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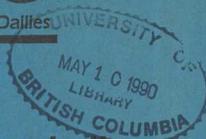
Squatting hits Vancouver - Pg. 4

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Special Collections Serial

KINESIS

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies



Feelin' mad all over:
the fight to save
the Women's Program



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KINESIS

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies

MEANS MOVEMENT

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

PRODUCTION THIS ISSUE: Joni Miller, Christine Cosby, Nancy Pollak, Claire Fowler, Frances Wasserlein, Nora D. Randall, Lisa Schmidt, Bonnie Waterstone, Faith Jones, Sandy James, Winnifred Tovey, Janet Cleary, Susan O'Donnell, Tarel Quandt, Susan Prosser, Sonia Marino, Linda Choquette, Jackie Brown, Trisha Joel.

FRONT COVER: Photo by Colleen Penrowley—a protest of the Women's Program funding cut in Vancouver, April 17, 1990.

EDITORIAL BOARD: Marsha Arbour, Gwen Bird, Christine Cosby, Nancy Pollak, Michele Valiquette, Terrie Hamazaki

CIRCULATION AND DISTRIBUTION: Rachel Fox, Jennifer Johnstone, Cat L'Hirondelle

ADVERTISING: Birgit Schinke

OFFICE: Jennifer Johnstone, Cat L'Hirondelle

Kinesis is published 10 times a year by the Vancouver Status of Women. Its objectives are to be a non-sectarian feminist voice for women and to work actively for social change, specifically combating sexism, racism, homophobia and imperialism.

Views expressed in *Kinesis* are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect VSW policy. All unsigned material is the responsibility of the *Kinesis* Editorial Board.

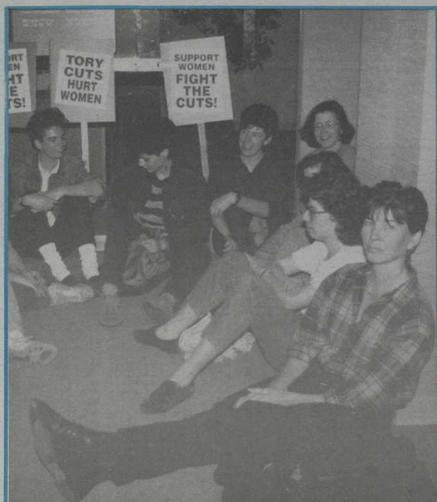
SUBSCRIPTIONS: Individual subscriptions to *Kinesis* are \$20 per year or what you can afford. Membership in the Vancouver Status of Women is \$30 or what you can afford, includes subscription to *Kinesis*.

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

ADVERTISING: For information about display advertising rates, please contact *Kinesis*. For information about classifieds, please see the classified page in this issue.

DEADLINE: For features and reviews, the 10th of the month preceding publication; news copy; 15th; letters and Bulletin Board listings: 18th. Display advertising, camera ready; 18th; design required: 12th.

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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.

Single Mother's Resource Guide

The Vancouver Status of Women has responded to the needs of families headed by single women by publishing the *Vancouver and Lower Mainland Single Mother's Resource Guide*. The guide contains 40 pages of easy-to-read information on housing, child care, social assistance as well as free and low-cost support services. These include: family places, women's centres, education and employment training, crisis intervention and child abuse prevention, counselling, advocacy and self-help groups.

The guide will be available through community organizations and free to single mothers. (A donation of \$1.00 per copy is encouraged from organizations who can distribute the guide to help offset printing costs. Tax receipts can be issued for orders over \$25)

For further information about the guide, call the Vancouver Status of Women at 255-5511.

Women and violence around the world

Match International, a Canadian-based group that provides women in Third World countries with solidarity and financial support, has created a resource kit on women's global struggles to end violence. Called



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

Louise Allen • Janet Berry • Roxanne Cave • Viviana Comensoli • Anne Dagg • Sydney Faran • Judy Forester • Teresa Gibson • Ellen Hamer • Suzanne James • Olive Johnson • B. Karmazyn • Dorothy Kidd • Ursula Litzcke • Myrtle Mowatt • Angela Page • Brenda Pengelly • Tracy Potter • Ranni Richards • Janet Routledge • Carolyn Schettler • Gulistan Shariff • Denise Taylor • Joanne Taylor • Maureen Trotter • Michele Valiquette • Betsy Warland • Diana R. Wolfe • Jane Wolverson

Women Organizing Against Violence, the kit includes international statistics on violence, women's personal accounts, poetry and art, profiles of groups around the world which deal with violence against women, a short list of recent readings and audio-visual materials, and a bumper sticker: "Real Men Don't Abuse Women."

To order copies of the kit, send \$15 per copy to Match International Centre, #1102 - 200 Elgin St., Ottawa, Ont. K2P 1L5. Discount available for orders over 10; Third World Women's groups - free of charge.

Tenant Survival Guide for rental relief

Hot off the press: Some relief for British Columbia renters in the form of the *Tenant Survival Guide*.

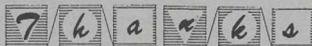
This 50 page booklet is available free from the Tenants Rights Coalition and covers general information about BC law for tenants such as the Residential Tenancy Branch, what to do when you move in, problems while living in a rented space, eviction, moving out, how to do an arbitration and other kinds of housing that are available.

The booklet may be picked up at community centres and libraries in the Lower Mainland.

Stories about work and pay

Jobstories: I Like The Work, I Like The Money is a new book of interviews of women in well-paying, growth occupations. Arranged alphabetically by occupation, this book profiles 57 women in British Columbia who work in trades and professions where women earn the "average" BC wage. *Jobstories* relates how the women got their training and skills, obstacles they encountered and career planning information.

Specifically directed at high school students, *Jobstories* can be ordered for \$19.95 per copy (plus \$2 postage and handling for each copy) from the Learning Resources Society, #102 - 2511 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V5K 1Z2



A call for writings on abuse

Women, Children and Abuse: The Role of the Law is a project of the Faculty of Law at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. The purpose of this project is to collect first-person accounts of women and children who are survivors of personal and social systems abuse, including abuse rooted in sexual, racial and economic discrimination. Survivors of child custody disputes and of access arrangements are also encouraged to contact the researchers.

The research will focus on three general themes: How the specific situation of each woman affects the way that she and/or her children have been abused; how the law and/or other agencies have intensified or contributed to the construction of that abuse; how women and children have empowered themselves in relation to abuse and dispute resolution.

Especially of interest are unpublished accounts and documentation of relevant mediations, trials and administrative proceedings. Academic work that relates to this theme will also be considered. Submission length should be no more than 50 pages double spaced and typed, although longer and shorter material will be considered. Contributions, drafts, ideas and enquiries can be sent to: Kathleen A. Lahey, Faculty of Law, Queen's University, Kingston, Ont. K7L 3N6



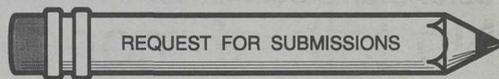
Many women connected to *Kinesis*, have been intensely involved with the fight to restore funding to the Women's Program. The experience has been both tiresome (you know, more unpaid work) and thrilling: women are making important new political and personal connections, something no government can ever cut.

In April, a number of women contributed to the paper for the first time and we welcome them to come back again: Claire Fowler, Janet Cleary, Rachel Goddu, Millie Strom, Kelly Maier and Susan O'Donnell.

We also welcome the new administrator to the Vancouver Status of Women, Jennifer Johnstone. Jennifer is new to Vancouver and VSW and *Kinesis*, and she is destined to become an important part of the paper's life. Welcome aboard.

Corrections

In last month's *Kinesis* we missed a few people. In the article "Listen to what we have to say," Margaret Matsuyama should have been listed as a member of Colours. And we forgot to include Joni Miller (*Kinesis's* typesetter) and Charlene Linell as members of the "Production this issue" gang.



SHARING OUR EXPERIENCE

A BOOK OF LETTERS BY WOMEN OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITIES

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women will be putting together a book in which the voices of under-represented groups of women will be heard. It will be a collection of letters written specifically for this publication. We are looking for the living, personal accounts of women who, because of their ethnicity or racial origin, believe it important to share their thoughts and feelings.

We want to hear your description of the difficulties and pleasures of living and working in Canada. Whether you were born inside or outside Canada, we ask you to share your ideas and experiences with regard to racism, sexism, and discrimination in the paid labour force and in home life.

The deadline for letters will be October 30, 1990. If you are interested, let us know and we will send you more details. Contact:

Yuen-Ting Lai
Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Box 1541, Station B
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5R5
Telephone: (613) 995-2492
Fax: (613) 992-1715

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Budget cuts:

Native groups charge "spiritual genocide"

by Kinesis Writer

Budget cuts to Native groups and services are a political attempt to silence Native peoples, say Aboriginal representatives.

A producer with the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation calls the cuts "spiritual genocide." Blandina Makik says many Inuit are angry at being reminded that they live in "a colony of sorts where all the decisions affecting our future are not made by people up here."

Spokespeople for other groups express similar feelings of anger and outrage at the cuts, which will affect all aspects of Native culture and politics—including Aboriginal people's land claim and self-government struggles. Indian Affairs cut \$50 million from four programs affecting social and economic development and the Secretary of State axed almost \$10 million from Native communications and other programs.

Although the Indian Affairs budget was increased by 8.1 percent, it was \$50 million less than originally expected.

Native spokespeople criticize the cuts and point out that up to 50 percent of all on-reserve housing needs major repairs; that 40 percent of Aboriginal peoples are illiterate, and that unemployment in Native communities ranges from 30 to 90 percent.

The Secretary of State completely gutted the Native Communications Program by removing core funding from all 12 First Nations newspapers and severely reducing the budgets of Native radio and television outlets. It cut Aboriginal languages funding in the northern territories by \$800,000.

...mainstream media marginalize Native issues...

Besides slashing communications funding, the department chopped the funds to Native organizations; including the core funds to 28 First Nations representative organizations.

Funding to Native women's groups was not cut. Gloria Nicholson of the Professional Native Women's Association believes the women's groups escaped the axe simply because the amount allocated to them was "so small it was hardly worth it."

Nicholson says the main concern for Native women's groups is how they will continue to promote their programs if the Native media outlets are eliminated or reduced. Mainstream media marginalize Native issues, she says, and although Native media tends to marginalize women's issues, it is often the only communication channel available to Native women's groups.

Her concern about reduced access to information are echoed by Nadine Caplette of the Hey-way-noqu Healing Circle, which offers alcohol and drug treatment programs. Although most of the group's promotion is done by word-of-mouth, Caplette says the reduction of Native media outlets will restrict her group's ability to recruit Native staff members.

The cuts to language programs could be particularly hard on northern Native women, many of whom, especially the older women, do not speak English. Forcing radio and television stations to broadcast in English means that information will not reach these women. The move away from Indian and Inuit language programming could lead to a further breakdown of communication between older women and their families.

Another concern for women could be the increasing commercialization of Native media outlets. "Becoming more commercial" is sometimes the only viable op-

tion available to Native newspapers who will lose all their federal funding on September 30, says Keith Mathew, editor of B.C.'s *Kahlo*.

Besides trying to increase its number of subscribers, the paper will be canvassing local businesses in an attempt to raise advertising revenues. This process will necessitate "streamlining the organization," which Matthews says will force *Kahlo* and other newspapers to "leave some issues behind."

A publication dependent on the local business economy is often under financial pressure to publish fewer articles on social issues, says the editor, who claims that *Kahlo* will try to continue its coverage of social issues but admits that some of the issues that might be left behind are the ones affecting Native women.

Privatization of Native media means making deals with local businesses which may or may not benefit the Native communities. Media outlets will be forced to charge more for their services, possibly reducing access to low-budget Native groups, including women's groups. In addition, the privatization process will mean that media staff members will be spending more time courting businesses and less time investigating relevant social issues.

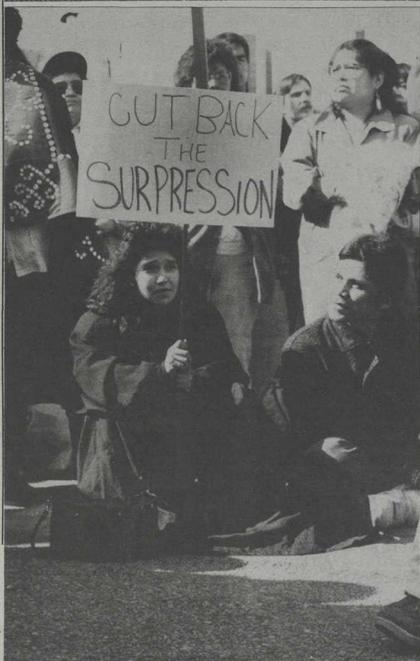
Dorothy Kidd, a non-Native woman who has been working in the Native broadcast communication field since 1984, charges that the government has never been interested in promoting Native autonomy and that in fact the whole Native broadcast network was initiated by the federal government for other reasons.

At the top of the list, says Kidd, was the importance of a satellite communications network for military and industrial interests, especially the industries in the resource-rich northern areas. Other reasons included wanting to provide television programs to non-Native workers in the north and wanting to assimilate Native peoples into the dominant culture.

The government can now cut funding to Native broadcast outlets because "the hardware is already established," says Kidd.

Spokespeople for Native organizations promise their groups will continue to lobby for reinstatement of the funds. Plans are underway for a coordinated nationwide protest.

Recent federal government attempts to diffuse criticism of its cuts has met with derision by Native groups. For example, the National Aboriginal Communication Society has refused to participate on a federal government inter-departmental task force to study the impact of the cuts on Native communications. A spokesperson claims that the task force should clearly have been put in place before, not after, the decision to cut funds.



Protesting the cuts during Finance Minister Wilson's visit to Vancouver in late March.

Carol Gran's Committee:

No talk of money

by Nancy Pollak

When BC's Minister Responsible for Women's Programs announced the formation of a short-term Advisory Council on Community-Based Programs for Women in late March, many feminists groaned.

All that month, women's groups had forcefully urged Carol Gran to deliver funding for women's centres hit by federal budget cuts (see page 10). The minister had completed a three-month tour of the province's women's groups. She was informed, perhaps saturated with information about the needs of women's groups and had heard one message repeatedly: give us some money.

Instead, Gran opted for another consultation with an appointed group of women.

The advisory council will meet six times until May 22, and then make recommendations to the minister under the terms of their mandate.

The official objectives of the committee are to "work with BC ministries, the federal government and communities to examine the delivery of women's programs at all levels to identify gaps and possible duplications in services to women" and to "recommend a long-term strategy for community-based program delivery involving coordination of existing community and government services" [emphasis added].

The appointed council members are: Susan Brice (Mayor of Saanich); Enola Finlay (Northern Lights College); Lois Hollist-ed (Vancouver YWCA); Mobina Jaffer (Immigrant & Visible Minority Women of BC); Dr. Rozman Kanaani (BC Chapter, Medical Women of Canada); Robin LeDrew (BC & Yukon Assoc. of Women's Centres); Betty McClurg (Langley Family Services); Irene McRae (Deltassiat Community Services); Bette Pepper (Prov. Council of Women of BC); Patreece Sinclair (New Door Second Stage Transition Housing); Kathy Taylor (Western Businesswomen's Assoc.) and Ruth Williams (Interior Indian Friendship Centre).

LeDrew's presence on the committee as a BCYAWC representative is controversial. While the steering committee and some regional reps consented to her appointment (without consulting the membership as a whole), it was on the condition that her attendance be interim. Member centres will have a chance to approve or reject her participation at the BCYAWC conference in late April.

Before the council held its second meeting, the provincial budget came down—with no mention of new funds for women's centres. In an interview with *Kinesis* on April 24, Carol Gran said, "I hope that the women of BC will keep up the pressure on the federal government. I believe it is their responsibility to continue the core funding to women's centres."

LeDrew believes the committee will have the power to influence government spending and to help women's centres access funds from various ministries. Others agree that the BCYAWC should have a voice on the committee, including Sally Mackenzie of the Nelson Women's Centre and Carol Sabo of the Terrace Women's Resource Centre. But Sabo cautions, "We don't really need a committee: we know what we need."

Other women see the committee as a sham and believe the BCYAWC is being co-opted by its participation. "It would seem very honourable for the BCYAWC rep to leave the committee now that the budget has come down with no mention of core funding for women's centres," said Bonnie Waterstone of the Vancouver Status of Women.

According to Heather Nelson of the Port Alberni Women's Centre, "In view of the fact that her committee is still meeting, it is unbelievable that Carol Gran has stated there is no funding."

She also said that if the committee advises the province to fund women's centres, she will stand by their recommendations. (She added that requests for funding must be approved by cabinet and treasury.)

Despite the budget's lack of money for women's centres, Gran said the committee was credible "because the president of the women's centres [LeDrew] is a member."

Women active in new Squatters Alliance

by Sonia Marino

"Squatting is the only viable alternative for a lot of homeless people. It's also one way to stand outside a system which views housing as a profit-oriented consumer market rather than a basic human right."

So says Rolyn, a member of the newly-formed Squatters Alliance of Vancouver East (SAVE). She is one of nearly 20 squatters who have been occupying, for the last two months, four of the six houses awaiting demolition in the 1600-block Frances Street in Vancouver's east side.

"At least one of these houses has been empty since last October," says Rolyn. "It's common practice for developers to buy up a row of houses and then evict the tenants months before the demolition begins. SAVE is lobbying for an end to this practice because that housing should be made available to the homeless. We also hope to set up a squatting registry."

On April 17th, in an effort to fight imminent eviction, SAVE held a Squatters Jamboree, complete with a live band and outdoor barbecue. About 200 supporters attended the jamboree, which was held to gain community support.

One squatter, Sue, has been living in an all-women house on Frances St., dubbed the Bushwimmings Squat.

"There's not much affordable housing out there for women, especially for single mothers," says Sue. "If my only choice is to sell my body to get a roof over my head, then I'd rather be squatting. It's a positive choice for me, as well as a political decision. I chose to join an all-women squat to avoid having to deal with men and because we gain a certain amount of empowerment from each other."

"We [the Bushwimmings Squat] realize that we represent a strong sentiment among homeless women, and we want to use the community support we've received to

push for legislative changes... things like an end to unregulated rent increases and a stop to the demolition-frenzy in Vancouver."

Sheila Baxter, a local poverty-rights activist researching a book on the homeless, feels that the situation is particularly urgent for women in the downtown eastside.

"I've heard numerous reports of mentally-challenged women being put up in hotel rooms," says Baxter, "but they find themselves isolated there, and are often found beaten or raped. These women end up on the street because local shelters are full and turning women away, even in the middle of January."

"I've also talked to several women who were forced to return to abusive situations because they couldn't find an affordable place to live."

According to a city-commissioned study, 1,009 affordable rental units were demolished for 816 lux-



Photo by Dawn of Liberty

ury suites in the first seven months of last year. Noreen Shanahan, of the Tenant's Rights Coalition, said that squatting is bound to increase

as the shortage of rental accommodation continues and as decent housing is emptied and demolished to make way for condominiums.

REAL Women host right-wing do

by Rachel Goddu

Who speaks for REAL Women?

The speakers invited to address REAL Women's April 28-29 Annual General Meeting and conference in Richmond include a woman from Abortion Recovery Canada, a man from the conservative think-tank the Fraser Institute, and British Columbia's Minister responsible for Women's Programs.

REALW opposes universal daycare, the sex equality provision

in the Charter, choice of abortion, no-fault divorce, sex education, human rights protection for lesbians and gay men, and equal pay for work of equal value.

BC minister Carol Gran, the conference's keynote speaker, told *Kinesis*, "I know a little about them. I do not want to discriminate against them. I intend to go to their meeting and take the same message I have to other groups."

Gran said that by listening to a broad spectrum of women and "being non-political and non-

confrontational," she hoped to draw women together. The last in a long series of confrontations between feminist groups and REALW occurred when the Secretary of State funded the organization's 1989 conference which featured speakers making anti-feminist, anti-choice, and homophobic statements.

When REALW received its \$21,212 grant for its 1989 conference in Ottawa, representatives of feminist groups noted its mandate contravened Secre-

tary of State's criteria for women's groups. Groups addressing abortion and sexual orientation issues are not eligible for grants.

REALW asked Secretary of State for the \$130,500 costs of this year's conference, entitled: "Towards 2000 - Equality in the Information Age." The group also requested \$260,070 in core funding to set up a national office in Ottawa. Their application is still awaiting a decision by government officials.

Peggy Steacy, BC president of REALW, said that the government

did not confirm the grant for their 1989 conference until the last moment, and if the \$130,500 was not forthcoming for the 1990 conference, the group will "work it out somehow."

Besides the Gran speech and those by representatives of the Fraser Institute and Abortion Recovery Canada, the conference agenda included workshops on education, day care, the media and the environment. The conference concluded with "Tea at BC's famous Fantasy Gardens," famous for its owner, Lily Vander Zalm.



Photo by Dawn of Liberty

Over 20 prostitutes have been murdered in the last three years in the Lower Mainland and no one seems to give a damn, says POWER (Prostitutes and Other Women for Equal Rights). On April 21, POWER organized a march through the downtown eastside to show support to the working women there—and to grieve the recent deaths of four women.

IWD Thanks

by Noel Currie

It's time to thank the women who contributed their time, energy, resources and expertise to the march and rally celebrating International Women's Day 1990 in Vancouver.

The rally was a great occasion for "Raging, Resisting, Rejoicing" thanks to speakers Denise Beck (White Rock Women's Centre), Terry Hamazaki (WAWA-RCC), Dawn Black (NDP MP, New Westminster), Carol Neilsen (VLC), Celeste George (AWARE), Adela Mukaka (ANC), and MC Frances Wasserlein. The talents of sound technician Jean Saha, interpreters Jami Nystrom and Corrina Salvail, performers Sue McGowan and Andrea Kohl, Aya, and the women of Katari Taiko were also responsible for the success of the march and rally.

For donations of time, money, space and resources, thanks are due to the following organizations and individuals: WAWA-RCC, Women in Focus, India

Mahila Association, BCTF Status of Women, the YWCA, *Kinesis*, Vancouver Lesbian Connection, Vancouver Status of Women, Women and Work Research and Education Society, the Communist Party of Canada, the BC Council of the CCU, BC Public Interest Research Group, Gloria Geller, Esther Shannon, Dorothy Seaton, Leona Burrell, Leslie Jamboree, Melva Forsberg, and Jackie Brown and Wendy Frost who shared their knowledge about security and marshalling.

Thanks are also due to the International Women's Day Committee members: Zubda Ahmed, Donna Chan, Noel Currie, Carol Delany, Gloria Geller, Caz George, Margaret McConnell, Erin Moore, Johanna Pilot, Ann Thomson and Colleen Smith, for their efforts, as well as to the women who marshalled the march, and to everyone who volunteered, marched and rallied.

An analysis of the day by the IWD Committee will appear in an upcoming issue of *Kinesis*.

Referendums

No money for anti-sexist programs

by Susan Prosser

In January, 1989, the BC Ministry of Education introduced a law which makes individual school districts responsible for their own funding over and above a block amount budgeted by the ministry. Each school district must now hold a yearly referendum to ask its taxpayers for money if the district's requirements exceeds the block funding.

The BC Teacher's Federation (BCTF), BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA), and the BC Confederation of Parents Advisory Council (BCCPAC) all strongly oppose the referendum law. They see it as regressive—a decision that will counter-

...girls...will still be learning from the same sexist...materials and sexist educators

act the largely positive agenda of Education 2000, the province's new education blueprint, and further move the BC school system towards a two-tiered rich/poor system of schooling.

Feminists within the system predict that referendum will gravely harm efforts to introduce non-sexist programs and textbooks.

Education 2000 grew out of the 1987-88 Sullivan Commission. The document has

its critics, but for groups with a feminist agenda, like the Status of Women Committee of the BCTF, Education 2000 is seen as a relatively progressive step in that "gender equity" is one of its fundamental stated principles and the School Act is now written in gender neutral or inclusionary terms.

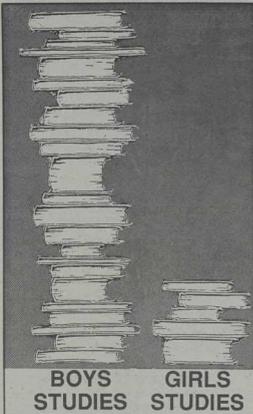
But as Phyllis Westhara, chair of the committee said, it "didn't go far enough for girls to escape the Cinderella syndrome."

Although the ministry has committed 1.5 billion dollars over the next ten years to the implementation of Education 2000, Westhara says, they "didn't offer enough funding to do what we want [Ed 2000] to do." She pointed out that gender equity will mainly focus on the graduate years (where formerly there were 13 grades, the new curriculum will have three levels: ungraded 1-4 (already in place), intermediate 5-10 and graduate 11-12.)

Westhara's concern is that girls in lower grades will still be learning from the same sexist education materials and from the same sexist educators, without the counselling and role model support they need to break out of traditional patterns. The referendum system almost guarantees that girls will not have access to services they need. These services are still seen as frills and they will be the first to be axed if the public refuses by referendum to support "extra" spending of its school district. Special needs and anti-racism programs are also likely to be viewed as frills.

For the last two years the government held dialogue with all education partners about funding. A mutual decision was reached to institute block funding for school districts as a means of allowing for better long term planning. In all the talks that led up to the block funding decision, the ministry never so much as whispered the word referendum.

The referendum system is being billed by the Secords as "direct democracy" but in reality it is a democracy that only some school districts in BC can afford. One of the



major problems is that only about 30 percent of the people in the province have children in school. The other 70 percent, with the GST looming, may view this so-called direct democracy as welcome news because they will have the option not to pay, with little understanding of how it will erode the school system.

In many states in the US, referendum systems are used and experiences there are typical of the less desirable consequences of so-called direct democracy. Chris Dudley of the Oregon School Boards Association said four

years ago the opinions and passions of Oregon citizens were such that a tax increase was defeated. As a result, a number of districts ran out of funds before the end of the year and were forced to close schools while additional funding was arranged.

Barbara Roby of the Arizona School Boards Association, said two Arizona communities went so far as to vote to withdraw entirely from the surrounding school districts. "They don't realize that these school kids will be paying their pensions and feeding the economy." The Illinois Association of School Boards' Wayne Sampson said, "The wealthier districts simply vote to spend more money on their schools. We have as wide a discrepancy as \$2,000 per pupil in some districts and \$11,000 in others."

Maxine Wilson, president of BCCPAC, says introduction of the referendum system shows that "partisan politics take preference over children." She says districts like New Westminster are already discussing raising class sizes in anticipation of having to cut their budgets. Educators now face the possibility of severe cutbacks at a time when they are expected to make major changes in the curriculum to meet the demands of Education 2000.

Kathleen MacKinnon of the Status of Women committee of the BCTF says the ministry has recently created a position for someone to oversee the implementation of gender equity, but admits that they are dragging their heels about making this position appealing to a good candidate.

She notes, with irony and some humour, that gender equity is overseen by the Special Education department of the ministry. Girls, children with special educational or physical needs, and students for whom English is their second language may find that the referendum system ends their chances for a fair, let alone progressive, education.

Pensions:

Long, lingering discrimination

by Shelly Quirk

Charging discrimination on the basis of marital status, the Women's Legal Education Action Fund is taking the federal government to court over a pension program that punishes hundreds of thousands of women for the crime of being divorced or separated.

The program in question is the Spouse's Allowance, a companion to the Guaranteed Income Supplement. The allowance is available to people aged 60-64 (usually women) who have a spouse 65 or older (see box) and who would be eligible for the GIS if they were 65 already. The maximum Spouse's allowance is equal to the maximum GIS for a married person plus the OAP (making the couple's combined income the same as if the younger spouse had already reached age 65). If the older spouse dies, the younger spouse continues to receive the allowance until they turn sixty-five. Divorced or separated spouses do not qualify for the allowance at all, and although the government recognizes common-law marriages for pension purposes, lesbian and homosexual partnerships are not recognized.

It is estimated there are 390,000 people who could benefit from the allowance but who do not qualify because of their marital status. The National Council of Welfare suggests that rather than waiting for a decision on LEAP's charter challenge (which could take years), the federal government

should simply expand the program so that it covers all needy people aged sixty to sixty-four. The council estimates that it would mean \$1.2 billion in additional federal government spending per year.

The Spousal Allowance, however, is not

the only contentious issue where the CPP, OAP and GIS are concerned. Homemakers, non-paid caregivers and people with no post-secondary educations continue to be victims of discrimination under the current system. Mothers who choose to stay home with their children are only minimally pro-

vided for, and those who spend time attending infirm or disabled relatives are given no consideration whatsoever. People who enter the workforce an average of seven years earlier than those who pursue a post-secondary education take a reduction in their CPP if they want to retire early, although the same penalty is not experienced by university and college graduates.

Gus Long of the Federated Anti-Poverty Groups agrees that the current pension system is inadequate. She is quick to point out that taxation changes introduced by the Conservative government have exacerbated these inadequacies and female pensioners have been hit particularly hard. Long notes that within the first four and half years of Mulroney's rule the percentage of poor elderly women increased by 13.6 percent. The Proposed Goods and Services Tax is expected to dramatically increase female poverty.

In the recent BC budget, mention was made of a BC pension plan for homemakers which would presumably supplement the CPP, yet details have not been forthcoming. What women should watch for are: meaningful tax reforms, pay equity, pension benefits for care-givers and support for the idea of a guaranteed income which would eradicate poverty at all levels. If these things are achieved, growing old could become the dignified and rewarding time of life that it should be.

The pension alphabet soup

The state-sponsored benefits for Canadians aged 65 and older can be divided into two specific pensions: the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans (CPP and QPP) and the Old Age Security pension (OAP).

The CPP is linked directly to earnings made while the individual is in the paid workforce. When a person retires, they receive CPP benefits equal to 25 percent of earnings up to the average wage. It is assumed that the average person will do paid work 40-47 years before retiring, and only individuals who work 40 years will receive the fully indexed CPP or QPP.

The OAP is a pension every Canadian who has been a citizen for 10 years or more receives when they turn sixty-five. Linked to the OAP is the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) available to OAP recipients who are in need of additional income.

Although the GIS is intended to function as a financial safety net, it allows many people, especially single women, to fall into poverty. The maximum GIS for a single person living in a city with a population exceeding 500,000 was \$4,694 for 1989. The maximum OAP for that same person was \$3,950. This would give the unmarried, divorced or separated dweller of a large urban centre who lacked a private pension plan a total of \$8,644 per year—or \$3,393 below the poverty line. Most provinces pay very small supplements to single people. British Columbia pays married couples over twice the benefits paid to single people.

WHAT'S NEWS?

by Linda Choquette

"Market workshop," etc. leads to child poverty

The National Anti-Poverty Organization declined an opportunity to appear before parliament's standing committee on health and welfare in April, and instead sent a letter which blasted the federal government and accused them of hypocrisy.

The organization's head, Havi Echenberg, wrote to committee chairperson MP Nicole Roy-Arcelin (PC) that the federal government is making conditions worse for millions of Canadian children living in poverty.

"We believe that recent federal government actions are systematically and persistently undermining the current (adequate) levels of income and social support for poor children and their families," wrote Echenberg.

"Leaving aside the general thrust towards market workshop contained in the free-trade agreement, we bring to your attention government action on the Canada Assistance Plan, the Established Program Financing, unemployment insurance, child care programs, funding to aboriginal and women's groups, income tax reform, the goods and services tax, and Human Rights Act amendments," the letter continued.

"Each of these actions, in our view, demonstrates that far from being interested in the elimination of poverty among children, the federal government is prepared to exacerbate the condition of economically vulnerable Canadians—including a million children—to meet the apparent exigencies of international and domestic economic and fiscal measures."

Echenberg's letter was also critical of limitations on welfare for clients in Ontario, Alberta and BC, reduced services under provincial medical and hospital plans and the government's failure to act on the issue of child care.

This publication is regularly indexed in the Canadian Women's Periodicals Index.

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Child abusers unreported by social agencies

Child welfare workers suspected of sexually abusing children are not necessarily stopped or dealt with in the Canadian child welfare system. Instead, suspected abusers make their way through the system to re-offend, often transferred with recommendations to another part of the country.

Speaking at a national symposium on residential care in the child-welfare system, Lawrence Birdsall, a spokesperson for Nisha Children's Society in Vancouver told of such an incident. Apparently, Nisha received a letter from "a major BC agency" recommending a former employee who was later charged with abusing a disturbed 14-year old girl in a Nisha home. Later, the society learned the employee had faced similar allegations at his former job.

Birdsall commented, "I can't believe our situation was unique."

Other spokespersons supported Birdsall and said the practice of quiet transfers was system wide. "It happens in group homes, foster care, treatment centres and other institutions.

"There's still a denial of that reality" by child-welfare workers, agencies and governments, said a Toronto-based institute director.

Happiness, relief major outcome of abortion

Reporting in the US journal *Science*, a team of researchers found that the vast majority of women having legal abortions suffer no psychological ill effects. In fact, 76 percent of women reported feelings of relief and happiness.

Only 17 percent expressed negative emotions, such as guilt, and these feelings soon diminished. "The evidence suggests, if anything, the women feel better, not worse, as time goes on," said Brenda Major, a psychology professor from New York.

Major and five other researchers from universities and medical institutions across the US reviewed more than 200 studies that purported to document how women felt after abortions. Many of the studies had to be discarded, partly because their conclusions were shaped by "political, value and moral influences," the researchers found. They ended up working with 19 reliable studies.

The studies, some of which were conducted up to two years after the abortion, indicated that the "legal abortion of an unwanted pregnancy in the first trimester does

not pose a psychological hazard for most women."

"This is not really all that surprising given that an abortion is a resolution to the problem of an unwanted pregnancy," said Duke University professor, Susan Roth. "That's not to say an abortion can't be stressful," she said, but the "primary stressor" is the unwanted pregnancy.

Women who did suffer immediate "negative emotions" were generally those who had to make the abortion decision on their own, who experienced opposition from parents, or who had negative feelings towards their partner.

For most women, the "time of greatest distress is likely to be before the abortion," the researchers said in their report.

One study of 360 adolescents suggested that teenagers who had legal abortions were psychologically much better two years later than those who continued unwanted pregnancies. The group who chose abortion had higher self-esteem, a greater sense of internal control and lower anxiety.

Steady, regular work for welfare spies

Québec's Minister of Manpower [sic] and Income Security confirmed in April that he employs a private firm of investigators to keep tabs on welfare recipients suspected of fraud or receiving overpayments. Defending the practice, André Bourbeau said it was best to use specialists for the investigations, but he denied reports that all 323,000 welfare recipients in the province would be subject to scrutiny.

Since September, more than 3,500 files have been turned over to the company for action. Two thirds will be investigated for fraud, and one third for recovery of overpayments. The company gets \$6 a file for compiling credit information from their database.

Justifying the measures, Bourbeau said his ministry has been criticized by the Provincial Auditor for failure to collect over \$30 million in overpayments. He said the investigations in no way violate the right of individuals to privacy as guaranteed by the Québec and Canadian rights charters.

Due to take effect August 1, controversial Québec social assistance reforms are intended to trim welfare rolls by reducing payments to recipients who refuse to participate in job training and education programs.

The ministry has been harshly criticized in the past for its severe methods. The welfare investigators who conduct surprise visits to homes of recipients are called "Boubou Macoutes," a compound of a pet name for Premier Robert Bourassa and the infamous Tonton Macoutes—the Haitian death squads.

Sitting down is now a right for cashiers

Marlene Girard, a Quebec cashier who last month won the right to sit on a stool at her work station, may have set a precedent which could help hundreds of thousands of others who work on their feet. The Québec workers' compensation board, ruling for Girard, stated that the law which ensures workers "the right to working conditions that respect their health, security and physical integrity" had been violated.

Girard asked her employers for a stool a year ago complaining that her 8-to-10 hour shifts standing at a grocery store cash desk caused backaches and leg pains. Her bosses refused. The workspace was too small for a stool and further injuries might result, they said.

The provincial compensation board at first sided with the employer, but Girard's union, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux-commerce, appealed the decision.

The union represents almost 30,000 Québec retail workers. "If cashiers have the right to sit down, why not bank tellers, store clerks and factory workers?" said Lise Poulin, union spokesperson. "All of them suffer from the same health problems."

Nicole Vézina, an ergonomics professor at the Université du Québec a Montréal, said what is really needed is a redesign of the traditional cash register work area. In Europe, said Vézina, virtually all cashiers and factory workers sit down on the job, but their work areas are designed to accommodate seating and prevent back injuries.

The modern art of employment equity

The Ontario College of Art (OCA) had about 50 vacancies in early April, and only women need apply. The college has a new hiring policy that retiring faculty must be replaced by women, a move designed to redress the traditional imbalance in male/female faculty. At present, women make up about 25 percent of teaching staff at the college. (Even this figure disguises the imbalance: women teach only 13 percent of the College's courses.) The college's affirmative action policy has been severely criticized by some male faculty and would-be male applicants as reverse discrimination. Meanwhile, over 1,000 women have swamped the college with applications.

Applications are coming from "very qualified" women in Europe and Canada, said Blaise Enright-Peterson, OCA's employment equity coordinator. "We usually get five applications for each position. Now we're getting complaints from the hiring committees because there are too many good applicants to choose from."

One of three educational facilities in Ontario to use this method to accelerate employment equity, OCA will only hire women to fill vacancies created by retirement. Other vacancies are open to men and women.

Judith Doyle, one of the applicants, called the response "very exciting. The calibre of applicants is extremely high. It's very exciting to have that kind of competition."

Source: *The Globe and Mail*



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Tikkun Olam:

Healing ourselves and the world

as told to Terrie Hamazaki

Tikkun Olam is a group of Jewish women who are organizing a series of weekend workshops for women in the lower mainland to deal with anti-Semitism and alliance building. The workshops are structured within a feminist, lesbian-positive framework.

Terrie Hamazaki recently spoke with Tikkun Olam members, Silva Tenenbein and Devorah Greenberg about the group, the workshops and related issues.

Terrie: Can you describe your group's formation?

Silva: In 1988, Ricky Sherover-Marcuse did an unlearning racism workshop in Vancouver. She looked around the room at one point and said, "You know, at these workshops you can always tell who the Jews are because they're sitting in the corners, acting like they don't have the right to be here." Over the course of that weekend, there formed a group of Jews, and Ricky suggested that we do an unlearning anti-Semitism workshop in the same way that we do unlearning racism workshops.

It was a brand new idea for all of us ... but we wanted to do it and we negotiated with her to meet again ... and three months later she died ... After we recovered we said it's more important than ever, formed a group and decided to carry on this idea which we do consider to be her legacy.

Terrie: Your group identifies as feminist and lesbian-positive.

Are you going to be the only Jew in the group of women of colour ...or the only woman of colour in a group of Jews?

Devorah: We're all feminists, but we're not all lesbians. These workshops are designed to make all peoples comfortable. There will be caucuses at the workshop for Jewish women, non-Jewish women, women of colour, survivors of child sexual abuse ... and for children of survivors of the camps, as well as others.

Terrie: When Ricky commented at the workshop on how one could identify the Jews in the group, did that name something for you?

Devorah: We're an invisible minority. We don't exist in most people's minds. Because we're not clearly "other," it's really tempting for some of us to just fade into the dominant culture and pretend to be ... whatever that is.

Silva: And we're not clearly "other" because we are some of everything. Jews are not a specific racial group but cover all the racial groups. Jews look like everybody

and so we're not distinguishable. Because of that, and because of the anti-Semitism that has stereotyped Jews as middle-class—which is not true—we're told, "What's your problem? What are you complaining about?"

And so the anti-Semitism we face every day is trivialized and we internalize that trivialization.

Devorah: The other problem with anti-Semitism is that it implies the Holocaust and so you say "anti-Semitism" and immediately people think of the Holocaust and say, "Oh that was an awful thing, but it's gone" ... so anti-Semitism is this enormous, monstrous awfulness, the Holocaust, and the subtle, hidden ways it operates in our society now tend to be disregarded or glossed over.

Terrie: The first workshop was for Jewish women only. What did women learn about themselves and what kinds of issues came up?

Devorah: The first workshop was to build safety. For us to be together and to talk about anti-Semitism. And our diversity was recognized ... learning to celebrate all the different ways that we're Jews. It's not only that we cover a variety of racial groups—Falashi, Askenazi, Sephardic—we also cover a variety of religious levels of observation ... it's a religious, cultural, political way of being. There's a lot of facets here and we're all very different from one another. By the end of that weekend, we had really learnt to be able to trust one another as Jews in all of our differentness and it was great!

Silva: We also discussed the crisis in the Middle East. Part of the issue among Jews is calling it the crisis in the Middle East and not "the problem of Israel." People are unable to separate Jews from Israelis. They make assumptions about it ... the crisis in the Middle East is definitely one of the things we'll try to work into the next workshop.

Terrie: What layers need to be uncovered in unlearning anti-Semitism?

Devorah: Fear. I was a member of Temple Shalom which was firebombed five years ago in Vancouver. That was a cumulative act following red paint splattered on the doors, swastikas painted on the front, the rabbi's car was scratched up, hate messages were left on the answering machine.

Recently, someone burned a tree outside Talmud Torah, the Jewish dayschool, during school hours, just to terrify the children. There's a concentrated group of people out there who really do hate us.

Silva: And I'm afraid to ask non-Jewish women of colour to come to our workshops and listen to us talking about our oppression. If we draw the line and say white women and women of colour, it's perfectly obvious who's oppressing whom. But if you draw the line as Jews and non-Jews, then it puts women of colour into the position of being the oppressor. In the general context, when you single us out as Jews, that's what's true. It's one thing to appear as a privileged white person, because certainly all white people are privileged, but to appear as a privileged white person that's complaining, that's a real concern ...

Devorah: It's an amazing *chutzpah* (nerve) on our part to say to women of colour, "we are oppressed, and you are part of that oppression." It feels so wrong, and

yet that very feeling of wrongness is part of our internalized anti-Semitism. I feel totally inappropriate saying to non-Jewish women of colour, "I am oppressed."

And for Jewish women of colour, the issues magnify because among non-Jews, there's an assumption that Jews are white. And when we caucus at the workshop, what will those Jewish women of colour do? Are you going to be the only Jew in the group of women of colour ... or the only woman of colour in a group of Jews?

...expressions of anti-Semitism become the structure of the language, and reinforce... our history of not being welcome and not being safe.

Silva: And as we Jews have generations and generations and generations of experience of being turned away and not welcome. There's a very common English expression, "that's beyond the pale." The Jews weren't allowed to live in Russia, and in the countries all around Russia were col-

onized countries where the Jews were allowed to live, and that ring of countries was called the pale, so being beyond the pale is being outside of even where the Jews live. These expressions of anti-Semitism become the structure of the language, and reinforce anti-Semitism and our history of not being welcome and not being safe.

Terrie: What are your main objectives or hopes from doing these workshops?

Devorah: To make anti-Semitism visible ... and to make it okay for Jews to talk.

Silva: In the same way that racism is devastating in all our lives, so too is anti-Semitism. To realize that we're all in the fight against anti-Semitism too. That we all need, personally, to have that undone.

Terrie: Anything in closing?

Silva: I was telling somebody about the workshop, and she didn't get it at all. She said to me, "Where are you going to find the anti-Semites to come?" In my heart, I just panicked ... but I thought, everywhere I look. I hope lots of women come and that by Sunday, we all feel safe.

Devorah: We are opening the workshop Friday evening with a Shabbat service, which is to mark time without time; Shabbat is a forest of how life might be lived without oppression ... and there's another service planned for the closing, we're doing Havdalah on Sunday afternoon. What that weekend will be, hopefully, is a taste of what the world would be like without oppression ... of anybody.

For workshop details and information on Tikkun Olam's upcoming Potato Latke Brunch fundraiser, see Bulletin Board.

תקן עולם



Tikkun Olam, the repairing of the world, is an enormous task. None of us can undertake that task in its entirety. We must start, each of us, at whatever point we can. We must start, each of us, with ourselves. And we must start. We must begin to repair the damage.

In the secret world of mothers

by Joni Miller

My mother graduated from university pregnant and spent the next fifteen years at home raising babies. She says she enjoyed that time. I assumed she was lying—until I became a mother. As a kid, I thought the lives of women were uninteresting. They cleaned house, wiped noses, rinsed poopy diapers and talked about babies. I wanted to be like my father, who worked in an office at interesting things, I assumed.

Motherhood is a job, a biological function, a transformation. I became a mother just over a year ago. After a birth control failure, nine months of pregnancy and an 8 hour labour, the midwives presented me with a grey wiggling creature—my baby. It seemed impossible. I saw myself as a scrappy little rebel—not a mother. When my baby was a few weeks old, she cried for an entire day once. "They'll have to take her back!" I remember thinking. "I can't live like this." Months later, I'm still adjusting. Parenting is the job you get no training for.

To be a mother is to lose anonymity. Small babies are a magnet for attention and advice. On the street I've gained instant respectability. With a baby at my side, men don't bother me and senior citizens thank I'm nice. The neighbourhood has opened up for me in a new way.

I remember movement strategy sessions about how to get to the 'ordinary woman'. The ordinary woman was not like us (feminists). She needed to be politicized, but we weren't sure how to reach her. I know that woman now. We meet in the secret world of mothers. She stops me in the street and tells me how long it took to lose weight after her second baby. She says "put a hat on that baby," advises me on teething remedies and asks how well I'm sleeping. The ordinary woman counts me in now, but I don't have time to 'organize' her.

I'm too busy trying to organize myself. Nothing prepared me for the intensity of parenting. Before the birth, my male partner and I were essentially two independent people orbiting around each other. Now we are profoundly interdependent. *Somebody* has to be with the baby.

I discovered my mother is right about one thing—babies are interesting. Of all the things I do in my life, taking care of my daughter is my favourite. The sight of her tiny face—even at three a.m.—fills me with exquisite tenderness.

When my baby took three steps by herself I immediately called my mother. "Oh no, not Joni," my brother groaned, when he heard about it. He counted on me, apparently, to be without those emotions.

And so, for years, had I. By the time I

became a parent, I had been party to many discussions about the problems, exhaustions and inequities of mothering. What was never communicated to me was the joy.

My mother's generation may have been burdened with all of the housework and all of the childcare, but at least they had society's approval. "It was just what you did," my mother reports, "I didn't even think about it."

The situation today is complex. In my neighbourhood, I've met mothers who represent a spectrum of possibilities—single moms on welfare, professionals with part-time practices, working women with full-time nannies, mothers who care for other people's children. Common to most is anxiety about doing it "right."

Motherhood is a job, a biological function, a transformation

"I have no skills," a woman told me, apologetically. She was explaining why she took in other children so she could afford to stay home with her own.

There is much talk about hands on fathering these days, and an expectation that men should be doing housework. I even run into a few men who are the primary caretakers in their families. For some women, this expectation is an added stress—not only are they doing all the work, but their men don't measure up.

"I think we really bought what the patriarchal society defined as not valuable—women's work," says Wendy Solloway, a longtime feminist and mother to Rubin, an 11 month old boy. "It became wimpy to just stay home and have a kid. There was disrespect towards women who chose that. Now, you've got to have a kid and have a career and be superwoman and do everything."

"People keep asking me when I'm going back to work" says Colleen Tyلمان, Solloway's partner and Rubin's birthmother. "I kept trying to say 'I am working, I am working', but I got tired of it." Tyلمان has devoted most of the last year to caring for Rubin.

Solloway and Tyلمان talked about parenting for years, but became serious after travelling in Latin America.

"Here kids are [considered] a burden," Solloway says, "they're not welcome in a lot of places. [Mothering] is this thing you have to 'find time for in your life'. There, they [kids] are life."

Tyلمان, a day care worker, originally wanted to adopt a nine year old girl, but was discouraged by homophobia in the adoption

system.

"One of the greatest things about two women together is you have the option," Tyلمان says. "It was hard for me to deal with getting pregnant—I didn't want to be artificially inseminated. Once I was pregnant, it was incredible. The pregnancy itself was thrilling." The birth, however, was long and difficult, ending in a caesarian.

Lesbian couples raising babies together is a relatively new (but growing) phenomena. Books available on gay parenting mostly discuss gay couples raising children from previous marriages. There is little recognition for the non-birthmother in such an arrangement—and no automatic legal protection.

"People were always addressing me as the mother," Tyلمان says. "It took a while for them to sort out that you don't have to be a biological mother to be a mother."

Maura Volante, a feminist, writer and musician chose deliberate single parenting.

"I always thought I would be a mother," she says "Except for a period in my 20s after coming out as a lesbian. I didn't know about alternatives [ways of getting pregnant], so I put it [mothering] out of my mind."

Volante joined a co-op house of women and children that evolved into a childcare collective. The situation proved emotionally difficult.

"[One of the mothers] named me as a parent—and then she took off [with the kids]," Volante says.

"The whole process influenced how I felt about collective parenting. I wanted him [the child] to love me as much as his biological mother. Now I see that nobody is like the blood mother... I wanted that kind of relationship."

Volante spent several years searching for an appropriate sperm donor. "We [lesbians] used to joke that men were always 'looking for some place to put it', but it's not that simple," she says. "I wrote to a men's group, but the only one willing to donate sperm had a vasectomy. I just kept asking around."

After several fruitless interviews ("we'd meet and talk about genetics") a man approached. "Still looking for a donor?" he asked.

Volante developed a set of parameters for the relationship. "I was open to being friends, but I wanted him to have no control. In return I was guaranteeing no strings."

The arrangement worked. After a period of getting acquainted, both parties felt comfortable enough to proceed sexually rather than using artificial insemination. Volante's daughter was conceived in an act she describes as magical.

"There was some ritual involved—I painted a picture, he wrote a poem. He felt like he was giving me a great gift, which he was."

Volante became pregnant right away. The father remains a friend. Volante sees many advantages to being a single parent but emphasizes the situation works for her because of a solid network of support. "I accept other people's influence" she says, "but I'm the only one with a vote."

Volante credits motherhood for increased ambition. "It's put a fire under me to get moving with things I want to do... everything is more urgent—even though there's less time."

Wendy Solloway would like to see a support network for mothers—other than the government.

Colleen Tyلمان agrees. "There's a whole romance about the sacredness of motherhood," she says. "When people become mothers, unless they fit into a very narrow definition of the word, there's no support at all. Women can go crazy—right over the edge, if they don't have support. You get instant respect [for being a mother] but it's all really ethereal."

Since becoming a mother, the social fabric of my life has shifted. Some friends I rarely see anymore, while others have become closer. I miss things like: spontaneity; a good nights sleep; time alone. ("Time alone?" one parent quipped "that's when I drive to work.") But childhood is brief, and all too soon, the little girl who clings to my leg now will be off on her own adventures.

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A first for Zimbabwe

as told to Louie Ettling

The Musasa Project is the first women's organization in Zimbabwe to work with women who have been raped or battered. Located in the capital Harare, the project was started in July 1988. The Musasa tree, depicted on this page, is the national tree of Zimbabwe.

Dolly Vengasayi, the project's resource administrator, has had a lifelong interest in women's issues and a background in marriage counselling. Saliwe Matopodzi was a full-time housewife before going to adult school and joining the project as a counsellor and administrative assistant. They are the project's full-time paid staff, working closely with trained volunteers.

Last August, they spoke with Louie Ettling about the history and work of the Musasa Project and how changes in Zimbabwean society have affected women's responses to violence.

working women, sometimes she's just afraid of facing life on her own, of facing a divorce. You counsel them and look at ways to make divorce possible, if that's what they want. Next time the woman might be back, saying that they don't want to do it anymore. Some women don't say why they've withdrawn, but from the public speaking and discussion we've had, we know why it's so hard. As Saliwe says, the reason is a practical one of survival and not knowing where to go.

Saliwe: When you get divorced they always classify you as a "reject of society." With men it's a different case.

Dolly: It's sort of like only they [men] are allowed to get divorced. A woman should just stay and stand everything, even if she gets beaten.

Saliwe: We explain to women why an organization like the Musasa Project formed. Women's relationships with our aunts today is not what it used to be, way back. It's not as close. You have someone of my age

"Binding over order" where the husband can be stopped from beating the women. Sometimes women receive such an order and they don't even present it to the men. The men don't even have to be nailed then.

Another area that's problematic is that rape is not considered rape in marriage.

Saliwe: A man thinks that once he has paid *lobola* [bride price] the woman has to consent to everything.

Dolly: And incest often goes unreported. Every day. We've discovered that it usually happens with stepdaughters. And the woman is scared of losing the man, so she doesn't report. It's a serious crime in Zimbabwe. It's silenced.

In The Beginning

Dolly: Saliwe and I were among the first trainees [at the project]. For the first nine months we did a research program to find out what would be most suitable for Zimbabwean women. The need for such an organization became clear and there was a lot of backing for it.

We counsel women and we help them to file their reports with the police and where possible we go as far as the court, to give women moral support. But the main thing that Musasa does is counselling—then women might be able to approach the police on their own.

Saliwe: A problem with counselling is that sometimes the women don't come back to report on what it's been like at home. Then we don't know how useful we have been. Our policy is that we don't do the follow-up, we don't phone.

Dolly: We are always open to women and say, "feel free to phone me or to come back." We don't want to intrude. But at the same time it makes the counsellors uncomfortable. At least we want to know if people are happy with the counselling. It's a dilemma.

Saliwe: We are dealing with violent men. If the man picks up the phone you could create another problem. She could be beaten again, because such violent men always try to isolate their women.

Dolly: People hear about us because we have posters all over Harare. Some of these clients are referred to us by doctors, nurses,

Women's relationships with our aunts...are not what they used to be

not knowing my auntie anymore. So these organizations can play the role that aunts used to play.

Dolly: When the auntie-issue is brought up, we don't oppose it. We say, okay, the aunt is the right person to go to when there are problems. We are willing to go and talk to the aunts. This makes women quite happy.

Traditions are changing altogether in Zimbabwe. For instance women really don't accept their husbands staying with other wives anymore. The first wife will just pack and go if he does. We also have cases where women have felt that it hadn't helped them to see a traditional healer (*angwa*). So, now they look to be rescued somewhere else. The Musasa Project hasn't had women saying they would rather do it to an *angwa*; it's not been part of our work to deal with that. Times have changed.

We have no social security here as it exists in developed countries, so it's really a problem. It becomes so hard to counsel women when the whole economic infrastructure is what it is. Women want us to "fix all." Sometimes they don't really understand what is meant by counselling. Even the police don't understand the idea.

We can't stop the husband from doing it. We can't fix all. Find jobs, get stolen clothes back, write a letter ordering the man away and that kind of thing.

You know, there's this law called the

Reaching Out

Saliwe: We have also engaged in public education because we saw there was a need to educate young people about rape—they don't know where to turn after a rape. We go to schools and youth clubs to share ideas. We are now arranging to have source meetings with the Ministry of Education officials to see how we can work together. Last year, we started public education with the police about how they should handle rape cases and wife beating cases.

We have plans to spread our public education to rural areas and other towns, because we are not dealing with a problem that only exists in Harare.

We managed to get a stand at the Harare agricultural show to help women who cannot read and do not have radios know we exist. We have to be very careful, though, where we talk and how we talk.

Dolly: We have material needs. We need a tape recorder for public education—it's very difficult to get something like that here since things are very expensive. We need to record the ideas that women come up with at our public meetings.

Our future plans are to buy a safe house for women who don't know where to go. This would accommodate women for at least three days while we try to sort out alternative accommodation. Depending on the situation, women could go back home or to the aunts—we can accompany them to the aunts.

We don't have statistics for the whole of Zimbabwe—but in Harare we think about 30 percent of women have been raped. Probably 60 percent have suffered from domestic violence. Those are police statistics. But we believe that it's closer to 60 percent of women that have been raped.

We do feel overwhelmed sometimes, but it hasn't discouraged us. For me, working on this project has been a very challenging and positive experience. There's a lot one has to be knowledgeable about, especially legal issues. There's a lot of reading and research involved.

Saliwe: It's not an easy task. It's hard to counsel only the women, when there are two parties involved. My idea was to help other women, as I was helped.

We managed to get a stand at the Harare agricultural fair

friends who happen to know about us. We also advertise in the paper. We stay anonymous, but we are nervous, because even some of the police could be wife beaters so we cannot stay that anonymous. But when we put out information we don't put down our address, only our phone number.

Dolly: We are just trying to make contact with women in other countries doing this kind of work. We've had the link with South Africa, now Lesotho and Papua New Guinea. And we'll be exchanging documents. It will take time to develop what we do.

"Save the Women's Program"

Feminists in spirited resistance across the country

by Nancy Pollak

The spring of 1990 will be remembered as the season when feminists not only raised a huge public cry against funding cuts to the Secretary of State's Women's Program, but managed to keep alive, at least temporarily, many of the centres and groups most badly stung by the cuts.

The season isn't over.

As *Kinesis* goes to press, women's groups across the country are forging a proposal for the Secretary of State Gerry Weiner, a proposal which will formalize demands and conditions for the reinstatement of core funding—and for the preservation of the Women's Program itself.

Weiner is expecting a proposal, although he is not expected to readily embrace the contents. And thereby hangs a tale...

Occupied By Occupations, etc

The \$1.6 million cut to the Women's Program in the February budget was most damaging to Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Yukon and British Columbia, where almost 80 women's centres lost all their operational money. In Québec, 39 centres lost their federal core grant and were forced to fall back on much smaller provincial grants.

Four national women's organizations (including three feminist periodicals) lost 100 percent of their funding, and national advocacy and education groups were dealt 15 or 20 percent cuts.

The fight was on.

Women's groups launched full-scale letter writing campaigns, visited cabinet ministers at their offices, protested at their speaking engagements (notably Mary Collins, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women), held symbolic bake-sales at government offices, and in various other public and not-

so-public ways requested that Gerry Weiner meet with the groups whose funding he had cut without warning.

Public support for women's centres was widespread and immediate. Groups received donations and offers of support, and their demonstrations were well-attended—women and men are clearly angry about these cuts. With prompting from feminists, mainstream media had no difficulty presenting a sympathetic portrait of the local women's centre, struggling to survive. Editorial writers grasped that the funding cuts were at least impolite, and probably contrary to the government's stated support for women's rights.

The Progressive Conservatives in Ottawa had a harder time getting the picture. Despite formal requests from affected groups, Weiner made no move to meet with women.

In the Yukon, the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre formed a coalition with Native political, communication and social organizations also cut by the Secretary of State (SecState). The Yukon Coalition Against the Budget, with major community support, took out full-page ads protesting the cuts on March 8 (IWD) and again on March 23rd.

On March 21 in Montréal, 75 women attempted to enter the SecState offices but were refused entrance to the elevators by security guards. During the noisy, all-afternoon demo, they faxed their demand to Weiner: meet with us. The following day, he invited them to an April 9 meeting in Ottawa.

It took him a little longer to respond elsewhere.

Women in St. John's, Newfoundland were the first to stage a full-fledged occupation of a SecState office. On March 26, 60 women announced "the newest women's centre in Canada," and set about using SecState's telephones and fax machine to get what

they came for: a meeting with Weiner to discuss full reinstatement of core funding.

Over 400 women, including elected NDP and Tory politicians, participated in the week-long occupation: a unanimous motion of support passed in the House of Assembly; a local fish and chips joint delivered lunch for 50—and Gerry Weiner sent an official to discuss project funding.

We're Not Just Projecting

Luring women's groups with offers of short-term project funding has been the government's standard strategy since the cuts were announced.

Here's how it goes.

Imagine you are the government.

Your first move is to hammer home that core funding is gone for good—blame it on the deficit. Then say women's centres are a provincial responsibility anyway because they're so service-oriented.

Second, emphasize how much project funding is available. In the western region, stress how it's been increased—but don't explain that that's only because so much core funding was cut. Write letters to the editor about all the project money.

Third, phone up women's centres on the brink of closure and say they can have project money in a matter of days—it's called "fast-tracking." Mention that the centres can use the money for operational expenses if they like (wink wink, nudge nudge). Add that there is money for winding-down expenses, too: pay off the photocopier lease, settle up with the landlord, sleep tight.

Finally, watch in consternation as groups across the country turn down your proposal because they have more political sense and solidarity with each other than to accept an offer of perpetual instability.

Newfoundland women rejected the project funding offer by Weiner's official in

late March, reiterated their demand for full funding and set an inspired example for the rest of the country. The centre in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia took the next step, deferring a project grant for \$46,000. National groups, other Nova Scotia and Québec women's centres, and the BC and Yukon Association of Women's Centres followed suit, and a gradual boycott of project funds grew.

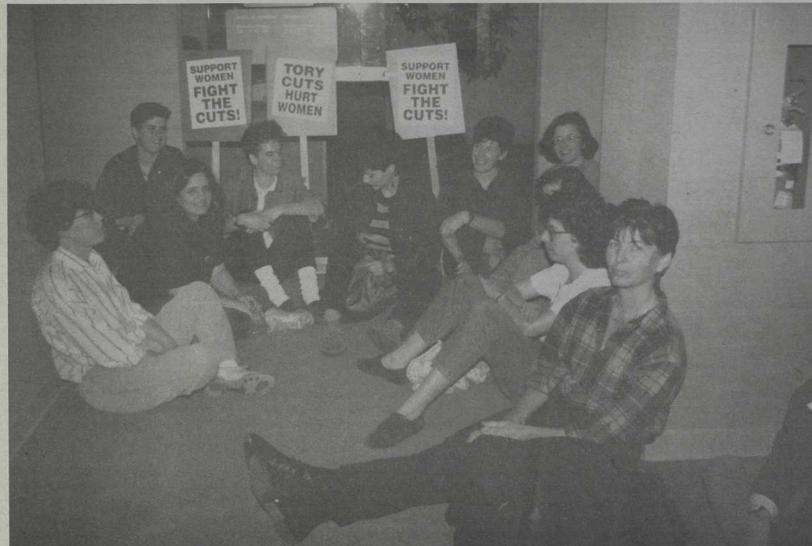
Coast to Coast

Despite poor national press coverage of the Newfoundland occupation, women across Canada were aware of the events in St. John's and prepared to show their support. On the first Monday (March 26), women in Toronto attempted to enter SecState offices and were met by closed doors and over twenty police officers. Four women were gently hauled away. In Vancouver, a symbolic sit-in took place in the SecState vestibule. As the week wore on and the Newfoundland occupiers showed no sign of giving up on their major demand, Vancouver women made plans to mirror the Atlantic action with a little of the Pacific kind.

Friday March 30: Within an hour of occupying the 12th floor Vancouver offices of SecState, 20 or so British Columbian women learned the police had arrived in St. John's with a new offer: leave or be charged with mischief. A few hours earlier, women in Halifax had met an instantaneous police response when they had attempted to enter government offices.

The Tories, never enthusiastic about the idea of talking with women, were now drawn to the idea of arresting them.

The women in Halifax and St. John's were "escorted" from the offices by the police and no charges were laid. Back at the women's centre in St. John's, telephone contact was made with the Vancouver occupiers and 40 weary but elated Newfoundlanders sang solidarity songs over the



Locked out—and soon to be arrested—while trying to arrange a meeting with Mr. Weiner in Vancouver.

photo by Rachel Rozco

speaker phone to their west coast sisters who, shortly afterwards, noticed the arrival of the police.

The Vancouver occupiers made the same demand as other groups: full reinstatement of funding to the Women's Program and a meeting with Weiner. As they waited for a reply to the faxed demand, the women asked SecState to call off the police while negotiations were taking place.

The answer came near midnight. Wendy Carter, Regional Director of SecState, reminded women of the easy availability of project funding. There would be no discussion of other matters except during regular office hours and, because there were no negotiations, the police would not be called off. By midnight, under a threat of a mischief charge, Vancouver women were escorted from the building by police.

The following Monday, the St. John's office was revisited by protesters, still seeking a meeting with Weiner. Twenty women and two men were arrested and charged with mischief. The scene repeated itself in Vancouver on April 5. With a spirited demonstration taking place below, twelve women attempted to enter the SecState offices to deliver another letter to Weiner. Met by locked glass doors and security guards, the women slipped their letter to director Carter and sat down to await Weiner's reply.

His reply was another letter. Weiner would not reinstate funding, would not meet with women in BC, but would invite a designated representative to meet with him in Ottawa on April 11. Not satisfied, the women refused to leave. By dinner time, they were arrested for the stepped-up offence of "assault by trespass" and carted off in a police wagon.

Charges have not been laid.

Meet Me in Ottawa, Meet Me in Montréal

Across the country, special security guards were posted to protect government offices from rampaging females—the kind who want to talk to ministers of the crown. The federal NDP Women's Critic Dawn Black

told parliament she had calculated the government would spend about \$560,000 on security fees over three months—almost a third of the budget cut.

While the public protests were going on, national organizations such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW), and Healthsharing also tried to set up a meeting with Weiner to specifically discuss cuts to their operations.

While women's centres had captured the public and media's attention, the advocacy, research and publication groups hit by the budget hadn't fared as well. Yet the cuts they sustained (between 30 and 100 percent in two years) are considered a strong indication of how far the Tories may go in completely dismantling the Women's Program.

As *Kinesis* goes to press, national organizations are still awaiting confirmation of meeting times with Weiner, who refused a request to meet with them collectively.

But he did meet with the women's centres. Bowing to public pressure, Weiner met on April 9 in Ottawa with Urgence Secrétariat d'Etat, the Québec women's centre ad-hoc coalition, and again on April 11 in Montréal with invited representatives from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, BC and the Yukon. The meetings were as different as cheese and chalk—or were they?

Weiner did most of the talking after receiving the Québec women's demand for full reinstatement of funding. He turned them down flat, suggesting instead that they look to grants from the SecState programs for "doubly disadvantaged women"—the government's term for women of colour, Aboriginal women and women with disabilities. The Québec women left the meeting disappointed and angry at such an obvious attempt to play women off against each other.

The April 11 meeting unfolded differently. The 7 anglophone representatives had been selected by Judy Wright, director of the Women's Program. The night of the 10th, Wright and Danielle Remillard, Weiner's representative, encouraged the women to consider making the minis-

ter a proposal, rather than a direct demand for full reinstatement. They also insisted that only women's centre funding could be discussed, saying that separate negotiations were taking place with the national organizations despite the fact that no such meetings had been held.

And the women did come up with a proposal for Weiner: fund women's centres at 1988-89 levels for two more years during which time the federal government would negotiate a provincial/territorial take over of women centre funding.

During the meeting, a relatively friendly Weiner, accompanied by top civil servants, listened to descriptions of the women's centres and expressed favour with the idea of transferring responsibility to provinces and territories. Weiner promised to bring a women's centres proposal to the cabinet's Priorities and Planning committee—which holds the government's pursestrings—on May 10. He then left for another meeting.

After further discussions among themselves, the women presented more details of

their proposal to Jean Fournier, SecState's deputy minister, and the other civil servants. Fournier advised there was no chance of a two-year plan since the budgeting process was annual.

The women left the meeting after agreeing to present the minister on April 30 with a detailed funding proposal that would first be approved by the regions and groups they represented—many of which would be surprised to learn the trial proposal veered sharply from the demand for full restoration of funding.

Minutes later, when the Québec women learned of this friendly meeting, they flipped: the anglophone experience was in stark contrast to their less than hospitable encounter with Weiner two days earlier. However, they were reassured that they would be included in any proposal.

A Proposal, or a Bended Knee?

Women's groups reacted differently to news of the April 11 meeting. Some groups were appalled at the naivety of actually negotiating an end to federal responsibility. Others view it as a pragmatic step and/or a gamble—maybe the Tories won't be around in two years. Some national organizations were enraged at being shut out of the process, and at least some women's centres, unaware that a proposal was being made in their name, shared that anger.

Two things are certain. No provincial or territorial government has demonstrated a willingness to "save" their women's centres, even during this acute funding crisis (see page 3 for details of the BC response). And the demand for full reinstatement of funding, with a view to the long-term survival of the Women's Program, has not faded.

Since April 11, women's organizations funded by SecState have been "meeting" over conference calls in an attempt to develop a proposal for Weiner that is far-sighted and mindful of the differing needs of differing groups. By early May, the negotiating process with the federal government—if there is to be any process at all—will be underway.

In the meantime, women have shown no tendency to let up the pressure. Equality Day, April 17, was the scene of numerous "Weiner Roasts." The same day, women in Vancouver interrupted a public speech by Justice Minister Kim Campbell, urging her to support the call for full funding. Campbell, a member of the inner cabinet and a self-avowed feminist, agreed to meet with women's representatives in early May.

The season is not over.

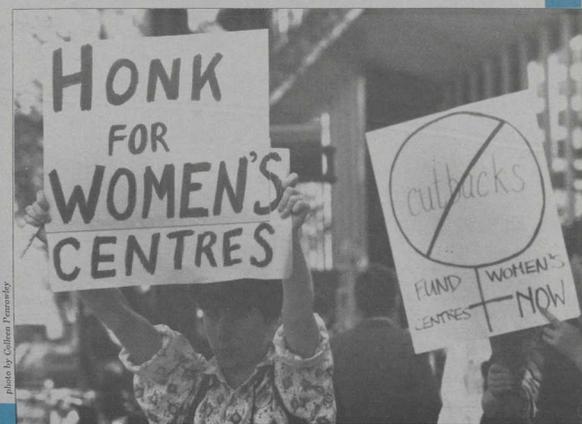


photo by Colleen Parvovoy

"Ten years ago in Port Alberni"



On April 5, outside the government of Canada office tower in Vancouver, Heather Nelson of Port Alberni addressed a rally protesting the funding cuts. Upstairs, twelve women waited outside the locked doors of the Secretary of State for a chance to arrange a meeting with Gerry Weiner. Six hours later, they were arrested.

Ten years ago in Port Alberni, a small group of women began a piece of work. From their strength, anger, and commitment to women, a transition house and women's centre evolved. Three of those women are still with us, along with others ensuring that services to women continue to respond to women's needs in our own and the surrounding communities of Tofo, Uchelet, Bamfield, Parksville and Qualicum.

While unique and precious to us, our story is a fairly common account of the inception of many women's centres across Canada. All of them have been created by women, all involve a history of struggle for survival on meagre budgets and over-extended staff and volunteers.

"Service delivery" has traditionally been a problematic definition of work done in rural centres—problematic that is, for our federal funders.

In our community, the work we do is largely defined by the women who come through the door. Much of what we do is crisis intervention: for women who have been beaten and need legal, financial and housing assistance; for women caught up in the bureaucracy of the welfare system; and for women who are being evicted because they've complained about no heat or other abuses by their landlords.

It is precisely through the provision of these services, helping women to recognize their strength while at the same time attending to their survival needs, that lasting social change is accomplished.

On February 23rd, 1990, we were informed by our Secretary of State representative that our core funding had been cut but that we were welcome to apply for project funding. Having put on two Island Women Conferences in previous years, we are well acquainted with projects and their potential for overriding the real day-to-day needs of women using our centre. There seems to be an attitude that core funding is some sort of free ride and that centres will have to use their own initiative to raise funds—and prove community support for the work being done.

I can assure you that fundraising is no new concept to those of us who stand in the rain in front of shopping malls and liquor stores on Tag Day, nor to the staff and volunteers who work our weekly Night-Owl Bingo from 9:30 to midnight. Countless hours are further expended writing letters and making presentations to service clubs. In any rural community, competition is fierce for the donation dollar.

Core funding has never kept pace with the legitimate cost of our services and it is only as a direct result of women's initiative that we have been able to keep it together this long. We cannot and will not allow this government to deter our energies in what would amount to mammoth fundraising drives at the expense of our commitment to women.

Contrary to statements issued about clear warnings of pending cuts, none of us were prepared for total devastation of our funding base. *Nor should we have been.* Because all political rhetoric aside, the work is not done. The need for women's centres is still great. And the responsibility still lies squarely on the shoulders of the federal government.

Violence against women, the housing shortage, childcare crisis and the feminine face of poverty are nation-wide conditions. No government legitimately committed to the welfare of better than half its populace can be permitted to silence the very instrument of change. We are here today to demand full restoration of funding to women's centres. We are here today to say that it will be women who close the centres, women not politicians who will know when justice and equality for women have been achieved.

Adoption:

The injustice of surrender

by Millie Strom

Adoption is promoted by anti-choicers as the alternative to abortion. The pro-choice movement also views adoption as a viable option. The forgotten woman—the birthmother—can have a very different view.

I am a birthmother who became active in pro-choice because I am angered by the anti-choice promotion of adoption. But, I found both sides of the abortion issue have many misconceptions about adoption, particularly the effects on the birthmother and the adoptee.

In adoption, three sides exist: a woman—often young and poor—who is very frightened because she faces an unplanned pregnancy; an infertile affluent couple or single heterosexual or lesbian women, who want and feel they deserve a baby; and, of course, the baby.

Marsh Riben, a birthmother and proponent of adoption reform, in her book *Shedding Light on the Dark Side of Adoption* [sic] states, "adoption is a social system that impoverishes and punishes certain groups of people."

As a mother who lost my child to adoption over 21 years ago, I can attest to the ongoing pain. Like over a hundred other birthmothers I have met, and thousands of others attending support groups across North America, I have not forgotten my child as I was told I would. Other birthmothers have forced themselves into denial and secrecy, advised by the experts to pretend it never happened. Birthmothers internalized the shame and degradation that society held about sexuality. We spent the rest of our lives unable to grieve the loss of our children because we were buried by society's shame, reinforced by the concept of what a family should be.

Surrendering a child does not dissolve the crisis of an unplanned pregnancy. A prominent US study in adoption reform, *The Adoption Triangle* by professionals Arthur Sorosky, Annette Baran and Ruben Pannor—confirms the tremendous negative effect on the birthmother.

Now, when women are challenging our woman-unfriendly society, many birthmothers are able to tell of the cruel injustice of surrender. Riben explains, "Birthparents have no grave to bring flowers to, no one sends them condolence cards." Birthmothers are not remembered on mother's day, yet

they never stopped caring for their children. They go underground with their feelings.

The adoptee too, suffers: "The adoptee is a product of social engineering," states Betty J. Lifton, adoptee and author. Her work with members of the triangle is documented in her books, *Twice Born and Lost and Found*. "To be chosen, is a burden and its specialness isolates one," states Lifton, "you are chosen and everyone else is born."

When adoptees are raised, emphasis is on being chosen, but the sense of rejection is not addressed. My son, who I have been reunited with for two years, says, "When I hear other adoptees make a point of saying that they were chosen, it's because they're hiding and repressing the rejection. Because to be chosen, you have to first be rejected."

Many adoptees reside in this denial until they reach their late 20s and 30s. Many adoptive parents, operating under the myth that adopting is the same as having one's own child, do not understand their children's need to search. As a result they respond negatively to the search, forcing some adoptees into clandestine reunions.

The Adoption Triangle also discloses some shattering facts: adoptees are over-represented in therapy, in group homes, in crime and in child sexual abuse statistics. Because the adoption process makes adoptees feel grateful to have been chosen, it insulates them from coming out of denial regarding abuse.

The newer, open adoption system (where the natural mother chooses the adoptive parents and stays in contact with the family) eliminates the secrecy and shame inherent in a closed setting. But the mother is still pressured to relinquish her baby and suffers enormous grief.

Open adoption was not created to ease the pain of birthmothers and adoptees, but was a result of a market shift. Some women have gained access to birth control, abortion, day care facilities and education; consequently, fewer women relinquish babies. With fewer babies available, birthmothers were encouraged to participate in an open setting, in an effort to lure their babies away.

Social workers identify more with the prospective parents—older adults, formally educated with higher incomes—than with the pregnant women. A national survey in 1982 found that 14 percent of unwed mothers, who had been counseled, decided to relinquish their babies. Only 1.5 percent who

were not counseled, made the same decision.

In addition, social service agencies perpetuate the image of a birthmother as inferior, irresponsible and incapable of raising a child. *The Adoption Triangle* shows that birthmothers have been portrayed by social agencies as "a picture of severe emotional disturbance. They insist on the birthmother's permanent anonymity to reinforce the view that she had sinned and suffered for it."

Chana Fay, an adoptee and Vancouver filmmaker of the adoption-reform documentary, *Life After Adoption: Open vs. Closed Records*, has talked with many social workers for her second film. She found "this attitude towards the birthmothers still exists today." Fay also questions "why we should be protected from our own mothers." Birthmothers have become the adversary. The fraudulent birth certificate supports this fear of her. (Adoptee's birth certificates read as though their adopted parents are their natural parents.)

ing a child, and 20 children available.

In the North American adoption system, not all babies are equal. It is well documented that adoptive white parents will hold out for healthy white infants, while thousands of other children—older, Black or handicapped—go without homes.

Dr. Henry Morgentaler, during his April visit in Vancouver, was asked about the diminishing supply of babies available for adoption. He replied that there are plenty of Third World babies available. However, this view ignores the needs of women throughout the world to provide for their children. Is turning to foreign women for babies, because the number of 'handmaids' is diminishing in our country, consistent with a feminist outlook?

Viewing the two sides—unplanned pregnancies and infertility—as two distinct issues may be the solution. "Infertility is not a social injustice but a physical incapacity," states Carol Anderson, vice-president of Concerned United Birthparents (CUB). CUB is an American non-profit organization with chapters in Canada and other countries formed in 1976 to provide support to birthmothers. It has evolved to include adoptees, adoptive parents, birthfathers and professionals.

Anderson adds, "Separating adoption from infertility would do more than reduce psychological and other abuse. It would reduce the number of adoptions, a social practice that treats children as things, as cures for infertility, rather than as human beings with their own individual backgrounds, needs, relationships and rights."

There is a strong tendency to view adoptive couples as parents who need and deserve a child rather than as people who need help in accepting and learning to live with a tragic physical incapacity."

There are alternatives for people wishing to parent: Thousands of older children linger in foster care and need homes; working with children; starting day-care centres; or lobbying for changes to stop the causes of infertility may be rewarding alternatives.

Owning children, along with denying women their reproductive rights, are patriarchal devices to ensure the continuing domination of women.

I believe in choice—and choices that leave no victims.

To contact CUB, call the author at 255-0235.

We spent the rest of our lives unable to grieve the loss of our children

Along with open adoption, a growing private adoption market has evolved. This is clearly the buying and selling of babies. In an article in the *L.A. Times Magazine* titled "The Baby Brokers," the author states that the most powerful people in the adoption relationship are the lawyers because they can "beat nature." Mothers and their babies can easily be exploited to serve the client: an affluent couple who want and feel they deserve a baby. In the US the ratio of adoptive parents to babies is 40 to 1 (in 1982 according to the National Committee for Adoption). Locally, the ratio is greater. According to the Adoptive Parents Association during October and November of 1989 there were over 2100 adoptive parents want-



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Putting ourselves in the picture

by Susan Leibik

Women photographers are looking at themselves—becoming their own subjects—as an active challenge to the traditional photographic legacy of objectification, distortion and exclusion.

"Reclaiming the Image of Self", an April forum at Emily Carr College of Art and Design, focused on the multiple uses and implications of self-portraiture by women. On the panel were Jo Spence, a British writer and photographer known for her book *Putting Myself in the Picture*; Patti Levey, a San Francisco photographer also trained as a psychologist; Jan Grover, a photo critic, historian and curator of AIDS: The Artist's Response; and Judy Weiser, a psychologist and director of the Phototherapy Centre in Vancouver. The discussion provoked a range of issues, including the use of photographs in therapy, the politics of representation in the public and private domain, and the big question "Is it Art?"

For Jo Spence, the idea of being seen as an artist (or not) was resolved by "an image of myself as a cultural sniper," and her work reflects that sense of challenge and subversion. Spence's images compose a case study of the labels she inhabits: "a 55 year old, aging woman, white, heterosexual, cancer patient, working class born, educated, labour, socialist, marxist, feminist and would-be therapist." (This got a laugh from the audience.) Calling her work psychic realism, Spence deals primarily in self-portraits that expose her multiple selves, shaped by parent/child relationships and continuing power struggles in the social realm. "Self-exploration, not voyeurism or narcissism" is the basis for her images.

Stressing the importance of therapy in her own life, Spence also stated, "I don't believe in doing private work in public," and only exhibits images that she has processed in a therapeutic setting. Slides illustrated some of her concerns: a documentation of her own traumatic surgery for breast cancer, and serial work investigating re-nacted adolescent images, the expression and repression of sexual energy, and family history. Spence sees the metaphor for her work as "story-telling, and a bridge into everyday spaces, away from an academic approach."

Mostly Amnesiac

Patti Levey trained as a clinical psychologist and wrote her thesis on self-portraiture as a form of therapy. Experimenting with

dream-like images, double exposures, costumes and props, Levey calls her photography a form of self-revelation, where she can shed cultural and familial roles. Her own intimate and painful portraits have their roots in the amount of denial in her own family, which stressed outward appearances.

As an incest survivor, Levey has utilized photography as a means of retrieving memory. Being "mostly amnesiac about details of sexual abuse" led Levey to a series in which she focused on the body as a site of knowledge. She spoke of "giving her body a voice," writing words directly on her skin, asking questions in front of the camera, such as, "who did what to me?" "why am I afraid?" For Levey, a primary factor in healing has been to see and validate her pain, and to share it with others. She emphasized the need of working with a therapist and having a support system when working with this type of self-portraiture.

Judy Weiser spoke from her perspective as a photo-therapist. She regards the camera as a healing tool, and uses photographs as catalysts, starting points for investigating personal histories.

"All pictures I take are self-portraits," says Weiser, also including any picture that has significant meaning as being autobiographical. Showing slides from her own family album Weiser illustrated the ways in which body language can give visual clues to repeated patterns and dynamics within relationships.

Jan Grover described herself as an ex-academic, trying to collect the voices and images of the un- the under-, and misrepresented. Offering response and commentary to the other panelists, Grover disagrees with the notion that every picture is a self-portrait, feeling that the use of camera is not "instinctual" as a tool of self-reclamation. Grover believes that we are already "caught up in a system of representation," and cited her own experience as a lesbian, having to learn to read images transformatively in order to affirm her identity. Grover feels that people begin with the conventions and images already in circulation and go from there toward reconstructing a sense of self.

Unconsciousness-raising

Other questions touched on conditions that inform the work of Spence and Levey. Spence spoke of her role as an educational photographer, a title which allows her leeway in pursuing collaborative work with therapists, doctors and individuals.



Jo Spence, photographed by Jo Spence

She finds "process far more important than product."

Her main interest is in what she termed social therapy and unconsciousness-raising, the questioning of family, power and class structures. Spence says showing her work in galleries is merely the tip of the iceberg, allowing her a profile which contributes to her work as a writer, lecturer and teacher.

Levey sees making self-pictures as a political as much as a personal act. Women literally creating images of themselves also taps a healing capacity, a way to explore and experiment with roles and self concept without judgement.

Grover addressed the question of appro-

priateness in showing such personal work in gallery settings. She feels it is important to challenge these spaces and to use them to one's own artistic and political ends. The sharing of such work in the public sphere rests upon issues of education as much as artistic value. Both Spence and Levey have done workshops with their photographs, and Spence notes the importance of working in schools and non-art venues.

These women are changing the uses and conventions of photography in ways that have implications for both personal and social change. Simply "putting themselves in the picture" becomes a transformative act. After that, who knows what might develop?

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Caryl Churchill:

About witches, without witches

by Bonnie Waterstone

VINEGAR TOM

by Caryl Churchill
directed by Martin Millerchip
Pink Ink Productions

Pink Ink's April production of Caryl Churchill's *Vinegar Tom*, matched the unconventionality of the play with an unusual set and novel seating arrangements: the audience was separated by gender. The stage and the tiers of seating were covered with



Caryl Churchill

rough burlap. From either side, women and men faced each other across a dim, straw-strewn rural village of 17th century England.

In the program notes, director Martin Millerchip wrote: "Physically our play can fill the space between the men and women in our audience, but . . . we will have achieved something more if you think about why the gap is there at all."

This play does make you think. Churchill writes feminist plays and she believes that "playwrights don't give answers, they ask questions. We need to find new questions, which may help us answer the old ones or make them unimportant."

One of the most widely performed and published English dramatists in contemporary theatre, Churchill is known for innovative theatrical techniques and a strong commitment to socialism and feminism. Her Obie Award-winning plays *Cloud Nine* and *Top Girls* are familiar to Vancouver audiences. *Vinegar Tom* was written in 1976 in cooperation with a London feminist theatre company, Monstrous Regiment.

Vinegar Tom draws parallels between medieval attitudes to witches and attitudes to women today. The script intersperses historical material with contemporary songs. The 21 scenes give the play a fast-moving, fragmentary quality and the 7 modern songs stand outside the historical action, making their pointed comments in blunt, sometimes crude, and often poetic lyrics.

The central action involves Margery and her husband Jack, a couple seeking to expand their farm holdings. Beset by various misfortunes, they blame their troubles on Joan and her daughter Alice, their poor neighbours. (Vinegar Tom is Joan's roaming cat whose presence in Margery's butchery is interpreted as witchcraft.) Margery, a righteous wife, cannot bear feeling incompetent and undeserving; Jack needs a target for his sexual and financial frustration. Neither wants to believe god judges them "bad" and is punishing them. Instead, they scapegoat the single, poor and sexually unconventional women.

"I wanted to write a play about witches with no witches in it; a play not about evil, hysteria and possession by the devil but about poverty, humiliation and prejudice, and how the women accused of witchcraft saw themselves," Churchill has written.

In *Vinegar Tom* we have the righteous wife, the young woman labelled village harlot and her aging mother who likes beer—Margery, Alice and Joan. There's also a young pregnant-again wife, a landowner's daughter who resists marriage, and a "cunning woman," the local healer who lives alone in the forest. All four are eventually executed for witchcraft.

The first to be accused is Joan. Poor and old, she sustains herself with pride and anger. Doris Chilcott gave an excellent performance in this role, as she chatted with Margery, wheedling a "bit o' yeast" from her, showing the shrewdness and strength of this character.

Alice, played by Bonnie Panych, refuses marriage but not sex—which she evidently enjoys. She's a single mother and seems very modern in her independence of spirit. We know she didn't take Jack's "thing," even though he claims it is missing from his trousers. Jack goes to the cunning woman

**"Why was I screaming?
Because I'm bad
Why was I bad?
Because I was happy"**

for a cure—which brought a lot of nervous laughter from the men's side of the audience.

Betty, the landowner's daughter, is resisting an arranged marriage. She escapes from the room they've locked her in and climbs trees, wanders the countryside, shouting for joy. The doctor is called in to cure her of this hysteria by bleeding. In a scene filled with dramatic tension, Betty, tied to a chair, begins a singsong monologue, which becomes a chant of despair:

"Why am I tied? Tied to be bled. Why am I bled? Because I was screaming. Why was I screaming? Because I'm bad. Why was I bad? Because I was happy. Why was I happy? Because I ran out by myself and got away from them and—Why was I screaming? Because I'm bad. Why am I bled? Because I'm tied. Why am I tied. Because I was happy. Why was I happy? Because I was screaming?"

Betty is trying to make sense out of something that feels completely wrong. Any woman who has ever had her reality denied can relate to this. Today women aren't subjected to bloodletting, but many other threats keep us in line. While we aren't labelled witches, we are still labelled if we don't conform.

As the play's last song, the Lament for the Witches, says,

*Look in the mirror tonight
Would they have hanged you then?
Ask how they're stopping you now.
Where have the witches gone?
Ask how they're stopping you now.
Here we are.*

Churchill's plays can be counted on to ask challenging questions and to make strong feminist statements. At one point the cunning woman, musing on how to tell if you're a witch, explains the art of sinking without drowning. *Vinegar Tom* shows that sinking without drowning is the art of survival for women, whether in the 17th or the 20th century.

Books about Women

"It's Up to You"

WOMEN AT UBC IN THE EARLY YEARS

Lee Stewart

This book describes the experience of women at UBC from the founding of the university until after World War II. "Documents vividly and for the first time the hopes, defeats, compromises, and strategies involved in the struggle of women to participate fully in the academic, cultural, and political life at UBC, a struggle that is ongoing." Nancy M. Sheehan, Dean of Education, UBC hc \$29.95, pb \$19.95

Life Spaces

GENDER, HOUSEHOLD, EMPLOYMENT

Caroline Andrew and Beth Moore Milroy, eds.

Written by some of Canada's top researchers in the field, the articles in this collection introduce a new chapter in feminist literature, focusing on women and their experiences in urban settings and illustrating the importance of gender in the development of urban areas. "Offers an enticing vision of new ways to organize our life spaces." CANADIAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE \$16.95

No Bleeding Heart

CHARLOTTE WHITTON: A FEMINIST ON THE RIGHT

P. T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell

Popularly remembered as Ottawa's pugnacious major, Charlotte Whitton championed the cause of child welfare across Canada and worked hard for the status of women long before the word *feminism* had passed into everyday language. "It is to the credit of Rooke and Schnell that they have not only written a book which restores Whitton's place in history, but in doing so they have presented an interpretation of her life which explains why an uncompromising image of Whitton should be so persistent." CHEA BULLETIN \$26.95

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A HANDMAIDS TALE
directed by Volker Schlöndorff
based on the novel by Margaret Atwood.

by Shelly Quick

The opportunity to fund the production of *A Handmaid's Tale* must have seemed golden to the Cinecom Production Group. The futuristic novel written by Margaret Atwood has all the makings of a successful movie: Religious zealots are exposed as lecherous megalomaniacs, environmental disasters are causing sterility, television has become a religious icon, and fertile women (handmaids) have lost their reproductive rights and are forced to bear children for the elite. Add to this sex, violence, a few actors with familiar names and a screenplay by Harold Pinter and you've got a movie that can't lose—at least not financially.

What is lost in this adaptation of *A Handmaid's Tale* is feminist integrity. All of the conventions which pervade mainstream, male-dominated cinema, can be found in this movie. The feminism which gives the novel its shape and plausibility has been eradicated. The viewer unacquainted with the book is confronted with something that can easily be dismissed as yet another paranoid vision of the future.

Atwood's futuristic state of Gilead can be traced directly to trends in today's society. When this dystopia hits celluloid, however, the links between Gilead and our society are seriously undercut. The attitude of the film's director, Volker Schlöndorff, is a source of the problem. He has been quoted as saying "the whole political level immediately gets extremely boring for me because I think it's more about fear of things, it's about creating the most paranoid situation possible for women to live in."

The handmaid's world is indeed a fearful one—particularly since the film version is so obviously dominated by male fantasies, myths and paranoias. But what is most fearful about this film is the way it subtly excuses men from any responsibility for the patriarchal state of Gilead.

Although there is an underlying assumption that men control Gilead, in the movie we virtually never see males in command. In this version of *A Handmaid's Tale*, where images speak much louder than words, it is the women who we see shouting orders. When the film's heroine Offred (played by Natasha Richardson) is first captured, it is a woman who commands her to join the group destined to become handmaids. As Offred trains for her new vocation, women are the ones who carry the electric cattle prods and force obedience upon them. And finally, when Offred is placed in the home she is to service, she must acquiesce to the decisions of Serena Joy (played by Faye Dunaway), wife of the home's patriarch (played by Robert Duvall.)

It is the treatment of Duvall, cast in the role of a powerful commander, which most clearly highlights the way in which the burden of responsibility has been shifted onto women's shoulders in the film. Whereas Serena comes across as cold and calculating, the commander is revealed to be a big child, an idealist who got confused. When Offred asks the commander why he supports the actions of the fascist government of Gilead, the commander cites pre-Gileadian-existential despair: "there were no rules, no meaning, people were unhappy." Duvall is allowed to add a dimensionality to his char-

acter that Dunaway, playing the archetypal 'bitch' is denied.

The commander is allowed to show a concern for others that the self-centred Serena Joy does not possess. It is the commander who tries to make the sex ritual easier for Offred. The ritual consists of the handmaid and patriarch solemnly copulating (for procreation purposes) while the infertile wife vicariously participates. It is clear in the

this is a cue for the audience to laugh).

The portrayal of the sex ritual is one of the movie's most blatantly offensive scenes. After Offred first experiences the ritual she runs to her room to clean herself. After a few shots of water running, basins etc. we get our first glimpse of Richardson naked. She hangs out of her bedroom window, chest bared, her breaths come in heavy pants. Suddenly she notices the chauffeur (played by Aidan Quinn) staring at her. As Quinn tells her to get out of the window Richardson draws back slowly, a thoughtful expression on her face. Later, predictably, they become lovers.

What this movie lacks, besides a feminist ideology, is an understanding of women. Rape victims do not consider who their new lover will be minutes after being raped. The 'sexiness' of rape is a male convention.

A Handmaid's Tale is a classic example of patriarchal co-option. What could be more perfect than a world in which women have the power to control each other but not to help themselves? Everything in this movie, from the imagery to the archetypal characters has been seen before. And hey, there's even a handsome prince to rescue our heroine in distress! The movie version of *A Handmaid's Tale* is a lot of things, but a feminist film is not one of them.

the film version
is...dominated
by male fantasies,
myths and paranoias

movie that Offred endures this ritual as she would a rape. Serena, aware of this, offers no support. The commander, however, arranges clandestine meetings with Offred in an attempt to get to know her—apparently he realizes the ritual is difficult for her and he himself finds it "a little impersonal" (yes,

Does the goddess have

A hidden agenda?

GODDESS REMEMBERED
directed by Donna Reed
produced by Margaret Pettigrew
National Film Board, Studio D, 1989

by Tarel Quandt

Studio D's *Goddess Remembered* is an hour long documentary about early goddess-worshipping cultures and their implications for mainstream society. The film takes the audience to the caves of pale-

olithic France, the temples and monuments of neolithic Malta, the earthworks of ancient Britain and the palaces of Crete. Mainstream theories of women's positions in ancient cultures are challenged. A wealth of archeological evidence illustrates the importance once assigned to females. The film contends such evidence demands a reexamination and reinterpretation of history—women of ancient cultures can no longer be trivialized, buried and ignored. Further, the film claims that goddesses played a promi-

nent or key role in peaceful, co-operative cultures.

Woven into this revised presentation of the archeological sites is a dinner conversation among feminist scholars and authors meeting in San Francisco. Jean Shinoda Bolen, Charlene Spretnak, Starhawk, Merlin Stone, Susan Griffin and Carol P. Christ explore what the discovery of the goddess means for women and the earth.

The film's theme is the empowering influence the goddess can have for women—a reminder that life-giving is profound and powerful, linking us to the earth. Women's biological capabilities evoke nurturing instincts which cause them to value life—all life. A desire for peace, cooperation and respect flows from this nurturing instinct.

The feminists in the film stress the importance of women reclaiming, rediscovering and reaffirming the female within themselves. This female essence, if embraced, can challenge the present patriarchal system and offer a vision to heal the world. Female understanding can end environmental devastation and the desperate human condition.

Although I enjoyed its fantastic archeological imagery, I found *Goddess Remembered* disturbing. I was puzzled by the certainty with which the filmmakers interpreted ancient history. There are, after all, diverse feminist opinions about women's status in goddess worshipping cultures.

What disturbed me most were the film's philosophical underpinnings. *Goddess Remembered* leads the audience down a slippery path towards embracing the female as superior because of her biological capabilities.

It all smacks of biological determinism. It is ironic that a philosophy used by patriarchy to oppress women is used by this film to liberate us. Feminists have resisted being defined by biology ie that anatomy is de-

see *Goddess* page 16



from Goddess Remembered

A Canadian resource on repro tech

THE FUTURE OF HUMAN REPRODUCTION
ed. by Christine Overall
Toronto: Women's Press, 1989

by Kelly Maier

The literature on reproduction and reproductive technologies is vast. While a significant feminist collection is developing, most writing has been dominated by traditional medical, legal and moral viewpoints, with their embedded—usually unacknowledged—male-centred biases. In addition, discussions in this area have decidedly lacked a focus on the social implications of reproductive technology. The lives of women as a group are profoundly affected by reproduction and our societal attitudes toward it, and woman-centred analyses in this area are essential. Feminist perspectives locate women at the centre—any discussion of reproduction which does not begin with and return to the standpoint of women seems woefully inadequate, if not entirely invalid.

In *The Future of Human Reproduction*, not only is feminism the central unifying premise, the majority of its contributors make visible the socio-political context in which reproductive technology debates and practices are being waged.

Editor Christine Overall is a feminist philosophy professor and author of *Ethics and Human Reproduction: A Feminist Analysis* (1987). Overall's multidisciplinary approach has drawn together contributors from sociology, law, women's studies, medicine, philosophy and political science, each of whom has written on a range of research interests. The result: a rich source of Canadian feminist thinking accessible to those both familiar and unfamiliar with the issues.

Overall has grouped the articles into four general categories: Current Medical Perspectives; the Social and Political Context of Reproduction; Social Policy Questions; and Looking to the Future. The articles explore numerous topics: midwifery, abortion, homebirths, donor insemination, pre-natal diagnosis, so-called surrogacy contracts, to

name a few—as well as feminist theoretical/ethical approaches to reproduction.

Throughout the anthology, certain goals repeatedly emerge, including: increasing the control women have over sexuality and reproduction; having universally accessible woman-centred reproductive services; understanding the framework for government's political goals; ensuring women have access to information about reproductive technologies in a thorough and

to women's choices on abortion. Feminist frameworks must enlarge to tackle these most difficult binds.

One of the most important concepts explored in the book is the ideal of "motherhood" with its split model of good (deserving) and bad (undeserving)—those women who deserve abortions and those who do not, those who ought to have access to reproductive technologies and those who are unfit. The anthology examines how these

nologies change or reinforce existing power structures in society? In a sexist society where discrimination on the basis of sex, race, class, sexuality, and able-bodiedness are deeply embedded in our social structures and mainstream institutions, the nature of reproductive technologies as cure or boon becomes clearer.

Echoed throughout the book is the glaring fact that sexual politics determines technology, not the other way around.

The social, political and cultural implications of reproductive technologies are dense, yet one simple fact remains crystal clear: reproductive processes are presently controlled by the mainstream bio-medical model of pregnancy and infertility. These questions must be answered: who are the official and unofficial gatekeepers to reproductive information, services and the new reproductive technologies? What values do they possess and how does this shape access to reproductive information, delivery of services, research questions, media reports? Or more simply put, from what gender, race, class, sexual preference and cultural bias will decisions about reproduction continue to be made? On what levels can women challenge these systemically embedded discriminations?

As Overall points out, the claims of benefit and harm to women must be carefully examined. What may seem like apparent benefit (eg. access for some women to *in vitro* fertilization to circumvent infertility problems) may pose a significant danger to women as a group. The case of diethylstilbestrol (DES—a 'miracle' pregnancy drug) is a chilling example of this—DES's fifty year history is explored in the anthology. The harms/benefits assessment of reproductive technologies must be done carefully and with women's present status and future well-being firmly in mind.

The federal government's recent attempt to gut the Secretary of State Women's Programs will seriously harm the community-based women's resource where women are thinking, speaking and organizing on reproductive issues. The closing of women's centres and the damage to feminist advocacy group and publications can be seen as a particularly forceful government tactic to silence women—just as the Royal Commission on Reproductive Technology prepares to tour the country for input from Canadian citizens.

Happily, we have this new book to inform and compel us to act on.

Kelly Maier thanks Claire McCarthy and Kristen Schoonover for their assistance with this review.



graphic unknown

The anthology examines how these ideas are used to justify the reproductive harassment of women

consistent way before they agree to let doctors use them; approaching the exploration of reproductive technologies as an active process—informed "decision-making" rather than passive, "informed consent"; moving from a medical model of reproduction to a woman-centred model; broadening the feminist model of reproductive freedom to incorporate both abortion and reproductive technology.

Think of the recent case of the frozen embryo "custody" dispute in Tennessee. The embryos were granted to the woman's custody on the basis that "life begins at conception," and were denied to her ex-husband sperm donor (who wanted to destroy them) who had argued the frozen embryos were private property. It was a "good" decision based on a "bad" judgement, dangerous

By attributing rights to fetuses which can then be used to violate pregnant women's fundamental human rights, the white, professional elite, male-dominated fetal-protection racket threatens the integrity of every woman.

As one contributor suggests, the test of any reproductive technology will be whether it reinforces patriarchal family norms and idealizes motherhood, or whether it contributes to social change, such as the recognition of diverse family systems, the need for altering the gendered division of parenting, and the need for collective responsibility for children (living and as yet unconceived) by the community.

We need to ask, how does the widespread use and acceptance of reproductive tech-

through an archeologist's explanation of the temples of Malta. The male phallic symbol is always found outside the holiest places. The female fertility symbols are found inside these places.

I wish the feminists at the dinner party had been honest about their beliefs. If they desire a female dominated society, they should own up to it. What is needed is an open discussion about the visions feminists have for the future. While some of us will agree with the film, some of us won't, but the debate can only further a feminist understanding of our collective future.

I was also left wondering about the North American appropriation of other cultures. The dinner scene is quite bizarre—women reclaiming and embracing ancient cultural practices, calling the differing goddesses their own, as they sit around a lavish dinner table with all the trimmings.

Goddess Remembered unearths history and exposes the oppressive nature of the dominant society's theories on ancient cultures. The film raises important questions for the women's movement—questions to be carefully explored.

Goddess Remembered is the first of a two-part series on women and spirituality. Part two, *Burning Times* (on witches, past and present) will be released this year. NEB films are available for free (film or video) from local offices. In BC, call 604-666-0716.

Goddess from page 15

tiny. We have demanded the choice to explore this world in its entirety, and rejected being assigned only to the family.

Yet, this film defines women primarily by our biology and sticks us in the role of the nurturer. The role has been expanded from its patriarchal boundaries, but it is still business as usual: woman, the transcendental caregiver, responsible for everyone and everything.

Yes, it is true that women are primary care-givers in our society. And, knowing how to care for one's children can logically extend to a concern for the earth. However, can we as feminists comfortably say that because we have a uterus we are naturally nurturing/good?

There is also a tension between the film's actual content and its implicit messages. I wanted the women at the dinner table to come right out and say exactly what they meant: I couldn't help feeling there was a hidden agenda, to convince the audience that society can only be saved if the female reigns supreme.

The claim was made that goddess religion organizes society in an egalitarian fashion. How would egalitarianism work? If females possess the unique ability to understand healthy/whole living, where do males fit?

I think the film reveals its intentions

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Karen Finley:

Not a word about petunias

by Lauri E. Nerman

Karen Finley is a unique, complex artist whose music is difficult to categorize. When I discovered her last year, I felt that I heard music for the first time, a new language and new sound.

I've played her a few times on my radio show and it never fails: people either love or hate her. There doesn't appear to be a middle ground. In Florida and other states, fundamentalist groups have successfully lobbied for laws to shunt Finley's albums (and others) into the "X-rated" bins of record stores.

Finley is an American performance artist who integrates music, words and visuals. Her work is a reflection of a culture that perpetuates myths around sexual abuse, pornography and sexuality. She deals mainly in lust and emotionality. Every aspect of the world is seen as a duality and Finley constantly crosses genders to point this out. In Europe she had a top 10 bar hit: people danced to, "Baby do you have a clit? Baby do you have a cock?"

Finley left the New York visual art scene in the mid-70s to pursue performance work. She was disgusted with the marketing and "prostitution" of visual artists. Most of her work is live performances although she has recorded segments on vinyl: fortunately the records capture her work in a satisfying manner.

Accessibility is another matter: her records are very difficult to find, due to the nature of her work. Critics frequently misunderstand and misinterpret her use of sexual language, yet her language is neither gratuitous or without context. It is the back-bone of her work.

Finley says "I'm interested in showing that women can be dominant in their sexuality and really express their sexual preferences." For Finley, what matters most is what happens for us after we hear her words. We are being asked to open up our ears.

In her work she shifts points of view frequently. We go from the view of the victim to the person doing the crime. It is clear that her perspective and politics indict the culture, not the individual.

"I'm interested in showing that women can be dominant in their sexuality..."

Karen Finley's relationship with her father is a central theme. He committed suicide when she was a teenager. She says "That act gave me such a depth of a human being—the idea of death, of tragedy, of seeing that act, is something that I live with every day. And that is really a trigger for me and my work—the anger of how that happens, trying to conceptualize spiritually when tragedy happens..." (*Pranks, 1987*).

In a long recorded piece, "The father in all of us" she changes voices and perspectives as quickly as you can count them. We first hear a voice telling us "my first sexual experience was at the time of my birth. I knew I was a penis." The penis eventually

forms and shoots itself out of the womb.

The second piece is told through the eyes of a young daughter. She describes being locked in the refrigerator by her father after her mother leaves for work. The father takes her out of the fridge and uses all the left-over vegetables to rape her. When the mother returns she is furious at the daughter for eating the vegetables. The daughter retreats to her room and places band-aids in-between the legs of her dolls.

Finally we are alone with a dying AIDS patient. The young man refuses to accept

for me, what I like in art or in great works of art are the ones that deal with what's going on within the society."

There have also been accusations that her work is pornographic. In one live piece she becomes an elderly woman who is being physically abused by her daughter. At a number of performances Finley thrust a can of yams into her ass to show the physical abuse. In another piece a prostitute talks to her john and tells him: "I'm not going to let you sit on me while you fuck me, sir. I'll take your money but I won't take your

Finley is adamant that the problem lives with a culture that perceives her work as simply sensational. She is not interested in changing anyone's mind and is only concerned about exposing conditions right now.

Our smug sensibilities are shaken and challenged by her, and that is the essence and power of her work. As a listener, we are never made to feel comfortable. As she puts it, "the truth is hard to swallow."

A postscript of sorts: If you want to find her records you should be prepared for obstacles. I suggest trying your favorite specialty record store and see if you can order it. I've enclosed as much information as I can with the discography. My sources also tell me she has a new album out but I haven't been able to learn its title. Good luck.

Discography

Like a Girl I Want to Keep Coming 1989. This compilation album features 9 artists. "Party Animal" is Finley's piece. Glorno Poetry Systems Records, Dist. by Rough Trade, 326 Sixth St. San Francisco CA 94103

Jump in the River 1988. This EP features two versions of the same song. Side A features Sinead O'Connor. Ensign Records Limited. Dist. by MCA Records Canada, 2450 Victoria Pk. Ave. Willowdale, Ont. M2J 4A2

The Truth is Hard to Swallow 1987. A full length album featuring most of her performance pieces. Pow Wow Art International. Dist. by Distributions Goliath, C.P.1235, Succ. Desjardins, Montreal, PQ H5B 1C3



his death until he can talk to his father. Realizing that he is dying alone without his father, he begins to mourn: "You wouldn't announce my death/cause you wouldn't announce my life."

Another central theme is Finley's belief that penis envy is the fabrication of a misogynistic society, that womb or woman envy is at the core of violence against women. In "Gringo" she takes on the voice of seven men who can only relate through their penises. She is never mocking and presents them for who they truly are:

Hi my name is Irv
I use my cock to serve
I work on computers
I like moans and purrs.

How does it feel to be a gringo?

How does it feel to be a gringo?
Well you're big and fat [sic]
and real, real white

You rape countries with all your might

How does it feel to be a gringo?

How does it feel to be a white white man??

In the otherwise unmemorable video *Mondo New York*, Finley presents a piece about art entrepreneurs. Naked on stage, she begins to smash huge plastic bags full of raw eggs. She takes two stuffed easter bunnies from another bag and dips them into the bag of eggs. She smears the egg over her body and gradually creates herself as an art object. She adds glitter and ribbons to further the effect.

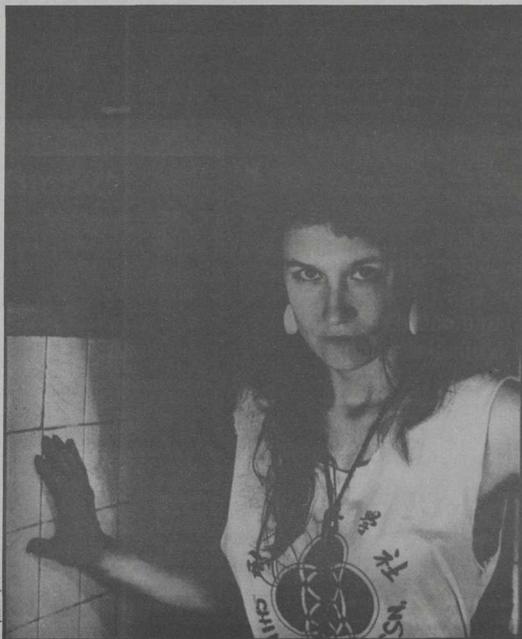
This has been a silent act until she screams her indictment against these entrepreneurs. In her fantasy she cuts their balls off, dips them in excrement and wraps the "chocolate" balls in foil. She then sells the gourmet candy to stores for \$40. A pound. Consumers can't get enough of this new product. Art entrepreneurs have lost their power in this world.

Women's art festivals in the US have banned Finley from performing due to the content of her work. In an interview in *Unsound Magazine* she says, "I wish that things were really nice and that I could talk about petunias, and that art could just be a reflection of something that aesthetic. But

shit."

Finley dismisses these charges. "I hope that when people see me they aren't getting sexually turned on but exploring the idea that in pornography there's really violence going on, and that when they are watching me, the pain that goes on within sexuality is no longer sex or sensually pleasing. I'm showing the sense of power and powerlessness." (*Unsound*).

She is philosophical about the fact that she attracts a lot of criticism. In interviews,



Karen Finley

BULLETIN BOARD

READ THIS

All listings must be received no later than the 18th of the month preceding publication. Listings are limited to 75 words and should include a contact name and telephone number for any clarification that may be required. Listings should be typed or neatly handwritten, double-spaced on 8 1/2 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

WANNA GET INVOLVED?

With Kinesis? We want to get involved with you, too. Come to the news group meeting and help plan our next issue. Tues. May 8 at 1:30 pm at our office, #301-1720 Grant St. If you can't make this meeting, call Nancy at 255-5499 to arrange another time. No experience necessary.

MAYWORKS FESTIVAL

A week-long celebration of labour culture, by working people, for working people May 1-6 throughout the Lower Mainland. Call 324-8821 for details, or watch around town for posters.

PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKS

Anne Ferran's "I Am the Rehearsal Master" will be part of a large project entitled AURORA AUSTRALIS shown at Presentation House Gallery, 333 Chesterfield Ave., North Van., to May 27. For more info, call Presentation House, 986-1351.

UNITED IN STRUGGLE

Women of Colour Initiate a Dialogue: An Evening of Theatre and Discussion. Sun. May 6, 8 pm, at La Quena, 1111 Commercial Dr. Admission \$3. For more info, call VSW at 255-5511

MARY KELLY: INTERIM

Mary Kelly's work has long been considered pivotal within feminist art and theory. "Interim 1984-1989" is a re-evaluation of representations of women at the threshold of middle age, using a variety of formats which often pair narrative text panels with images. May 16 - July 30 at the Van. Art Gallery.

DAY OF CHOICE

May 12 is the national day for choice on abortion and a chance to protest Bill C-43, the proposed criminal abortion law. In Vancouver, gather at 11:30 am at Granville Sq. (north foot of Granville St.). March to and rally 1 pm at the Art Gallery. Bring a coathanger. For info call 669-6209.

WOMEN & THE ENVIRONMENT

A 4-part series, Thursdays 7-9 pm, May 3-24. Topics: Ecological Issues from a Personal Perspective, Local and Global Development Issues, Environmental Health, Building an Ecofeminist Community. Rm. 207, 580 Burrard St. Cost: \$25 series/\$7 session, subsidy available. For more info, call 683-2531.

EVENTS

PRO BICYCLE RALLY

To encourage the City of Vancouver to make our city "Bicycle Friendly." Bring your bicycle, Tues. June 5, 1 pm. For location or more info, call Gavin Davidson at 251-6471.

AGANETHA DYCK

Show at the Lateral Gallery, Women in Focus, 849 Beatty St. Exhibition companion by Sigrid Dahle. Gallery hours: noon-5 pm Wed.-Fri. until May 13. Call 682-5848 for more info.

EXPLORE ART THERAPY

As a career. The Vancouver Art Therapy Institute offers a two year graduate level training programme. Two Demonstration Workshops are scheduled for the Spring. May 11th, June 15th. \$35. Phone: 926-9381.

TIKKUN OLAM BRUNCH

Sunday, May 6, 1:00 - 4:00 pm, Tikkun Olam presents a Potato Latke Brunch: a benefit for the Unlearning Anti-Semitism Workshops in Crescent Beach. Fabulous Jewish food, Full brunch. Tix \$4-\$18. Women only. For info: Sandy 274-4065 or Karen 685-9161.

UN-LEARNING ANTI-SEMITISM

Fri. May 25 - Sun. May 27 Tikkun Olam II: A weekend workshop for Jewish and non-Jewish women on unlearning anti-semitism and building alliances to be held in Crescent Beach. For info: Sandy 274-4065, Karen 685-9161.

"GOLDEN THREADS"

The worldwide network of lesbians over 50, presents its 4th. Annual Celebration June 22-24 in Provincetown, Mass. Festivities feature Alix Dobkin. For more info contact: Christine Burton, Golden Threads, P.O. Box 3177, Burlington, VT 05401-0031, USA

SUBMISSIONS

BLACK LESBIAN ANTHOLOGY

Seeking quality, unpublished poetry (any length or form) and fiction (incl. plays and experimental pieces) All topics and genres desired, must be by Black Lesbians. Send poetry to Terr Jewell, 211 W. Saginaw, #2, Lansing, MI 48933 USA. Send fiction to Stephanie Byrd, 705 E. Seneca, #7, Ithaca, NY 14850 USA. Please send SASE with submission or inquiry. Deadline: Aug. 15, 1990.

DREADLOCKS

Black feminist writer seeking women with dreadlocks for anthology. Wants photographs and women's own words on the experience of locking their hair. If you are a DreadWoman or know of any, please contact Terri Jewell at above address.

ACT NOW

You can be a princess, a dragon or a mule. Random Acts is looking for lesbians with some acting experience to perform in "The Fairy Princess and the Princess Fool," at the Cinderella Ballroom during the Gay Games. Must be available for rehearsals (prob. evs.) during June and July and for night performances Aug. 4-10. Script: Nora D. Randall, Director: Jackie Crossland. If interested, call 682-3109 before May 25.

LESBIAN MOMS & KIDS

Support group meets every Wed., 1-3 pm, at the VLC, 876 Commercial Dr. Playtime and outings for children with emphasis on support for mothers. For info call 254-8458.

GROUPS

KARATE FOR WOMEN

Self defense, fitness, confidence. All women's karate club seeking new members. Shito-ryu karate taught by a female black belt. Tuesdays & Thursdays, 7 pm, Carnarvon Community School, 16th & Balalava. Observers welcome. Call Joni: 734-9816; Rose: 737-0910 or Monica: 872-8982.

JAPANESE-CANADIAN WOMEN

Are you a Japanese-Canadian woman? Were you raised in a violent home? I am planning a feature piece in an upcoming issue of the JCCA Bulletin (Geppo) on "Violence Against Women in the Japanese-Cdn. community" and would like us to share our experiences. Complete confidentiality is respected and guaranteed. Help to break the silence! Please call Terrie at 321-0575. Try calling before noon daily.

NEW REPRO TECH

New reproductive technologies: how can women have a say? Volunteer needed to take charge of a short term project. Purpose: to provide network between Lower Mainland groups preparing briefs for the Royal Commission on Reproductive Technology for fall 1990. Project would last from May-Sept., with few hours and lots of support. Sponsored by VSW and the Van. Women's Health Collective. Call Bonnie at 255-6554 for more info.

TO YOUR HEALTH

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective needs volunteers. An opportunity to be involved in women's health issues. Please call 255-8284.

MISC.

GIVING BIRTH

is Just the Beginning: Women Speak about Mothering, by Judy Lerner Crawley. A book of the trials, tribulations and triumphs of child-rearing in the '80s. Now available from Artex, 3575 St. Laurent, Suite 303, MtL, Québec, H2T 2T7 (514) 845-2759. Cost: \$25.

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STUDIO FOR RENT

Studio/office space available immediately in shared building. Lower Lonsdale. High ceiling, lots of light. Suitable for working artists. 150-400 sq. ft. \$200/month plus. Call 980-4235, 9-5 pm, 987-9265 evs.

TRAVEL AGENT WANTED NOW

Must have 2 years experience in industry, reservac trained. Person needs to have managerial skills, understanding of co-operatives and unions, and lots of enthusiasm. Send resume to Airheart Cop Travel, 2149 Commercial Drive, Van., BC, V5N 4B3.

TWO CITY WOMEN

Looking for country acres. Under \$25,000, minimum 3 acres, some of it open and gardenable. Established well or water possibility. Out of the way location - Sunshine coast, Gulf Islands or central Vancouver Island. Please call 872-0516.

GULF ISLAND COMMUTER

Got an extra room? Responsible woman needs room in quiet conscious female house 3 nights per week. Prefer UBC/Kits area, but west/east end near bus route O.K. For June 1. Call Daphne 228-1716 (w), 731-0407 (h).

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KATE CLINTON
CHRISTINE COLLISTER
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SHIATSU TREATMENTS

The dynamic movement of Shiatsu. The rhythm, the flow of breath. Connecting and moving thru pain, stiffness, doubt, lethargy, restlessness. Moving, releasing, charging, discharging, grounding. Phone Astarte Sands 251-5409.

MENSTRUAL RELIEF

An acupuncture workshop for women experiencing menstrual discomfort. Renfrew Community Centre. Thurs. May 10 7:10-10:00 pm. Fee: \$15. Phone 434-6688 to register or Astarte 251-5409 for info.

JERICO BEACH!

Easy-going dyke seeks same to share beautiful 2 bdrm. ste. on top floor of Kits character house. 2 balc., fp. Avail. May/June 1st. \$525 inc. heat, light, cable & laundry. Call Heidi 736-2657.

SUMMER SUBLET

Room in shared house with two feminist, n/s, quiet, semi vegetarian women, east end. Looking for a compatible woman, sorry no pets. Available June, July, August, possibly longer. Approx. \$300/month. Call Sally at 251-4231.

TRY CO-OP LIVING

City View Co-op, a 31 unit building near Victoria & Hastings, keeps an open waiting list for applications for membership. Rent for 1, 2 or 3 BR apts, is \$467, 589, or 663, plus a (refundable) share purchase. To apply, send a S.A.S.E. to: Membership Ctee, 1885 E. Pender, Vanc. V5L 1W6.

COUNSELLING

Zhara Balleny, B.A. Counselling for women, lesbian-feminist focus. Individual or couple counselling dealing with coming-out, relationship, family, co-dependency, assertiveness and support issues. Sliding scale and free 1/2 hour consultation. Call: 876-2036.

READ LESBIANEWS:

Monthly events, information, ideas from Victoria's lesbian feminist community. Sample issue/back issues \$2 each. Yearly subscription (mailed in plain lavender wrapper) \$18. Cheques to Debby Gregory, LesbianNews, PO Box 5339, Station B, Victoria B.C. V8R 6S4.

MANITOBA HISTORY PROJECT

Seeks women and men who were actively lesbian or gay in our province before 1970, to help us record our (varied!) past. Confidentially assured. If you, or someone you know, can help us, please write: Box 1661, Winnipeg, MB., R3C 2Z6, or phone collect, (204) 488-7642.

WOMEN'S GUEST HOUSE

Didn't make it this winter? Never fear! Villa de Hermanas, our beautiful spacious beachfront guesthouse in the Dominican Republic is available as a private home May - October. Stroll our long, secluded beach, relax by the pool, sit on shady balconies and enjoy the shimmering ocean view—on your own or with friends. The temperature is wonderful; the price perfect. Reservations: call our Toronto friend, Suzi, at 416-462-0046 between 9 am - 10 pm.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY Geography/Women's Studies

Women's Studies and the Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University have a tenure track joint appointment in Human Geography at the Assistant Professor rank. Applications are invited from candidates who have research interests in the field of development in both Women's Studies and Geography. The candidate should have a Ph.D. completed and will be required to teach undergraduate and graduate courses in Geography and Women's Studies. The candidate would be expected to develop a strong research programme in her/his area of specialization. This position commences in September, 1990. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirement, this advertisement is directed to people who are eligible for employment in Canada at the time of application. Simon Fraser University offers equal employment opportunities to qualified applicants. This position is subject to final budgeting approval. Applications and three letters of reference should be received by May 15, 1990.

Apply to:
Andrea Lebowitz, Co-ordinator,
Women's Studies Program,
Simon Fraser University,
Burnaby, B.C., V5A 1S6 Canada

Telephone: (604) 291-3321
FAX#: (604) 291-4455

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ACREAGE WANTED

Intentional Womyn's Healing Community is looking for large acreage w/building(s) in the Southern Interior of B.C. w/access to water. Preferably lease w/option to buy. W.M.H.V.S. c/O 12538, 24th Ave., Surrey, B.C., V4A 2E4

BOOKS FOR SALE

by Anne Innis Dagg. *The Fifty Per Cent Solution: Why Should Women Pay for Men's Culture?* \$8; *Harems and Other Horrors: Sexual Bias in Behavioral Biology* \$6. or \$12; *Camel Quest: Summer Research on the Saharan Camel* \$12. Add \$1. for postage and handling. Otter Press, Box 747, Waterloo, ON N2J 4C2.

PEACEFUL RETREAT

Bed and Breakfast located on Salt Spring Island. Close to Fulford Harbour and Ruckle Park. Cozy rooms with private entrances. A comfortable setting for women in a feminist home. Phone Maureen at 653-4345 for info and reservations.

CHARLES SQUARE CO-OP

Charles Square, a 36 unit housing co-op in East Van has an open waiting list for 1, 2, and 3 BR units. Rents are \$460, \$570 and \$705 with \$1,000 share purchase (financing can be arranged). Near park and community centre; meetings run by consensus. To get on waiting list, send SASE to Membership Ctee, 1555 Charles St., Van. V5L 2T2

SALTSPRING RETREAT

Watch the deer browse as you relax on the deck. Cozy up to the wood stove and dream a little (wood provided). Escape to Saltspring Island for a weekend or a week. Fully equipped women's guest cabin in a country setting. Close to sea, lakes and hiking trails. \$35 single, \$50 double. Special rates for week or month. Call 653-9475 or write Gillian Smith, C85, King Rd., RRI, Fulford Harbour, B.C. V0S 1C0.



Mary Kelly is a feminist artist and she's at the Vancouver Art Gallery in May and June.

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HERIZEN NEW AGE SAILING

Are you the confident, competent sailor you want to be? Are you all too truly can be in your life? Are you fully experiencing your aliveness and the ecstasy of life? The time is now to have what you want on land and sea through HERIZEN personalized sailing and self-awareness coaching for women. "My love for life, sailing and supportive, non-judgemental teaching specifically designed for women makes time aboard my yacht a magical experience of transformation for women." Your new-found confidence and peace within will go with you into your everyday life, to empower your sailing, personal and working relationships. For more information on courses in B.C. and Mexico, personally tailored to your needs, call Captain Trish Birdsall, 662-8016.

GREENPEACE - HELP WANTED

We've moved to 1726 Commercial Dr. (at 1st Ave.) We need articulate activists to join our public outreach/fundraising crew. 2:30 - 10 pm, \$200-\$300/week. Excellent benefits. Call Cary or James, weekdays 11 am - 2 pm, to schedule an interview. 253-5990.

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