September, 1988

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KINESIS

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies

it really happened; breaking silence; putting the blame where it rightfully belongs; learning to love and forgive the child within; trusting ourselves; grieving; allowing anger; disclosures and confrontations; forgiveness; spirituality; moving on.
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Incest survivors: a healing movement

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Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Call us at 255-5499. Our next News Group is Thurs. Sept.8 at 1:30 pm at *Kinesis*, #301-1720 Grant St. All women welcome even if you don't have experience.

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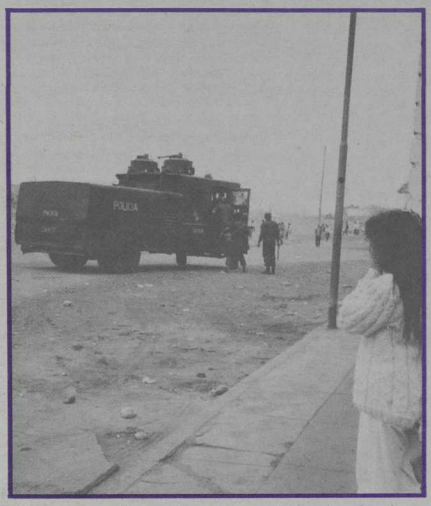
KINESIS

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies

MEANS MOVEMENT



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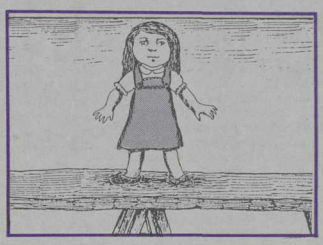

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MOVEMENT MATTERS

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.

The politics of reproduction

Submissions are being requested for "The Politics of Reproduction," an upcoming issue of *Resources for Feminist Research* which will focus, in particular, on the work of Mary O'Brien. Writings that explore O'Brien's philosophy of birth and her critique of dominant Western intellectual traditions are invited. Papers are also encouraged that critique ideologies of reproduction in other cultures and traditions.

For more information about suggested topic areas, or to send submissions (in English or French, not to exceed 3000 words, deadline Feb. 1, 1989), write Somer Brodribb, RFR, c/o OISE, 252 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ont. M5S 1V6.

Women in trades & technology conference

"Surviving and Thriving: A Canadian Conference on Women in Trades and Technology" will be held in Naramata, BC from October 1-4. Over 400 delegates are expected, representing all facets of industry: tradeswomen, educators, employers and government officials.

The first two days are for women working in trades and technology. (The conference is open to both employed and unemployed women.) Workshops will allow participants to discuss issues such as career pathing, overcoming isolation, lobbying and community-based training. The women will then be joined by employers and others for two days of discussion and debate about employment equity, education, and programs and policies to encourage women's full participation in these labour sectors.

Specific presentations include "Assertiveness Training for Tradeswomen," "Building Alliances," and "Supervising Male Employees."

For information about attending the conference, call Marcia Braundy at 604-226-7624, or contact the conference organizers: Kootenay Women in Trades and Technology, RR 1, Winlaw BC V0G 2J0.

Welcome to new women's publications

Two new (or almost new) publications will emerge this fall for feminist and lesbian audiences.

The Womanist hails from Ottawa and is aiming for national distribution and coverage. It promises up-to-date information on federal legislation, critical analysis of the women's movement, international coverage, and, in particular, "Rumour Has It", a national gossip column.

The Womanist will be distributed for free, in laundromats, daycare centres, family places, etc. The collectively-run paper is seeking women to contribute as writers, distributors, graphic artists, and subscribers. Subscriptions for the bimonthly tabloid are $5-$10. Write Box 76, Stn. B, Ottawa, Ont. K1P 6C3.

From Montreal comes a revived version of *Long Time Coming*, a lesbian magazine published for several years in the 70s. *LTC-2* will inform/report/analyse and in general provide lesbians with food for thought about issues important to them.

LTC-2 is accepting manuscripts from lesbians only: articles no longer than 5000 words on any topic will be considered, including fiction, poetry and graphics. *LTC-2* will pay contributors. Subscriptions are $20/4 issues a year in Canada, $25 elsewhere. Cheques are payable to JAM Publications. Write LTC-2, Box 531, Place du Parc, Montreal PQ H2W 2P1.

Unlearning racism workshop in Sept.

There are still spaces open for women of colour—meaning Native women, women of mixed heritage, Asian women, Black women, Hispanic women, and so on—at the Unlearning Racism workshop Sept. 16, 17, 18 at Camp Alexandra in White Rock, BC. The workshop will be facilitated by Ricky Sherover-Marcuse, a Jewish feminist who has done this workshop for over 15 years.

Organizers want the workshop to be attended by 50 per cent women of colour and 50 per cent white women. The facilitator will work separately with women of colour and white women for portions of the workshop. Women of colour will not have to listen to unaware racism of white women.

Sliding scale $20-$150, food and accommodation included. Childcare subsidies available. Site is wheelchair accessible. For information, registration and access arrangements call Celeste George at 877-0514 or Antoinette Zanda at 738-5236.

Shocking Pink Paper unfolds

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women has released its latest "Shocking Pink Paper" in anticipation of the yet-to- be announced federal election.

The pocket-sized pamphlet presents ever-so-brief summaries of social/political issues (day care, pornography, pensions, etc) and suggests questions women may pose to political candidates. (Sample: "What will your party do to address the negative impact of tax reform on women?")

The bilingual pamphlet, which is indeed on shocking pink paper, is available, free of charge, from CACSW. Bulk orders accepted. Contact the National Office at 110 O'Connor St., 9th Floor, Box 1541, Stn. B, Ottawa, Ont. K1P 5R5

Political skills handbook available

Sharing Power takes a personal look at the lives and work of Vancouver Island women who have taken on the challenge of political power. Authored by Josephine Payne-O'Connor, this 'political skills handbook' examines the experiences of lobbyists, band councilors, mayors, alderwomen and MLAs. From fund-raising to campaigning, and from public speaking to decision making, they demystify politics and offer an invitation to women to share power.

The book costs $8.95 plus $1 postage. Proceeds from the book go to its publisher, the Victoria Status of Women Action Group, and the Saanich Native Women's Association.

To order copies, contact SWAG, Box 6296, Stn. C, Victoria BC V8P 5L5.

B.C. midwives: new journal, new energy

The Midwifery Task Force Journal is a new publication of the Vancouver-based Interdisciplinary Midwifery Task Force. The first issue of the 8-page newsletter appeared July 1, 1988, a day after a BC coroner's jury recommended the legalization of midwifery as an autonomous profession fully integrated into the provincial health system.

Midwifery activists were elated by the inquest's recommendations which they feel will have a positive impact on the BC Ministry of Health's internal Task Force on Midwifery, expected to report this summer.

Supporters are asked to write the government, urging implementation of the jury's recommendations. Letters should be sent to Peter Dueck, Minister of Health, Parliament Buildings, Victoria.

The Midwives Association of BC faces enormous legal bills from the inquest and welcomes donations: Legal Fund, 244—810 W. Broadway, Van. BC V5Z 4C9. *The Midwifery Task Force Journal* is available from Box 34425, Stn. D, Van. BC V6J 4W4.

Corrections

In the July/August Kinesis, a paragraph from Sadie Kuehn's "Urging stronger anti-apartheid links" was omitted. The last paragraph should read: "Prabha Kholsa, who is now working in Mozambique, in particular deserves thanks for her work seeking the funding to hold this national women's conference on Women, Solidarity and Southern Africa."

And, our apologies to Margo Farr for listing the wrong opening date for her art show "Taking Liberties."

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photo by Andrea Lowe

Marching Against Apartheid

A celebration of solidarity and defiance, South African Women's Day was marked in Vancouver on Aug. 7, twenty-two years after thousands of women of all races marched on Pretoria to denounce the government's racist pass laws.

The march from City Hall was followed by a rally at the YWCA where Susan Mnumzana of the banned African National Congress spoke. In recognition of the parallels between apartheid in South Africa and the struggle of Native people in Canada, the audience heard also from Marie Wilson of the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en and writer Lee Maracle.

Another death
No help from "injustice" system

by Cynthia Drum

One hundred and fifty people marched through Vancouver's downtown eastside on August 22, shouting chants to protest the murder of Lisa Marie Gavin, 21, a prostitute beaten to death August 12.

Her death brings to 25 the number of B.C. women, mostly prostitutes, who have been murdered since the 1985 inception of Bill C-49, the federal anti-soliciting law.

At the rally, Birget Eder, a lawyer who often represents prostitutes, spoke of how the criminal justice system affects women in the street. She cited examples of "the trivializing of violence so commonly found among police officers," and the attitudes of judges who send women to jail on solicitation charges, telling them prostitution is dangerous.

Kairn Mladenovic who spoke through tears while declaring herself a prostitute for 7 years, objected to this doctrine.

"I disagree," she said. "It's *men* who are dangerous." She went on to describe incidents of violence against herself and her friends, who included Lisa and another murdered woman, and the futile and degrading responses of police and judges.

"Our stats tell us that, between 1986 and '87, 877 men attacked, raped and beat up prostitutes," she said. Seventy-six percent of these attackers are white males between the ages of 25 and 35. Less than one percent are convicted.

"The police are running around with a picture of Lisa's mutilated body," said Mladenovic. "They are putting her lifestyle on trial and using Lisa's murder as a scare tactic to get women off the street and back in line."

Marie Arrington of Prostitutes and Other Women for Equal Rights (POWER) said, "We are angry that the police chief and the vice cops are more concerned with locking women up and punishing them than finding and charging violent men."

Said Arrington, "Lisa was more than a prostitute. She was a woman, a friend, a daughter, a sister, a lover, a work-mate. She did not deserve the violence, just as no prostitute deserves the violence she is subjected to by the police, tricks, vigilantes, as well as the injustice system."

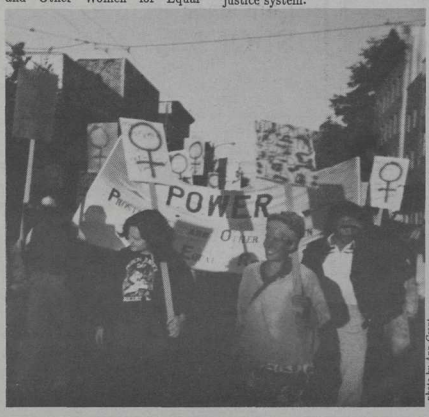


photo by Ann Grant

GAIN
Mandatory program violates privacy

by Nancy Pollak

Women on income assistance will lose one more shred of personal freedom when the B.C. Ministry of Social Services and Housing (MSSH) takes over their legal right to maintenance and child support this fall.

Under the GAIN Amendment Act proclaimed in early September, enrollment in B.C.'s new Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP) will be *mandatory* for welfare recipients who have a right to a maintenance order, regardless of whether or not they wish to initiate or pursue such orders.

For all other people, participation in the Attorney General's FMEP is voluntary.

A refusal to allow MSSH to pursue maintenance action "on the client's behalf" will result in disqualification for income assistance.

Affected by this new ruling are those welfare recipients who are divorced, separated from a marriage (including common law), remarried (or living common-law) with children from a previous marriage, minors, and relatives who have taken in a minor.

While one of the ministry's stated purposes in assuming this right is "to ensure that family breakdown does not impoverish dependent family members," community workers are quick to point out that support recipients will only be allowed to retain a maximum of $100/month.

The rest of the money collected will go into MSSH coffers.

"On the surface it looks positive," said Pat Chauncery of the Child Poverty Action Committee. "But it won't help families much at all. It's just going to save MSSH money."

Deborah Nilsen, manager of MSSH's Family Maintenance Program, was unable to say what the ministry expects to save, citing a lack of "concrete experience" with such a program.

But according to Georgina Marshall of the First United Church, "We've heard the ministry intends to save millions over the next few years ... and they'll do it by nickel-and-diming recipients."

Another aspect of the program troubling Marshall and others is the ministry's access to 'back payments' of maintenance/child support.

This scenario involves women who go off welfare by finding a job. If the defaulting ex-husband then comes through with back payments, she will be required to forfeit that money to the ministry.

In effect, she must pay back the public money she wasn't really due. Nilsen confirmed this would be the case: "Income assistance is paid because maintenance isn't."

Barbara Findlay of Legal Services described the FMEP as "a laudable effort to get husbands to pay more," noting that only about 20 percent of men are still fulfilling their support obligations after a year.

Still, Findlay found it "quite shocking" that MSSH would take the mandatory route. One of her prime concerns is for women who will be forced to deal with two lawyers: her own, and the ministry's. Findlay cited the example of a woman leaving a battering marriage.

"She goes to Legal Aid and gets a lawyer there to deal with maintenance, access, custody, property ... since she needs money, she

See **GAIN** pg.4

Homesharing good news for single mothers

by Lea Dawson

The Single Mothers Housing Network, operating out of Richmond Family Place, received funding this August from the B.C. Family Initiatives Program.

The Network is the first service of its kind for single mothers in Canada. Modelled on homesharing networks for seniors, it was initiated in 1986 in response to conversations Family Place director Ita Margalit had with women wanting to leave unhappy marriages.

These women faced certain poverty, with high housing costs and the pressures of raising children alone the most frequently cited concerns.

Elaine Shearer, the Network's counsellor, describes the women using the service as "very courageous, with a lot against them." About half the women are working, and between paying for day care and rent, "it is amazing they have enough to eat." Homesharing provides a viable option and "women, when they get their heads together, can come up with some creative solutions not as humiliating as the alternatives."

The companionship that comes with sharing a home has proved the success of the program. Many women have found a long-term stable friendship, a sense of family, and a place to share child-rearing responsibilities. For young women pregnant with their first child, homesharing has "worked out beautifully, providing them an opportunity to learn from other mothers," says Shearer.

The Network had applied to the ministry for core funding, hoping for enough money to move to a larger space in Vancouver and hire five staff. They were disappointed to receive only a one-year contract. The Network will be staying in Richmond and hiring only one person, a social worker to review the success of the program in the Richmond/Delta area.

For more information, phone 278-8033.

Renate Shearer: a life of commitment, hope

by Alicia Lawrence

Renate Shearer died on August 23, 1988, one year after being diagnosed as having cancer. Her dearest wish was that her work would be continued. Women from around the province will remember her best as an advocate for human rights and social justice, but her work was wider in scope.

Renate had a deep love and commitment to the well-being of women and children, and worked to bring about changes necessary to protect and advance equitable treatment of all people.

Her early professional work was as a staff person and board member with the Vancouver YWCA. In this capacity, she worked with immigrant women and provided language courses for women working in sweat shops. As a social planner in Vancouver, she was active in developing a downtown Detox Centre—Cordova House—and the #44, which offers services to transients and street people.

She continued work for the city as a member of the Race Relations Committee. She was also part of a task force dealing with juvenile prostitution.

Renate worked with the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people to develop their health and child welfare programs which are now being used as a model for other bands. Her sense of how people should treat each other extended to all fields of her work.

Renate had an interest in the arts, believing they were a vital force in making social change and should be available for all to enjoy, regardless of income. She saw children as people and part of our culture, capable of accepting challenges. She was on the board of the Vancouver Folk Festival and helped with funding for the Human Rights stage this year.

She also worked as a volunteer and consultant with the Children's Festival and with Headlines Theatre. She was influential in the theatre's decision to work with the refugee community on their next production.

While a member of the B.C. Human Rights Commission, Renate was involved in developing educational activities to make equality a life experience for all. She helped found the B.C. Human Rights Coalition, a grass roots provincial group.

Never seeking the public spotlight, Renate agreed to a more public role when, in 1983, she was asked to co-chair the Solidarity Coalition. In those difficult times, Renate's ability to keep in touch with people and work with them toward a common goal bound the divergent groups together. Her ability to empower people, and to enable them to work in a participatory manner was one of the more positive results of the Solidarity work.

photo by Greg McIntyre

Renate Shearer

In her continued work for equality, Renate was a dedicated member of LEAF (Legal Education Action Fund), the Canadian Council on Social Development, and the Human Rights Centre in Ottawa.

This account of Renate's work only recalls a small portion of her accomplishments. What is left out is her personality, dedication and positive attitude. In the midst of difficult circumstances, Renate Shearer was able to bring hope, understanding and respect to people. Her sense of justice and her personal integrity are her legacy to all women working for equality.

Baby R
Court rulings reflect status quo

by Anna Blume

Two recent rulings by B.C. courts have struck down attempts by the state to confer legal status on a fetus.

In August, the B.C. Supreme Court ruled that, in the case of 'Baby R.', the provincial government had no right to apprehend a woman's fetus.

On May 20, 1987, the B.C. superintendent of child and family services had ordered the apprehension of the fetus shortly before birth, despite the mother's consent to a caesarian section. Doctors had requested government intervention, fearing the mother's hesitation to undergo surgery would endanger the fetus.

Feminists have lauded the court's ruling which noted that, "should it be lawful to apprehend an unborn child hours before birth, then it would logically follow that an apprehension could take place a month or more before term."

The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) presented arguments in the case. According to LEAF's Isabel Grant, all the judge really did was reiterate that, legally, the word 'child' does not include fetus.

"The Baby R ruling is consistent with a long line of common law interpretations," said Grant.

(As *Kinesis* goes to press, the baby's mother is awaiting a court decision re: custody of her child. The superintendent's reapprehended the infant immediately after the ruling.)

In another case, midwives Mary Sullivan and Gloria LeMay were relieved of a charge of causing death by criminal negligence when the B.C. Court of Appeals ruled that such a charge could only apply to "a person."

The charge against Sullivan and LeMay stemmed from the death of a baby being born to Jewel Voth on May 8, 1985. The baby died from complications during labour.

They were convicted of causing bodily harm to the mother. "The fetus is part of the mother," commented Isabel Grant, "and they [were judged to have] damaged that part of the mother."

Sages
Women-only restaurant on the menu

by Elaine Burgess

Women-only restaurant space is about to become a reality for the Vancouver community.

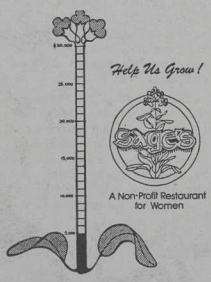
Sage's, to be located in the Commercial Drive area, will be operated by the Vancouver Lesbian Connection (VLC) on a non- profit basis. The restaurant will be licensed and will offer a menu ranging from snacks and light entrees to more substantial meals, a wonderful dessert selection and even a special Sunday brunch. Women's entertainment will be presented regularly.

The restaurant will operate on a club-membership basis (with nominal fees) in order to retain its women-only environment. Memberships will be available on an annual or lifetime basis. Sage's will initially provide paid employment for three women and possibly more later.

VLC offers community services and does political work as well. As part of the Lesbian Network, they help organize international lesbian week and co-sponsor the annual gay and lesbian conference. VLC works on the quarantine laws and other human rights issues such as same sex benefits, violence against gays and lesbians and international discrimination issues. These are women who care about our community and are willing to work hard to see that things get done.

The idea of starting a restaurant for all women came about from a desire to be self-sufficient and not rely on government funding. All profits generated by Sage's would go back to VLC for the continuation of their work.

A major fundraising campaign is now underway with a goal of $30,000 by the end of October. Lifetime memberships cost $100 and entitle the bearer to a significant discount on restaurant prices. Call VLC at 254-8458 for more information.



Daily sexism
Write soon, write often

by Terri Hamazaki

When women gathered outside the Pacific Press building on June 24th to protest a *Vancouver Sun* article trivializing child sexual abuse, their demonstration was watched from within by supportive newspaper employees.

Soon after, Vancouver Status of Women received a call from Anne—the pseudonym for a *Province* writer who wishes to remain anonymous. She described herself as "one of a group of women fighting sexism in the *Sun* and *Province*" and called for "support from women whenever they read sexist articles in the paper, in the form of letters to the editor."

Not just Trevor Lauten's "misogynist article" (June 18, mentioned above) was cause for her concern. She also cited Jim Taylor's column on the Miss Grey Cup Pageant ("Call him old-fashioned," *Province*, July 26), and Denny Boyd's commentary on breasts ("Men tired of being chastised for gauging women by breast size," *Sun*, July 26).

"Why aren't women writing in about these columns?" asked Anne. "The paper is waved by public opinion, but unless the public writes in response to consistently chauvinistic papers, it will continue to print such articles."

Asked if perhaps women do write in but their letters go unprinted, Anne replied, "That is always a possibility. I am always receiving letters addressed to myself personally. And other writers do as well."

Perhaps "women dread writing" as Anne ventures. Her message, however, is, let your anger motivate you to take pen in hand and dash off a letter addressed *directly* to the editor. Let the papers know what you want. But most importantly, let them know what you will not stand for.

GAIN from pg.3

goes to MSSH for income assistance and, boom, she has two lawyers.

"She no longer has any right to *instruct* [the ministry] lawyer, her spouse is dealing with two lawyers ... it's not a great position for her."

Since estranged spouses often make trade-offs with one another when juggling access, property and support agreements, Findlay foresees another hazard. The ministry's goal of securing hefty maintenance orders may produce "a straight conflict between her interest and the ministry's. They may say, you can't make *that* deal . "

Then there are the women who, for many very good reasons, don't want to have *any* dealings with their ex-mates or children's fathers.

"Women have 'disappeared' because their ex-husbands are violent and can't know where they are," said Pat Chauncery. There are fears that women may be beaten, or children abducted, when the ministry tries to collect.

Both Marshall and Chauncery are deeply concerned the new program will further separate women on welfare from other women. They are angry that something voluntary has been made mandatory for poor women. As Marshall said, "One's rights are again taken away. You are monitored, your privacy is taken away.

Family Maintenance Coordinator Gus Assonitis gave assurances the government was sensitive to those fears and would waive maintenance collection if there was a threat of violence.

Georgina Marshall is not so sure. "On the face of it, the waiver makes sense, but experience we've had with the ministry shows it won't work ... We might trust the [family maintenance] workers, but not the government managers."

"It's a subtle form of violence against women."

Announcing British Columbia's New
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Recently arrested

Just a gaggle of Grannies

by Joni Miller

If you attended this year's Peace Walk in Vancouver, or the La Quena Fiesta in July, you will have witnessed the Raging Grannies in action.

Recently, the Grannies went into action again at the Windchelsea Island military facility near Nanaimo. Protesting the nearby Nanoose weapons testing range, five Grannies were arrested for trespassing. When they get up on stage in their flower print dresses, sunbonnets and grannie glasses, The Grannies (ages 48 to 71) deliver an anti-nuclear message with humour and intelligence.

Their performances mix old familiar tunes with lyrics like, "Oh we're just a gaggle of grannies/ Urging you off your fannies/ We're telling you boys/ We're sick of your toys/ We want no more Cruise."

Add to this a deliberately corny presentation, a number of interesting props and, in their own words, " we're non- threatening. We feel powerful up on stage, and we tell other people they don't have to be impotent."

The Victoria-based Grannies (Fran, Betty, Doran, Bess, Mary, Linda, Joyce, Hilda, Moira and Lois) don't claim to be a musical group; some of them say people singing out of tune can be beautiful. However, they are serious about their non-professionalism and commit themselves to once-a-week rehearsals.

Their song list, which takes on various aspects of the nuclear arms race—uranium mining, nuclear subs and missile testing—also includes tomes on Free Trade and the CSIS. The lyrics are mainly written by a behind-the-scenes member who prefers to remain anonymous.

Most of the women met through a mixed street theatre called "Extenuating Circumstances." When that organization came to an end, there was a desire for a new form. As one Grannie pointed out, "We were sick of protests that don't work, so we decided to poke fun.

"Face it—the arms race is a joke, they can already kill us 50 times over, and they keep going!"

From the start, the Grannies were an all-women group. Partly "there were no men eager to come out and look ridiculous with us." Also, some of them had been reading feminist authors such as Mary Daly and were inspired by her message. The death of Margaret Lawrence, who devoted her later years to saving the planet, was also cited as an influence.

The Grannies are not unanimous on whether or not they are feminists; some say yes and some say no. ("Don't ask about abortion," I was warned.) However, they all agree they are against patriarchy, sexism and hierarchy, and believe women need to influence the political process.

The organization of the group is fluid—women take turns at being the "director," but if you don't want to play that role, you don't have to. They say growing older for them means more free time and more opportunities for activism. They also acknowledge that they are all middle class and as a group are well educated.

photos by Joni Miller

Go Grannies Go

A primary goal of the Grannies has been to reach people who wouldn't go to a traditional protest. Thus, their first performances were right out on the street, cheap movie night line-ups being a favourite target.

Their first 'official' appearance was at an anti-uranium rally held February 1987 in front of the Legislature Buildings. In response to the usual official clutter of papers on the topic, they arrived with their own "briefs"—a clothesline of men and women's undies—and proceeded up the stairs to the halls of government where a security guard blocked their way.

The crowd began chanting "Go Grannies Go" until eventually security was forced to let them in. "The Powers-That-Be don't know what to do with us," one granny remarked.

Since then, there have been many adventures. They described with relish one incident in which a local Victoria TV cameraman accompanied them into the harbour to serenade visiting nuclear subs. He was in a row boat with one

See **Grannies** page 6

Women most affected

Severe crisis in B.C.'s Long Term Care

by Kathie Sommer

It is almost impossible to put into words the severity of the crisis facing elderly citizens requiring Long Term Care facility placement in B.C. The crisis has emerged from a multiplicity of problems, too numerous to address here. What *can* be discussed, however, is the effect on Long Term Care residents of new policies, and the fee schedule recently introduced by the provincial government.

To do that, let me introduce Martha Owens (a pseudonym), one of the approximately 2500 women (compared to 1300 men) residing in Long Term Care facilities in Vancouver.

Martha, a 71 year old widow, lives in Berry Cove Extended Care Unit (again, a pseudonym). Due to the complexity of her medical problems, her general debility and inability to function independently, Martha is no longer able to live in her home of 40 years where she and her husband Stan enjoyed raising their three children.

At least, that's what her assessment says. The reality is, insufficient homemaker services exist to maintain Martha safely and comfortably at home.

As someone functioning at the 'extended care level,' Martha qualifies for the maximum amount of homemaker service—four hours per day. Martha is unable to get herself in and out of bed, on or off a chair or the toilet, and is unable to walk without support. She is unable to stand to cook a meal and she certainly can't navigate the stairs to the laundry room. No homemaker, no matter how efficient, would be able to attend to all of Martha's daily household, personal care, social and safety needs in a matter of four hours.

There is no one else who can help: her children reside elsewhere, many of Martha's friends require home help themselves. So, although she remains alert, witty and mentally active, begrudgingly, Martha is forced to live in an extended care facility.

Days Get Long

This spring, the provincial government raised the cost of residential Long Term Care from 75 percent of the basic federal pension (Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) combined) to 85 percent. That amounts to $598.30 out of $691.48 per month (or $19.30 per day) going toward residential care.

These dollars entitle a person to a bed, all necessary nursing and personal care, prepared and served meals, *some* personal care items and—we would hope but don't always see—a clean, well-maintained environment.

Kinesis file graphic

Martha receives the basic pension. As a recipient of the federal GIS, Martha automatically qualifies for the provincial Guaranteed Annual Income for Need (GAIN): $49.30.

Her disposable income after the Long Term Care fee is $142.48. The provincial government would have Martha believe that is enough for her needs.

Martha can't get herself out of bed and the staff aren't always readily available to help. To avoid trips to the less-than-private lounge to use the pay-phone, Martha would like a bedside phone to maintain contact with her friends. She would also like cablevision since TV reception without it is very poor. Besides, it provides more variety—the days can get long otherwise. But, combined, these cost approximately $30/month, an expense that would take away from other, perhaps more important things.

What could be more important when, as Martha is continually reminded, all her needs are taken care of? Well, Martha would like to buy some new clothes since she lost 40 pounds during a recent hospitalization. And there's the new seat cushion for her wheelchair—the wheelchair she bought herself. Martha also has to buy her own

Please see **Crisis** pg.6

WHAT' S NEWS?

by Gwen Bird

P4W: Shut it down

A recent report by the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) reiterates the recommendations of some 13 previous private- and public-sector studies, urging that Canada's only women's penitentiary be closed down.

The Kingston, Ontario prison, P4W, built in the 1930's and intended to house 100 prisoners, currently holds 150 women. Within the prison, minimum- medium- and maximum-security prisoners are all housed in maximum-security facilities and, as of last

Kinesis file graphics

year, P4W has no protective custody wing. The CBA report points out that in these, as well as other ways, the penitentiary system discriminates against women prisoners: men prisoners have more specialized—not to mention local—facilities.

The report also states that the current situation impedes efforts to rehabilitate and treat women. "The time has now passed when another Royal Commission or another committee report is required to urge its closure," the CBA says, recommending that legislation to close the prison be introduced "in a timely way."

Dalkon Shield settlement disappoints

A majority of claimants in the case against Dalkon Shield manufacturer A.H. Robins have voted to accept the company's settlement offer to establish a $2.26 billion trust fund.

300,000 women around the world who used the IUD in the 1970's and suffered abnormal pregnancies, septic abortions, PID, sterility and other disorders have been suing the manufacturers.

However, many women—and especially women from among the estimated 6500 Canadian claimants—are unhappy with the settlement. They are worried the money will never come their way. Says Toronto claimant Elizabeth Mueller, "There isn't any guarantee the claimants will see anything, partly because no one has ever determined the scope of the damage."

Members of the international Coalition of Dalkon Shield Claimants point out the settlement provides for reimbursement of Robins' shareholders and payment of $350 million to the Robins family before any compensation goes to Dalkon Shield victims. The Official Claimants Committee also testified in bankruptcy court that it would take between $4 and $7 billion to repay known claims.

Court rules daycare okay

The Manitoba Court of Appeal has set an important precedent in a custody case involving day care. The Appeal Court reversed an earlier decision which denied custody to a mother because she used paid day care and babysitters to care for her children while she was at work. The original decision granted custody to the father because his second wife was available to look after the children "24 hours a day."

Court of Appeal justices stated that the trial judge "committed a palpable error" and that "day are and home care arrangements are a fact of life which many parents and children face, and there was no evidence ... that the children would suffer the least harm."

Few women in sciences

The Council of Ontario Universities has released a report citing gender bias in classroom materials, lack of female role models and sexist attitudes on campuses as reasons for the low numbers of women in science and engineering programs.

According to the study, although 53 percent of 1985 university graduates were women, only 12.3 percent of science and engineering graduates were women. At the doctoral level, only 7.6 percent of students in these fields are women.

University of Waterloo Chemistry Professor Doreen Brisbin states more female faculty members are needed in the sciences to

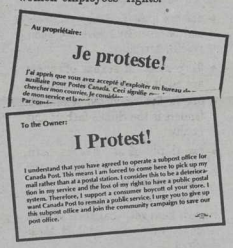
provide role models. She headed a committee that urged the university to allow lighter work loads for new faculty. Under current conditions, women faculty members with families often have to choose part-time or sessional appointments instead of the full-time jobs that lead to tenure.

Canada Post stamps out women

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) has launched a campaign denouncing the establishment of sub-post offices in drug stores, delis and grocery stores as particularly harmful to women.

CUPW points out that the spread of these smaller, non-union stations will help the federal government to "dismantle Canada Post," and to save money only by relying on cheaper, untrained labour.

With almost 80 percent of Postmasters in rural Canada being women, the loss of these jobs will force more women into lower-paying jobs or unemployment. Furthermore, CUPW points out that workers in the federal public sector are protected by legislation calling for employment equity and equal pay for work of equal value, and that the union also fights for women employees' rights.



Au propriétaire:

Je proteste!

J'ai appris que vous avez accepté d'exploiter un bureau de... auxiliaire pour Postes Canada. Ceci signifie ... cherchez mes courriers. Je considère... de mon service et la...

Par conséquent...

To the Owner:

I Protest!

I understand that you have agreed to operate a subpost office for Canada Post. This means I am forced to come here to pick up my mail rather than at a postal station. I consider this to be a deterioration in my service and the loss of my right to have a public postal system. Therefore, I support a consumer boycott of your store. I want Canada Post to remain a public service. I urge you to give up this subpost office and join the community campaign to save our post office.

In Vancouver, CUPW local President Marion Pollack and others have protested outside a 7-Eleven store where a sub-post office was established. Says Pollack, "While it may be more convenient, the final result is the slow death of Canada Post, piece by piece.

The union proposes that Canada Post expand services and keep post offices open longer, and urges Canadians to do their business with the post office only in unionized postal facilities.

Real help needed by young hookers

A conference of child welfare groups has taken a stand calling for the decriminalization of child prostitution and for better services to get young prostitutes off the streets.

A recent report on the National Consultation on Adolescent Prostitution was released by the group of social workers, youth workers and government officials. They point out that current programs tend to overwhelm young prostitutes instead of providing the services they need. Health care, job training, drug-rehabilitation, counselling and safe housing should all be available in one place and preferably through one person so trust can be built up over time.

Delegates from the Canadian Child Welfare Association criticized Bill C-49 which makes soliciting an offence, and therefore blames the child for child prostitution. They said, "Rather than going after the kids, the customers ... need to be penalized ... If (we) don't ... charge the customers, then as a society, we are condoning sexual abuse of children."

They estimate the number of child prostitutes in Canada to be between 5-10,000.

Law unfair to common-law spouses

A common-law father in Alberta who claimed his child support payments as a deduction on his income tax is taking the federal government to court for refusing the deduction.

Under current law in every province except Ontario, separated or divorced spouses can claim child support on their income tax, but common-law parents cannot. Murray Grigg of Calgary has raised a Charter of Rights challenge in federal court over this issue.

Federal officials admit that a new precedent could be set by this case, and that deductions policy may change. That, in turn, could result in higher court-ordered support payments for children of separated common-law parents.

Grannies from page 5

Granny, while the others paddled out in a canoe. On the way back, the reporter grabbed the oars and insisted on a race.

"As you know," I was told, "canoes are much faster than row boats, so naturally we won, but was he ever mad! He couldn't believe that a group of "old women" could beat him."

Once they hired a horse and carriage to take them out to Legion Park in Esquimalt where they ceremoniously placed peace flowers on the cannons. Another innovative action involved setting up a street vote on Douglas Street in Victoria. People were given play money and a choice of three jars in which to place it, labelled nuclear submarines, education or health. The final tally was nuclear subs $640, education $24,000 and health $16,000.

They also crashed a reception sponsored by Conservative MP Pat Carney and sang her their Free Trade Trot. ("Who needs a culture/ or an identity when we have Dynasty/ on our TV?")

Ms. Carney's face reportedly turned from "very nice" to "beet red" to "outright angry."

They say their main impact is on the young. Last year in Victoria they were invited to appear at a number of high schools. Most of these schools have subsequently declared themselves "Nuclear Free Zones."

The Grannies consider themselves role models of hope and say they have no monopoly on the concept. With their encouragement, Granny Groups have sprung up on Gabriola and Saltspring Islands, Sechelt, Vancouver and Edmonton. The first "Raging Granny" convention was held this August on Saltspring Island. Among other activities, the women are planning to meet with the Greenpeace Ship "Vega" to sing a rousing chorus of "Well, Hello Greenpeace."

Crisis from page 5

shampoo, toothpaste and other personal care items.

Speaking of toothpaste, Martha still has her own teeth and some of them are bothering her. She'd like to see her dentist but doesn't think she can afford to because her glasses don't seem right anymore and she may have to get new ones. They, she feels, are more important than teeth.

Without them, she can't pass the time watching TV or reading the mysteries she so dearly loves. And she wouldn't be able to see the cards at her now all-too-infrequent bridge games, or read the letters from her children and grandchildren.

That's a reminder. Four birthdays are coming up soon. Then comes Christmas. Martha would dearly love to send 'a little something' to all of them but there just doesn't seem to be enough money. Martha regrets that cards will simply have to do. She hopes she has some stamps on hand and can find someone kind enough to get the cards for her because she knows she certainly can't afford the cost of the taxi to take her shopping. And the HandiDart, although only $1.25 each way, has to be booked a week ahead of time.

Schedules! Bingo on Monday, bus trip on Tuesday, pub night on Friday. Martha enjoys them all; they get her out of her room, but they cost money. No, there isn't enough money—only enough for the basics.

Martha knows how often she must choose between some of the basics. She also knows that if she can't have or do the things she wants because there isn't enough money, at least she'll have lots of time. Maybe she could sleep.

Martha laughs at the irony. It's just like it was when she and Stan were starting out, raising their young family in a new city—no money, but lots of time. Well, it was a little different back then. At least Stan and the kids were around and there was hope for the future. Yes, Martha thinks she'll just sleep a lot.

In custody cases
Court fails to protect abused children

by Noreen Shanahan

There's a dangerous trend happening in family court.

If a woman charges her child's father with sexual abuse in a custody battle, there's a good chance she'll be branded vengeful and manipulative, her child will be called a liar, her lawyer will wish she'd never brought it up—and her husband will walk off hand in hand with the child.

In a recent call to the Vancouver Status of Women (VSW) one woman expressed frantic concern for the safety of her children, a seven-year-old girl and nine-year-old boy, after a judge's ruling sent them packing to their father's for the summer.

"He beat me up for ten years, was charged three times with sexually abusing my daughter, and the last time we saw him he was chasing us down the road with a shot gun."

Like countless other women, she was forced to either abide by the court ruling and hand over her children, or risk jail if she refused.

"I don't care what happens to me, I just want somewhere safe to leave my kids." She was calling for an address.

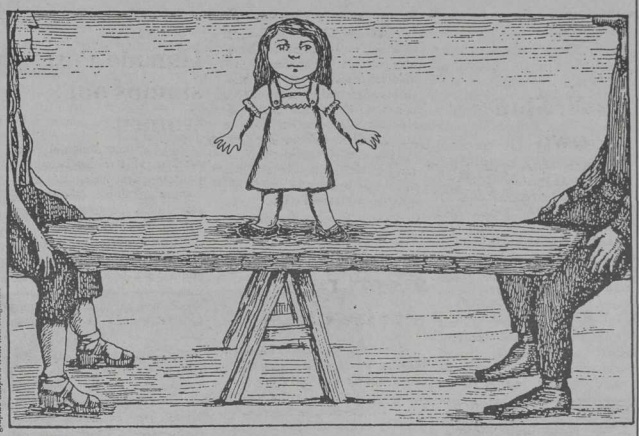
Lea Dawson of VSW says the majority of the calls they receive are from women losing their children in custody decisions. "We often feel frustrated to help these women because we don't have a legal background, and if a woman is told by the courts to give the father visitation rights, she has no choice but to go to jail."

In a custody battle presently being fought in Edmonton, a five-year-old girl's father is arguing for unsupervised visitation rights while her mother is presenting proof of sexual abuse.

The mother, in seeking support from women's groups across the country, distributed information on the case. It says her daughter was sexually assaulted over two years by the woman's ex-husband and, despite medical and other evidence, the police haven't laid any charges of sexual assault. After eight court appearances, he continues to demand unsupervised visiting rights because "men have rights too".

These men have found a friend in Dr. John Bradford, an Ottawa child psychiatrist, who says false allegations of child sexual abuse is increasing at an alarming rate, resulting in a 'new phenomena' in child custody and access cases.

"The cases overwhelmingly involve a mother accusing the child's father of abuse. And some fathers are being wrongly convicted of molesting their children," he said. "Being accused of child abuse is worse than being accused of murder."



graphic adapted from Ms. Magazine

In custody fights, some say it's smart to enter the ring armed with a few statistics—just to keep it straight about who has rights, and who is abusing the rights of other (often younger) people.

- one girl in four/one boy in seven will be sexually abused by their twelfth birthday;
- 97 percent of sexual offenders are adult or adolescent males;
- one in five convicted sexual offenders is the child's father; and finally
- two-thirds of all children born in Canada in the 1980's will see their parents divorce.

Women are increasingly convinced, however, that their silence in court will better protect their children.

"Women are being told by their lawyers not to talk about sexual abuse," said Ruth Gillings of WAVAW (Women Against Violence Against Women). "If they do, they'll appear to be manipulating the child into lying, just to win the case."

As well as the 'lying to make mommy happy' perception, there's a tendency in family court to doubt a child's testimony simply because 'kids lie'—and a growing awareness about child sexual abuse gives them ammunition and shock value.

Barb Brett, of Vancouver Incest and Sexual Abuse Society (VISAC) is concerned about the growing number of cases where children are not believed and defendants not charged in allegations of sexual abuse. "I won't be pushed to the wall by saying there are never improbable allegations, but in our experience they're extremely rare, and they're not malicious or conniving."

She's alarmed by media reports on the so-called rise of false allegations. "As a society, we seem to have a need to deny it (sexual abuse) and this is played up in the media."

(Recent media reports say a B.C. man killed himself after being 'wrongly accused' of sexually abusing his foster child. And earlier this year a Toronto school janitor lost his job and 'good reputation' after false allegations of sexual abuse were laid. Both of these highly publicized and sensationalized cases lead to an increased suspicion of children's testimonies.)

A pattern is emerging in which children are first talking about abuse at the exact time their parents are getting divorced. The child is faced for the first time with the prospect of being totally alone with the abusive man.

In a *Globe and Mail* commentary Toronto psychologist Paula Caplan and lawyer Mary Fassel express concern with the anti-

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photo by Jackie Brown

Songs For A Sacred Valley

Buffy Ste. Marie (above) was one of several thousand who gathered in B.C.'s Stein River Valley in early August for the fourth annual "Voices For The Wilderness" festival.

The Stein Valley, under threat of first-time logging, is a sacred site of the Lytton and Mount Currie Indian bands. Addressing the crowd, Chief Ruby Dunstan of Lytton said, "If [loggers] go into the Valley, [they] might as well peel off all of the Indian's skin."

Surprise, disappointment greets new Broadcasting Act

by Pam Galloway

Recent government proposals for a new Broadcasting Act gloss over equality provisions, leaving MediaWatch, national watch-dog on sexism in the media, surprised and disappointed.

Recommendations by MediaWatch were supported by the government's Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, set up to evaluate the need for new legislation. But the call for provisions to significantly increase the number of women and minority groups at all levels of broadcasting was met by the government in a vaguely worded section of the proposed Act, lauded as the Human Rights clause.

Linda King of MediaWatch says the only reference the government makes to equality provisions comes in the statement "the Canadian broadcasting system should strive through its operations and programming to reflect the circumstances and aspirations of Canadian men and women."

King says the inclusion of broadcasting operations is a step in the right direction as it brings CRTC jurisdiction, for the first time, to behind-the-scenes employment practices. But she doubts it effectiveness: "It is more likely to provide women with false hopes and battles with the CRTC and the courts than any actual changes."

She also sees the possibility of the broadcasting industry using the clause to support the status quo. Programmers could argue the aspirations of women are to be primarily depicted in traditional roles and as sex objects. Employers could provide equal access to jobs, but deem women applicants unqualified.

The bill is in parliamentary committee stage and King will appear as a witness to present further evidence. MediaWatch cites research studies showing the inequality of on-screen representations of females. In 1985, Erin Research found that, in live drama, 78 percent of characters were male and 22 percent were female. Other research shows that women make up the lower echelons of the broadcasting industry, and are noticeably under-represented in positions involving the selection of material and people.

King is hopeful it is not too late for the bill to be changed, "but that depends on how well the public makes its support known."

MediaWatch urges all women to write to parliament in support of clearly stated equality provisions in the Broadcasting Act.

Address your concerns to Flora MacDonald, Minister of Communications, Room 324-WB, House of Commons, Ottawa K1A 0A6.

In Nicaragua

The emotional crisis between women and men

by Sofia Montenegro

Sofia Montenegro is a Nicaraguan feminist and senior editor of the newspaper Barricada. *She was active during the final stages of the revolution against the Somoza dictatorship, delivering messages and running safehouses.*

Last March, on the occasion of International Women's Day, Montenegro did a speaking tour of nine Ontario cities. The following is a transcription of her speech, edited by Nancy Farmer of Tools for Peace.

Capitalism came late to Nicaragua in the 1950's in the form of large plantations of cotton and coffee under the control of rich landowners. This had a wide social impact on our country as it disrupted the traditional peasant family: men were forced to migrate from plantation to plantation according to the harvest.

This created a nomad male population who, wherever they went, would create a new family. This naturally left great masses of women and children deeply impoverished and women then became a very cheap labour reserve for the landlords.

Women began to move to the cities where again they became exploited as cheap labour in the factories. Middle class women were restricted to careers in the liberal professions such as teachers or lawyers. The seal of a Spanish and Catholic culture further restricted the rights of women.

Over 20 years ago, coinciding with the growth of feminism in western society, women began to organize. Women developed a political attitude towards equality and decided they were one of the most exploited and impoverished parts of the population. By 1969 women were involved in the guerrilla movement, which finally liberated the country in 1979.

By 1977 the women's movement took another step and organized itself into what was known prior to the revolution as the National Association of Women. Women took to the streets not only because of their demands but because their fathers, husbands, brothers and sons had been either killed or imprisoned and tortured by the Somoza regime.

Women had begun to realize that to change their status it was necessary to change the system. This was a period when upper class women were not supposed to go out without a chaperone; so imagine the shock when thousands of women took up arms and started fighting side-by-side with men.

Transcending their role of servitude, women became fighters themselves. For women it meant gaining a great deal of self-respect.

After the revolution one of the first tasks was to make some sense out of the chaos. First and foremost, education of the population was undertaken. Women were central in this campaign that had one half of the population teaching the other half how to read and write. The more we advanced the more we were changing our vision of the world and women's consciousness evolved to an understanding that a nationalist and patriotic attitude was needed to solve the problems of the country. A new sense of alliance began with women from all classes and with men.

Choosing Revolution

Our situation became a little more difficult when the aggression increased in 1984 from the U.S. mercenary forces and remnants of the Somoza regime. The women's movement had developed under the direction of AMNLAE; however when the fighting increased, it centered its efforts on what we call "backing up the mothers." Our organization began to shrink as some thought we were treating all women as mothers and not as women. But time has proven this was historically necessary.

photo by Nancy Farmer

The Reagan administration had built up a force of 30,000 soldiers of fortune who were fighting against our revolution. Since 100,000 men a year were called to defend our country, it practically left control of the economy and production in the hands of women—women who were recently literate, women who were full of enthusiasm but who lacked experience.

It also created another phenomenon—a triple work day. Women had not only to do their own work but also the work of the man who was missing. This was very stressful for many women but slowly, slowly they became confident and acquired a greater sense of personal dignity. They also realized they were not as dependent on men as they had thought and this created another problem.

War doesn't civilize anyone and the men hadn't been living through the same process as the women. There was a large gap between the level of consciousness achieved by women and men. When men returned to their homes after two years of military service, they often didn't recognize the women they had left behind.

Many men resisted these changes and the response has been violent. We have the social syndrome of "beaten women" in Nicaragua. Part of this stems from the violent times we are living in.

So today we are not only facing a military and deep economical crisis, but also an equally strong emotional crisis between men and women. The foundations of our society have been really shaken and the old role models will not be tolerated.

In time of war it is difficult to think clearly and sort all this out. It's an emotional crisis for men to discover that their relationships with women won't last. The divorce rate has increased and women are looking for another alternative to marriage. If they are going to get involved with a man they want to sign a "Peace Accord" first. Men are resisting the new social roles women are playing. Many men are demanding that a woman choose either the revolution or him and naturally women are choosing the revolution.

It is true that the revolution has opened many doors for women; however we have found there are ideological barriers of culture and customs. Officially we have equality established in our constitution. The problem is how to make it a social reality.

Still Machismo

For the last three years the women's movement has been engaged in a hot debate with the government about the women's agenda. There was a current which wished to postpone this debate until we have peace or until socialism comes. Others would attack feminism and others argued about how best to implement these demands. The challenge the Sandinista Government has presented to us—the women's movement—is to devise a strategy, to create a proposal for feminism for an underdeveloped country, underdeveloped in the conditions of war, crisis and poverty, without endangering the national unity. This is no easy task!

A major gain was won March 8, 1987 when the government established its official position on the women's question. It stated that "women's problems" were society's problems. It took the position that the struggle for emancipation should be continued together with the military task of defending the country.

The Sandinista Frente gave us a year to develop a blue print for emancipation. We have been studying the different experiences of women around the world. We do believe that any gains made by women in the western countries have an impact. In socialist countries, women perhaps have better conditions and better status, but they still aren't emancipated. Socialist men are still machismo—more refined, more eloquent—but in their souls still machismo. Our advantage is that we have a type of laboratory to experiment in, to see what will work best in our situation, and we have a government that has no dogmatic attitudes.

So we have decided that our strategy must consist of three pillars. Firstly, in order to emancipate women, the revolution must survive, therefore we must defend it. Secondly, it is necessary to break the sexual divisions of labour as well as class divisions. Thirdly, it is necessary that women claim the ownership of their own bodies and the state must provide the conditions to make this possible, through laws and access to health care. We see this plan of struggle for the next 20 years as moving from the most basic demands to the more complex.

On the question of abortion, we cannot lead a fight for its legalization until we have educated the population. If it is not fought for by the base of women and is decreed from above, it will mean an automatic confrontation with the Vatican and more problems for the revolution. The state has told us to start this campaign and it will back us up.

Just as we will not accept a larger nation's attempt to destroy us, we will not accept this from men either. We are beginning to monitor the media and public speeches made by our leaders. Women are encouraged to speak out against mistreatment. The Minister of the Interior, who is responsible for regulating the media, is a woman. This March one of the smaller newspapers published an exploitative picture of a woman. This is illegal so the publication was fined. Another newspaper which was critical of the government making such a fuss over a photo of a woman with almost no clothes on, reproduced it. They also were penalized.

This is more or less the way women are thinking in Nicaragua and now we must change the way men think. As women we have the responsibility to devise an alternative way of thinking for men, something with which men can identify. This is necessary to establish a political alliance with men, to change the world. This is the way a new man and a new woman will be born in Nicaragua.

Custody from page 7

woman backlash happening in family court, too often resulting in danger to children.

"The truth is that sexual abuse of children is under-reported and it is rarely raised in custody disputes, even when the abuse was a major reason for the marriage breakdown."

They said most women do not expect their husbands to contest custody and therefore may see no reason to raise the issue at the start. But when the husband pursues custody of a child he has abused, the woman has no choice but to come forward with this information.

"Considering the pervasiveness of child sexual abuse and its traumatic, often lifelong effects, it is worrying that people concern themselves with blaming women when the crimes are committed almost exclusively by men."

Well, fathers have rights too. The recent emergence of fathers' rights groups, arguing most vociferously for joint child custody, may be warping the sensibilities of family court judges across the country.

One Montreal group calling itself "Fathers for Equality in Divorce" says that "luckily for our children, there are over 100 militant fathers' groups in North America today fighting for their inalienable rights as a parent."

Says a spokesman, "Your ex-wife only has to *not* agree to shared custody and she has 86 percent chance of getting the kids, the house, the car, handsome alimony and child support, half of his assets and anything else she can rape him for."

Perhaps the most significant impact fathers' rights groups are having in the custody/access arena is in terms of a 'friendly parent' clause instituted in the federal Divorce Act of 1986.

Section 16 (10) requires judges determining custody to consider each spouse's willingness to facilitate the child's contact with the other spouse. This makes a mother who wishes to limit her child's access to a father who has fondled or raped his daughter vulnerable to loss of custody.

According to Barb Brett, what's infusing family courts these days is a swing back to the older values of 'the family'; having both a mommy and a daddy in the picture—even if they aren't necessarily in the *same* picture.

"But the father doesn't always know best, not if the father is sexually abusing his daughter. One has to wonder if we're not hitting on a theme as a society that we've a lot of difficulty facing, and a lot of investment in denying."

In Iran
Retribution... and the Party of God

by Edna Rahim

In late 1978 and early 1979 when the revolution that overthrew the Pahlavi dynasty was peaking, thousands of Iranian women participated in demonstrations against Shah. However, most of these activists were not very concerned with how the revolution would affect *women*. Many of them assumed that since Iranian women had participated and sacrificed to overthrow the monarchist regime, there would be a better status for them in the post-revolutionary society.

Women's influence on the anti-Shah movement was so obvious even the most fanatic mullahs (Muslim 'priests') could not deny it. Khomeiny himself praised the role of women in the movement against Shah. Unfortunately, realities soon proved that, without firm standing on their rights, women will be repressed again in a deeply patriarchal society like Iran.

Considered Suspicious

Most Iranian women with a feminist consciousness joined different leftist groups such as Fadayan Khalgh Organization, Peykar Organization, Tudeh Party, Komala in Kurdistan, and other smaller groups. Women with Islamic beliefs joined the Mujahadeen Khalgh Organization which had more egalitarian ideas about women than the fanatic Muslim organizations.

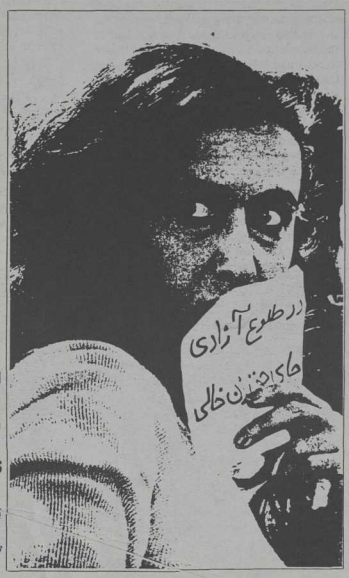
The leftist groups condemned the traditional role of women which was defined as dual exploitation of women at home by their husbands and in society by the imperialist-backed regime of Shah.

They promised equal rights for women after the revolution. In spite of this rhetoric, women's independent organizations were considered suspicious by most of these groups. Leftist and Muslim organizations knew women-only groups were going to be formed sooner or later. They wanted these groups annexed to their own, and set out to infiltrate them.

Muslim fundamentalists under Khomeiny formed the strongest opposition to the Shah and, after the insurrection of February 12, 1978, a coalition of this current and the liberals governed the country. At that time, a major part of the left supported this government. The fundamentalist Muslim current claimed the way to independence from imperialism and communism would be through the fundamental values of Islam. Less than a few weeks after the new government took power, most women broadcasters in the government-run TV stations were either fired or were required to wear Islamic cover. All the arts and entertainment programs were cancelled. Women singers were banned.

Mullahs in important positions in the ministry of justice banned women judges since, according to Islamic laws, women were incapable of judging other Muslims. These mullahs also intended to cancel the family protection law which restricted men's sole right of divorce and polygamy and obliged them to pay child support after separation. The Association of Women Lawyers formed to oppose these repressive measures.

At this time, Khomeiny called for women's Islamic veils in one of his speeches. A few newly-formed women's organizations decided to demonstrate against the mullahs' attacks on women's rights and set up a rally for the 8th of March 1979, International Women's Day. The rally took place in Teheran University and around 15,000 women participated: university and high school students, teachers and housewives.



"In the dawn of freedom, women's rights are missing."

No cease-fire for Iranian women

I recently interviewed a midwife, a refugee claimant who left Iran in March 1988. She provided valuable information on the situation of nurses and other working women in Iran.

- Women doctors and nurses are required to strictly obey Islamic fundamentalist rules. For example, in operating rooms, female surgeons must wear Islamic cover under their surgical gowns. This makes it unbearable in hot summers.
- Any disobedience of Islamic rules are reported by the Islamic Societies in each hospital to higher security organizations. One example the midwife remembered clearly was the sexual relation between a male physician and a female nurse in a hospital in the southern city of Bandar Abbas.

  The Islamic court sentenced them to flogging in public—in front of the hospital: a lesson to other employees. The couple was also forced to marry.
- There are vigilante groups of fundamentalist Islamic women, organized by the Islamic Revolutionary guards, called the Sisters of Zaynab (Zaynab was one of prophet Mohammed's daughters).

  These groups move in the streets of Tehran and other major cities, in Toyota vans, especially in summer. If they see any woman not wearing complete Islamic cover or with make-up on her face, they arrest her. She may be either flogged of fined.
- Women cannot be seen by men when they are practicing sports, nor are they allowed male coaches or lifeguards. Therefore, women's sport is in very bad shape.

  The team from Iran always has a 100 per cent male face at international games. At the Seoul Olympics, the Islamic Republic of Iran will have its banner carried by a man: all other nations have women carriers.

photos by Sophie Keir from "Going to Iran" by Kate Millet

The rally was disrupted by reactionary forces and soon the women headed out towards the ministry of justice where women lawyers had a sit-in. The demonstration was condemned by the government as an act of the prostitutes and pro-imperialist women.

In the next few days, women's organizations such as the National Union of Women and Women's Emancipation continued their marches to protest against compulsory veiling of women and layoffs in different government institutions. Fundamentalist Muslims organized the so-called Hezbollah (the Party of God) thugs to attack these rallies by stoning and stabbing women and doing other indecent acts.

It is worthwhile to mention that the Mujahadeen Khalgh Organization and the Tudeh Party, a traditional pro-Soviet Union party, criticized the women's demonstrations for playing into the hands of imperialists and endangering the revolution.

At this time, Muslim fanatics under the leadership of Islamic Republic Party were not only attacking women, but also viciously attacking different leftist parties, workers councils and national and religious minorities. Women activists were mainly busy fighting a powerful faction of the government that was attacking the overall democratic rights of the society; they could not concentrate their energy on the issue of women's liberation.

As the result of Islamization of Iranian society, in less than seven months the co-education of male and female students in colleges and technical schools was banned. Since women were the minority in these institutions, they were the ones who had to quit. There were large demonstrations and occupations of these schools by female students who opposed these rules. Demonstrations were frequently attacked by the Hezbollah; even Hezbollah women participated in the attacks to show that women have no right to refuse a fundamentalist Islamic government.

Opposing God's Rules

In less than two years, the fundamentalist Muslims, after repressing all opposition groups, started to arrest women on the streets for failing to wear Islamic dress. In the summer of 1980, government banned the employment of unveiled women in all public places including the private sector. Shopkeepers were instructed to refuse service to unveiled women and government institutions denied entrance to any unveiled women.

In June 1981, the government started its final, bloodiest attack on left and liberal organizations. Every day the official government newspapers published the names of hundreds of men and women political prisoners who had been executed for opposing the rules of god.

Soon afterward, the Law of Retribution was passed by the Islamic parliament. This law based the criminal code on primitive Islamic codes. Consequently, married women were sentenced to death by stoning in case of adultery, and many other barbaric rules were enforced.

After these attacks, many activist women fled Iran, becoming exiles in Europe and North America. For the first time, the question of having independent women's organizations was raised seriously among these women. Exiled Iranian women have been working on different aspects of patriarchal society and its effects on the inferiority of women in these societies. Iranian women's support groups were formed in major European cities. Equipped with a progressive idea on women's liberation, Iranian women may be able to force any future government to recognize their rights.

In Peru, in Canada

Where is our worth, how happy can we be?

by Alicia Barsallo

Being only three feet away from assault policemen and military men in order to take their pictures while they attacked demonstrators almost made me shake with fright.

Like the other reporters, I made sure to be part of a group in hope of not being assaulted, but unlike them I had little confidence in the oppressors' respect for press correspondents. In my several years of Peruvian activism before coming to Canada, I had always been on the demonstrators' front, running away from the police. This visit was a time to learn.

I had never before been a reporter. I had never before seen so many soldiers, police, armoured cars and tanks in Lima. If it had been for me, I would have run—except no one else was running.

Peruvians' bare struggle against their economic system would have been enough to keep me there, attentive to their every move. But there was more than that. Alongside their struggle was their developing thought and the advancement of their individuality.

There were people everywhere with a strange sparkle in their eyes, completely disillusioned with the system and weary of its institutions and its morals, but vibrant with the possibility of victory, with the daily discovery of what they were capable of, with their new friends, with their new ideas.

Why Are We So Different?

When I left the Lima airport I knew I would particularly miss that continuous questioning of values which forms part of Peruvians' struggle against the capitalist system.

We have yet to see signs of such inquiry in Canada. Why are we so different. How is it that our dissimilar socio-economic contexts and political dynamics influence our way to search for happiness?

Peruvians' political clarity derives mainly from their harsher reality.

Peru's incipient capitalism leaves most people without a say over most aspects of their lives. It is only through strong mobilizations and repeated acts of heroism that Peruvians gain some influence over the availability of food and transport and over the increase in prices and police and government violence.

Peru is a highly inefficient society. There is little access to modern technology, and success in achieving any one task depends not only on one's effort but on the good will of others—and on luck. Deadlines are flexible and people are used to last-minute breakdowns, successes or failures.

Bribes and corruption are a way of functioning in all of Peru's government institutions. Justice is fragile. The most unimaginable crimes take place right in front of people's eyes and go unpunished.

The Catholic church as usual, sides with Peru's creditors impassively watching as thousands of "its children" are killed in order to maintain the status quo. Part of the church's preaching has always helped to exacerbate Peruvians' misery: in an overpopulated society of sick, hungry children and many unskilled and mistreated women, the church has stood firm against the use of contraceptives, it has condemned abortion and divorce, and has promoted male chauvinism.

So Peruvians are aware they depend on other people for their survival. Accordingly, they organize themselves at local and national levels. No strike is devoid of overall slogans: "End the State of Emergency!", "Withdraw the Troops from Ayacucho!", "Don't Kneel Before the Boot!", "For a Decrease in the Cost of Living!" The victory or defeat of a group of squatters, a union, a community, is literally felt as the victory or the defeat of everyone.

The Illusion of Control

Canadians, on the other hand, seem to rely on their individual resources to achieve happiness.

The vast wealth of Canadian society gives us the impression we will all be able to succeed if we work hard enough. We do not have widespread starvation and homelessness in Canada (although they exist and are growing); we have, to varying degrees, access to modern technology; and we are members of a society which is oriented towards efficiency. It is still possible to achieve personal goals such as going on holidays or taking a course, and to have some capacity for planning.

The relatively high standard of living we enjoy gives us *some* control, but this limited power tends to give a great many of us the illusion of having *complete control* over our lives. We are into accomplishing tasks which respond to individual goals. We hold jobs, build things, get degrees and so on.

If we fail, it is our fault. It is not the system that must be changed, but we who have to become more efficient. On the road to achieving our personal goals, we work at mastering a pragmatism that must, at many points, ignore our feelings. Feelings will often keep us from doing our work, so they are not allowed to be freely expressed, they are assigned a niche.

Any criticism of society's values is also set aside. The very intellectual power that suggests to us what must be changed convinces us any attempt to do it must be abandoned because it puts us at a disadvantage in the race. Roles must be played, canons followed, images kept up.

We have relatively mild and disjointed political movements that mainly seek to maintain or enlarge the benefits of one sector of the population or another. The difficult task of questioning values is done by small groups: feminists, marxists and progressive sectors of the churches, which themselves must fight—and at times be neutralized by—the conservativism of Canadian society.

In Peru, traditional life-styles and morality itself are undergoing questioning. This is surprising, for Peru is a country where some of the most backward expressions of female/male roles and values have been long accepted. But it is happening.

Feminist groups with the most advanced positions on female/male equality are penetrating the middle-class milieu, trade unions, shanty towns, communal kitchens, mothers' clubs, Andean cities. Women's committees that promote equality in trade unions and peasant organizations are formed almost as a matter of course. Women are elected leaders of organizations struggling for water, electricity, milk for children, a place to live, and as leaders of the defense committees.

Feminists, marxists and mass leaders in general, however, are acting only to speed up and deepen a process of questioning that is inherent in the current Peruvian political dynamic. It is the mass movement that gives people an identity, a sense of justice, an opportunity to create, a glimpse of the new values. It is within the mass movement that they can share their suffering, their disillusionment and their visions.

Lima, in the summer of 1988

photo by Alicia Barsallo

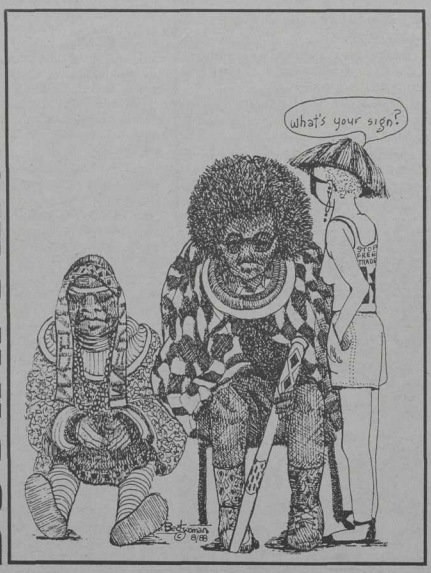
Traditionalists march side-by-side with feminists, catechists with prostitutes, to discover who they are, who others are, what is possible. People can no longer be defined in the same old way. There are too many fine human features, too much heroism, too much uniqueness for the old capitalist slots to be used again.

One notices in Peruvian society a much more relaxed attitude regarding the old morality. Individuals will abide by one moral principle or other because it proves at the time to be convenient for them, with little concern that such principle be followed by anybody else. The individual is examined instead. Institutions and rules being on shaky ground, actions tend to be defined by the people who perform them and not the other way around.

The embryo of a new morality that recovers the right of everyone to her own uniqueness is clear: the conception that everyone's happiness depends on everyone's commitment to work and to risk one's life to aid the collective good, to aid the struggle against hunger, oppression, repression, depersonalization.

Within the next two years, Peruvians will have to survive an invasion of armoured cars and military tanks. However many of them die, they will not die only for more bread. They will die to keep open the door to freedom that is allowing them to bury the capitalist values and find their own. For where is our worth or how happy can we be, if we cannot be ourselves?

Beckwoman



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BEANS

Shaking those "Talkin' to Claude" talking blues

by Nora D. Randall

Pat, Colleen and Linda went to Victoria as spokeswomen for the Child Poverty Action Committee (CPAC) to talk to Claude Richmond, Minister of Social Services and Housing, about the proposed $50/month cut to mothers on welfare. When I ran into them on the ferry home, they were busy dealing with the load of contempt that had been dumped on them.

This particular dumping action started when Claude announced that, as of October 1, 1988, mothers with a single child six months or older, and mothers with several children but only one under six years will be classified as employable. All mothers with children who fall into these categories will lose $50 off their monthly welfare cheques.

Claude described this move as a "motivator" for those mothers to find jobs. Linda said this was a perfect example of how the Socreds thought poor people were different from rich people. Rich people, like investors, they motivated by tax cuts and cheap labour, thus giving them access to more money. Poor people they motivated by taking money away.

Things are already desperate for mothers on welfare. Taking from them seemed to be one of those mistakes that gets made when the decision-maker doesn't have the right information. So CPAC decided they would go to Victoria and tell the people making decisions just what that $50 was doing in their lives.

They called Claude's office and the Socred caucus office and said they wanted to meet. No problem, they were assured. So 20 mothers who are on welfare and will lose the $50, or who have been on welfare and know what it's like, or who are looking for work but can't find affordable daycare, rounded up all their kids and set off for Victoria.

Crystal Gardens, Fantasy Gardens

When they arrived at the Socred office, they were told no one was available to meet with them because the Socreds had no idea they were coming. In fact, at that very moment, Claude Richmond was over in the Crystal Gardens holding a press conference to re-announce a program he had announced a month earlier. It was a program to put people on welfare to work in the parks.

Pat, Colleen and Linda knew the Socreds knew they were coming because they'd made at least four telephone calls and had been assured they were expected. Pat and Cora, with her baby wearing a heart monitor, went up to Claude's secretary and asked for an appointment. The secretary gave them one for a month down the road. Pat was standing around wondering what to do next when a reporter saw Claude walking down the hall. She said, I'll get him to see you. The reporter walked up to Claude and spoke to him.

He beamed a big smile, strode down the hall and extended his hand to Pat. Pat beamed back and shook his hand. I'm so happy to meet you, she said, I've been trying to get a chance to talk to you. I'm Pat from the Child Poverty Action Committee.

Claude's beam disappeared, his hand loosened, he looked stunned. Pat found out later the reporter had told him Pat was a reporter from Ontario interested in his enlightened social policies. But it was too late. Pat and Claude were totally surrounded by media. Pat told him that taking $50 away from welfare mothers wasn't going to motivate them, it was going to make their children even more hungry.

She asked him to rescind the program. Claude said he didn't think he would because the cut had been very carefully considered. Pat took the opportunity to thank him in front of all the reporters for agreeing to meet them again in a month. He smiled and said, oh. She thanked him for his time and went off with the rest of the group to be introduced in the legislature by the NDP.

Pat said it had always been a fantasy of hers to be introduced in the legislature because they do it for visiting bigwigs and delegations—the mother of the governor general, or the president of Exxon, or the boy scouts from Surrey. The NDP did a great job. All fourteen MLA's from the lower mainland introduced them, first as a committee of mothers who were raising children on welfare and then individually by their names.

Pat's idea was that the next time they talked about lazy mothers on welfare who didn't take care of their kids, they would know better. But the Socreds were unable to live up to Pat's modest expectations.

graphic adapted from "I Belong to Me"

They oinked as the mothers were being introduced. They said, whine, whine, whine. They all looked at their desks and refused to look up except for Brian Smith who glared at them. Pat thought it was a blatant intimidation tactic.

Afterwards they met with the NDP caucus who sat with them and listened to their stories and fed and helped watch their kids. Pat said it was so different from the Socreds who would not even talk to one of them. But then, the NDP has no power. But the mothers at least had been listened to before they went back to Vancouver and started organizing for the meeting with Claude.

They called at least twice a week to make sure the meeting was still on. They could only afford to send three women. They decided they would take over a budget and ask Claude to show them how to feed the children on that budget. They also took a study on daycare showing it was too expensive for mothers who could only get low paying jobs.

Claude had one other advisor with him so they could play good cop, bad cop with Claude being the good cop. Claude and the advisor took every opportunity to talk about what a good thing it was to stop "sitting back" on welfare and get a job. Pat, Colleen and Linda struggled to get them to look at the budget, to get them to read the study, to talk about the cost of daycare, to talk about how inadequate welfare rates were already making kids go hungry.

There was a discrepancy in information. Pat, Colleen and Linda said a mother with two children on welfare receives $480 a month maximum shelter variable and $385 a month for support. Claude and his sidekick took all the possible support programs and rolled them into one and divided across the board and said that a person "sitting back" on welfare receives $1600 a month. The mothers said they wanted the government not to take the $50 away. Claude asked them how he could justify a "raise" in welfare rates.

He told a story about a woman in Barrier who worked the midnight shift for minimum wage to raise her kid and how angry she had been when Claude told her what her benefits would be on welfare. She was angry at the people on welfare for taking money from the government to take care of their kids in a way she couldn't. The women said it was terrible that a woman should have to work that hard to take care of her kids and that when a single mother has to work the kid loses both parents, because the father's not around and the mother is working and doesn't have enough money or enough time to raise the kid.

Pat asked if he was going to rescind the order. Claude said he didn't think he would because the cut had been very carefully considered.

They got on the ferry to go back to Vancouver and start organizing again. Claude says he has 1600 letters telling him how pleased people are with the new policies. Pat, Colleen and Linda say what he needs is 5000 letters saying Stop the Cut.

Child Poverty Action Committee: 321-1202 or 435-7624.

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To incest survivors:
A message of hope: healing is possible

by Kim Irving

Laura Davis, a San Francisco writer and radio producer, at age 28 recalled the sexual assaults by her grandfather when she was a young child. Fighting the denial of her mother and other family members, Davis attended a workshop led by Ellen Bass, which explored the traumas of child sexual abuse through the writing process.

Ellen Bass had been doing writing workshops for 10 years. Through these workshops, women confronted Bass with their experiences. The results of some of the workshops were published in 1980 in *I Never Told Anyone* (Harper and Row).

Together, Davis and Bass combined their experiences and those of other survivors to produce *The Courage to Heal*. Their goal, beyond sharing their skills and experiences, was to reach as many women as they could with the message: healing is possible.

The following interview was held in San Francisco, July 1988 during the authors' book tour.

Kim: What motivates a woman to heal?

Ellen: Sometimes she is motivated because the way she has been coping isn't working anymore. It may happen at a different life stage, such as a birth of a child, a new job, moving, someone dying—whatever. Today, motivation can come from external forces. Perhaps someone has given her a book on incest or there has been some news coverage about incest on TV and then she begins to remember.

Laura: Last night we spoke on a radio program. A man called in and said, "I think my mother was sexually abused as a child. How do I talk to her?" Also during our speaks we've had mothers come forward saying their daughter or son was abused and wanting tips on how to talk to them. So, in many cases there are family members who want to talk to the survivor rather than the survivor needing to talk.

Kim: Laura, you've been very open and honest about your survival. Do you feel you've completely healed?

Laura: I'm not finished healing. There's no such thing as finishing. When I look back at the person I was years ago I almost don't recognize myself. I thought then that my life was destroyed and I was damaged beyond repair.

I absolutely do not feel that way anymore. Now, when a crisis happens, when I feel those same emotions coming back, I know I have the skills to deal with it. And I don't hate that part of me anymore.

Working on this book has been incredible, in terms of my own feelings. Taking the action to do the book was the most powerful move I could make. It really felt like fighting back. Now that we have finished and are touring, I'm in a totally different place than before. Healing is like a funnel—you start out really big, then you go through this narrow part and then it opens up again.

Kim: Ellen, you're not a survivor of incest, nor a therapist ...

Ellen: (laughs) What am I doing here? That's a good question.

Laura: And no one's ever been that blunt before (laughs).

Ellen: I've asked myself a thousand times—a million times—"Was I abused?" I'm pretty sure I wasn't.

I suppose the skills I have are right for working with this issue. My interest began when working with women in my writing workshops. I was very moved by the women's experiences as well as the amount of healing women were doing in the workshops. Women were benefiting and that was rewarding. I like watching women heal. Then, I wrote *I Never Told Anyone*. I had all this information about healing and I wanted to share it.

Laura: Tell her about the wedge ...

Ellen: (laughs) Sure, the wedge. In the last couple of years there have been times when I've needed a lot of courage. One difficult period, when we were working on the book, I was feeling bad. I hadn't fulfilled my part of the work and began crying while driving to Laura's house.

Ellen Bass

I began to picture all the women who I have worked with, who had so much courage. I pictured them as a wedge behind me. My personal friends, my partner, were at the tip; women I have worked closely with were next and the women I've worked with once or twice were after them. As I cried, I called out their names—if so and so can do it, so can I.

You know, I get an awful lot of appreciation for doing what I do. And I've definitely gotten back as much as I've given.

Kim: Recently, in Sojourner, *Louise Armstrong wrote that even though the feminist movement has done a lot of work on incest, it still hasn't changed the status quo. It's only provided a new topic for the talk show hosts. Would you agree?*

Ellen: I didn't read the article so I can't comment exactly. But from that principle, I disagree. I don't see how we can be doing what we are doing without all the work that has been done. If the point she is making is we need to do more work, then I agree. But I always feel sad and disappointed when the work we did to get to a certain point is discounted in some way. Rather than supporting those who have done the work and say, okay, this is good, but we can't stop here.

Laura: I did read the article. The gist of her article was not only about how just as many children are being abused, but also about how they are being encouraged to talk, only to run into the hands of the law, which abuses them again. And that mothers are having to flee with their children.

I agree that we are still in a bad position. But I also believe that as survivors heal, they will be in a better place to protect their own children. Survivors are out there lobbying for a change in laws and legislation. But this all won't happen over night. We have a long way to go before we learn to protect children.

Kim: Yes, an important part of her article was about the sanctuary movement of mothers being forced to hide in order to protect children from the courts.

...as survivors heal, they will be in a better place to protect their own children. Survivors are out there lobbying for a change in laws...

Ellen: And I agree with her on that. The legal and judicial system is quite prehistoric. It's horrible.

Kim: An issue that is consistently avoided within the women's community is that of women who sexually abuse, whether it be a mother, therapist or another lesbian ...

Laura: When you're in a minority culture, you will want to protect yourself from what others think. Being in a minority, such as the lesbian community, people already think you're twisted and sick, so you'll go to any means to protect your image.

And that's not just for lesbians. It's much harder for women of colour to step forward to talk about incest because there is this assumption that all abusers are men of colour. So if she steps forward, she faces reinforcing that stereotype.

In the lesbian community there are women who do not want to acknowledge the violence: that a lesbian close to them, or perhaps they themselves could be violent. Protecting yourself from the outside is no reason to allow abuse to exist within your community.

Ellen: It really means a huge shift in your world view to admit to yourself that lesbians can be sexually abusive and damaging to other women and children. I've heard so many stories in this area. When I was speaking in Chicago a woman came up to talk with me. Her daughter had been abused by her ex-woman lover. She said she had gotten no support from her community and her daughter was now in a mental hospital. This woman was afraid that her ex would commit suicide if she confronted her.

Now, I looked at this woman and said, "You better ally yourself with your daughter and protect her now. Whatever your ex does, it's her business. Stop protecting her." This woman looked at me—with this sponge-like stare—because no one had ever told her that she had a choice.

In our book we've tried to be very clear. We are talking about abuse—it doesn't matter who is doing it.

Kim: In the past few years we've seen and heard more from incest survivors within the S/M community. They claim S/M is a means of healing from incest, of reclaiming their power.

Ellen: The idea of healing from incest—which is about an imbalance of power, degradation and shame, pain and humiliation—the idea of healing from that by recreating it is, to me, double-speak.

Theoretically, it makes no sense. I am aware of what the arguments are: that, this time, you are in control. But to me, that would be like a burn victim saying, "Okay, that was really traumatizing. I think what I'll do is keep burning myself and that will make me feel better. Rather than an accident, it will be me lighting the matches."

When you are a child and your first sexual experience is pain and humiliation, your sexual arousal system gets hooked up to that. So, as an adult, you feel aroused by pain and humiliation. Also, for women who have been numb for a long time, who have never had good sexual feelings, then it may be a way to get off. And these women may conclude that, "I'm gonna have my sexual feelings any damn way I feel like and stay out of my business."

I understand that feeling. It makes sense to me. Especially everyone should have the right to sexual feelings. I do not think there should be laws saying what consenting adults can, or cannot do. But, what is happening for these women is not healing. What a lot of women are not aware of is, they can have it all. They can truly have a choice in their sexuality that will not only get them off, but will feel good to their bodies.

I have worked with women who have tried S/M as a way of reclaiming their sexuality, as well as just for the experience. Many were told it was a way to heal, therefore they tried it. Yet, they found this not to be true. An exciting part of my work is seeing women who have reprogrammed their sexuality and chosen a sexuality that not only reflects immediate sexual pleasure but also the deepest values of what life is about.

It's real hard work—and it's possible.

Kim: A lot of therapy programs are geared towards the preservation of the "family". What is your feeling about this?

Laura: In my experience, it's incredibly rare for family reconciliation to happen. If it does happen, well, that's great. But, it is unusual. Generally, the survivor has to heal with what she needs and that often is in conflict with what the family wants. Reconciliation cannot be a goal for healing. The goal should be getting yourself back together as an independent person.

Kim: Is gaining a political consciousness through healing necessary?

Ellen: There is the chance to become political because you are looking at your whole life. So if you extend the meaning of political to the more simple issue of respect, you'll certainly get a lot of that. Children need to be respected, women should be respected, people should be respected. I do see that much political growth.

Yet I don't think everyone who heals needs to see it within the world view. Personally I connect it all—either you're destroying life, or you're not.

Laura: It's great when survivors do become political because that's how things get changed in the world. So many survivors have spent their lives just hanging on they haven't had the time to look around and see what's going on in the world. I think the largest political change made to survivors is empowering them with the healing process.

Laura Davis

Where to start

The following is a list of resources available in the Lower Mainland for adult child sexual abuse survivors.

24-HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICES

- **WAVAW (Women Against Violence Against Women), 875-6011** Counselling, referrals to therapists, peer counselling groups.
- **Rape Relief and Women's Shelter, 872-8212** Counselling, shelter for women and children, referrals.
- **Crisis Centre, 733-4111** Emotional support, suicide prevention, referrals.

FOR SURVIVORS

- **SEPSA (Support, Education and Prevention of Sexual Assault), 873-6766** Support groups for adolescents and adults who were sexually abused.
- **VISAC (Vancouver Incest and Sexual Assault Centre)/ Family Services, 873-3510** Individual therapy, special programs and support groups.
- **SARA (Sexual Abuse Recovery Anonymous), 597-2525** Self-help support groups based on AA's Twelve Steps.

Towards a women's healing movement

by Teresa D. Gibson

THE COURAGE TO HEAL
by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis
New York: Harper & Row, 1988
$19.50

The Courage to Heal, a two-and-a-half year project, has it all. Co-authored by Ellen Bass, a highly-skilled counsellor, and Laura Davis, a child sexual abuse survivor, this book single-handedly explodes the myth of an already-saturated market in incest and women's self-help writings.

With great clarity, and a diligent commitment towards being all-inclusive, the work weaves its way along—creating, directing, and truly inspiring a women's healing movement. Its rich and powerfully-written pages are a virtual wealth of knowledge about this, one of the most devastating of all personal sufferings.

As an incest survivor myself, I found the discovery of this book an emotionally-charged experience. While absorbing the material was easy, my reactions were not. There it was. Somebody had taken the trouble to write it down, every bit of it. They dared plunge into a not-so-bottomless pit and changed us all forever because of it.

To help explain, I'll briefly highlight each of the book's five major divisions.

"Taking Stock" has two subsections. "Effects: Recognizing the Damage" stresses that the abuse permeates all areas of our lives: self-esteem and personal power, feelings, our bodies, sexuality, children and parenting, and families of origin. After an exploration of each, there is a list of informed, thought-provoking questions entitled "Where Are You Now?" These are invaluable in assessing where we're at today.

"Coping: Honouring What You Did To Survive" takes the personal inventory one step further. It emphasizes that we shouldn't minimize (make light of) what happened, rationalize (explain it away), or criticize ourselves on our survival tactics. Whether we denied; forgot; split off from our bodies; became addicted to control; spaced out; made jokes; busied ourselves; became super-alert; escaped via mental illness, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, eating, lying, stealing, gambling, avoiding intimacy; became religious fanatics; compulsively sought or avoided sex—we were doing our best at the time.

"The Healing Process" does a comprehensive job of mapping. With the utmost care, the milestones are identified, spaced appropriately and discussed. These include: the emergency state (how we are after the decision to heal); remembering; believing it really happened; breaking silence; putting the blame where it rightfully belongs; learning to love and forgive the child within; trusting ourselves; grieving; allowing anger; disclosures and confrontations; forgiveness; spirituality; and the resolution stage, or moving on.

Imperative to note here, is that all of this is just a guideline. The authors approach the whole picture from a humanistic, survivor-oriented point of view. More specifically, this means at no time is it stipulated one *must* do things such as confronting and/or forgiving the abuser. Seeing this in black-and-white generated much confidence in me. No longer need a vulnerable survivor fall into this trap—go against their gut instincts about what is and isn't good for them. Sadly enough, there *are* places where women feel coerced in this way.

...at no time is it stipulated one *must* do things

"Changing Patterns" is an in-depth analysis of the effects of abuse uncovered in "Taking Stock." The authors immediately launch into: internalized messages; setting limits with friends/family; creating a positive self-image (through affirmations and visualizations); choosing relationships which mirror us healthily; discovering our nurturing parent; handling feelings; letting addictions go; intimacy; a truly chosen sexuality; and parenting children (and ourselves).

Part four is "For Supporters of Survivors"—family members, partners and counsellors. Though a survivor's needs from each individual (or group) are somewhat unique, the groundwork is pretty basic. New to a non-survivor might be: *never* sympathizing with the abuser (the child-victim deserves absolute loyalty), and learning the difference between safe and sexual touching.

"Courageous Women" breathes reality into the whole thing, guiding us through the true stories of 15 child sexual abuse survivors. While the women represent a wide range of child-victims (economic classes, ethnic backgrounds and coping mechanisms), their similarities are often striking. Never do we struggle to feel compassion, respect, or awe at our resiliency as a whole. Always we are moved.

"Writing Exercises" also contribute to the overall effectiveness of the book. Strategically placed, I find the instructions on the use of this tool almost revolutionary. This is because it is reinforced that all answers are within us. We are encouraged to probe our memories; stop assuming we are 'making it up' or 'blowing it out of proportion'; and not to censor the writing process with concerns like: "my spelling is awful," "this sounds stupid," or "somebody might read this!" Though awkward at first, doing these exercises in the proposed manner can be most beneficial. It can trigger movement again—especially if we've been stuck.

Finally *The Courage to Heal* does not leave us hanging. We are presented with a complete resource list—names and addresses of self-help programs and national organizations, and a bibliography outlining each and every publication with the potential to be useful. The needs it creates—complex as they appear—are channelled to the appropriate outlets.

At the Fair

We will speak in our own voices

Memory. Power. Strategies of Feminist Thought. Thus were named the theme days at the Third International Feminist Book Fair held in Montreal, June 14-18. Hundreds of writers, publishers and readers from around the world attended workshops ("Writing As a Dangerous Profession"), readings ("Multilingual Lesbian Readings"), exhibits and performances.

In coming months, *Kinesis* will 'cover the fair' with features on various international feminist literary projects. This month, our coverage starts with impressions of the fair, by BC women of colour (Native and Asian) who were there, as panelists and as visitors.

We Are Still A Colony

It is inevitable when women of colour and European women come together, discussions centering on racism will figure rather large. For myself, as a Native writer, it was my intent to put racism in the feminist publishing industry on the agenda. Invited as I was to give a workshop, this was not difficult.

The feminist movement that arose in the 70's has gone through a number of personal struggles (personal only in the Canadian sense of the word). In the early days of feminism, arbitrariness and white exclusivity were common. Today, this is slowly changing. The feminist movement is struggling to reach out to women of colour—particularly Native women—and find some common ground.

This is not easy. For Native women, the National Question is still foremost on our agenda. We are still a "classical colony" replete with a colonial administration, and racism is still a powerful obstacle to our self-realization.

The nature and strength of patriarchy is different for Native women and the potential for unity with white women still depends on the alteration of the consciousness of the Euro-feminist movement.

Still, a great deal of emotional work was done at the fair and Canadian and Native women lurched forward somewhat in the direction of that much covetted unity.

It is a covetted unity. From the attitude of the women that attended the fair and from the organizers, it was clear to me that this unity between all women is a much desired one.

—Lee Maracle (*Author of* Bobbie-Lee—Indian Rebel *and* I Am Woman; *co-founder of Write-On Press*)

A Strong Catalyst

Beneath the pasty, whitewash reality of Canadian life, you don't get many glimpses of the smoldering anger of women of colour. At the Third International Feminist Book Fair, I got an eyeful.

It was a theme that emerged throughout the workshops and readings. It nourished me to see this anger, to hear Audré Lorde address a tearful audience of 400 and say, "The transcendence of women's power means nothing if it is not used to confront racism."

This anger was present but tempered at the women of colour reception by the beautiful sense of unity I saw among the Black women. Some women sang their songs of welcome. Others affirmed that until South Africa is free, none of them were free.

I got a big lump in my throat and all that emotion got stuck in my chest because I'm not used to going about my everyday life and wanting to weep because I witnessed the spirit the most oppressed survive on.

It was harder to hold onto my impassive face, however, after listening to Lee Maracle challenge Anne Cameron with love and respect "to move over," after listening to Gloria Anzaldúa talk about healing and making whole all the broken parts of the self through the living and writing of it.

At the Native writers' reading, I think everyone at one point or another just wanted to put their heads down on their desks and have a good bawl. There was just too much raw pain mixed in with the poetry, too much beauty, strength or something in that room with Chrystos, Jeanette Armstrong, Joy Harjo, Lee Maracle and all the other poets, warrior women and shamans.

I guess I cried a lot at the book fair. The event was very emotional, a strong catalyst for me to look at some of my own pain around racism. One thing I missed though was the presence of Asian writers. I got to learn about the anger of Black women and the anger of Native women. I would have liked to hear more about the anger of Asian women. I hope this changes at the next book fair.

—Lorraine Chan (*Member of the Asian Women's Group which writes and performs short plays for the Vancouver Asian community*)

Revenge Is Not Justice

The International Feminist Book Fair was an exciting event and a rare opportunity to meet and get to know other women writers and publishers. It was exhilarating to have so many intelligent and earnest women in one place. Considering so much of my experience at the fair was positive, I feel focusing on a negative incident does not adequately represent the fair but it's something I have to do.

There was a lesbian poetry reading featuring a number of writers whose work I had read or had heard of. I went with my lover who happens to be a man and a writer. The reading was *not* scheduled as lesbian-only. I entered the room followed by my lover. It was a matter of seconds before the shouting started. "There's a *man* in the room!" "*Get him out of here!*" "Are we agreed that no men are allowed?"

I sincerely regret our presence was so distressing and I do realize the importance for certain lesbian-only events, but two months after the fair, I still cannot understand why a poetry reading of published works should be segregated. Nor am I convinced that writing's effectiveness is enhanced by restricting the audience or that discrimination against men is a reasonable route to the dissolution of sexually determined inequality.

The lesbians present must have felt very satisfied 'getting back' at the *enemy*, driving *him* out of *their* space. When you've been disempowered for so long, it's exhilarating to feel yourself in ascendancy. Revenge, however, is not justice, nor is it a useful tool for social reform. Were the few men who were interested enough to attend the fair *really* the enemy? Are straight women *really* second-class feminists?

Throughout the fair, I repeatedly heard the phrase, "lesbians are in ascendancy." The very term in ascendancy shows a mode of thinking that is vertical and based on the old assumption that the only alternative to the role of victim is that of aggressor. This binary model oversimplifies the complexities and varieties of human existence and leaves no room for cooperation and growth. Feminism, as I have always understood it, is a movement to breakdown assumptions and social restrictions based on sexual difference or sexual orientation. At the fair, however, people were evaluated in terms of Women over Men, Lesbians over Straight Women, 'Coloured' over White. *Nothing is ever that simple.*

There were several other incidents such as the one I've sketchily set down here. This rage has a source, it has a history, but what has to be considered now is how to vent it productively, creatively, in ways that will not simply escalate mutual hostility.

Perhaps because I'm young and most of my lesbian friends have come out with less fear than joy and revelation, I was not adequately prepared for the anger of an older generation who've suffered traumatic ostracization. Still, I'm shocked and disappointed that a faction of the feminist community should in turn exercise the same kind of ugly and arbitrary discrimination I thought we were fighting against all along.

—Jean Yoon (*Poet*)

poster design by Danielle Blouin

Fanning The Fire

At this women's book fair, women of colour had a very strong voice. There were times when I was moved to tears by their words. Strong women who have struggled such a long time, such a long way, came to this fair and spoke out on their experiences so that women like myself could go home empowered and enlightened.

There were so many women to hear, I couldn't get to them all; the panels were crowded, one on top of the other; the keynote addresses and plenaries overflowed with information. Often the chosen topics were dry and academic, with little relevance to the movement as it is happening today.

Please see **Fair** page 16

Interviews with the "forcibly poor"

by Alex Maas

NO WAY TO LIVE
Poor Women Speak Out
by Sheila Baxter
Vancouver: New Star Books, 1988

Sheila Baxter spent several years working out of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside Women's Centre as a welfare rights advocate before writing *No Way to Live: Poor Women Speak Out*, a book about the reality of poor women's lives in the BC of the '80's. She interviewed more than 50 women in East Vancouver over a period of a couple of months in 1986. They were Black, white,

Asian and Native Indian; they were lesbian and heterosexual; some with university degrees, others with little formal education; and they were in varying stages of physical and mental health.

Baxter asked them each the same three questions: Why are you poor? What needs to be done to change this? Do you think you will always be poor? The answers to the first two questions share several common threads, but the answer to the third was "yes" more often than not.

The is a book about what it's like to be "forcibly poor" in BC. Baxter coins the phrase in her introduction and it's a very good one. It captures what Dorothy O'Connell later reiterates in her essay "The Lighter Side of Poverty" (lighter purses, lighter children) "... it is government policy to keep a certain portion of the population poor. The Conservative government in Ottawa made a conscious decision to fight inflation by having a large number of people unemployed." The statistics themselves are no longer shocking, we've heard them before and, in any case, they are only numbers.

The fact that BC welfare rates are as much as 50 percent below the poverty line begins to have some meaning once translated into personal hardship of individual women and children: when one of the 4290 single mothers living below the poverty line in BC is the single mother living next door to you in the co-op or standing in front of you at the check-out counter. For anyone who doesn't know and wants to, *No Way to Live* provides an appreciation of what it means to struggle to subsist; for those who know, it provides an analysis that takes poverty out of the realm of the personal and makes it everybody's problem.

And everybody should read this book, but mostly because it's a great book, almost everything about it is well done: the content, the format, the analysis. It combines personal accounts and photographs with selections from speeches and essays by welfare rights advocates plus facts, figures and information about the welfare system in Canada in general and in BC specifically.

photos by Lori Gabrielson from "No Way to Live"

This variety readily covers the topic providing one of the best overviews of the relevant issues, economics and personal experience I have encountered on any subject.

One Hand Tied ...

Particularly effective are the texts of two speeches by Dorothy O'Connell, an Ottawa poverty rights activist and writer of three books including the hilarious *Chiclet Gomez*. She exposes the tenaciously held belief that "raising wheat is work. Driving a garbage truck is work ... But raising kids—any woman should be able to do that with one hand tied behind her back, right? Raising children is nothing. So getting welfare is getting something for nothing."

And she doesn't shrink from applying a class analysis to her sisters in the women's movement. To the AGM of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, she remarks that there are relatively few feminists among poor women. The middle class career ambitions of many modern day feminists offer precious few alternatives for the majority of women living below the poverty line with or without children to support.

While encouraging the support of "other women ... to help them attain a place from which they can help the rest of us," O'Connell makes clear the system is designed so there are a limited number of places at the top and the people in them are only at the top by virtue of everybody else living at the bottom.

Jean Swanson, the co-ordinator of End Legislated Poverty, a coalition of anti-poverty groups, has contributed an essay in which she describes how, as a young mother in the US, she lost a child to the cold-blooded cash basis of the American medical system, and how this taught her the importance of translating individual experience into a political context. *No Way to Live* has other stories like that, so many it becomes obvious that tragedy is not an isolated incident, but the commonplace experience of daily poverty.

This is the lesson of the book. Poverty is not an accident of circumstances but the wilful exploitation of women and children for the benefit of business and political interests (otherwise known as monopoly capitalism). And it will not go away by helping poor women to "feel better about themselves." It will only go away when *we* make it do so.

The sensuality of skin and ink and stone

by Persimmon Blackbridge

"Luscious Lesbian Lithographs"—prints by Marsha Arbour—aren't actually all lithographs, but we won't go into that. You don't need to have studied lithography for 10 years to appreciate it. It's very direct and accessible.

It's all body prints. Arbour would roll litho ink on her body or on a friend's body, and then roll on a lith stone (first step for lithographs) or on paper (for monoprints). The colours range from delicate pastels to harsh reddish black. They are incredibly sensual. I've seen this technique used in shallow gimmicky ways, but not here. Arbour's solid sense of form gives strength to the detailed textures of skin and hair.

Her process mirrors her content: an exploration of some of the ways we see ourselves as women. "Beautiful Lesbian Cunt #1" is a pubic triangle (a fine filigree of curly hair with a little bit of belly and thighs around it) in black, red and metallic gold on white. People sometimes criticize work that fragments women's bodies and focuses on sexualized parts. But in this case, fragmentation is used to create images of female power.

When I asked her about her pubic imagery, Arbour said, "I was coming to terms with myself and my sexuality. This was quite a while ago, you understand. I didn't really know what these pieces were about until later. But I knew I wanted to show women's genitals as beautiful, to be pleased with my body, not embarrassed."

The breast self-examination and lump series are more difficult. The lithograph called "Lump" is raw and frightening—the head is tiny, the arms dwindle away, the flesh seems lifeless, rotting. It's not pretty; it reflects our fears.

The pieces in "Breast Self-exam Suite #1" are also disturbing. Along the edge of each print are embossed eight small torsos looking like they came right out of a chart on how to do breast self-exams. Depersonalized. Beside them, the central image is overwhelmingly personal and immediate: a body print of a woman's torso and arm in one of those same classic breast self-exam positions. The gesture is frozen, tense. At times the flesh is charred looking.

The second breast self-exam series is more gentle and lovely: self-exam as caring for ourselves rather than as fear of cancer.

There is a wide range of work beyond what I've described, from decorative, to stark, to playful. Though most of it deals in some way with sexuality, Arbour doesn't find it erotic.

"To me, it's more about sensuality," she says, "the sensuality of skin and ink and stone. But for some people it's erotic and that's great. It's a bonus."

"Luscious Lesbian Lithographs" will be at the Vancouver Lesbian Connection, 876 Commercial Drive, from Sept. 2-30, Monday to Friday, 11 am-4 pm and Tuesday evenings, 6:30-9:30.

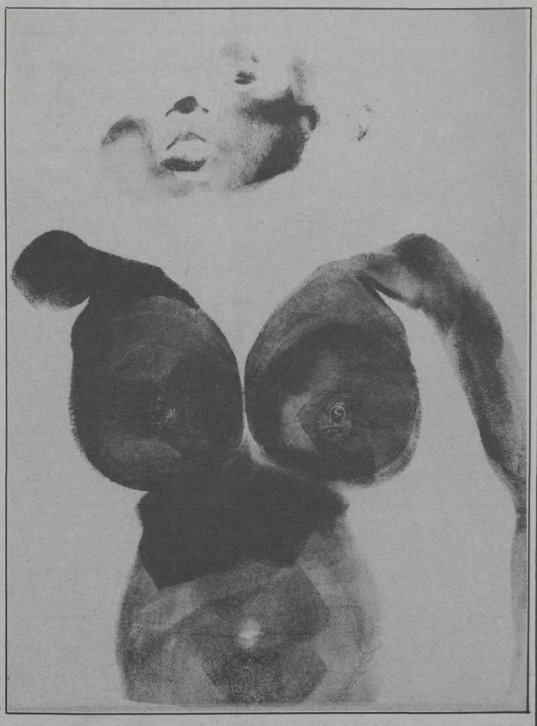

photo by Marsha J. Arbour

From Mexico

A voice full of life's passion

by Maura Volante

Every time I go to the Vancouver Folk Music Festival, I end up following someone around, drawn again and again to a voice, a style or the lyrical content of the songs. This year that someone was Amparo Ochoa, one of Mexico's pre-eminent interpreters in the New Song Movement.

Ochoa brings to her hard-hitting political songs a voice and a style that captures everyone's attention and holds it. At an open air gathering of this size, with as much socializing as listening going on, it is difficult to take the focus and silence the crowd. Ochoa accomplished this as easily as if she were performing in a concert hall.

With her clear, fluid voice full of passion for life, Ochoa could have reached prominence in any field of music. Fortunately for those of us who crave content, she chooses to sing songs of struggle and change in real people's lives, particularly those of women.

"The songs talk about the daily struggle of women for respect," she said, speaking in Spanish with an interpreter, "and the lack of respect women face. Women are ignored. The Mexican woman has no right to decide if she's going to have children or not. She is abused by the authorities.

Ochoa doesn't write her own material, but has found wonderful songs which deal with these issues in a poignant and personal manner. She is consequently in high demand by Mexico's feminist movement, singing not only in concerts and conferences, but also at rallies and picket lines.

"The last strike I participated in was that of the seamstresses," she recalled. "They formed a union called the 19th of September. The name comes from the September 19th, 1985 earthquake in Mexico City. More than 300 seamstresses lost their jobs because their buildings came down. They had a rally in downtown Mexico City and I was there."

Born in the northern Mexican state of Sinaloa in 1946, she taught school and sang locally before moving to Mexico City at the age of 23. Here she did radio, television, bar and folk club singing, while studying at the National Music School. She also performed for worker, peasant and student organizations throughout Mexico.

Rustling The Still Water

She spoke about the birth of the New Song Movement, downplaying her reportedly major role in its conception.

"It wasn't only my work, but that of a lot of other compañeros," she said, going on to describe the situation before the movement began. "For awhile there was lethargy, a still water, in the Mexican songs, with all the boleros, in which they were talking about trivial things. I have nothing against it because I like boleros a lot. It is a music that talks about the countryside and how the Mexicans think. I'm a big fan of that music.

"...these songs came up again...with the arrival of the exiles..."

"But there wasn't another option for the Mexican people, songs that would talk about our roots and our problems. That had been forgotten. It was sleeping. From 1971 to 1972 these songs came up again which talked about our things.

photos by Maura Volante

"It started with the arrival of the exiles to Mexico, people from Chile, Argentina, Uruguay. They turned around the Mexican people, gave them a taste for Latin American music, particularly from South America. That's how the recognition came for the artists working in Mexico. Their songs has as much value as those from South America.

"So the taste, ears and eyes of the people came to the Mexican protest songs. Now this movement has matured, not only on the part of the songwriters and interpreters, but also on the part of the public."

Amparo Ochoa sees much of today's feminist movement as having roots in the New Song Movement, because it has helped spread information about the history and struggles of women.

"There is a lot of force in the women's movement today," she said, "with many coalitions of women's groups, not only in Mexico City but in the rest of the country."

Though she is quick to point out the women's movement is independent, run by women for women, she also maintains it is respected and supported by compañeros in the New Song Movement. As well as links with the feminist movement, Ochoa reported a growing unification of what she calls "the plastic arts—song, dance, literature and independent cinema."

Committed as she is to political education through her music, Ochoa doesn't confine herself to adult topics and audiences.

"I like to sing songs of love that transcend the individual..."

My first glimpse of her performing at the Folk Festival was at the Little Folks stage where, with animated gestures and her dynamic voice, she was charming young and old alike with songs about animals and children. Not that she left her politics behind when performing for children. One song was about racism seen through the eyes of a young black girl.

And she also sings of love. "I believe in love," she said, going on to define the kind of love song she prefers. "I like to sing songs of love that transcends the individual, not songs that treat people like worms."

Amparo Ochoa clearly recognizes the power in her voice, and makes choices of material with a sense of responsibility. This clarity and commitment shine through in her face (stunningly beautiful, especially when she sings), her movements on stage, and always in her voice.

Although she travels more than she would like to (she has a four-year-old daughter and a 17-year-old son), Ochoa stressed the honour and privilege she feels in performing at festivals like the one in Vancouver.

"I can share the stage with other artists," she said, "and meet others like you, too. That affirms that women are not alone in Mexico. We have the support—not only mental—but also moral and sometimes physical support as well. There are many women who are conscious of the struggle of women for their rights."

Fair from page 14

I felt it was women of colour (participants and speakers) with their incredible energy who came and fanned the fire. And when they sat around to tell their stories, their warmth drew others in.

—Sky Lee (*Writer and nurse*)

The Whole Ugly Question

My recent attendance at the Third International Feminist Book Fair left me with some impressions that, while there is perhaps some hope for change, a lot of work is ahead. There is no doubt in my mind there was a feeling of solidarity on some issues. More importantly, there were issues that arose which continue to plague, and we must have the courage and compassion to confront.

The whole question of racism surfaced clearly and the role we each have as writers to rage against it. Underlying that was the whole ugly question of cultural imperialism and oppression of people. The role that clearly emerged of feminists of privileged white Euro-western cultures is to act as catalysts and enablers, rather than appropriators of information and opportunity for writing's sake.

The fact that the Black women of Concordia [university in Montreal] chose to boycott the fair was indicative of the expression of those women of colour who did attend that we will speak in our own voices. The participation of Native women spoke to this in a gentle but firm voice, as the need to understand sharing as a means of liberation. Very noticeable was the absence of Oriental women from Asia and elsewhere. In the vast numbers of participating countries, including the host country, Oriental women are there writing. I wanted to hear their views.

Some views which were perhaps spoken loudest and which I hoped represented a minority were those who chose to misrepresent non-sexist thinking with extreme sexist rhetoric. Chauvinism is chauvinism and, from either male or female, is repugnant to liberation and true non-sexist thought.

—Jeanette Armstrong (*Author of Slash*)

If You Are Willing To Listen

The Third International Feminist Book Fair provided me an opportunity to witness for the first time since the inception of the fair, and first time ever to hear so many indigenous women writers partake in such an event. It challenged the women who attended to provide active support to the indigenous people of Kahnawake, Quebec to fight the erosion of sovereignty over their territory by the federal government and RCMP. As a result $1,500 was raised and a formal petition was ratified in support of the people in Kahnawake.

I have always felt strongly that the struggle of cultural imperialism and appropriation of our people's knowledge must and has to be dealt with. The book fair was a baby step in that direction.

It is my hope that the fair provided the impetus for a beginning, and better understanding, as well as more recognition for indigenous women writers. It was like finally, after many years, letting feminists know there are very articulate, intelligent and strong indigenous women writers out there, if you are willing to listen and search them out.

—Viola Thomas (*Sewepenic Nation, Penticton, B.C., works at Theytus Books*)

On the wall

A delicious display of lesbian sex

by Pat Feindel

DRAWING THE LINE
by Kiss & Tell: Persimmon Blackbridge, Susan Stewart and Emma Stonebridge
Women in Focus, Vancouver

I came away from "Drawing the Line" overcome by a wave of emotion. I confess, I cried.

Many of Susan Stewart's photographs are of ordinary sex. Between lesbians. They are totally extraordinary to experience in a show. To see them is to realize, to *feel* the absence of images like this—images of sex between lesbians, sex that is honest and alive. I felt overwhelmed by an awareness of that absence, that silence.

I also felt moved, exposed and excited to see the images hanging there, brave and fragile on the walls. That fact was beautiful, exhilarating. I had been given a gift.

I saw the photos early opening night, and then the room filled with women, mostly lesbians. It filled to bursting with the electric excitement (not to mention body heat) of women gathered over the subject of lesbian sex. Women mingled and jostled under bright fluorescent lights, sweated profusely (it was a hot summer night ...) and looked at lesbian sex together.

There was historical, cultural significance to this social event. The power of the evening undoubtedly affected how I reacted to the photographs. But the *context* of art is always a part of how art is perceived and understood, and opening night was certainly part of the context for this show.

As the artists point out in their statement, the larger "hystorical" context is the discussion about sexual representation—"this painful angry long thing we're in"—that started centuries ago, but has recently arisen from looking at men's images of sex and wanting to make something different.

The show was set up with several wall panels of photos, moving more or less from "nice" sex to explicit depictions of butch/femme or dominant/submissive sex roles. They ranged from soft and gentle to hard or stylized, from tender to sadomasochistic. The same two women were shown throughout.

The artists wanted people's reactions. Grease pencils were provided so women could write—on the walls—their comments, reactions, likes, dislikes: where they would "draw the line" between what is acceptable or enticing, and what is not.

There were many levels on which the show broke with tradition (photographic, erotic, artistic), and writing on the walls was the first. I thought it might not work: women wouldn't do it, or I would find it distracting or uninteresting. But the walls filled up quickly with comments that became just as interesting as the photographs.

Interacting with sexual images is—dare I say it—empowering, breaking the convention of passivity in viewing. I love the fact that the artists thought of including the act of writing on the walls in their work.

I enjoyed seeing the variety of sex practices: different positions and settings, from sex in the bushes and beside waterfalls, to sex on garage floors and car hoods. There was a relaxed, open mood to them. The women laugh and play and really look at each other.

Though the content and mood varied, the emotional tone stayed within a range of friendly, casual lightness. This worked to demystify the whole subject of sex somewhat, to break from the choices of heavy Hollywood romance, raunchy formula porn or purist lustless art. It also added an edge of humour to many of the pieces.

But it seemed emotionally cool, too. I wanted to see more passion, more intensity, more of a repertoire of touching, a wider portrayal of the whole body's eroticism. More wild abandon, more urgency.

I would have loved to see more tongues kissing necks, ears, sucking fingers, more hands under clothes, hands undressing (oops, is this fragmenting women's bodies? Well, I won't go on ...)

There were written reactions to all the panels: " ... I like the fun and tenderness on this wall ... this is not for me ... I really like this group—no clothes, no costumes, no props, just sex, just women ... gorgeous ... exquisite ... delicious ... it is the faces that work for me ... "

The controversy started around panel four: " ... you didn't stick your necks out ... garters are a distancing phenomenon ... why garters? ... they hold up stockings, silly ... why must we comment on another's opinion ... men's magazine images ... sexy ... too posed ... "

The final wall, the S/M wall, got the lion's share of comments. On that wall grew the debate about S/M imagery and practice that has gone on in a disorganized and very personalized way in Vancouver (and more generally, across the continent). Women expressed both positive and negative responses—their fears of the images, their attraction to the images, their judgments, their fears of judgments.

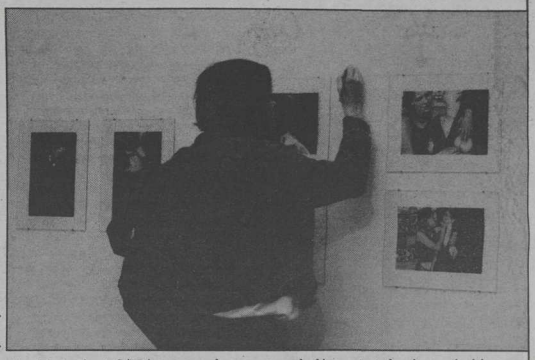

photo by Shai Fowler

But, on the wall, the debate was removed one step from individual people and seemed to make it easier for women to hear and speak the arguments.

I know many S/M dykes found these images tame. Other women clearly found them way past "the line." I thought they were sensitive, compromise choices given that lesbians and women of all persuasions would be seeing these photos and reacting to them. They pushed the limit, but provided a safe ground to react and begin looking, talking and listening.

The difference between these photographs and other erotic or porn images was fascinating. For one thing, the models do not look out: they are engrossed in each other, so the camera is not acknowledged.

Usually in porn there is an explicit acknowledgement of the viewer. You see a performance going on, for your benefit. Often—especially in still photographs—the models are looking out at the viewer—inviting you in, teasing you, offering themselves up to you.

Here, the women aren't there for the viewer, they are there for each other. The camera is documenting their interaction, rather than directing or portraying it.

At the same time, you know they are modelling. The sets, the costumes, the lighting are all staged with great attention to detail. The blend of staging and spontaneity reflects, in fact, the process of the artists. According to their statement, they would "be getting really hot and Susan would say, 'Hold it, I have to change the film,' or 'Okay great, now try something else.,"

These photographs didn't make it possible to possess the subjects in the voyeuristic way porn usually does. Perhaps it is the open, relaxed way the women interact, perhaps because it is clear you will not be pandered to or performed 'to' that you can look without shame or inhibition. Your looking will not violate or invade anyone.

The texture and design of the photos are a delight. They frequently use the black-and-white medium to its fullest in costume and setting: white satin underwear, black satin camisoles, satin sheets, leather jackets, black garter belts and stockings, shiny black motorcycles, a white porcelain bathtub, metallic foil as background. The artists used clichés from traditional erotic/pornographic imagery, but played with their edges in interesting and sometimes humorous ways.

There are striking elements—shocks of long curly hair, the sensuality of hair sweeping over a partner's face, perfectly classical nude bums, the placement of a hand, the mixture of fabric and skin textures.

These are sensual, pleasing photos. Some are stunning. Some made me laugh, two or three made my heart thump, some surprised me with a thrill.

As a whole, the show made me want to have sex—made me want that in a really different way than other sex photos have. Often when I've seen porn or even mainstream movies, I've felt a kind of empty wanting, an addictive give-me-a-fix feeling. This show made me want in a different way—an embracing, expansive, adventuring, playful and honest way.

It made me feel hopeful.

So thanks Susan, Emma and Persimmon ... and all the women who helped them.

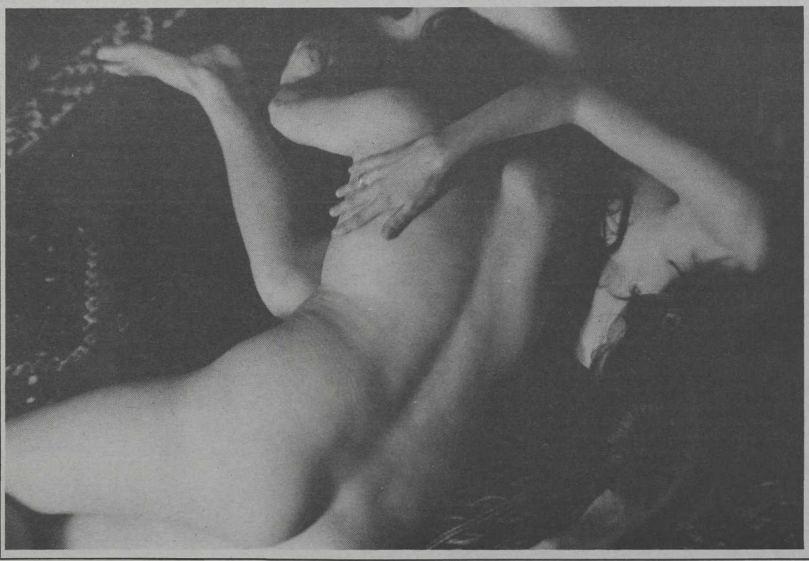

photo by Susan Stewart

South African theatre

The only place you can say what you feel

by Antoinette Zanda

The Vusisizwe Players want to wake up South Africa through their play *You Strike the Woman, You Strike the Rock*. They want to revive the memory of when 20,000 women marched on parliament in Pretoria, August 9th, 1956 to state that Black women would not carry identity passes as legislated by the white controlled government.

They are saying if women practiced that kind of solidarity again and again, the South African government would be defeated.

The acting cast of the Vusisizwe Players is made up of three women: Poppy Tsira, Thobeka Maqhutyana and Nomvula Qosha. They are the first group of Black women actors ever to leave South Africa and tour with a play.

The play is set in everyday scenes—a market place, a bus trip—but each reflects daily tension resulting from the political oppression in South Africa. Central to the play is the way the Pass Laws affect Black people in urban areas. The Pass Laws in South Africa restrict the movements of Black people to benefit white controlled labour needs. Most often Black families are split up in the process.

The Black people in South Africa endure to survive, such as not knowing the whereabouts of family, the police raids, lack of housing, police surveillance, poverty exploitation, and confusion from changes in laws.

Although the play is clearly political, the actors say it just reflects some of the daily experiences in the lives of Black South African women.

Through this dynamic play, Thobeka, Nomvula and Poppy are saying to all of us, "This is our reality, wake up, unite and do something."

Antoinette: What is the meaning of Vusisizwe?

Nomvula: It means "Wake up the nation."

Antoinette: What is the significance of the title?

Poppy: It was a protest song that was sung in the march on Pretoria [a capital city] in 1956 for the abolition of Pass Laws. It was sung by 20,000 women from all over South Africa—Black and white.

Antoinette: How was the script of the play written?

Poppy: We interviewed people, then went to workshops and improvised what they told us. We did this in Cape Town at the market—sometimes we would even help them—work with them so that we would know what we are talking about. Sometimes we would show the workshop to people who had the personal experiences.

photo by Andrea Lowe

The Vusisizwe Players: Nomvula Qosha, Poppy Tsira and Thobeka Maqhutyana

We worked on the script for four or five months. The first performance was in 1986 in May. We went to the Market Theatre in Johannesburg and kept changing it to make it easy. For example, we did not want to carry a lot of props. We never changed it since we went on tour.

Antoinette: Were you concerned with censorship?

All: No.

Nomvula: When we were putting it together, we knew we were talking about our lives—our own experiences. We would worry about censorship later. We had a slight problem when we played for a year and they banned one of our songs about Mr. Botha.

Antoinette: How did you get involved in political theatre?

Thobeka: When we started this play we never thought it was going to be a political play. I don't see it as a political play—I see it as Black theatre or protest theatre. We talk about our lives, we talk freely about what we have experienced and our history without anything happening to us. It is better to be in Black theatre—we are telling people about our lives artistically.

Poppy: As a Black person in South Africa you have no right to say anything. If you are doing theatre you are allowed to say everything, say your feelings and express yourself. It is the only place where you can say what you feel.

Nomvula: You may call it a political piece but it is not. It is our lives. I'm living politics. We are just meeting people, talking to people. I also see it as protest theatre.

Antoinette: When you left South Africa to go on tour, what personal situation did each of you leave behind?

Thobeka: I'm staying in Langa, a township outside of Cape Town. I was born there. We live in matchbox houses. I've got kids but theatre is what I do full time.

Poppy: I'm from Guguletu [also a Black "township" outside Cape Town]. I also live in one of those houses. I have kids and call myself the breadwinner of the home.

Nomvula: I live in a squatter camp called KTC [near Cape Town] and I've got four children but they are not with me; they are staying with my family in the rural areas near King Williamstown [over 1000 km away]. I don't know what is happening now—things were bad when we left home. We all have teenagers.

Thobeka: We went through too many difficulties and sacrificed ourselves to do this play without funding. Many of us would like to keep on doing this work but there is not even a room to rehearse in the "townships." Nobody must work for nothing.

Nomvula: When I talk about my kids—Black people never have enough money to put it in the bank for them. I would say we are unfortunate because our parents and grandparents worked, but for such little money they could only buy food.

We want to create work in the "townships." We haven't got creches [daycares] for our children where they would be safe. Sometimes things happen to them during the day when you are not at home.

Antoinette: What do you want the women in Vancouver to remember?

Thobeka: Women generally, I'm not just talking about Black women, must be united.

Poppy: I would say the same. Solidarity of women is necessary so that we help each other. They have problems too and before they start on South Africa, they may just as well help themselves first.

Nomvula: I agree. Women just clean here in Canada first. If we can then work together and do what the women in 1956 did, we could join together and defeat the Botha regime.

Poppy: Women should not take this as a piece of theatre full of slogans. They should think of what is behind the slogans. These words come out of the stomach, out of the heart.

Antoinette: What real changes do you see happening politically in South Africa?

Nomvula: Changes. There are no real changes. They are just talking but not doing. They say they have got rid of passes but we are still carrying identity cards. They number them so that they know what colour people are. So we cannot go freely in our own country of birth.

Poppy: They say now that if we want to marry a white guy we can, but I am worried about where you are going to live. What are your kids going to be identified as? I don't see any change.

Thobeka: I don't see any changes.

Nomvula: If they let us do what we want, you will see changes.

If you want to support the Vusisizwe Players and other actors in South Africa, money can be sent to: SAWAA (South African Women Against Apartheid) c/o Kinesis, #301-1720 Grant St., Vancouver B.C. V5l 2Y6.

A Guide to Feminist Expertise

The CRIAW Bank of Researchers

A computerized database of feminist researchers working in various fields and committed to the advancement of women.

The Bank allows you to identify researchers with whom you may wish to network or who are working in fields in which you may be seeking expertise. An invaluable tool for journalists, professors, action or community researchers, policy makers and conference organizers.

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N.B. We encourage all feminist researchers to register in the bank. Application forms available from CRIAW.

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The tragedy is not about incest

by Jeannie Lochrie
and Heather Wells

SEE BOB RUN
by Daniel MacIvor
directed by Ken McDougall
Firehall Theatre, July 12-23

See Bob Run is enjoying wide critical acclaim across Canada. A dramatic exposé of one woman's incest experience, the play has been nominated for the prestigious Chalmer's Award, voted best play of the 1987 Vancouver Fringe Festival, and cited as one of the year's best theatre productions by the *Toronto Star*. Fine staging and direction, excellent acting from Carolyn Gillis, and poetic dialogue make it easy to see why audiences and critics alike have been seduced by Daniel MacIvor's well-crafted play.

Not surprisingly, we went with high expectations, despite *See Bob Run* being the work of a man. Unfortunately, the tragedy in *See Bob Run* is not about incest.

Bob, short for Roberta, is the play's only character. The set is a highway where this likable young runaway speaks directly to the audience, telling funny, sad and poignant stories. Bob is an incest victim although she never uses the word incest. It is up to the audience to figure out Bob's "secret." And it's not hard to do.

Through what becomes the play's central metaphor, a fairy-tale, we discover Bob is in a classic state of denial. Early on she states: once upon a time there was a King "who was good most of the time," a Princess to whom the King was devoted, and a stupid ugly Queen.

Bob has left home because the wicked Queen figures out the incest and has had the "good" Father-King exiled. Bob is on her way east to find her father who, she tells us, she loves dearly.

Through flashbacks Bob describes the big monster coming out of her bedroom closet at night. He wants only to have "his handle" touched. He's sad, not mean, and she feels sorry for him. Then we watch as Bob writhes around in pain, moaning quiet protestations whilst her father-abuser rapes her.

photo by Susie King

Carolyn Gillis as Bob

In one of the more chilling scenes, Bob pulls out a pink dance dress, glitter trimmed, bought by "dad" for a dance they attend together. Dancing around the stage she reminisces over this "wonderful" time. Tenderly she puts the dress on the stage floor; one gets the impression she is laying it on a bed. Spotlight on the dress. It would appear this is the incident that tips off her mother who finally calls in the authorities.

These images, evoked as they are in the dark, dreamlike space of the theatre, rivet one to the incest layer of the play: complete suture, total identification with Bob. We are Bob, she is us.

All this she tells us as she hitch-hikes east, "to the water" where she hopes to find the exiled father-abuser. To the countless male drivers who pick her up, Bob is charming and witty. Between rides she begins to tell us about her boyfriend Timmy who wooed her with "lilacs and a card with the moon on it." He's a romantic figure, a singer, a catch.

Then we get an interesting anecdote. Bob had been living with a girlfriend with whom she had many erotically charged cuddles in bed. She likes this, she admits, but is won over by the charming hero and goes to live with him. Problems arise when sex enters into things. Bob hates it. Not surprisingly.

"It's Greek. It's Freudian. It certainly isn't feminist."

More images of her tortured sex life are displayed to us. But it's the audience who makes the connection between her sufferings and her past incest with "dad." Not Bob. Us.

Audience betrayed

In what can only be described as a moment of high theatrical flourish, MacIvor delivers a very clever twist. Out of the blue, Bob takes off her sweatshirt to reveal a blood-soaked green tank top. She has murdered Timmy with a gun her father left behind. Bob tenderly cradles Timmy's imaginary head as she talks about how his brain was blown out in neat little triangles of bone.

What exactly has happened here? Our emotions, our identification with Bob are now completely cut off. We are appalled—but not because of incest. Because of murder. Our sympathies go from Bob the murderer to Timmy, the innocent victim. We are betrayed as an audience. Essentially, we are forced into an identification with male, not female pain. And there is to be no catharsis, either for us—or for Bob.

See Bob Run has a male-bonding subtext. All the men are "nice guys." The father-rapist, in Bob's imagination, didn't mean to hurt her. Timmy is swell and all of the men who pick her up are fab. Not *one* of the drivers makes even the slightest pass at her.

The women are another story entirely. Bob hates her mother for exiling the King of the castle. Her erotic interlude with her girlfriend is ruptured by Timmy; it's too good to be true. But the most abhorrent part is the lesbian scene. The first of only two women to give Bob a ride makes a pass at her. Bob extricates herself quickly. The next ride is also a woman. "You married?" Bob asks. "Yeah." "Good." The audience laughs. What comedy!

What playwright MacIvor has done in *See Bob Run* is far from new. He has presented the same old male story: the Electra complex; the woman who loves her father and hates her mother. It's Greek. It's Freudian. It certainly is not feminist. And it is not avant garde.

It is dangerous to use one of woman's most important issues—incest—without allowing any catharsis for the disturbing images and memories that at least some of MacIvor's audience must feel. In a sense *we* are abused: it's an incest within an incest.

See Bob Run is not about incest. It is a play about how a male writer needs to perceive it. MacIvor did research at rape-crisis centers (a woman he knows is a survivor), yet he gives us no sense of the collective process feminists have created for our healing. Let men write about their own abuse issues and leave women to create art out of our pain. As women we have to hold this play up to the light of our own experiences. We did and found that *See Bob Run* betrays us.

Fringe Festival fraught with females

by Hazel Madley

Leave some room in your date book between September 9th and 18th. You'll want to catch the Fourth Annual Vancouver Fringe Festival, an unpredictable, high calibre collage of alternative theatre and performance art.

The festival takes place in eleven unique venues located within walking distance of the Fringe Club at 185 East 11th, the refreshment and information centre of it all. While the Fringe has blossomed since 1985 to include over 100 local and international performers, the admission prices have not. All shows are $5 or less. Tickets must be purchased at individual venues just prior to each performance.

Here is a sneak preview of some of the scheduled acts by or about women that caught the eye:

SPEND THE NIGHT—Asks the question: what finally killed Marilyn Monroe? A fatal injection or the misogynist climate of the times? Norma Jeane and Marilyn confront each other in the last 45 minutes of their lives. By Jennifer Martin.

HOW SHE PLAYED THE GAME—From *Women Heroes*, the 1986 New York Women's Project poses the question, can women be heroes? Examines the lives of six exceptional women athletes. Performed by Marilyn Norry.

LETTERS HOME—Illustrates the struggle of Sylvia Plath both as a woman and an artist, and her mother Aurelia's attempts to come to terms with her daughter's life and death. Written by Rose Leiman Goldemberg.

POTATOHEADS AMONG US—Serious and hysterical one-woman show about life and times in the Nuclear Age. Written and performed by Kimelly Anne Warren.

RETURNING TO BALANCE—A lighthearted look at the balance in male/female relationships. Writer/performer Batyah Fremes tips the scales with laughter in her improvisational stories.

DR. FRANK'S CREATION THEORY—Concerns two women of genius in the 1870's. Doctors Almira Frank and Sarah McFee, scorned by their colleagues in medicine, succeed in their strange experiments. Written by Catherine Young.

TRANSFORMATIONS—Wives Tales Story Tellers explore the boundaries of their art with stories of change. Pieces are acted, told, sung and chanted.

CRYSTAL BALLS—An exciting, emotional drama between friends. This controversial one-act play written by Jan Steen is about a close encounter with four women. Is Kate destined to be a lesbian?

Remember, this is a preview of probables, so check before you go. Complete festival information on who's playing where and when can be found in the Fringe Program, a supplement to the September 2nd issue of the *Georgia Straight*. Or call TheatreSpace at 873-3646.

photo by G. Davey

Marilyn Norry in *How She Played The Game*

Following V.Woolf's advice

by Michele Valiquette

Thousands of new books by and about women are published every year, and not only by our own presses. Even mainstream houses seem to have figured out something's going on. Several have seen the light—or is that the cash register—and added women writers series to their lists. At this point, there's such an array of titles for the feminist reader to choose from, she may well have difficulty deciding what to add to her bookshelves.

Virginia Woolf believed, sensibly enough, it is the reviewer's job to help the public make these decisions. But for the feminist reader, the review pages of newspapers, magazines and even literary journals aren't especially useful.

Consider the statistics. In 1982, Sharon Nelson reported that only 21 per cent of the books reviewed by Canadian newspapers were written by women. At 26 per cent, literary magazines proved only slightly better. A recently-released study by the English group "Women in Publishing" draws attention to a similar situation in the U.K.

If the chances of a woman's book making it on to the review pages are low, the chances that, once there, it'll be reviewed by a feminist reviewer are lower still. A 1986 analysis of Canadian general readership magazines by journalist Liss Jeffrey found that under five per cent of the *total* editorial content touched on feminist issues. Tales of women's books mistreated by male reviewers are legion.

All of this means that not only are women readers deprived of intelligent information about new books, but women writers do without the feedback and public discussion they need to develop writing skills and to build reading audiences. And ultimately, the culture as a whole loses.

Feminist reviewing, then, is a political act essential to the survival of women's writing. And in recent years, several feminist review publications have been created to fill the void left by the malestream press.

Careful, Informed

The Women's Review of Books is probably the best-known of these. In the five years since the monthly began publishing, its circulation has grown to 11,000. Every issue of this tabloid-format review is packed to overflowing with in-depth analysis of current women's books from every imaginable field. In addition to reviews, many issues also feature interviews and articles about women and publishing. The latter have been especially fascinating, covering topics ranging from authors' rights to the fate of feminists in the mainstream.

In this publication, women's books are given the careful, informed readings they deserve. Reviewers for *The Women's Review of Books* have a thorough knowledge not only of their subject areas but of feminist issues. Whereas reviewers in the malestream press often seem eager to do combat with a new text, here reviewers are more likely to approach it asking: what can this book add to our understanding of women's experience? How is it linked to feminist discussions currently underway?

All of the pieces in *The Women's Review of Books* are substantial and at times they can be heavy going. But they're invariably worth the effort. The letters section is often the liveliest part of the paper and one of my personal favourites. Here readers, and often authors whose work has been reviewed, respond to points raised by reviewers.

Debates can span several issues and often revolve around questions central to the practice of feminist reviewing: how can we deal with the tension between sisterhood and literary standards? On what basis do we decide some writing is "good" and other writing is "not so good?" The letters are an important means of helping to ensure the publication is responsible to a larger community of feminist readers and writers.

I have one complaint. The paper describes its audience as "the feminist intellectual community." But judging by contributors' bios, the editors are holding to a fairly traditional, and narrow, understanding of the term "intellectual." Although an encouraging number of reviewers are creative writers and some are women who work in the publishing industry, a majority seem to be women who teach at universities. I'd expect a journal that seeks "to represent the widest possible range of feminist perspectives" to work a little harder at drawing in feminist thinkers who work outside academic circles.

Individual copies are $2.10 (Canadian) in bookshops. Subscriptions are $18 (U.S.) Write: *The Women's Review of Books*, Wellesley College Centre for Research on Women, Wellesley, MA 02181.

Belles Lettres

A newer feminist review publication, but one quickly building an avid readership, is *Belles Lettres*. The editors describe the intended audience as non-specialist readers who enjoy a well-written review as much as they do a good book.

Reviews of non-fiction fall within the scope of this publication but, as the title suggests, *Belles Lettres* leans more toward discussion of creative writing. The editorial statement evokes images of the literary salons of an earlier era: "Our purpose is to promote and *celebrate* writing by women and in doing so, to inform and entertain."

The contents of the bi-monthly are often organized around one or more themes. Over the three years *Belles Lettres* has been running, these have included: Asian, Canadian, Native American, Irish, and South African writers as well as mothers and daughters, women and work, and women and war. In addition to reviews, each issue of *Belles Lettres* includes an interview. Judy Grahn, Linda Ty-Casper, Sheila Fugard and Bharati Mukherjee are among those who've discussed their work here. In the next issue, a regular column devoted to women's detective fiction will debut.

Some *Belles Lettres* reviews are essay length, others as brief as 250 words. This is a balance I appreciate, especially when my reading time is limited. Like other review publications *Belles Lettres* tends to run to large blocks of print, but it is printed in two colours which provides visual rest.

Like *The Women's Review of Books*, *Belles Lettres* is a must for any feminist reader who has ever wondered what to read next. It has a permanent place in the pile of favourites next to my bed.

Subscriptions are $15 (U.S.) and sample copies are available for $1 (U.S.) Write *Belles Lettres*, PO Box 987, Arlington, VA 22216.

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LETTERS

Some thoughts on language and disability

Kinesis:

As a woman who at the age of 25 became disabled as the result of a freak accident, I felt empowered reading about Ashley Grey. ("Disabled we stand," July/Aug. '88). Indeed, Grey's narrative should reinforce in us all—'dis'-abled and 'able'-bodied alike—commitment to the belief that mutual acceptance, understanding, validation and support of our differences, enables us to recognize the intrinsic similarities we share which connect us to one another.

While on the whole my reaction to the article was a positive one, some of the language used by Brooks and Mitchell left me feeling uncomfortable. The use of "deformed" seems to be contrary to the very tone of, and assertions put forth in the article.

Grey, herself, is quoted as saying " ... one of my hands is not properly formed" but reading that statement brought two considerations to mind: was this remark made with sarcasm that the printed word has failed to convey? Is such *self-description* a tool of empowerment that should be likened to defining oneself as a dyke, i.e., a reclaiming of language?

I also had difficulty with the phrase "she has learned to cope with the body that belongs to her." My interaction with physically challenged folks has shown me that persons born with such a body do not "cope." Would we use that language when speaking of one's lived experience and self-image if one is born Black? Female? It seems to me that speaking in such a way ascribes some degree of inadequacy to the person whom one speaks of. (Those of us who were not born with differently-able bodies may have to *cope* with our self-images for we have had them cultivated in a society that is ripe with prejudices and fosters suspicion of difference: now, we too are different!)

It is more to the point that one "copes" with the realities one experiences living in a society constructed for the white, heterosexual, able-bodied male when one is only some/none of these things.

Finally, the word "cope" suggests a resignation to 'limitations': Grey doesn't seem to embody such an attitude.

Thanks for providing the opportunity for women's dialogue.

Shelley Tremain
Hamilton, Ontario.

Let's not kid ourselves

Kinesis:

With all due respect to sex trade workers, I do not see the "absolute parallel" Chrystos talks about between "being a hooker and being a feminist." Being a whore, like being a wife, is a participation in a patriarchal institution, invented by men, for men. If this were not so, there would be male prostitutes available to women. The implication is that women don't really enjoy sex so men must buy it from us one way or another. Also, the patriarchy wants to divide women into wives and whores, one kind of woman to be mother and unpaid drudge and the other kind to be a toy for recreational sex. To be a feminist is to reject either role and to be one's own person.

Prostitution is more honest, in ways, than marriage—at least it owns up to being a business proposition!

Her point about the economic necessity for prostitution is well taken, but this should not be confused with *choosing* to sell your body, because economic necessity negates the "choice" part.

Those of us who have endured oppressive relationships with men have no right to look down on prostitutes. Both patriarchal marriage and prostitution are things we do to survive either emotionally or economically, but let's not kid ourselves that either one has much to do with liberation.

Sincerely,
Anne Miles
Gibsons, B.C.

BULLETIN BOARD

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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 $6 for the first 75 words or portion thereof, $2 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* Attn: Bulletin Board, 301-1720 Grant Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2Y6. For more information call 255-5499.

EVENTS

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

Women will take to the streets to protest violence against women on Fri. **Sept. 16**. March starts at 8 pm at Park'n'Ride lot, corner of hastings and Windermere, across from PNE. All women welcome. Wheelchair pushers available. To pre-register for childcare, call Rape Relief 872-8212.

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT DANCE

Will be held on Fri. **Sept. 16**, at Capri Hall, 3925 Fraser St., from 8 pm-1 am. Organized by VLC. Childcare available. Sliding scale $4-$6. Bring banners.

VIDEO EXHIBITION

Video In presents FLV: the first international feature length video exhibition at the Video In and Robson Square Media Centre, **Sept 15-18**. Screenings include *Playing With Fire*, by Marusia Bociurkiw, on **Sept. 16** at 6:30 pm, and *Gertrude Stein and Companion* by Ira Cirker at 8 pm at Robson Square Media Centre. For more info on additional screenings and workshops, call Karen 688-4336 or Helen 291-7630.

EVENTS

WOMEN IN TRADES

From **Oct. 1-4** the Naramata Centre near Pentiction, BC will host the Canadian Conference on Women in Trades and Technology. Organized by the Kootenay Women in Trades and Technology Assoc. See Movement Matters for more info.

CUBAN CONFERENCE

The Federation of Cuban Women is hosting the Third Continental Women's Meeting in Havana **Oct. 3-7**. The theme is Latin American Women in the 80's. Cuban Airlines is offering reduced flights. For more info call Susan at 254-9797.

EROTICA NIGHT

On **Sept. 2** the VLC is sponsoring a showing of lesbian erotic videos by Blush Productions of San Francisco. Tix are $3-$5 at the door. For details call 254-8458.

VLC CELEBRATES 5th YEAR

On **Sept. 11**, starting at 7 pm, there is a special coffeehouse anniversary party featuring Donna-lee, Doreen Maclean, Nadine Davenport, Carol Street and others. Call 254-8458 for more info.

EVENTS

HUMAN RIGHTS LECTURES

The United Nations Assoc. in Canada and the BC Human Rights Coalition present a lecture series marking the 40th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. **Sept. 19**, Francine Fournier addresses human rights in global context. **Oct. 3**, Mayors Gretchen Brewin and John Laird give municipal responses to human rights needs. Both lectures at Robson Square Media Centre at 7:30 pm. Call 736-8965 or 736-8963 for info.

LUSCIOUS LESBIAN LITHOS

Is a show of prints by Marsha J. Arbour. Printed directly from women's bodies, her images explore sexuality in its broadest sense. At VLC, 876 Commercial Dr., **Sept 1-30**, weekdays 11-4 pm and Tues. eves 6:30-9:30 pm. (See article this issue.)

WOMENFUTURES

WomenSkills Development Society is holding a benefit dinner on **Oct. 24** at Isadora's Cooperative Restaurant, 1540 Old Bridge on Granville Island. Tix are $35-$15. Proceeds will be used to establish WomenFutures, a non-profit society to help women get financing for cooperative and non-profit enterprises. Send cheque to 4340 Carson St., Vancouver, V5J 2X9 or call 430-0450 for other tix locations.

GAY/LESBIAN CONFERENCE

Planning is underway for '89 BC Conference. First meeting will be held on **Sept. 6** at the Gay and Lesbian Centre, 1170 Bute St., at 7:30 pm. For more info call Keith on Friday afternoons at 684-6869.

ANNOUNCING!
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EVENTS

GALS NIGHT OUT

SWAG and the Hot Flashes Coffee House are co-sponsoring a dinner-entertainment-dance extravaganza on **Saturday Oct. 15** at the Crystal Garden Ballroom in Victoria. Limited admission, advance tix only. For tix info contact Ariel Books or Vancouver Women's Books. Victoria residents can call 381-1012. All women welcome.

WE THREE

Seattle's a capella trio in concert Fri. **Sept. 23** at 8 pm, La Quena. For info call 251-6626.

PEACE CONFERENCE

The fourth annual BC Peace Conference will be held on **Oct. 1-2** at University of BC. For input on workshops and info, call 736-2366.

WOMEN IN CELEBRATION

NFB presentations, displays, guest speakers, networking and entertainment will be held **Saturday Sept. 10** from 8:30 am to 5 pm at Hastings Community Centre, with no fee. Directory of Lower Mainland women's groups available for cost. Pre-register by **Sept. 5** for childcare and special needs assistance 525- 7246.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE CALLING PMS

An NFB film about premenstrual changes. Vancouver premiere on **Sept. 8**, 7:30 pm, at the Cinema, Robson Square Media Centre. Discussion to follow with director Haida Paul. Co-sponsored by NFB and Van. Women's Health Collective. Free admission, for info call 666-3838.

EVENTS

NW LESBIAN CONFERENCE

A group of lesbians in Seattle is holding monthly planning meetings for a northwest Lesbian Feminist Conference in fall of '89. Need reps and input from Alberta and BC. For more info, write NWLFC at 120 E. 32nd, Seattle, Wa. 98112, or call (206) 324-1708.

JOINT EFFORT

Benefit for Joint Effort, a group of women in prison and outside working on prison issues, will be held on Fri. **Sept. 30** at Ms. T's Cabaret, 339 W. Pender St. $2-$4. Sponsored by Thivia productions. For info call 251-1764.

ICELAND WOMEN'S STRIKE

Oct. 24 will be an international day of celebration and action on anniversary of the world's first strike to shut down an entire country. A planning meeting will be held in Van. on **Sept. 8**. For info, call Ellen at 253-3345.

MAYWORKS BENEFIT

Will take place **Sept. 3**, 8 pm, at the Van. East Cultural Centre. With the Humdrums, Kokoro Dance, Judy Radul, Nora D. Randall and more. Tix $10/$8 at Van. Folk Music Festival, Octopus Books. For res. call VECC 254-9578.

VLC FUNDRAISER

The VLC is launching a Pledge Campaign to raise money to maintain the centre—Canada's only lesbian centre—and provide services for women. Pledges of $2, $5, $10 or more a month are urgently needed. Send to: VLC, 876 Commercial Dr., Vancouver, V5C 3W6. For info or pledge sheets call 254-8458.

GROUPS

RACISM/ANTI-SEMITISM GROUP

We are five white lesbians, two Jewish and three non-Jewish, who have been meeting for a year. We are looking for new members—women of colour and white women—Jewish and non- Jewish, lesbian and straight. We meet every two weeks to discuss readings and individual concerns about racism and anti-semitism. For more info call 253-6792.

FAMILY SERVICES FOR WOMEN

The New Westminister office of Family Services has expanded to include several new groups for women. They offer subsidies and free child care for support groups. Course topics include: Women Who Love Too Much, Dealing With Anger and Confidence Building. Courses start **Sept. 19**. Pre-registration is required, call 525-9144.

FEMINIST COUNSELLING ASSOC.

The Western Canadian Feminist Counselling Assoc. is holding their AGM and elections on **Sept. 15** at 1254 W.7th Ave., at 6:45 pm. Guest speaker will be Helen Rayne. For info call 732-8013.

SINGLE MOTHER'S SERVICES

Weekly support groups in 14 locations, childcare available. Bi-annual newsletter written by and for single mothers (contributions welcome), annual conference—organized by single mothers, seasonal events throughout the year. For more information call Single Mother's Services 683-2531 ext. 316.

RESOURCES

THREE DEALS, ONE GAME

An 88-page book by Women's Economic Agenda on the implications of free trade, Meech Lake and privatization of government services. Cost is $3 for individuals, $5 for groups (free if you can't afford). To order contact WEA, c/o BC PIRG, TC 304, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, V5A 1S6, or call (604) 253-3395.

SUBMISSIONS

LESBIANS OF COLOUR

Are looking for articles, poetry, photos, graphics for Nov. *Angles* issue on "Racism and the Lives of Lesbians and Gays of Colour." Deadline **Oct 1**. (Sorry, submissions cannot be returned.) Send to VLC, c/o Lesbians of Colour, PO Box 65951, Stn. F, Van., V5W 5L4. For info call Margaret at 876-7152.

EDMONTON FILM/VIDEO FEST

The In-Sight Collective is asking for film or video submissions from women for the Festival of Women's Film and Video in Edmonton on **Oct. 28-30**. For info call NFB at (403) 495-3013 or write c/o Women's Program, 11019-90 Ave, Edmonton, AB,T6G 2E1.

WESTCOAST ARTISTS

A multicultural women artists society is forming in New Westminster. Some services they want to offer are: studio and gallery space, shows and workshops and a resource library. Women artists throughout BC are invited to send slides for their registry. Call 520-3078 for info.

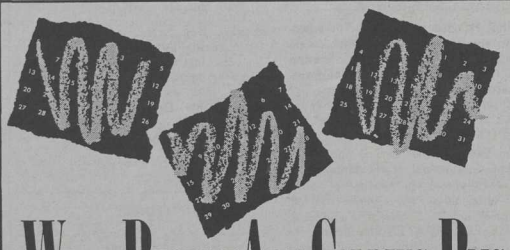
HEY CARTOONISTS

Kinesis wants to hear from/see you. If you're female, feminist and funny (serious or whimsical would also do) show us your wares. Drop by the office, write (send a SASE) or call for further info: 255-5499.

MISC.

WANT REVENGE?

On a sexist bully family court counsellor in the Vancouver area? It's probably too late for me—the incident took place over 5 years ago and, at the time, it was his word against mine. If you have been harassed and it turns out to be the same guy, I will gladly be a witness to your complaint. (A tape recorder in your purse is recommended.) Call Anne, 886-7988 (Gibsons).



WHAT PEOPLE ARE CALLING PMS

A FILM ABOUT PREMENSTRUAL CHANGES

VANCOUVER PREMIER

Co-sponsored by the Vancouver Women's Health Collective

7:30 pm, Thursday, September 8, 1988

Cinema, Robson Square Media Centre

800 Robson Street

Discussion and reception to follow with director Haida Paul

Free admission

Info: 666-3838

National Film Board of Canada / Office national du film du Canada

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NEW TITLES

Maru - Bessie Head
Before Stonewall: The Making of a Gay & Lesbian Community -Andrea Weiss & Greta Schiller
Reading Romance - Janice A. Radway

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EMPLOYMENT NEEDED

Progressive, feminist nanny from New Zealand urgently requires live-in nanny position in Vancouver. One year sponsorship is required. Terms of work and wages can be negotiated. Maybe interested? Please call Sue Harris 255-6644.

SHIATSU MASSAGE

So I said to myself, I said, "the only thing this here womin's paper doesn't got is a recipe or two." So here's a recipe for FEELIN GOOD: In a large, comfortable space mix a willing body and a receptive mind with a large dose of shiatsu. Sprinkle generously with Reiki and Jinshin. Mix well with sensitivity and a dash of intuition until the body is a soft and mushy consistency (at least one hour—maybe an hour and a half). Serve warm. Astarte 251-5409.

INDEPENDENT WOMYN'S COMMUNITY

Is looking for lesbians interested in founding the 1st Canadian Homeland. We are a group of 4 lesbians who are interested in starting a corporation directed towards buying land for an all lesbian community. Anyone interested in becoming a founding member/shareholder, please contact Linda (403) 235-5169 or Marlis (403) 678-5947 or write to Independent Womyn's Community, P.O. Box 237, Canmore, Alberta, T0L 0M0. First meeting planned in Calgary **July 2nd** or **Sept 4th**. Please state your preference and reply or call as soon as possible. Billets will be provided.

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.

FINISHED MANUSCRIPT?

Not sure if it's publishable? Professional reading and assessment of long or short manuscripts. Fiction, non-fiction. Ten years experience teaching creative writing at U.B.C., author of two published books, numerous articles and stories. Call Joan Haggerty at 255-2895.

photo by Raul Nuora

I Wasn't Born Here (Historias de viajes inesperados) is an original production of the Belfry-Puente, six Latin American immigrant women who presently live in Victoria. Performed in English and Spanish, the play is touring the lower mainland: Sept. 9 at Kitsilano Neighbourhood House (8 pm), Sept. 10 at the James Cowan Theatre in Burnaby (8 pm), and Sept. 11 at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre (7 pm). The Sept. 11 performance will commemorate the murder of thousands of Chileans on that day in 1973. Suggested donation $5. For information call 525-0089.

CLASSIFIED

GOLDEN THREADS

A contact publication for lesbians over 50 and women who love older women. Canada and U.S. Confidential, warm, reliable. For free info send self-addressed envelope (U.S. residents please stamp it). Sample copy mailed discreetly. $5 (U.S.) *Golden Threads*, PO Box 3177, Burlington VT, 05401.

ALCHERINGA

Come to Salt Spring Island and stay in a very special guest cabin for women where privacy and accessibility blend with rustic charm and convenience to create an atmosphere of Old Mexico. Walk to the beach and popular Vesuvius pub, sunbathe nude in the private patio, and take a sauna and shower under the stars. There is electric heat, TV and tapedeck, double bed and single futon, the neatest outhouse on the island, and funk. Treat yourself! Summer rates (til November 1) are $50 double, $40 single, with the seventh night free. Phyllis Tatum, PO 1332, Ganges, BC, V0S 1E0, 537-4315.

CLASSIFIED

LESBIAN HOUSEMATES WANTED

To complete a 5 bedroom co-op house near Jericho Beach. The house has a fireplace, washer/dryer, 2 bathrooms, yard and garden and is a smoke and pet-free space. Rent is $260/month plus utilities. Rooms available **Sept. 1st & Oct. 1st**. Call 737-0910.

SITKA HOUSING CO-OP Three bedroom, three level townhouse in women-only housing co-operative available **Sept. 1st**. Roofdeck and enclosed patio facing attractive courtyard. Housing charge $652 per month. For more info please call Jackie at 255-7363 or Tova at 255-0046.

SITKA HOUSING CO-OP

Two bedroom, two level townhouse in women-only co-operative available **Oct. 1st**. Suite has private entrance and two balconies, one facing attractive courtyard. Housing charge $544 per month, includes heat and hot water. For more info please call Jackie at 255-7363 or Tova at 255-0046.

CLASSIFIED

IN THE SWIM

For lesbians and gay men interested in organized swimming with a social flavour, there is a group for you. English Bay Swim Club offers stroke improvement and swim workouts on four levels of intensity. The team coach will also make up individualized programs for swimmers interested in competition training.

English Bay Swim Club celebrates its sixth season this fall and will be hosting the International Gay and Lesbian Aquatics meet in March 1989 as well as planning for the 1990 Gay Games swim events. Despite these competitive involvements, the focus of the Club is firmly on swimming as a social recreation.

English Bay Swim Club invites more lesbians to join and would especially like to find a woman coach to share training responsibilities. EBSC meets Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:30-8 pm at the Van. Aquatic Centre, starting **Sept. 20th**. For more info call Dirk at 669-2382.

FINDING SELF RAISING SPIRIT

How many times have you wished you could change your life? How often have you thought—I wish I knew what this feeling is about?—or—Why am I doing this again and again? You want to know but the circumstances seem too overwhelming. Fear, anger and depression keep you distant from your understanding. There are simple, direct and grounded ways to help yourself. You can develop new skills. Using a few new tools, your ability to take charge will be in your own hands. There is no miracle. It is a step by step process that starts now. I am offering a 10 week workshop in Finding Self-Raising Spirit. Designed for the participants, we will focus on goal-setting, body-mind integration, creative visualization and much more. I am a feminist working for social change by supporting the individual woman to find her inner light. I also work on a wide range of political issues as a cultural/community worker, and I am a certified Hypnotist and Polarity Therapist. Deadline: end of Sept. For more info call Brenda R.Bryan 732-8927.

JOB OPENING AT VSW

Part-time Fundraiser/Administrative Assistant

Start Date: October 3, 1988

Primary Responsibilities:

organizing and implementing fundraising activities and systems; co-ordinating fundraising committee; recruiting, training and supervising volunteers for fundraising; processing Kinesis subscriptions; designing efficient subscription systems; assisting in general administrative tasks; sharing in internal organizational tasks.

Qualifications:

experience and interest in fundraising; ability to work independently and provide initiative to organization re: fundraising; basic understanding of computer systems (familiarity with DOS, PCFILE and PCLABEL an asset); ability to follow through on detailed work; ability to work collectively in feminist organization.

Closing Date: September 16, 1988

Send resumés to: Vancouver Status of Women
301 - 1720 Grant Street
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For more information call 255-5511

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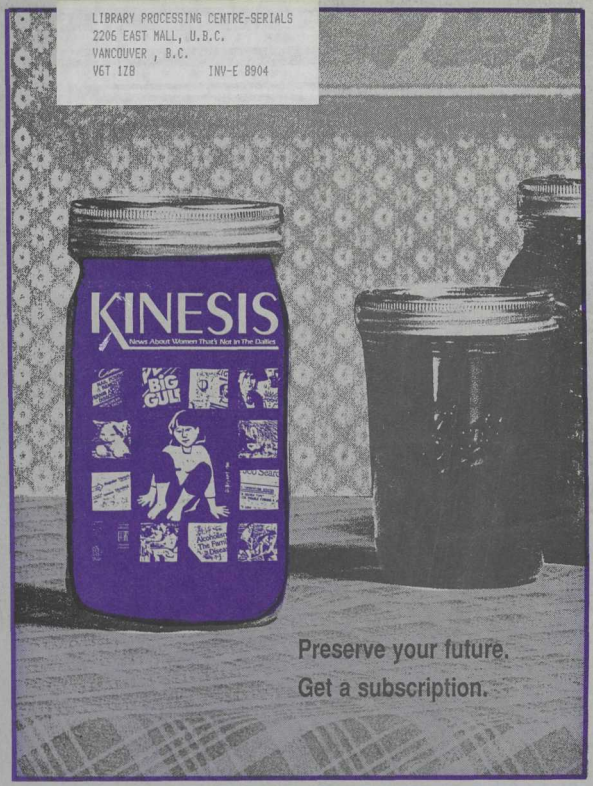

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