being Ourselves. What a high for me: all those women... such beauty... such energy... such a good time! It gave me such a sense of revitalization to be amongst so many women, so many dykes!

Living as I do in the pleasant but quiet little city of Fredericton, it is always a joy to hop in the car and drive those five hours down the highway to the (comparatively) thriving metropolis of Halifax and "do the town," as it

were.

This time was even better because my friend Lisa-from-Edmonton-via-Toronto was visiting me from that big city, so the drive down to the conference was filled with talk about life and feminism and love and plenty of coffee. The conversation alone would have gotten us to Newfoundland and back again!

We didn't make it in time to attend the Friday evening showing of the Boston-made lesbian soap opera, "Two in Twenty." Instead, we drank too much wine and talked into the

morning at our billet's house.

We suffered the inevitable hangovers in the morning but I awoke early anyway. I was eager to get going, anxious to meet up with old friends down at Veith House, the site of the conference.

And I was not disappointed: friends were there and greeted me with warmth and eagerness. I revelled in the sense of community — that sense that springs from long-time connections, past struggles and plain simple friendship that weathers trials of time and distance.

The conference was well set up and organized with plenty of information sheets and guidelines about good restaurants and places to stay laid out on tables and posted on walls.

The site was accessible to women in wheelchairs and there were interpreters for the hearing impaired. (They provided terrific visuals to us hearing women, also, during Anne Cameron's reading of her very erotic poetry!)

There were a host of workshops to choose from — Breaking the Silence on Disability, Lesbians and AIDS, Lesbians and the Law, Sex and Friendship, Sexual Abuse, Lesbians Franco-phones, AIDS and Safe Sex, Human Rights, Using Video, the Issue of Class, and Rural Women.

They were billed as informal sessions in which the participants should expect to lead the discussion as much as follow the lead of the facilitator.

Every room had been given a name: the general assembly area was called "The Closet" (out of which everyone had to step at one time or another!), the Cauldron, Labrys, Lesbos, Matriarch, Sappho, Marie-Claire Blais, and Amazonia were workshop rooms.

In the end, I attended only one workshop. I chose "Lesbians and the Law" because I was interested in learning about things like wills, financial and personal contracts, giving power of attorney to my lover, and so on. It was a very popular session and provided good, sound information that is clearly wanted by a lot of us.

The rhythm of the conference was slow and easy. The women in Halifax sure know how to plan a day: the conference hadn't begun until the very civilized time of 10 a.m., so it was time for lunch once the first workshop sessions had ended.

Lunch of home-made soup, fresh-baked rolls with cheese and fruit was provided for only \$2.50. We lined up into the kitchen and took our food into The Closet where the level of conversation increased as our hunger was sated by the excellent food.

A sense of excitement began to build as 1 o'clock approached and the time for Anne Cameron's reading. She is the author of such books as *The Journey*, *Daughters of Copper Woman*, and *The Annie Poems*; this session, held in The Closet, was clearly a major attraction. The room was filled to capacity by the time Anne started her reading.

She began with a powerful message about the uniqueness of Native spirituality and the dangers involved in "messing with it" when you don't fully understand it.

She moved into her reading, standing tall and strong at the front of the room commanding attention with her

presence and her powerful, melodic voice.

The signers worked with Anne to interpret her poetry of strong women, dyke-loving women and sensual women. Words take on new power

when read aloud by their creator.

I spent my afternoon visiting and doing some shopping — I was flying high on the energy of the conference and didn't want to slow down long enough to sit through a workshop.

I was already looking forward to the evening talent show and dance, and neither disappointed me. There were songs and jokes and music in the talent show, and the dance rocked to the beat of the DJ's tapes and women's bodies moving in time.

Sunday morning was almost my favourite time at

the conference: about 20 of us went to a local bowling alley and played at being "Dykes for Strikes!" We were totally outrageous — loud and raucous — and had a marvellous time. The local Sunday morning league players weren't quite sure what to make of us. Our scores may have been low but our spirits were high!

For Lisa and me this event brought the conference to a close. The weather had taken a turn for the worse and we had to head home. After a round of hugs and general goodbyes, we filled the thermos with coffee and braved the icy roads.

While the conference was over, the sense of energy, of revitalization stayed with me for a long time. I had almost forgotten what it was like to be in a place surrounded by lesbians proud to be who we are. The sense of community, of belonging, of shared identity is, for me, a source of strength.

Living day by day in a place where the lesbian community is for all intents and purposes invisible makes it seem normal to be cautious and silent. Being part of a gathering of womyn celebrating our sexuality and our identity has given me a much needed shot in the arm.

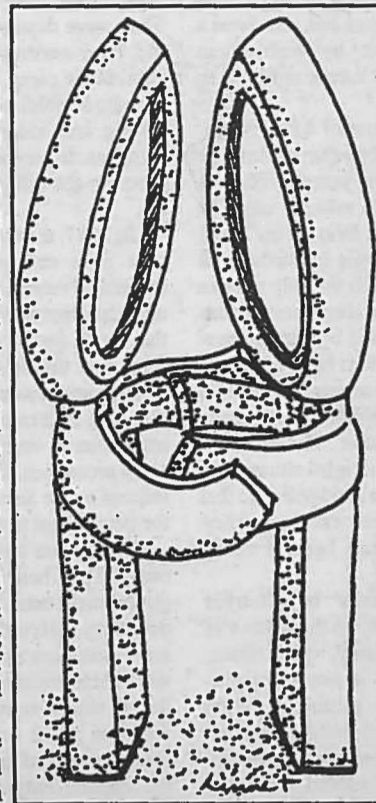
We may well be everywhere, but unless we join together, unless we work and struggle, play and celebrate together as a community, we may as well live in the well of loneliness. Sisterhood is powerful, and for lesbians I believe it is our very life blood.

Congratulations on a great conference, organizers! When's the next gathering?

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Amanda is interested in hearing from any outrageous women interested in playing at "Dykes for Strikes!" in the greater Fredericton area.

Contact her c/o Comp. 142, SS 1, Silverwood, Fredericton, NB, E3B 5M7.



Louisa May Alcott's real life not reflected in her writings

Carol McLeod

Writing about the ideal domestic life is often easier than living it. For Louisa May Alcott, author of the perennial best seller *Little Women*, creating scenes of familial happiness was one of the few escapes from an existence plagued by stress.

Born in Germantown, Pennsylvania on November 29, 1832, Louisa was the daughter of an eccentric, debt-ridden schoolmaster who believed that Louisa's dark hair and eyes — so unlike his own — were a mark of inferiority. Louisa's mother was a bitter woman who resented her life of genteel poverty and who found her new daughter difficult and demanding.

During her childhood and adolescence, Louisa was often at odds with her father and resentful of the favouritism he showed her

three sisters. "I don't want to live," she wrote in her diary in 1850. "Only it's cowardly to die till you have done something." Gradually she developed a rapport with her mother who recognized Louisa's writing ability and encouraged her to develop it.

Louisa's first short story was published in 1854 when she was 21 and was quickly followed by a collection of fairy tales. For a time, Louisa savored her success and basked in her new self-confidence. She gradually recognized, however, that even her writing would not bring her independence. The more she earned, the more her family counted on her to supplement her father's income. Worn by care, she looked older than her years and in 1858 she contemplated suicide.



Louisa May Alcott

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, she seized the only opportunity she knew she would ever have to live a life of her own. Enlisting as a nurse, she served at a military hospital in Washington for six weeks before almost dying of typhoid pneumonia. The large dose of calomel she was treated with resulted in mercury poisoning, causing recurring illness for the rest of her life.

Unable to resume her nursing, Louisa rejoined her parents who were then living in Concord, Massachusetts. During her recuperation, she compiled the letters she had written during her stay in Washington and sold the collection to a publisher. Printed under the title *Hospital Sketches*, the book became both a critical and a popular success.

In 1868, Louisa started *Little*

Women, a novel based on her childhood memories and written for adolescent girls. Yet because she felt compelled to present a candy-coated world of familial goodness, she sublimated people and events into what she wished they had been. The book became an immediate best seller and for the rest of her life, Louisa was able to support her family well.

Paradoxically, however, the success of *Little Women* harmed Louisa professionally. The public clamoured for more of the same, narrowing her avenues of artistic development and stifling her creativity. In the years that followed, several new children's books sold well, but with each one Louisa found her work less satisfying.

Her rise to fame irked her and she was particularly annoyed with the smug satisfaction her father took in her growing reputation. Years of domination by him had filled her with a desire for sexual equality, and she became a staunch supporter of the women's suffrage movement.

However, the aggravations of her life had taken their toll and Louisa died suddenly on March 6, 1886 at the age of 55.

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Carol McLeod is a writer living in Riverdale, New Brunswick. She has written for many Canadian and Maritime magazines and journals including *Harrowsmith*, *Financial Post Magazine*, *Atlantic Insight*, *Macleans*, *Horizons* and *New Maritimes*. She has also written four books including *Legendary Canadian Women and Wives of the Canadian Prime Ministers*.

No easy answers, no easy "choices" for most women seeking abortions

Debra Westerburg

On February 22, 1968, at the age of 20, I had a baby girl, named Patricia Joanne after my mother, and sister who died. I used to walk down the hall of the hospital numerous times a day to the nursery where she lay. Since I had come from a home for unwed mothers, I wasn't allowed to hold her or feed her, but they couldn't stop me from looking at her. The five days I was in the hospital, I was alone. No family, no friends, no real validation for what I had gone through.

I had a good pregnancy: I tried to eat well, exercised, kept my mind positive. I had a difficult delivery and had to work hard at pushing that baby out. Now there was nothing. I didn't allow myself at the time to feel what I was going through. I had already resolved that the baby would be given up for adoption because it was the "best decision." When my mother came to visit me back in the home after the delivery, she cried about the poor baby and wondered what kind of life it might have. I was angry and defensive.

A few months later I received a phone call from the adoption agency saying it was soon time to sign the papers and they wanted to know if I'd like to see my daughter (although I'm sure they didn't refer to her in that way!). I climbed the stairs to the office one afternoon and spent about an hour looking at Patti Jo, holding her, playing with her. I thought she was beautiful

and so alive, but I certainly didn't feel like a mother. No rush of maternalism swept over me, but a certain sadness that I was saying a final farewell as I left. Walking out into the spring day I thought I closed the door on that part of my life and rarely thought about it aside from the occasional dream about babies. I always thought I would have children in the future.

One spring later I found myself in the same situation. I was absolutely hysterical. I had been taking birth control pills, had run out the same time as I had broken off with my boyfriend and thought "why bother." One stoned night I crashed in the bed of a very good friend of mine who was like a brother and woke up to his sexual manoeuvrings. It was an awkward, embarrassing moment, soon over. But six weeks later when realizing I had missed two periods, I completely panicked. I couldn't believe it. I thought I would die before I'd let my parents know. I had lost most of my credibility with them as it was and this would surely finish it off.

I felt I couldn't tell my "friend" because more than anything in the world he wanted a partner and a child, so I moved away from our circle of friends and sought help elsewhere.

Another male acquaintance found a doctor. When we walked into his office I felt extremely uncomfortable. On the inside of the office door was a full-length self-portrait of the doctor in an army uniform. Speaking to the man I felt nervous, but finding someone to do the abortion in those days, and one that I could afford, was difficult and my friend convinced me that I was being overly sensitive. With the gift of hindsight, I know that more than any other time in my entire life, my intuition was correct and I should have run a mile to get away from that man.

The next week my friend walked me back again to the doctor's office. He left me, saying he'd be back in a few hours to pick me up. The doctor had no receptionist, no nurse, just he and I were in the

office.

He showed me the room where the D&C was to take place with its chair much like one in a dentist's office. He showed me the room where I was to undress. He gave me nothing to cover up with — nothing to put on and I had to walk back into the room while he was standing there waiting for me, naked, afraid and ashamed.

I sat in the chair and while he was strapping my feet into the stirrups and tying my arms to the chair, he started telling me how pretty I was.... Feeling dizzy with fright, I started to tell him that I wasn't sure... but just then he jabbed a needle into my arm. The last thing I remember was him leaning over me stroking my hair and kissing me.

When I woke up several hours later lying in the anteroom covered with a sheet, my friend Larry was peering at me asking me how I felt. My mind was foggy and I just murmured OK. He said that the doctor had told him I would probably be groggy for a few more hours and maybe he should leave again and come back later. At the mention of the doctor it started coming back to me and I begged and begged him to help me get dressed and out of there — not to leave me. He finally agreed.

It took a while for me to tell him what had happened. I could hardly even believe what had happened myself and I'm not sure he did. I couldn't help but believe that somehow it was my fault...

...the sheets were soaked with blood and the doctor asked me if I had done this to myself...

Several days later I started hemorrhaging alone in my own apartment with Larry out of town and no other friends knowing of my situation. I got some neighbours downstairs in my building to drive me to the hospital and let me off. After a few minutes on a stretcher, the sheets were soaked with blood and the doctor asked me if I had done this to myself...

I spent the first few days in the hospital being given transfusions, massive antibiotics to stop the infection that was running rampant in my body, and one afternoon, while I was lying in bed, something came out between my legs. The doctor had never even done the D&C — he had merely mucked around somehow and brought me very close to death. I had surgery later and they told me they weren't sure of the damage done but I would be all right.

I didn't have any visitors. I didn't know the right questions to ask. I didn't know how I was going to pay for all this. I didn't know how I was going to go on.

The nurse told me the police were going to come and ask me who the doctor was and I decided I was going to tell them so that no one else went through what I did. Larry thought it imprudent — maybe the doctor just made a mistake. He checked his credentials and he was on staff at a hospital in Manhattan. He went and spoke to him and complained after I got out of the hospital. I just couldn't go... and the police never came.

Twenty years later these two incidents are still fresh in my mind — they have seared their way into my heart and soul. They have helped to shape (pervert) the way I feel about myself and what I present to the world. Immediately after giving birth I started sleeping with a pillow clutched to my body. I still do.

While I have known for a long time how painful my abortion experience was and have tried, generally unsuccessfully, to work through in therapy my anger and guilt about the incident, it has taken me 20 years to see how utterly painful giving up a child is. I never really cried about it. I never saw it as completely unnatural. If I were an animal in nature and lost an offspring that I had nurtured to birth I would have howled and howled about it.

Bringing a child to term, communicating with it in your womb, helping it to come out into the world and then giving it up is not an easy choice. There are implications you will live with for your entire life.

When I was finally ready to have a child, I was unable to have one and now I know I never will. Even though I have had a very rich life, a partner who has helped me instill into my life a sense of trust and stability, loving friends that I sometimes feel I don't deserve, varied interests and skills and a life full of incredible experiences, I often long for that experience that I would have shared with my sisters all over the world and for time immemorial — motherhood. I now long to have that daughter who would now be 21. I long to tell her about my life and share the real adventures I have had as a woman searching for personal truth and political freedom. I'd like to laugh, cry and argue with her about the differences that undoubtedly would come up, but to look in her eyes and see some spark that is me...

Because the circumstances of my abortion were so horrific I have never been able to understand how I really feel about having had an abortion in the first place. As I talk to my friends over the years, however, I sense that it's not an easy choice either. It's implications are long-lasting. It is not like having a tooth removed. We live in a society that has not adequately dealt with the choices we seem to be faced with in a supportive and realistic manner. Even



though in some ways it is easier to have an abortion than when I had mine, there is still a stigma attached. Women are still accused by others as being irresponsible and even murderers.

For many of us, our belief that we have the right to choose to terminate a pregnancy is the only comfort we have when we have to exercise that option. What we don't have is real and supportive help in dealing with the pain that might be left within us for exercising that choice.

We will always have unplanned pregnancies — some of them will end at six weeks, some at nine months, some will even turn into cherished children. All of these, however, have implications that will affect us for our lifetime. Who knows how these different "choices" will affect us, whether our chance at motherhood ended with an abortion or an adoption agency.

The reason I didn't allow myself to feel bad at giving up Patti Jo was that I had made the right CHOICE for the situation I was faced with. The reason many women don't allow themselves to feel bad at terminating a pregnancy is that they feel they made the right CHOICE given their situation. While we have to defend our ability to make these choices, we also have to honestly tackle the full implications of those choices.

I feel that when we need to have abortions, they should be done in safe atmospheres where none of society's guilt or ambivalence is present. Having an abortion obviously affects women differently. While some women experience a great physical and emotional relief at terminating an accidental pregnancy, others experience a great sadness and even guilt. For some, developing rituals that help to deal with those feelings might be helpful. We need to know that we used the power that we have in a responsible way. We need to speak it out loud. We've been so defensive about even having the right to have access to safe abortion that we have continued to sweep it under the rug — not really dealing with it.

If our daughters, nieces and friends give birth to children who will be raised by others, we have to encourage them to feel the sadness of giving up that new life and to really talk about what that means. Adoption laws

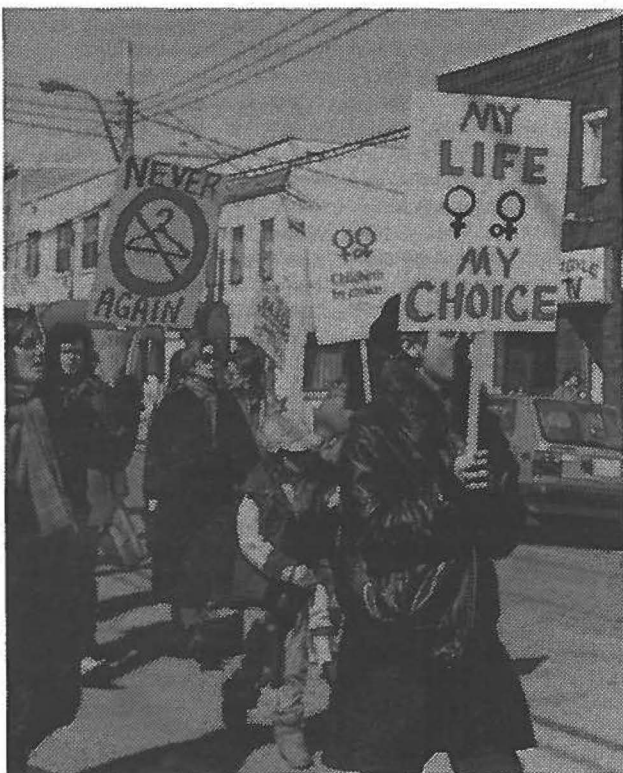
Women are still being accused of being irresponsible and even murderers

should be more open so that a mother has rights to have some very basic information about her child throughout its life.

While it may be all well and good for us, as women, to delve further into the implications of these choices, not until the lawmakers of Canada realize that they have no right to govern those personal situations, will we be able to separate our own personal feelings from those dumped on us by those who have been instrumental in institutionalizing the repression we all suffer under.

We can never, ever, again allow the women of this country to go through what I and thousands and thousands of our sisters have gone through in the past. Each year — all over the world — women continue to suffer injury and death at the hands of religious and societal taboos that impose limits on women's control of their own fertility. This is but one more way to try and control the profound power of the female — the ancient power to both create and destroy in order to continue the wheel of life.

As we work together to manifest that power in the world, we will become more comfortable in exercising it and knowing that we are using it wisely.



(Photo by Brenda Conroy)

Current abortion question brings back hard memories

Charlene Brown

Not a pretty story. Not a story I tell without much shame. Not all the shame should be mine, but I'm the one who must live with it.

1947

At the age of seven, in a small border town in Ontario, considering what I was going through, had already gone through and where I was about to go... I wish my mother had had choices then. By that age I had gone through incred-

ible abuse by a Hitler-type father—emotional, physical and sexual. I had no choice and my mother's only choice was to stay in it and avoid it by drinking and staying away from the house where my father came after work and between women to lay down the law as my two sisters were made to watch. And so it continued...

1957

Due to an attempted murder (of me) charge on my father (who received only two years' probation) I was sent to live in Toronto with my grandmother. At 15 I quit school and got a job, was raped and pregnant all in the same year. In the spring of '57 I found myself in a dark, dirty little sleazy, smelly hotel room scared to death. I was young and innocent, waiting for a phone call to tell me where to go next for an illegal street abortion performed by who knows who.

I found out about this at a clinic in Toronto when I discovered I was pregnant. I was sitting in the waiting room with many young vulnerable-looking

women when a sleazy-looking person slipped me a note saying "If you're pregnant and need help, call this phone number."

When I look back I realize how alone I felt, although I know I was just one of many young women in that dingy clinic in the same shape: crying, scared, and alone.

I phoned the number and went from person to person until I found myself sitting on a smelly, dirty bed in a hotel

ing that baby.

1967

Japan, now married with five children, my military husband has beat me and left me alone to raise five babies while he drinks and lives with women in Japan. He stops in drunk once in a while when he wants a change, beats me and leaves. I find myself pregnant again.

In Japan there was help. Abortion clinics were as common as drug stores.

Abortions were obtained as easily as vegetables, to anyone, anytime, no questions asked. I've never regretted that abortion, but being so alone, so alone...

1977

Now in the United States near the Mexican border. Alone with my six beautiful children, raising them haphazardly without a father. Looking back, I try to analyze why I was pregnant so much. The only time I was really cared for in my life, it seems, was being pregnant. Most people seemed to care for a pregnant woman. Today, with all the birth control methods, education and openness, why are there still so many unwanted pregnancies? Of course there are always birth control failures. But also, it is such a romantic notion that "We are going to have a baby," proof that someone loves you and the hope that you'll be able to hold onto that love with a baby.

I was not doing a great job with the children I already had, was alone with them, unmarried, wanting to be loved and I was. I got pregnant again, by a smooth talking macho dude who told me he wanted me to have his baby. "My baby is going to have my baby." Ooh, those words meant so much to me.

He crooned that line as we drove to Mexico to "get married." "You go here and get the blood work done," he said as he dropped me off in a back alley. "I'll be back. I'm going to get some nice clothes for us," and he drove off as he told me they knew I was coming.

I walked in, scared again. My intuition sensed terror but I trusted this Romeo because he loved me.

The room was filled with young women, some with husbands or boyfriends. Some were even from Canada but no one was saying why they were there. I thought maybe they were all getting married but terror filled my very being.

Two attendants took me to a room, laid me on a stretcher-type table and stuck a needle in my arm. All of a sudden my body felt like it was permeated with a skunk scent. Something was happening to me. I was drugged and couldn't move. I saw someone with a pail and bright lights went on above me. The next thing I know I was being shoved into a taxi. Everything was very hazy as once again I was being pulled out of the taxi and steered by big dirty hands propping me up against a wall in what appeared to be a bathroom in a bus station. Somehow someone got me onto the bus as I slowly came out of my dazed

Will those who are anti-choice help support and pay for children born to unwilling mothers? Will they go to the funerals of those who die from illegal abortions?

on Jarvis Street with strange noises coming from the rooms around me. I was cold, shaking and scared and before the call came through I ran out of the room, down the narrow stairs, and into that awful street filled with all sorts of people I didn't know and certainly had never seen in my short life.

Ultimately I did have my baby, alone again, since in 1957 having a baby and not being married was one of the biggest sins of the day. I had a beautiful baby girl who some people tried to take away from me. I managed to keep her but there was never a moment in her life and mine that was easy. With my background and life-skills I did what I could, but it was hell for both of us and today she is still going through her own private hell. I love her so much but I was not equipped at all in any way for rais-

"We are going to have a baby" is such a romantic notion, proof that someone loves you and hope that you can hold onto that love with a baby

1989

Finally I have broken away from the life that seemed to be filled with a desperate search, need, to have a man love me no matter what. Many people have spent days, months, and years helping me realize there is another way.

Once more I deal with the issue of abortion. A beautiful young woman approached me after long hours talking with friends and family. She knows without a doubt she wants an abortion. She has made up her mind; she is sure. She needs help. She has called many places in town for help and due to various reasons is being shuffled from one place to another. She desperately asks for help.

I quietly call the same places she called only to discover pitfalls and questions, hesitant people, people stating their views and religious beliefs and some making scary statements about what they thought of the whole thing. Many questions: Are you sure? Have you thought about adoption? etc. etc.

Finally someone suggested a doctor who is controversial in town because he takes a stand and sticks by it. I called and right away was put in touch with CARAL (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League). They did help this young woman. Without them, there is

no doubt in my mind that the young woman was desperate enough to try anything. I shiver to think where she would be without the help she so desperately needed.

This situation took me back to my own horrible experiences in Toronto and Mexico. The thought of her or any other woman going through the same painful agonizing weeks as I did 30 years ago forced me to continue searching at all costs for a safe legal solution for her.

In all my 50 years and all the men that have come in and out of my life, not one wanted anything to do with my children. But yet people have asked me to sell them my beautiful blond-haired, blue-eyed children or wanted me to give them away. After all, I had enough and I

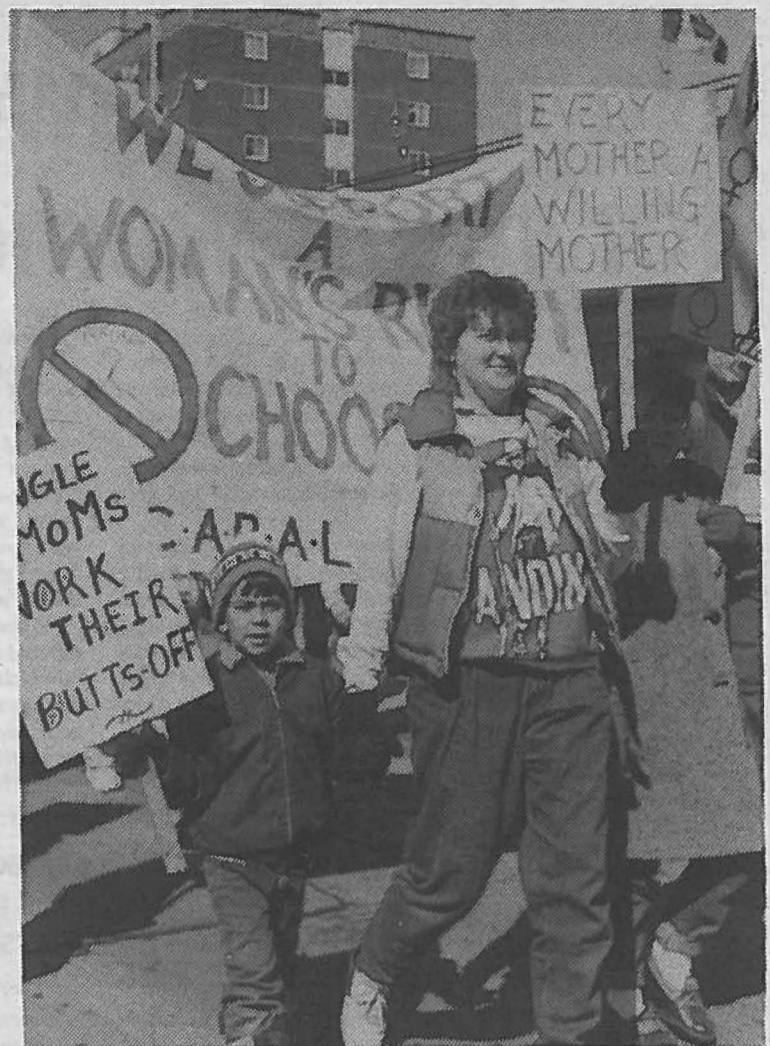
wouldn't miss them. I am still stunned by remembering such questions and yet there have been moments when I felt anyone but me would have been better for my children than I was. But I couldn't do it. I just couldn't! I felt selfish, but I loved them so much.

I am appalled when I hear men and women today suggest that we go back to the dark ages of NO CHOICE for women. What would they say if they found their daughters and granddaughters had back-alley abortions or dying from botched abortions? I've even heard sweet gentle-looking women say that men who have gotten women pregnant through violent rapes have a right to a say in what happens to "their baby."

Women will always want and need abortions, but only the rich and middle-class will be able to afford them. Some of them will die. But mostly poor women will die. There are already more than enough unwanted, abused children. Will those who are anti-choice help pay for children born to unwilling mothers? Will they go to the funerals of women who die from illegal abortions? What will they tell the families? More quotes from the scriptures?

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Charlene Brown is a pseudonym.



International Women's Day March 1989

(Photo by Brenda Conroy)



International Women's Day March 1989
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(Photo by Brenda Conroy)

Abortion not easy decision when teenager confronted unwanted pregnancy

In order for women to control their fertility, they must have access to safe abortions. Discussions of morality cannot alter the fact that there are no completely safe and effective methods of birth control. Nor can we control human error. Thus, women must be able to make a choice between terminating or continuing an unwanted or problem pregnancy.

I faced this dilemma ten years ago. I was a pregnant teenager in a rural area, with literally no one to talk to. My response was terror. All I wanted was the whole situation to go away. I definitely did not want to have a baby.

My parents' response was mixed. My father was angry that I had been so careless. My mother was self-pitying. She felt I had let her down. They were both afraid of what people would think if anyone found out.

So I was taken to the nearest city where I had to see two doctors. Abortion had to be approved by a hospital committee. I was then sent to a psychia-

trist who was more interested in my sexual activity than in my emotional well-being. At that time, physical or mental health had to be endangered by the pregnancy, if it was to be terminated. In the hospital, I was treated with disdain by one doctor and several nurses. I began to understand the strength of misogyny. I also began to internalize the disdain and to believe that I wasn't a good person. I never received counselling, before or after the abortion. As well, I had no visitors in the two days, which added to my sense of isolation.

It was many years before I was able to talk about this experience without crying. It was many years before I was able to begin the healing process which allowed me to feel good about my decision. The emotional pain that I felt was not caused by the abortion. It was pain created by uncaring, unsupportive professionals, as well as a family who was ashamed and did not know how to show caring.

Abortion is not an easy decision. An unwanted pregnancy can create extreme vulnerability. If a woman is to make her own decision, she needs a safe environment with supportive people around her. She may also need reassurance afterward. I believe these goals can be achieved far better in a private clinic where the staff respect women and respect their right to choose.

I have no doubts that I made the decision which was right for me. I only hope that women today, and especially young women, are able to make their own decision about abortion. If this is to happen, there must be safe and open access. There must also be concerned people who will not try to impose values which deny choice.

The anti-choice movement in Canada is both vocal and militant. They have made abortion an uncomfortable issue for many women. But unless we are willing to demand our right to choose, we effectively give over the control of our bodies and our lives.



International Women's Day March 1989 (Photo by Brenda Conroy)

Personal, political beliefs lead to pro-choice organizing

Marie Paturel

No one told me it was going to be easy and yet I didn't think it was going to be this hard.

When I heard that there was a meeting set to talk about actions for the planned Morgentaler Clinic, I thought, "Great! Something is being done in this city." I had always felt that there was something missing in this province — a strong pro-choice movement.

I went to the meeting on April 5 feeling that now was the chance to do some action. I entered a room filled with about 40 people. Wow! All these people! Having done some organizing over the past year, I realized how difficult it was to get large groups of people out to a publicized meeting let alone one passed on by word of mouth.

As the meeting progressed there was a definite sense that people wanted to do something: demonstrations, clinic support, anything, to have our voices heard.

CARAL (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League) said that their role was one of lobbying and public education. They felt they did not have the energy to organize demonstrations and clinic support — quite understandable. There is only so much that a volunteer organization can do with their time and energy. So it became apparent that another group had to be formed, a group that would give support to women who wanted access to the clinic and to voice the pro-choice sentiments of Nova Scotians.

From that initial meeting, about nine of us agreed to meet to organize what would become the Pro-Choice Action Group. A tentative date of April 23 was set for the next large public meeting. Before then, those interested in forming a core group would meet to come up with goals and strategies.

There's something exciting about starting something from scratch, building and working towards and defending something you really believe in. But there is also something frightening. The realization that there is a lot at stake and that the success or failure of the group would have an effect not only on the members but also on many women, places a tremendous strain and responsibility on the individuals as well as the group.

Slowly and painfully, we worked together on building a foundation for this group. This was not a simple process. We were a group of men and women coming from different social and political backgrounds, each having varying views on how the group should be run and what the group should do in regards to the clinic, public actions, networking, etc.

Members had different schedules and obligations so only a few of us could attend every meeting. And some people would attend one or two meetings and then stop going.

With this kind of background, we had 18 days to pull a group together and come up with a plan of action. Within that three week time period, we set up a liaison with CARAL and the clinic, decided on group process, started working on the group's mission statement and goals, arranged to have representatives from the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics to come to help with escort training and decided on our offi-

cial name: Pro Choice Action Group (PCAG).

We thought we were prepared for the next large meeting. Members of PCAG phoned those who attended the last general meeting as well as notifying others. We decided not to publicly announce the meeting in case of harassment from anti-choice groups. It is hard enough to present a newly formed group to a large audience without the problems anti-choice groups would add.

All hopes were cut down on the

statement and defined its goals. We are planning another public meeting for May 22 with a short film and a talk from representatives of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics.

All future plans for the group depends on that meeting: how many show up, what kind of support we get financially and emotionally, how many are willing to give their time and energy to the core group. It all depends on how much people want to put into this group. We are also planning our first training sessions for escorts.

The group is finally coming together, yet we need new people and energy.

I have to admit that I've learned a lot from being involved with this group. Not only about organizing groups and the problems and obstacles that come with it but also about the political diversity within the women's community I belong to and the amount of support one can depend on from them. I

expect and am prepared to defend myself to people with right-wing beliefs, but I find it extremely defeating to have to do this with women who belong to my community.

Different people take on different issues. For some, it is human rights, or peace, or racism, and for others it's choice. There are very few issues that have taken hold of me as much as the choice issue has. There are various personal and political reasons for my

decision. It is not that I ever needed an abortion. Still, I know what it feels like to have control over my life infringed upon. I know what it feels like to have choices and decisions over my personal life restricted by the rest of society.

I spent most of my childhood in rural Cape Breton and have a large amount of love and respect for my mother and women like her who live there. Yet for all of the organizing, debating, participating and learning I have done, I feel that very little of it is tied to their reality. The issue of choice does that for me.

Let's face it, if we lose our rights to choice and access, all women are affected, but the 18 year old woman from rural Nova Scotia, Newfoundland or wherever is going to have a harder time than the woman who can afford to overcome the obstacles and go to places where women's right to choose is protected.

Different women have felt the repressive effects of a white, middle class, heterosexual, male dominated society in different aspects of their lives. White women feel it differently than black women, straights feel it differently than lesbians, and so on, yet if we cannot band together and defend such a basic and fundamental right as control over reproduction, a part of our lives that all women share, how can we ever expect to have control over the other areas of our lives.

It is not that women have a right to an abortion: it stretches farther than that. It is the fundamental right that women have control over their own bodies. If we lose that right, control over all aspects of our lives is in danger.

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For more information on Pro-Choice Action Group, call 422-2917.

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evening of April 23. Only 15 people showed up, seven of whom were core members of PCAG. As well, many of the things we worked on and presented were severely questioned or criticized. The group left the meeting feeling drained, attacked, and without support. I wondered where the hell everyone was.

Since that meeting, however, the group has gained a few new members and has finally completed its mission

Disclosure as disabled or lesbian means being considered as 'other'

I'm sitting in a circle of women who are discussing plans for a solidarity action. The committee looking after the march presents its proposal for a route. It includes a long trek up Halifax hills and suddenly I realize I won't be able to take part. There's no way I can handle that much uphill walking, especially in a fairly fast-moving group.

I feel myself start to withdraw from the meeting, tears come to my eyes and my throat is closing. I don't want to say anything in case I lose control. Obviously I must be pre-menstrual; maybe it's the full moon.

As I try to understand why I'm "over-reacting" I remember an earlier conversation with one of the organizers. When I congratulated her for having the meeting in a wheel-chair accessible school she laughed ruefully: "More luck than good management!" No one had realized they were booking one of the four free accessible meeting places in the city.

Certainly a major source of my emotional response is the understanding that if I don't raise the issue of accessibility for the march, no one else will. The next committee is already giving its report. To speak up now would seem to make a big deal out of something others have already accepted. I don't want to embarrass the women doing the organizing. And, perhaps more important, I don't want to draw attention to myself as someone who can't keep up.

On the other hand, I think, why should I keep worrying about the feelings of women who have, yet again, carried on as if we are all able-bodied.

As the meeting continues, I begin to fantasize. I defend women who have hearing problems and have to sit through mumbles and whispers in meetings. I curse long, sitting sessions on behalf of all women with back problems. I break cigarettes with a single snap on behalf of the asthmatic and buy gallons of apple juice for those with caffeine restricted diets. I ban socializing in taverns on behalf of women with alcohol problems and restrict potlucks on behalf of the diabetic and those who live with candida or food allergies.

I realize I am silently taking my reaction to an extreme because after a while dealing with the reality gets so painful. I know there are lots of straight forward (even out-loud) ways of dealing with this issue. The march route is only a proposal after all. Why don't I just speak up?

Well, that's a big question for all disabled women and, perhaps particularly, for women who have invisible disabilities. One of the reasons I don't speak up is because I'm not exactly out of the closet on the issue of my invisible disability.

I'm embarrassed by the restrictions I feel because of my actual and potential dependency. And why wouldn't I be? I don't see disability issues being used as a basis for unity or being considered a priority in the women's community where I do my political work. Raising them merely draws attention to what is dealt with as my personal problem. In most contexts the issues do seem personal; at least they are individualized.

I have multiple sclerosis (MS). I've had it for almost 15 years and my constant companions are a slight limp (which becomes more noticeable as I walk up hills or stairs), general weakness and lack of co-ordination in my left leg and arm, intermittent numbness

in my face and an extraordinary lethargy that can strike without a moment's notice. While I can usually pull myself together to focus on work, it's often impossible for me to handle the diffuse noise and relaxed socializing after the work is done. As well, I cannot reduce my physical responsiveness by drinking or letting myself get over-tired.

Until recently I haven't been particularly forthcoming with this information. I've believed that I'm not really different, that every woman has some restriction on her life, mine just has a name. I've been reluctant to talk about "my" problem even when it seems appropriate. The conversation



almost always stops cold as women try to find a response. Once they are aware I have MS I become "different" and the resulting awkwardness on everyone's part usually results in an uncomfortable mixture of self-consciousness, curiosity, over-protectiveness or an inability even to respond to what I've said.

And it's true that despite my outward appearance I am different. I have to fight to make myself realize this as much as I fight to have others develop a consciousness of disability issues. There's no doubt that carrying around the knowledge that I have an incurable, virtually untreatable, degenerative neurological disease has changed my life and the way I look at the world. I am very aware that my independence is a present-tense gift, a privilege that I could wake up without tomorrow morning. Paradoxically I also need to plan minutely for the future, to make sure I have parcelled out my personal resources in the most efficient, effective way.

I feel an affinity with women whose life conditions, or sense of fatalism, gives their day-to-day life that same paradoxical sense of impermanence and need for security. But I am different.

I am also different from the women whose disabilities are, for whatever reason, more visible than mine. In most ways, I have the advantage and I am not so naive as to want to suffer from the public ignorance, mobility problems, visual, aural or speaking problems that

visibly disabled women face. However, I have often wanted a sign that says "There's a reason I'm sitting here resting and not stacking tables."

I want women to know that I can't lift anything very heavy. I can't sustain physical activity for very long. I need to stop as soon as my body tells me to stop. I need what often seems to be an excessive amount of quiet time, time to let go of the kind of consciousness it takes just to keep going. I need to be selfish. I have a reason to be selfish.

I'm often the hardest one to convince of all this. I always have a sinking feeling that maybe I'm just unfit, or lazy or burned out and want an excuse to get away to my favourite chair and a good book. To a large extent this comes out of the Protestant work ethic I ingested as a child: You don't stop working, you don't make excuses, until you're confined to bed or in the hospital.

My own inability to take my symptoms seriously also reflects the treatment many women get from the medical profession before (sometimes even after) they get a positive MS diagnosis. We commonly go through months, even years, of being told we are suffering from young-married stress, non-married stress, new-job stress, new-mother stress, student-exam stress, marriage-problem stress. We are told our symptoms (admittedly often unpredictable and non-specific) are the "nerve problems" to which women are so prone.

I have been told by doctors that MS is the perfect disease (meaning excuse) for someone like me who has a very low pain threshold, enjoys quiet, contemplative work, is well-organized and (it's implied) self-centered. But after 15 years of living with the physical and psychological restrictions of MS, I no longer know how to differentiate between my "personality" and the ways in which I have adapted my life to fit within a framework over which I have no control.

When I am using a wheelchair, even a cane, no one questions why I might need to lie down right now—not 10, 20 or 30 minutes from now. Without the visible signs, I have to either swallow my pride or explain, or simply give up caring about the consequences of leaving mid-process.

Both options are difficult. Although my feminist friends are caring about my needs, the way we behave speaks about the strength and ability of women who are empowered through political action and community.

It seems a betrayal, then, not to be able to stand on my own two feet as a witness to this strength. I worry that I betray myself and the women with whom I work. If we, as feminist

women, can't deal with the pressure, can't show that we are able to continue—no matter what—then how, I ask myself, can we convert the masses?

And I continue to fear I will be pitied. My lover will be pitied. My child, housemates, colleagues will be seen as having one extra burden to carry.

Most invisible disabilities seem to be attached to degenerative diseases and the "what-ifs" are often their most difficult component. At what point in relationships should I share the information about having MS? When is it appropriate to consider it a significant issue?

The difficulty of this sharing is amazingly similar, whether it's with a child, employer, lover, affinity group or housemates. It involves a level of vulnerability that is difficult for able-bodied women to understand. It can also involve a future of frustration: able-bodied women simply do not remember from day to day (sometimes from hour to hour) that I have to monitor what I am doing constantly. And it doesn't help to have to become vulnerable, yet again: to explain it all, yet again.

So most often I "pass" as able-bodied. In the mainstream world that means keeping my distance, not committing myself to activities that I don't want to have to withdraw from. In the feminist world, it means closing off some parts of myself until there is enough closeness—and consciousness—to risk opening them.

I resent this closing-off. It means either I don't raise political/practical issues of accessibility when they come up, or I raise them as personal concerns about "them," the disabled women, or as political concerns about accessibility in theoretical terms of race, class, affectional preference, physical ability, etc. Obviously, this disconnection from myself is not healthy, but it's a trade-off I've made to keep working in a community that doesn't often take the time, energy or money to develop a consciousness and analysis around this issue.

What I want is to be able to speak in solidarity with the many women who are not able to be wherever I am because they couldn't make it up the stairs or because they can't sit for 4, 6, 9 or 12 hours. I also want to speak in solidarity with women who experience exclusion from the women's community—the Euro-Canadian, middle class, heterosexual and able-bodied community—because they don't fit in. I feel uncomfortable adding the privilege of physical ability to my race and class privileges. If I can get to the meeting, I should speak up and make my personal connections clear.



I especially want to make the connections as a Lesbian. I constantly have to come out if I don't want to be assumed to be heterosexual. Coming out as Lesbian or disabled may be equally disruptive to my relationship with an individual or group; may be equally awkward or embarrassing for women who need to respond. Either disclosure may place me in a same position of being seen as "other," as needing compassion or assistance. Both may also alienate or threaten women who do not want to deal with difference, who do not wish to face their own vulnerability—or their own privilege.

Coming out as Lesbian, while often tedious, is usually less difficult for me, however, than coming out as disabled. I see my identification as a feminist Lesbian as a major source of my strength and contribution to my community. This is hardly the way I have been able to view the unchosen fact of having MS!

While the personal reality of my physical disability is obviously negative, there are many advantages to keeping quiet. I've started to recognize my feelings of powerlessness when I pass for able-bodied. There are situations where I want my disability and the disabilities of other women recognized as strengths. I do not want to deny my unique abilities that enable me to continue despite the emotional, physical and psychological trials of living with MS: I also want to recognize these abilities in other women.

I have found it very helpful to read Michelle Cliff's writing on "passing" especially her article "If I could Write This in Fire I would Write this in Fire" from *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. She talks about claiming her blackness when people assume, because of her light colour, that either she is white or prefers to be considered white:

"It is not a question of relinquishing privilege. It is a question of grasping more of myself. I have found that in the real sources are concealed my survival. My speech. My voice. To be colonized is to be rendered insensitive."

"To be colonized" for me means continuing to silence myself when I need to speak out for myself and in solidarity with others. Although I am invisibly disabled most of the time, I am slowly but surely recognizing that I don't have to be silently disabled.

PRO-CHOICE
action group

Pro-Choice Action Group

meets every Wednesday
7:30 at Veith House

All people interested in working for choice are welcomed.

Childcare provided.
Veith House is wheelchair accessible

For more information please call 422-2917 or write PCAG,
P.O. Box 1603 Station M, Halifax, B3J 2Y3

Rituals, imaging and visioning help women transform their experiences

Morrigan

In this reign of terror called Patriarchy, it can be said that besides the domination of the white male supremacist culture over the black, coloured and indigenous peoples of the world, women, whether black or white or coloured, have suffered the oppression and degradation of "slave in the master's house." For black, coloured or native women, this has, of course, been a double oppression. Through these years of father god and father right, men have, for the most part, held the rights to ritual use which has been their most profound display of cultural authority and their most direct access to it.

"The performance of ritual in most societies, 'primitive and civilized' is a simultaneous acknowledgement of men's warrant to create and define culture and by exclusion a sign to women to keep in their place, a place we have already designated as outside culture and without the symbolic or real attributes of power." (Contemporary Feminist Rituals — Kay Turner)

Starhawk (a radical feminist wiccan witch) describes ritual as one of the great tools of the weavers of culture: "In the dismembered world we live in, ritual can help us regenerate a culture of life... like seed crystals of new patterns that can eventually reshape culture around us."

Ritual marks and intensifies value. It creates sacred space which in itself is an act of protection. When we think of women creating rituals together, whether in women's actions, women's concerts, (the women's peace camp at Greenham Common can be seen as an on-going ritual) or the rituals of Women Spirit gatherings, we see women empowering each other. Women creating protected space, recognizing our beauty, valuing and magnifying our selves and creating sacred space to connect with our inner power.

In effect, we are participating in transforming experience, the focus of which is to connect and empower us, define and unite us in a world of disconnection and alienation. To name our power, our beauty, our connection is a radical affirmation of the revolutionary potential of the feminist movement.

When I think of revolutionary potential, I have many faces before me. The beautiful face of Louise Teish, priestess of the African Yoruban tradition who has written a wonderful book on rituals. I think of Starhawk and her revival of Wiccan rituals. I think of many women here in Nova Scotia and around the globe with their revolutionary acts.

As I sit here today watching a raging winter storm, feeling the wind shaking

this old farmhouse — watching the trees driven by the wind, I know out there is the ocean, the beach, the earth and the seeds of life — the rivers, the planets, the moon and stars (the celestial sphere of breathless beauty.) I feel my own blood running in my veins; I see the faces of the circle of women gathered on the recent Winter Solstice night and remember the feeling of peace, celebration, unity, exultation, and the knowledge that we were engaged in a radical act... I see before me a circle of women on the beach seated around an altar laid on the sand, comprised of a wreath of sea pea vines just picked, exquisite shells just found on the sand. Rich plump red plums glistening at each woman's place in the circle, red candles pressed into the sand.

The waves break gently on the shore, the evening sky reddened by the setting sun so the vision is of fire in the heavens and fire in our circle, the fire of life leaping up before us and passing through us round the circle raising our inner power. Our Divine Selves breaking through the veils and filters of the outer self. We have touched the place of knowing we are connected to everything. What rises in us is the joy of this connecting and the power of love which runs through us like a flame. A light not seen in the "dismembered world." A light we must kindle in our daily lives to set fire to the world.

The devaluing of women "created from man for man" is the poison Patriarchy pours into our hearts and minds.

In our ritual circles, we return to the place of "being for ourselves and each

other," to the enactment of the healing circle, the raising of our collective power. Visioning and imaging healing the world and restoring harmony and order through the female principle.

So gather, my sisters, offer prayers. Envision the healing needed. Now know and live fully your woman self.

To quote Audre Lorde: For me living fully means living with maximum access to my experience and power. Loving and doing work in which I believe. It means telling my stories and speaking out of my most urgent concerns against the many forms of anti-life surrounding us.

That, my sisters, is also my wish and speaks succinctly of my vision and desires, and, I believe, the vision of our feminist movement and women's culture. So be it.

Fantastic Food — Anita tells us more

Anita Martinez

Being very fortunate in having been able to spend time in many unusual places, I have wasted no time collecting as much info as possible about the food and preparation of it — and having six beautiful, hungry children, I have built-in taste testers (including myself who has saved many lives as a result of taste testing their food before they ate it). My children and friends have many stories of culinary disasters and savoury delights that I have forced them.

Here are two more tried and true recipes for those who want very quick, very nourishing, inexpensive, and "won't make you feel like you slaved over a hot stove all day" food. These can be frozen and quick heated. The second is a summer dish that is very

quick and nourishing and fun, because you can eat it anytime.

Fried Vegetables and Noodles, or Yaksoba (Yok so ba) Mabey

Grate lots of fresh (I freeze it to keep it) ginger

Press 6 large or medium cloves of garlic (I freeze this after I section it and put it in ziplock bags or covered containers)

Grate 3 carrots. Chop 3 onions. Chop 4 celery sticks. All of these vegetables are optional; add whatever you like (even shrimp, scallops or chicken)

Toss mixture in a hot pan until onions are translucent.

Grate some orange peel into mixture and add some sesame seeds or oil; season with salt or soya sauce. You can add chopped Jalapeno peppers to taste.

Toss all of this into a large hot frying pan with 2 or 3 packages (45¢ each) of instant Ramen noodles or use leftover spaghetti. Toss until heated thoroughly.

Serve with a smile and possibly hot sauce or Worcestershire sauce.

Summer (or anytime) Noodle fun (Serves 6)

Preparation time 15 minutes. Eating time: 2 minutes if you're late for work, 2 hours if you're in love.

Take a package of cooked long spaghetti (but never overcook the spaghetti). Set aside.

Make a sauce of 1/2 cup of soy sauce and 1/2 cup of water, 2 tablespoons of vinegar, 1 tablespoon of sugar, honey or sweetener, and 1 teaspoon of roasted sesame oil. This oil is

expensive but it does last a long time and makes inexpensive dishes taste simply marvelous. It makes you look good too.

Grate 2 large cucumbers. Cut 6 green onions into tiny pieces.

Put the noodles into bowls, and top with 1/2 cup of grated cucumbers. Sprinkle onions on top with 4 ice cubes for each bowl of noodles. Spoon 1/4 of sauce into each bowl. Serve.

N.S. Women's Music Festival to be held this summer

On April 21, a group of women got together to discuss the planning of a Women's Music Festival to be held this summer. The date, August 19, (mark it on your calendar!) was established as the date for a festival to be held somewhere in Nova Scotia. This event will be a forum for the many talented women vocalists and instrumentalists in and around Nova Scotia through a celebration of song. It is sure to be an event worth singing about, so plan to attend!

We are seeking an area to hold this event — preferably outdoors. We are also seeking women who would be willing to perform voluntarily or for a small fee as we are working on a small budget. If you would like to perform, have a favourite performer you would like to see at the festival, or know of useable land, please do not hesitate to drop us a line and let us know. We are very open to suggestions.

We are organizing fundraising events, so be sure to watch out for them. In addition to funds, we need volunteers to help out. All those who are interested in getting involved in this event (which we hope will be an annual event) please contact the following committee member and let her know you are interested.

Susan Atkinson, 425-0631
or write: N.S. Women's Music Festival, P.O. Box 63, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0



Welikchijedega — Native Awareness Action Days

About 80 people attended an evening seminar on Native issues at the Micmac Friendship Centre on April 4. Sponsored by Nova Scotians in Solidarity with Native People, the evening was part of Welikchijedega — Native Awareness/Action Days. The events were held to raise public interest in issues such as the Micmac fight for treaty rights, the Innu protest

against low-level flying in Labrador and the Lubicon struggle for a reserve in Alberta. Photo: from left to right: Jackie Ashini, Sheshatshit Labrador Innuband; Jean Knockwood, panel moderator; Viola Robinson, Native Council of Nova Scotia; and Betty Peterson, Quaker Committee on Native Concerns. (Photo by Sara av Maat)

Finding a feminist therapist in Metro not as easy as it seems

Barbara Cottrell

Middle age. If you can cope with reading the newspaper at arm's length and can adjust to hearing yourself saying, "Is it hot in here?" constantly, middle age isn't so bad. It can be a time when you take stock in your life, and reflect on what is important to you. A time to concentrate on the inner self.

That's how it was me, at least. Mind you, along with middle age, there was a minor trauma that shook me into taking a hard look at some of the assumptions I had about myself. I was working my way through life in a reasonably average fashion, when I was offered the chance to spend a year in Germany. I was beside myself with excitement: I could learn the language, focus on my writing, explore a new land. Friends were making plans to visit.

The first six months were fantastic. I enrolled in "German As A Second Language" and spent four mornings a week with people from places like Poland, Iran, Turkey, and Brazil. Few people in the class spoke English, so we all struggled along in our almost non-existent German.

Imagine it. Walking to school in the morning, "Guten-tag! Wie gehts?" (Good morning, how are you?) We'd smugly practise our new found tongue. And that would be it. All we'd learned this week were words we'd use at the doctor's office, and where in Cologne to apply for a resident's permit, and neither was appropriate for the occasion. Silence broken with futile attempts at conversation. As the weeks passed, more communication, although always limited, became possible. Eventually, we could communicate enough to talk about our native countries. Many of the class were trying to escape desperate situations in their homelands. They came to Germany as refugees, immigrants, some even passed themselves off as tourists. Half of them were trying to get to Canada.

So here I am, among people with heart-breaking stories, many of them with little hope of happiness for the future, struggling to communicate in a language we could barely use to buy groceries. Slowly I realized that to both men and women in my class, I was an oddity. They oscillated between laughter and anger at my suggestions that we could look at women a little differently. Classes on words and phrases associated with the home were hell for me. Blatant sexism was the norm. I had Herr Wolny, the instructor, reading Dale Spender's *Man Made Language* before the end of the first semester. He was more careful about what he said after that—and less friendly.

Obviously I needed some sisters. I had to find beautiful healing German feminists. But where to start? I wrote to Emma, the country's primary feminist magazine, asking to meet with them, but received no response. On the other hand, communication with women I did meet was so difficult, we ran out of energy long before connections were made. I needed those connections, but they simply weren't there.

I was depressed, and the more depressed I became, the more I stayed indoors. The more I stayed indoors, the

more depressed I became.

I don't want to give the impression that my time in Germany was totally awful. Those who know me will not be surprised that I organized get-togethers of the people in the class around food and music instead of language. If we couldn't really talk with each other, we could eat and dance. I learned to cook Middle Eastern food in the kitchen of my Iranian friend Fahemeh, and couscous under the guidance of Fouad from Morocco. Together we shared some of the most wonderful banquets I have ever feasted on. We had many evenings full of music and laughter.

But at their core, these were sad people in desperate straits and we were not able to reach across language and culture (particularly around attitudes to women) to connect. Here I was, the poor little rich kid, a year in Europe, none of my class-mates' horrendous problems, and I was depressed. The inevitable question: what is wrong with me? I tried to "pull myself together" for the remaining three months of our stay, but decided that after years of bracing myself to face the world with a cheery,

feminist therapist in Halifax. Dr. Toni Laidlaw and Dr. Leah Nomn were the only names that came up. Toni is a full-time professor in the School of Education at Dalhousie University where she teaches classes in counselling (including counselling women), developmental psychology, and gender. She also takes clients for psychotherapy. Unfortunately, I knew Toni personally, and was not comfortable with asking her to take me on as a client. But even if I had been, Toni can only counsel a maximum of five clients so she rarely has an opening.

Finally, I opted for a counsellor (who does not claim to be feminist) who was able to give me short-term support while I worked on the roots of my self-confidence. I did not tell many people I was seeing a counsellor. Despite the fact that I believed this was a positive step to healing myself, I was embarrassed. More than once, as I was going in for a session, I met someone I knew coming out. Every time it happened, we

laughed and nodded in unspoken agreement: our secret was safe. Since that time, I have lived to enjoy a new

sense of self. I am only sorry that it took me until middle age to be able to start to understand at a personal level how living in a patriarchy had affected my sense of self-worth.

Over the past two years I have learned many things about therapy. For one thing, I learned there are a number of women who are therapists/counsellors in Halifax. I also learned that I didn't know the terms: when is a counsellor not a therapist; if a therapist is she a feminist-therapist. There are numerous debates over that issue. One therapist I did discover was

Mary Petty. Mary is a social worker who describes herself as both a therapist and a counsellor. It depends on the client's needs. Dr. Leah Nomn, a practising therapist, says, "Everyone has their own definition of what a feminist therapist is." She believes a number of local therapists have a feminist perspective, but are reluctant to admit it because of the widely held negative connotations of that word. Leah is a holistic healer who attempts to combine her knowledge of physical medi-

everyone is born with intellectual potential, natural zest and lovingness, it believes these qualities become blocked and obscured in adults as the result of accumulated distress experiences (loss, pain, embarrassment, etc.) that begin early in our lives. We experience these emotional hurts as we grow up, but are rarely given the chance to release the emotional tension that results from these hurts. Co-counselling provides a non-threatening, supportive forum where adults can cry,

tremble, rage, laugh, or do whatever it takes to discharge the hurts. Co-counsellors are trained to recog-

nize patterns of negative attitudes in their counselling partners and offer support while attempting to break the patterns.

I suspect there are other options 'out there.' I have written about the therapists I discovered, and in no way have I intentionally omitted women who are working in this area. There may even exist a 'Directory of Feminist Counsellors and Therapists in Halifax.' What a lovely thought.

Dr. Toni Laidlaw 420-8604
Dr. Leah Nomn 422-4021
Mary Petty 423-0299
Co-Counselling 424-2330

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Pandora's Note: It is difficult to find the feminist therapists/counsellors in Halifax. If you are one or know of one, please let Pandora know and we can spread the word. Write a letter or advertise in Pandora.

I'd had enough of a life-time of battling alone

self-confident grin, I was going to attend to my inner self. I'd had enough of a life-time of battling alone. I wanted help with healing myself. I wanted to understand my depression and the accompanying doubts of my self-worth.

When we arrived home, I immediately went to my wonderful feminist doctor and asked her to recommend a feminist therapist. But my doctor did not know of any feminist therapists. I was surprised, but ready to set out and find one on my own. I started by asking my friends. I soon discovered my doctor was not alone: few people can name

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I believed this was a positive step [but] I was embarrassed...

cine with the psychological and spiritual. She rejects the concept that we are anything but a combination of all three. "Any healing or change of consciousness has to take all three aspects of a person into account," she stresses.

For many women, even if they are able to find a feminist therapist or counsellor, this type of healing is out of the question because it is far too expensive. Most therapists/counsellors charge around \$50 an hour, and it's not covered by MSI. The choices for women on low incomes are, as always, even fewer.

One possibility is to find a feminist psychiatrist—I haven't tried to discover one of those, but would bet they aren't plentiful. Another possibility is Co-counselling, a definite bargain in the emotional health field. While Co-counselling is not strictly feminist, it shares feminism's holistic, affirming principles. Based on the theory that

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Midwifery is rebuilding trust, choice, diversity and breaking down today's stereotypes

Holiday Tyson

It's appealing for me, as a midwife involved in both the day-to-day work of a community midwifery practice and the year-to-year evaluation of midwifery in Ontario to be able to learn about and hopefully help in a small way with the development of midwifery care in Nova Scotia.

The theme of this conference, "Reclaiming Birth: Challenging the Stereotypes" is a timely & wide-ranging one. It has made me reflect, in preparing to talk with you, about the power of midwifery to challenge stereotypes in many realms.

These areas are: the personal development of the woman who experiences childbirth, the political development of midwifery as an important basic tenant of good health care, and the community-based development of what some have called "the new midwifery."

Midwifery has the power to challenge and break stereotypes but also the equal and opposite power to hold fast and reinforce stereotypes. We need to be aware that midwives and their practice can be as dogmatic as any other profession. In Canada, midwifery has the good fortune of being in the process of developing directly as a result of consumer demand, of being based strongly in communities, and of being firmly rooted in the principle of choice at a grass roots level—choices such as when, where and with whom a woman will give birth. The principles of choice and the practice of breaking down negative stereotypes in childbirth and midwifery are two of the most important things we should all value and work towards.

Midwives have the power to influence how women give birth and how they view themselves giving birth—this is a huge responsibility. The old historic stereotype involves a relationship between midwife and mother based on trust and dependence—a "maternal model" of care. Today's stereotype of this relationship evokes images of a highly independent, well informed consumer and a midwife who

informs and educates—the "autonomy model." It is vital for midwives and the women they work with to have the courage to develop a model which recognizes both times of dependence and autonomy in the experiences of pregnancy, childbirth and parenting. Trust and empowerment can only go hand in hand when a model recognizes vulnerability as normal and not a weakness, when a caregiver provides compassion, strength and clinical judgement but does not seek to "take over" the woman and her family's experiences.

One of the most positive developments of community midwifery is the affirmation of the ability of almost all women to give birth spontaneously with a minimum of interference. The breakdown of the powerful stereotype of women's bodies frequently needing to be served from their own inadequate functioning by modern medicine in order to give birth is a wonderful triumph. International research shows that where community midwives practice, surgery and drug intervention and hospitalization are lowest, with no increase in perinatal mortality rates.

For the very survival of midwifery care, we as a society must break away from negative stereotypes which exist about who midwives are, and what their roles and abilities are. A prevalent stereotype is that hospital-based nurse midwives are safe practitioners and community-based non-midwives are not. We need to educate the public and professionals about the values of multiple educational routes to midwifery, and remind them that midwifery is most advanced and consumer control is strongest where midwifery exists not as an extension of nursing but as an autonomous, community-based profession (for example, in the Netherlands). We need to encourage and participate in meaningful research about place of birth and birth practices. It falls largely to midwifery supporters to remind us of the limitations and faults of the monopolized art of obstetrics which has seldom based its practices on



Holiday Tyson

(Photo by Brenda Conroy)

epidemiological evidence, and to develop not only an art but a science of midwifery here in Canada.

It is important for midwives to be able to critically appraise their own and others' advice about the ways to practice. Good midwifery practice is flexible, not dogmatic. Let's all consider our views on birthing positions and place of birth. It's easy to slip into the very limiting view that there is one

superior position or place for birth to take place in—similarly, what the role(s) of partners and extended family in pregnancy, labour, during early parenting are? Are we prepared to accept a wide range of roles and behaviour as normal? It's sobering to turn from old textbooks and guides for parents which our society almost uniformly sees as dogmatic, and find in the new and alternative birthing literature the same


dogmatism. I use as a guideline that we should feel informed but not coerced by literature about childbirth and early parenting. Remember that we are all as different in how we give birth and express our needs as we are in every other area of our lives.

So, in creating midwifery let's not build stereotypes for midwives or for the woman and families they work with, but instead, build a new, community based health care profession on the principles of respect for choice and diversity.

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Holiday Tyson is a midwife who has practiced in many countries. She currently lives in Toronto and is active in the formation of new regulations for the legalization of midwifery in Ontario.

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Lack of information, communication, throughout:

Old school mate returns to harass woman

Janet Doucet
Last night I awoke from a dream I don't recall. My hand was "glued" to the baseball bat I keep at the side of my bed, which tells me it was a bad one. It's been like this for three years now. The bat... well... it's a "prop" from another, recurring, nightmare; tangible evidence of a bad dream that won't go away.

The first letter came more than ten years ago. I read it in bewilderment—a lot of incoherent babbling from a man I barely recalled from my grade school days.

It suggested the voice he heard wherever he went was mine, the visions he saw were of me. I wondered if he was "tripping out" on some hard drug. The letter was post-marked somewhere in Western Canada. Since the probability of encountering this person seemed remote, I tore the letter up.

Later, I would recall the boy, K. B., from my grade school memories. This was the tough boy from the tough family, capable of doing anything that would get him in the principal's office. This was the boy who boasted a switchblade; who chased me home after school, throwing rocks and screaming the word "Communist!" at me.

Then, one year he didn't show up at school. Someone told me that he had been sent to reform school. I never did know why. Some 20 years later, I would encounter the accusations of this "tough" boy.

In November, 1986, arriving home from a weekend out of town, I saw a book lying face down in the rain. Without thinking, I picked it up and brought it into the house. It seemed odd that a library copy of Hitler's biography would suddenly appear on my doorstep. It wasn't until my mother opened it to the fly-leaf that I felt fear.

Scrawled across the page were the words, "Merry Xmas, Janet." Much of the writing was illegible, but the word "Pinko" was clear. The little pocket normally reserved for the library recall card on the last page, had one very abrupt message... a bullet. Panic gripped my insides.

Some three years later, I would learn he hadn't intended to knock me off because I was a Communist, but because he felt "rejected."

Through that night we debated what to do. Feverishly, I tried to figure out who would want to do me this harm. I even created an "I'll get even with you" inventory.

My mother then said that that same weekend a man with a very large dog had approached our door. Our little Westie was tied outside. When she began barking and making a fuss, Mother opened the door. She was just in time to rescue our dog from the jaws of a large Husky-Shepherd mix. The man mumbled something and tried to force his way in. Frightened, Mother managed to slam the door and lock it. When she peered out of an upstairs window, neither man nor dog were in sight.

She described the man as someone she had never seen before: dirty, unkempt, with a bloated face and eyes "with all the expression of a dead fish." I shuddered.

The following day we contacted a policewoman friend of my sister's who agreed to do the legwork for my case. She kept me abreast of any progress, but when she was later relieved

and replaced by a male detective, I spent some of the most sleepless nights I've known.

The book had been traced to a young man who claimed his wallet had been stolen. The wallet had been turned in at the station by a man claiming he'd found it. This man had left his name. "Did I know him?" Yes, I remembered K. B. "Why would he do this?" I don't know. I didn't know this man. He was just someone who had attended the same school I had.

During the two weeks leading to his arrest, a friend gave me an old baseball bat. "Go for the knees first, then let him have it over the skull," she told me.

The police had advised me against getting a gun. "Don't worry, he won't get into your house," they assured me. I got the impression this was all a big joke to them, but I put it down to my state of mind. Lack of sleep, appetite... these were the culprits responsible for my paranoia.

New locks for the doors and windows; blinds; more outside lights; exchanging night vigils waiting for my sister who worked evening shifts as a nurse; all of these previously unknown precautions entered my life, our lives, those of my mother, sister and grandmother as well. We were a "house full of women." My father had died when I was four years old.

I had the impression that this was all a big joke to the police...

Sometimes I would peer out the window in time to catch a squad car driving slowly up the street. This didn't put my mind at ease; rather, it told me my harasser was still out there somewhere. It hadn't helped hearing a neighbour recall a man and dog of the same description prowling around, always stopping to survey our house from a distance. How many times had I walked my dogs in that same vicinity? He must have been watching.

Every facet of my life was affected by this ordeal. I couldn't bring myself to confide in anyone; I thought I might be laughed at. I didn't realize just how compassionate my female co-workers

could be. To this day, I have never told any of the men I work with why I looked so "hung-over."

I didn't feel relief when I learned of K. B.'s arrest. I felt strangely excluded from the whole thing. I wanted to be reassured it was really over.

But no one contacted me. Instead my information came from the media. I hadn't thought of the kind of story this would create but I knew I didn't want sensational publicity. When I saw my name in a newspaper article, I was furious.

The detective was not (ever) available. The receptionist kept me at bay with comments like, "Didn't you know you had the right to request that no information, your name for example, be released to the press?" In the meantime, I learned K. B. had been sent to the provincial hospital in Campbellton for psychiatric evaluation.

I remember reading the newspaper article on his trial and conviction, something related to drugs and harassment. I don't remember the rest. At that point I just wanted to get on with life.

It wasn't easy. I still wasn't sleeping. Eventually I moved out of the

apartment at my mother's. I now share a house with a friend; there are no bad memories here. Two years ago,

while jogging with a friend, I almost ran into K. B. I think my heart almost stopped, but he didn't notice me. He seemed to be staring at something on the ground in front of me as he walked and talked to himself.

Two weeks ago, the letters started again, postmarked Springhill. My mother tore up the first two, not wanting to see me upset again. She must have realized, however, that this was no solution.

I opened and read the third. My first instinct was to write, "return to sender," or "moved... address unknown." No. This would be like running away from the problem.

The contents were the same, incoherent in most places, the admission of suffering the effects of doing too much acid. There was again the reference to me being a communist. What confounds me most is how he presumes to know me. Anyone reading these letters would assume we're old friends.

Assuming he wasn't really in Springhill, I sought advice from my uncle who has personal acquaintances on the police force. He agreed to deliver the letter for me because he thought I'd probably be laughed at if I

would consider criminal prosecution. He explained he was still waiting for word from Springhill and would notify me when it arrived. I suspect if I hadn't taken the initiative to see him personally, that file would never have seen the light of day.

Curious, I asked the detective how he perceived K. B. He explained, rather defensively, that the man was now 40 years old, had lived most of his life in the area, and to date had never caused anyone any harm.

Before leaving his office I asked the

detective whether or not I had anything to fear if and when K. B. was released. "It's my experience that most criminals are afraid of the law in some way

Lack of sleep, appetite... these [must be] the culprits responsible for my paranoia.

went in by myself. So I hadn't imagined it last time.

My uncle was assured, "If K. B. is anywhere in the justice system, we'll find him and put a stop to this." After waiting a week for a reply, I thanked my uncle and called an old ally at the New Brunswick Advisory Council-Status of Women. The same afternoon I called, I learned that K. B. was indeed in the penitentiary in Springhill and also that the letters could affect any decision on eligibility for parole based on good behaviour. I had to get the letter back, or at least get a copy.

I went to the station and demanded to see the detective. I offered to wait the entire afternoon, if necessary, as it was extremely urgent.

Since this was our first official meeting, in person, my face or name meant nothing to the detective until I mentioned K. B.'s name. Yes, he did remember. Matter of fact, he had the book with the death threat right up there on his shelf, like a trophy.

He apologized for not getting back to my uncle. He had drafted a letter to Springhill and got a copy from his secretary. That it took 20 minutes or so to find the file made it plain to me that this case was not on his priority list.

He read the letter out loud. In it he indicated, among other things, that if another such letter was sent, the police

or another." I felt I had been patronized, and not at all sympathized with. I felt he had been more sympathetic with K. B.'s plight.

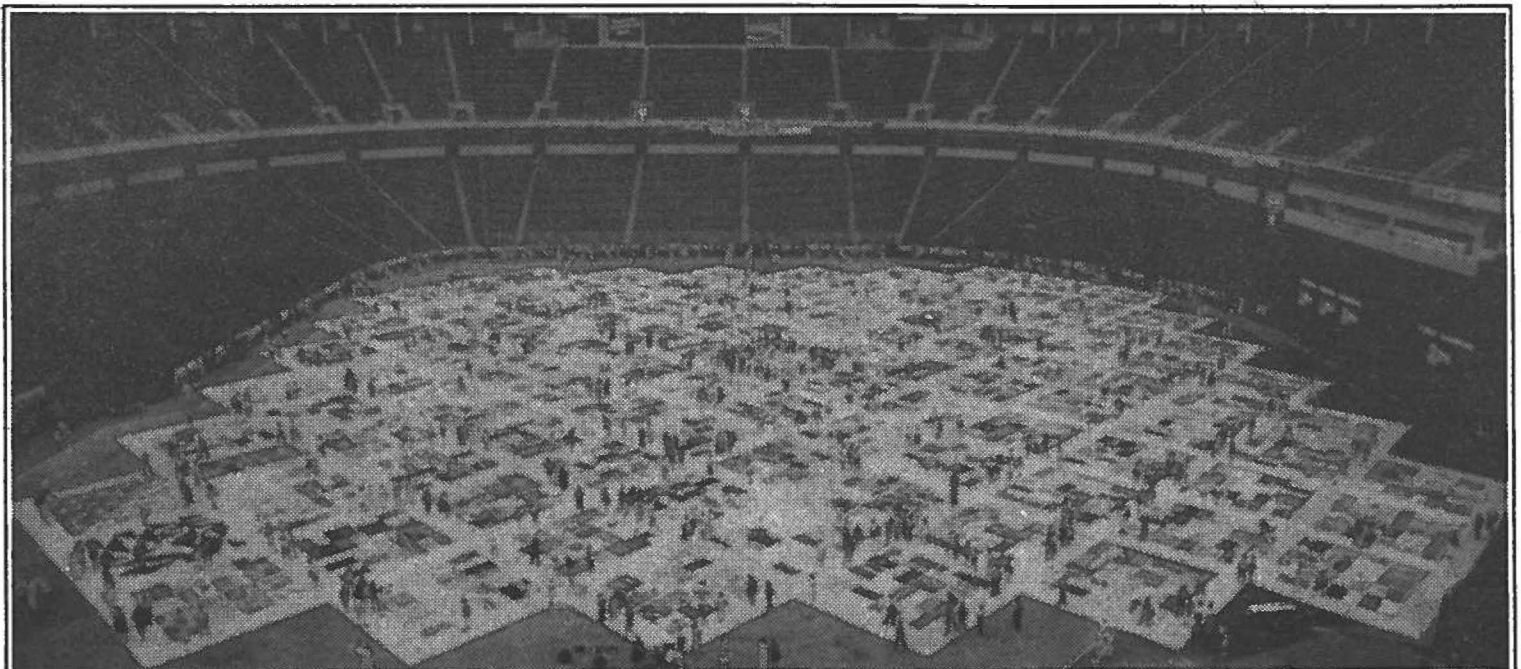
At the time of this writing, I am still not convinced the police will help put this harassment to an end. Another letter arrived yesterday, this one more suggestive and disgusting than the last. This time, when I hand it over to the police I will make the accusation I've been longing to. "How could you possibly know what this feels like... or even put yourself in my position?"

There are probably a lot of men like K. B. out there, desperately needing psychiatric help. But is this a kind of justification for the ordeal victims of harassment undergo?

As for the authorities, I'm quite sure being female has hindered any efficacy with which the problem is being handled. Now I feel more justified in my impression of the law as something foreign and unapproachable.

Until now I've felt very alone in my predicament. I would like to acknowledge the help and support of the Advisory Council-Status of Women, N.B., in particular Noella Richard. I feel that together we can end this nightmare.

Ultimately I hope that by writing about my experiences, other women in similar circumstances will be able to put their nightmares to rest, too.



AIDS Quilt comes to Halifax

The AIDS Quilt was on display at the Tower at Saint Mary's University from June 1-3. It assembles names, photographs, letters and poems of those who died of AIDS on 3 x 6 foot panels individually handmade by friends and loved ones. Each panel represents just one of many stories of lives affected by the AIDS virus. Each tells of a life ended too soon. (Contributed photo)

International co-operating: Nova Scotian women exchange skills with Asian counterparts

In January 1990, three Nova Scotian women will be packing their bags for a three month stay in Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia or Malasia. They will be taking with them some skills that an Asian women's group want to learn as well as their experience in women's groups in Nova Scotia. In turn, they will learn about the work of a women's organization in Asia.

Women's groups in Asia are among the most sophisticated in the world in terms of the work they do and the international networks they have built. They are helping women improve their lives through credit unions, develop-

ment of small-scale industry and craft production, co-operatives, agricultural improvement, literacy, education, resisting domestic violence, research, organization of women in the free trade zones, and work against sexual slavery.

Five Nova Scotia women have applied for the exchange. They bring a great variety of skills with them, including craft marketing, small-scale business, legal education, health, community development, lobbying, and organization building. All have a deep commitment to the development and equality of women.

In April, the five applicants met for

a weekend of preparation. Each brought another woman from her sponsoring group. The three organizers of the exchange led the weekend—Rieky Stuart of the Coady Institute in Antigonish, Ruth Schneider of the Centre for International Studies in Sydney, and Anne Bishop of the Community Development and Outreach Unit in Halifax. Linda Snyder, Co-ordinator of CUSO Atlantic and Pat Phillips, CUSO Asia, also participated. CUSO is funding the exchange and organizing the Asian end of it.

The women who took part in the weekend event learned something of the context and work of the Asian women's groups, shared and reflected on their own organizations, and talked about why they want to go and what skills they have to offer.

The next step will take place in Asia. Ruth Schneider will tour the Asian women's groups along with a CUSO Asia staff member. She will be looking for groups who would like to have a working guest from Nova Scotia and who need the skills the applicants can offer. When she returns, the group will decide which three will go overseas this time around.

The organizers hope to be able to cooperate with programs such as the Coady Institute and the St. Mary's University Institute on Gender and Development to bring some of the women from the Asian groups back to travel, work and learn in Nova Scotia.

We also hope that this will be a continuing relationship with exchanges back and forth for years to come. Women in Asia and women in Nova Scotia face many parallel challenges. Working visits can be a powerful way to learn from one another.

Thousands of claimants eligible for damages

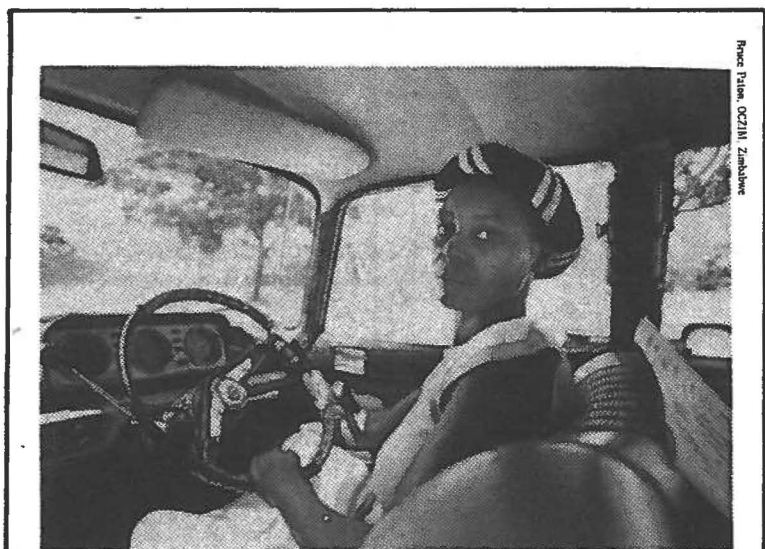
After nearly 12 years of litigation, a judge in the United States has ordered a massive advertising campaign and search to locate female victims of sex discrimination who sought employment with the Voice of America (VOA) and its parent agency, the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), over a decade between October 8, 1974 and November 16, 1984. Unknown to thousands of women who applied for jobs with VOA and USIA, the court found VOA and USIA guilty of sex discrimination in several major occupations, largely in the communications fields.

As a result, VOA and USIA are engaged in a court-ordered search to find the women who applied for the jobs in question and were turned away. Women who sought employment with VOA and USIA are eligible to partici-

pate in the class action lawsuit. Also included are female applicants to Radio Marti. The suit covers radio broadcasters in English and 44 foreign languages, writers and editors, production specialists, radio broadcast technicians, electronic technicians, and foreign information specialists.

Women participating in the suit may be entitled to monetary awards for lost wages and fringe benefits, priority consideration in hiring and retroactive seniority if they were hired.

To participate, women must file a claim form by July 15, 1989. Claim forms can be obtained from the attorneys for the plaintiff class: Bruce A. Fredrickson or Susan L. Brackshaw, Webster & Fredrickson, 1819 H Street, N.W. #300, Washington, D.C. 20006, (202) 659-8515.



Join the Partnership

CUSO offers you a challenge. The chance of a lifetime. Two years living in another culture and an opportunity to work with others who are striving to improve their lives.

It's hard work, but rewarding.

We need someone special. Someone who wants more than 9 to 5. Someone willing to try something different.

The person we're looking for has skills and experience and can live on a modest salary.

If you are a community development worker, social worker, adult educator, special educator or TESL teacher, we probably have a job for you. Join other Canadians working in the Third World. Join CUSO.

For further information, send your resumé to CUSO, BE-26, 1657 Barrington St., Suite 508, Halifax, N.S. B3J 2A1



Nominations being accepted for community contributions

As part of this year's Lesbian/Gay Pride Week, an event is being planned that will celebrate significant contributions being made by individuals and groups in our community. This recognition ceremony will be held at Rumours on Saturday July 1 following the Pride March and buffet.

A committee has been formed which is ready to receive nominations in the following categories:

Community Contribution, Female — open to any lesbian who individually or in concert with others contributed significantly to Nova Scotian lesbian/gay community life over the last year.

Community Contribution, Male — similar to above.

Outstanding Rumours Staff — open to paid employees, female or male, management or worker, who, through their ideas and actions or personal manner, made Rumours a better place to be over the last year.

Outstanding GALA Member — open to current members, female or male, Board or general member, who, through their ideas and actions, has contributed significantly to the development of GALA over the last year.

Outstanding Cultural Contribution — open to an individual lesbian/gay man or group, GALA or non-GALA member, who, through their artistic/creative endeavours, has deepened the cultural life of Nova Scotian lesbian/gay community life over the last year.

Long-Term Contribution — open to a lesbian/gay man who, through their consistent actions over the years, has displayed an unwavering commitment to the ongoing growth and development of the community and the cause of lesbian/gay liberation in Nova Scotia.

Friend of the Community — open to any person outside the lesbian/gay community who, through their actions, has shown their unwavering commitment to the cause of lesbian/gay liberation in Nova Scotia and who has worked to strengthen ties and deepen understanding between our community and the larger society.

Moth Ball Award — open to the individual or group outside the lesbian/gay community who through their actions or inactions has done their utmost to keep lesbians and gay men in the closet.

Nominations can be made by any lesbian or gay man. Nominators need

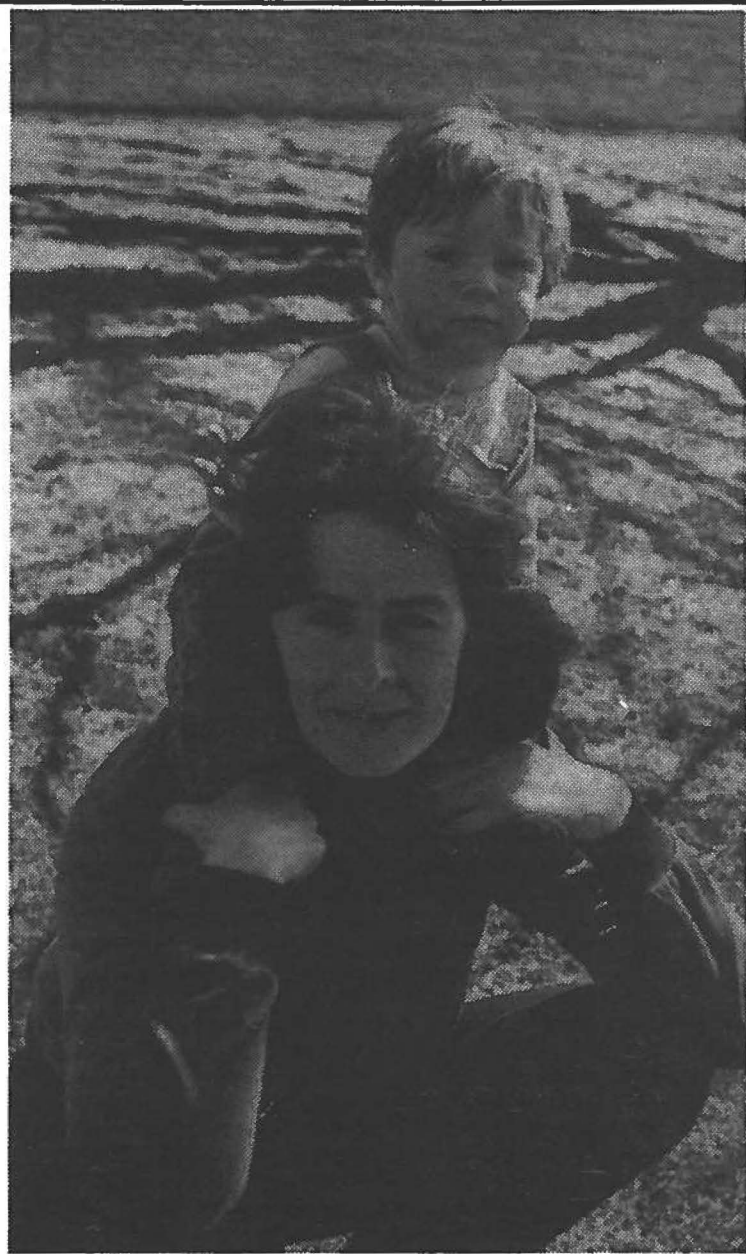
not be GALA members. Nominations must be made in writing, including the name and phone number of the nominee, the contributions for which they are being nominated, and the name and phone number of the nominator (yourself).

Nomination papers should be marked "Community Recognition Committee" and left at the Rumours coatcheck no later than Saturday, June 10. Nominations can also be mailed to GALA, c/o P.O. Box 7126, Halifax North, B3K 5J5.

Upon receipt of nominations, the Recognition Committee will contact nominees (except for the Moth Ball Award) to confirm that they wish to be considered. In categories where more than one person or group is nominated, the Recognition Committee shall choose the successful nominee by secret ballot.

Should any member of the Reception Committee be nominated in any category, s/he will relinquish her/his vote in that category. Should such cases arise, the Recognition Committee will select an alternative.

Happy nominating and see you on July 1st.



WHEN Conference

Michelle and her son take a break from the many workshops and entertainments held during the Women's Health Education Network Conference at the end of April. The annual event, held this year at the N.S. Agricultural College in Truro, focused on "Care for the Caregivers." (Photo by Anita Martinez)

PLURA gives \$\$\$ to low income groups

PLURA, which stands for Presbyterian, Lutheran, United, Roman Catholic, and Anglican, provides small grants to groups fighting poverty. Formed as a national body in 1974, PLURA began to disperse funds collected from the five churches, working through provincial committees. Fifteen years later, the Nova Scotia PLURA Committee continues to assist low-income groups in this province.

Donna Marshall is a member of LINC, the Low-Income Network Committee, a province-wide organization for single mothers with low incomes working to improve their situations. Marshall first heard about PLURA at a conference for low-income women in June, 1987. "Everyone at the conference found the networking useful. Knowing we had a lot in common, living in poverty, and trying to raise our children properly." LINC was founded following a second conference, but the task of staying in touch with members across the province proved difficult - and expensive. Recently, LINC applied for and received a PLURA grant to cover costs of phone calls, child-care so members can attend meetings, and printing and mailing costs.

Because PLURA has less than \$20,000 per year to allocate in grants, the maximum amount a group can receive is \$1,500. Grants of this size can either contribute to the accomplishment of a specific, short-term project, or help a group get started and reach the point where they may be eligible for other forms of funding. "To a small group like LINC, \$1,500 is a lot of money," claims Marshall. "And we make sure that every penny is spent on something that will benefit the group and what we're trying to do."

LINC's current project is to circu-

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Isolation is a common barrier for people trying to improve their economic situations. Taking Control/Making Changes is an organization in Pictou County that is breaking through this isolation.

Member Mary-Ellen MacLean describes the group. "We are low-income women and the money is used for us to set up a support group between ourselves. It's made many of us able to do other things. Whether it's looking at the possibility of a university education or basic literacy. Last week, we met to attend the open house of the new Community College together."

Meetings are held in New Glasgow and the groups' membership is growing fast. For Taking Control/Making Changes, like other rural groups, the transportation costs are formidable for members living up to twenty miles outside of the town where meetings are held. MacLean states, "PLURA's made it all possible, because we couldn't have afforded the transportation or the child-care."

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PLURA's budget can best be spent to support efforts to fight poverty in Nova Scotia.

As Donna Marshall says, "I think PLURA is so important because, as far as getting experience goes, it's not hard to fill out a grant application form. Any organization fighting for social change, no matter how small, PLURA is there for them."

For more information about PLURA, write to Nova Scotia PLURA, c/o Mary Reardon, 5557 Cunard Street, Halifax, N.S., B3K 1C5.

CLOW celebrates our Herstory

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The two-day event will begin with a popular theatre performance by the women of GLOW (Guysborough Learning Opportunities for Women.) In a series of skits and songs, GLOW will replay for us scenes of women's lives in rural Nova Scotia.

Four the Moment will be part of a fun-filled gala celebration which is included in the \$35 (or what you can afford) registration fee.

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Joan Brown Hicks will lead a discussion of current issues including literacy and the school curriculum, and representatives from women's organizations will discuss how we can work together to keep up the good work despite government cut-backs.

We are hoping women from other lands who are attending the Summer Institute on Gender and Development at St. Mary's University will join us for a session on Global Feminism.

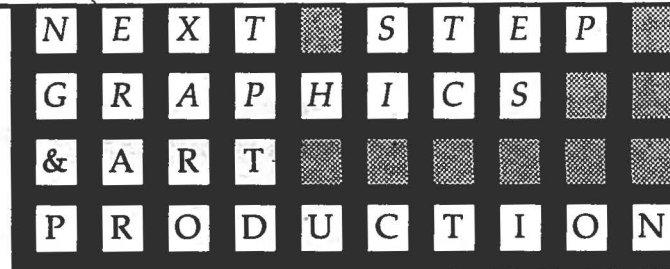
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902 422-6654

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Any woman wishing more information
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Please leave a message with "Norman",
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and a real live woman will get back to you.

Lesbian
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Pride '89
"Right
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Proud"

June 23-July 2, 1989

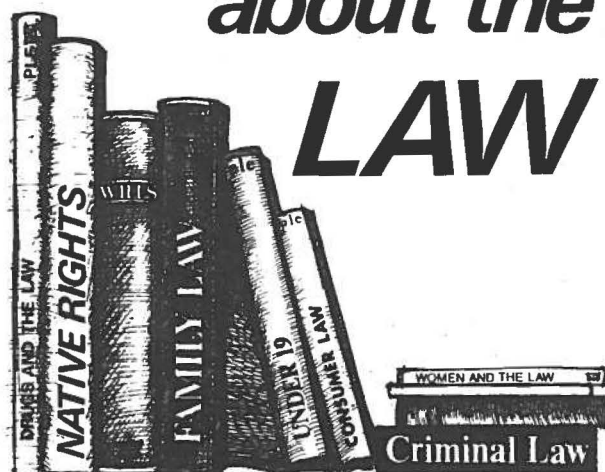
Join in the fight for our rights, the expression of our lifestyles
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For more information, contact
Laurie Alexander
Atlantic Canada Studies
Gorsebrook Research
Institute
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(902) 420-5668

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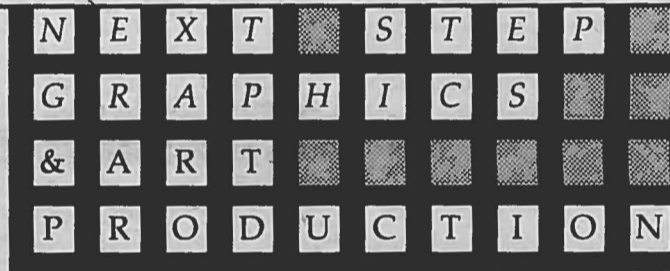
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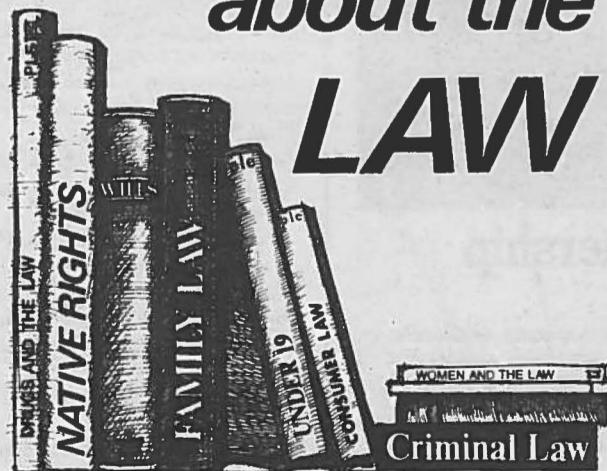
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For more information, contact
Laurie Alexander
Atlantic Canada Studies
Gorsebrook Research
Institute
Saint Mary's University
Halifax, N.S.
B3H 3C3
(902) 420-5668

BOOKS
for
by
and
about

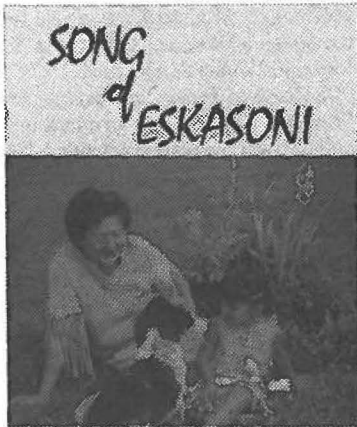
Compiled by Jocelyne Marchand

Canadian Book Information Centre tells us about new book releases

Women and Counter Power
edited by Yolande Cohen

This landmark collection of essays by scholars and activists compares the experiences of women in various countries, both historically and currently. By representing the experiences of groups of women living in different countries under different political regimes, the book presents not only the historical importance of women's struggle, but also its contradictions and ambivalence.

0-921689-10-1, \$19.95
Black Rose Books



Song of Eskasoni, More Poems of Rita Joe
Rita Joe

This is the long-awaited second collection by popular Micmac poet, Rita Joe. Her poems celebrate a culture and a way of life, from the early history and lifestyle of the Micmac to issues facing the Micmac today. Many of her poems are about the importance of the family, her relationship to the land, relations between the Micmac and other cultures and about what the future holds.

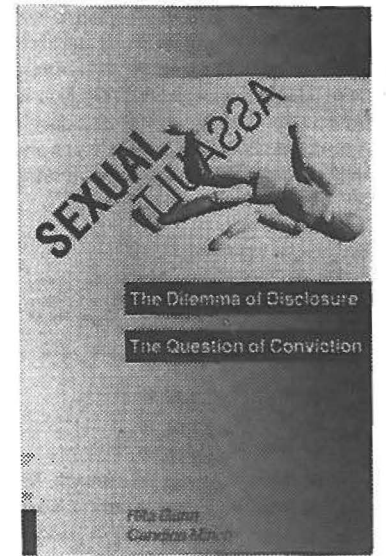
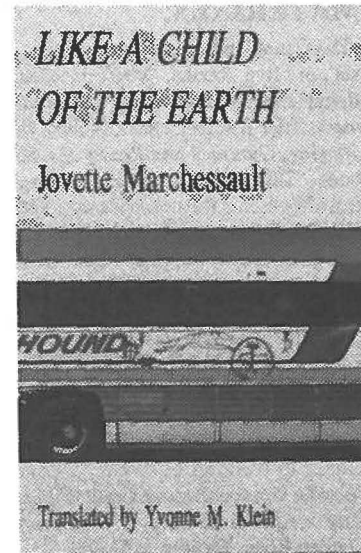
0-920304-85-0, \$9.95
Ragweed Press

Like a Child of the Earth

Jovette Marchessault
Translated by Yvonne M. Klein

A translation of the first volume of the author's autobiographical trilogy. It is a unique, lyrical, frequently surreal interior journey which carries the reader in the belly of a great Greyhound from Mexico across all America. Marchessault's voice is profoundly North American, and her vision encompasses the tragic and glorious history of the entire continent.

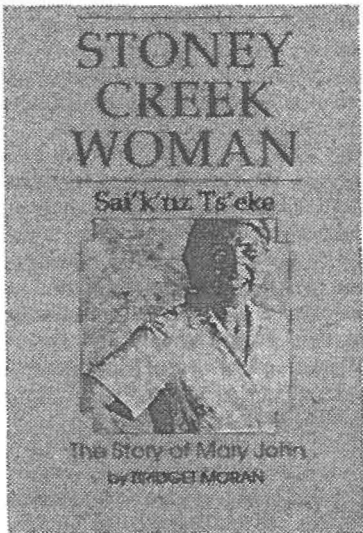
0-88922-261-4, \$11.95
Talonbooks



Sexual Assault: The Dilemma of Disclosure, the Problem of Conviction
Rita Gunn and Candice Minch

This book presents, for the first time, the most comprehensive data yet available on sexual assault in Canada. It examines the social and legal responses to sexual assault. The authors provide a framework with which to understand how a power imbalance in a patriarchal system results in violence against women.

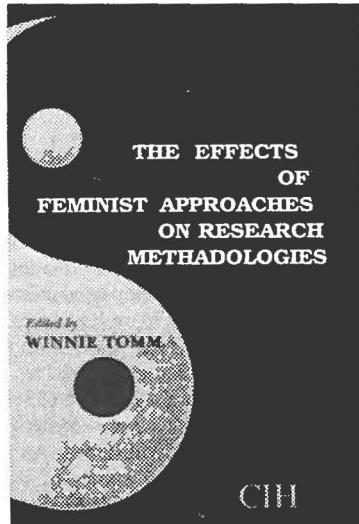
0-88755-618-3, \$12.95
University of Manitoba Press



Stoney Creek Woman, The Story of Mary John
Bridget Moran

This is the extraordinary life story of Mary John, a Native mother of twelve, member of the Carrier Indian Tribe living of the Stoney Creek Reserve in northern B.C. As told to Bridget Moran, she recounts the hardships endured by her people- racism, sickness, poverty, and her personal struggle to rise above not only these indignities, but those she face as an independent Native woman as well. Her story is journey of hope and of personal and cultural survival.

0-88978-197-4, \$9.95
Tillacum Library
(a division of Arsenal Pulp Press)

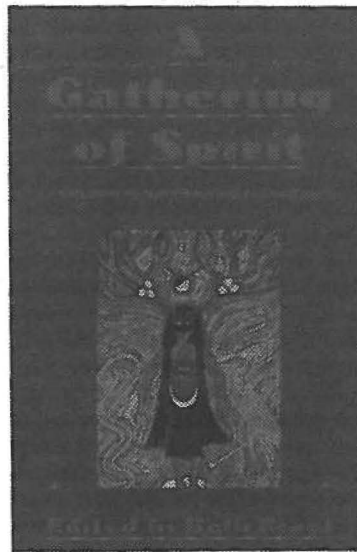


The Effects of Feminist Approaches on Research Methodologies
Winnie Tomm

A thought provoking collection of essays by leading feminist authors exploring feminist approaches to research in twelve academic disciplines. They look at the purpose of knowledge and the issue of whose knowledge is communicated in academic research.

0-88920-986-3, \$17.95

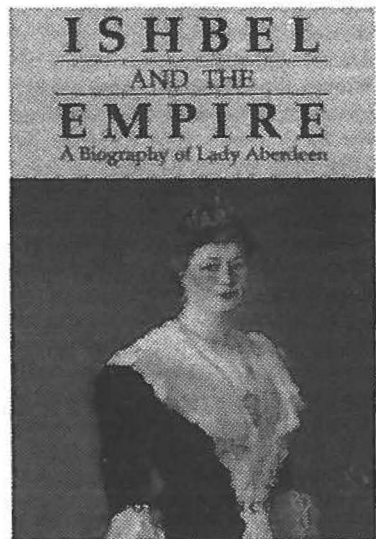
Wilfred Laurier University Press



A Gathering of Spirit
Beth Brant

Native women from over forty native nations in Canada and the United States explore a variety of issues and themes: identity, history, work celebration and parenting. They speak through poignant short stories, autobiographies, prose letters and illustrations.

0-88961-135-1, \$12.95
Women's Press



Ishbel and the Empire
Doris French

This is the warmly human biography of Lady Ishbel, Countess of Aberdeen, who came to Canada in 1893, as the wife of Lord Aberdeen, newly appointed Governor General. Founder of the Victorian Order of Nurses, she had a strong sense of mission, an irrepressible interest in politics, and a fund of energy few could match.

1-55002-038-2, \$16.95
Dundurn Press



Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black
bell hooks

In this book, bell hooks is as strong and uncompromising as ever but it is also much more personal. She writes about the meaning of feminist consciousness in daily life and about self-recovery, about overcoming white- and male-supremacy, and about intimate relationships, exploring the point where the public and private meet.

0-921284-09-8, \$12.95
Between the Lines

All of these books can be purchased from your favourite bookseller. For more information, contact the Canadian Book Information Centre nearest you.

In the Maritimes, CBIC is at 1741 Barrington St, 4th Floor, Halifax, B3J 2S4 (902) 420-0688.

The National office is at 260 King St East, Toronto M5A 1K3 (416) 362-6555.

The Western office is at 1622 West 7th Ave Vancouver, B6J 1S5 (604) 734-2011.

The Prairies office is at 100 Arthur St Suite 205, Winnipeg R3B 1B3 (204) 943-3767

Far East Books & Supplies

are you interested in:
health alternatives, women's spirituality,
tarot, I Ching, magic & mayhem?

Drop by 1649 Barrington St., 4th floor

Halifax Tai Chi Association
1649 Barrington Street, 4th Floor,
Halifax, N.S.

Looking for ways to:

- Reduce stress?
- Improve your health?
- Learn self-defence?

TRY TAI CHI!

New Beginner Classes
starting in June

For more information, call 422-8142

Taoist Meditation also offered
A registered charity

Notices/Calendar

PLEASE NOTE: We think the calendar and notices are important parts of Pandora. We like to think it helps keep women across the network informed about what is happening in the community. But it is a LOT OF WORK to try and keep tabs on everything that is going on. PLEASE... won't you call and let us know the dates of important events? Call Pandora at 454-4977.

Notices

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

•Women Employment Outreach has moved to 5639 Spring Garden Road, 3rd floor (above Valu Fair) in Halifax. WEO offers free employment counselling services to women including workshops on resume writing, interview skills, and the hidden job market. Individual counselling is also available to women on improving their chances at getting better jobs through upgrading and skill training. Four-part pre-employment workshops for women start the first Tuesday of every month, 9:30 - 11:30. For more information call 422-8023.

•CUSO has been asked to recruit a documentalist for the Manuela Ramos Women's Movement in Lima Peru. This is a two-year placement beginning in October. For more information contact CUSO, Selection Desk, 135 Rideau St., Ottawa, Ont, K1N 9K
•Women who applied for positions with the United States Information Agency, the United States International Communications Agency or the Voice of America during the period October 9, 1974 to November 16, 1984 may be eligible for compensation due to a successful class action suit against those companies for sex discrimination. If you think you may be eligible, contact Webster & Fredrickson, Attorneys at Law, Suite 300, 1819 H Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006 (202) 659-8510.

CLASSIFIED:

•Working woman with child seeks another woman to buy 2 unit dwelling in downtown Dartmouth. Phone 861-2599 after 6.

•Housemate wanted for shared house. \$100-\$200 per month plus utilities. Available June 1 and July 1. Non-smoking lesbian positive women. Call 429-3561.

•Roommate wanted to share large house in Dartmouth with two wonderful women. Comfortable, homey atmosphere. \$240 per month plus utilities. Includes parking, washer/dryer and other amenities. Close to #1 bus route and ferry service. Available July 1, 1989. Phone 466-3493 evenings.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

•Fireweed's weird writing collective is looking for material for their special innovative writing issue: fiction, theory, graphics, rap, dub, poetry, photo, reviews, etc. Deadline June 30. Include self-addressed, stamped envelope. Contact Fireweed, P.O. Box 279 Stn B, Toronto, Ont., M5T 2W2.

•Playwrights' Workshop Montreal is looking for women playwrights and

women writers who may be interested in writing for the stage. Contact Svetlana Zylina, P.O. Box 604, Postal Station Placed'Armes, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 3H8, (514) 843-3685.

•A Directory of Canadian Women Specializing in Global Survival Policy Issues is being prepared. Ideas for project development and help with funding would be welcome. Contact Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg, Project Co-ordinator at Canadian Council for International Co-operation, 1 Nicholas Street 3rd Floor, Ottawa, Ont, K1N 7B7, (613) 236-4547.

PUBLISHED MATERIALS:

•The Canadian Breast Cancer Series, a set of five books, *Understanding Breast Cancer, Diagnoses and Treatment, After Breast Cancer, A Time for Sharing, Glossary and Resources*, \$5/book, \$20 series including postage from Women's Resource Centre, YM-YWCA, Downtown Branch, 100-209 Vaughan St., Winnipeg, Man. R3B 2N8.

•Halifax City Regional Library has published *The city, the province, the country, the world: How to be an effective citizen*. This list includes information about materials on how the government works, how to research, guides to working effectively around specific topics and more. From Halifax City Regional Library, 5381 Spring Garden Road, Halifax, B3J 1E9.

•A *Particular Class of Women*, an oral history about strippers from the sex workers' perspective, is now available from Lazara Publications, Box 2269, VMPO, Vancouver, BC V6B 3W2. Price \$7.95 plus \$1 postage.

•The Women's Research Centre, 101-2246 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V6K 2E4 (604) 734-0485 is offering the following books: *Just Give Us the Money: A Discussion of Wage Discrimination and Pay Equity*, \$9.00; *In Women's Interests: Feminist Activism and Institutional Change*, \$3.00; *Action Research for Women's Groups*, \$4.50; *Women and the Economy Kit*, \$4.50; *Evaluation Guide for Women's Groups*, \$7.00; *Brief on Wife Assault and Protection for Battered Women*, \$2.00; *Feminist Action, Institutional Reaction: Response to Wife Assault*, \$6.00; *Study of Protection for Battered Women*, \$8.00; *Sexual Harassment of Working Women in British Columbia*, \$1.00; *How to Study Your Own Community - Research from the Perspective of Women*, \$2.00; *Battered and Blamed - A Report on Wife Assault from the perspective of battered women*, \$6.00; *Family Violence - Is it a Woman's Problem?* \$2.00; *An Analysis of Ideological Structures and How Women are Excluded*, \$2.00.

•Vancouver Women's Health Collective has just published a new series of books: *Talking About Periods; Avoiding Pregnancy; Miscarriage; Infertility; and Women Talking About Health*. Books are \$12 each or all five for \$55. (\$8.50 if you are un/underemployed). Include \$2 for 1 book, \$2.50 for 2; \$3 for 3; \$4 for 4-5 books for postage. Contact Vancouver Women's Health Collective, #302-1720 Grant St, Vancouver, BC V5L 2Y7.

•The government of Canada has just published its "Directory of Federal Government Programs and Services for Women." This directory includes information about programs like employment & retraining, educational assistance, social services, child care,

etc. Free from The Honourable Barbara McDougall, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, 151 Sparks St, Room 1005, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1C3
•"A Guide to Provincial Funding for Women's Centres" and an education/employment workshop kit titled *Focusing Forward* have just been published by the Nova Scotia branch of the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CLOW). These materials are available free to women's groups from the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

EVENTS & GROUPS:

•You are invited to the book-ordering committee meetings at Red Herring Co-op Books to advise and suggest book titles in areas of feminist theory, gay and lesbian, ecology and spirituality. Phone 422-5087 for more info.

•Third Place Transition House has recently opened in Truro. Contact The Third Place Transition House, P.O. Box 1681, Truro, N.S. B2N 5Z5 (902) 893-3232.

•To mark the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, CLOW-NS has applied for a Secretary of State Grant to research and publish an Anthology of the History of Women's Groups in Nova Scotia. If you would like information about your group included in the history, or if you know of any defunct groups, please call Linda Roberts at 422-8023 or 455-8013 or Barbara Cottrell at 423-9654.

•Voice of Women Nova Scotia is looking for more women to become involved in the peace movement. They specifically want women who will work on the co-ordinating committee, the newsletter, distribution of press releases, as well as administration. Contact Marion Kerans, 425-3573.

•The Transition House Association holds regular weekly support groups for abused women in Charlottetown, Montague and Summerside, P.E.I. For info contact 892-0895. Collect calls accepted.

•Outreach Abuse Prevention is a non-profit organization providing seminars and workshops that focus on sexual abuse prevention for all ages. Educational materials, books and a newsletter can be ordered. For a free catalogue contact Outreach Abuse Prevention, P.O. Box 1271, Stn B, Oshawa, Ont., L1J 5Z1 (416) 728-3163.

•North Branch Women's Group meets every Wednesday 10 am - 12 noon, Halifax City Regional Library, North Branch, Gottingen Street.

•LAIG (Latin American Information Group) meets 7:30 pm the first Tuesday of each month at the Oxfam-Deveric office, Veith House, Halifax.

•Coalition Against Apartheid meets at 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month at the Oxfam-Deveric office, Veith House, Halifax.

•Listen to the Dinner Party Soundtrack (women's music in a feminist context) on CKDU 97.5 FM at 8 pm Sundays.

•Listen to Women's Time (news and interviews about women's issues) on CKDU 97.5 FM, Thursdays at 5:45 during the Evening Affair. Any community women's groups who would like to announce their events, call 424-6469

•CKDU: Women's Time needs volunteers to help out with programming. Contact Jennifer at 424-6479 or drop in to the station at Dalhousie University Student Union Building. You don't

need to be a student.

•Anderson House Thrift Store, open Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm., is located next to the Food Bank in Charlottetown. Donations of used clothing and household articles are appreciated. Call 892-9557.

PHONE LINES

•Victims of Spousal Abuse has a telephone line where you can reach a friendly voice, anonymously if desired. The volunteers are survivors of spousal abuse. Call any time, any day, 462-6228.

•The Pictou County Women's Centre in New Glasgow, N.S. has established a Rape Line. This line offers confidentiality, anonymity, information, and peer counseling for female victims of sex abuse, incest, and rape. The line is staffed by volunteers. Phone 752-2233.

•The Abortion Information Referral Service 422-4123. Sponsored by CARAL/Halifax.

•Dial-a-Law: a toll-free, non-profit service which offers taped information through the phone. General legal information on more than 75 topics. Hours: Mon-Fri, 10 am to 2 pm. 420-9000.

•GAE has an info line on gay and lesbian events and groups. Call 454-6551.

•We at Pandora don't know everything that goes on in the Maritimes. Any woman out there who knows of an event you think others would like to know about, please write a short piece (500 words or less) to report on it. We would like you to use Pandora to network with other women. Let us hear about what is going on out there.

Calendar

June 6
Red Herring book-ordering committee, 7 pm, all interested readers welcome, 1555 Granville St. Halifax, call 422-5087 for more info.

June 7
Demonstration: People's Closing of the Department of Environment, 11:45 AM at park opposite VIA station/NS Hotel, Corner of Barrington & South St., Halifax. Contact 752-5108 or 485-8202.

June 9
Oxfam/Deveric will hold an open house at 3115 Veith Street, Halifax. Call Marian at 454-4874 for info.

June 19
Public Meeting to decide the future of Pandora, all interested women welcome to attend, Veith House, Veith Street, Halifax, 7:30 pm, Call 454-4977 for info (leave a message)

June 23-24
CLOW Conference: Celebrating our Herstory at Saint Mary's University, Loyola Bldg, Halifax. Contact B. Cottrell 423-9654 for info.

June 23-July 2

Lesbian and Gay Pride week. Many events planned. Contact 423-7129 or 429-7922 for info.

June 24

March & Rally to mark South Africa Freedom Week. Assemble at Halifax Public Library at 12:30 pm, rally at Victoria Park, for info about or to help plan other events that week call Sherri Cline 420-5419 (w) or 422-4606 (h).

June 25

Halifax Women's Centre planning meeting, 2:00 pm. Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, Halifax. Call 425-1340 for info.

July 4

Red Herring Co-op Bookstore book ordering meeting, 7 pm, 1555 Granville St, Halifax.

July 7-15

Pilgram Warrior Training, week of story-telling, guided meditation, psychodrama, music, play & ritual to increase skills in spiritual journeying, and celebrate personal power as women. Send \$25 deposit immediately to: Full Moon Rising, 114#4 Prince Street, Charlottetown, PEI, C1A 4R4, Call Jan Devine for info 892-1491.

August 19

Nova Scotia Women's Music Festival. Contact Carol at 477-9771 or Susan at 425-0631 or write Nova Scotia Women's Music Festival, P.O. Box 63, Pictou, N.S. B0K 1H0.

September 1-4

Justice and Peacemaking for All Ages, weekend event for those who work for justice and peace from a faith perspective. Children, teens, adults and seniors welcome. Tatamagouche Centre, Registration \$25, accommodation \$35 (or camp). For info call (902) 657-2231.

September 28-29

Intensive workshop on incest counselling for clinical practitioners, with Sandra Butler, author of *Conspiracy of Silence*, Cost \$150, call Terry Mitchell (902) 675-2541 for info.

September 28-30

Women, Community and Culture 9th Atlantic Canada Workshop at St. Mary's University, Halifax. Contact Laurie Alexander, Atlantic Canada Studies, Gorsebrook Research Institute, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, N.S. B3H 3C3 or call 420-5668.

October 4-8

Annual conference of Association of Women's Music and Culture (AW-MAC) in Albuquerque, New Me. ico. For info, contact 2124 Kittredge St #104, Berkeley, CA 94704.

October 11, 1989

National Coming Out Day: Lobby for lesbian/gay rights; contribute time or money to a lesbian/gay organization; wear a button; light a candle at sunset; accept yourself!

November 17-19

Popular Theatre—A Tool for Community Groups, a residential workshop, Tatamagouche Centre, Cost \$130. Call 657-2231 for info.

Pandora needs
your support
come to our
public meeting
on June 19th