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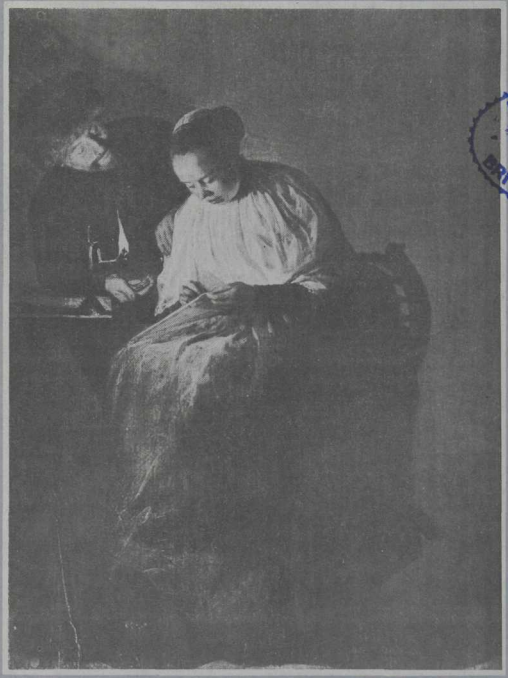
KINESIS

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies



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Sex trade workers: the life, the politics

Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Call us at 255-5499. Our next News Group meeting is Wed. Nov. 11, 1:30 pm at *Kinesis*, 301-1720 Grant St. All women welcome even if you don't have experience.

PRODUCTION THIS ISSUE: Marsha Arbour, Noreen Howes, Allisa McDonald, Esther Shannon, Nancy Pollak, Isis, Jody McMurray, Susan Fell Pacaud, Lucy Moreira, Val Speidel, Brenda Bryan, Kathee Muzin, Andrea Lowe, Jane Walton, Sonia Marino, Aletta Jacobs

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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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SUBMISSIONS: All submissions are welcome. We reserve the right to edit and submission does not guarantee publication. All submissions should be typed double spaced and must be signed and include an address and phone number. Please note *Kinesis* does not accept poetry or fiction contributions. For material to be returned, a SASE must be included. Editorial guidelines are available on request.

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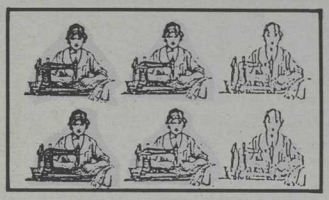

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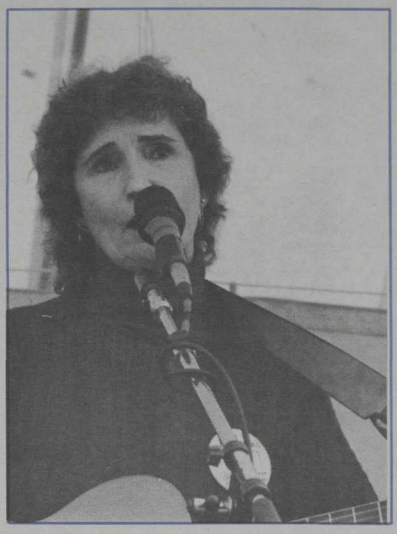

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MOVEMENT MATTERS

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 on eight and a half by eleven paper. Submissions may be edited for length. Deadline is the 18th of the month preceding publication.

Palestinian speakers

The Vancouver Committee to Support Palestinian Rights will be hosting two Palestinian women who are touring North America to generate support for and understanding of the Palestinian struggle. The women were scheduled to be in Vancouver from mid to late November but as the person making the arrangements with North American contacts has been detained by Israeli authorities it has been impossible to confirm dates.

Women who live on the West Bank or the Gaza Strip are living in an area that has been occupied by Israel and subject to military rule for 20 years. They, along with men, are subject to arrest and imprisonment for political reasons and under conditions of extreme ill-treatment including torture. Women prisoners have conducted two successful strikes for better conditions.

Women are also frequently put under house arrest. Families regularly have their houses destroyed if one member of the family is even suspected of illegal political activity. Palestinian women who live in refugee camps in Lebanon have been shot and killed while attempting to return to the camps with food for their families.

The Committee recognizes that there are many parallels between the experience of Palestinians and Canada's Native people, a fact which often escapes Canadian's attention. As only one example, Canada was colonized by England and settled mainly by European immigrants. Canada was established in total disregard of the wishes of the Native population. The same is true of the state of Israel. In both cases the colonizers portrayed the land as empty and waiting to be settled; in neither case was this true.

The Committee will be organizing an evening event when the Palestinian women arrive. Please watch for notices about this and come to hear what they have to say about conditions in their homeland. For more information call 877-0514.

Housewives report

It's Time To Speak Out, the second report of Housewives in Training and Research is now available. The report was developed by seven Vancouver women who interviewed women in their communities about their daily lives as housewives and mothers.

Sections on individual women's stories are balanced with factual information on welfare, education, poverty, daycare, immigrant women and more.

The study concludes with recommendations to housewives that urge them to seek emotional and financial recognition for their work and to governments calling for pensions and wages for housework. The report also urges the media to play a role by presenting realistic and positive images of housewives and their work.

Copies of the report can be obtained by writing Housewives in Training and Research, c/o South Vancouver Family Place, 7595 Victoria Drive, Vancouver, B.C. V5P 3Z6. A donation of $1.50 to cover postage costs is requested.

Call for submissions

Healthsharing, a Canadian feminist health quarterly, is planning a thematic issue on Women, Health and Economics for June, 1988.

The issue will address the impact of economic factors on women's social, emotional and physical lives. It will include personal and analytical articles, and will look at individual and systems level concerns.

Proposals should indicate whether an article is a personal experience, introduction to a problem, an analysis of issues or an interview. Also include the angle, what or who will be quoted, how long the article will be and why it will interest *Healthsharing* readers. Manuscripts due on Jan. 15th.

For further information write *Healthsharing* 101 Niagara St, Suite 200A, Toronto, Ontario M5V 1C3. 30

Apologies

Our apologies to Dolores Fitzgerald, whose article "Disabled woman files discrimination complaint" appeared in our October issue with a missing paragraph due to a production error.

The paragraph should have read as follows: "Meister's complaint generated broad public attention when the Ports Canada police intelligence unit decided to investigate her background to determine whether she was planning "any other aggressive actions." Intelligence officer, Larry Kozak, asked Meister's acquaintances about her home life, her political affiliations, whether she had a job and what community groups she belongs to."

Since the publication of the October issue Joan Meister has received an apology from Ports Canada. While pleased that Ports Canada has acknowledged its responsibility, Meister has suggested that since Ports Canada has admitted investigating other legitimate protesters they should be required to destroy any files they have on activists pressing for disabled access improvements to Crab Beach.

Corrections

Our November cover image was attributed to an unknown artist. In fact the image is from a work by well known artist Fernand Léger (1881-1955) called *Nus sur fond rouge* painted in 1923.

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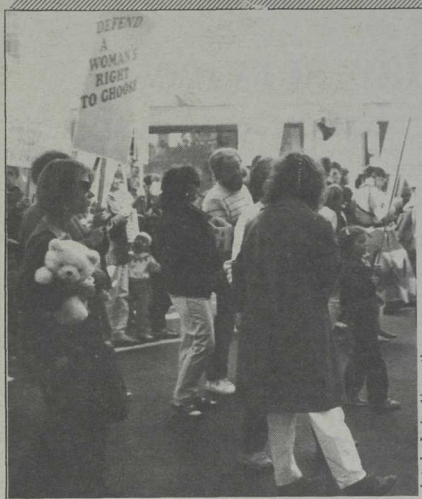


photo by Janice Ainsworth

Vancouver women marched and rallied on October 18, continuing the B.C. Coalition of Abortion Clinics (BCCAC) campaign to open an abortion clinic in Vancouver. The clinic coalition is working to raise $500,000 for legal defense costs before the clinic opens.

B.C. Coalition for Abortion Clinics: building support

by Noreen Howes

Many British Columbia Social Credit women disagree with their leader on one important issue according to Jackie Ainsworth of the B.C. Coalition of Abortion Clinics (BCCAC).

"Women Socreds we've talked to are upset that (Premiere William) Vander Zalm is trying to impose his personal political views on the populace ... " she said. "They feel that in a province where eighty-seven percent of the people support choice on abortion, there should be a separation of church and state."

Most of these women, Ainsworth added, are pro-choice but not necessarily pro-clinic. One woman active in the Social Credit party however does support plans to open a free-standing abortion clinic in Vancouver, and has offered to share her fundraising skill with BCCAC.

"As a backroom worker for the Socreds she does fundraising and she comes up with some great ideas like gourmet dinners at a hundred bucks a shot."

BCCAC is unwilling to provide the woman's name at this time, honoring her request for anonymity. They also refused to divulge the names of other supportive members of the Social Credit party.

Clinic organizers say the only way to successfully keep a clinic open is to have a broadly-based coalition; a membership drive is therefore a priority within BCCAC with people from all political parties asked to join.

"B.C. has the highest pro-choice support in the country, which means a lot of Socreds out there want the right to choose," said Ainsworth, "And of course we want individuals in the Progressive Conservative and Liberal parties represented as well."

NDP support is clear with leader Mike Harcourt assuring Medical Services Plan coverage for the clinic if his party gains power, and with the NDP Women's Rights Committee continuing to take an active role in the coalition.

Outreach work is also being done through B.C. Federation of Labour who will mail BCCAC membership requests to their locals across the province.

"We'll inform local officers of the clinic campaign, remind them of our policy supporting free-standing abortion clinics and suggest they tell their members to join the coalition," said Astrid Davidson of the B.C. Fed.

The fact that clinic support is rooted in the Vancouver women's movement, says Ainsworth, makes outreach to rural women an important part of BCCAC's membership drive. Support letters for the clinic have recently gone to every B.C. women's centre.

Fundraising—both for the clinic's eventual opening and for legal expenses in the event of it being shut down—are also a high priority of BCCAC.

Although the amount of money needed to actually open the clinic is not known, BCCAC estimates a $500,000 legal defense fund must first be raised to protect clinic workers.

According to Ingrid Pacey of Physicians for Choice doctors want this financial security before they will agree to work in a clinic. "It's a great risk physicians would be taking," she said. "It's an illegal act and they will be harassed by government, by the courts, by anti-choice people on the street ... "

Physicians for Choice is comprised of forty doctors supportive of choice on abortion but opposed to free-standing abortion clinics, and another forty favouring the establishment of a Vancouver clinic.

"Right now there isn't a cohesive group of doctors that support that position (of opening a free-standing abortion clinic in B.C.)," said Pacey. "There isn't money for legal defence or for the clinic."

There are presently no doctors willing to work in a Vancouver clinic. "We feel strongly that we're not going to find a Morgentaler to work in the clinic and we don't really want one," said Ainsworth. "We don't want to be open to the charges of a travelling abortionist ... we want a team of B.C. doctors."

Both Ainsworth and Pacey believe it to be a matter of educating doctors of the advantages, both in terms of accessibility and medical attention, to providing the services of a free-standing abortion clinic.

"We're still miles away from any *real* discussion on opening a clinic," said Ingrid Pacey.

Trail cleaners lose fight

by Noreen Howes

Attempting to keep their jobs, fourteen office cleaners at Cominco Industries in Trail, B.C. took on their bosses—both in the Steelworker's union and in the company—and lost.

Early in October, eighteen months after these women were told their cleaning jobs were being handed over to janitors (union brothers anxious to get back to work), an Industrial Relations Council (IRC) decision ruled against them.

"There is nothing inherently unlawful in a union making such a decision that favours one group of employees over another," the decision reads. "The Panel understands the sense of injustice the Complainants may feel ... but unfairness is not necessarily unfair representation."

The women filed a Section 7 complaint against local 480 after they were laid off in March 1986, charging the union with acting in bad faith and in a discriminatory manner. The union had refused their request to grieve the lay-offs.

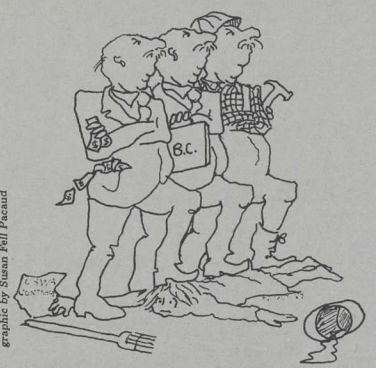
"Pretty soon we'll be dinosaurs," said Charleen Davidow, a cleaner with eight years seniority. "Extinct in this company ... and the union sat on their behinds and didn't lift a finger to get us rehired."

The August IRC hearing which ruled on the women's jobs was boycotted by local 480 as part of an overall B.C. Federation of Labour strategy. Their action proved detrimental to the women: evidence of the union's bad faith and discrimination was called inadmissable and hearsay due almost entirely to the union's absence.

Although Section 7's are historically hard to win, Steve Geller, the women's legal counsel, said the IRC made a political decision in supporting the union over the office cleaners.

"It was done to demonstrate to the Steelworkers and (Ken) Georgetti and the B.C. Federation of Labour that the IRC didn't deserve this harsh boycott treatment."

Consider their odds: living and working in a company town where both the company and union want them gone and where hundreds of laid-off men grasp at the chance to get back on the Cominco payroll.



graphic by Susan Pell Pacaud

The company was "in collusion" with the union, he added, over the decision to replace the office cleaners with janitors—a "meeting of the minds" said one Cominco representative at the IRC hearing.

"There's nothing in the collective agreement that prohibits the employer from transferring work; therefore the employer has open season on the union with the union's acquiescence ... it's a sad commentary on the union representation of its members, how they square that duty with how they get along with the employer."

The fourteen women have lost in their bid to regain their jobs but what's not lost to them is the strength and courage they've sharpened throughout this fight.

"We've hit a few nerves," said Davidow, "that these 'dumb women' could take it this far."

The women could find no legal help, "All the lawyers in Trail are either in the company pocket or the union pocket," and they sought instead the counsel of a lay advocate. But legal expenses still accumulated leaving the office cleaners with a $2,000 debt.

Further, the women were barraged from the outset with sexism from their union brothers.

Davidow recalls Local 480 president Bob Schmidt warning her that the women had made so much fuss they'd be sure to never work again and that since they weren't 'breadwinners' in the same way as men are, they therefore don't *deserve* the jobs.

"According to the union hot

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RCMP runs amok

by Marianne van Loon

Continuing the fight against pornography, RCMP raided a downtown Calgary office in mid October, and seized 42 slides. The office belongs to the Alberta Coalition Against Pornography (ACAP) and the slides, of magazines and books sold locally, are part of their anti-pornography presentation.

Janet LaVoie, coalition spokesperson said, "It's been wonderful publicity, but it's absurd. They should be supporting us. If we have porn on view, its because it's for sale (around Calgary). That's where they should be putting their energy.

The raid followed a complaint by a man who had seen the anti-pornography presentation previously. When he found out it was to be shown again, he contacted the authorities who duly attended the show. The RCMP discussed with ACAP the possibility of making a presentation to Alberta's Attorney General to determine if the slides were illegal or would come under the "public good" classification. However, this was apparently not the usual protocol, and two RCMP constables, armed with a search warrant raid the ACAP offices and made off with the slides.

Subsequently the Attorney General declined to press charges and the slides were returned, in a brown paper bag, by a plainclothes officer.

Legal aid cuts gut family law services

by Jackie Brown

There is a growing speculation that more B.C. women are having to turn to social assistance because the legal aid system cannot adequately represent their rights in family law matters.

Insufficient provincial funding and strict eligibility requirements are cited as major problem areas which make it difficult for many women to either obtain maintenance orders or have them enforced. As a result, some are being forced into poverty.

Barbara Findlay, Director of Client Services for the Legal Aid Services Society, says prior to restraint measures in 1982, a woman was eligible for legal aid if paying for a private lawyer would impair her ability to adequately house, feed and clothe herself and her family. Now, however, eligibility is based on Statistics Canada poverty guidelines, and only women earning $810 net per month or less qualify.

"So that means there are many women who can't afford a lawyer in a long maintenance or custody battle and they aren't able to get any help form us," said Findlay.

Jessica Gossen, of Gossen and Dunnaway, notes that the "absurdly low" financial levels means that even a woman in a low paying clerical job may not qualify for legal services, "despite the fact that she is below the poverty line."

Even those women who are eligible and get a maintenance order often have difficulty getting them enforced. Gossen says one reason is that family law fees are so low that lawyers eventually reach a point where they can no longer afford to stay on cases dragged out for months by men who know their wives will eventually run out of money to fight.

"Women in society aren't generally made a priority and another example of it is legal aid funding," says Gossen, who adds that the family law tariff rate is the same for criminal law—a mostly male area both in terms of lawyers and offenders—even though family law requires four times the work.

Those lawyers who take cases on a "pay as you go" basis for women who aren't eligible for legal aid, have an even tougher time of it, she says. "I have a client in a low paying clerical job ... and basically I've funded her lawsuit. Her husband is a longshoreman who earns $40,000 a year to her $10,000. She has an order, and he's ignored the process. So what happened was, she ran out of money and I've run out of the ability to fund the lawsuit."

Findlay says legal aid will provide enforcement assistance only in those very few instances where it is clear that the woman cannot proceed on her own. She adds, however, that family counselling services will help initiate a "show cause" hearing—where the husband must tell the court why he can't pay.

But, she said, it is up to the woman to convince the judge that he can—an often difficult process especially since the husband could have had plenty of time to prepare his defense. "She can cross examine, but that is a skill even some lawyers find difficult to acquire," says Findlay, adding that such hearings don't have a high success rate.

When asked if enforcement problems could be sending more women to social assistance, Findlay conceded the possibility: "I can't say, based on the statistics we have, that it's a fact. But what is true, is, if Mrs. Smith comes to us for enforcement of arrears, she won't get it unless it's urgent."

Gossen says there is no doubt that strict eligibility requirements and enforcement difficulties have increased the number on income assistance. Lack of reasonable maintenance along with provincial funding cutbacks to daycare and homemaker services, makes it impossible for many women with children to go to work, she says.

Gossen says the situation is even more desperate for women who can't get restraining orders to prevent their husbands from abducting the children or to protect themselves against abuse.

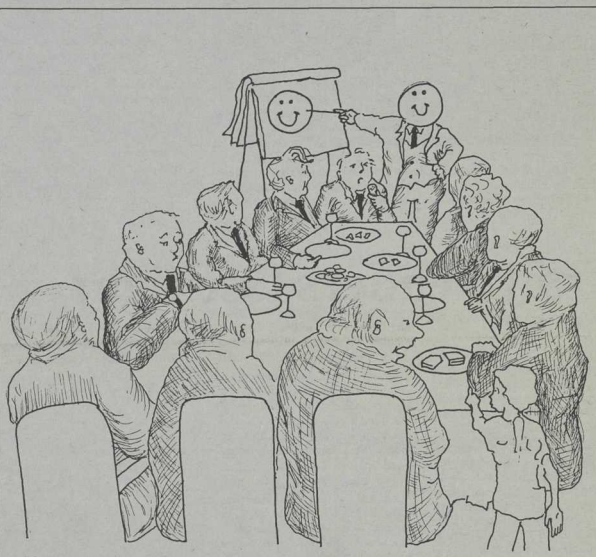
"Over and over again, I've met up with women who have been forced by the process or by their own lack of knowledge about (battered wife) services and by the incredible hustle it takes to get legal aid funding for a lawsuit, into situations where they've been literally fearing for their lives over a course of six months."

And, ironically, says Gossen, many are winding up with abusive men for financial support who they can't afford to kick out.

To try and make more husbands pay their court-ordered maintenance, the B.C. Attorney General's office has established the Family Maintenance Enforcement project. However, the program is only for women already on social assistance, says Findlay, and operates in the Vancouver area only—although plans for its expansion to other regions are in the works.

While Gossen says the program theoretically makes it tougher for husbands to skip payments because they would be in contempt of court and go to jail, she says judges rarely impose the penalty.

"My view is, you have many older judges, who have grown up with a different attitude towards family law and maintenance and have a different attitude towards the 'poor man' who is being taken to court. It's 'why doesn't she just go out and support herself and why doesn't she just go away." Gossen says while the courts might be publicly saying they are going to get tough, "it's not the case."



"Go away kid, can't you see we're busy eating—er, meeting?" *graphic by Susan Fell Pacaud*

con't from page 3

shots they were just womenfolk working for pin money," said Steve Geller. "Schmidt was outraged that this handful of 'ladies' had the temerity to fight him ... they were supposed to roll over and die, not be fighting two years later."

Bob Schmidt denies exercising any discrimination. "I have always pushed women to the forefront, same as I push men," he said, citing his daughter, a champion jockey, as an example.

Steve Geller found the experience of working with the women awe-inspiring.

"They got told over and over again 'we are the power so step aside'," he said, "but these extraordinary women still have the feeling in their bones that when they're treated wrongly—especially by their union—they want to make it right."

Bob Schmidt disagrees. " ... the impression I'm left with for these ladies is that all they care about is themselves, yes, they're selfish."

"We're trying to support ourselves and they say we're selfish!" said Davidow. "When our husbands walked out on us and left us with kids to support none of them lifted a finger to help ... it'll be the men who'll complain about all the women on welfare! They'll say 'she's just scumming off the guys who are working'."

According to Geller, the women have won a great victory by their courage, stamina and unity: victory for all Local 480 rank and file members. "It'll be a cold day in hell that the union will proceed in such a cavalier manner with a group of workers in the days ahead."

Donations and letters of support can be sent to: Cominco Office Cleaners, c/o 1430 5th Avenue, Trail, B.C. V1R 1P6.

School board moves slowly on hunger issue

By Kathryn Zeron

Vancouver has more than 10,000 children on welfare and more than 20,000 hit by the effects of unemployment. The Vancouver School Board's (VSB) Hungry Children's Committee had only identified 500 hungry children by June of this year.

The Child Poverty Action Committee (CPAC), established as a result of a April forum on child poverty which alerted British Colombians to the problems of hunger in the provinces schools, presented a brief to the VSB in late September urging stronger action on hunger issues.

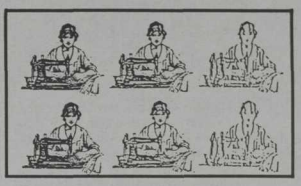
The CPAC brief argued that the school board should actively seek funds for a universal food program in Vancouver schools to ensure that poor children are not singled out. The CPAC says that the VSB committee's actions, to date consisting of further study, further education for teaching staff and more research into the effects of hunger on learning, are not enough. It recommends that the school board seek support from the federal Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), which could provide up to 50 per cent funding for a food program. According to the CPAC the school board could also investigate the prospects of hiring a consultant from the City of Vancouver to actively seek CAP funding.

A variety of other groups at the school board meeting also urged more concrete action. The British Columbia Association of Social Workers asked the VSB "... not to shirk their responsibility on the basis that such needs are more properly in the domain of other government departments because this excuse is unacceptable at a time when the arm of government most responsible — the Ministry of Social Services and Housing — has directly reduced income support levels for the first time in 60 years."

The British Columbia Nurses Union (BCNU), also appearing before the VSB, said "If the school board is to succeed in their mission of providing an education to Vancouver's children they must address the problem of inadequate nutrition. To this end we suggest first, food and second, education. The BCNU recommended that the VSB "... consider a breakfast program and nutrition education."

Support for school food programs will only come from public pressure and this need will not be met until the public is informed by major newspapers such as the Vancouver Sun and Province. Both newspapers failed to report the strong demands for a food program from a wide cross section of community groups.

Advisory council ducks leadership on free trade



by Esther Shannon

Canadians who have come to expect that the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women will provide leadership and activism on the major social, political and economic policy issues confronting women in Canada are in for a surprise when it comes to the issue of women and free trade.

A look at the Council's recently released publications on women and free trade discloses, at best, a mixed and, at worst, a dangerously misleading message to Canadian women. As significantly, the message to the federal government and business, the key supporters of the free trade initiative, is that the Advisory Council is not going to make waves about the impact of free trade on women.

In October, the Council published three background papers on free trade and its impact on women, all presented with the disclaimer that the information in each paper was "provided by the author, and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Council."

Two of the papers present research and analysis on the impact of free trade in two key sectors, manufacturing and services; the other paper entitled "Free Trade and Canadian Women: An Opportunity for a Better Future" attempts an overview, touching on the key sectors and women as consumers.

A reader studying these papers and attempting to draw some overall conclusions is left at a total loss. The authors of the papers investigating the impact on women in manufacturing and service industries present analysis and statistics that lead inescapably to the conclusion that free trade will have a profoundly negative impact on women working in these sectors. The author of the overview paper, however, hails a bright future for women, both as workers and consumers, if a free trade deal is consummated.

The paper on manufacturing, co-authored by Ann Porter and Barbara Cameron, and the paper on services, authored by Marjorie Cohen, agree that free trade will mean an increase in unemployment for women in both sectors. Both also argue that wages in these sectors will fall and working conditions will be eroded. As well, both agree that social services and legislation affecting women, such as equal pay and affirmative action, may be called into question by Canadian employers who believe such services and policies put them at a disadvantage when it comes to competing with American business.

The third paper, prepared by Katie Macmillan presents an overview of the issue and concludes that "a free trade arrangement with the United States would improve economic prospects for Canadian women."

Macmillan argues that women "particularly in the service sector will face greatly expanded job opportunities" and that "the removal of tariff barriers on goods and services imported from the United States would mean substantial savings for Canadian consumers." While Macmillan agrees that women's employment in the manufacturing sector could drop, she says such industries are "already under intense international competitive pressure."

About the only thing all three papers agree on is that major labour adjustment programs, specifically geared to women, will be required if Canada and the United States conclude a free trade treaty. In other words, a free trade deal is going to have a major impact on women.

This is, apparently, the single point of agreement that the Advisory Council has with the papers. In a press release accompanying the studies the Council says "Labour adjustment programs must be designed to accommodate the unique needs of female workers and offer retraining programs with assistance for childcare." The Council also states that, for effective programs, "it is essential that women's views be taken into consideration."

According to Cohen, a leading feminist economist and the author of a recently released book on women and free trade, the Council's intention to concentrate on pushing for labour adjustment programs is "pathetically inadequate."

"Calling for adjustment programs," said Cohen, "is just one minor thing ... Currently no adjustment program policy exists with respect to free trade and women's past experience shows no great success with labour adjustment programs."

Sylvia Gold, Council President, described the papers as fulfilling the Council's mandate to bring issues of concern to women to public attention.

"We have taken leadership on this issue ," Gold said, "in producing these documents ... We are fulfilling our goal of informing and educating the public ... "

"These three papers," said Gold, "present three different perspectives because we don't have a crystal ball on free trade ... We hope women will use the papers to make their own judgments."

According to Cohen the Council approach is extraordinary. "Free trade," Cohen said, "is going to have a massive effect on women and the government is not serious about studying this impact.

There were 72 studies done for the MacDonald Commission (The 1985 Commission urged the government to negotiate a free trade deal with the Americans) and as far as we know not one of them addressed women. This is an clear indication of how seriously government is taking women's concerns.

"The Council must come out strongly and advise the government not to go through with this deal. It must take its role to speak for women much more seriously."

Gold agrees that the lack of studies on women and free trade is "a major problem" and says that the Council will continue to urge government to undertake this work.

She does not, however, see the Council advocating a position on free trade, either for or against.

"We intend to continue to monitor issues around labour adjustment," said Gold. Aside from that, Gold says "We've done our work on free trade and we will be moving to a number of other areas that need our attention."

South Africa

Commonwealth grapples with sanctions

by Nancy Pollak

Joseph Clark, Canada's Minister of External Affairs, admitted to "sanctions fatigue," eager Canadian officials romped on the giddy heights of high moral ground, and Brian Mulroney — for the first time in a very long time — smelled like a rose.

The Commonwealth Conference has come and gone, and while no gains were made on the central issue of sanctions against South Africa, African leaders were pleased that Canada's prime minister maintained a strong pro-sanction position.

With Britain standing alone in its refusal to endorse sanctions, the remaining Commonwealth countries reaffirmed their belief that "economic and other sanctions have had a significant effect on South Africa and that their wider, tighter and more intensified application must remain an essential part of the international community's response to apartheid."

Britain, whose trade with South Africa far exceeds that of all other Commonwealth nations combined, has steadfastly asserted that putting the economic squeeze on Pretoria will only 'hurt' Black South Africans.

A recent poll of Black South Africans revealed that fully 67 percent support full sanctions as the appropriate means of forcing the South African government to end its 16 month-old state of emergency and, ultimately, to abolish apartheid.

BERNARD BENNELL/The Globe and Mail

Britain did, however, agree to join Canada in providing economic support to South Africa's neighbours, the front-line states.

Margaret Thatcher had been expected to demonstrate Britain's 'abhorrence' of apartheid by promoting such aid measures, rather than sanctions, and there was considerable worry that assistance to front line states would overshadow sanctions as the Commonwealth's foremost anti-apartheid strategy. Observers were satisfied this did not happen.

The economies of the front line states have traditionally been interwoven with South Africa's, producing a dependency that has proven devastating. In addition, Pretoria is waging unofficial war with many of its neighbours: South African-backed soldiers in Mozambique have destroyed rail and port facilities, hamstringing that country's economy. (Mozambique was granted observer status at this —and the next —Commonwealth conference.)

Vancouver anti-apartheid activists give Mulroney a mixed review for his conference performance. While congratulating Canada for defying the intransigent British, African National Congress member Kerensa Lai Thom asserted that only total sanctions, rather than Canada's elective approach, will work.

"Brian Mulroney, in his speech to the U.N. in 1985, stated that Canada would sever all diplomatic and economic ties if South Africa didn't move away from apartheid. The time has now come for Mulroney to keep his word," said Lai Thom. Describing Canada's present level of sanctions as "pretty good", Lai Thom also remarked that there were "loopholes everywhere."

Louie Ettling, active in various anti-apartheid groups, observed that Mulroney's progressive stance gave organizers "something to kick against, something to work with in Canada."

Petro Canada continues to peddle Vancouver sulphur to Pretoria, and Carolyn Jerome of the "Call Off The Sulphur" group felt "no enthusiasm, no progress" from the conference.

Shell Canada and its Netherlands-based parent deal extensively with South Africa. This fall, the anti-apartheid network is gearing up for a major Canada-wide boycott of Shell. To get involved, or for details, contact 734-1712 or 877-1287.

Meech Lake

Parliament approves accord

by Kinesis Staff Writer

The Meech Lake Accord was passed by Parliament in late October with only a handful of Liberal and New Democrat members of Parliament voting against the agreement.

Women's groups opposed to the accord seem, however, to have found a new ally, amid continuous signs that the accord has less than unanimous support amongst Canadians.

Recently elected New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna has expressed reservations about the accord saying that he is uncertain the accord has adequate protection for women's and minority rights. McKenna has also criticized the accord's amending formula, which he says would block any hope for an elected Senate.

McKenna's comments have raised new hopes that English women's groups may yet get the accord amendments they have been lobbying for since all provincial governments must approve the accord before it passes into the Constitution.

The accord designates Quebec as a "distinct society" and gives the provinces a say in the makeup of the Senate and the appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada.

With the important exception of women's groups in Quebec, women's groups in Canada argue that the accord's vague language could allow Quebec to discriminate against women despite the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They have urged that Section 16 of the accord, which extends special guarantees to aboriginal and multicultural groups, be expanded to include women.

WHAT' S NEWS?

by Esther Shannon

Fines program unfair

According to recent provincial Justice Department figures almost half of the women jailed in Saskatchewan in fiscal 1985-86 were behind bars because they did not pay fines levied as alternatives to prison. Figures show 43 percent of women, compared to 32.6 percent of men, served time instead of paying fines.

Arla Gustafson, executive director of the provinces Elizabeth Fry Society said the difference between the numbers of women and men going to jail indicates a desperate need for changes to the system. She said some poor women, including single parents are unable to take advantage of Saskatchewan's fine options program because they can't afford childcare.

The fine options program allows offenders unable or unwilling to pay fines the opportunity to work for a given time instead of paying fines. The program would be more fair if the government put up money for babysitting according to Gustafson.

graphic by Susan Pell Pacaud

Stillbirths increasing

Recent statistics are showing the incidence of pregnancy loss, including miscarriage, among younger women is increasing to as much as eight times greater for women aged 20 to 30 than for women 30 to 35. Researchers believe that a sexually transmitted micro-organism, ureaplasma urealyticum, may be responsible for an increasing number of young women bearing stillborn babies after the fifth month of pregnancy. Studies show that 85 per cent of sexually active adolescents have the organism in their genital tract and it is thought that younger women have been exposed to more genital tract micro-organisms through having more sexual partners than older women. Ureaplasma urealyticum is sexually transmitted and grows like bacteria in the genital tracts of both men and women.

Incest award overturned

An Ontario incest victim has had a $50,000 jury ordered compensation award overturned by the justice presiding over the Ontario Supreme Court case. Mr Justice William Maloney ruled that the woman's claim was nullified by the statue of limitations.

The jury found that the woman's 56 year old father had committed incest against his daughter from the time she was eight until she left home when she was 16. They awarded her $10,000 in general damages and $40,000 in punitive damages.

The statute of limitations normally provides that an action in an assault suit must be started within four years after the cause arises or six years in the case of negligence. The woman left home in 1973 and did not start the action until 1985.

The woman's lawyer argued that the statue of limitations provides that the run of time is stopped if a person is of unsound mind when the action arises, and that applies until the person becomes of sound mind. The Justice did not accept the lawyers argument that the woman was of unsound mind, despite testimony from a psychiatrist who said the woman experiences numerous problems including insomnia, nightmares and phobias.

Gay rights stalled

October 26 marked the second anniversary of the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights which recommended that the federal government include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act.

In the face of continued inaction from the government EGALE, an Ontario based coalition of concerned individuals and groups has launched a major drive to demand that the Conservative government enshrine protection for gays and lesbians in the human rights act. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) is a strong supporter of the campaign and points out that "the absence of equality rights legislation is an unacceptable signal that the government condones discrimination against lesbians and their families."

Canadians are urged to write the Minister of Justice, Ramon Hnatyshyn, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6 asking that the government include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination. Copies of letters should be sent to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Liberal Justice critic Robert Kaplan and N.D.P. Justice critic Svend Robinson.

Legalizing midwifery

A special task force on midwifery, set up after the Ontario government promised to incorporate midwifery into its health care system, has issued its report. The task force calls for training and licencing of midwives as independent professionals, the establishment of a midwifery college to regulate the profession and safeguards to guarantee standards of midwifery practice. The report also recommends that midwives, in consultation with the medical profession, prepare a protocol to be used in assessing which mothers can safely give birth at home. Ontario's Health Minister has announced she will seek reactions to the report before taking any action on its recommendations.

Quebec farm women organize

The newly formed Federation des agricultrices du Quebec intends to teach farming women how to protect themselves legally in the event of a marriage breakdown and help farm women secure loans from financial institutions.

Kinesis file graphic

Mariette Breniel, a founder of the Federation, said that in the past "women shared the farm work but they weren't guaranteed anything." Women now account for 11 percent of Quebec farm producers, up from four percent in 1984.

The association is made up of regional women's farm groups and has 1,400 members. It hopes to affiliate itself with Quebec's largest farmers' association, L'Union de producers agricoles, later this year. The Quebec government contributed $165,000 to help set up the association.

Government funds anti-choice

Alberta feminists are up in arms over a federal government decision to fund a series of workshops by the pro-life Alberta Federation of Women United for Families (AFWUF).

The Federation, an affiliate of Real Women of Canada, was granted $5,800 from the Secretary of State for five workshops at their annual November conference. According to Federation board member, Lorna La Grange, "It's the first time I think the government funded a pro-family, pro-life, women's lobby group in North America." The workshops include topics such as lobbying, prostitution and child care.

Luanne Armstrong, of the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee, noted that Secretary of State funding guidelines prohibit groups from using government funding to fight the abortion issue. "Whatever work we do on the abortion issue, we do with private funding," Armstrong said.

Pap smears cut cervical cancer

by Kinesis Staff Writer

The incidence of death due to cervical cancer among Canadian women has dropped by over 50 per cent since the development of pap smears over 35 years ago. But from 1971 to 1980, the incidence of the disease in women 15 to 24 years old rose by 79 per cent, due possibly to an increasing trend to multiple sex partners.

Experts now agree that cervical cancer can be initiated only by a sexually transmitted agent, however they also hold that there are a number of cofactors at work, the most important of which is believed to be smoking. Interestingly, barrier methods of birth control are seen as helpful in reducing the risk of cervical cancer.

While pap smear tests and early treatment are working, medical research into the causes of the disease is continuing with much of the work being done in Canada. Since 1976, several human Papilloma viruses (HPV) have been studied for malignant potential. There are 46 known human Papilloma viruses that cause many wart conditions, most of them benign.

Two particularly dangerous cervical infections caused by HPV-16 and HPV-18 are currently being studied to determine the viral agent responsible for malignant cervical growths.

Researchers have found that HPV affects cattle causing warty growths and scientists have been able to develop an effective bovine vaccine that offers hope for human immunization. It is estimated, however, that the development of a human vaccine could take as long as 12 years.

Pap smears are done to pick up pre-cancer of the cervix, known as cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN). According to one researcher, "If there is one good screening test known, it's the pap smear."

Treatments for pre-cancer, involving extreme heat (electrocautery) or cold (cryotherapy) as well as laser vaporization and traditional surgery, are effective in most cases.

There is controversy about the stage at which treatment should begin. What is unclear is the malignant potential of what is known as a flat condyloma, a wart like growth. Some medical experts call for treatment if the flat condyloma is observed, while others say you are only treating the effect of the virus, not the virus itself. There is still not enough information to conclusively say whether or when flat condylomata should be treated.

It appears, however, that a flat condyloma can develop into a atypical condyloma and from there follow through a number of pre cancer stages to severe dysplasia (CIN III) or carcinoma-in-situ, a stage still treatable by the above mentioned methods. Invasive cancer of the cervix, the final stage, traditionally requires radical hysterectomy and radiation treatment.

Breast feeding activist urges action and support

by Nancy Pollak

photo by R. Bruhart

Margaret Kyenkya and her son, Mugada.

A billboard in east Africa.

In each massive panel, a cheerful African woman demonstrates an aspect of breast feeding. Her plump baby suckles happily, held securely in the crook of her arm. Mother carefully washes her nipple before and after the feeding. Healthy mother. Healthy baby.

A government campaign promoting maternal and infant well-being? Not on your life, says Margaret Kyenkya, a breast feeding activist from Kenya. This particular public message was brought to the women of Africa by Nestlés, the infamous manufacturer of infant formula. It brims with misinformation.

"Look at how this baby is positioned [it is incorrect]," says Kyenkya at her Vancouver speak in October. "And this advert tells a woman that you wipe your breast before and after each feed. If you advise a woman to wash her nipple on the day she delivers, the following day her nipples will be hard, the third day they'll be cracked, and she'll be hooked on breast milk substitutes.

"The International Code states that information on breast feeding should be coming from experts, *not* from the manufacturers of baby food." It's not hard to see why.

The Code — the International Code on the Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes passed by the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) in 1981 — is a prime tool used by Kyenkya and the worldwide movement against the multinational corporations producing infant formula [see box].

The Infant Feeding Action Coalition (INFACT) Canada sponsored the cross-country tour by Kyenkya, the former African Regional Coordinator for the Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), and her successor, Christine Lwanga of Kenya.

Disturbing Trends

Kyenkya made it plain that neither the 1984 lifting of the Nestles boycott nor the Code's near-unanimous passage (only the U.S. voted against) were grounds for relaxed vigilance by organizers. With annual sales at $4 billion and growing, the infant formula industry is as vigorous as ever.

"Statistics show that breast feeding rates are on the increase in western countries. The more educated women are, the more they breast feed," said Kyenkya.

"In Africa it is the opposite, and I think this applies to Latin America and Asia ... breast feeding trends are going *down*, faster than they were in the 60's."

The reasons are multifold. Traditional home births are decreasing as women are persuaded to use health facilities which mimic western practices and actively discourage the establishment of lactation.

Increased urbanization and compulsory schooling — the separating of mother and child — are also leading factors.

A new threat to breast feeding are attitudes surrounding the AIDS epidemic. Although the HIV virus has been found in the milk of infected women, there have been no studies proving transmission. As one researcher said, "Before we in the west make recommendations that will impinge on the lives of some of the world's neediest people, we need to consider it's effects ... an unproven attempt to prevent even one infant infection [may] lead to injury and death to countless thousands ... from infection and malnutrition."

The devaluing and maligning of breast milk, described by Kyenkya as "a very valuable world resource we are allowing to go to waste," has appalling consequences for babies.

It is estimated that 40,000 children die daily in the Third World. Activists are convinced that many of those lives could be saved by the nutrition and immunological protection offered by breast feeding.

The economic consequences are also significant. "[INFACT Canada] predicted that in the 80's, the developing world would be spending at least $1 billion annually on formula ... that is more than the World Bank was lending African nations in 1977 to settle their economic problems."

The economic drain is ludicrous on more than the national scale: one study has shown that a Kenyan minimum wage earner would have to spend 32 – 67 percent of her pay on formula.

Working women were of particular concern to Kyenkya. "One of the myths used to encourage bottle feeding ... is that this is a modern world and women in Third World countries need to go out and work and, as long as they work, they cannot breast feed.

"My question is, if we have to work, do we then have to condemn ourselves and our babies to a life of bottle feeding?"

The question can be applied globally. The factors compelling Canadian workers to stop breast feeding — employment conditions which simply won't accommodate a nursing mother, and the absolute need to earn money — are exaggerated for poor Third World women. And, as Kyenkya said, "[breast milk substitutes actually] increase their load of work *for nothing* ... as long as their babies are not breast fed, they get sicker more often and the mothers spend more time going to clinics."

Maternity leave legislation wouldn't help the majority of women working in the 'informal' sector (such as sweat shops, stores and rural areas). Citing a study showing that unrefrigerated breast milk survives for over 8 hours, Kyenkya recommended that "we support working women in learning how to express milk, so they can leave it for their babies."

Modern World, Disastrous Results

The 'modern world' issue crops up again and again for Kyenkya, and it reveals a class dimension. Wealthy Third World women eschew breast feeding, and poor women — rural and urban — emulate them with disastrous results.

Kyenkya described how, at the Women's Decade Conference in Nairobi, 1985, her group's display in the appropriate technology area didn't please everyone. "The decision-makers — for instance, a woman Minister of Health — didn't want to hear about it. [It's] challenging her position: she worked hard, she held her heart and left her children behind and moved between men and went up.

"Now you want to pull her back and bring your babies crawling in her office. That's not nice. We still have *that* to fight."

Kyenkya's work in Africa has been an energetic mix of grass-roots organizing and government lobbying. IBFAN's network has spread from Kenya to Zambia, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland, Nigeria, Uganda and Mauritius (they are not allowed into South Africa). Working closely with traditional mothers' support groups and health workers, IBFAN has succeeded in keeping breast milk substitutes out of many government hospitals. Private and religious mission hospitals still accept — and dispense – free formula samples.

Just Four Women

In Nairobi, a small volunteer group of breast feeding counsellors made an enormous difference.

"Clinics can be very crowded ... 300 women waiting with their children. These counsellors would go at six in the morning and start shouting about breast feeding.

"They have changed the situation in Nairobi so much that women in every part of the city call them up to get help. Just the four of them. Because of their work, we started getting funding ... the government is starting to respond by having their own employees promote breast feeding."

In the 70's, African organizers relied heavily on western anti-formula groups for information and strategies. Now, the information and strategy flow has reversed. Kyenkya described how an African colleague, invited to a breast feeding conference in Ireland, galvanized the isolated organizers into coordinated action.

She called upon Canadians to do the same. "The person working with mothers in the hospitals *needs* the link with the person standing on the street demonstrating, and the link with the women in government who are feminist."

For Kyenkya, it takes "getting the courage to challenge the system; to say, *yes* we want to be free, but with our children along with us."

Contact INFACT Canada at 4768 Blenheim St., Vancouver BC V6L 3A6. Tel. 253-4684

Nestlés vs. the Third World

In the 70's, a global outcry against the aggressive marketing of breast milk substitutes in the Third World by multinational giants such as Nestles, Mead-Johnson and Wyeth resulted in a boycott against Nestles. Infant formula was — and continues to be — responsible for countless deaths: mothers are unable to understand cryptic labels, formula is overdiluted to make up for an inadequate supply, and a lack of clean water and sterile bottles and teats exposes babies to deadly illnesses.

Worse still, bottle feeding deprives a baby of the essential nutrients and natural defenses in breast milk, and robs both mother and child of an emotional bond.

The International Code grew out of this movement. Strengthened in 1986, the Code advocates the promotion of breast feeding and advises restrictions on the commercial behaviour of multinationals. For example, companies are *not* to supply free samples to hospitals, a prime route by which new mothers are seduced into bottle feeding.

The Nestles boycott ended in 1984 with the company agreeing to comply with the Code. Since then, Nestles and the other firms have made a mockery of that promise. Free samples are unloaded daily, in Kenyan hospitals, in Canadian hospitals. Attempts have been made to compromise breast feeding action groups with promises of funding. Articles critiquing the benefits of breast milk are planted in magazines.

The Code is a guideline only: to date, only four Third World countries have actually made it the law of the land. In Canada, the federal government passes the buck to the province and the province shrugs its shoulders, saying our hospitals are private and beyond legislation. And babies in Canada continue to die.

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Mexico City women's centre has broad goals

by Kim Irving

It's dusk and rainy in downtown Mexico as I pass by the military police who guard this corner day and night. Although they pay little attention to passers-by, I still feel unnerved. It is with a sigh of relief that I spot the crescent women's symbol above the name Cuarto Creciente on the nearby building. It tells me that I have arrived at Mexico City's first women's centre.

I am immediately welcomed into the Centre and given a tour by Angie, one of *Cuarto's* most dedicated workers. The Centre is divided into several rooms: a health room where women can receive alternative health care and birth control information, an art room that is used for everything from photography to macrame; a library and documentation centre; and for the more energetic feminist, a fully equipped dance studio. Each Friday night the Centre hosts a coffeehouse with local entertainment, which provides enough funds to keep the place open.

The Centre is situated on the site where the statue of Coyolxauhqui was discovered. This Aztec moon goddess, according to myth and the women at *Cuarto*, was the last matriarch to reign before the rise of patriarchy (she was murdered by her brother who stole her crown).

While visiting the Centre I am able to talk with Virginna Sanchez, founder and coordinator of *Cuarto Creciente*. After spending ten years in Europe where she studied and was involved in the women's movement, she returned to Mexico with the dream of opening a women's centre. Her personal funds went towards the first month's rent and renovation of the Centre, where she lived for the first two years.

Cuarto Creciente is named for the day that it opened, October 6, 1984, the eve of the quarter moon.

Virginna, you spent some time in Europe during your twenties. Could you tell me a bit about your experiences?

I arrived in Europe in '73 and returned back to Mexico in '82. When I left I was married. In those days women had to marry in order to get out of the house. So here I was, part of a traditional couple—and I was dying. So I left for France. There, I worked and also studied. I met some Latina women and began to acknowledge my Latin identity. I stayed in France for seven years and came out as a lesbian through a very intellectual process which started in our women's group meetings where we knew that the best of our energy and commitment was with each other, yet we were always going home to our men each night. Eventually we questioned "why are we going home to men?" We began to realize our sexual feelings for each other.

When I returned to Mexico there was not really an active movement here. I was strong on the idea of building a women's centre. I wanted to create a space where life could have some continuity. I met with several groups and there was some positive and negative feedback to my idea.

Cuarto Creciente *is Mexico city's first women's centre. I understand you received some criticism after it was opened. What was the criticism?*

There was criticism that *Cuarto* wasn't solely a lesbian centre—which was never my intention. This doesn't mean I'm hiding my life, my identity, my love for women. It's just we cannot reproduce the ghetto. I thought *Cuarto* could be a stimulus for lesbian issues—I believe in common living.

And this past few years I've gone through another process, that is beginning to relate to men again. This is very much criticized. It's been hard fighting the criticism from the women I know—the ones I was formed with, but I don't feel bad about my process at all. At *Cuarto* now, you'll find a mixture of women. You'll find women who don't know how to read. You'll find secretaries ... and this has been criticized.

I want to work for a place where women are offered the chance to meet. Where their prejudices are allowed to meet—and that they face these prejudices. It is those prejudices that stop us from being able to work together. Unless we allow ourselves to be confronted with all women, or women's centres we don't like ... we are then only fooling ourselves and we are dividing ourselves. And this only benefits the state.

In those days women had to marry in order to get out of the home.

Doing Something Together

It's been mentioned several times to me that the 1985 earthquake was what initiated the formation of new groups in Mexico. Where were you at the time of the earthquake?

At the time of the earthquake several women were living with me at *Cuarto*. Out of six of them, four lost their family homes. And one was about to have a baby. So, here I was left alone again—one year after starting the Centre. I was ready to throw the towel in! But, at that time, there was a very desperate need. In the streets it was us, the people, that organized the traffic, took away the rubble, did the rescue work ... it was very tragic but also very wonderful. You see, it had been fifteen or sixteen years since masses of people have done something together (since the 1971 rock concert massacre). So after the earthquake our unity was very strong. But there was also a very fast attack by the state. They sent the army in who tried to stop our work.

Since I was alone, I decided to concentrate on my neighbourhood, *Cuarto's* neighbourhood which was in the centro—a very big and poor neighbourhood. This was very fruitful. It was a whole new discovery for me finding all these strong beautiful women near me. And when they realized what *Cuarto* was they became very supportive. Some more women moved in with me, so we rented a space upstairs and kept the Centre as a women's centre. There were very poor women, middle class women, women who had just left their homes. However, personal problems swallowed my energy and we never got to do as much outreach as we wanted. It's been a year and a half since they left—and now they are just returning.

This all sounds emotionally draining

I've learned it's worth sticking with it. To stick out those natural emotional rhythms. Since I don't live there any more, as of two months ago, women who are new there and women from the previous collective have no one to direct them. So it's going through a kind of a crisis—and I have to allow that to happen instead of running to it and try and fix it—solve the problems.

It's been hard for some women—all the women working at *Cuarto* now are new to feminism. I guess I haven't been very organized in their formation. I should have made it easier for them to fit in—I realize this now.

But I'm proud—I think we all can be proud that we finance ourselves. We can pay the Friday night bands, the phone and rent and provide two small salaries. Of course, my hope for *Cuarto* is that the women in the neighbourhood will eventually take it over, to satisfy their own needs.

In 1981 you went to the First Encuentro of Latin American and Caribbean Feminists in Colombia—what was that like?

In Colombia, I worked hard to organize a lesbian workshop which everyone was opposed to initially. Everyone had their reasons; two of my Colombian friends said they were tired of heterosexual women always using them. However, the workshop went ahead and in the first hour over 300 women attended—practically the whole Encuentro!

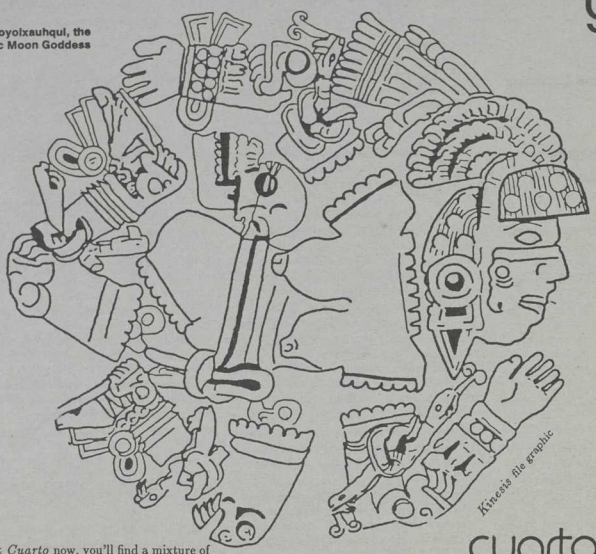
Organizing Inside the Empire

What role did Mexican feminists play in the Encuentro—from the first to the upcoming fourth one in Mexico this October?

In Colombia there was six Mexican women and I believe we played the big sister role. The second one in Peru was more academic. Peruvian feminists have ten times the structure compared to Mexico organizing. In the third one, in Brazil, I don't think Mexicans played much of a role. In this fourth, the role we are going to play is going to come through the lesbian issues. It's the only group that has considered having a lesbian look on the rest of reality. Also, Mexican women should recognize that the Colombians, Peruvians and Brazilians have experience in organizing Encuentros. We are fooling ourselves by taking it so easy.

... we knew that the best of our energy and commitment was with each other...

I have been quite frustrated with the coordination of the fourth. They have been quite deaf to my suggestions that we have the geographic privilege to be meeting with our Chicana sisters, whose political and feminist experiences are totally different than ours. We have a lot to learn from them and they have a lot to learn from us. This social change that we visualize will not come about by isolating ourselves. We have to go



Coyolxauhqui, the Aztec Moon Goddess

Kinesis file graphic

cuarto creciente

In order not to fall into the traps of the state we need long term visions

Kinesis file graphic

An Ancient Zapotec Goddess of Time

beyond our national limits. American Latinas and the Third World are very strong—and we would be stronger if we were organized inside the empire. So, I'm very frustrated that I haven't been able to communicate this to the organizers in the last two years.

But feminists here and the left must be continuously bombarded with Americanism ... plus you've had the privilege of living abroad and being a part of other movements.

Yes. I think having studied in the U.S. and Europe, having the privilege of being able to go back and forth, helped me see the use of combining information. Like, learning about the Italian feminist struggle—how they were torn to pieces and where they are now—and sharing that information so that we don't have to go through the same experiences ourselves. But there is a common prejudice amongst different political lefts—at least in Latin American countries. When you talk about the social struggles somewhere else, when you make some kind of analogy, they think you are imposing left imperialism. Of course, you have to be careful you're not, but sometimes we don't recognize what we can gain from learning from other struggles.

Have the Encuentros assisted in forming the Latina feminist movement?

Very much. They have helped us focus on producing a common strategy. It's where we have been able to meet *outside* patriarchal institutions. It's where women have started talking about our sexuality, birth control or our demographic repressions. And where we've been able to go back to our countries with new information and tools. Between the two years of the Encuentro's we visualize and verbalize our commitments as a continental movement.

You also attended the International Lesbian Conference in Geneva in 1986. What was gained there for Mexican women?

Seven months after the earthquake, we went to Geneva. Everything on our minds was absorbed with the last few months of rebuilding our society. Our whole existence had been helping people who were living in the streets—who had no food, no clothing, illness ... In Geneva, I was hoping for international support—developing a network. *No one* wanted to hear anything. Only the Danish women were open.

Geneva was so racist! Right from their application forms they sent in the mail ... funds were available for the blind, disabled, the black—it's so absolutely ignorant to put us in those terms! *We are not the blind. We are not the Black. We are not the Latinas. Come on!*

At Geneva I found the white women and the European women very guilty over their racism—actually paralyzed and immobilized by their guilt. There was this pretense there: "Oh, we'll send you our money or we'll send you our left over magazines." There was no acknowledgement from them of what they learn from us. Or it comes out in a very 'touristic' attitude "Oh, those Latinas they're such good dancers!" But I am also fed up with the Third World attitude of victimizing ourselves. We all have to change our roles. We have to come out of our roles of always asking for money and they have to come out of their roles of "Oh, yes, here—take half my sweater." We are so different. We have a lot to learn from each other.

Perhaps we are not ready to meet globally yet?

I guess not. That's sad. Because that means more war, more hardship—more women being oppressed.

Revolution?

The left in Mexico has tried several times to unite left communities—the feminist community, the lesbian/gay community. The decision to work with the left has divided feminists in the past. Do you feel women should work with the left?

As feminists we need to tell the left that the source of exploitation of women isn't necessarily in the industries, but in the family. They need to expand their thinking on social oppression. I think feminists have to go through a separate movement, unless we are willing to go deeper into analysis of our movement. At this point we have nothing to give or say to the left. We have to work on ourselves. After that we can work with them and not be swallowed by them.

As feminists we need to talk about what we want in the long term. A problem with most movements in the world is they don't practice the long term vision. The Mexican left doesn't even have the will for power yet, let alone a specific project with a long term goal.

So who is the left movement in Mexico?

The Coalition of the Communist party is the largest left movement which is a combination of five left parties, formed after 1968. The Trotsky movement is on and off. In Mexico there's no channels of finding out what's happening in different regions. In Oaxco there's a strong coalition of students, peasants and workers who put communist people into the government. Now that area is sort of a free territory in Mexico. The president can't even go in—government officials can't go in. If they did there literally would be war. This is something that has sustained itself for the past six years. In the north, people are trying to defend their land—we are not aware of how ready and armed they are. It's scary to think how we are not together.

What is the Mexican government's attitude to women?

Totally patriarchal. Mexico has very much maintained its macho stereotype. It's in our language, customs and behaviors. The fear of women is very strong and this has been the government's attitude.

So how is the feminist movement in Mexico?

We are more alive than most movements! In the media you find feminist writers. We only have one feminist magazine *Fem* (see box), which is sad. There's plenty of women organizing in the grassroots. But what's lacking is a common analysis and discussion. Women are scared of that and pretend we are bound not to communicate. Being here the last five years after being away the ten years before—I can see how the government is so powerful and intelligent in slowing down political movements. Plus, we are very soothed by Latina slowness ... I don't know how else to explain it.

Are you in favour of state funding?

Generally I'm opposed—there's not enough discussion on state funding. In order *not* to fall into the traps of the state we need long term visions. Previous to funding we need to meet because when there's money, in any country, groups break each others arms and legs to get at it!

There's some discussion in the left movement here of revolution. Do you believe that a revolution will solve the problems?

No. I don't believe in revolution. I've seen Cuba, China and the socialist countries in Europe. They're not at all the societies that I envision. Cuba, which is the closest to Mexico, I have been able to visit the most. Fidel (Castro) has a lot of merits but he's also just one big patriarchy. Nothing has changed for women in the home. Women are still expected to work in the home as well as outside. Sure, abortion is legal and free and divorce is legal and free, but there's still a macho attitude towards women.

So I don't envision those kind of changes, especially those that go through violence. I know we have to go through the violence but I also know that's not the solution. Yet the violence is happening here already, now. In different areas of Mexico peasants are being killed every day.

Unless there's a deep change in our consciousness, fighting with arms will get us nowhere. Being critical is our best weapon.

Fem: voice for Mexican women

by Kim Irving

Fem started in 1976, with only two women who were reacting to the lack of reporting on the Mexico women's movement. And, this last year the women of *Fem* celebrated their tenth anniversary. Published monthly, *Fem* remains the only consistent voice for Mexican women.

The magazine, surprisingly, survives on advertising and the few subscribers they've gained over the years. Their distribution runs as high as 15,000, mostly in the Mexico City area. They have a growing international audience and are continually looking for more.

However, *Fem* has largely been an "academic journal used for research," said collective member Elena Urrutia. "Although we would like to reach more Campesina women ... we also know our limitations." These limitations are that collective members are from an older generation within the academic community and that getting the magazine distributed to Mexico's rural areas is expensive and nearly impossible.

Fem is working to change this. Their first step was to hire a new director, a younger woman, who will hopefully draw in new, younger readers. Her influence is already evident with the new column "muchtia" written by and for younger women. This, and new design changes, will certainly keep *Fem* in the centre of the growing Mexico women's movement.

To contact *Fem*: Difusion Cultural Feminista, A.C. Av. Universidad 1855, 40. Piso. Col. Oxtopulco, C.P. 04310 Mexico DF. Subscriptions $30 U.S.

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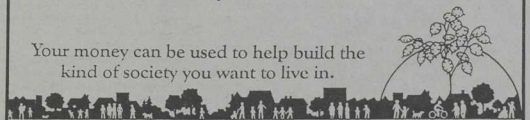

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by Esther Shannon

Feminism challenged

The following interview with retired stripper and sex trade activist Amber Cooke is an excerpt from the Toronto Women's Press recently published *Good Girls, Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers Confront Feminists*, edited by Laurie Bell.

The book is largely a compilation of the proceedings from the "Challenging Our Images: The Politics of Pornography and Prostitution" conference held in Toronto in November of 1985. It also includes a number of interviews with sex trade workers and activists.

The conference, which marked the first time sex trade workers and feminists met in Canada, was organized as a result of a controversy between Toronto's March 8th Coalition and the Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes (CORP). The prostitutes rights group objected to Coalition plans to include, in its 1985 International Women's Day literature, statements that porn shops along Toronto's Yonge Street were harmful to women.

CORP argued these statements did not represent the views of women employed in the sex trade. After debate the Coalition decided to withdraw the statements.

CORP's objections, however, spurred a continuing discussion in the Toronto women's movement between sex trade workers and feminists. CORP had two major issues it wanted feminists to address: How could feminists and sex trade workers begin to talk to one another? And what would be feminists' response to two government reports—the Report of the Committee on Sexual Offenses Against Children and Youth (Badgley Committee report, 1984) and the Report of the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (Fraser Committee report, 1985). One result of these discussions was the decision to hold the Challenging Our Images conference.

A Distinctly Canadian Conference

In the introduction to *Good Girls, Bad Girls*, editor Laurie Bell, who served as a member of the conference organizing committee, notes that the agenda for the conference was "quite broad, extending beyond the two questions posed to the March 8th Coalition to include various cultural, historical and political perspectives on pornography, prostitution, and the images of women in our society."

Bell identifies the two key concerns of conference organizers as ensuring that the conference included representatives from across Canada and that the issues of pornography and prostitution be examined from a Canadian perspective and from within the Canadian context.

According to Bell, the conference "was unique because it included the participation of such a variety of points of view: women and men, prostitutes and non-prostitutes, anti-pornography activists and anti-censorship activists." Bell notes that "... the ability to bring together such a diverse group may be distinctly Canadian. It seems that in other places the separate camps meet in separate quarters."

By the time the conference took place in Toronto, the federal government's response to prostitution in Canada, Bill C-49, had passed its third and final reading. It is now Section 195.1 of the Criminal Code.

The law gives police sweeping arrest powers and has been deemed an attack on individual liberty by a wide cross section of Canadian society. Many have argued that the law is only workable if police use entrapment tactics. Of major concern to prostitute's rights groups is that the law threatens prostitutes' lives by forcing them to work in more isolated areas away from the security of working in pairs or groups.

A recent Metro Toronto Police report on prostitution indicates that the new law is not effective. Figures from the report note that while conviction rates have increased, this has had little effect on prostitution as the number of female prostitutes working in Toronto has more than doubled in the past year.

According to Inspector James Clark of the Toronto police force, "When the number (of prostitutes) increases with enforcement, that tells you there is no deterrent value. From the standpoint of reducing it, I don't think we are winning it at all.

"I don't think higher fines and prison sentences for females is the answer," Clark said. "I think the answer has to come from social scientists."

New federal proposals for legislation to control pornography are still on the back burner and are unlikely to be introduced in Parliament this fall. The current proposals were introduced as Bill C-54 in May of this year.

The new bill, a revamped version of a June, 1986 effort—Bill C-114—defines six categories of pornography that would be illegal to produce, import, or sell in Canada. Included in these categories are depictions of "attempting to cause or appearing to cause ... impairment of the body" and "sexually violent conduct" as well as "masturbation ... ejaculation ... and vaginal, anal or oral intercourse." The sale of sexually explicit material would be prohibited to anyone under the age of 18 and the bill would prohibit the depiction of anyone under the age of 18 or who "appears to be" under the age of 18.

Opposition to the government's proposals has been intense. Feminists, artists, civil libertarians and others have denounced Bill C-54 for a variety of reasons ranging from opposition to censorship of any sort to fears that the government makes no distinction between erotica and violent pornography.

Since the Challenging Our Images conference the CORP has become a member of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), thus furthering communications between sex trade workers and feminists.

CORP resolutions at the 1986 NAC annual meeting called for the repeal of Bill C-49, opposition to "any and all legislation which seeks to limit the personal and business lives of adult prostitutes and support for prostitutes to work for "empowerment in their working agenda." Despite opposition these resolutions were approved and a NAC Prostitution Committee was formed.

In 1987 the Prostitution Committee brought forward further resolutions, including repeal of Criminal Code sections that deal with living "off the avails" (of prostitution) and opposition to the forced testing and/or quarantining of prostitutes for AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Committee members acknowledge there is no unanimity in NAC about prostitute's rights.

Organizing work against the proposed pornography legislation is on-going with coalitions active in Toronto, Vancouver and elsewhere.

According to Laurie Bell, feminists need to do three things to build understanding and support for women working in the sex trade. Bell says feminists must "continue our dialogue about analyses of and strategies toward pornography and prostitution, ... move beyond the identified feminist community and initiate and maintain a relationship with women working in the sex trade ... and take public action ... to respond to legislative changes and the results of their implementation."

Good Girls, Bad Girls presents the full range of issues and analyses that confront feminists concerned with prostitution and pornography. *Kinesis* has chosen to excerpt the interview with Amber Cooke because she represents a voice seldom heard in the feminist press ... the voice of a woman who has worked in the sex trade.

Sex trade workers:

Fitting politics and survival together

by Laurie Bell

Laurie Bell: During your eighteen years as a professional stripper, what was your perception of your place in the culture of the sex trade and within the wider dominant culture?

Amber Cooke: I had always believed feminism to be personal empowerment, and the choice to be a stripper—to be my own boss, to be creative, to express myself fully, without terms of bureaucracy or established norms—was in fact personally empowering. The women who were in this trade supported each other in finding themselves and empowering themselves in whatever undeveloped aspects or areas they chose, unhampered by a particular value system outside that world. So it was the value system in that world that actually enabled us to empower each other.

Bell: Many feminists might feel that within the culture of the sex trade there's no place for women to have personal empowerment.

Cooke: That's not so. That may be the perception of an outsider, but for women involved in it, there is a whole different reality. The business is run by capitalists, people who want to make a profit, so of course it's set up to their advantage. The whole situation—from the dressing rooms to the stage presentations to the sound system to the lighting system to the practice of paying star status to the money received—are all set up by men for profit. But what the women actually do, our work, while it is under their jurisdiction, is still up to us. So yes, our work is controlled, but what we do when we work isn't.

Bell: How much control do the men in the audience have over the women who are stripping?

Cooke: No control at all. Although with table-dancing they have some control. But table-dancing, once it was brought back, gave power to the audience. Now they can pick and choose who they want to come and dance at their table, and of course the competition is great because wages have been cut. And so to make your wages up, you

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have to then pamper the male in whatever he chooses for you to do. But when there are stage shows and only stage shows, the power is outside of their hands and in the hands of the woman. She embraces it, she puts forth what she sees as entertainment and erotic. And they're the audience.

Bell: In society as sexist as the one we find ourselves in, do you think the men that are in the audience can distinguish between real women and strippers as an act, as entertainment?

Cooke: Sure they know that. The struggle for male and female roles right now in our society is very difficult. It's painful as you grasp new inner truths and try to deal externally with them and with whoever your partner or co-workers may be. But to come to a strip club—of course it's a fantasy. Reality is outside the door; this is now fantasy. This is a place in which to relax and not have to worry about all of what it takes in relating your identity with reality and co-operating with others. So they get

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to come in and put that aside. They know that they are interacting with the women outside the door—their wives, their sisters, their daughters, their mothers—in a fuller capacity. They know the difference.

Bell: What about the accusation that seeing strippers and looking at porn sets up unrealistic expectations in men of their wives or their partners? Things that women at home can't live up to?

Cooke: I can't see that as the problem of pornography. I can see the problem of men relating to women. All of us can go to any media—movies, shows, books—and if we base our real life interactions with people on any of that, we're going to be mistaken; we are going to come out short in the end. I don't believe that pornography contributes to that. It is men's responsibility as human beings to relate to women as whole human beings.

Bell: As a child it is hard to see teachers as a whole people. You see them only in the role of teacher. Isn't it a bit the same with women working as strippers? It's very hard for me to imagine them outside of that role. How do they live? Who do they relate to? Do they have friends? There's been such a stigma about women who work in the sex trade that the rest of us never meet them in our daily lives.

Cooke: You probably do all the time but just don't know it. When you're very young, you don't have a full sense of self yet, so to look at a person and imagine their full sense—of course it's difficult; it's beyond your consciousness. But as you become aware of who you are and what your destiny is, especially as a teenager, when you start to realize your own sexual desires, your own sexual struggle, you can realize that other people have that too. The more aware you are of yourself, the more you can understand that other people have other aspects you might not see. When you sit down and think about it, you know that everyone has a life. These people don't just magically come to life once they're on stage or in a club.

Bell: Because the sex trade is kept as a separate subculture, one of the consequences seems to be that people in the dominant culture have no idea about the lives of women working in the sex trade.

Cooke: Yes, and that's partially created by the women in the sex trade themselves. They want to create a great deal of that isolation, that barrier, for their own protection. So as much as the dominant society wants to look the other way so that it doesn't have to deal with this whole group of people that it doesn't understand, we try to keep it away too. As soon as it gets hold of some information or knowledge, there's books written, there's articles written—there's all kinds of information coming out distorted through society's own biases. Not from what our life actually is. So yes, we want to protect ourselves from the curiosity, the exploitation, the thrill seekers who are just going to take a peek and then use their own imagination from there.

Bell: How safe is it for a woman to work as a stripper in this city?

Cooke: A lot safer than being a hooker. A lot safer. Politicians and the law still keep the women as sitting ducks though. They can still come into a club and enforce "indecent acts" or "obscene acts"; they have various by-laws under which they can charge the woman, but it's up to their discretion. And now that they've made the taking off of the G-string your "option" (although it's not your option—it's mandatory if you want work), to take it off means that you are at the mercy of the whim of anyone that comes in and chooses to fine you or charge you. So power has been taken away from the woman and put with the audience, with the club owners, and with the police. No longer does the woman run her own business.

Bell: If you could ask the feminist movement, the women's movement, for things on behalf of women who work in the sez trade, what would they be? What needs to be said to feminists on behalf of women in the sez trade?

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Cooke: We need a multi-faceted solution. It's not as simple as what we need support for or what we need changed. It's not one or two issues. The women in the sex trade themselves need consciousness-raising. They need to be able to understand that they have the ability to change things. They feel that they're powerless because managements keep any talk of organizing outside of the doors. If you are found to be one that wants to unite the people or bring them together, to change something, to change the law, or to strike in a club, to picket a club, or to take a club owner to court for not paying you, you're not hired. You're blackballed. You get a mark against you. So it has to start with women understanding that they have the power.

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Bell: And do you think feminists can be useful with that?

Cooke: They can be, but they haven't been so far.

Bell: Part of what's being suggested here is that feminists should get to know sez trade workers, that they should lend their support to sez trade workers, and that sez trade workers are as legitimately a part of what we have called the feminist or women's movement as any other women.

Cooke: More so than some. We've been out there doing our own thing, fighting all the fights that you possibly can to be females in any way we choose, and that's our right and our power. We were out there doing it long before the feminists came in and started picketing clubs, saying that we

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were exploiting ourselves. We've been self-employed people with our own social aid, our own society, our own system for a long time, based on our power as women. And then the feminists come in and want to fight us. Now in getting them to support us, we have to train them not to fight us! That's one of the first steps.

Bell: So perhaps the question really is: what do sez trade workers have to offer feminists or the women's movement?

Cooke: Betty Friedan says that every woman has the right to say yes and no. You've got to have the choice to say yes or no to what job you're going to have and to your sexuality. It's up to the woman herself. I can't see a group of women coming in, calling themselves feminists, who are ready to put into gear a structure as oppressive as the male structure. And claim that they are in fact helping these women out.

Bell: How do you think sez trade workers can get that message to feminists?

Cooke: I just keep thinking that if feminists could understand that we in fact want to do this work and then enable us to do so. Every time a feminist agency or organization does come to our assistance, it helps a little bit. Once the women understand that

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they can go to feminists, because the feminists understand what sort of information they're receiving, and once the feminists learn to define the problems of the women in the sex trade—once we have an open dialogue and good communication, we will be putting the power back into the women's hands. I think that's the only way to do it.

Bell: But for a woman who works in an escort service or on the street—when she hears the word 'feminist,' what do you think that brings to mind?

Cooke: Most of them have an impression that feminists are asexual women. In feminist politics there has to be more than just cut-and-dried intellectualizing and theorizing about what should be and shouldn't be. We need to deal with what *is*, and instead of relating to the women in the sex trade through the rhetoric or the theory, understand the women.

Bell: Some feminists think that the best thing they can do for these women is to help them get out of the trade.

Cooke: Why?

Bell: Because they say women are getting hurt there, women are being exploited, women are spending their lives and their work being at the service of men.

Cooke: That's their judgment. These people choose to do that. As women. It's like the Roman Catholic judge who wants to base laws on his particular belief of what sin and corruption are. You can't do that. You can't walk in and be that person that says, "Based on my beliefs, everyone has to do this. It has to be my way because this is my value system." You can't do that.

Bell: Do you think that feminists are placing a moral judgment on sez trade workers?

Cooke: I think they're transferring their fears. Most women in one way or another understand the power of their sexuality. But a lot of women are afraid of that power, of how to hold the power, of how to use that power. And when they are confronted with someone who's comfortable doing that, it shakes them up. It challenges them. It makes them question themselves. When that happens, you become threatened and defensive; you react on that basis. The woman who is happy with her sexuality, quite satisfied to embrace it, embark on it, dance with it, enjoy it, then becomes the feared person. I don't believe it's so much morals as it is fear. That's why I say feminists are new at this. They're just coming along saying, "Own your own sexuality," whereas we've been doing it for a long time. We haven't been making a big deal out of it—just doing it.

Bell: For you there is no contradiction between a woman being a stripper and a feminist at the same time.

Cooke: How are they different? It's like saying this mammal is a cat. Same thing. You can be a stripper and a stalwart feminist, you can be a feminist and a stripper—it goes hand in hand. I know women who are feminists who don't understand what it is to embrace their own power. It's only an intellectual concept for them that they

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are struggling constantly to achieve. I know women in the sex trade who don't struggle to embrace their own power either. They're women who seek their approval from outside sources. That's the struggle for women. If there's a common denominator that would bring us all together, it is that we are all learning to seek our own approval, especially in terms of sexuality. That's our bond. Wherever you're coming from, you are not exempt from that common denominator.

Bell: Has working on the pornography and prostitution conference, being at the conference, working with the Elizabeth Fry Society, affected your perceptions of feminism?

Cooke: It's given me the opportunity to see that feminists actually want to help. There's a real concern there. How founded their concerns are, and the perspective from which those concerns are viewed, is something else again. But we all need education and training. I need training to understand why the feminist takes her stand and how that works for her, and she needs to know that about me.

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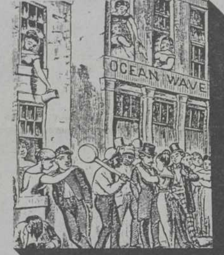
Bell: What do you think could be a good way for that exchánge to happen?

Cooke: That's difficult. A conference is very good. More public talks, more public speeches, more shows. Right now it's at the stage of this brand-new relationship. We're developing trust. That's what we really should be doing right now. All the ways in which you develop trust should be put into gear and acted on. Once there is open communication and trust established, then both of us can know better how to help the other. But right now this is a very, very new thing; it's very tender and gentle. And rather than get into the militant stage much before it's time, let's just develop that trust through books, the media, getting people to talk.

Bell: What about the more informal gatherings? It seems that the conference because of its public nature, was a disadvantage to sex trade workers. It was risky for them to come and identify themselves as sex trade workers.

Cooke: That's not the real problem, that's not the problem that kept them from being there. The women who are political, who are sex trade activists, are a very small handful of women. And they'll come to all these public talks; they'll keep coming. The names will keep popping up all the time. But women who are out there, who are on the borderlines, who are fighting for



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survival, have not yet been able to indulge themselves, or afford the opportunity, to develop a political analysis. Therefore they see all this political activity around this issue as outside of their realm. They don't understand that they're the living politics of it. Within themselves they're political, but they don't know that they are. They don't know what is happening at these conferences, and they're not ready to come forth and be part of it.

Survival and politics are two different things. Engaging in politics is a luxury, but if you're really, really busy just having to make your money, to keep your ends together, you're going to take all the hours you can to make your money. You're not going to be taking great huge gaps of time for meetings.

If you went out through Toronto and found ten sex trade workers you wanted to talk to, number one, you'd pay them because their time is money. No one's come up with that one yet.

Sex trade workers are economically and emotionally vulnerable. It's about their work. And it's been so mishandled so often. It's horrible to come and listen to what people have to say, and their attitudes, and struggle through all that. Especially when it's taking up your time and money. It's a lot easier to walk out the door and go back and do what you're doing with people that know what you're doing. Where everyone isn't standing around analyzing what you're doing and talking about it for hours.

It's the same as any kind of thing with politics and the peasants: keep the peasants so much on the line that thinking about feeding their families is all they have time for. They don't have time for politics—they can't. It's all in somebody else's hands. It doesn't matter which way the politics go—they still have to struggle day after day for food. Put that in the woman's terms too. It doesn't matter what new laws are made, it doesn't matter who shifts power, it doesn't matter what conferences are going on or not going on—she still has to make her bucks.

Say you came on the street and said, "I'll offer you affordable housing if we can get a thousand of you together this Saturday afternoon. You'll all sign a petition, and you'll all get an apartment that you can afford to live in." They would be there. That's practical. Sitting around and talking about what they're doing for hours and hours isn't practical.

Bell: Do women in the sex trade want to see some sort of tangible support from feminists? Is this the way the feminists need to go in order to make alliances with women in the sex trade?

Cooke: Absolutely. How were any of the great unions in the States made? People didn't just go around and talk to workers; they went out there and worked with them. They'd live with them. The organizers would help the dying babies. And once the organizers know the life of the people and are with the people, then they can go and make changes because then you have the people's support.

So far everyone is just talking about the sex trade. Practical manoeuvre are needed. Come to their court cases, come to their houses, come to their lives, get involved with them, help them to help themselves. Practical manoeuvre. With the whores it's pretty cut and dried; it all really revolves around C-49 right now. With the strippers it's altogether different.

Bell: How is a feminist supposed to get to know a stripper? Where do we meet each other?

Cooke: What are your likes and dislikes? What do you do in your spare time?

Bell: Go to meetings, just like your average feminist! Chances are that I'm not going to meet strippers or hookers at meetings.

Cooke: It depends on the meetings. Go to a few Al-Anon meetings. You'll meet some. Join the Beat the Street literacy campaign. Go to places where they would go to. I have a friend who spends all day Sunday in church; she plays the organ. You could go to her church and talk to her between sermons. A lot of the women have children. Go to day care centres, meet the moms. Where would you meet any woman? We don't have clubs for strippers only. We work in public places. Go into a club and buy her a drink; say that you just want to talk to her.

Bell: In the United States, at least, there seem to be women-only escort services and strip clubs run by women for women. It seems like there's no big deal about it there.

Cooke: We've received our greatest support from the lesbian community because they are fully supportive of recreational sex; the sex between them is not procreative. So they've backed us 100 percent. Sure, sex is fun. We know that. Never mind babies. Sure.

I think guilt about recreational sex is the overriding issue. Each one of us carries a little piece of that. When we sit down and confront one another, our fears keep coming up. People fear women in the sex trade because they don't understand what that little switch is that they've turned on that makes it okay for sex to be just for fun or a commodity to sell. They don't understand how they've taken away the guilt of the church or the rest of the culture to see it in a much clearer perspective. It may not match your morality system, but sex trade workers are much more clear on what sex is for them.

10

Bell: Are women forced into the sex trade?

Cooke: There are women working as waitresses, as legal secretaries, as librarians, as nurses, and that may be the only thing they can do. So that's what they're going to do. And then there's women who celebrate in their occupation or careers. It's the same with women in the sex trade. Some feel they are victims. Some *are* victims. And then there are also others who have made that choice and celebrate that choice. We're not so different.

The whole difference is viewing sex as a commodity or as recreation or as entertainment. When you take sex out of the traditional, intimate bonding process, it becomes something else.

Bell: And that's okay?

Cooke: Of course! How many things in our lives are totally acceptable because they bring us pleasure? Most things are supposed to be means to an end. Take the Catholic view of sex as strictly procreative. I'd rather be a whore than a Catholic.

People will actually pay for sex, and that makes it a valuable commodity to a woman. That's her right. As long as people are willing to buy sex, there will be people who choose to make their living in the sex trade. Unless we return to the temple prostitutes, who did it for God.

Bell: It has been said that the women's movement won't really be a women's movement unless it includes whores.

Cooke: Absolutely. There are a lot of whores that are there; they just don't state that they are. So let's get honest about this. And how can any women's movement be a true representation of women without representing all women?

Whatever level of political consciousness women in the sex trade are at, the best thing for them is to be matching up with a group of women in the feminist movement who are open to them and can do something to support them. So even apart from the infighting on both sides of this issue, the networking has to be done very carefully or we are going to be throwing ourselves even further into their chaos.

Sex trade workers don't want much more than anybody else out there doing their work. They want working conditions that are hygienic and conducive to doing their business. They want money for the work they do. One of the things that all feminists could do for all sex trade workers is really simple: make sure that the health standards for the dressing rooms are up to scratch. Ensure that there is a toilet, that there is some sort of ventilation, and that there are heat and light. Those are really basic things yet the working women can't get it for themselves.

Go into a club and find out what kind of air system they have to get rid of the smoke so we're not all choking and going blind in there. Go down to the dressing room and get rid of all the drips that force you to wear something on your feet all the time because the floor's wet. There's no proper light, there's no place to hang up your clothes, so they sit on the back of the chair and fall into these puddles. That would be a good place to start because then the women know you're on their side. When they don't have pneumonia that winter, they'll remember the feminists.

Good Girls, Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers Confront Feminists, edited by Laurie Bell (1987) is published by the Toronto Women's Press and is available at bookstores across Canada.

1. A courtesan with a customer, Greek pottery. From: *Prostitution: An Illustrated Social History* by V. and B. Bullough.

2. Prostitute of low rank, Utamaro, 1753 - 1806. From: *Yoshiwara: City of the Senses* by Stephen and Ethel Longstreet.

3. Rue des Moulins: The Inspection,1894 by Toulouse–Lautrec. From: *Degas/Lautrec: Painters of Parisian Life* by Keith Roberts.

4. Salesman's gift to facilitate a shoe sale to the room's occupants. From: *Storyville, New Orleans* by Al Rose.

5. Street girl and customer in Berlin, anonymous photo, 1922. From: *The Oldest Profession* by Hilary Evens.

6. Medieval house of prostitution. From: *Prostitution: An Illustrated Social History* by V. and B. Bullough.

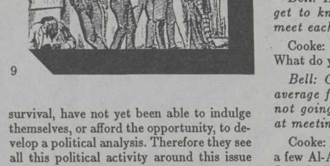
7. The costume worn by some Venetian prostitutes, with men's breeches concealed under a decollete dress, 1590.From: *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance* by Georgina Masson.

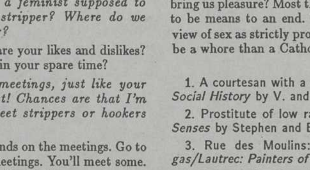
8. The modern American counterparts of the medieval bathhouse, massage parlour prostitutes. Courtesy of Margo St. James and Call Off Your Old, Tired Ethics (COYOTE).

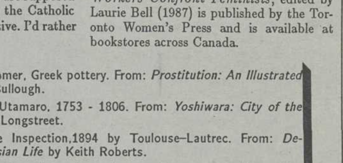
9. Bordello on Almond Street, St. Louis, Missouri. Anonymous print, 1878. From: *The Oldest Profession* by Hilary Evans.

10. Detail from Titian's Venus and An Organist. There are several versions of this painting of the voluptuous courtesan and her admirer, suggesting that it may have been the Renaissance equivalent of a modern day "pin up." From: *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance* by Georgina Masson.

Some information on this month's cover artist. Judith Leyster was a seventeenth century Dutch artist who is best known for her genre paintings, small group portraits in everyday surroundings. "The Proposition", our cover image this month, is one of a group of such scenes which show women at work in domestic settings.







BEANS

Women's work a lost continent

by Nora D. Randall

When the school buses started to roll again this year I was not ready. I had recently undertaken a new career as a good time girl and I discovered that I was pretty good at it. I had a lot of fun last summer. Then school started and I had to start getting out of bed at 6:30 in the morning. This is half an hour later than I had to get up last year but it was about two and a half hours earlier then I'd like. I am not one to suffer in silence, and since I have my own car this year I could stay after the morning shift and go to coffee with some of the other women drivers. What I heard over coffee shut me up pretty fast. It also left me wondering, once again, about the amazing relationship between work, money and women.

One woman at coffee was rolling out of bed at 4 a.m. to drive her grandson to his babysitter in Burnaby and put him back to bed there before driving into Vancouver to punch in at 6:30. Another woman always gets up at 4:30. She needs a while to think before she starts the drive to work at 5:30.

About a third of the drivers at this company are women. It's a good job. We're unionized and our rate of pay makes this a possible job for single mothers. But only because it leaves open so many hours in the day when they can make money at another job. One single mother is driving school bus during the week, waitressing at a nearby restaurant between the morning and afternoon runs, then driving handicap buses on the weekends.

Another mother drives taxi besides driving school bus. She says the taxi's good because when you run short of money between pay cheques you can pick up cash for food by driving cab. Another driver chimes in with a story about how once she was so desperate for money that she took a job driving around to the pubs selling costumes to the strippers. She said she hated it.

When it comes to complaints, I am definitely out of my league at this coffee break. Especially when you consider that none of these women are complaining, they're just trading stories.

If you think about these women one way, they are the lucky ones. These are women who've made it into a predominantly male field and a predominantly male union. Some of the women at work are licensed to drive anything from the big rigs right down to your sub compact. Though it says something right there, that a woman with a rig licence would end up driving school bus.

I've met farm workers and garment workers who get up that early and work harder and make less. If it comes to that, I know a farm wife who got up that early to organize the milking of forty dairy cows and the feeding of sixteen children, along with the pigs and the chickens and everything else and I doubt she even has a social insurance number, because she's never had a job.

Over the last several years there's been a growing awareness that in most countries there are two separate economies operating. These are usually referred to as the formal economy, meaning regular jobs with regular pay cheques, tax, pension funds, holiday pay, all a matter of public record and legislation. The informal economy is made up of things like bartering, moonlighting, trading services, piece work or any of the illegal businesses like sweatshops and the drug trade. For some women it will still be an achievement to get their work into any economy where they will have access to money.

This is not good enough. I know this is no surprise to anyone. None of this is a surprise, not how hard women work or how little we're paid. I think the thing that shook me up and made me think about all this all over again is that I got a glimpse of how hard some of the women I'm working with are working. We're all doing the same job at the bus company, but that is the tip of the iceberg. If all women's work were to rise to the surface and become visible I bet we'd find a lost continent.

Rawnie Dunn

Disabled organizer launches research study

photo by Anne Field

Rawnie Dunn's study concerns low income families headed by a single disabled parent.

by Eunice Brooks

Rawnie Dunn is a person worth getting to know. Yet, she is often hidden under a forward tipping halo of blond hair. The bowed head will be tending her young sons, pouring over statistics, or sipping the ever-present lemon tea.

Today Dunn is a sociologist. Her interest is in families where one or more members is disabled. Her focus is on mothers, because since 1971 Dunn has suffered from spinal cerebellar degeneration. Now she uses a wheel chair for mobility.

And mobile Dunn is: a single parent, holder of executive positions on several boards of disabled groups for social change, and she is working on her master's thesis at Simon Fraser University. She's an honors student. Yet Dunn finds time to pen vignettes on the frustrations of being disabled that have appeared in local publications. Irony is the meat in her stew.

However, the book/research project she has just undertaken in conjunction with DAWN BC (DisAbled Women's Network) is serious stuff. Her concerns are for low income families with a single disabled parent. The idea to write a book came to her when she was unable to find a book, or even a paper on her topic, in the university library. There is no resource that could be used to defend a disabled woman in family court about to lose a child the authorities think she cannot handle. Dunn thinks disabled mothers can cope, and she is going to prove it.

Her research will consist of long initial interviews with thirty women, with several follow-up interviews spaced months apart. Don't hold your breath waiting for publication, if you are in a situation of losing a child. Publication will be in years rather than months. Still, it is comforting to know someone is working for disabled mothers. As her research becomes available, Dunn will make it public through DAWN BC. DAWN is one of the groups of which she is a director.

Last Mother's Day, Dunn organized a picnic for disabled moms and their kids, in Stanley Park. It was a proud-faced media event, with a better than expected turn out. Late that night Dunn's two sons told a TV audience that sometimes having a mother in a wheelchair embarrasses them. They admitted that people laugh at her. "But we say that she's just as normal as other mothers, only her legs don't work."

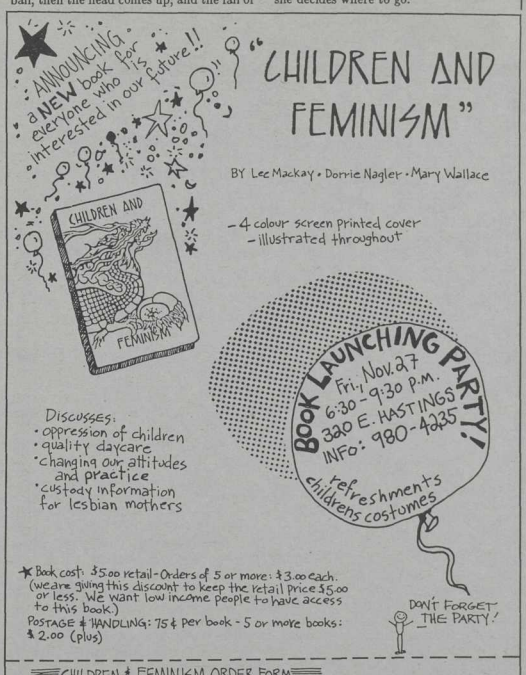
It says something for the upbringing of boys who feel free to speak out about heartache as personal as having their mother laughed at.

Ask Dunn what it's like to have spinal cerebellar degeneration and she'll reply: "Well, it depends on the time of day. At 7:30 in the morning, it seems like I've spent all my life getting the kids ready for school." She goes on to describe scenes every mother can relate to.

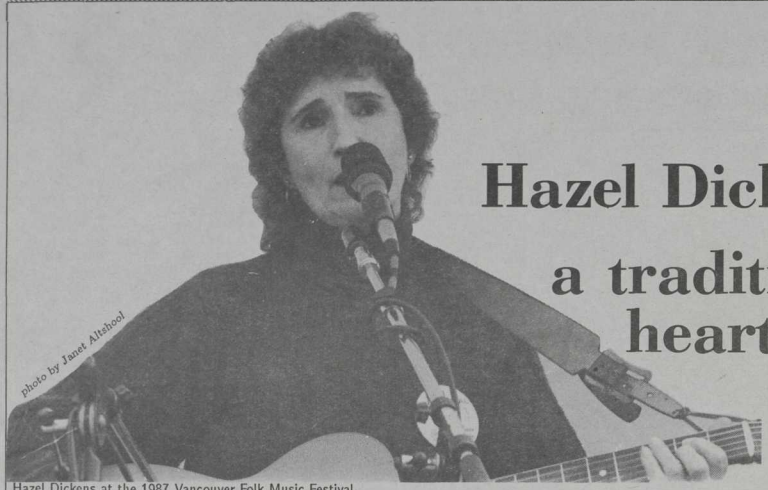
However there is one difference. Five years ago, when Dunn had to take her boys to daycare, the facility was inaccessible to wheelchairs. She had to wait at the foot of the steps outside so the supervisor could bring out the "Sign In" book. There are other places Dunn would like to go, but her wheelchair can't—the Women's Bookstore is just one example. Crab Park is another. Buildings that don't provide gently sloped ramps and large comfort stations with grab bars, might as well advertise that the disabled, like Dunn, are unwelcome.

Dunn doesn't consider herself confined to a wheelchair, in fact the phrase is one of annoyance to her. She says: "Wheelchairs are simply tools that can be used by the mobility impaired." Careful observation of the woman, Rawnie Dunn, gives one the idea that she doesn't consider herself confined to anything.

Wave a challenge in front of her, and Dunn will accept it or turn it down. Whichever, the choices are hers. She stares into the lemon tea as though it was a crystal ball, then the head comes up, and the fall of hair is tossed out of her way. That's an ideal time for you to get out of her way too, because Dunn doesn't let much stop her once she decides where to go.



Hazel Dickens: a tradition of heartfelt music



Hazel Dickens at the 1987 Vancouver Folk Music Festival.

by Isis

Encircled by interviewers at the 1987 Vancouver Folk Music Festival, including *Kinesis*, Hazel Dickens explains, in her down to earth, direct way, what she believes. Dickens has been singing and performing hillbilly music for years, and considers herself a music traditionalist. She plays the old songs that celebrate people's fights and victories, and she makes new songs that reflect what is happening today.

She speaks to us softly, she is greatly outnumbered by interviewers, and she has answered most of these questions many, many times before. Yet she gives the impression that she really is talking with each of us, speaking from her heart.

"Things are still in a sad place, when anybody votes for Ronald Reagan or takes Ollie North as a national hero. We need heroes, but we don't need that kind. We need a revolutionary, working class hero," she explains with conviction.

Although she would not take on that definition of herself, there is no doubt that Dickens is just such a hero.

Hazel Dickens grew up in Montcalm, West Virginia, an infertile coal mining district. Life was hard, and music was something the people had for themselves. It was an integral part of everyday life, and as the eighth out of eleven children, she always had someone she could sing with. People would sit out on their front porches and make music. "It was just something you had—like cows in the pasture."

Beckoned by the rumours of the good life, she moved to Baltimore in search of work around 1950. The city was not everything she imagined, and hillbillies like Dickens and her family struggled to find an identity in a culture that made no place for them. In the country, music made things easier and drew people together, and the same thing happened in the city. Not only hillbillies, but to Dickens' surprise, some city people became interested. "I had never met city people before. We did a lot of living and learning together. That was the beginning."

The whole city experience was an awakening for Dickens, who had been raised in a church rigid with black and white definitions. She began looking for good message songs, to write about real things and real people, about looking for ways to live with other people, ordinary people. "I do better if I stay close to the earth and close to the things that I know about."

Over the course of her life, she has seen a lot of political changes, and the women's movement was the first that came to her mind when questioned about these. "Women have a lot more say in a lot of things that we used to, in all areas."

She was especially impressed to be at the Vancouver Folk Festival in the company of so many other fine women musicians. This would not have happened ten years ago. But women have made tremendous progress everywhere. "I think it's time for a president," she states laughingly, but to her it is no joke. When several interviewers at once snort about Maggie Thatcher, Dickens readily concedes this is not what she had in mind.

The women's movement has touched Dickens personally. "Being around women is extremely helpful and stimulating. It gives me courage." Growing up she didn't have much support from other women, but the women's movement has helped her find the voice to sing songs she used to keep hidden.

She is supportive of the women's movement, although she seems to feel some distance. Identifying as a traditionalist performer, some of her feelings of distance derive from troubles she has had being accepted and welcomed as such. And unpleasant encounters with separatists have made her feel left out, but she does emphasize that although these incidents were very unpleasant, they haven't been many in number. "I definitely feel the support from the women's movement, and I definitely want to support them."

A major complaint is that traditionalist women, such as Dickens, are often not included or adequately represented in women's music events. These women are the roots of contemporary women's music, although many of us might not recognize their names: women such as Florence Reece who lived through the 1931 Harlan County coal mining strike when company gun thugs terrorized the countryside. Reece wrote "Which Side Are You On," the famous union rallying call, still popular at demonstrations and pickets today. Sarah Organ Gunning, Aunt Molly Jackson, Frankie Armstrong, Jean Ritchie, Alice Gerard and Rosalie Sorrels are only a few others. Listen to our predecessors, the traditionalists, many are still active. We can gain a sense of how far we've come, how long the struggle is, and how powerful we are.

"If you don't know what you came from, the people who first ploughed the earth, you're not going to have a good harvest. We need to know the people who fought and died for us, and it'll give us strength, and we need it. God knows we need all we can get."

Making a living as a traditionalist and a performer with a social conscience is even more difficult in mass culture. Musicians have to balance what they are saying with trying to earn a living. It becomes a toss-up between poverty and saying what you want, or making a lot of money. "It's a pretty big commitment because you do have all kinds of offers and people who want to take what you have and make it into a more commercial music."

This is not the only thing that Dickens has had to consider. When she began playing in public she felt like she was exploiting the music by using it in a political way. She eventually realized that the music's message, what it said to people, was what the music was about. Music is a powerful way for people to derive strength and a sense of unity. Music for music's sake alone is not what it's all about for Dickens.

"At first I was very much against using the music as a bridge between me and other people, or in a political way. I was a real purist and thought I was exploiting the music and people and I didn't want to do that. I began later to see that it was a service. I feel very good these days. I wouldn't put a song on a record just to fill up space. You're cheating people if you do that. There's so many good songs and so many things to talk about in songs, poetry, books, that it's an insult to people not to say it."

The Canadian Women's Movement Archives/ les Archives canadiennes du mouvement des femmes,

is preparing a computerized directory of the Canadian women's movement. This directory will index women's groups by area of interest and geographical location, and will be available soon on computer disk or as mailing labels.

If you belong to a woman's group that received a questionnaire please fill it out and return it to us. If you belong to a group that was not contacted, or know of a new group in your area, contact us.

Lesbian and Gay activists and researchers:

Just published: A listing of the Canadian Women's Movement Archives lesbian and gay collections. This is now available from the CWMA at a minimal charge

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CFRO 102.7 F.M.
RUBYMUSIC

Potpourri of music news

by Connie Kuhns

I'm not a fan of Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt and Emmy Lou Harris' recent collaboration, *Trio*. This record was in the works for ten years, which is quite a build up for such a disappointment. None of the women particularly stand out, and certainly Dolly's talents are down played in order to keep everything nice and soft and even. Such potential. Such a boring record. Also, I've never been able to forgive Linda Ronstadt for her pathetic stand (or non-stand) on South Africa. For that reason alone, I can't recommend this album.

I'm afraid I must also be the dissenting voice on the subject of Michelle Shocked. After playing her record *The Texas Campfire Tapes* several times on my radio show, and after seeing her at the Vancouver Folk Music Festival, it looks to me like she's a victim of her own publicity.

Michelle has a sweet voice, but there is nothing particularly interesting about her performing style or her songwriting. In fact, her songs remind me of someone who just discovered there were oppressed people in the world, but only because she drove by some on her way to work, or read a newspaper article. She is too far removed from her subject matter to make me really care.

However the hype surrounding her first album release is quite incredible, including record company promo that compares her to early Dylan. Michelle should have been allowed to develop an image which is more suited to who she really is. Comparing her to one of the best so early in her career just sets her up for tough criticism. Subliminally,

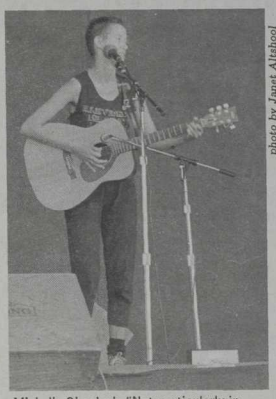


photo by Janet Allshool

Michelle Shocked: "Not particularly interesting."

I think every record company in the industrialized world is looking for another Ferron. They just can't find one.

(Michelle will be appearing at the Commodore in Vancouver on November 8, with label-mates and first rate musicians, the Oyster Band.)

On the A side, the Minneapolis band Tetes Noires has released an outstanding second album, *Clay Foot Gods*. Their first album was on their own label Rapunzel Records, but Rounder Records has picked up their cause. They're a very original band with sharp lyrics, which you can understand. Their song "Dear Jane" is one of the best I've heard this year.

Also on the turntable is Ellen McIlwaine's eighth album *Looking for Trouble*. This woman is an unbelievable talent. After interviewing her for the second time last month, and seeing her shows in Vancouver and Winnipeg, I can't believe she walks around and eats and sleeps like ordinary people. She is authentic rock and roll; a groundbreaker who is still breaking ground. Buy anything with her name on it.

Last words: former Go-Go Belinda Carlisle and Dolly Parton are planning a duet; an all female band Wanda and the Way It Is have released a debut single "We've Got the Feeling"; a Boston-based band, Mata Hari, has completed a 5-song master produced by Genya Ravan; and Vancouver's Elizabeth Fischer has a new Animal Slaves.

In other music news, I will be writing a column for Chicago's *Hot Wire* magazine called *Live! From Canada*. The column is being described as an introduction to the women's music movement in Canada. Please keep me informed as to what you or your group is doing so your movement can be chronicled. My first article, which will appear in the November issue, is on Heather Bishop.

Heather is currently on tour in the United States with dates in Boston and surrounding area, Durham, N.C., Ann Arbor, and California. Her recent album *A Taste of the Blues* is Midwest Music's number five top seller, and Lucie Blue Tremblay's debut album is number six for Ladyslipper Records. Heather was nominated for a Juno for most promising female vocalist, and Lucie's album was nominated by the *Boston Globe* as one of their ten best albums of the year. Teresa Trull's *A Step Away* was also on the list. Teresa won outstanding recording artist at the San Francisco Cable Car Awards where she was also nominated for entertainer of the year.

Redwood Records celebrated its fifteenth anniversary while Redwood founder Holly Near was honored by the San Francisco Women's Foundation for her outstanding achievements in music. Holly, Linda Tillery and Meg Christian won the California Women for Understanding Lesbian Rights Award.

Sweet Honey in the Rock won in the women's music category at the National Association of Independent Record Distributors Awards; Sue Fink received honorable mention. Casselberry-Dupree were nominated for best reggae album and best album design.

June Millington is involved in the founding of The Institute for the Musical Arts, an organization whose primary goal is to help women, especially women of colour, pursue careers in a variety of musical fields. At a recent benefit in San Francisco Millington played, as did Linda Tillery and Vicki Randall. Angela Davis was the host.

And finally, if you're on the road Novem-

photo by P. Sutherland

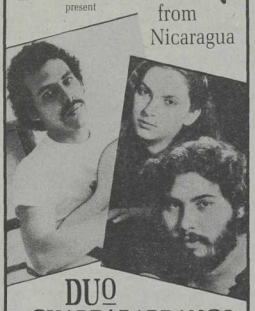
Ellen McIlwaine: "An unbelievable talent."

ber 13, the place to be is New York City's Carnegie Hall for a concert performance by Ferron and Holly Near.

The women's music history project is underway. By the time you read this, I will have completed interviews in Winnipeg, Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto. Coming up are Edmonton, Calgary, Halifax and Vancouver.

Remember, this book will include interviews with audience members and other consumers of women's music, as well as the women involved in the business. So, if you have something to say, please write to me at 1706 W. 15th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 2K8, or phone me at (604) 738-7950.

Vancouver Folk Music Festival
Music for Nicaragua & Tools for Peace
present



from Nicaragua

DUO GUARDABARRANCO
with
SALVADOR BUSTOS

Salvador and Katia Cardenal, the brother and sister known as **Guardabarranco**; and **Salvador Bustos**, are the best-known proponents of "**Volcanto**", the Nicaraguan version of the Latin American New Song or "**Nueva Cancion**" movement. They have been one of the most-requested "invite backs" of the 1985 Vancouver Folk Music Festival.

Their tour will feature a **slide show** of images by some of Nicaragua's and North America's most prominent photographers. This slide show, produced by **Jackson Brown**, will include subtitles translating the Spanish lyrics into English.

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West Word Three: expanding success

West Word Three, Women and Words' third annual Summer School/Retreat for Women, was held last August in Vancouver. West Word Three expanded the scope of previous years by adding a new workshop—Creative Documentary. Enrollment for the school was up to thirty-two, in contrast to twenty for West Word Two.

The school was designed to give the students intensive daily instruction as well as a large amount of free time in which to write and reflect upon their positions as women writers. Each day classes ran from 9:30 to noon, with the afternoons available for the instructors to meet with individual students for consultation and critiques. There were two evenings of student readings; all of the students elected to read their work to the rest of the school which they generally found a productive and exhilarating experience.

Students with diverse literary backgrounds came from Newfoundland, P.E.I., Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Many of the women had previously published their work or were involved in writing or publishing organizations; others had experience with workshops or post-secondary schooling. This diversity contributed to a positive and stimulating environment for young and unpublished writers, as well as those women who have limited contact with writing communities. All twenty of the students who required scholarships in order to attend received them.

The instructors were as follows: Nicole Brossard, fiction/theory, Margaret Hollingsworth, playwriting; Myrna Kostash, creative documentary; Betsy Warland, poetry.

Brossard has been a key figure in the development of women's writing in Quebec. Known primarily as a poet, she has also published seven books of prose. Her recent collection of theoretical writing *La Lettre Aerienne*, will soon be available from Women's Press.

Hollingsworth, from Toronto, has been writing plays for fifteen years; several of her plays have been produced and others have been nominated for various awards. A collection of short stories, *Smiling Under Water*, will be released later this year.

Kotash, from Edmonton, has contributed to several magazines and anthologies and has written documentary film scripts for the NFB and CBC. Adding to her two other books, *No Kidding: Inside the Life of Teenage Girls* was released during her stay at West Word.

Warland, a Vancouver poet, has published two books and has two forthcoming in 1988. She is also an editor of *(f.)lip*, a new feminist literary quarterly.

Also contributing to West Word were two guest readers: B.C. writers Jeanette Armstrong and Sharon Thesen. Their readings were a part of a number of public events which ran the duration of West Word. A new public event was added this year: a panel discussion given by the instructors and moderated by Sandy Duncan. The subject is reflected clearly in the title: "Leaps and Boundaries: Where the Genres Cross."

The instructors and students provided insightful and generous evaluation remarks about both the school's structure and content, as well as reflections on their experiences.

According to one instructor, "Both instructors and students are intensely involved in creating a provocative, yet safe, learning environment: the risks that are taken and the breakthroughs that are made are exhilarating! This is the heart of a woman-centred school."

Gallerie:

New arts annual to showcase women

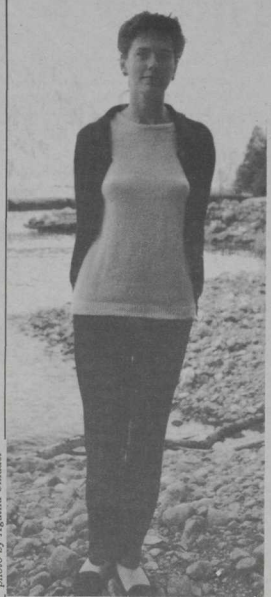

photo by Agatha Cinader

Caffyn Kelley, the publisher of *Gallerie*, believes women have been excluded from the arts establishment.

by Agatha Cinader

Gallerie is the name of a soft-bound book of womens' art that Caffyn Kelley, a Vancouver artist, hopes to publish annually, beginning in June 1988, if she can raise the $30,000 it will cost to produce the first issue.

The book would include photographs representing an integrated body of work by each of at least forty women artists from Canada and the United States. In an accompanying text the artist would describe what her art means to her, how she produces it, how it fits in with her work, her life etc.

In addition to this gallery of work, other articles would deal more generally with what Kelley calls "women's culture." For instance, an article might compare the way in which women's art is shown and distributed by the mainstream art world with alternative systems generated by women's organizations for showing and distributing art.

Finally, *Gallerie* would include announcements of events of possible interest to women artists and advertisements from various women's groups, including, for example, book publishers and distributors.

Kelley sees *Gallerie* as a place for women artists, whether or not they are professional artists, to learn about one another's work, a place where they can make their own meanings, define art without reference to the art world establishment of galleries, critics, academics ... For as Kelley points out, women have been and continue to be excluded from that art establishment.

"In the 1970's, women started to make a lot of noise about being excluded from the art world and a lot of major work by women artists started to be shown ... and a lot of texts were written by women about women's art ... but that all came to a screeching half ... the 80's has been a decade where those gains have been withdrawn to some extent ... There has been a trend away from the forms of art that women had made special and popular, using handicrafts, using vaginal images, all those things suddenly became passe ... "

Women's concerns and their artistic expressions of these concerns have often not been considered valid by the art world. Women have also had trouble finding the time and money to support themselves as artists. As Kelley says:

"A lot of women are never going to make it as art world professionals, not only because they are excluded by prejudice from the top-paying jobs in the art world but because they don't have the money to set themselves up as artists ... Yet they're doing important work and meaningful work and want to share it with other women and want to know what other women are doing."

The women who show their work in *Gallerie* need not be professional artists. Work would be considered in any medium that can be communicated photographically. And each woman would tell her own story of what her art means to her and how it fits in with the rest of her life.

Kelley describes how the idea for *Gallerie* developed from her experiences as an artist and printer. After she graduated from Simon Fraser University, Kelley took some courses in photography and printmaking and began to make art, while earning a living as a graphic designer. During this period she started to meet other women who shared a similar understanding of the world: she became a feminist. She was attracted to printing because it provided a way to share ideas with a lot of people.

" ... I thought, wouldn't it be great to be able to produce in mass the things that make the world make sense to me." But as an estimator and purchasing manager for a commercial printer she found she was doing flyers for Safeway, worrying about "whether or not 150 envelopes cost seven cents or two cents each and all these things that don't really matter much."

The idea to produce a magazine of women's art had been in the back of her mind for some time and now her life has become organized in a way that makes it possible for her to pursue this dream. She now works part time for a good salary so she has time to work on *Gallerie* and she has a supportive relationship with her partner, Marnie, with whom she shares a house nestled in a bay of Indian Arm.

Gallerie is an expensive project. Kelley estimates that it will cost about $30,000 to produce the first annual. She is relying on early subscriptions to raise that money. To encourage people to make a commitment to *Gallerie* now, she is offering the first issue to people who order before December 1 for $6.00 (fifty percent of the list price). At $6 per copy, she must sell 5000 subscriptions to meet her costs.

Gallerie is an ambitious and interesting project. If it succeeds it will be one of the few magazines of its kind in North America. You can help it to succeed by ordering your copy now.

The deadline for art submissions and early subscriptions is December 1, 1987 (this may be slightly extended) so write now for entry details or send your subscription cheque to: Gallerie Publications, 2901 Panorama Drive, North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 2A4.

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and
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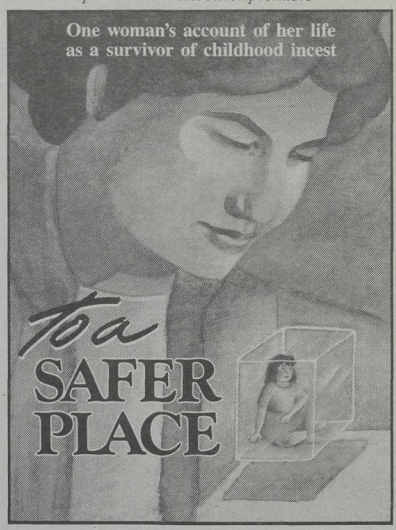
present the Vancouver premiere



Monday, November 30, 7:30 p.m.
Cinema, Robson Square Media Centre
800 Robson Street

The subject of the film, Shirley Turcotte, and director, Beverly Shaffer, will be present at the screening.
Reception to follow.

Admission free

For information:
666-0718

A film directed by Beverly Shaffer
Produced by Studio D
National Film Board of Canada

National Film Board of Canada
Office national du film du Canada

COMMENTARY

Women: holding the thread of life

by Josie Wallenius

There were three International Women's Conferences held during the United Nations Decade for Women, 1975-1985, but it was only at the third, held in Nairobi, that a real explosion of women's consciousness took place. I was not present at that conference, but I heard that white Western women stopped complaining about their jet lag when they realized that some of the their African sisters had walked for eight days to meet them.

The second explosion of the women's consciousness happened in Moscow in June of this year, 1987. It was the conference called, "Towards the Year 2000 Without Nuclear Weapons, for Peace, Equality and Justice," and was attended by nearly 3,000 women from over 154 countries.

Mikhail Gorbechev addressed the conference in the opening session, and said something very interesting about women. He made reference to an old saying that suggested that the three main things in life of most value are: daily bread that gives us sustenance, books that give us wisdom, and women that prevent the thread of life from being broken.

The idea of women holding the thread of life stayed with me constantly over the next six days. Six days of festival and song and women talk. Women talk about peace, and the need to identify solutions rather than redefining problems. Women groping to hold fast the thread of life.

After my return to Canada I had to grapple with the idea that women are more inherently responsible for life than men are, because, in this era of genetic engineering, the subject is highly debatable. However, I have a deep respect for old wisdom, and dredged a memory from a book read long ago that said during World War Two, European women reverted en masse to breast feeding when bottled, powdered, and tinned milk was unavailable. A whole generation of children was kept alive by these women. Children kept alive by women, continuing the thread of life.

If we women hold the thread of life, as I now believe we do, than we need to come up with some other explanation for the preponderance of our gender in the peace movement than the one currently in vogue, i.e. that we are more loving and caring than men. Not only is this assumption questionable, it is also a put down of both sexes and implies women are capable of little else.

I would suggest instead that because we hold the thread of life we are absolutely more intent on finding the way to preserve it, and happen quite simply to be using very womanish skills to do so.

For instance, women are notoriously curious. Those of them who have passed through the grieving stage which is inevitable when the reality of the dying planet is confronted, have begun to explore what it is that is eating away at the roots of life, and discovered a ghastly can of worms, something that many of them never knew even existed. They have taken the lid off this can of worms, taken a look, and realized with a sinking heart and rising spirit that they will never be able to replace that lid, and they are also using another long practiced skill, communication, to pass on what they have discovered to other curious women.

Women's communication is unique to their sex. It not only shares feelings which is vital at all times, but has the element of gossip intrinsic to it.

The word gossip is also a put down for women, but the Oxford dictionary definition includes "friend, especially of women ... easy unconstrained talk or writing especially about persons or social events" and signifies for politicised women talking about things we are not supposed to talk about, and wanting to know things we are not supposed to know.

They want to know if the international Mafia is linked to N.A.T.O. They want to *know* who the United States is really protecting in the Persian Gulf. They want to *know* if their elected representatives are only school prefects. No matter how bad it is, women now want to *know* everything.

Beyond this *knowing* aspect, women are doing more. They are intuitively making connections. Some people call this right brain thinking, people who put down women call it leaping to conclusions.

Whatever it is called, women are indeed making leaps, and great progressive leaps at that. Of course this is somewhat scary, especially to white, middle class women for whom this type of leaping is relatively new. They are also unavoidable leaps when faced with the hurdle of facts they now *know*, and are the same leaps that have been and are being made by the world's hungry and oppressed because they are survival leaps pure and simple, and must be made by all of us if the thread of life is to continue.

Two illustrations of the connections that are being made (and not being made) arrived in my mail last week in the form of two very different newsletters from activists in the United States.

The first, by a group not making leaps, was from a Central American support and refugee camp in the southern states, staffed by an extremely fine group of people, Judeo Christian pacifists. On the front cover of their newsletter there was a picture of an adult white American worker at the camp gently helping a small Nicaraguan child to hobble on a wooden leg. This is their new project; making prosthesis for Central American children whose legs have been blown off by North American bombs. The group is doing caring, decent work, as the children do need the limbs.

The second newsletter was from an all women's peace group which had two articles on the front page. One about poverty in the U.S. and the other about racism in the U.S.

What is the difference? Why would I see the first group as not making the leap while the second has?

The difference is that the women in the second group have learned something basic from the war in Nicaragua, and are working to ensure that future Nicaraguan children will be able to keep their own brown, running, leaping legs.

These women *know* that their country's weapons, conventional and nuclear, are to protect the riches of this abundant planet for the wealthy, and they know that the weapons are directed at the poor of the world and those that defend justice. They *know* that our economic system has to change, and they *know* that to say anything less and to work for anything less is a betrayal of the thread of life.

They *know* there is no short way to peace, although we could perhaps look for magic to give us time to do it in. I am proud to be these women's sister, and profoundly grateful that women hold up more than half the sky.

LETTERS

More lesbian publishers

Kinesis

We heartily congratulate and encourage you, the staff and volunteers of *Kinesis*, to continue providing an excellent source of information for women and offering a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences.

With reference to Agatha Cinader's article on Ragweed Press in the September 87 issue, we want to let women know that Lilith Publications decided early this spring to narrow its focus to publications on lesbian and strong women-identified books.

As we understand it, Impertinent Press of Calgary is also preparing to launch books by lesbians.

Lilith's first lesbian book is entitled "Secrets of the Invisible World" by Saskatchewan writer Jean Roberta, available at Canada's feminist bookstores.

Also scheduled for spring 1988 is the "Lesbian Guide to Gracious Living" (submissions are welcome).

Women's presses in Canada are coming out, so to speak, and we think it's great that lesbian writers and readers at last have three Canadian presses to turn to for their literary needs.

Yours,

Adena Franz, Publisher, Lilith Publications Inc., 2191 Clifton Ave., Montréal, Québec, H4A 2N5

IWD organizers take note

Kinesis

We (the Women's Rights Committee of the B.C. Federation of Labour) are planning a conference on Pay Equity for International Women's Day, (IWD) which will be open to participants from the women's movement, the New Democratic Party and trade unions supporting the Bill 19 boycott.

We are hoping to bring at least 200 to the IWD rally and have planned our conference agenda based on the earlier rally start of last year.

International Women's Day falls midweek in 1988 and so there are two weekends which could be used for the rally. Because we had to book conference facilities some time ago, we have booked the Robson Square Media Centre for the weekend of Friday evening March 11, and Saturday, March 12.

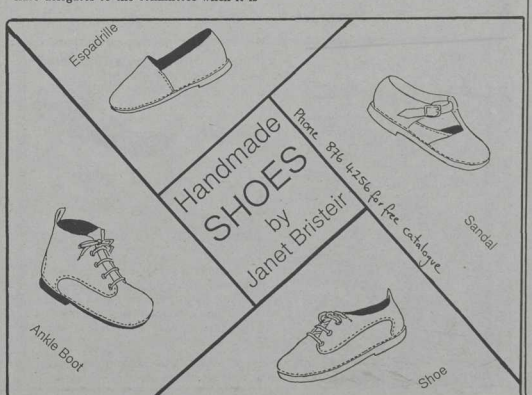
We hope this will fit in with the plans of the 1988 IWD and we have elected Kate Braid and Astrid Davidson to act as alternate delegates to the committee when it is set up.

We would very much like to build a coalition of women's groups around the issue of Pay Equity as done in Ontario and our Saturday morning speaker will talk about the Ontario coalition.

We really hope we can all get together on Pay Equity the way we have on IWD day the last two years.

Yours in sisterhood,

Anne Harvey, V/P B.C. Fed, on behalf of Women's Rights Committee, B.C. Federation of Labour



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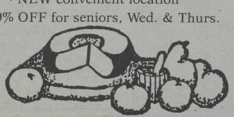

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BULLETIN BOARD

Read this

All listings must be received no later than the 18th of the month preceding publication. Listings are limited to 75 words and should include a contact name and telephone number for any clarification that may be required. Listings should be typed or neatly handwritten, double-spaced on 8 ½ by 11 paper. Listings will not be accepted over the telephone. 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*.

Classified are $4 for the first 75 words or portion thereof, $1 for each additional 25 words or portion thereof. Deadline for classifieds is the 18th of the month preceding publication. *Kinesis* will not accept classifieds over the telephone. All classifieds must be prepaid.

For Bulletin Board submissions send copy to *Kinesis* Att'n Bulletin Board, 301-1720 Grant Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2Y6. For more information call 255-5499.

EVENTS

MICHELLE SHOCKED

Plus the Oyster Band in concert. **Nov. 8** Commodore. Doors 7:30 pm. Tix $12 VTC/CBO 280-4444, Black Swan and Highlife Records, and the Vancouver Folk Music Festival. The Cooking Vinyl Tour "promises to be one of the highlights of the musical year."

VLC DANCE & AUCTION

The Vancouver Lesbian Coffeehouse Collective will be holding a dance and auction at Talk of the Town (former John Barley's), 23 W. Cordova **Nov. 28**, 8 pm. Cost $4-$6. This is a fundraising event for the VLC Coffeehouse.

GARAGE SALE

The Vancouver Lesbian Connection is holding a garage sale on **Nov. 15**, 11 - 4 pm. If it's time to clean out your closet and you'd like to make a donation, please call VLC 254-8458.

DIVORCE

What Women Need to Know, with lawyer Diana Davidson **Nov 10** 8 pm at Vancouver Status of Women's new location 301-1720 Grant St. Free.

JEWISH LESBIAN DAUGHTERS

Of Holocaust survivors (and partners, lovers, and lesbian friends) join other JLDHS for a weekend of workshops, discussion and support in New Hampshire. **Nov. 13-15**. More info JLDHS, Box 6194, Boston, MA 02114.

EVENTS

KATE CLINTON

One of the pioneers of stand up comedy with a feminist aesthetic, Kate Clinton is presented by the Vancouver Folk Music Festival **Nov. 8**, 8 pm. Vancouver East Cultural Centre, 1895 Venables. Tix $10. Reservations 254-9578.

REPRODUCTION & THE STATE

The B.C. Law Union invites the public to their annual conference. Women, Reproduction and the State. **Nov. 14**, 9:30 - 1 pm. Teacher's Centre, 123 E. 6th Ave. Hear professor Kathleen Lahey, Queen's Law School, discuss the "Law of Reproduction" and Katy Young, Vancouver lawyer, on the "Baby R" case. $5 employed, no charge for others.

NEW AGE CLASSICAL

Concert featuring the works of 3 west coast composers: Marcia Meyer, Ross Barrett and Craig McCaw joined by vocalist Patti Dahlquist. **Nov. 15**, 8 pm. Van East Cultural Centre. Tix $10 & $8 for students, seniors & unemployed. More info 254-9578.

MUJER ARTE Y PERIFERIA

Women Art and the Periphery. Chilean Artists-Curators Diamelo Eltit, Nelly Richard, and Lotty Rosenfeld will be in Vancouver **Nov. 11 - Dec. 19** as co-curators at The Floating Curatorial Gallery at Women in Focus: **Nov. 11**, 8 pm. opening; **Nov. 11 - Dec. 19** exhibition of 13 Chilean artists' multimedia works; **Dec. 10**, 8 pm walking tour of works with curators; **Nov. 26**, 8 pm Women Writing in Chile: a talk by Chilean writer, Diamela Eltit $3 un/der employed & member, $4 employed (co-sponsored with Women and Words). As foreign visiting artists-in-residence at Video In: **Nov. 21 & 22**, 9 pm, video screenings of recent video art by Chilean women $3 un/der employed & members, $4 employed ; **Nov. 27**, 9 pm video installation opening; **Nov. 27 - Dec. 19** video installation; **Dec. 5**, 10-5 pm workshop: Women and Art in Chile $5 un/der employed & members, $6 employed.

As speakers co-sponsored with Women in Focus and Video In: **Dec. 3**, 7:30 pm, Feminism & Politics in Chile, La Quena Coffeehouse, 1111 Commercial Drive, $3 un/der employed, $4 employed.

BOLD PRINT

Bold Print, 478A River Ave., The Winnipeg Women's Bookshop is celebrating its first anniversary **Nov. 12-15** inclusive with special events, new books, music, cards, calendars and women's art, and sale items. Judy Chicago will be in Winnipeg **Nov. 4**. Tix available at Bold Print for this event.

EVENTS

OPEN ROAD BENEFIT DANCE

Benefit dance celebrating Guy Fawkes with Animal Slaves, Roots Round Up, Neo Morte & Mad Regatta in support of *Open Road*, a local anti-authoritarian news journal. **Nov. 6**, doors open 8 pm. Legion Auditorium, 2205 Commercial Drive. Tix $4 low income, $7 employed. To pre-register for childcare call Marion 251-2699.

OPENING DOORS

Donna Spencer's theatrical adaptation of *Opening Doors: Vancouver's East End*, which played to sell out crowds as part of the Downtown Eastside Festival is being remounted by popular demand. See Vancouver's past come to life **Nov. 4 - 14**. Tues. - Sun. 8 pm. Firehall Arts Centre, 280 E. Cordova. Info 689-0926.

INTIMATE INVASION

Le Théatre Parminou is on the road again for a bilingual tour from Ontario to the west coast, with *Intimate Invasion/Ca Creve Les Yeux, Ca Creve le Coeur*. Speaking to men and women alike, *Intimate Invasion* takes a concerned look at pornography. **Nov. 19-21**, 8 pm. SUB, 6138 SUB Blvd., UBC. Info 228-5336.

SUBMISSIONS

GRACIOUS LESBIAN LIVING

Lilith Publications Inc. is calling for submissions of prose (no stories) for the *Guide to Gracious Lesbian Living* inspired by the often undocumented idiosyncracies of lesbians and their lifestyles. Deadline **Jan. 1**. Queries to Lilith Publications Inc. (new address), 2191 Clifton Ave., Montreal, H4A 2N5. Envoy ID: San #S115-5776.

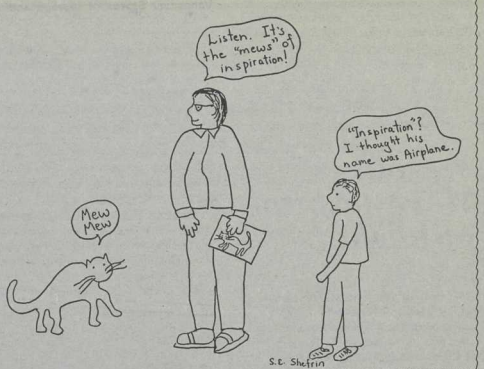
LABRYS RECORDS

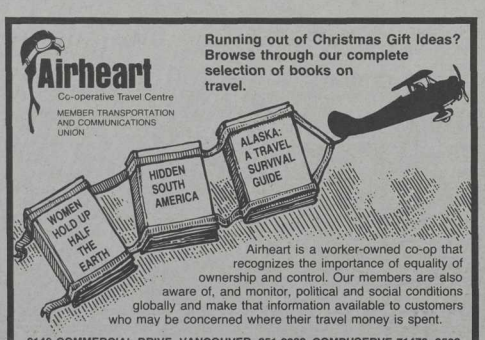
Labrys Records, a women owned independent record production company is interested in women with original lesbian-identified material for a recording project. We are especially interested in women of colour and/or women who have an original approach to their music. All women will be considered. Submit a home-quality cassette containing 3 or 4 best songs and self info to Labrys Records, P.O. Box 174, Tolland, CT 06084 by **Nov. 30**.

IWD POSTER COMPETITON

Call for submissions from artists & designers on International Women's Day 1988 theme of Pay Equity. Small honorarium: Submit to Jennifer Bradley at 253-2580 (h) or 987-3374 (w) by **Dec. 1.**

S.E. SHEFRIN





BULLETIN BOARD

SUBMISSIONS

SLIDES OF ARTWORK

The slide Registry is open to the public and is used by administrators, curators, educators, researchers and writers.

Submissions being called for in any and every medium for slides of artwork by women artists. Send slides (indicate date, medium, size), resumé and available support material (reviews etc.) to Slide Registry, Women's Art Resource Centre, 183 Bathurst Street, 2nd floor, Toronto M5T 2R7.

WORKING FOR A LIVING

Women spend a great deal of time working—in paid and unpaid jobs. *Room of One's Own*, a feminist literary quarterly, invites submissions for a special issue on this theme. Poetry, short fiction, graphics and reviews are welcome. Query first for reviews. **Nov. 30** deadline. Enclose SASE (outside Canada, SAE with IRC) for reply. Send to "Working for a Living", c/o *Room of One's Own*, P.O. Box 46160, Stn. G, Vancouver V6R 4G5.

WOMEN ARTISTS

The *1988 Gallerie Annual* calls for entries from women artists. Artists represent their work with photos and a short written text. Entry deadline **Dec. 1**. Send all entries and inquiries to Gallerie Publications, 2901 Panorama Dr., N. Vancouver V7G 2A4.

WORKSHOPS

LESBIANS & THE LAW

The Vancouver Lesbian Connection is sponsoring 6 workshops held the 3rd Monday of every month (except Dec.). Next workshop **Nov 19**, 8 - 10 pm. Issues being addressed will include: child custody, wills, human rights. Free.

DOUGLAS COLLEGE

Introduction to Test Preparations for Women, **Nov. 5**; Introduction to Interpersonal Communication Skills for Women, **Nov. 12**; Introduction to Assertiveness for Women **Nov. 26**. All workshops in Room 1711 from 12 - 2 pm. at Douglas College, 700 Royal Ave., New West. Pre-register Room 2760 or by calling 520-5486.

MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Public meeting to discuss the Accord re: equality rights and cost-share social services. **Nov. 16**, 7:30 - 10 pm., Unitarian Church of Vancouver, 949 W. 41st Ave. For info call: Jillian Riddington 738-0395; Samantha Sanderson 731-0457; Shirley Masuda 875-0188.

GROUPS

IWD COMMITTEE MEETING

Next meeting of International Women's Day Committee is **Nov. 7**, 9:30 am at Sitka Housing of Co-op (Gravely & Woodlands) in the common room. New women welcome. No experience necessary. We train.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC AGENDA

Women's Economic Agenda meeting to plan a report on women in the B.C. economy **Nov. 16**, 7:30 pm. First United Church. More info 291-4360.

WORD WEAVERS

Awakening The Third Almanac of Lesbian Lore and Vision ... a companion sourcebook in 8 seasonal sections. $6.95; *Ripening The First Almanac of Lesbian Lore and Vison* $4.95; *Dreaming The Second Almanac of Lesbian Lore and Vison* $4.95; *Lesbian Land*, 150 photographs and illustrations with 30 narratives, $15; Lesbian Land poster, the Lesbian Land cover featuring "The World" by Shoshana Rothaizer, 2 colour 11 x 17, $3 *Maize* lesbian country magazine, subscription rate $10 per year (4 issues), back issues available; *Saving Seeds*, metaphors of lesbian growth by Jennifer Weston and other gardeners $4; bumper sticker "Come Out Now ... Ask Me How" $2. All prices in U.S. dollars and include postage. Order from Word Weavers, Box 8742, Mpls. MN 55408 or ask for these books at your wimmin's bookstore.

WE FINALLY DID IT!

Vancouver Status of Women and *Kinesis* have moved to a new improved location in the east side. You can now find us at suite 301-1720 Grant (at Commercial). There is an elevator but as yet there is no wheelchair accessible washroom. Volunteers welcome.

WILPF

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom works for disarmament, political solutions to international conflicts, economic justice within and among States, the elimination of racism and all forms of discrimination and exploitation, the respect of fundamental human rights and the promotion of women to full and equal participation in all of society's activities. WILPF's Vancouver office is located at 5-1310 13th Ave. V6H 1N8. Phone: 733-9018.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

What a time! What a place! What a paper to volunteer on! *Kinesis* offers opportunities to learn a variety of skills in newspaper production including layout/design, writing and distribution. All this—and in a new and exciting office space on Commercial Drive. Call us at 255-5499.

photo courtesy of Women in Focus

Women and Focus' Women Art and the Periphery show will run from November 11 to December 19. The show deals with 13 Chilean artists multimedia works and will include a broad range of issues and concerns to women.

CLASSIFIED

ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

Most people carry unwanted tension in their bodies. You can feel it all around you ... stiff necks. Rigid shoulders. Headaches. The Alexander Technique has been widely used by four generations of actors, singers, athletes and musicians to eliminate unwanted tension and improve their performance.

It is equally effective in ordinary everyday activities around home or office. The Technique will assist you in achieving the light and easy alignment of the head an neck that reduces tension and pain. Common activities like sitting, standing and walking provide a focus for its subtle re-education. A few private lessons will help you assess how the Technique can help you.

For professional instruction phone: Julia Brandreth, Certified Alexander Technique Teacher (604) 684-2541, Vancouver, B.C.

WEST SIDE CO-OP HOUSE

Participate in founding a west side co-op house. Enough for one more n/s person in a bright, newly-formed co-op house (5 people total). We are three adults in our 30's and a considerate pre-teen boy who have rented a spacious house near the UBC endowment lands for **Nov. 1**. If you are interested in living co-operatively and creating a home which is power-sharing, child-welcoming and supportive please call 733-5249. Feminist preferred.

ONE DAY ART SALE

Five Vancouver women artists. Small gifts and affordable art. Sat. **Dec. 5**, noon. La Quena, 1111 Commercial Drive.

CLASSIFIED

WOMEN'S COUNSELLING

My specializations include depression, sexuality, sexual and emotional abuse, adult women survivors of childhood sexual abuse, identity issues, self-awareness, relationship issues, decision-making and career explorations. I work using verbal and expressive therapies, gestalt and guided imagery. Sliding fee scale. Janet Lichty, B.A. M.Ed Counselling Psychology. 874-6982.

VAN EAST HOUSING CO-OP

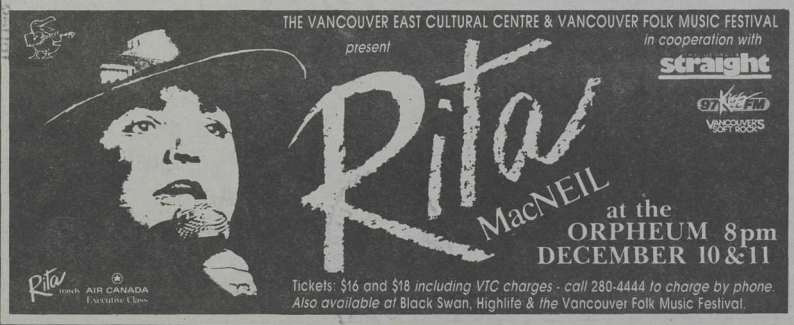
Looking for people for waiting list. No subsidy available at present, but reasonable market rents. Single units from $248-$356; 2 bedrooms from $378-$535; 3 and 4 bedrooms from $459-$572. If interested please write for an application. Membership committee #3-1220 Salsbury, Vancouver V5L 4B2

TRAVELLING TO CHINA

Woman looking for someone to travel with in China April and May '88. Will be in Vancouver early Jan. before leaving Canada. Can meet regarding travelling plans then. In the meantime, write to J. Langford, Box 5546, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 5H4.

BOOKS BY MAIL

Feminist and lesbian books by mail (in English and French). Free new book bulletin published 3 times/year. L'Androgyne Bookstore, 3636 St. Laurent, Montreal H2X 2V4.



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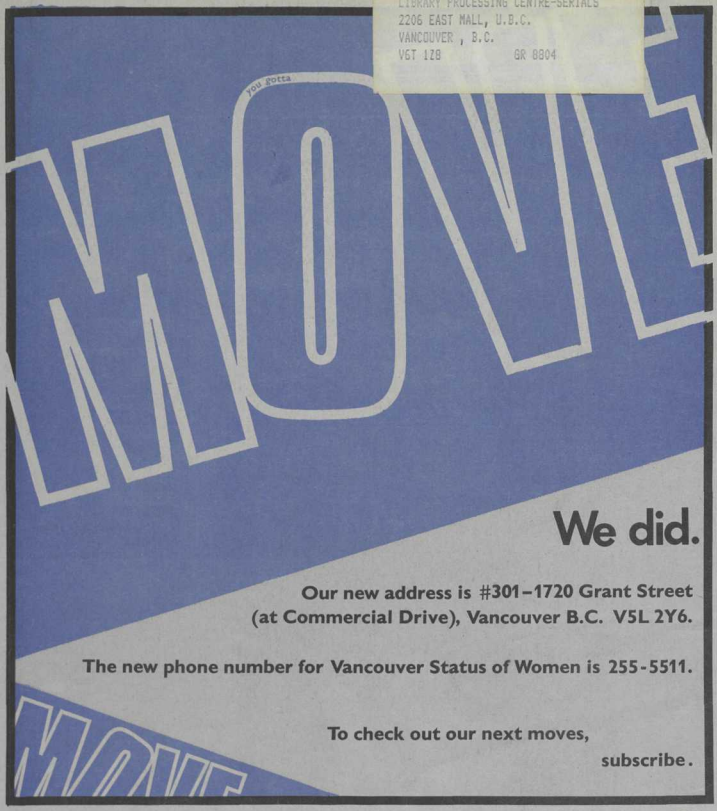

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