JUNE1995

The attack on CAP...page 6

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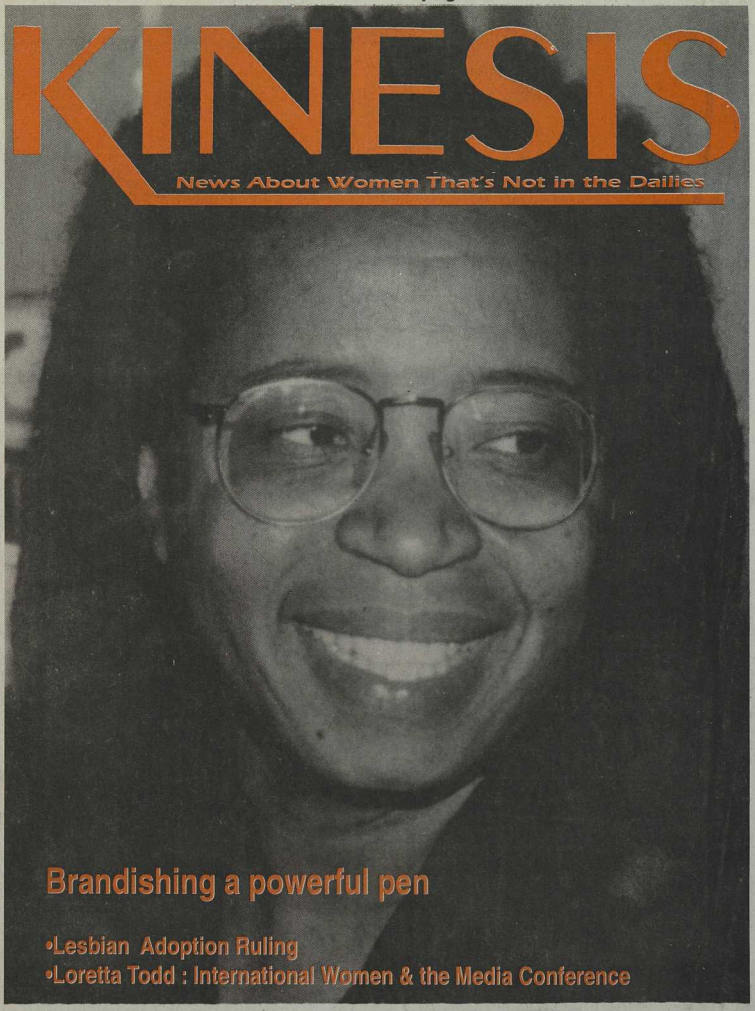
KINESIS

News About Women That's Not in the Dailies



Brandishing a powerful pen

- Lesbian Adoption Ruling
- Loretta Todd : International Women & the Media Conference

INSIDE

KINESIS

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Vancouver, BC V5L 2Y6
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Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Our next Writers' Meeting is**June 6** for the **July/ August** issue, and **August 1** for the **September** issue, at 7 pm at *Kinesis*. All women welcome even if you don't have experience.

Kinesis is published ten times a year by the Vancouver Status of Women. Its objectives are to be a non-sectarian feminist voice for women and to work actively for social change, specifically combatting sexism, racism,classism, homophobia, ableism, and imperialism. Views expressed in *Kinesis* are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect VSW policy. All unsigned material is the responsibility of the *Kinesis* Editorial Board.

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Fatima Jaffer, Lissa Geller, wendy lee kenward, Agnes Huang, Robyn Hall

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SUBMISSIONS
Women and girls are welcome to make submissions. We reserve the right to edit and submission does not guarantee publication. If possible, submissions should be typed, double spaced and must be signed and include an address, telephone number and SASE. *Kinesis* does not accept poetry or fiction. Editorial guidelines are available upon request.

DEADLINES
All submissions must be received in the month preceding publication. Note: Jul/ Aug and Dec/Jan are double issues.
Features and reviews: 10th
News: 15th
Letters and Bulletin Board: 18th
Display advertising (camera ready): 18th
(design required): 16th

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KINESIS

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means movement

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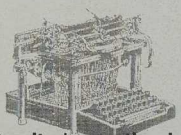

Next writer's meeting is on Tuesday, June 6th at 7pm at VSW #301-1720 Grant Street

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May was a hectic month here at *Kinesis*, as we had a lot of things happening—new staff, some illnesses, major surgery, and just a few stressful times. But we survived. So many things could have gone wrong this issue...but didn't. Most of this is thanks to the hard work and commitment of so many women.

We did manage to bring you lots of stories we think are important, but as usual—with every month, with every year—there were a thousand more stories that make it into the pages of *Kinesis*.

We will be trying to follow up on many of them in upcoming issues. For now here's a sampling of what's been going on.

As *Kinesis* goes to press, women are still deciding whether or not to go to the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in September. Women are concerned because the NGO forum has been moved to Huairou, 40 kilometres away from the official government meeting site *[see* Kinesis *May 1995]*. Guess the Beijing government thought that having 30,000 women activist descend on Beijing was just a bit too much. And what are the bets that the rest of the world governments aren't too upset about the move.

After meeting in New York, women with NGO forum facilitating committee decided to give the Chinese government and the UN an ultimatum—unless the NGO forum is moved back to a more suitable location, they may press for cancellation of the conference. The facilities in Huairou are not accessible to women with disabilities, and finding transportation to Beijing—where the government delegates are meeting—is difficult. We'll give you the updated word on Beijing next month.

Closer to home, lesbians and gays have won yet another court case. An Ontario trial court recently ruled that the provincial law preventing lesbians and gays from adopting their non-biological children they are already raising is unconstitutional *[see story, page 3]*.

In other court matters, the Supreme Court of Canada is keeping pretty busy these days. As *Kinesis* goes to press, we've learned that they're just about to release decisions in *Egan and Nesbit*, and in *Thibaudeau*.

Egan and Nesbit, two gay men who have lived together for over 46 years, are challenging the Old Age Security Act arguing that it violates the equality rights provisions of the Charter because it offers spousal pensions only to "heterosexual married and common law partners." This will be the first time the Supreme Court is dealing with whether sexual orientation is a prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Charter, and the definition of a "spouse."

The Supreme Court's ruling in Thibaudeau will be of great significance to a lot of women. Suzanne Thibaudeau is challenging the income tax law requirement that she pay taxes on child support she receives while her ex-husband gets a tax break *[see* Kinesis *June 1994]*. We'll tell you about the outcome next month.

In case you haven't heard, Lloyd Axworthy has shelved his plans for a two-tiered UI system. Looks like the pressure from women's, anti-poverty, and labour groups finally got to him. Axworthy had been saying that repeat users—such as seasonal workers—should get a lower amount of unemployment insurance. Instead he wants to offer them job counselling and some skills training.

Basically, what he's saying is that seasonal workers are abusing the UI system...what he seems to have forgotten is that his government has had a big hand in ensuring that there are not enough full-time, full-year jobs with liveable wages in this country. And also, he seems to have forgotten that his government promised to create jobs. We're getting really tired of waiting for the liberals to keep their promises.

And just because the liberal government has backed down a little on targetting unemployed people, doesn't mean they've eased up any on their reactionary corporatist agenda. Nope, the liberals are still going ahead with lots of their "deficit cutting" measures that particularly target women, poor people, working class people and people of colour *[see stories, page 5 and 6]*. Sigh...will it ever end?

Well, that's about all we have space for this month. When next *Kinesis* goes to press with our July/August issue, we'll be bringing you lots of articles and information on new reproductive technologies and the politics of choice. And we'll also be celebrating a number of anniversaries. Whose anniversaries, you ask? Well, you'll just have to wait and read.

So until then, have happy times in the sunshine...

As we begin every edition of Inside *Kinesis*, here's a weather update from Vancouver. As *Kinesis* goes to press...oops that's for another column...the sky is blue and the sun is shining in Vancouver. It's very beautiful outside. But here inside *Kinesis*, it's very cold because unfortunately, we don't have control over the thermostat. But hey, at least we'll have one day off to play in the sun before we start again to bring you all the news about women that's not in the dailies.

We do have some happy news to report from inside *Kinesis*—our dear and beloved outgoing editor, Fatima Jaffer, is recovering comfortably (and somewhat restfully) from her surgery. And even from her hospital bed, Fatima wouldn't let *Kinesis* down—she did her best to make sure the new editor had her support and the benefit of her morphine-laden wisdom.

Fatima's doctors tell us that we'll have to wait at least two more weeks before we can have her back on the Editorial Board or pile her up with lots of stories to write...good thing we're patient. We're just really glad that Fatima's doing well.

This issue of *Kinesis* would not have happened without the tremendous effort and support of a lot of women (or at least it wouldn't have happened without our new editor getting an ulcer). Thanks to Fatima Jaffer, Janisse Browning, Nancy Pollak and Wendy Frost for their help editing the pages of *Kinesis*.

And an amazing thank you to all the women who came in...with minimal begging...during production to help out writing, proofing, and with layout.

And a final thank you to Ed Boarder wendy lee kenward for bringing us healthy things to eat—especially since some of us often forget to eat during production...our moms thank you.

Hey do you notice the new snazzy look on the pages of *Kinesis*? Yes, there's lots more graphics and lots more white space. We're just thrilled about it too! And do you know who's fault...er, brilliance...it is? ...our new production coordinator, Laiwan.

Laiwan is well known around this town for her work designing other publications like *Front Magazine* and the arts pages of *Angles*, and for her work as a multi-disciplinary artist (some of her work is currently showing in Seattle...so go check it out).

In less than one month, Laiwan has revolutionalized our production room and our computer systems. She introduced us to the world of "scanning" and is responsible for all the cool graphic images you see throughout *Kinesis*, and she brought in a computer monitor that doesn't hurt our eyes—Thanks to Moira Keigher for the loaner. What can we say, but a big welcome to *Kinesis*, Laiwan.

You may have noticed that Sur Mehat's name appears twice on this issue's masthead. Sur has been working at *Kinesis* as our typesetter for the over two years...and now she's taking over our as our advertising coordinator. We're positive Sur will do a great job with our ads.

Oh by the way, here's something you may not know about Sur...she's also *Kinesis'* resident poet (check out the back page and page 17).

This month, we got two new members of the Editorial Board: Robyn Hall and Alex Hennig. Robyn has been volunteering with *Kinesis* as a writer and in production for almost three years, and we've now been able to convince her that the Ed Board is lots of fun. Alex is a regular production volunteer and she's a whiz on PageMaker. And as her first task as an Ed Board member, she managed to get us a waxer on permanent loan (ours broke last month). Thanks. And welcome on board, Robyn and Alex.

Welcome to our new writers this month: Andrea Imada, Gomi Puri, Vanaja Dhruvarajan, Loretta Todd, Sandra McPherson, Beckylane, and the De Poonani Posse collective. If you're interested in joining the list of women writing for *Kinesis*, drop by our next writers' meeting on Tuesday, June 6 at 7pm at our office. Or if you can't make it, give Agnes a call at 255-5499.

Welcome also to our new production volunteers: Grace Wandolo and Holly MacKenzie. Grace and Holly were busy away working in the office when we approached them with a "please, please, please proof these..." (hey, that rhymes). If you too want to join in on all the production fun, give Laiwan a call at 255-5499. Production for the July/August issue will be from June 22 to 27.

One last thing from Inside *Kinesis*...usually at this time, we tell you all about our fabulous, fun-filled annual *Kinesis* benefit (usually held in June). But this year, because of lots of things happening at *Kinesis*, the Ed Board has decided to postpone the benefit until sometime in September or October. We'll let you know next issue exactly when it's going to happen. Stay tuned.

Well that's it for this edition of Inside *Kinesis*. We hope you have a great month! Bye for now.

THANKS

VANCOUVER • STATUS • OF • WOMEN

Our thanks to Vancouver Status of Women members and donors who support us year 'round with memberships and donations. Our appreciation to the following supporters who became members, renewed their memberships or donated to VSW in May:

Anonymous * Pierrette Boily * Kate Braid * Eleanor Brockenshire * Karen Clark * Melanie Conn * Sharon Costello * Karen Egger * Karen Evans * Frances Friessen * Stan Gabriel * K. Heinrich * Cheryl Heinzl * Barbara Lebrasseur * Deborah Nilsen * Neil Power * Sandra Sharp * Janet Shaw * Mary-Woo Sims * Kay Sinclair * Sheilah Thompson * Gale Tyler (Recommending Women Club) * Lynne Werker

A very special thank you this month to some dedicated volunteers:

Holly and **Heather** have been answering the phones for more than a few months now - providing information, support and referrals for women from all over the Lower Mainland. We are very appreciative of their dedication!

Thanks to all those who helped make Single Mom's Day in the Park a great success. Thanks to all the volunteers and staff who put so much energy, time, enthusiasm and ideas into making it all happen. A big thank you to **Co-op Radio, Coop Food Store, Norman's Fruit and Salad Market**, and **Purdy's Chocolates** for their donations.

Finally, a huge thanks to the fastest bunch of envelope-stuffers in town who finished our recent mass mailing in record time!

Amy (who also single-handedly accomplished our recent Bulletin mailing) * Theresa * Heidi * Holly * Balbi * Andrea * Grace * Miche

Ontario court ruling on lesbian adoption:

My mothers are lesbians

by Lissa Geller

After years of struggling for equal rights before the law, lesbians and gays won a small but important battle in Ontario last month. Four lesbians have been awarded the right to adopt under an Ontario court ruling which found that denying lesbian and gay parents the right to adopt children they were already raising was not justifiable. The court found that the section of the Child and Family Services Act of Ontario which prevented lesbians from adopting was unconstitutional.

The case involved four couples who all had been with the children since their births. Although the biological mothers were all the legal parents of the children, their partners were not considered spouses and, under the law, were not eligible to adopt the children. The restriction meant that the non-biological parents' rights were severely curtailed.

For example, they could not sign legal documents affecting their children and could be prevented from having access to their children in hospital. As well, in the event of a breakdown in the couple's relationship, non-biological parents had no legal standing with respect to the children they co-parented. They could be denied access and visitation rights on the whim of the biological parent.

"We take our kids to school as two parents, we go to family celebrations as two parents...we even have family memberships at the zoo and the museum... (This decision allows us) to know the children we love are ours forever," says Alison Kemper, one of the mothers involved in the case.

Lesbian and gay human rights groups were elated by the ruling. "Our community has been vindicated by the court. We are full citizens of this country with full constitutional rights as working people and as parents," says Susan Ursel, a Toronto lawyer who spoke on behalf of the Foundation for Equal Families. The Foundation was formed in Ontario in 1994 after the defeat of a bill that would have extended employee benefits to same-sex couples in that province.

Brendan Crawley, a spokesperson for the Ontario Attorney General, suggested that the ruling may not have immediate ramifications for other lesbians and gay men wishing to adopt children. Crawley noted that the decision was made at the lowest court level and "really only deals with the four couples involved. It doesn't bind other judges or other levels of court."

Nonetheless, there is nothing to prevent other lesbians and gay men from applying to adopt children under the current law, although they would likely also face a court challenge.

The Ontario court's decision may yet have a positive impact on the fight for same-sex spousal benefits, says Laurie Pawlitza who, along with Judy Parrack, represented the couples involved, noted that "judges are frequently very influenced by decisions of other judges particularly when there is a significant amount of evidence..."

Despite that, University of Ottawa law professor Cynthia Peterson doubts there will be a flood of victories on spousal benefits. "The decision definitely promotes equality for lesbians and gay men but...you still have to put the burden on the government to justify any legislation," says Peterson. What would help more would be a political decision by the government to change the legislation to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Chris Phibbs, one of the women involved in the case, noted that "the courts instead of the people we elect [are now leading Ontario]." This has led to a slow process of legal battles where lesbians and gays have usually won their cases but only after substantial cost and time. Although recent rulings have favoured the extension of rights of lesbians and gays, Brenda Crossman, a family law professor at York University's Osgoode Hall, is quick to point out that a political solution in the near future is unlikely. "Every [government] who has moved forward [to extend lesbian and gay rights] has basically chickened out on this issue," says Crossman.

In British Columbia, the government recently changed its adoption rules to allow single lesbians and gay men to adopt healthy children. In the past, provisions allowed them only to adopt children with special needs.

However, they are still not allowed to adopt as couples or to adopt their partner's biological children. The government may be poised to make changes regarding this legislation which would allow for adoptions as couples, but any reforms will be subject to a full debate in the legislature and that may doom them to defeat like their counterpart in Ontario.

Lissa Geller is a regular contributor to Kinesis.

Silent vigil for Linda Williams

Linda Cyr-Williams, a mother of four children, was murdered by her husband on March 21, 1993. She was 30 years old. Her husband, Glenn Williams, received a five year sentence for the murder. Williams is eligible to apply for full parole after serving 18 months of his sentence. He can reasonably expect to win parole after serving two-thirds of his sentence, that is, after serving 40 months.

Based on previous sentences Canadian courts have meted out to men who murder their partners, Williams' five year sentence was deemed appropriate by Vancouver's Crown Counsel. His defense attorney argued for a sentence of 1000 hours of community service. It is expected that Williams, an engineer, will apply for custody of Linda's children after he is released.

Fair Justice, a South Surrey/White Rock women's group, was formed in outraged reaction to Williams' sentence. In mid- May, the group held a silent vigil outside the main provincial courthouse in Vancouver to protest against lenient sentences given to men who kill their partners. The vigil was attended by Linda's mother, Marta Arsenault-Cyr and her sister, France Cyr. According to Fair Justice, in 1990, an average of two Canadian women per week were murdered by their husbands or male partners.

Photo by Dorothy Elias.

Feminist magazine closes:

Losing Herspective

by Faith Jones

Mary Billy, the dynamo who virtually single-handedly edited, produced and published a feminist creative writing magazine, has decided to call it a day. *Herspectives*, a quarterly produced in Billy's Squamish, BC home for the past six years, stopped publishing as of May 1 this year.

"When I look at that stack of magazines I am very proud of what we accomplished together, and I'm sure that all those wonderful, wise, strong healers and peacemakers will find other ways to get their work out there," Billy wrote when she announced the closure.

Herspectives published essays, short stories, poetry, art and graphics by women. Billy says her main editorial policy was simply to allow women to express themselves. Aside from a few guiding principles—no violence, racism, homophobia, *et cetera*—the magazine allowed a variety of viewpoints to be put forward without editorial changes. "We had only one rule, to break all the rules," says Billy.

Billy says both money and health reasons forced the closure, not because she's in bad health but because after

years of illness she is finally healthy enough to get a paying job. For six years the magazine has taken a great deal of her time and energy, but has never paid her a living wage. The magazine survived on subscriptions, a few advertisers, and donations. All the writing and artwork was donated.

Billy started *Herspectives* after talking to her friend, writer Gert Beadle. Beadle's self-published work was selling well at feminist gatherings, but she couldn't get a publisher interested in it. Billy and Beadle together drew up some notes for a magazine. A few months later, Billy sent out letters describing her vision to 40 or 50 people, and received 8 paid subscriptions in response. "That's what we started on," she says. For the first few years, Beadle had a regular column.

In spite of the hard work and lack of pay, Billy says creating a magazine was a truly fulfilling experience. "What kept me going was getting letters from women saying they hadn't thought they would ever find a magazine like it," she says. She says she would do it again in a second if she could figure out a way to get paid for her work. She says it could easily have become a monthly, based on the amount of quality material that was submitted.

One important resource Billy continues to work on is the Femicide List. This is a list of names and synopses of cases of females murdered by men in Canada. There are over 600 cases listed, most of them from within the last five years. Billy plans to continue to add to this list, and invites people to share information with her. Friends and relatives of murdered women can also write to make sure their loved ones' names are on the list. *(see address below)*

In addition to the Femicide List, Billy also has some back issues of *Herspectives* available at $5 each. For now, Billy is looking for work as a resource person on feminist issues, and she plans to spend some time on her own writing. She has a weekly column in a local Squamish paper, and wants to find a publisher for her poetry and short stories. While she is sad at the demise of *Herspectives*, she is also celebrating what the magazine accomplished. "We were an outlet for women who were really saying things, important things," she says.

For more information on the Femicide List or to order back issues of Herspectives, *write to Mary Billy, Box 2047, Squamish, BC, V0N 3G0. Anyone wanting a reply is asked to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.*

Faith Jones is a regular contributor to Kinesis.

Protesting parole hearing of convicted rapist

A call for accountability

by wendy lee kenward

On May 11, 30 people gathered in front of the parole board office in New Westminister, BC to demonstrate against the parole hearing of John Horace Oughton, a convicted rapist.

The demonstration was organized to show support for survivors of Oughton's assaults and to raise public awareness of his crimes and the parole process. The protesters--mostly survivors of Oughton's assaults and their families and friends--also demanded accountability from authorities.

The demonstrators were concerned that the parole office did not inform survivors or the public that Oughton was coming up for parole, and that authorities did not ensure the hearing was accessible. Out of the 60 people who applied to attend the hearing, only 16 were allowed in.

Oughton--known as the "Paper Bag Rapist"--was convicted in 1987 of 14 sexual assaults. However, it is believed that he raped approximately 170 girls and women in the Lower Mainland between June 1977 and May 1985.

Oughton received an indefinite sentence for the sexual assaults and was designated a dangerous offender. Under the criminal code, dangerous offenders are entitled to a parole hearing after one year of incarceration, and every two years after. At this hearing, Oughton was denied parole.

Those who demonstrated at the parole office say Oughton does not even deserve to be considered for parole, and called on authorities to ensure that he remain behind bars for life.

Some of the people who attended Oughton's hearing were concerned about their own safety. After the hearing, they learned that Oughton could have access to their names.

Demonstrators were also concerned that authorities did not inform survivors and the general public that a dangerous offender was having a parole hearing. The demonstration was organized after survivors became aware of Oughton's parole hearing through a column in a local newspaper.

Overall, demonstrators feel the protest was successful in showing support for survivors, and raising awareness around dangerous offenders and the parole process. "A lot of people showed up, and the media response was excellent," says one of the organizers.

wendy lee kenward is a regular volunteer with Kinesis.

The Women's Program of Status of Women Canada-B.C./Yukon Region is inviting local, provincial and territorial women's equality organizations to submit grant proposals in support of action- and change-oriented projects addressing violence against women. Up to $50,000 is available for this initiative.

To be considered, proposals must:

- *aim to contribute to the elimination of violence against women;*
- *directly involve women most affected by the issues being addressed;*
- *draw on the experience and expertise of the diversity of women in BC/Yukon;*
- *be based on a critical analysis of the links between violence and women's socio-economic status;*
- *incorporate strategies to change public and/or private sector policy, procedures and practices; and*
- *clearly identify project outcomes.*

Priority will be given to proposals that are:

- *innovative;*
- *collaborative (ie, involve partnerships with other women's equality organizations and/or mainstream institutions); and*
- *practical.*

**Additional sources of funding must be identified as funding is not available for 100% of costs.*

A two to three page outline of proposed project objectives, activities, costs and outcomes should be submitted by September 20, 1995 to:

Women's Program
Status of Women Canada
P.O. Box 11145
17th Floor, 1055 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6E 2P8

Fax: 666-0212

For further information please contact Mary Clare Zak at 666-2279 or 666-0112 (TTY)

Federal government budget cuts:

Scapegoating immigrants

by Nandita Sharma

Canada's liberal government has further institutionalized discrimination against immigrants and refugees, with a number of measures aimed at "deficit cutting." In reality, the government is scapegoating these communities for 20 years of policies that have caused a revenue crisis but is being called a deficit crisis.

With its latest budget, the federal government introduced a new landing fee for the right to merely apply for landed immigrant status *[see* Kinesis *April 1995]*. The government has also indicated it will require a sponsorship bond from people who want to sponsor family members as immigrants. And the federal government's has said it is looking into privatizing settlement services, which will likely result in user fees for services such as English as a second language (ESL) training.

The federal government's new policies on immigrants and refugees especially targets women, and in particular women from countries in the South. The government's new policies will have a devastating impact on their ability to enter Canada, their independence, and on their well being.

The new head tax

As of February 28, all immigrants and refugees over the age of 19 are required to pay a $975 "landing fee" upon entering Canada, to be considered for landed immigrant status. The government's new head tax is on top of the $500 "processing fee" already in place.

The government expects to make $146 million from the landing fee, which will be channeled directly into the government's general coffers, and not into settlement services for immigrants and refugees.

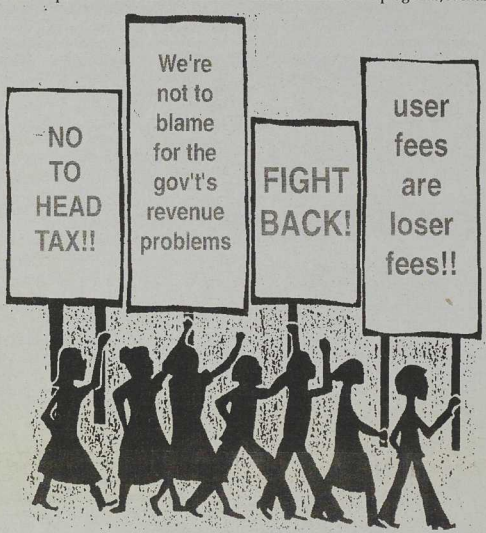
The government has stated that the $975 landing fee is not discriminatory because it applies equally to everyone. But given that we live in a world of great disparities between women and men; between people of colour and white people; between the "Third World" and the "First World", this head tax will make it especially difficult for many women of colour to enter or remain in Canada as permanent resident.

To counter criticism of the head tax, Sergio Marchi, the minister of citizenship and immigration, announced that his government would set up a loan program to ensure that immigrants and refugees would not be denied entry to Canada simply because they cannot afford the landing fee.

To be eligible for a loan, applicants need to meet the "ability to pay" criteria—the same criteria required for any bank loan. Recent reports already indicate that 50 percent of those who have applied for a loan have been turned down—including people already accepted into Canada as convention refugees.

Sponsorship bond

The federal government is also making it more difficult for people to bring in their family members. People who wish to sponsor members to Canada will soon have to put up a cash bond or other guarantee in order to reunite with their families.



The government has already said the bond is a sure thing, they're just deliberating over how much it should be—maybe as much as $20,000. The majority of people coming in under the family class category are women, and the bond will make it even more difficult for women, particularly women of colour, to immigrate to Canada.

If sponsored immigrants receive social assistance (or other services not yet defined), the government would deduct the cost of those services directly out of the posted bond.

For women sponsored under the family class category, the bond will leave them much more dependent on family members. Given the level of violence against all women, taking away their independence is clearly unacceptable. Also, many women who wish to sponsor family members will find that they can no longer do so since few will likely be able to put up $20,000 in advance.

Cutting settlement services

The federal government has also clearly stated that it will no longer provide direct delivery of settlement services for immigrants and refugees. In cutting funding for such services, the government is off loading its responsibility to provinces governments, immigrant settlement agencies, and individual immigrant and refugees themselves.

The federal government's cutback occurs on top of many years of reductions to much needed programs, such as ESL classes and job skills training. Even with government funding, most of these programs have long waiting lists.

Many provincial governments have already said they will not make up for the loss of federal funding. Service agencies—most of whom rely substantially on government funding—will be expected to seek private sources of funding or provide less services.

In addition, there appears to be no mechanism in place to protect immigrants from user fees. Many who work at immigrant and refugee agencies expect that user fees will soon be put into place to cover the cost of the services. There may be no regulation of the amount of user fees required or of the level or quality of service provided.

Introducing user fees for settlement services means that immigrants will be paying twice for much needed resources•—once through paying taxes, and again when they need to access services. For women, who only recently won the right to have access to some of these services, this is a giant leap backwards. As usual, women—who have least access to economic power—will be the last to gain English language and job skills training.

Basically, immigrants will be expected to cover all their own costs of living in Canada, even though they already pay more in taxes than they use in social services. Denying immigrants and refugees public access to programs and services, making them pay for them privately, violates the principles of equality and equity. And placing extra financial burdens on immigrants simply because they use settlement services is illogical, for the entire community benefits - not just the immigrants themselves.

The federal government is clearly pandering to the anti-immigrant hysteria led by the Reform Party which believes that immigrants are a drain on Canadian society, and should be supported by volunteers and their own families.

This of course, means adding to the already incredible responsibilities of women. Many women who are now employed to provide such services are in danger of losing those paid jobs, and while other women will be forced to pick up the slack as volunteers.

Also, we will see greater disparities between the provinces in regards to the quantity and quality of settlement services. But even those provinces which may want to provide a decent level of settlement services will find that they have less money to do so. Less money always means less social services and more of a hardship for women.

As in its attack on social programs, the government is blaming people in Canada for failing social policies while doing nothing to reduce the problems we face. Instead of collecting deferred corporate taxes or embarking on a meaningful job creation strategy, the government is off loading responsibility onto immigrants who already contribute more than their share to society.

Fighting back

A number of actions and campaigns have been organized to challenge the government's targetting of immigrants and refugees. In April, TCAR (the Toronto Coalition Against Racism) held a rally outside the liberal party headquarters in Toronto to protest the $975 head tax *[see* Kinesis *May 1995]*.

In Vancouver, a coalition of women's, anti-racist and progressive organizations—the Network for Immigrants' and Refugees' Rights--has initiated a petition and postcard campaign. INTERCEDE, the Toronto domestic workers' rights organization, has also organized a petition campaign. And the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) has taken the campaign nationally.

On June 12, as part of NAC's annual lobby of federal members of Parliament, the groups will present the petitions to federal finance minister Paul Martin.

For more information about the campaigns, write or call the Network for Immigrants' and Refugees' Rights, c/o 8163 Main St., Vancouver, BC V5X 3L2, telephone (604) 325-6647; or call INTERCEDE at (416) 483-4554 or NAC at 1-800-665-5124.

Nandita Sharma is the chair of the Immigration and Refugee Rights Committee for the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, BC region, and a member of the Network for Immigrant's and Refugees' Rights.

Feds attack key economic rights:

Knocking off the CAP

by Jean Swanson

Canadians may not know that their government is about to eliminate the only legal economic human rights we have, but officials at the United Nations do and are concerned about it.

The rights that are about to become history are found in the Canada Assistance Plan Act which, in 1966, established the Canadian Assistance Plan (CAP) to provide Canadians with adequate social services and welfare. More importantly, CAP set national standards for welfare provision that all provincial governments must meet in order to be eligible for federal contributions to their social services costs.

Under CAP, all Canadians have:

- the right to income when in need;
- the right to an amount of income that takes into account budgetary requirements;
- the right to appeal decisions about welfare that they think are unfair;
- the right not to have to work or train for welfare; and
- the right to income assistance regardless of what province they live in [the moblility right].

Bill C-76, introduced into Parliament in late March, and expected to be proclaimed in early July, will eliminate the first four of these rights as of April 1, 1996. The mobility right will ostensibly be preserved, but, because people won't have the right to income when in need or the right to appeal, it could be virtually useless.

Three of Canada's activist anti-poverty organizations, the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO), the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), and the Charter Committee on Poverty Issues (CCPI) have appealed to the United Nations for support in their campaign to defeat Bill C-76.

NAC has been extremely active over the past year in coalitions dedicated to preserving Canada's social security system, and proposals going forward to its 1995 annual general meeting call for a broader fightback to protect universality and eliminate women's poverty. The struggle to undermine CAP protections will doubtless be a key part of NAC's expanding campaign.

In early May, Sarah Sharpe, a former president of NAPO from Newfoundland and Vince Calderhead, a Vancouver lawyer with CCPI, gained a meeting with the United Nations Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights in Geneva describing how Bill C-76 will "revoke all legal protection of the right to an adequate income in Canada"...and will cut $7 billion from federal transfer payments for social programs.

Why should the UN care about economic human rights in Canada? In 1976, Canada and many other countries signed the UN Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights. Among other things, the Covenant commits Canada to recognizing the rights of all Canadians to "an adequate standard of living...and to the continuous improvement of living conditions." It also commits Canada to recognizing "the right of everyone to gain his [sic] living by work which he [sic] *freely chooses* or accepts..."(my italics).

In 1993, when Canada was last monitored, NAPO and the CCPI went to Geneva to report that Canada had not been living up to its commitments to reduce poverty. The Committee, which monitors compliance with the Covenant by collecting reports from each country every five years, issued a stern warning to Canada, calling on it to incorporate social and economic rights in legislation, train the judiciary on Canada's obligations under the Covenant, and undertake "concerted action to eliminate the need for food banks."

Since the Committee's warning, new statistics show that poverty is increasing by about one percent a year across Canada, and that over 60 percent of single parents and young people living alone are in poverty.

Without the rights in the Canadian Assistance Plan, it will be perfectly legal for premiers like Alberta's Ralph Klein to deny welfare to people in need. Women who now have access to social assistance if they have to leave their abusive spouse, could be left without resources, and it may be perfectly legal to provide so little welfare that more people will have to live on the streets.

Without CAP rights, people in need could be forced to work for their welfare cheque (workfare) in violation of the Covenant requirement that work be freely chosen. The right not to have to work for welfare is an important economic right for all Canadians, not only people on welfare. It equally protects working people from having to reduce their wages to compete with people on welfare who could be forced into their jobs.

This is already happening in Alberta and New Brunswick, and the federal government is refusing to enforce existing CAP rights. People working as nursing and teaching assistants are seeing their jobs and hours taken over by people on welfare, forced by necessity to work at half the going rate.

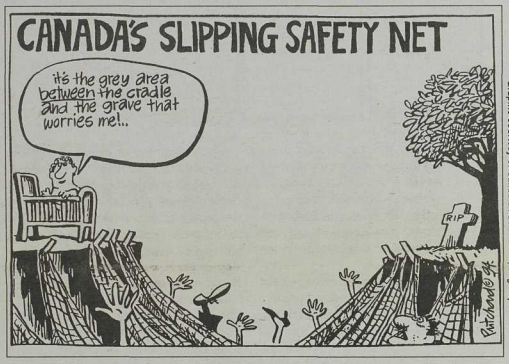
Because the federal government has drastically reduced the dollars they transfer to provinces for social programs since 1990, even provinces that want to treat poor people decently, are having to cope with lack of funding for welfare. Some provinces may be forced to gradually reduce the amount of benefits and the number of people who are eligible for benefits—even if unemployment and need escalate.

Sharpe and Calderhead were able to convince the UN Committee that Bill C-76 poses a serious threat to the economic rights of Canadians. The Committee agreed, for the first time ever, to hear a presentation from a non-governmental organization (NGO) on a country whose five year reporting cycle wasn't complete.

The Committee's initial reaction was mild. It wrote to Canada's ambassador to the United Nations and said that the Committee "would welcome observations by the Canadian government on the issue of its conformity with the Covenant...later this year." There is still hope that the UN Committee will admonish Canada as it did in 1993.

In the meantime, NAPO and its provincial member groups are lobbying Members of Parliament about the rights in the Canada Assistance Plan. With the exception of Svend Robinson, none of the MPs lobbied to date have been able to even name more than two of the five rights they will probably soon vote to abolish.

Jean Swanson works at End Legislated Poverty and is president of the National Anti-Poverty Organization. And, she's worn out trying to get the corporate media to recognize that the government is about to end crucial economic rights for Canadians, and frustrated because virtually no one knows this is happening.



Graphic courtesy of Canadian Dimension, Aug/Sept 1994

Help save the rights in CAP

HELP CAMPAIGN

End Legislated Poverty (ELP) has launched a lobbying campaign against Bill C-76. ELP intends to educate MPs and MLAs about Canadian's basic welfare rights as guaranteed under the Canada Assistance Plan.

ELP is also lobbying provincial politicians to legislate the CAP rights provincially. BC social services minister Joy MacPhail is on record as supporting the five key rights under CAP. However, the Premier's Forum, an advisory body whose members are appointed by the provincial government, has just issued a report that calls for workfare for young people and quasi-workfare for older people. While the NDP party did pass a resolution at its convention supporting the five rights under CAP, such resolutions are not binding on the government.

ELP has a form letter that can be sent to MLAs and MPs asking them to preseve the rights in CAP. Call 879-1209 if you'd like a copy or would like to volunteer on this campaign.

NAPO CAMPAIGN

The National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO) will be urgently working on a campaign to save the rights in CAP over the next year. NAPO has an excellent fact sheet on the five rights and a brochure on workfare written jointly with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). To get involved in the campaign or to obtain copies of the workfare brochures or fact sheet, call NAPO at 1-800-810-1076.

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What's News

by Andrea Imada

New legislation for class-action suits

The BC government's announcement in May to permit class action lawsuits was greeted with enthusiasm by Canadian women suing companies over silicone-gel breast implants. But the good news on the legal front was dampened by Dow Corning Corporation's announcement a few days later that it is filing for bankruptcy to avoid dealing with litigation over the controversial implants. Dow Corning is the major manufacturer of silicone breast implants.

The BC legislation to allow class-action suits will come into effect August 1 and opens the door for groups of people to collectively launch civil lawsuits. The legislation has special significance for the estimated 1,100 BC women who are suing companies for ill health effects from the implants. Lawyers say the class-action suits will prove less expensive and more efficient for women and will garner faster settlements.

Women with the implants have suffered from painful breasts caused by scar tissue, and auto-immune illnesses such as arthritis, lupus and chronic fatigue.

The move by Michigan-based Dow Corning to seek bankruptcy protection received tentative reactions from Canadian lawyers working on the case.

Deborah Acheson who represents about 300 BC women said that women should be concerned but not alarmed by the announcement, and should wait to see the ramifications of the bankruptcy proceedings. Other lawyers across the country were likewise assuring their clients that they should wait and see. The possibility of filing suits against Dow Corning parent corporation, Dow Chemical and Dow Corning Canada is another option being considered.

Although Dow has claimed there is no scientific evidence to support the women's claims of auto-immune diseases, the company pledged $2 billion over 30 years to a $4.25 billion "global" settlement fund set up to compensate women with the implants. However, a paltry 3 percent of the fund was set aside for women outside the US, even though half the implants were sold outside of the U.S. Many Canadian women opted to go the route of litigation.

In Canada, an estimated 10,000 women are taking legal action for compensation. Up to 150,000 Canadian women have the implants.

Buffer zones for abortion clinics

Women in BC are welcoming moves from the BC government that promise to ease the harassment of women and staff at abortion clinics.

Provincial health minister Paul Ramsay announced in mid-May that the government will soon table a bill that will make it illegal for anti-choice protesters to picket, block or harass women and health care workers in designated "buffer zones," including areas around abortion clinics and the homes of doctors who perform abortions. Breaking the law carries sentences of up to six months in jail and fines.

Pro-choice activists are exuberant about the proposed law. "This is going to fill a hole of protection that's been needed for a long time for providers of abortion services," said Kim Zander of the Everywoman's Health Centre.

Currently, abortion clinics must apply for court injunctions to prevent harassment and picketing by anti-choice protestors.

Increasing violence and harassment towards staff at Vancouver abortion clinics culminated last November with the shooting of Dr. Garson Romalis, a Vancouver gynecologist who performs abortions. Ramsey acknowledged that the attack, which took place at the doctor's home, was a key factor in drafting the new legislation.

"We would not tolerate the sort of harassment and intimidation that has gone on in the case of therapeutic abortion, if it was directed to any other health service," said Ramsey in announcing the legislation. "And we shouldn't tolerate it here."

by Kinesis Writer

Accrediting immigrants' credentials

The provincial government has established a program which will enable immigrants with post-secondary education to have their skills evaluated, improving their opportunities to work in BC in their chosen profession. Under the program, a panel will establish regulations that will allow employers and degree holders to reach agreement on acceptable credentials in a number of professions.

Currently, many immigrants to Canada find they cannot gain access to opportunities in their field because their qualifications are not recognized. The program is a joint effort of the provincial ministries of multiculturalism and labour and the Open Learning Institute, a distance education college.

BC government campaigns against violence

BC's ministry of women's equality launched its "Prevention of Violence Against Women" week with the publication of a pamphlet aimed at providing women and their employers with information on personal and workplace safety. The glossy, full color poster folds down into a pamphlet and emphasizes basic awareness and prevention, taking action against an attack and workplace action. It encourages employers to introduce safety measures, train staff and develop safety programs.

Laura McCoy, a counsellor at Vancouver's Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW), commends the poster campaign as a way to keep women informed about personal safety, pointing out that campaigns that focus on, "why men are so violent are also needed."

"It's really frustrating," McCoy says, "because it shouldn't be our responsibility to stop the cycle of violence, it should be the responsibility of men... Women wouldn't have problems working alone, if men didn't rape women."

The Ministry also announced $250,000 of funding for 11 violence prevention projects across the province this year. Projects focus on elders, youth, Aboriginal women, date rape and violence against women in the workplace.

Sisters suing police and BC government

Two First Nations women are suing the RCMP and the BC ministry of social services for failing to take action when they complained of sexual abuse by their adoptive parents. The case, believed to be the first of its kind in BC, goes to court June 5.

Donna and Marie Lewis were seven and four years old when they were apprehended from their mother and adopted by a federal civil servant and his wife. The sisters recently sued adoptive parents John and Helen Lewis, and settled out of court. Both girls had been abused sexually and physically for years.

The sisters say they are suing the RCMP and the provincial government because, despite knowing about the abuse, neither did anything to stop it. The women say that in September 1974, an RCMP officer who took statements from them about the sexual abuse, but did nothing. And they say a social worker took no action despite knowing that John Lewis had raped the younger sister.

"I thought they might do something to make it stop," says Donna Lewis. "I was thinking every day a policeman or a social worker would come to get me. But no one came."

Donna Lewis says she hopes other adults who were abused as children will speak out and hold accountable the people who failed to protect them as children.

"I've been spending most of my life trying to recover from the pain of my childhood," she says. "For many years I've carried the guilt. But it's up to them now to take on the responsibility, and to realize their inaction damaged people."

She adds, "Now that I'm doing something I don't feel so angry. I'm having the people who abused and neglected us own up. Each little step is another weight lifted off my shoulder."

In mid-May, John Lewis, who now lives in Ontario, pleaded guilty to two charges of gross indecency and two charges of indecent assault on a woman. He was given indefinite probation.

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MOVEMENT MATTERS

listings information

Movement Matters is designed to be a network of news, updates and information of special interest to the women's movement.
Submissions to Movement Matters should be no more than 500 words, typed, double spaced and may be edited for length. Deadline is the 18th of the month preceding publication.

by Robyn Hall

Women weaving the world together

Women attending the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in September will stitch together a 20 kilometre ribbon made of thousands of pieces of hand woven cloth from around the world. The cloths will be sewn together on the opening day of the conference to form a link between the UN conference site and NGO Forum.

This initiative was created by women from all over the Asia/Pacific region, and is being coordinated by Khemara, a leading Cambodian voluntary organization. All women are invited to contribute. Handwoven pieces should be one metre wide, any length and any fibre.

To register to participate in the "Women Weaving the World Together" project, write to Khemara, National Road 5, Mittapheap Village, Russey Keo District, Phnom Pehn, Cambodia, or for more information call Shirini Heerah (0) 171-620-4444 in London, England.

First Nations law conference

The Native Community Law Office Association of British Columbia is holding a First Nations conference to explore an approach to community-based treatment services for victims and offenders that are based on traditional values. The conference will be held from June 15 to 17, at the International Plaza, Squamish Nation, 1999 Marine Drive, North Vancouver.

The conference will look at the challenge First Nations communities face in trying to restore traditional balance through community-based delivery of health, child/family, educational and judicial services.

Some of the areas of discussion are: the creation of community-based services for victims and offenders, traditional justice systems and how they fit into a modern context, the concerns of Aboriginal women, elders, and youth in relation to the current justice system and treatment programs that promote healing for generational victims of residential schools.

Panelists and presenters will be from the First Nations, federal and provincial governments and from community service organizations.

The conference fee is $300, and includes an information package and lunches. Registration deadline is June 7.

For more information or to register, contact Judith Doulis, co-ordinator, The Native Community Law Office Association of BC at (604) 775-1821.

Labour and social movements solidarity network

The Maquila Solidarity Network, a new initiative to promote solidarity between Canadian, Mexican and Central American labour and social movements, has been formed to raise standards and improve conditions in maquiladora zones.

With the spread of free trade, workers throughout the Americas are being threatened with lower wages, cutbacks in social services including medical care, and poorer safety and environmental standards. This situation is the worst in the maquiladoras, the special industrial zones spread throughout Mexico and Central America. In the maquiladoras, multinational corporations have set up their factories, employing mostly women, at extremely low wages.

The goal of the Network is to develop a broad, cross-sectional network of Canadian labour, women's, anti-poverty and other groups to act together on drives and campaigns with Mexican and Central American groups. The organizing strategies will connect community and workplace issues, address health and environmental problems and look closely at the problems of the female workforce.

The Maquila Solidarity Network is a joint project of Solidarity Works, a network of union activists and labour educators across English Canada, and Mujer a Mujer (Woman to Woman), a continental women's network focusing on the impact of free trade and restructuring on women.

To join the Network, and for more information, write the Maquila Solidarity Network, 606 Shaw Street, Toronto, Ontario, M6G 3L6.

Rally against false memory syndrome backlash

The 2nd annual *Voices Against Violence: Taking a National Stand Against the False Memory Syndrome (FMS) Backlash* march and rally will take place Saturday, June 3. The march will start at 1pm at the Vancouver Art Gallery and end at 2pm with a rally at the BC provincial law courts on Smythe Street.

Voices Against Violence was first organized in response to the spread of the ideology of "false memory syndrome"—the idea that adult survivors of child sexual abuse have had their memories implanted by their feminist therapists and that their memories are false.

Last year's rally was held in front of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) building in Vancouver to protest the extensive pro-FMS coverage in the mainstream media.

This year's rally will focus on the legal system and its part in the backlash against survivors of violence. The committee organizing the march and rally—the Against the Backlash committee of SPAN (Service Providers Adult/Advocacy Network)—say they have uncovered a Manitoba RCMP investigational guidelines document, "Indicators of False Allegations," which shows that law enforcement agencies support FMS. The committee says the document says that police officers can assume an allegation of abuse is false if the survivor is accusing both parents of abuse, describes ritualized events, or has read *The Courage to Heal*, a guide for women survivors of childhood sexual abuse written by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis.

The rally will feature speakers, entertainment, poetry, open mike and live music. The rally will also address the intention of a US-based lobbying group—which supports FMS—to draft legislation restricting the type of therapy available to childhood trauma survivors, and to allow for third party suits against therapists.

For more information about Voices Against Violence, *call 736-3610.*

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FEATURE

4th World Conference on Women:

No easy road to Beijing

by Agnes Huang

Over 1400 women gathered in New York in March and worked feverishly to ensure that the concerns and rights of *all* women are reflected in the Platform for Action--the document to be ratified by world governments at the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing *[see* Kinesis *May 1995].*

The New York Preparatory Committee meeting—the 39th session of the Commission on the Status of Women—provided the final opportunity before the Beijing conference in September for women from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to have input into the Platform for Action.

Women attending the New York PrepCom formed caucuses to address concerns with the Platform. There were caucuses of lesbians, Aboriginal women, women working in support of migrant workers, women of colour, young women, and refugee women.

The lesbian caucus lobbied to ensure that the presence of lesbians at the Beijing conference will be the most organized ever. International lesbian organizations have launched several campaigns, and have called on the Secretariat of the 4th World Conference on Women to intervene in cases where lesbians have been turned down for accreditation and/or visas. [So far, only a handful of countries, including Canada, have agreed to officially recognize the importance of lesbian issues in their national reports.]

For almost every section of the Platform for Action, groups of women worked on the language and ideas contained in those sections to make sure they reflect what women want. Caucus members reviewed and amended portions of the Platform dealing with the outlined critical areas of concern such as, health, violence against women, globalization, media, education, human rights, and the effects of armed conflict on women.

The women of colour caucus pushed for the acknowledgement of how racism affects the lives of women of colour in both the so-called First and Third Worlds. The effect of racism on women's lives is not really recognized in the Platform for Action, except in the opening section which sets out the context for the document.

The women of colour caucus tried to identify all the possible sections and lines of the Platform where the issues of racism and the concerns of women of colour could be included, says Mirai Cho, a member of the International Work Committee of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). Cho also works for the Korean Canadian Women's Association in Toronto.

The caucus—consisting of over 50 groups mostly representing women of colour living in the North—also issued a statement focusing on the impact of global restructuring on women. In it, the caucus said that "the present profit-driven global economic structures are systemically and historically racist, making [women of colour] the most vulnerable to extreme poverty and to every violation of women's human rights."

Mirai Cho says that women of colour in the North issued the statement in solidarity with "the struggles of our sisters in the South and [to] affirm the historical and current linkages between us."

Fely Villasin, vice president of NAC, adds that "the issues of women of colour often get bypassed. It's a struggle to bring in language [into the Platform] that will put a face to women who are always marginalized."

At the PrepCom, women working in the caucus of migrant women tried to address the exploitative situation of migrant workers worldwide. Nowhere in the Platform for Action are migrant workers' rights explicitly outlined. Over 57 groups—mostly women of colour working with migrant workers in the North and South—tried to bring the concerns of migrant workers into the document.

A sub-group of the migrant women's caucus examined specifically the section of the Platform for Action dealing with violence against women. The caucus issued a statement stressing the necessity of including migrant workers' concerns into that section *[see box].*

The severity of situation for migrant workers was highlighted during the New York PrepCom by the execution in Singapore of Flor Contemplacion, a Filipina domestic worker. Contemplacion was hanged on March 17—in the midst of the PrepCom meetings—for the killing of another Filipina domestic worker, Delia Maga, and the young boy Maga was caring for. Many believe that Contemplacion was innocent *[see* Kinesis *April and May 1995].*

In the days before Contemplacion's hanging, the migrant women's caucus launched a flurry of actions to stop the execution. The caucus called on the Chair of the Commission of the Status of Women, Patricia Licuanan, to demand at the official government meeting that Singapore stay the execution.

Hours before Contemplacion's hanging was scheduled, NGO groups picketed for the stay. Licuanan, who is also from the Philippines, read a statement before the general assembly of UN members expressing grave concern over the Contemplacion's scheduled execution, and called for a minute of silence.

Fely Villasin, who also works with the Toronto domestic workers' rights organization INTERCEDE, says that the execution highlights the exploitation of migrant workers, and that it must be stopped. "The hanging of Flor Contemplacion brings to sharp focus the day-to-day violation of fundamental human and labour rights of migrant women, particularly domestic workers, who leave family and friends behind in search of employment abroad," says Villasin.

Even though women at the New York PrepCom put in a lot of work amending the Platform for Action, Villasin says there still is a lot more work to be done in Beijing, as almost 40 percent of Platform is bracketed. [Areas bracketed are those that are still open to challenge by any of the world governments.] The bracketed sections will need to be discussed and ratified at the government forum in Beijing.

As *Kinesis* goes to press, the revised Platform for Action was still not available. Stay tuned...

Statement of NGO "Migrant Women and Violence" caucus to the 39th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

We are gravely concerned that the issues of (im)migrant women are not substantially represented in the draft platform for action. Although many of these issues coincide with those of refugee and/or displaced women, the situation of migrant women living and/or working outside their countries of origin should be addressed seperately.

It is necessary to acknowledge the most fundamental root causes of migration. Present economic structures and development models have failed to provide basic employment, sustainable livelihood and peace, leading to a widening gap between countries. [Migration is one] consequence of the resulting social, economic and political inequalities between rural and urban sectors within countries, between the industrialized and industrializing countries as well as predominantly agricultural countries.

All forms of violence against women in public and private life affect immigrant, refugee, displaced and migrant women, regardless of individual status or condition. This is further exacerbated by the disintegration of traditional support structures, and inaccessibility and/or lack of cultural and linguistically appropriate services. Another major factor contributing to the vulnerability of migrant women to acts or threats of violence, is the actual and psychological dependency of those whose legal status in the host country is dependent on their employer, husband or partner.

Migrant women continue to be sexually harassed, raped, tortured and trafficked. Indeed, trafficking in and violence against women are increasingly becoming integral issues of international migration. Trafficking in women and children has not only expanded, but also taken on new forms, including trafficking for marriage, for illegal (and therefore, unregulated and unprotected) labour sectors in domestic and public spheres, for the sex industry, and as "bonded labour."

The human and labour rights of migrant women, including those who have been displaced, those who have fled their countries and those who have voluntarily left their homelands, continue to be violated because laws to protect them and measures to assist them and promote their welfare—even when existent—are inadequate or not enforced. They consistently face racism, discrimination and harassment.

Domestic workers, who form the majority of women migrant workers are especially subject to slave-like conditions of work, due to the lack of recognition of domestic workers by existing labour laws of host countries. The execution of Flor Contemplacion, a Fillipina domestic worker in Singapore lends sharp focus to the day-to-day violations of the fundamental human and labour rights of migrant women.

In general we urge governments to:

1. Ensure that women can sustain a livelihood in their home country. Migration should be an option, not a necessity for a sustainable livelihood.

2. Adopt laws and implement measures to eradicate all forms of racism, xenophobia and homophobia, including institutionalized racism and promote education on human rights, understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity.

3. Abide by the UN 1994 GA Resolution 49/165 on Violence Against Women Migrant Workers and should sign, ratify and enforce the 1990 UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant workers amd members of their families.

4. Adopt and implement guidelines recognizing gender related persecution as a basis for women claiming refugee status, in addition to signing and ratifying the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees and their related 1967 Protocol. Implement the 1991 UNHCR Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women.

5. Review the 1949 Convention on the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others and, if neccessary, amend it in order to make it more effective in addressing trafficking in women.

Vanaja Dhruvarajan:

Changing the university: context and content

by Vanaja Dhruvarajan, as told to Gomi Puri

Vanaja Dhruvarajan is a first generation Indo-Canadian woman. Currently, she is the 1994-1995 Ruth Wynn Woodward professor of women's studies at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC. Since 1973, Dhruvarajan has been teaching sociology at the University of Winnipeg. She obtained her Ph.D at the University of Chicago.

Dhruvarajan has written a book, Hindu Women and the Power of Ideology *[published by Bergin and Garvey, Massachussets, 1989, and in paperback by Vistaar Publications, Delhi, India 1989], as well as numerous articles on Indo-Canadian women.*

Dhruvarajan organized a one-day conference, Bridging the Race and Gender Gap, *held in May at Simon Fraser University, Harbour Centre campus. The objective of the conference was to bring together women from the university and activist communities—and in particular, women of colour from those communities—to discuss issues such as racism, sexism, poverty, violence and occupational and educational opportunities.*

Gomi Puri: As the current incumbent of the Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowed Chair at Simon Fraser University, what special focus are you trying to bring to the teaching of women's studies?

Vanaja Dhruvarajan: One of the reasons for the five endowed Chairs across Canada was the bridge the gap between universities and the community. Women's studies itself developed as the result of grassroots women's movements, and is often considered to be the academic arm of grassroots women's movements. The idea is to keep a continuous link between the academy and the movement itself so that both can develop from the interaction.

Puri: You say there are three aspects to your work: research, teaching and community outreach. With regard to research, is there a special focus to your work this year?

Dhruvarajan: I have been involved in doing research on Indo-Canadian women for some time, and my work this year is a continuation of those studies. I have done research on first generation Indo-Canadian women in Winnipeg. I have also collected data on second generation Indo-Canadian women, and during this year will be writing up the findings of that study.

Puri: When we look at the position of South Asian women in Canadian society, the social location of South Asian women here and now, it appears to be a continuation of the colonial exploitation that has characterized our history for much of the past two centuries. Do you agree with this analysis?

Dhruvarajan: By and large, yes. The colonial heritage has impacted on the position of South Asian women. Immigration policies have generally been racist. Their preference has been for able-bodied men. Women have mostly immigrated under family class, with the expectation of being looked after by their menfolk.

Often that does not work out, and then women find they do not qualify for many social services like language training, *et cetera*. So, they are forced to take up jobs in the lowest [paid and most exploited] rungs of the labour force. There were exceptions to this in the late 60s and early 70s when there was a shortage of professionals. [Some] South Asian women were able to [get] professional jobs because of the difficulty of finding European immigrants to fill these positions.

So there is a kind of bi-modal distribution with [South Asian] women in the highest as well as the lowest categories of the employment market. Women in both these categories suffer; the ones in professional fields often cannot find jobs commensurate with their training because training from other countries is considered by universities and professional associations as inferior. Women in the lowest levels of employment face the worst conditions. So the colonial heritage does affect both.

Puri: What has been your experience in trying to bring change to the university context?

Dhruvarajan: Part of the mandate of this Chair is to teach two courses. I taught a course on women of colour in the first term, and one on Indo-Canadian women during the second term. I have faced some difficulty convincing white students of the significance of white privilege, but by and large the courses have been well received.

There are many ways to deal with systemic racism: through changing the university curriculum to become more inclusive, respecting differences and accepting differences, having more women of colour teaching these courses, and consciously trying to raise awareness in the larger society.

Puri: Could you talk about the content of your courses, and about the reaction of the university population to your courses?

Dhruvarajan: I wanted to bring in the perspective of women of colour [into the courses] to make the material more inclusive, to bring the margin to the centre, as [African American writer and academic] bell hooks puts it. In addressing the issues from the perspective of women of colour, I wanted to explore ways in which [our] issues could be addressed.

I did this in several ways. Many of my students were white women. One method was to ask each student to [categorize] herself according to gender, class, race, and ethnicity, make an analysis of her own life experiences, and then compare [her experience] to [the experiences] of women of colour [they interviewed]. The idea was to help [the white students] understand they have race and class privilege. Although some of the women of colour have class privilege, they do not have race privilege. The idea is to understand the intersection of all these factors.

Photo courtesy of Vanaja Dhruvarajan

We also analyzed many of the articles written by women of colour about women of colour, and discussed possible solutions for the problems women of colour face in Canadian society, such as racism, being treated as "outsiders", job discrimination. Many [white] women said they had gained a whole new perspective.

There seems to be a great deal of interest in the [women's studies] department to continue teaching a course on women of colour, to be more inclusive and responsive to the needs expressed by women of colour.

With regard to the course on Indo-Canadian women, there is not much written information [on or by Indo-Canadian women]. Almost all women in the course were Indo-Canadian women, so part of the course was having them look at their life experiences as Indo-Canadians.

The Indo-Canadian women [in my class] were not only concerned about racism in the larger society, but about the class and caste conflicts in their own community, as well as issues such as dowry, sex selection, *et cetera*.

Puri: Have you had the opportunity to go out into the larger community, and bring the issues of women of colour to them?

Dhruvarajan: One of the exciting things about my work this year has been the opportunity to meet many groups—both of white and of South Asian women. I particularly remember one instance [whén] I spoke at a meeting about the global and national issues of women of colour and of their views on these issues. One older white woman came up and said that her perspective on these issues had changed completely, and she had acquired a new dimension to her thinking and analysis.

At another meeting I spoke of the issues of racism and sexism surrounding the sex selection issue [and] the South Asian community, and the treatment of the issue by the media as a "cultural" phenomenon. I pointed out that it was an issue of power, not culture. I drew the parallel of the issue of date rape that happens so frequently in Canadian society and pointed out that a person from a foreign country, coming in, would see this as a cultural phenomenon rather than the power issue that it is. Seeing the light go on when the issue was explained in that way was a very satisfying experience!

Gomi Puri is an Indo-Canadian woman who lives in Vancouver. She works for the Ministry of Women's Equality.

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UNESCO International Symposium on Women and the Media:

Mystifying the demystifying of media

by Fatima Jaffer

I'd never been to a conference organized by a gigantic, famed international body such as the United Nations or any of its "bodies." I didn't know what to expect when *Kinesis* decided to send me to report on and participate (in the limited capacity of "gatecrasher") in the International Symposium on Women and the Media. I knew other women had survived (and lived to tell the tale of) other United Nations conferences, such as 1985's World Conference on Women in Nairobi.

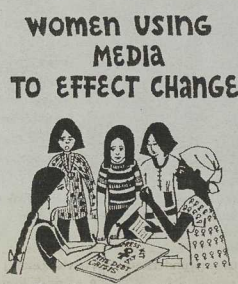
The symposium, which took place at the Toronto Hilton in March, was organized by the Canadian Commission of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

I imagined a large room filled with men and women "experts," artists, filmmakers and other cultural producers, and a smattering ot women trom grassroots organizations from all over the world. I imagined day-long formal presentations, people checking IDs, and male security types wearing suits. I expected women from *Ms. Magazine* (the US), *Herizons* (Winnipeg) and other feminist media to be there.

I also imagined that a roomful of women working in media production would lead to heated discussions on world politics, such as the rise of the religious (and non-religious) Right, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the emergence of "Islamic fundamentalism" as the new "Red threat," and the devastating impact of global economic restructuring on women worldwide. I expected debate between women of different political, economic, racial and geographical backgrounds. I expected to see women of colour and Aboriginal women from the "First World" at the symposium—very few were.

"Talking-head" panels took up most of the four-day symposium. There *were* some feminists and a (smaller than I had expected) smattering of women from grassroots organizations. There were only a handful of men. But there was little heated debate and discussion, and limited acknowledgement of the economic and political contexts in which women live, both in the so-called First or Third Worlds. And in fact, *Kinesis* was the only Canadian feminist publication present. Still, no one checked my ID.

The Toronto symposium was a long time in the making. In 1975, when women from around the world met at the NGO forum of the 1st UN World Conference on Women in Copenhagen, they fought for acknowledgement of the fundamental importance of the relation between



By the second day of the symposium, many of the women attending had begun to express dissatisfaction with the formal structure...there was no room for discussion *between* women of the issues raised (or not raised) during the presentations.

women and communications. Twenty years later, the 4th UN World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September, will put the issue of women and "communication in the service of humanity" on the official agenda for the first time.

It was to this end that about 150 women gathered in Toronto. The symposium, subtitled *Access to Decision Making and Expression*, was organized over a two-year period. It was UNESCO's prime contribution to a series of international conferences that have taken place in preparation for the Beijing conference.

The conference began with welcoming speeches by Canada's Status of Women minister Sheila Finestone, and Gertrude Mongella, the Secretary General of the 4th UN World Conference on Women. Finestone spoke the morning after the Liberal government's federal budget was announced. The budget saw massive cuts and sweeping changes to Canada's social security system, which will most devastatingly affect Canadian women. Finestone made no reference to the budget and its effect on women's equality in Canada, nor to the rise of the Right in Canada. Her speech focused instead on the role and representation of Canadian women in mainstream media, minus the context and realities of most women's lives in Canada today.

In fact, mainstream media and women's place within it formed much of the content of panel presentations at the symposium. Presentations ranged from "Progress in Canada towards women's

equality in the media" by Women's Television Network president Linda Rankin; Palestinian journalist Ruba Husari's "A journalist between war and peace;" CNN senior vice-president Gail Evans' "Women in an international news station;" Bettina Peters of the International Federation of Journalists' "Value and limits of a self-regulatory approach to gender in the media;" to "The definition of news," by New Zealand's Shona Geary, Zimbabwe's Patricia Made, and Fiji's Vasiti Waqa.

While some participants and observers from countries other than Canada did represent women's alternative media organizations, there were few of them. The Canadian participants included mostly women—many of them feminists—from mainstream media organizations such as the National Film Board, Women's Television Network, National Arts Centre, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council, and *The Calgary Herald*. Exceptions were independent Aboriginal filmmaker Loretta Todd *[see interview, page 12]* and Mediawatch founder Sylvia Spring.

Many of the participants pointed out that they did not consider themselves feminists. Some identified women's increasing buying power and not women's equality as the catalyst for the women-targetted media services they create or work for.

During debate sessions, some of the observers pointed out that while much time was spent talking about "riding the back of the tiger "(mainstream media)," there was almost no discussion about "the tiger" itself.

Concerns raised included: the need to look at alternative forms of media and cultural production; who owns and profits from media production; the differences between women in the South and in the North; the identification of male-centred media as North-centred media; and whether the number of women in mainstream media in itself could affect social change irrespective of where these women placed themselves politically, or whether they had any commitment to social change.

By the second day of the symposium, many of the women attending had begun to express dissatisfaction with the formal structure. Although half an hour was structured in at the end of plenaries and panels for "debate," it wasn't enough and there was no room for discussion *between* women of the issues raised (or not raised) during the presentations.

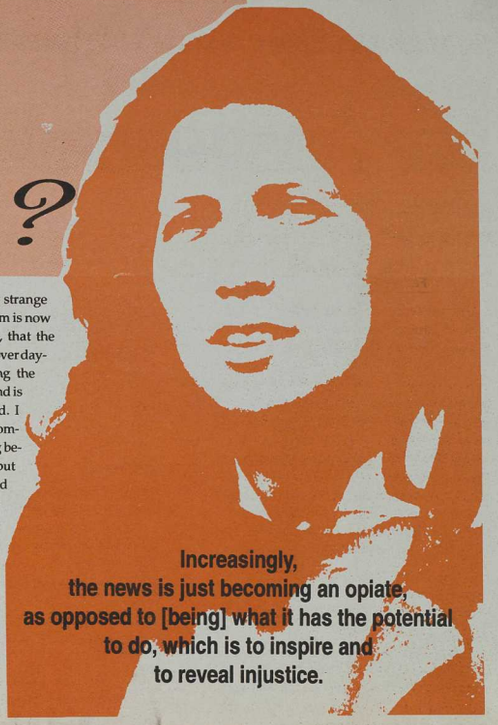
Ad hoc caucuses were formed. Women working in alternative media, lesbians, francophone women, and other groups held discussions outside the central plenary space. Perhaps the biggest concern expressed was the lack of time given to directly address and collectively amend the Toronto Platform of Action—the document containing critical areas of concern and recommendations for actions and objectives to promote access to media, decision-making and expression for women worldwide.

The Toronto Platform had been developed over a two year period, initially

continued on page 14

Interview with filmmaker Loretta Todd

whose media... whose agenda?



Increasingly, the news is just becoming an opiate, as opposed to [being] what it has the potential to do, which is to inspire and to reveal injustice.

as told to Fatima Jaffer

Loretta Todd is Aboriginal filmmaker whose work includes, Learning Path *(National Film Board, 1991) and* Hands of History *(NFB 1994). She is also a writer on cultural issues.*

Loretta Todd attended the International Women and the Media Symposium in Toronto last March as a participant. She was the only Aboriginal woman from Canada invited to the conference as a participant. The symposium was one of the regional meetings held in preparation for the 4th World Conference on Women, and was organized by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

Kinesis *spoke to Loretta Todd in Vancouver, where she lives.*

Fatima Jaffer: Could you talk about why you decided to attend the Symposium?

Loretta Todd: I felt I would be able to dialogue with women in the media from around the world. I was originally asked, as a participant, to facilitate a workshop. I assumed it would be a workshop with dialogue, and that that dialogue would then shape the document that would eventually go to the World Conference on Women in Beijing.

I had never been to a UNESCO or UN conference, so I had no idea what to expect. I felt I could contribute something based on my experience with Aboriginal film and video in Canada, as an independent filmmaker, and that I could bring some of the discussion that has been going on around women, the media and the Aboriginal community.

Jaffer: Among concerns raised at the conference was the lack of time given to debate and discussion between women. As well, there was little space for discussion of the Toronto Platform for Action, the document we were supposedly there to influence and debate. [The UNESCO Toronto Platform for Action contains concerns and recommendations on women's expression through, decision-making in and access to media. *See page 14.*]

Todd: I certainly felt at a bit of a disadvantage not having understood the process leading up to the creation of the Toronto Platform. At first, I thought I'd do the polite thing and just listen and maybe get an idea of how the symposium would work. I brought things up, hoping there would eventually be a place to discuss them.

Finally, I realized there wasn't a place. There seemed to be a misunderstanding between the organizers and the participants and observers. The organizers seemed to believe that enough discussion had gone on at earlier meetings, while most of the participants and observers wanted to give input in Toronto. The Toronto Platform had been already drafted and there seemed to be confusion among the women I talked to about our role.

I also couldn't really embrace what was contained in the Toronto Platform because there hadn't been any consultation with Aboriginal women—not just in Canada but in the world. Also, the document didn't address issues of *whose* media it is...

Jaffer: ...nor who profits from it.

Todd: Yes. There seemed to be an assumption that there is a mass media you *have* to plug into, as opposed to choosing to influence mass media or choosing to create your *own* media. There was little space at the symposium to look at creating your own media, the advantages and successes in doing so, or even the advantages of working within the mass media and asserting different strategies from within.

One woman actually said that it's a given, the more women we get in positions of power, the greater our chances of seeing changes in the media. But look at the media in the world—they're multinational, owned by fewer and fewer people, and have blatant right-wing agendas. What kind of agenda are we going to be able to advance within these media?

Jaffer: Certainly the picture most people attending the Symposium got was that *most* women in Canada want to go along with this mass media agenda...

Todd: ...and have actually been fairly successful at going along with that agenda. Claire Prieto from the National Film Board and I were both approached by women from non-European and North American countries and asked whether it was true that it was so good in Canada. We were the only ones who ruptured this picture of how good it is here.

Jaffer: In fact, Status of Women minister Sheila Finestone opened up the whole symposium with this very unreal and positive view of what's happening in Canada...

Todd: ...when only hours before, her government announced significant cuts to cultural production in Canada and to programs for women. It's a dangerous kind of hypocrisy because Canada holds itself up to the rest of the world as a leader of human, women's and Aboriginal rights, while at the same time carries out its already well-prescribed agenda to erode these rights.

It was also dangerous because when [Claire and I] spoke up, there was a sense we were just these whining women who obviously weren't living up to the great ideals of this country and who weren't grateful for all we have in Canada—not that there *is* racism, sexism, homophobia or colonialism in Canada.

For that matter, [that was the same reaction to] the concerns raised by women of colour in Canada.

Jaffer: What issues did you want to see being put on the table for discussion?

Todd: A group of women from the Pacific region mentioned the *Women Empowering Communications* conference held in Bangkok last year. One of the recommendations made at that conference was about the role of Indigenous forms of communication in the media. I was hoping that, if there was to be a discussion about Aboriginal rights, there would be discussion on the right to culture and language, and ways of exchanging culture and language through the media.

The Canadian constitution recognizes [those rights], and the UN recognizes various issues around culture. These rights are set in writing to supposedly prevent cultural genocide. Theoretically then, there should be the same recognition for Aboriginal media as for mainstream media. I really believed there would space to discuss, reinforce, and acknowledge those rights.

Another concern I had was that there is still systemic racism in the media in Canada. The media has made some improvements for women, but statistically, there hasn't been a corresponding increase in people of colour, women of colour, or Aboriginal women or men working in the mainstream media. [Women at the symposium] did talk about access—putting guidelines into newsrooms, media practices and so on. Well, there *are* guidelines in Canada but they don't work.

The way [the symposium organizers] were looking at media, you felt like you were at the 'World Bank' of media, that mass media is inevitable and there's no way to resist it, that it is essentially a necessary practice in every country, and if we accept it and if [those in control of the media say they'll] put guidelines in, we'll be protected.

Another thing I would like to have seen was acknowledgement of the good things people have been doing within alternative media. For example, TBNC television broadcasting station in northern Canada has been essential in preserving Native languages. National broadcasting networks across the north for Indigenous people have remarkable facilities and they do remarkable stuff—everything from talk shows to carpentry shows, high-school equivalency shows to children's shows—sometimes in English, sometimes in traditional languages.

If WTN (the Women's Television Network) can be held up as an example of success for women in Canada, then TBNC should be held up as the success of Indigeous people. The National Film Board, Studio D [the division of the NFB which produces many films by women] and the CBC [Canada's national public radio and television broadcasting system] keep getting touted as great successes. Again, where is TBNC? And what about the co-ops and collectives and other alternative media where we have seen different voices having somewhat increased access. This symposium could have been a place of commonality and convergence where we could talk about all our success stories.

Most of the women attending the symposium primarily work within mainstream media. There were a few women who had created alternatives but there was really no place for these women to talk because [the symposium was a place] to talk about how you work in these mass media environments and how you get employment equity within those environments. The myth is that, as soon as you get to those positions of power, everything will be fine.

Jaffer: As in other sectors, when a handful of women get into management or top positions, it is considered a success for all women, even though it doesn't fundamentally change anything for women.

Todd: That assumption was never challenged. One woman actually said that it's a given, the more women we get in positions of power, the greater our chances of seeing changes in the media. But look at the media in the world—they're multinational, owned by fewer and fewer people, and have blatant right-wing agendas. What kind of agenda are we going to [be able] to advance within these media? How much would we have to mirror the kind of news and the kind of perpetuation of the status quo in order to be able to advance within those companies? There was no challenge of the threat trans-national mass media holds for people, yet we're talking about cultural genocide of peoples, wherever they are.

Jaffer: The representative from CNN opened her speech with a comment that 500 years ago, Christopher Columbus embarked on "a voyage of discovery," and 500 years later, CNN is embarking on a new voyage of discovery. She was challenged by a woman from India who said, what is a voyage of discovery for CNN is actually a voyage of conquest of people in most parts of the world.

Todd: And one woman from Switzerland pointed out that during the Gulf War, CNN ran around Europe selling access to their coverage of the war, basically saying, "take *this* and we'll give you more." She added that before you know it, you've atrophied your local news production and are relying on CNN, which is many thousands of miles away, to tell you what's important in your city, in your town, in your country.

She said, fortunately, her news [department] rejected CNN. But many places haven't. Again there was no discussion about the imperialism of CNN. It's an issue that should have been addressed. I felt really strange because there were all these women who weren't addressing how to get ownership over news that is made in their land. I find it strange how the practice of capitalism is now restricted to multinationals, that the opportunity to have control over day-to-day commerce—including the media—within your own land is being increasingly restricted. I have no problems with commerce and media interacting because media costs money, but increasingly, communities and individuals are losing control over their commerce and media.

At another conference I went to, people were saying how capitalism's dead—what we're really going into is a sort of feudalism.

Jaffer: I'd say that's an obvious evolution of capitalism, not *separate* from capitalism.

Todd: Yes, you could call it white capitalism or whatever; it is inevitable. There was an idealism among women at the symposium, even if some of them were afraid to speak out. I believe some journalists do take on the responsibility of writing about human rights and so on. Yet there seemed to be no questioning of what effect free trade and multinational corporate agendas have on the basic exchange of information on our own lands and between our own people.

Increasingly, the news is just becoming an opiate, as opposed to [being] what it has the potential to do, which is to inspire and to reveal injustice. What about cultural production about who you are as a people, who you are as a woman? The space for that is becoming more and more restricted.

Jaffer: At one point, the agenda of the symposium did change and participants finally got to discuss amendments to the Toronto Platform for Action. You spoke at that session, but again there was no discussion permitted and you walked out. Could you talk about what happened there?

Todd: The organizers had initially left out any space for a working session where we could talk face-to-face about the Platform and say whether it reflected what we felt it needed to reflect. [The organizers] had filled the agenda fairly compactly so there were presentations going on every minute.

As you know, a group of us got together and said, "This isn't working." There were a lot of different suggestions, from "We should just leave," to "We should go out of the regular meeting room and hold our own meeting." Eventually, the organizers agreed to provide half a day for a working session so we could actually talk about the Platform. But I felt frustrated at that session because I still couldn't break through.

Jaffer: I think that was the general feeling in the room. We were standing up, making suggestions for changes, pointing out things, but then being shut down yet again.

Todd: I finally decided that, since I had asked many times for things to be discussed, and since there had been no space to do that, I couldn't stay. I had asked if there had been any formal consultation with Aboriginal women in Canada, or for that matter in North America. They said UNESCO had been in dialogue about the Beijing conference with Native women's organizations in Canada, but not specifically about the media.

They also told me they'd been in dialogue with an Aboriginal woman about Beijing, but they hadn't had any feedback for a year and a half. They also told me how there had been women from Canada who'd attended earlier meetings leading up to this Toronto symposium, and that Canada had concentrated primarily on talking about women and the media and about violence, so they felt there had been enough input from Canada.

So with all of those things, I just didn't feel prepared to endorse the process. If I did, I would be irresponsible to the things that have been going on in Canada, the things the World Alliance of Indigenous Film and Video makers has been doing. So I left.

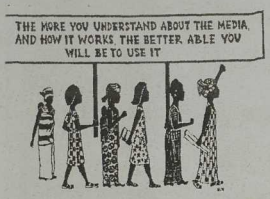
Jaffer: Later you came back.

Todd: I talked to some Aboriginal women in Toronto who were at a meeting of the Aboriginal Film and Video Arts Alliance, including Maria Campbell and Alanis Obomsawin, and said, "What shall we do? Here we were again in the same old position—cast as radicals when all we were doing was talking about things in our lives." They encouraged me to go back, but with the idea that we would write up our own recommendations following the symposium to be discussed at the final preparatory meeting for Beijing being held in New York later in March.

I wrote up the recommendations, but haven't heard anything since from UNESCO. It's a risk participating in this kind of process. Do you end up being an addendum or do you end up being incorporated into the regular stuff?

UNESCO International Symposium on Women and the Media:

Mystifying media (continued)



involving input from women attending seven regional world conferences on women and the media in 1994 sponsored by UNESCO. Between seven and 40 women attended each regional conference. This information was then taken to two meetings in Paris last December, where the draft Toronto Platform for Action was prepared for final ratification by the participants at the Toronto symposium.

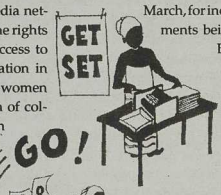
The Toronto Platform includes paragraphs on media and communications issues that are to be included into the overall Platform for Action to be discussed by world governments at the Beijing conference. It also comprises proposals for actions and objectives targetted at mainstream media enterprises and associations, international and national non-governmental organizations, educational and training institutions, and international and national governmental organizations.

As a result of the caucusing at the Toronto symposium, women successfully lobbied the UNESCO organizers to change the agenda of the last two days, to enable participants and observers to directly address the draft Toronto Platform.

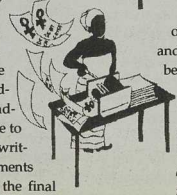
At a three-hour session provided for this purpose, the Canadian women of colour observers and Aboriginal filmmaker Loretta Todd pointed out the lack of recognition of "Third World" women within First World countries, and the need to encourage and support non-traditional media.

Several women from Asian, Latin American, Caribbean and African countries pointed out the need to recognize and challenge the imperialist and capitalist nature of most Western mainstream media institutions and new information technologies such as the television conglomerate CNN and the information superhighway systems.

Others called for the recognition of women's media networks worldwide, and the rights of all women to have access to expression and participation in the media, in particular women with disabilities, women of colour, Indigenous women and women of diverse sexual orientation.



Although the time spent discussing amendments to the Toronto Platform was still seen to be insufficient and tight deadlines for written amendments were enforced due to the limited time, over 600 written and spoken amendments were incorporated into the final draft of the Toronto Platform, substantially altering its nature and form.



The final draft has since been taken to a conference of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York, held later in March, for inclusion into the documents being prepared for the Beijing conference. *Kinesis* has not yet heard whether the amended wording was in fact incorporated into the Beijing Platform for Action.

A follow-up meeting of the Toronto symposium and the Beijing conference is being planned by UNESCO to take place in 1996.

Fatima Jaffer is a Kenyan-born South Asian feminist living in Vancouver. She attended the symposium as media.

Draft Toronto Platform for Action

The draft Toronto Platform for Action is the central document to come out of the UNESCO International Symposium on Women and the Media. The Toronto Platform deals with paragraphs referring to media in the overall Platform for Action—the document to be discussed and ratified at the Beijing World Conference on Women in September.

The following is excerpted from the Toronto Platform, and refers to the numbered sections dealing with media in the Beijing Platform for Action [see *Kinesis* May 1994]. *Amendments to these sections that were made at the symposium are marked below in [our] italics.*

Following the symposium, the Toronto document was taken to New York in March, where a final preparatory meeting was held to discuss and incorporate changes to the Platform for Action. Kinesis *has yet to determine whether the Toronto ammendments were actually incorporated into the draft Platform for Action.*

Global Framework

24: In the past twenty years, the world has seen an explosion in the field of communications. With the advances in computer technology and satellite and cable TV, global access to information, *when democratically used*, continues to increase and expand creating new opportunities for the participation of women in communications and media and for dissemination of information about women. *However, all these developments bring about new threats. They may affect negatively the existing cultures and prevailing values of receiving countries. With the re-emergence in some countries of reactionary beliefs, media are also becoming a weapon of domination and obscurantism. Finally, the present global situation in the media shows the perpetuation and reenforcement of negative images of women that do not provide an accurate or realistic picture of women's multiple roles and contributions to a changing world. Even more insidious are the use by media of women's bodies as sex objects, and violence against women as "entertainment".* Greater involvement by women in both the technical and decision-making areas of communication and media would increase awareness of women's lives from their own perspective.

Strategic Objectives and Action

Section J: Insufficient mobilization of media to promote positive contributions to society

161: During the past decade, advances in information technology have facilitated the development of international media enterprises which transcend national boundaries and which have the power to shape public policy and private attitudes. These media offer the promise of greater interaction among people, rapid exchange of knowledge and accessible sources of education. They can, on the one hand, *reinforce stereotypes, ignore, exploit and demean people, especially women. It can also convey with the re-emergence of intolerance and extremism, in particular religious extremism, dominating and obscurantist ideologies which are a threat to women's rights and democracy. Media also can strengthen existing power structures (political, cultural, class and gender). Women and media issues cannot be considered outside the context of socio-political issues.* In many countries women are working to make the mass media more sensitive to women's reality and to the emerging roles of both women and men. Everywhere the potential exists for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women in society and to the public's acceptance of women's true roles.

162: There has been an increase in the number of women involved in the communications industries but not at the decision-making levels. Their lack of power and influence in the organizations which employ them, mainly at the writing and production levels, is evidenced by the failure to eliminate sex-based stereotyping which characterizes so much of the output of the major international media enterprises. *The culture of the mainstream media is predominantly male and the power of that culture to socialize its citizens must not be underestimated. Even when women work in writing and production, their tacit acceptance of traditional media values can be crucial to their professional survival.*

Strategic Objective J1: Increase and enhance the access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media.

Strategic Object J2: Promote a positive portrayal of women in the media.

Talking with De Poonani Posse:

Flowing with Da Juice

De Poonani Posse. Photo by Grace Channer.

by E. Centime Zeleke

De Poonani Posse is a collective of three Black lesbians of West-Indian descent—Nicole Redman, Tonia Bryan and Sherece Taffe. They live in Toronto.

They see themselves as media activists who are trying to shake up stereotypical images of Black lesbians. De Poonani Posse's major project is starting up Canada's first Black lesbian magazine, Da Juice. *Their first issue will be published as the winter issue of* Fireweed: a feminist quarterly. *De Poonani Posse also take it upon themselves to grab open mike wherever possible and to plaster their propaganda sheets—aimed at Black straight men, women and Black dykes and fags—in the neighbourhoods of Toronto.*

Kinesis *had the opportunity to speak with two members of De Poonani Posse last month.*

Centime Zeleke: The word poonani is a West-Indian colloquialism that can be roughly translated into pussy. Why did you choose the name and what does it mean for you?

De Poonani Posse: Yes, poonani can be translated into pussy, and as lesbians we do like poonani and we like our own poonani. So the name is about women loving themselves, loving their sexual selves. Poonani is also one of those words that a lot of people use but do not really know the meaning of—so for us it was a way of taking the word back.

We also chose the name because it does resonate with West-Indianess and Africaness. When we talk about women loving themselves, we are talking about a very specific kind of reality, a Black lesbian reality. This is the context we are trying to work in. To just define ourselves as women and to be talking about the earth goddess is fine, but we are Black lesbians and we are fierce and bold face. This is the way we talk to each other, straight up.

Utilizing a language and speaking in a way that is familiar to us translates into a way of being that is familiar to us. We have gotten some flack from white people and curiosity and confusion from non-white people about this word, poonani. I think there is a lot of surprise when people discover that Black people who have been so totally colonized in the diaspora have words amongst ourselves that they do not know. They are shocked, they thought it was all exposed; it's threatening and we like that.

Centime: Can you talk about your work producing the magazine, *Da Juice*?

De Poonani Posse: Well we are trying to create a Black dyke magazine that covers the many facets of Black lesbian life—meaning there is no one Black lesbian. We want to shake up some things. We do not necessarily want to be about toeing the party line—and there is a party line. There are certain politics, hairstyles, modes of clothing and certain modes of sexual expression that are acceptable. We do not really buy the party line and we realize that most of the Black lesbians we talk with and interact with are not buying it either.

Da Juice is trying to say there are many ways of expressing one's self. This is why in our policy of submissions we say we are looking for everything from collages, artwork, hairstyles, recipes, love letters to lust letters.

Centime: I know there has been a lot of problems with lesbians from the African continent—say Ethiopia or Somalia—having cultural differences with West-Indian lesbians. I am wondering how you intend to avoid creating a monolithic Black lesbian?

De Poonani Posse: This is something that often comes up in conversations amongst ourselves. We really feel the need to express who we are in all the different ways we can. We don't want the magazine to contribute to an atmosphere of narrowness, where there are only a few possible variations on being. We are realizing that there is a lot of exotification of African women by women from the diaspora, where if you say you are from Africa there are automatically all sorts of associations that go through people's heads.

Our experiences as three Black lesbians have been different in that we have an understanding of where our alliances need to be. Having a shared sexuality is really not enough.

A lot of that has to do with the fact that we've gone through the experience of slavery, and [we] have to look back [to Africa] and hope there is something better. We in the diaspora also need to realize that African women are real women who are not frozen in time. They have their real lives and identities.

Centime: The first issue of *Da Juice* is going to be about identity. Why did you choose this as a theme?

De Poonani Posse: We chose identity because we wanted to open up what it means to be a Black lesbian. We want to say that there is no hegemonic Black lesbian identity. We are looking for people who are willing to question and say what needs to be said.

When we talk about identity, we can be talking about anything. It could be about race, about women who see themselves as being "of colour" or diasporic or African, or it could be about lesbians who see themselves as being into vanilla sex or S.M. or who sleep with men. Choosing identity as a theme will help us lay down the framework of the magazine as inclusive.

Centime: The first issue of *Da Juice* will be a guest editorship of *Fireweed*. How did this happen, and what kind of funding do you expect to get in order to sustain *Da Juice*?

De Poonani Posse: So far we have obtained small funding from the Ontario gay and lesbian appeal grant. With *Fireweed*, we approached them with a proposal to guest edit because in the whole history of *Fireweed* there has never been a Black lesbian issue or a Black women's issue. For us it was a way to take something like *Fireweed* and make it our own at least for a small time. We want to use this issue of *Fireweed* as a jump off point.

We have a lot of heart, marvelous politics, good writing and artistic skills, but in the area of distribution, circulation and other technical aspects of a magazine we are weak. This is a very hands on approach to putting our magazine out there.

Centime: Sometimes when I think about media, I think we need to create more alternative media that do not replicate hierarchical power structures. But there is another part of me that thinks we need to infiltrate already established forums so we do not further marginalize ourselves, but then I think we often just end up being tokens.

De Poonani Posse: Well we think it is possible to do both. What is always preferable for us—and also what seems to work for Black people—is when we do create our own [media]. We see examples of this in Sister Vision Press [the only Black women and women of colour publishing house in Canada] and other small scale businesses.

In cynical times, we think you're just bound for failure when you try to work within a Euro-centric model, for the results usually do not pay for the time and frustration. However, the reality is that they [established media] have the money and the resources.

Centime: What kind of alliances do you have or imagine having with the straight Black community or with gay Black men whose media often serves to silence lesbian voices?

De Poonani Posse: As Black lesbians we participate in the Black community in general. There is a need for more outward activism on the part of Black lesbians and gay people saying we are out there. Our world is not the white lesbian and gay world. Many Black lesbian and gay people embrace the white lesbian and gay world when they come out. This is often because of homophobia in the [Black] community or their situation at home. But our experiences as three Black lesbians have been different in that we have an understanding of where our alliances need to be. Having a shared sexuality is really not enough.

De Poonani Posse is still accepting submissions for their first issue of Da Juice. *All submissions should be typed or neatly written, double spaced, and include a SASE and bio. Send submissions to* Da Juice, *PO Box 156, Stn P, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2S7. Deadline is July 15.*

E. Centime Zeleke is an Ethiopian femme with an axe.

Interview with Dionne Brand

Brandishing a powerful pen

as told to Charmaine Perkins and Sandra McPherson

Dionne Brand is a Toronto based poet, writer and filmmaker. She has published several books of poetry, including No Language is Neutral, *and a collection of short stories,* Sans Souci and Other Stories. *As well, several of her essays can be found in such groundbreaking texts as* Returning the Gaze: Essays on Racism, Feminism and Politics, *edited by Himani Bannerji, and* We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up: Essays in African Canadian Women's History, *coordinated by Peggy Bristow.*

Brand has also written and directed three documentary films: Older, Stronger, Wiser; Sisters in the Struggle *and* Long Time Comin'. *She is presently working on a documentary of a conversation between her and Adrienne Rich.*

Kinesis *had the opportunity to interview Dionne Brand in April when she was in Vancouver to read from her latest collection of essays,* Bread Out of Stone recollections sex recognitions race dreaming politics.

Charmaine Perkins: When last we spoke, you used a powerful image to describe one of the ways you conceptualized *Bread Out of Stone*, as a work done in ruin or out of ruin. Could you elaborate on the significance of this image?

Dionne Brand: At the time I started to write the book, I thought about writing in a very "popular way" about where we were at, about living in Toronto amid the kind of history of Black people living in Toronto, and about the kind of nihilism which seemed to be so much a part of our every day as Black people living in America. I started to think about writing these essays right after the "Just Desserts" killing in Toronto. *[In 1993, three young Black men were arrested for the shooting of a young white woman at a trendy dessert place.]* The police and the media projected these blurred images of young Black men, and it created a kind of vilification of the Black community as a whole.

I began to think about having grown up during the civil rights movement, and now seeing a lot of that rightness of fighting against racism or for human and civil rights disintegrate amid a right wing upsurge in the Americas, if not the world. I thought about where we are now located as people who want to continue the fight for racial equality, and racial justice.

I was thinking about what young people at this time would think, in the midst of what seemed to me was ruin, in the midst of a great right wing upsurge that wants to drive back the gains of social justice continually, everyday. That's the place *Bread Out of Stone* is coming from.

I also didn't feel there was any popular articulation of the life of Black folk or progressive folk in this country at this moment. I wanted to write that down; I wanted to contribute to that.

Perkins: I see revolution as a constant theme in your book. What does it mean, given that it's not a romantic or nostalgic sensibility, but that there's a necessity to work toward revolution, to work out of this sort of nihilism?

At your reading, you talked about freedom from all kinds of oppressive power structures.

Brand: Because nihilism is such closure, I think it is precisely the point at which one sees the possibility of regenerating a revolutionary vision, [especially] when things look as grim as they do for Black people in America—and I am including Canada in this notion of America.

I think what we are seeing is a new fascism. More recently, we see the presence of so many right wing militias, which threaten any forms of social justice that progressive people on this continent have been able to win. A lot of white men are talking about how these gains in social justice disenfranchise them--it's happened around employment equity issues in Ontario where there's a been a major outcry against employment equity because suddenly white men "can't get jobs." White men see social justice as anathema to their existence, and I think that's really frightening.

Charmaine Perkins and Dionne Brand. Photo by Agnes Huang

Perkins: And what about the revolution?

Brand: We also have this word "revolution" that I think has now been coopted by people like Newt Gingrich and the Reform Party who talk about how "this is a revolution." You know what they're doing is re-establishing white supremacist capitalist kinds of structures—and this re-establishing is seen as revolutionary.

So I think we've seen the full gamut, where we've seen socialist values, talk, and consciousness being inverted over the last 25 years or so to the point where we are faced with a right wing vulgar capitalism which seeks to take back all those gains we won, which seeks to promote a philosophy where some people lose their humanity.

I think we have to be really extremely vigilant to make sure—as powerful as capitalism is—that we are not left totally weak and victimized by it.

We have to recover some of those ideas we began with about social justice, about human equality. But of course, those ideas need a re-thinking because there are some things about them that didn't work. I think the philosophies we held as socialists or communists did not fully satisfy the rights of women or gays and lesbians—we didn't fully explore the nature of being human and how we would be required to share the work to really achieve that revolution.

I think that those of us on the left need to look deeply at what helped undermine our own struggle. This is why I look at homophobia and sexism in *Bread Out of Stone*, and how they must become an intrinsic part of our critique of society. I do that for my own well being as a woman and as a lesbian, to try to help us think our way out of [an oppressive] place.

I don't think essentially that socialism and communism are dead. I think that there are certain states that practise the kind of state communism and state socialism which have failed, but I think they are fundamental ideas and philiosophies about how human beings ought to share the world and our labour.

Perkins: Do you have any ideas on ways of sustaining ourselves and on the sort of healing that must also happen at the same time?

Brand: We may not be able in this phase of the revolution to find ourselves a text about the way forward—like the *Communist Manifesto* [by Karl Marx and Frederich Engels]. Maybe we are continually making these texts through the exploration of our experiences and consciousness. To look back at what we had before may not be sufficent.

I think there is a magnificent amount of new thinking about the way we are living—whether it is coming from feminist writers or poets, or from gay or lesbian writers, or from rappers...

I think we need to throw away much of how we thought, when we find it follows any orthodoxy. Maybe it isn't that we are looking for the one text that will lead us the way forward, but for the many, many texts which open us up to thinking about [possibilities and revolution] more and more.

When I think of all the texts that have come together for me to describe my experience and to think about the future, [I come up with] so many. There are those places and points that give you a salve and a way forward.

In some ways, we are eager for an end to [the way things are]. I think we have a right to that eagerness and to that end. But [we exist] in the face of a regime that tells us we are wrong to want social justice or employment equity or gay rights or working class rights—that's all you see on CNN, ABC, CBS, or CBC, for that matter.

We are constantly told that [right wing capitalism] is the major text of the societies we live in, and it is a text that has spread, like sheets of paper right around the entire world. But we also have these other texts that we merely have to notice, even at moments when we feel totally overwhelmed by that power structure.

Sandra McPherson: In the second piece you read, "Nothing of Egypt," you said that when you were in Grenada, you were conscious of your position of privilege and conscious of what you were writing. *[Brand went to Grenada during the socialist revolution in 1983.]* You also said that writing is claiming.

Brand: I find writing to be such a powerful medium, but even in saying that, it's only insofar as how many people are literate. Unfortunately, it's those people [who are literate] who run the

Review of Dionne Brand's Bread Out of Stone:

A taste of possibilities

by Charmaine Perkins

BREAD OUT OF STONE

by Dionne Brand
Coach House Press, Toronto, 1994

world and shape other people's lives. Given that, I don't want to be associated with the kind of writing that appropriates people's experience and sends it back to them.

When I talked about writing as claiming, I meant that there is a moment when writing is presumptuous, that there are moments when writing is privileged speech. I didn't want to assume a privilege above and beyond what everyone else in Grenada was experiencing—there were 100,000 people on that island.

What I wanted to claim was the particular space I occupied—which was a privileged space, a space I could leave. There is a guilt with being able to leave. There is a guilt when you're not killed, especially if you agreed philosophically and morally with that socialist revolution—which I did.

I could, with my pen, construct or reconstruct that place and those events. I always have to be very careful about how I construct a world, so what I do have to claim is my place in it, and the privilege I assume in it too.

I wanted to be respectful of those left behind. I know the way in which journalism and writing can appropriate all kinds of experiences, so I just wanted to be sure that I didn't do that. I didn't live that experience the same way that someone there lived. So those were all my 'buts' in that passage [in "Nothing of Egypt"]. I think it was incumbent upon me to put them in there because I didn't want to become this romantic figure who had been off to a revolution—like Hemingway.

McPherson: From that, I want to ask about the certain level of responsibility I'm seeing that you live with. I guess it is bestowed upon you, as a Black lesbian feminist writer, to continue writing. You've been across the country with *Bread Out of Stone*, you've had to put up with interviews and ugly reviews...do you not see it as a responsibility that you now have to...

Brand: ...take the shit? (laughter)

McPherson: To take shit and keep writing. Do you see yourself in a position of being some sort of model for those of us who have not yet picked up the pen?

Brand: The thing is, I'm not sure I would be doing anything else anyway. Writing is not a task in that way, it's not a duty. I can't imagine myself not writing or not writing these things. What am I going to do—go off and write some nice book that all the reviewers will like because it doesn't make anyone feel defensive or bad, or doesn't question anything, or isn't so passionate or [filled with so much] "rage"?—a favourite word that comes up all the time in critiques of my work.

I can't see myself doing that, as long as I can't see myself free. If freedom came tomorrow, I'd stop writing, (much laughter) because there would be no reason to keep writing.

Charmaine Perkins has contributed to Kinesis *before, and will again. Sandra McPherson is a first time contributor.*

In *Bread Out of Stone*, Dionne Brand critiques those systems and ideologies—racist, sexist, homophobic and so on—that oppress and downpress us as Black people and as Black women. Brand makes no apologies for recognizing those systems that lock us into a constant and daily struggle to make our homes and lives here, in countries like Canada. She makes no apologies as she names the injustices and attempts to overstand our place and survival in these societies: where we are all seen as newly arrived immigrants and as "illegals" who are a strain on society; where Black men and women are pathologized as criminals by law enforcement agencies and the media; and where in Montreal young Black children can be rounded up during school, by police, and bribed with pizza so that they can be placed in police lineups.

In spite of these and other examples, we as Black people are made to feel that these are merely isolated examples, exceptions, that draw bewildered "oohs" from concerned faces who would like to believe that it isn't all that bad, and that maybe we just like to draw attention to our plight—like a litany—to make them feel badly. Often we are made to feel guilty for what we feel and see and know—placed on the defensive and made to explain our so-called myopia, since we live with the reality of race: "Why must you people turn everything into a 'race' issue?"

So while many of us know and live these realities, the constraints of language itself—not to mention societal conditioning—makes the articulation of these experiences difficult. How easy is it to be stereotyped as the righteous wronged, and how easy is it to fall into romanticizing Black pain, Black strength and courage? How then do we find a vocabulary and a language that does not collapse into cliché and myth-making, where we can begin that enormous task of imagining and speaking our way into possibility and hopefulness in this Canadian landscape?

Given the lack of any unified front—the 60s and 70s Black consciousness and civil rights movement now a part of history and memory—many of us still long for change and justice, for something better. But at the same time, this longing and passion for change in *Bread Out of Stone* becomes suspect, another rhetoric or revolution that can be easily dismissed by Black and white readers alike as that romantic longing for revolution, where it becomes a nostalgic participation in something big, and you can temporarily lose yourself in the rightness of the moment and the action.

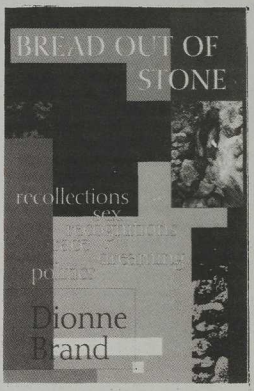
Such is my own skepticism and cynicism given that we learn from young not to be naive and sentimental—the world doesn't have time for that and for us. Even the very word has become so heavily trivialized and appropriated that it has become another empty sign.

While Brand may be unable to point us towards some revolutionary brick road, she does point to the necessity of imagining possibilities and of asking where do we go from here? In that way, *Bread Out of Stone* becomes a re-articulaton of what that revolution is—no longer a singular, unified event—and she locates herself, as a Black lesbian, as part of the struggle so that we don't have to live out lives "so small":

> *"Revolutions do not happen outside you, they happen in the vein, they change you and you change yourself, you wake up in the morning changing. You say this is the human being I want to be. You are making yourself for the future, and you do not even know the extent of it when you begin but you have a hint, a taste in your throat of the warm elixir of the possible."*
>
> ("Nothing of Egypt" page 138)

Brand does not, however, solely critique racist and sexist power structures, she also addresses the ways in which her lesbian identity is erased in Black communities where this identity becomes suspect and suspicious—as if it were a choice where one renounces one's Blackness and womanness to become that other.

In the essays "Bread out of Stone" and "The Body for Itself," Brand also critiques the paradigm of the Black woman's body–often subject to male violence—as heterosexual, conforming to male desire. What Brand deems necessary is the liberation of the Black lesbian body to exist, without having to be careful (especially to the threat of violence), to desire and to love.



Brand's other esssays in this collection touch on themes of migration, home, belonging, or connectedness. In "Just Rain, Bacolet," one of the more lyrical essays, she describes her flight from Canada to Tobago, and how "starved" she is "for someone to call us a name we would recognize." What Brand confronts, in this and other essays is what she calls "the presence of history and the ancestors," what she describes as a kind of "racial memory."

Critics of this book have, however, been quick to overlook it, taking issue with Brand herself and her ingratitude to Canada, which they feel she constructs as a site of "irreconcilable differences"—all the white people are racist, all the men are violent, and all the heterosexuals are oppressive. In effect, she is dismissed as just another angry, ungrateful Black woman, after all that Canada has done for her.

If anything, Brand's text functions as an "uprising textuality," a term borrowed from Carol Boyce Davies' latest work on Black women's writing, as an unpleasant reminder to those who take it for granted how we must negotiate and come to terms with this landscape we call home, and how we find our place in it.

Charmaine Perkins is a Trinidadian who is also negotiating her place here.

The Kinesis All-purpose Ad! (It even rhymes)

Hi there friend, how are you today?
my name is Kinesis and I'm here to say,
I could use a few things if you know what I mean,
if you could spare them, that would be super-keen.
One colour VGA monitor for 386,
would be at the top of the picks.
For a **386 or 486 computer** (no better),
I would consider knitting a Kinesis sweater.
I could use more **RAM memory,**
(skip this line 'cause it ain't gonna rhyme).

Writers, artists, paste-up queens!
I could use your sass, you know what I mean!
Come to see me, drop a line,
Don't be a stranger, come hang out some time.
If you have anything that I need,
call me up with great speed.
If any of this stuff you're willing to donate, that
would be great, don't hesitate,
Rush to the phone, I'll be sitting near mine,
call 255-5499.

What are all those lesbians doing in the movies?

Coming attractions

by Kathleen Oliver

Although it's barely a ripple in a very big, very heterosexual pond, "The Lesbian" has hit local movie houses and television sets. Not exactly big time, but the difference between absolutely nothing and a little something can feel very big indeed. The movies come in different flavours: sometimes "lesbian chic," sometimes scandal, sometimes barely a hint, sometimes demonic possession.

Rather than attempt a serious review of the many recent movies with lesbian content (including Canada's Tokyo Cowboy, *and* When Night is Falling *by Patricia Rozema,* Kinesis' *Kathleen Oliver listened in on an imaginary conversation between two Vancouver lezzy film junkies, Castra and Pat. Why don't we listen in...*

Castra: Have you noticed that an awful lot of lesbians seem to be turning up in the movies these days?

Pat: Whaddya mean? We've always had our own little subculture. There've been lesbian movies for ages—not a lot, but the ones you see at festivals and stuff.

Castra: No, no, I mean mainstream movies. The stuff you can see downtown any night of the week.

Pat: Come to think of it, yeah, there have been quite a few...

Castra: I first became really aware of the phenomena in February. In the space of a week I saw *Heavenly Creatures*, *Tokyo Cowboy*, and *Boys on the Side*—three movies from three different countries [New Zealand, Canada and the US respectively] that were as utterly different from one another as could be. The only thing they had in common was that each contained some lesbian content tucked into the story.

Pat: And wasn't that the same week that US network television aired *The Grethe Cammermeyer Story*? But it's interesting: the lesbian stuff wasn't the point of any of those films, it was just there.

Castra:Even if it was practically invisible in *Boys on the Side*...

Pat: Practically invisible? You mean completely invisible!

Castra: No kidding. And in *Tokyo Cowboy* the two women look so much alike I would have kept getting them confused except that one of them was always grumpy and the other one was terminally perky.

Pat: You know, I dug out my Vancouver Film Fest program after I saw that film: there was no mention of the lesbian content in the write-up—the girlfriend is even described as a "roommate."

Castra: What a switch from the general release—the *Toyko Cowboy* ad in the papers had a picture of the two women kissing, and a quote from the *Vancouver Sun* review with the word "lesbian" in it right above the title! Are we becoming safe or something?

Pat: Not if you look at *Heavenly Creatures*, where homosexuality is turned into this demonic influence...

Castra: But that film is based on a true story, and there's no question that psychiatry viewed homosexuality that way in the 1950s. I thought the psychiatrist was kind of a caricature, actually, the way they had a close-up of his sweating brow. This caricature downplayed the real menace of that view of sexuality and the genuine damage it did to people's lives.

Pat: Yeah, I guess it's easy for us, with all the strides that have been made, to forget how bad things were—still are, in many places. But hell, we're all over the movies now.

Castra: Even *The Brady Bunch Movie* had that delicious little lesbian subplot, with Marcia's butchy friend.

Pat: That was one 90s update that was definitely not in the original TV series!

Castra: Okay, so we're popping up everywhere, in a casual way. But what about the latest batch of films where we're the main attraction?

Pat: Like *Bar Girls*, which also played downtown...

Castra: And *When Night Is Falling*, which has been getting a *ton* of press and has full-page ads everywhere with this picture of two women kissing...

Pat: Care to offer a quick plot précis for those who might have missed it?

Castra: Sure. *When Night is Falling* is the latest from Patricia Rozema, Toronto director of *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*. Camille (Pascale Bussières), staid little professor at a Christian college, is at the laundromat, mourning the sudden loss of her beloved pet dog, when she meets and is comforted by Petra (Rachael Crawford), a circus performer who deliberately switches their laundry so she can subsequently try to seduce Camille with the unforgettable line: "I'd like to see you in the moonlight with your head thrown back and your body on fire."

Pat: Which sends Camille running back into the arms of her male lover, Martin (Henry Czerny), also a professor at the aforementioned Christian college. But somehow, despite their plans for marriage and professional promotion, she can't get the very persistent Petra out of her mind—or her immediate surroundings.

Castra: "Fear is what you pay for adventure," Petra tells Camille as she drags her along on a winter hang-gliding excursion, and eventually, Camille checks her fear long enough to have the adventure she and Petra have been waiting for. But then, everything Camille knows about herself is suddenly thrown into question: is the adventure a passing fancy or the beginning of a new life?

Petra (Rachael Crawford) and Camille (Pascale Bussières) share a passionate kiss in *When Night is Falling*, directed by Patricia Rozema.

Pat: Okay, it isn't deep, and the plot is pretty obvious, but it's a visually gorgeous film, especially with all of the circus business, like that unforgettable fancy dress dance with the steam irons, or the breathtaking work of the trapeze artists, interspersed with Camille and Petra's lovemaking.

Castra: But don't you think "visually gorgeous" is a bit of a double-edged sword? Wouldn't it be nice if, for a change, the women in these films had bodies or faces that didn't conform to fashion-magazine standards of beauty?

Pat: I'm with you on that—though I still prefer the lush sex scenes in *When Night Is Falling* to the invisible love in something like Hollywood's *Boys on the Side*.

Castra: That's what happens when men try to make movies about lesbians. Hey, and don't you think Mary Louise Parker, in *Boys on the Side*, is getting tired of playing women in lesbian relationships who end up having a terminal illness?

Pat: You mean like in the movie *Fried Green Tomatoes*? It's true, she's starting to get typecast or something...

Castra: Back to *When Night Is Falling*. Obviously, by virtue of its being a Canadian film, it's not in the same market as *Boys on the Side*, with Whoopi Goldberg and Drew Barrymore, but that's what saves it. I'd take *When Night is Falling* and its quirky depiction, fluffy and fraught with imperfections, any day over a Hollywood movie that suggests an utterly implausible relationship without ever once showing it—without so much as a peck on the cheek.

Pat: Yeah, it seems that ever since Sandra Bernhardt came out on *Roseanne*, everybody wants to jump on the bandwagon. Lesbians are trendy now.

Castra: And having Morgan Fairchild cast as Sandra Bernhardt's lover was our first clue to how confused mainstream movies and TV would be over how to deal with this new trend. Some, like *The Brady Bunch Movie*, handle it remarkably well; others, like *Boys on the Side*, fall way down.

Pat: I'm with you on preferring the quirky productions from closer to home. Trends in the mainstream come and go awfully quickly, but as long as more lesbians are moving into the business of making movies, we'll continue to have fresh visions like *Go Fish* and *When Night Is Falling*.

Castra: Incidentally, don't you think it was highly remiss on the part of the organizers of *When Night Is Falling*'s sneak preview not to rent a space that the largely-dyke crowd could repair to following the screening, to enjoy the post-happy-ending flush in each other's company?

Pat: Highly remiss indeed. (pause) But at least we have each other.

Castra: (smiling) Yes. And, apparently, a lot more lesbians to look forward to seeing in the movies.

Kathleen Oliver used to write about the arts for Kinesis *on a regular basis. Now she's writing a play.*

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Healing from ritual abuse:

Real memories, true courage

by Beckylane as told to Cathy Stonehouse

Beckylane is the pseudonym of a writer from Turtle Island, whose first book, Where the Rivers Join: A Personal Account of Healing from Ritual Abuse *was published this spring by Press Gang Publishers (Vancouver, BC). Beckylane is unable to use her real name or reveal details identifying her or her abusers because of legal threats made by her relatives.* Where the Rivers Join *weaves journal entries and first-person memory accounts in with quotations (on the subject of ritual abuse) from many other sources, as well as comments from readers and friends.*

White space and broken-up layout evoke the fragmented quality of recovered memory in a society which denies and disbelieves. Where the Rivers Join *is a powerful, non-sensationalized and precise account of an intense healing period, the work of a woman courageously reclaiming her life.*

Kinesis *had the opportunity to interview Beckylane when she was in Vancouver for the launching of her book.*

Cathy Stonehouse: How does it feel to go public with your story as a ritual abuse survivor?

Beckylane: I feel really good about it. I'm beginning to feel more and more strongly about how important this is.

Stonehouse: There are so few books out there for ritual abuse survivors, especially ones that talk about ritual abuse in a political context. Most of the books are either sensationalistic or written from a clinical perspective.

Beckylane: A book that was very helpful to me was Elly Danica's book, *Don't: A Woman's Word* [published by Gynergy Books, Charlottetown, PEI, 1988 and McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1990]. It was almost the only book available, now there is another, and pretty soon there'll be more.

Stonehouse: Addressing the so-called false memory syndrome backlash is one of the undercurrents of your book *Where the Rivers Join*. Was this intentional from the start?

Beckylane: It was not deliberate throughout the whole process, but when I was at a certain point in writing the book. [There was] a broadcast on a national Canadian television network about ritual abuse that was skeptical and really sensationalistic. [This] really made me angry. [The FMS backlash] comes from systemic push towards disbelief and denial [that abuse is real].

Stonehouse: I understand you wanted to publish under your real name but couldn't. How has it been with that kind of silencing?

Beckylane: It's very frustrating. In a way it's like a repeat [of the abuse]. First of all, [ritual abuse is] such a secret that I repress it; then I try to talk about it but I was not permitted to, then when I'm ready to, lo and behold I can't.

Because of this, all I am [seen as] for all intents and purposes is a survivor of ritual abuse, and that's really not who I am. In many ways the richness of who I've become is completely absent, I can't bring any of that into my story.

Stonehouse: Did legal threats also affect the content of the book?

Beckylane: Yeah, I had to take out anything that was an indicator of who I am...The afterword was very affected.

Stonehouse: I think the richness of your life still really comes through. You have raised two children—how do they feel about you having published your story?

Beckylane: My kids are both really supportive...The anger they have towards my perpetrators is pretty intense, but it's been wonderful for me to have my kids as grounding people. My past and the present [I share with my kids] are two really different realities.

Stonehouse: I think that's an enormous triumph. At what point did the work shift from being a journal to a possible book?

Beckylane: I would call them more diaries than journals because they were not part of my writing. [The diaries] were private notes to myself during the therapy process. Around the same time that my therapy ended I sent a letter of confrontation to my dad, and copies of that letter to my siblings. Then I got a letter from a lawyer representing my father saying that what I was doing was grounds for charges of libel...and if I published this information again—sending copies to my siblings was considered a publication—he would be forced to file a lawsuit against me. I took the letter and put a note under it saying "You think this is a publication!...just wait and see." After that I decided how I was going to put it all together.

Stonehouse: One thing that really struck me about the book was the way you lay it out visually. The use of different voices really expresses the experience of dissociation. Why did you weave in so many quotations from other sources?

Beckylane: When I first started putting the book together it was one long text of diary entries...and when I read through the very first draft I thought it was too intense. I also realized it probably wouldn't be clear to anyone who wasn't a survivor just what ritual abuse is. I didn't want to be the person to tell them, because I only experienced one kind of ritual abuse...and have learned along the way that there are several different kinds. So I went to the source materials I had read and put some of those voices into the text.

Stonehouse: I think some of the juxtapositions are very effective. In the book you describe how difficult it is to talk or write about ritual abuse, that there almost aren't words enough. Do you feel that you've really described the experience, or does it still feel unsayable?

What I'm hoping for, and looking forward to, is that other survivors will find the courage in themselves to express their stories. Having many versions will help make a language for ritual abuse for both survivors and the public.

Beckylane: In many ways I think I will never be able to find the words. A lot of it is because I experienced [the abuse] as a child, and the language I had to use then was so limited. I'm finding that even the language I have to use now is limited, restricted to my own experience. What I'm hoping for, and looking forward to, is that other survivors will find the courage in themselves to express their stories. Having many versions will help make a language for ritual abuse for both survivors and the public. It's just a beginning.

Stonehouse: Do you worry about being taken as a spokesperson for ritual abuse survivors?

Beckylane: A little bit. It's bound to appear that way to other people, and maybe even to me at times. I think it's a very complex problem. This is something that happened to me in the past, and I'm not interested in making it my life because I have a life. It's very difficult to speak out publicly as a ritual abuse survivor, never mind privately, even to yourself, and I feel that because I'm able to I have a responsibility to [speak out]. And I'll do it until I burn out, or it's no longer necessary, or until there are more voices out there. There are voices now, but just so few compared with the number of survivors there are, and the number of people who are going through [ritual abuse] now. It's just mind-boggling.

Stonehouse: What kind of support would you like to see in society for ritual abuse survivors? What vision do you have?

Beckylane: I'm not insulting therapists or social science professionals, I'm not trashing those people or the value of their work, but in the afterword I talk about—you use the word vision—a vision of a team of workers working with each survivor in a setting that doesn't suggest this person is sick or inadequate or all those other things—healers, members of the community, whatever people are comfortable with, as well as some of the more traditional social science professionals. I can't talk about my background, but I know there are other ways of working through trauma that are very different from the ways we are taught by social science.

Stonehouse: In what little literature there is, the stereotype seems to be that ritual abuse is a white middle-class experience. I've also heard it said that ritual abuse is not a feminist issue. What would you say to those kinds of perspectives?

Beckylane: First of all, I'm not from a white middle class background, but I do agree that ritual abuse is, more than likely, just from my own experience and readings, a white middle-class problem. As far as it not being a feminist issue, that takes me aback. I feel a bit angry, because in all fairness to women and children—I can only speak from my own experience—the abuse was based on extreme, violent ideas and practices that were highly misogynist

I [was taught] from a very early age that women are hateful, that there's nothing redeeming about being a woman, or being a child for that matter, and children, both boys and girls, were considered female until they reached puberty. And so to hear that ritual abuse is not a feminist issue, I'd like to hear why, what that means and where that comes from.

Stonehouse: What do you think helped you most to survive?

Beckylane: I'm not sure I can answer that. The first thing that comes into my head is that I repressed those experiences. Everything that has happened in my life since that abuse has been a kind of gift. Each time, I'm ready for whatever it is that's coming. And remembering that part of my childhood is the biggest gift I've received. It'll be years before I can actually work out who I am, based on who I was. That's when the "false memory syndrome" stuff comes in, and the hair on the back of my neck just stands on end. There's a reason why people repress trauma, particularly that kind of childhood violence. It would be almost impossible to remain sane and carry it with you at the same time. Nobody asks for that kind of childhood.

Cathy Stonehouse is a Vancouver writer, whose first collection of poetry, The Words I Know, *was published last fall by Press Gang Publishers.*

LETTERS

dear reader

***Kinesis* loves receiving mail. Please get your letter to us by the 18th of the month.**

If you can, keep the length to about 500 words. (If you go way over, we might edit for space.)

Hope to hear from you very soon.

Love,

Kinesis

Lots of reasons to renew

Dear Sisters,

I moved to Toronto in 1986. One might wonder why I continue to subscribe to a publication that originates from Vancouver and is, for the most part, about women's issues in British Columbia. When my renewal notice came in the mail the other day, I had to reassess whether or not I would renew. My decision is a definite yes.

I'd like to share some of my reasons why. First, even though *Kinesis* seldom covers news about women in other parts of Canada, I compare this shortfall to your excellent coverage of issues impacting on women. For example I appreciate your review of the latest Martin budget [Kinesis *April 1995*], and articles on international issues affecting women and I know I must continue to receive *Kinesis*.

In addition, *Kinesis* keeps me connected to the Vancouver Women's movement, where I grew up and came out as a feminist and a lesbian. I appreciate the information on the latest happenings in Vancouver even though it is sometimes sad.

For example, I read with sorrow of the passing of Andree Buchanan. I met Andree through the Gazebo Connection and remember her hard work, along with others in the Political Action Committee. We prepared and presented a brief in the early 80s on inclusion of sexual orientation in the Canadian Rights Act. We lobbied a number of MPs and Andree always had a sense of humour that would disarm even the most homophobic of them.

I will miss Andree but will never miss a copy of *Kinesis*. Please keep mine coming and keep up the good work.

Best wishes,
Mary-Woo Sims
Toronto, Ontario

Press Gang overlooked by *Kinesis*

Kinesis,

It is discouraging enough to put up with the mainstream media supporting the notion that anything or anyone important-enough-to-notice in the publishing industry is in Toronto (the perceived centre of the Canadian Arts universe)...but when the editorial board of Vancouver-based *Kinesis* casually makes Vancouver-based, Press Gang Publishers entirely invisible in a column referring to the serious effects of recent funding cuts to Canada's feminist publishers and the consequent challenge to our survival, I am choked beyond adequate words [*as* Kinesis *Goes to Press, May 1995*].

Having worked for nine years as the feminist publisher of such writers as Lee Maracle, Makeda Silvera, Chrystos, SKY Lee, Kiss & Tell, Shani Mootoo...just to name a few; having slogged through years of relentless overwork and underfunding from Canada Council (as well as no provincial arts funding for feminist book publishers); having prioritized advertising our book launches and reading events in *Kinesis* over many years...

I just don't understand how Press Gang Publishers' existence in this context can be so disregarded/disrespected/unacknowledged by you while you encourage readers of *Kinesis* to appreciate and consider the serious plight of our two sister feminist presses in Toronto, Ontario—and no one at *Kinesis* noticed this?!

Pages of political diatribe are seething in me, but that's all I can find words for at the moment.

Della McCreary
of Press Gang Publishers, a Canadian feminist publisher seriously affected by the recent funding cuts, Vancouver, BC

The Editorial Board responds:

Kinesis regrets our oversight in failing to mention Press Gang Publishers in our comments on the impact of the budget cuts on alternative media production. It was *not* intentional.

JANET LICHTY
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BULLETIN BOARD

read this

Bulletin Board listings have a maximum of 50 words. Groups, organizations and individuals eligible for free space in the Bulletin Board must be, or have, non-profit objectives.

Other free notices will be items of general public interest and will appear at the discretion of *Kinesis*.

Classifieds are $8 (+$0.56 GST) for the first 50 words or portion thereof, $4 (+$0.28 GST) for each additional 25 words or portion thereof and must be prepaid.

Deadline for all submissions is the 18th of the month preceding publication. Note: *Kinesis* is published ten times a year. Jul/Aug and Dec/Jan are double issues.

All submissions should include a contact name and telephone number for any clarification that may be required.

Listings will not be accepted over the telephone.

***Kinesis* encourages readers to research the goods and services advertised in Bulletin Board. *Kinesis* cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided or the safety and effectiveness of the services and products listed.**

Send submissions to Bulletin Board, *Kinesis*, #301-1720 Grant Street, Vancouver, BC, V5L 2Y6. For more information call 255-5499.

INVOLVEMENT

WANNA GET INVOLVED?

With *Kinesis*? We want to get involved with you too. Help plan our next issue. Come to the Writers' Meeting on **Tues Jun 6**, 7pm at our office, 301-1720 Grant St, Vancouver. If you can't make the meeting, but still want to write, call us, 255-5499. No experience is necessary, all women welcome. Childcare subsidies available.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

Are you interested in finding out how *Kinesis* is put together? Well...just drop by during our next production dates and help us design and lay out Canada's national feminist newspaper. Production for the **July/August** issue is from **Jun 21-27**. No experience is necessary. Training and support will be provided. If this notice intrigues you, call Laiwan at 255-5499. Childcare subsidies available.

FEMINIST NETWORKING

Meets once a month. Call Miche for more info at 255-5511.

ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING

The Vancouver Status of Women's Assertiveness Training Program will be starting soon. If you would like to volunteer or participate please call Balbi at 255-5511.

POLITICAL ACTION GROUP

The Women of Colour and First Nations Women's Political Action Group meets once a month. For more info please call Miche at 255-5511.

INVOLVEMENT

WOMEN IN BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Seeking women in business...with an eye for the social—as well as financial—bottom line. The Vancouver Status of Women is compiling a directory of women in business who incorporate their social principles into their business practices. For more info or for our self-audit questionnaire, call 255-5511 or write VSW at 301-1720 Grant St, Vancouver, BC, V5L 2Y6.

VSW WANTS YOU!

Want to get more involved but not sure where to begin? Join us—become a volunteer at Vancouver Status of Women. VSW volunteers plan events, lead groups, raise funds, answer the phone lines, organize the library, help connect women with the community resources they need, and other exciting tasks! The next volunteer potluck and orientation will be on **Wed, Jun 21**, 7 pm at VSW, 301-1720 Grant St. For more info, call Jennifer at 255-5511. Childcare subsidies available.

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EVENTS

LYNNE MARSH

Annie Get Your Gun, new works by Lynne Marsh will be exhibited until **Jun 17** at the Artspeak Gallery, 401-112 West Hastings St, Van. Gallery hours are **Tues-Sat** 12-5pm.

BENEFIT FOR CUBA

Vancouver-Cuba Friendshipment presents a Benefit Dance for Humanitarian Aid **Fri Jun 2** at 8:30pm at The Maritime Labour Centre, 111 Victoria Dr. The dance features three salsa bands: La Sonora Costena, Salsa Brava and Kin Lalat. Tickets are $12 in advance, or $15 at the door. For more info call 737-1299.

CAROLINE WOODWARD

Kootenays writer Caroline Woodward will be reading from her work on **Fri Jun 2** from 7:30-9:30pm at the Vancouver Women's Health Collective, 219-1675 West 8th Ave. Admission is free. Sponsored by West Coast Women and Words and the Canada Council. For more info call 730-1034.

VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE

The second annual *Voices Against Violence* national march and rally to speak out against the ideology of False Memory Syndrome will be held **Sat Jun 3**, 1pm at the Vancouver Art Gallery (Robson Street Side). Rally at 2 pm at the law courts on Smythe. Sister rallies will be held across Canada.

GRRRRLS WITH GUITARS

Many Grrrrrls with guitars will be preforming in June: Nadine Davenport and Robyn Carrigan, **Sat Jun 3**, 9 pm at Cafe Deux Soleils, 2096 Commercial. No cover. Jabber, **Wed Jun 14**, 10 pm, at the Lotus Club, 455 Abbott St. Tix $3-5. Kym Brown/Sylvi, Rachel Page and Bonnie St. Croix, **Mon Jun 26**, 10 pm at the Railway Club, 579 Dunsmuir St. Tix $3 members, $5 non-members. For more info call 879-4930.

HEALTH CONFERENCE

Broadening our Vision: Class & Cultural Issues in Women's Health, a conference co-sponsored by the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, A Friend Indeed Publications and McGill University, will be held in Montreal from **Jun 2-4**. For more info write to: Janine O'Leary Cobb, 3575 Boul. Saint-Laurent, Suite 402, Montreal, Quebec, H2X 2T7.

WALK FOR BIG SISTERS

This year's *Walk for Big Sisters* will take place on **Sun Jun 4** starting at Kitsilano Beach. Registration time is 8:30am and the walk begins at 10am. The Big Sisters annual picnic will follow at 11:30 at Kits beach. Food, games and crafts are free for participants of the walk. To register call Big Sisters House at 873-4525, or Mitzi at 264-1648 for more info.

SINGLE MOTHERS

Information get-togethers for the YWCA Single Mothers' Homesharing and Housing Network will be held **Mon Jun 6**, 7pm and **Thurs Jun 8**, 9:30am, at the Vancouver Housing Registry, 501 E. Broadway, Van. Free childcare, please register in advance. For more info call 873-1189.

JENNY MARKETOU

At the Western Front Gallery, Jenny Marketou will install an exhibition of photographic and video images entitled *Electric Eve*. She explores issues of identity, gender, beauty, age and disease as well as new frontiers of technology, where the boundaries of self, memory and identity are reconstructed and manipulated. Opening on **Tues Jun 6** at 8pm, the show runs till **Jul 1**. Western Front,

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Room of One's Own is sponsoring its second annual contest showcasing work by women, on subjects important to our lives.

This year's topic: Androgyny. Sexual, cultural, intellectual? What does androgyny mean to you? To the world? Do you embrace it or shun it? Is it expected of you? What are the implications? Advantages or disadvantages? How is it received? What is the social implication for you, for others?

Submission guidelines: One entry consists of either
- one piece of fiction, up to 3,000 words
- one to three poems, up to 68 lines each
- one piece of creative non-fiction, up to 3,000 words

Submission deadline: latest postmark June 30, 1995. Submit to *Room of One's Own* Contest, PO Box 46160, Station D, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6J 5G5.

Judging and prizes: Blind judging—type name, address, and telephone number on separate sheet of paper only, and include 50-word bio. Entry fee of $20 must accompany all entries. Winners will be published in the December 1995 issue of Room of One's Own. All entrants receive a one-year subscription to *Room of One's Own.*

Room of One's Own

BULLETIN BOARD

EVENTS

303 E. 8th Ave, Van. For more info call 876-9343.

JOANNE BRISTOL AND CARLA MARIE POWERS

The Oneric Girls perform the *Centre of the Universe*, a 30 minute performance piece involving two performers and an element of video. "It's a Sci-Fi tale about three generations of prairie lesbian nomads..." Bristol is a Saskatoon-based interdisciplinary artist and will perform at the Western Front, 303 E. 8th Ave, Van, on **Wed Jun 7**, 9pm. Tix $5/$7 at door. More info call 876-9343.

FUNDRAISING DANCE

The Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers' and Caregivers' Rights (CDWCR) is holding a fundraising dance **Sat Jun 10** from 8pm-1am, at Eagle's Hall, 748 Kingsway (east of Fraser). Music by the Dinahmic's. Tickets are $8. For more info call Julie or Lorina at 874-0649.

WOMEN IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Association of Women in Post-Secondary Education will be holding their AGM and a conference, *Social Action/Liason/Outreach*, at the Naramata Centre (near Penticton, BC) from **Jun 9-11**. Workshop topics will include harassment, backlash, safer campuses, and barriers in the workplace for First Nations women. For more info call Joanne Clarke at (604) 492-5305 or Linda Coyle at (604) 599-3281.

WOMEN'S WORDS

Women's Words Summer Writing Institute will be held **Jun 12-16** at The University of Alberta in Edmonton. The institute offers a variety of workshops and readings. For info about registration and content, call the Institute at (403) 492-3093.

EVENTS

DAPHNE MARLATT

Daphne Marlatt, author of *Ana Historic*, will be reading at Women in Print, 3566 West 4th Ave, Van, **Tues Jun 13** at 7:30 pm. Admission is free. For more info call 732-4128.

OPEN READING

No matter what your age, rage, style or persuasion you have from 1 to 8 minutes to read. Readers and listeners invited to an open reading, **Wed Jun 14** at 8pm at The Western Front, 303 E. 8th Ave, Van. Admission is free. For more info call 876-8343.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Preparing for Now, a three day conference on learning about tools available to those involved with community economic development and community based enterprises, will take place **Jun 15-17** at SFU's Harbour Centre campus in Vancouver. Keynote speaker is Marcia Nozick, Winnipeg author of *No Place Like Home*. For more info call 291-5473.

A CUT ABOVE

One in Ten Events presents *A Cut Above*. For women who enjoy dancing to selected hits of the 50s, 60s, 70s & 80s in a spacious smoke-free ballroom (covered balcony for smoking); with ample seating and a large dance floor and free onsite parking. **Sat Jun 17** at 1495 W. 8th Ave, Van (at Hemlock St). Doors open at 7pm. Jive lesson and dancing 7:30-8:30 pm. Cold buffet and dancing 8:30pm-1:00am. Sponsored by and tickets available at Harry's Cafe (1716 Charles) and Women In Print (3566 W 4th Ave). Advance tickets: $15 single/$28 for two, $17 each ticket at the door.

EVENTS

MARILYN DUMONT

Métis writer Marilyn Dumont will be speaking about defining Native literature **Fri Jun 23**, 7:30-9:30pm at the Native Education Centre, 285 East 5th Ave, Van. Admission is by donation. Sponsored by SFU Department of Women's Studies and West Coast Women and Words. For more info call 730-1034.

MAKEDA SILVERA

Toronto writer Makeda Silvera will be reading in Vancouver from her book of short stories, *Her Head a Village* (published by Press Gang Publishers, 1994) **Tues, Jun 27**, 7:30 pm, at Women In Print, 3566 West 4th Ave. Silvera is the author of two collections of short stories and the editor of many anthologies, including *A Piece of My Heart: A Lesbian of Colour Anthology*. Admission is free. For more info call 732-4128.

HARRISON FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

The *Harrison Festival of the Arts* will be held from **July 8-16** in Harrison Hot Springs, BC. This festival brings together a celebration of world music, theatre, dance and visual arts. For more info and tickets call (604) 796-3664, or write Harrison Festival of the Arts, Box 399, Harrison Hot Springs, BC, V0M 1K0.

NORTHAMPTON LESBIAN FESTIVAL

The 6th Annual *Northampton Lesbian Festival* will take place **Jul 14-16** in Northampton, MA. Workshops, a craft fair, and evening performances at five indoor venues. For more info, call (413) 586-8251.

MICHIGAN WOMYN'S FESTIVAL

The *Michigan Womyn's Music Festival* will be held **Aug 8-13** in Ocean County, Michigan. Performers include Mary Watkins, the Topp Twins, Holly Near, Linda Tillery, Margie Adam, Kate Clinton, and many more. Workshops on women's culture, politics, organizing and healing. Details about performances, workshops, childcare, accessibility, and registration can be found by contacting WWTMC, Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458 or by calling (616) 757-4766. Tix range from $40 for 1 day to $250 for 6 days - sliding scale.

EVENTS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The first annual Community Development Institute will be held **Aug 14-18** in Salmon Arm, BC. Participants will learn strategies and skills for affecting social change from experienced community organizers. The theme: *Local Leadership for Sustainable Communities*. For more info call Ken Monroe, Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC) at 736-8118.

WOMENFRIENDS MUSIC CAMP

Enjoy a weekend with women where your infinite creativity and musicality can find expression. Play, sing, chant, jam, perform, compose, meditate, give or take a workshop, or simply relax. **Nov 3, 4&5**, Camp Alexandra, Crescent Beach. Sliding fee $150-$250 including catered meals and accomodation. For info and registration call Penny Sidor at 251-4715.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN ON TRIAL

Women and Children on Trial, Current Issues in Custody and Access Litigation in BC, a manual for lawyers and advocates, is available from West Coast LEAF Association. The manual includes discussions, case briefs and an annotated bibliography, on issues such as expert witnessses and reports and how to challenge them, the impact of wife battering on custody cases, and lesbian mothers and custody. Cost is $25. Available from West Coast LEAF, 905-207 W. Hastings St, Vancouver, BC, V6B 1H7, or call 684-8772.

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BULLETIN BOARD

GROUPS

VANCOUVER PRIDE SOCIETY

Registration forms are now available for this year's Vancouver Gay Pride parade which will take place **Mon Aug 7**. Entry forms are available from Little Sister's Bookstore, the Gay and Lesbian Centre, Harry's off Commercial, or by contacting the Pride Society at 684-2633. The Pride Society is also seeking submissions from performers for the Pride Day Concert at Sunset Beach park following the parade.

BATTERED WOMEN SUPPORT SERVICES

Battered Women Support Services (BWSS) will be offering volunteer group facilitator and peer counsellor/advocate training in the fall. If you are interested in working with battered women as a volunteer at BWSS and would like to be considered for the training program, call 687-1868 for an application form. Deadline for applications is **Aug 25**.

VANCOUVER LESBIAN CONNECTION

The Vancouver Lesbian Connection (VLC) is seeking volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering and would like to take part in a fall training program please call Terrie at the VLC, 254-8458. Sonya and Tina, the coordinators of the Lesbian Battering Project, are also looking to network with lesbians working with this issue. If that's you, call them at the VLC.

LEGAL CLINICS

Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS) and the UBC Law Student's Legal Advice Program are co-sponsoring free legal clinics for women to be held every **Wed** from 2-8pm until **Aug 9**. For more info or to make an appointment call BWSS at 687-1867.

L'ARC-EN-CIEL

L'Arc-en-Ciel, Les Francophones et Francophiles des Communautés Gais et Lesbiennes, vous invite, le **samedi 17 juin**, au Festival Francophone. On se rejoins au Centre des Gais et des Lesbiennes, au 1170 de la rue Bute à 17h pour se rendre ensemble au Festival Francophone qui aura lieu en face du Centre Culturel, 1551 7ième Avenue Ouest. Le **dimanche 18 juin**, un Pic Nic aura lieu à la plage Jericho, de 14 à 18h. Informations supplémentaires: 688-9378, poste #1, boite vocal #2120.

NOT SO STRICTLY BALLROOM

Not So Strictly Ballroom invites lesbians to share a large dance floor, music and social dancing every Saturday morning at Trout Lake Community Centre, 3350 Victoria Dr, Van. Two-step, tango, waltz, rhumba, cha-cha and more. To register or for more info call Hazel at 255-1937 or Gay at 254-8998.

VLC WRITER'S GROUP

Do you write? Would you like to? Do you want critiques and helpful suggestions while pursuing your endeavours? Come join the Vancouver Lesbian Connection's writer's group as we write, share techniques, critique and work with each other. Next meetings: **Thurs Jun 8** and **Jun 22**, 7pm at the VLC, 876 Commercial Dr.

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SUBMISSIONS

FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL

Submissions are now being accepted for the sixth annual *St.John's International Women's Film and Video Festival*, to be held **Oct 12-15**. For more info write to PO Box 984, St.John's, Newfoundland, A1C 6C2, call (709) 772-0358, or fax (709) 772-4808. Deadline is **Fri Jul 14**.

EROTIC READINGS

Women writers/poets/performers are wanted for *Hot Summer Night... Erotic Readings by Women* to be held **Fri Aug 25** at Cafe Deux Soleils, 2096 Commercial Dr, Van. Audience includes women and men. Ten minutes per reader. If interested, call at 730-1034.

QUEER WOMEN'S SHORTS

Out West Performance Society is looking for short plays, 15 to 30 minutes, by queer women for their 1996 season. All submissions will receive a written assessment. Works which have not been produced before are of special interest. Send scripts to: *Queer Women's Shorts*, The Dramaturgical Committee, Out West Performance Society, P.O. Box 93582, Nelson Park Postal Outlet, Vancouver, BC, V6E 4L7. Deadline for submissions is **Thurs Aug 31**.

WOMEN IN VIEW

Applications are now available for participation in the 8th Annual *Women In View Festival* to take place **Jan 24-27, 1996**. The festival showcases work initiated by women in the performing arts, both emerging and established. For more info, write to *Women In View*, 314 Powell St, Vanc, BC, V6A 1G4, call (604) 685-6685, or fax (604) 683-6649. Deadline for applications is **Thurs Aug 31**.

THE PROJECTED MEMORIAL

The Projected Memorial, a visual memorial for those who have died from AIDS and for those of us who remember, is seeking submissions of photographs, which will be transferred to slides and eventually video. Images will be projected at various venues such as conferences, exteriors of buildings, galleries and colleges. For more info about participating in this project, call (604) 731-4074, or write to *The Projected Memorial*, 1858 W. 15th Ave, Vancouver, BC, V6J 2L1.

YOUNG WOMEN

Seeking published and unpublished short stories, poetry, non-fiction and creative non-fiction on any subject for an anthology of young women writers under the age of 30. This book will examine the issues important to the daughters of the second wave of the women's movement. Send work, short bio, including age, and a SASE to *Daughters of the Revolution*, Sarah Katherine Brown, PO Box 385, Kingston, Ont, K7L 4W2. Deadline is **Sun Oct 15**.

WOMEN OF COLOUR

Sister Vision Press is inviting women of colour under 30 to submit poetry, stories or journal entries on experiences of incest and sexual abuse for a new anthology. send hard copy or work on IBM disk with SASE to Sister Vision Press, PO Box 217, Stn E, Toronto, Ont, M6H 4E2. Deadline is **Sep 30**.

YOUNG LESBIANS AND BISEXUALS

Wet Behind the Ears: An Anthology About Young Lesbian and Bisexual Women is seeking submissions of poetry, erotica, photography, art, essays, comics, prose, and short stories from women aged 26 years or younger. Submissions should be no longer than 2500 words or 10 pages. Send submissions and a short bio to The In Your Face Collective, c/o Women's Press, 517 College St. Suite 233, Toronto, Ont, M6G 4A2. Deadline is **Oct 15**.

IMAGES OF JEWISH LIFE

Artist Sima Elizabeth Shefrin uses traditional techniques to produce quilts for her new exhibit, *Give me a stitch, I'll Take a Mile: Images of Jewish Life*: June 12 to July 3 at the Jewish Community Centre, 950 West 41st Ave, Vancouver. Opening night is June 12 from 7-10pm.

There will also be a quilting workshop with Sima Elizabeth Shefrin on June 25 from 1-5pm. The cost is $50. Pre-registration is encouraged. For more information contact Jeannie Kamins at 257-5111.

DA JUICE

Da Juice, a new black lesbian magazine, wants ideas, poetry, rap, stories, essays, songs, recipes, love letters, slides or photographs, collages, quilts or clothing, hairstyling tips, etc. Work written in languages other than English welcome. All submissions must be double spaced typed or neatly printed. Works under another name accepted. Please enclose SASE and Bio. Send submissions to *Da Juice*, PO Box 156, Stn P, Toronto, Ont, M5S 2S7. For more info call (416) 423-8031. Deadline is **July 15**.

CLASSIFIEDS

BACK-TO-SCHOOL GUIDE

The Back-to-School Survival Guide for Women, published by the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, is intended to help women make informed choices about learning. Available for $10 plus $3.75 shipping and handling. While supplies last, women who cannot afford the cost can receive a free copy. Please phone 271-2665 or toll free at 1-800-665-8002.

LESBIANS IN CHILLIWACK

Lesbian couple in Chilliwack looking for other lesbians interested in relaxing outdoor activities. These would include flat-water canoeing, easy treks, and camping. We are non-drinking, non-smoking women in our mid to late thirties. Phone (604) 795-7549.

LESBIAN SOCIAL WORKERS

Lesbian social worker seeks other lesbians with a BSW or MSW to participate in a one-time focus group for the purposes of a masters thesis at the UBC School of Social Work. Confidentiality assured. Call Bonnie at 253-4523.

WORKSHOPS AT HOLLYHOCK

Hollyhock Holistic Learning Centre on Cortes Island is offering workshops for women. Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom, with Dr. Christiane Northrup, is an introduction to the mind/body approach to women's healthcare issues. **July 3-6**. Tuition is $345. Mother's and Daughters, with Torkin Wakefield and Devin Hibbard, is open to all women who want to heal and deepen this powerful relationship. **July 10-16**. Tuition is $345. Women Drumming the Heartbeat, with Barbara Borden and Sue Lundquist, welcomes beginning and experienced drummers. **July 10-16**. Tuition is $425. Women and the Planet, with Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea, is a rite of passage for women attending to spirit and earth. **July 10-16**. Tiution is $445. Accomodations and meals at additional cost. For more info or to register, call 1-800-933-6339.

PARTICIPANTS WANTED

If you are a single woman or lesbian couple who have used donor inseminatinon, I would like to meet you and discuss your experience. I am looking for women who have obtained access to donor insemination from any source; e.g. fertility clinic, private doctor, personal arrangements. Confidentiality is assured. This project is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of Queen's University Medical School in association with the UBC Faculty of Nursing. For more information, please contact Sheila at 980-2945.

ARTIST'S SALE

Following a herculean spring cleaning effort in the studio, artist Sheila Norgate is happy to announce a two day only, priced to sell, never before offered, inventory blowout sale featuring original works of all sizes, block prints, cards, painted wooden bowls, and a brand new line of t-shirts ('nice girls apologize, bad girls strategize' and 'nice girls press flowers, bad girls press charges' to name two). She will not be undersold whatever that means. **Fri Jun 9** and **Sat Jun 10**, 11 am-4 pm. Suite 204-119 West Pender St, Van (between Cambie and Abbott). Call 689-4099 for more info.

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