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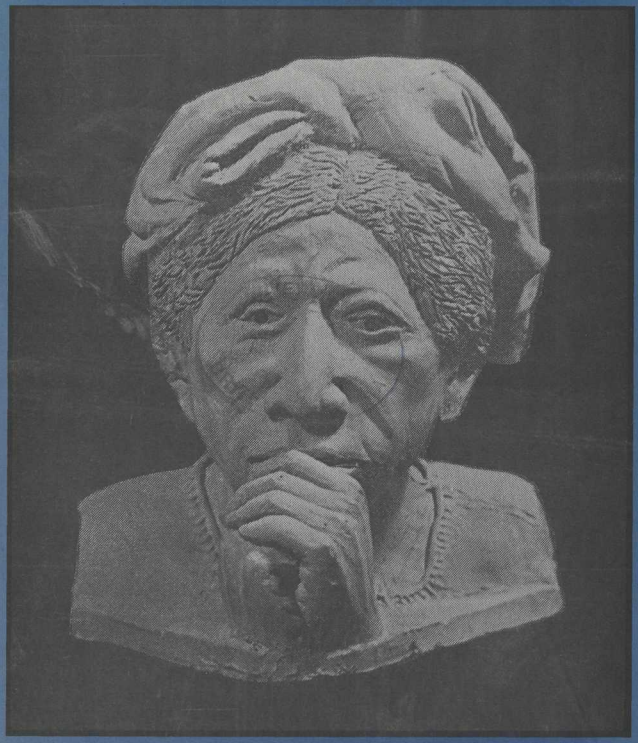
News About Women That's Not In The Dailies



Yoli Garcia: sculpture and politics

Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Call us at 255-5499. Our next News Group is Wed. April 5, at 1:30 pm at *Kinesis*, #301-1720 Grant St. All women welcome even if you don't have experience.

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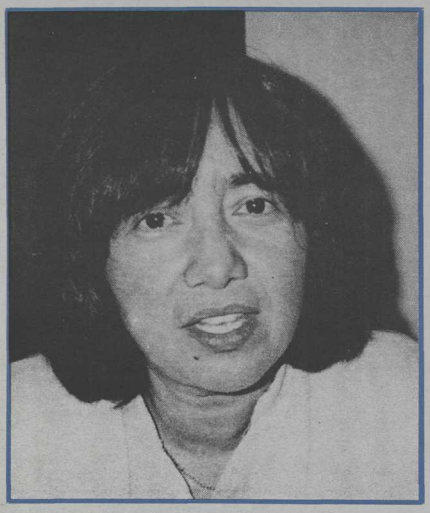
KINESIS

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies

MEANS MOVEMENT



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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.

Resources an addition

Action of Women's Addiction—Research and Education (AWARE) is a group which began in Kingston, Ontario in 1985. AWARE women work in the field of addictions or they are recovering substance abusers or they may be both. AWARE's philosophy incorporates a recognition that women develop substance abuse problems for reasons that are different than men's. The group implements this belief by making recommendations about women's problem prevention and treatment needs and ensuring that health promotion and educational materials are accessible to women, particularly in light of the fact that one in four adults in Canada has less than a grade nine education , and that more women than men have low literacy skills.

AWARE is producing, for the province of Ontario, a series of booklets on women's use of legal, mood–altering drugs. The booklets read at a grade eight level, and will be distributed in both English and French. They target women particularly vulnerable to becoming dependant on prescription drugs: low income women, women in middle years and older, and women who are full–time housewives. The social and political environment which encourages women to turn to prescription drugs to cope with the problems of day–to–day living is discussed and the safe use of tranquilizers, sleeping pills, and anti–depressants is stressed.

AWARE believes the booklets will enable women to make informed choices about their use of legal drugs and ensure women will be better able to discuss their use of prescription drugs with their doctors and other health care professionals. The booklets will be available in late 1989 or early 1990. For more information about ordering booklets or about AWARE, please call (613) 545-0117 or write: AWARE, P.O. Box 86, Kingston, Ont., K7L 4V6

Unlearning racism

An Unlearning Racism weekend workshop for women will be held June 9, 10, 11. Racism hurts all of us, but its effects are experienced very differently by people of colour and by white people. This workshop provides a positive, non–threatening environment where women from all backgrounds can explore and begin to work through a variety of issues related to race. This June workshop is particularly geared to women who have not attended a weekend Unlearning Racism workshop before and will be facilitated by members of AWARE, a local alliance group.

Organizers want this workshop to be attended by 50 percent women of colour and 50 percent white women. Facilitators will work separately with women of colour and with white women for parts of the workshop. Women of colour will not have to listen to the unaware racism of white women. The workshop will be held at Camp Alexandra in White Rock, a wheelchair accessible site. Please let us know about other access needs. A childcare subsidy is available. Sliding fee scale: $20 to $150. Register between May 1 and May 15 by calling: Celeste George, 251- 2635 or Mari Wright, 872-4079.

Mobile history

BACKGROUND is women bringing women's lives to the foreground to enrich existing records of our history, our myths and our dreams. BACKGROUND is women of all cultures, collectively re/membering and exchanging personal mythologies; our own and our predecessors. BACKGROUND has a mandate to develop and produce theatre that tells women's stories, and to maintain and develop a west coast women's museum and archive, The Living Museum of Women's Stories, for the safekeeping and telling of our lives in our own words.

The Living Museum of Women's Stories is being designed as a mobile unit that will travel throughout B.C. and in particular to remote and under-served communities. The mobile museum will offer collections of B.C.'s women's art and artifacts, live theatre and storytelling, as well as gathering and taping oral histories of women throughout the province for BACKGROUND's Archive of Voices. BACKGROUND is a non–profit, charitable organization founded in 1988 by Nicole Perrin, and governed by a seven member board of directors. It is supported by a growing number of members and volunteers and is looking for contacts throughout B.C. and beyond. We want your ideas and input to make the Living Museum of Women's Stories your museum. For further information contact: Nicole Perrin, Artistic Director, BACKGROUND, 1628 Graveley St, Vancouver, B.C. V5L 3A7, (604)253-9197.

Anti-apartheid campaign

The Anti-Apartheid Network has launched a letter–writing campaign calling for Canada to cut all ties with South Africa and the apartheid system. The goal of the campaign is to deliver 5 to 6,000 letters to the federal government on June 16, the commemoration of Soweto day. The letters will be individually written letters to the Canadian government calling for full mandatory sanctions against South Africa.

The history of the past few years is one of strong rhetoric but weak action from the federal government. Canada's trade with South Africa has increased by 68 percent in 1988 over 1987. Full mandatory sanctions are the most important action that can be taken by countries outside South Africa to support those working inside South Africa against apartheid .

We urge you to make a committment to work for sanctions against South Africa by joining in the letter writing campaign. For information to include in your individual letter or to help the campaign in some other way contact: Diane Smith, 876-1465 or Dave McMurran, 874-4020 or write Anti-Apartheid Network, 2524 Cypress St, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3N2

AIDS and women

Ines Rieder, former editor of *Connections*, will be in Vancouver April 17, to read from her most recent book *AIDS: The Women* and to discuss women's experience in the AIDS health crisis. Her speaking tour will draw attention to the needs of women with HIV infection, and will support the efforts of local women AIDS activists.

AIDS: The Women is a collection of intimate accounts written by ordinary women from a dozen countries, and a myriad of perspectives, a diversity that cracks open the cold statistic and the faceless stereotype of women affected by the AIDS pandemic. The book describes the daily occurrences of AIDS, recounting the stories of women with AIDS/ARC, women who are HIV positive, and the women who work on the AIDS wards, staff the hotlines, and trade HIV screening for condoms and syringes.

Rieder will be talking about women and AIDS Monday, April 17, 8 pm at Octopus Books, 1146 Commercial Dr. She will be prepared to answer questions from women involved as caregavers, as relatives and lovers, as educators or anyone just interested in issues about women and AIDS.

For more information please contact Brownie at Octopus Books 253-0913 or Robin Barnett 255-5363.

Clinic meeting vital

Last summer, the Everywoman's Health Center Society (1988) was incorporated and the first free-standing abortion clinic in B.C. was established. The Society is now at its next stage of development: the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) and elections for the Board of Directors who will be responsible for the affairs of the clinic. The AGM and elections will be held on May 7, 1989. Members of the Society will be mailed notices of the time and place.

To vote or run for the Board, you must have joined the B.C. Coalition for Abortion Clinics, or one of its member groups, before March 8, 1989: and you must join the Society by April 7, 1989. To find out if a group you belong to is a member group of the Coalition, please call 873-5455 or you can check group lists available at the Clinic (Victoria and 44th) and the Vancouver Status of Women, 301 - 1720 Grant St. Membership forms are also available at both locations. Many people have worked through the years to make the clinic possible, and it belongs to all of us. Please join the Society and come out to the Annual General Meeting, May 7.

Correction

The article "Activism in the home" which appeared in the March issue listed an incorrect contact number for 22 Environmental Group (Ed Moore). The correct number is 688-2228.

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Feminists fuming over REAL funding

by Noreen Shanahan

The Secretary of State's Women's Program's recent decision to provide Realistic Equal and Active for Life Women (REAL) with $21,000 sets an ominous precedent in funding women's organizations, and shows how funding guidelines have been altered to fit the right-wing Tory agenda, according to representatives of women's groups.

Although abortion and sexual orientation issues are expressly forbidden in Secretary of State (Secstate) funding criterion—resulting in the exclusion of many projects—REAL's forthcoming conference, "Equality Revisited," gives free rein to anti-choice and homophobic sentiments.

A preliminary conference agenda, obtained through Dawn Black's (NDP-MP) office, includes a speaker on the recent Joseph Borowski Supreme Court appeal decision, at which REAL intervened in Borowski's support.(Borowski's fetal rights challenge was dismissed in March by the Supreme Court of Canada.)

Also, the workshop "Canadian families: hi-lites, insights, future trends," is expected to zero in on the "homosexual threat"often voiced by REAL.

Jan Barnsley of Vancouver's Women's Research Centre, along with other nationally-funded women's groups, met with Secstate funders in early January.

Representatives from these groups attacked the ministry's policies on lesbianism and abortion, hoping to lift the restrictions and thereby (further) support women.

"The only way these policies could be changed is if we manage to convince the minister (Jerry Weiner) to change them," she said.

But this isn't likely to happen, she added. Rather, feminist groups will continue to be warned and threatened with funding loss if work is done on these issues.

Yolanda McCay, a spokesperson from Secstate, denies the arbitrary use of these restrictions. "We do not fund for abortion or particular sexual orientations or sexual points of view," she said.

Furthermore, she "sees no reason" why their office should be privy to REAL's conference agenda.

Meanwhile, Dawn Black believes the Secretary of State has such information but refuses to make it public.

Her office is now in the process of applying under "Access to Information" regulations for a complete conference agenda and a copy of REAL's successful application.

After five years and five unsuccessful attempts at getting funding, REAL now has it's toe in the door at Secstate.

"This represents the erosion of the program's mandate and it's very dangerous," says Barnsley. "It was designed as a special program that women's groups fought for and kept alive . . .

"Its original framework was to provide support to women's volunteer organizations designed to improve the status of women."

She's concerned that through acquiring the skills to write successful funding applications—in this case by re-defining 'equality'—REAL or groups like them will also gain increased funding and attempt to undo the work of feminists.

photo by Noreen Shanahan

The pro-family phenomenon is clearly an out-growth of the anti-abortion movement and 85 percent of REAL women members also belong to "right to life" groups, according to a 1986 survey of anti-feminist groups in anglophone Canada.

Efforts to stamp out this regressive trend have begun.

Intending to challenge the sexual orientation/abortion restriction and it's arbitrary enforcement, Gay Games (an international sports meet to be held in Vancouver in 1990) is considering applying to Secstate for project funding.

If rejected, they'll make a test-case of themselves and with LEAF's (Women's Legal Education and Action Fund) assistance, fight the discriminatory and homophobic funding restriction.

See **Fuming** pg. 7

Advancing women

by Sylvia Back

The Vancouver School Board has adopted policy which calls on the Board to "endeavour to establish and maintain an equal number of men and women in all administrative positions, including school and district positions."

The policy is a move to increase the percentage of women who are secondary school principals and senior administrative personnel, such as District Supervisors, in the Vancouver School District.

According to trustee Dr. Pauline Weinstein, "Since 1982, the board has followed the practice that if there were two equally qualified candidates for a position, and one was a woman, than we would hire the woman and so putting this in policy, while not a new step, is a very important committment by the board."

In the Vancouver School District, only one of the seven senior administrators is a woman and only eight of the forty high school principals are women. Of the 1,238 secondary school teachers employed by the board, 522 are women. Secondary school administrative positions are generally filled by teachers coming up through the ranks of high school teaching.

Weinstein says that the Board's record in some areas would have been much improved if not for the " . . . restraint program which has meant very little hiring and the loss of some administrative positions in the past four years."

"It is, however, a fact of life," Weinstein said, "that few women in the system aspire to administrative positions because the workload is such that they could be out three and four nights a week at meetings and often there are weekend conferences to attend. This becomes a real conflict for women who may have young children at home. Society doesn't go out of its way to help women in this situation.

"The system must take these aspects into account and try to facilitate a better approach. It may need to look at issues such as day care and evening care for children, for a start."

The new school board policy is not without its detractors. Dr. Ken Denike, former chairperson of the board, voted against the motion saying that it "would not be in the best interests of staff morale."

Denike argues that because there is a higher proportion of male teachers at the secondary school level it is natural that there will be more male administrators because the board "doesn't have the same base, the same pool of talent to work from."

"There are many people," said Denike, "looking up to the next level of promotion and if anything other than talent (as a basis for promotion) was imposed there would be problems."

The Secondary Teachers' Association is supportive of the board efforts and intends to recommend that a representational committee be established to discover ways to improve the representation of women in administrative positions.

Association President Don Briard does not think that staff morale would be adversely affected. "The majority of teachers would recognize and would accept the fact that something needs to be done to address the problem," said Briard.

B.C. Ministry make-work project?

by Esther Shannon

It used to be men would ask, "What do women want?" and feminists would grit their teeth. An update on the question in B.C. is, "What does the new women's ministry want?" and apparently, no one knows.

The Social Credit government announced the establishment of a women's ministry in the March Speech from the Throne, which opened the new legislative session. Details, such as who the new minister will be, have not been forthcoming.

What has been announced is that the new ministry will "ensure women's access to decision-making, assess government programs in assisting workers with family responsibilities, review access to skills and training programs and guide the province in developing day-care policies."

Currently, the government department responsible for these issues, with the exception of day-care, is the Women's Secretariat, a branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training.

Michelle Poirier, Director of Public Affairs for the ministry, told *Kinesis* the Women's Secretariat "doesn't know the timing of the ministry, who is going to be the minister, what kind of scope the ministry will have or any other details."

According to Poirier, "It would make sense that the Women's Secretariat would become a part of the ministry and it would appear that is very likely to happen but we really don't know." Poirier also said that the Women's Secretariat was not consulted prior to the announcement. "We didn't know that it would be announced."

New Democrat Party Women's Critic, Darlene Marzari has called the new ministry " . . . a contradiction in terms. The Socreds continue to put women in this province down. A women's ministry should empower and encourage women. It should open doors for women and this government has never done that for women."

Marzari charged that, "This ministry won't be efficient because it doesn't have a framework or a base. It only exists because the Socred's have been reacting to poll results that say that the government doesn't have the support of women. It's a grab for the women's vote and possibly a payoff for Carol Gran's loyalty to Bill Vander Zalm." (Gran is the Social Credit caucus chairperson. She has recently been increasingly supportive of Vander Zalm after opposing his stand on abortion.)

In a recent speech in the legislature about the women's ministry, Marzari pointed to a number of actions the government could take to demonstrate its support for B.C. women. Included in her list were: immediate funding for Everywoman's Health Centre, complete education for women and girls around family planning and reproductive choice, an affirmative action plan, a pay equity bill, affordable housing, transition and second stage housing for battered women, an increase to poverty levels, at least, in welfare rates and a move to massively increase childcare spaces, to mention just a few of Marzari's proposals.

Since Bill Vander Zalm's government appears to be at somewhat of a loss with respect to the new women's ministry's activities, this list seems tailor made to fill the gap in the Socred's planning, at least for the short term. No doubt other suggestions will be forthcoming from women in the province.

Nurses seek contract, condemn cutbacks

by Nancy Pollak

After years of poor wages and poorer working conditions, nurses in British Columbia are prepared to make the Spring of '89 the season they deliver a strong dose of labour militancy to their employers.

In fact, this season may prove a time of general labour tension throughout provincial hospitals as all the major health care unions renegotiate contracts which ended March 31 *(see Box)*.

The strategy of the 20,000-strong B.C. Nurses Union (BCNU) is being watched with particular interest, in part because of the stirring performance of sister unions on the Prairies in contract negotiations in 1988.

Both the United Nurses of Alberta and the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses waged successful strikes in the face of vicious attacks by their provincial governments, whose austerity programs had created substandard hospital conditions similar to those facing B.C. nurses—and patients.

Debra McPherson, a nurse at Vancouver General Hospital's cardiac surgery ward and BCNU regional representative, cites two major issues: overtime and work load.

"Our present contract requires only a 'reasonable amount' of overtime which management can request [rather than demand]," says McPherson, a 17-year nursing veteran. "But nurses are doing *lots* of overtime ... and having heavy moral and guilt pressures laid on them to do it."

The demand for overtime stems from a simple enough source: a critical shortage of nurses. In 1988, a B.C. Ministry of Health study concluded the province needed 2,000 more nurses. Other studies show that each month, an average of 460 nursing posts go unfilled.

Not surprisingly, these shortages directly affect both the working nurse and her patients. Nationally, this province ranks next-to-last for the amount of nursing care received by hospital patients, according to Statistics Canada. And the attention B.C. patients do receive frequently comes from a nurse who is working short-staffed—or alone, in a situation she considers unsafe.

For example, the intensive care unit at Vancouver's Childrens' Hospital is 14 nurses short. "Women are working a job and a half," says McPherson. "As you can imagine, this affects how good you feel about your work ... nurses are burning-out, morale is low."

BCNU president Pat Savage has characterized the understaffing as part of a "vicious circle. Substandard conditions make it hard to recruit badly-needed nurses ... and we go from bad to worse because there are too few of us.

"The system is eroding under our feet while the provincial government and our employers do virtually nothing."

The BCNU is negotiating with the hospitals' management body, the Health Labour Relations Association (HLRA). Seventeen thousand nurses in 142 hospitals are affected by the talks which, at press time, are scheduled to continue at least until mid-April.

Wages are another irritant to working nurses—and to the nursing shortage. Ranking about average nationally, B.C. general duty registered nurses start at $15.07/hr and peak at $17.43/hr. Since the nursing shortage is continent-wide, B.C. recruiters cannot attract nurses due to the relatively low wages and stressful working conditions.

Contract proposals tabled by HLRA in early March called for no wage increase. The entire HLRA package amounts to a series of rollbacks: in benefits, control of work scheduling, ease of transfers, etc.

Says McPherson, "Astonishing and *insulting* ... HLRA is truly pushing it."

The nursing shortage has deeper roots as well, ones that strike at the heart of a health care system laden with patriarchal values. "If we look at who became a nurse," says McPherson, "it was traditionally women—older daughters—instilled with the duty to care." Nursing tradition also instilled the duty of absolute obedience to the (usually male) doctor.

"Now, women are more sophisticated," says McPherson. "We want respect, autonomy, input into decisions ... The structure of the health care system doesn't allow that." In fact, the system is remarkably disrespectful of nurses' skill and intelligence and, as a consequence, "people leave the profession, and they leave it early."

buttons courtesy of B.C. Nurses Union

The BCNU is negotiating for the inclusion of a Professional Responsibility clause which will give nurses some power over their working conditions. With such a clause, nurses who are concerned with staff shortages, for example, will have a mechanism by which to appeal management decisions. (An independent body of nursing experts would evaluate the disputed situation according to accepted nursing practice.)

Nurses in Ontario and Saskatchewan won professional responsibility clauses in their last contracts.

Although the HLRA faces nurses at the bargaining table, "It is the government which pulls the strings that move the hand that eventually signs the contract," said union head Savage at a winter Wage and Policy conference. Nurses have every reason to be wary of Socred health care policy which seems more focused on funding medical technology than health practitioners.

Hospital nurses in B.C. have never been on strike and, as McPherson says, "We would approach that with trepidation ... and there's the moral dilemma (of caring for their patients.)" The BCNU has hammered out essential services plans in the event of a strike.

While nurses are hoping their bargaining committee can achieve a good contract through negotiations, "We won't accept another garbage contract," says McPherson.

"We're tired of being jerked around. We've accepted public sector cutbacks, but no more. We're tired of being nice."

Who's Who

On March 31st, contracts for all the major health care unions expired. Who's who at the bargaining table?

- **BCNU:** The British Columbia Nurses Union has 17,000 of its 20,000 members up for a new contract. The BCNU are Registered Nurses—with either a 2-year nursing diploma (90 percent of the membership), a 4-year nursing degree or advanced training.
- **HEU:** The Hospital Employees Union is 23,000 strong—85 percent of whom are women. Their jobs range from laundry and food service work to orderlies, respiratory technologists and Licenced Practical Nurses (LPN). The HEU is owed $5 million in wages from its last contract; this year, HEU is seeking pay equity.
- **HSA:** The 7,000-member Health Sciences Association is 87 percent women. HSA represents 50 professions including dieticians, physiotherapists and lab technologists. HSA is also seeking pay equity, since their members earn up to 24 percent less than male-dominated public sector professionals.
- **PARI:** The Professional Association of Residents and Interns is the union for doctors employed by hospitals.

Organizing for pay equity

by Marion Pollack

"Just give us the money." This was the theme and an oft repeated refrain at the March B.C. Federation of Labour Conference on pay equity.

Delegates at the conference made it clear that they were tired of receiving lousy wages for performing valuable work. Provincial government workers, clerks, hospital technicians, were all unanimous in the feeling that they wanted pay equity. Now.

The Conference had two focuses. One was to assess how far women have come in the fight for pay equity and to give participants the tools to carry on those fights in their unions. The second focus was on developing a pay equity coalition to give support and coherence to the struggle. The conference organizers are convinced that a coalition is the main way to ensure that the fight for pay equity keeps a high profile.

Rosemary Warskett, an independent researcher, was one of the keynote speakers. She outlined how big business and governments benefit from keeping wages for women and minorities low. Warskett said, that this low wage strategy was a deliberate policy pointing out that pay equity is more important than ever as government's and businesses are transferring jobs to the poorly paid non-union service sector. Warskett also tied together the fights for an increase in the minimum wage and pay equity saying both are necessary to ensure that working women and minorities get what is due to them. She concluded by saying that a coalition is needed to fight effectively for pay equity.

Warskett was followed by a panel of women unionists discussing the progress of their unions in achieving pay equity. Bernice Kirk from the Canadian Union of Public Employees talked about how Nelson civic employees have won pay equity in their latest round of negotiations. Sherry Parker from the Public Service Alliance of Canada recounted how her union is involved in a fairly complex job evaluation scheme with the federal government in an attempt to achieve pay equity. She said that her Union-Management Committee had been meeting for over five months and has evaluated less than one third of the jobs in their jurisdiction.

Throughout the conference considerable time was spent on discussing how to mobilize to achieve pay equity. Participants heard how women civic workers in Nelson described their jobs to their male co-workers and then pointed out the lousy pay rates. Many of the men were appalled and subsequently became pay equity supporters. Another story told how workers at one American University developed a programme, "Into the Red," to accompany their bargaining for pay equity. The campaign started slowly with some women wearing one item of red clothing to work. By the time bargaining was in full swing all the women were fully clothed in red, and all the men were sporting red shirts.

One of the most important ways to achieve pay equity is through the establishment of a coalition. A portion of the conference was devoted to that. Jean Swanson from End Legislated Poverty talked about the do's and dont's in forming a coalition. She made it clear that coalition was not only possible, it was necessary.

Anne Harvey, the ex-chair of the B.C. Federation of Labour Women's Committee, gave a courageous speech saying that the trade union movement had made mistakes in the 1983 Solidarity Coalition and that it had to learn from them if it is going to build a real coalition. Nothing else, she said, will do.

Delegates left the conference pledging to do one thing on the issue of pay equity. Some women are going to write letters. Some women are going to read more on the issue. Other women are going to talk to their co-workers. One by one we are going to build a massive movement for pay equity.

DAWN B.C. focuses on family life

by Eunice Brooks

Women with disabilities met at the Lion's Easter Seal Camp Squamish, March 16-19th to bring to a close the DisAbled Women's Network's (DAWN) year of focus on Violence Against Disabled Women, and to begin the year of Family Life.

Each year the DAWN women select a focus, while still gathering information on previous interests. The purpose of the Network is information gathering and education.

DAWN B.C. is not a self-help group, nor a doctor, nor a social club. The Network serves for information passing. Members are dedicated to educating themselves and others about services available, ways of improving well-being, and how to end the solitude disability brings with it.

The time of arrivals is almost too exciting to bear, as children and mothers greet friends they have likely not seen for a year. Bonding of newcomers takes place as if by magic. There never seem to be loners at a DAWN B.C. conference. The sororal atmosphere is abetted by plenty of food, fires in the fireplaces, the music of laughter, and hugging. Tears of joy are not rare.

For a woman such as Lynn Wilgenhof, with disabilities that cause her to need a wheelchair, getting to a conference at Squamish might mean leaving her Prince George home at five minutes past breakfast. She lugs with her a child, Kristen, and bags of necessary clothing, swim suits and towels. The first journey is to the airport. She wings it to Vancouver. Next she pushes through the crowds to find the ride that will carry her and Kristen up the highway of falling rocks (which our government has renamed but not refamed). She is tired, and the network supports her as she falls into the rhythm of the weekend workshops and the annual general meeting. She is DAWN.

Travel to camp was facilitated by a pair of vans with tie-downs for women who use wheelchairs for mobility, also by a luxury highway bus, with toilet, air conditioning, lights over each seat, and the nicest driver ever to tromp on the gas. He was, one could say, the opening act for the performance of the weekend. This year, the swimming pool was available for those arriving after lunch Thursday.

Also this year there was a full agenda of children's activities, not just babysitting. Women from Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) assisted the children in peer counselling and role playing. A profoundly deaf child, Ann Marie, bonded with Sarah, who has hearing. They were almost inseparable. Several of the children entertained the luncheon crowd on Saturday with a play. Each received a Network award presented by Hilda Dahl.

The camp is situated in a valley, near a river, and includes accessible hiking trails. It was an introduction to a way of life for some. On Sunday morning shortly before the bus was ready to haul the group back to Vancouver, there was an interesting revolt by the children.

They had discovered an old shack in the forest, and this new generation—a generation which appears never to have heard of hippies—planned to stay there and live off the land.

I don't pretend to know what this says about the sociology of the DAWN B.C. families, however, the call to make bag lunches brought the children off the land and, eventually, back on the bus for the trip home.

graphic by Claudia Rucker

Workshops filled most of the time: parenting naturally, reproductive rights, isolation and relationships. In each workshop, those attending spoke of what they know best. Every woman has a story worth telling and hearing. The group has plans to publish some of the stories told in this Family Life Conference. An anthology is in the works.

In parenting, we learned how the government makes announcements that "the family" is important, but a blind mother of four sons cannot get homemaker service. Her worker explains the children should be doing the laundry and floors. Nor is there money for recreational outings for families when mom is on a pension. There is no respite care for the worn out disabled mom who has no blood relations or available friends to call upon, and little money for a baby sitter. The Ministry of Social Services and Housing appears to have as its primary mandate the protection of tax dollars from the needs of disabled mothers.

An opening panel included workers from both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Services and Housing. No rotten tomatoes were thrown at them, but the mood of the queries was angry, and the facilitator had to cut the panel short. They—the panel—refused an invitation to stay for lunch.

In reproductive rights the twin topics of abortion and the right to carry what has been labelled a "defective" fetus were discussed. Women shared stories of abortions they had, and ones they almost had. The most striking story belonged to a woman whose son we had all met, and liked. He's 12, and charming. She birthed him, despite advice from three doctors to abort.

Others told of decisions made to carry till term, then put the baby up for adoption. You would have had to be there, to realize the pain letting go brings. No one admitted to having an easy decision about abortion, nor an easy time forgetting, but neither did anyone admit to regretting abortions had.

Through long raking sobs, one woman talked of the isolation of not having an ability to read. It was from her frustration that a policy was formed, to focus the DAWN B.C. eye on illiteracy and communications for our 1990 projects. Our work is always for the needs of members. Each joiner brings a story, stories lead to projects. Everyone contributes. Everyone benefits. DAWN B.C. works on the individual person and her quality of life and well-being.

We'll research ways for this illiterate sister to learn things readers take for granted. Talking books was the first suggestion. Others flowed along with the empathy.

We learned in a workshop, designed to inform members on the ways free trade is being implemented, that demands from Americans are already causing social programs to be cut. One example cited is the new program Worker's Compensation was preparing to inform people of the hazards of working with dangerous chemicals. Evidently this program goes against the best interests of some American chemical companies. Women farm workers will suffer.

There was counselling available all weekend with two members of WAVAW, and a lay counsellor from White Rock Women's Place.

Saturday evening DAWN B.C. celebrated her fourth birthday, with songs around the fire, story telling, two huge cakes and dancing.

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you,
Will you join the dance?
Lewis Carroll

New Board

The DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN B.C.) has elected a board to serve until the next AGM. Lower Mainland members consist of: Janice Stevenson of Surrey; Debra Westdrop of Langley; Jackie Pope of White Rock; Eunice Brooks of Surrey; Gem Wirszilas of Surrey; Isabel Alexander of Vancouver; Lynn Wheeler of Surrey; Jenny Volk of Port Coquitlam; Denise Kane of Burnaby; Andrea Fraser of Vancouver; and Stephani Crow of Burnaby.

The interior board members have not as yet been fully polled about nomination acceptances, but Lynn Wilgenhof of Prince George got in by acclamation. Isabel Sperberg of Nanaimo is the Vancouver Island co-ordinator, and Cindy Cole of Vernon is the one to see in the Okanagan.

The positions on the executive will be chosen by secret ballot at the first board meeting. At that time DAWN B.C.'s committees for the upcoming year will also form. The group is seeking a new place to meet.

For further information on DAWN B.C. call 589-4088, 534-1958 or 584-4449 (Vancouver).

Access stalled

by Kinesis Staff Writer

"As the end of the International Decade for the Disabled draws near, Canadians with disabilities are still fighting for access to their communities," according to a report by the B.C. Coalition of the Disabled (BCCD).

The report, entitled "Pathways to Integration," traces the history of disabled people's organizing around access issues and examines three areas: design requirements, enforcement of barrier-free design and disabled peoples' experiences of whether accessibility had improved in their communities.

Elena Thibeau, of BCCD's Plan A for Access, said "It is clear that the professionals and the municipalities are giving us band-aid solutions which are not solving the problem. In B.C., we have the best building code in Canada but we want more enforcement to ensure that new building codes are fully accessible from the start."

Over 200 surveys were sent to disabled consumer groups across Canada to look at the state of accessibility in their community. Almost half the people surveyed said their community was not accessible for people with a disability and even more said that access was not adequately covered in the building code requirements in their area.

According to the survey, most disabled consumers feel that the best goal for accessibility is the integration of people in society and the best way to enforce that goal is through the development and strict enforcement of accessibility standards in municipal building codes. The report also calls for increasing education of all professionals involved in the various stages of design and regulation of construction.

BCCD points out, "The number of people with disabilities is increasing in our society. As Canadians grow older the demand for accessibility features will increase. The goal of accessibility legislation is the integration of people into society, rather than special concessions for people with disabilities."

Copies of the "Pathways to Integration" report are available from BCCD, 211 - 456 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1R3

WHAT' S NEWS?

by Donna Butorac

Wen-do battles

The Wen-do Women's Self-Defence Corporation is fighting a complaint of sex discrimination brought before the Ontario Human Rights Commission by Michael Celik, a judo black belt who was prevented from observing or participating in women-only Wen-do classes. Celik filed the complaint as a representative of the men's rights group, In Search of Justice. The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) will assist the Wen-do corporation in its response to this complaint.

graphic by Colette Beaulieu

LEAF believes that Wen-do's women-only policies are specifically designed to promote women's equality and therefore do not violate human rights legislation. According to Marilyn Walsh of Wen-do, "(The) program was designed with women's common socialization and physiology in mind. Wen-do provides strong women role models and a safe space where women can talk about fears and experiences related to sexual violence." Counsel for Wen-do believes that the women-only program addresses the disadvantage experienced by women as targets of violence and is thus protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code. *Source: LEAF*

Gonorrhea alert

The number of cases of gonorrhea strains that are resistant to conventional antibiotics increased by about 35 percent last year. Most of this increase occurred in cities in Ontario, Quebec and Alberta. Doctors in North York, Toronto, for example, are now finding that more than one out of every two cases of gonorrhea are proving resistant to penicillin.

A sexually transmitted disease, gonorrhea infects the urethra and genital tract. It is caused by the neisseria gonorrheal bacteria that can infect the lining of the urethra, cervix, rectum, throat or eyes, and untreated can spread throughout the body, producing fatal infections such as meningitis. In women who contract the disease it may be several weeks or months before symptoms are apparent, and it can result in sterility. Gonorrhea was traditionally treated with penicillin or the antibiotic tetracycline, however, the penicillin resistant neisseria gonorrhoea (PPNG) do not respond to conventional antibiotics.

PPNG strains were first reported in 1976 in U.S. soldiers who had served in Vietnam, and the present rise in the number of cases in Canada is attributed to sexual contacts with infected people from the United States and the Caribbean, where resistant strains of gonorrhea are endemic.

Experts at the laboratory are conducting a national study of the incidence of PPNG and are encouraging provincial health agencies to monitor and control its occurrence more closely. *Source: Globe and Mail*

Compulsory job equity

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (HRC) has called for a compulsory employment equity law, in light of new provincial statistics on women at universities and colleges. According to Raj Anand of the HRC, "with respect to women, the figures are clearly discouraging and indicate that voluntary employment equity measures have largely been unsuccessful." Recently released statistics show that women in Ontario still tend to be clustered in lower academic and non-academic ranks at post-secondary institutions. Raj Anand says that it is especially disconcerting that such inequities prevail after three years of employment-equity support from the Ontario Women's Directorate. He has called for new money and strategies to deal with the problems of women, visible minorities, disabled people and natives in post secondary institutions. *Source: Globe and Mail*

Support weakens

Sixty-eight percent of Canadians surveyed in a recent national opinion poll favour changing the family allowance program so that only families in "greater need" would receive benefits. The poll, which deals with the country's deficit and how to reduce it, shows that while most people want the Tories to reduce the deficit, they also question the government's ability to do so effectively and fairly.

Forty-seven percent of people polled expect that the public would not be treated equitably if the government decides to take major steps to reduce the deficit; 36 percent say the Tories would act fairly; 17 percent are unsure. In other results, 56 percent of people surveyed support cuts in defense spending, while 38 percent are opposed, and nearly 80 percent favour raising taxes on large corporations, while 14 percent are opposed to this. *Source: Globe and Mail*

Custody not mobile

An Edmonton woman recently lost primary custody of her two children because she has remarried and moved to another province. In handing down the ruling, Chief Justice Tevie Miller held that child stability is more important than parental bonding. Therefore, primary custody of the children has been transferred to the father, who lives in Edmonton.

Their mother was given a choice: if she stayed in Edmonton her children could remain with her, but if she moved, then she would only have access to the children during spring and summer school breaks, as well as at least two four-day weekends a year.

Family law practitioners in Alberta are closely watching the effects of the new ruling, believing that it may have a chilling effect on the mobility plans of estranged spouses with joint custody arrangements. Mothers are caught more often in this dilemma than fathers because their home is still the primary residence of children in many joint custody arrangements.

Lawyer Louise Ares, who represented the Edmonton woman in this landmark case says that lawyers will have to rethink their approach to the custody issue, "if the courts keep on holding the custodial parent hostage to a particular location to accommodate the other parent's visiting rights." *Source: Globe and Mail*

Women stressed

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) released a report earlier this month which examines the particular nature of stress experienced by working women.

It states the number one health hazard for women may be the stress of combining housework and paid work. According to Sylvia Gold of CACSW, "women's double

Kinesis file graphic

day of paid employment, child bearing and household work sets up a stressful scenario which few men confront."

Sexual harassment in the workplace is cited as a form of stress which affects more women than men—a survey found 15 percent of women and 4 percent of men received sexual harassment. Other stressful situations more likely to affect women include part-time work, lack of benefits and job security, and single parenthood.

Following the release of the report CACSW has called for changes to diminish stress in women's lives. "Creating work environments which promote well-being, recognizing the value of women's work in the home, and reorganizing child rearing in the family and the community would go a long way toward reducing life stress," Gold said. *Source: Globe and Mail*

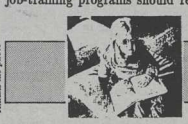
Repro tech study

Issues relating to high-technology reproduction will be looked into by the federal government, according to minister responsible for the status of women, Barbara McDougall. About a year ago a coalition of women's groups called for a royal commission on reproductive technologies, saying it was the only way to address the urgent problems surrounding the potential commercialization of human life.

Favouring a ministerial examination, the government plans to look into reproductive technologies that allow for in-vitro fertilization, surrogate motherhood and genetic engineering. Last fall, a federally commissioned report strongly recommended close examination of these technologies and the outlawing of certain forms of them, including surrogacy contracts. *Source: Globe and Mail*

Read or starve

Illiteracy may be the single largest barrier facing Canadians on social assistance programs, according to the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO). There is an almost complete coincidence of poverty and illiteracy rates in every region of the country, according to a brief presented to Employment and Immigration Minister Barbara McDougall. NAPO urges that federal job-training programs should restore liter-



Kinesis file photo

acy as a basic course of instruction, in an effort to break the illiteracy/poverty bind.

Literacy training was dropped last year from these programs because it showed a lower rate of success then other skills training. However, without literacy instruction in employment training, illiterate people are condemned to a narrow range of programs in which they may be taught new job skills, and as a result of this, they are trapped at the lower end of the wage scale. The NAPO brief, which deals specifically with the barriers to employment and training, also states that lack of childcare centres severely limits those seeking job training. *Source: Globe and Mail*

Hepatitis screening

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has recommended that all pregnant women be routinely tested for hepatitis B. Since most carriers of hepatitis B don't know they have it, routine testing of pregnant women would expose carriers, and enable immunization of their children to begin within 24 hours of birth, thus reducing the number of new carriers of the disease. Hepatitis B infects the liver and can cause cirrhosis and cancer of the liver. It is transmitted through sexual contact and the exchange of contaminated blood, including childbirth and intravenous drug use.

According to Dr. Anne Carter, chief of communicable disease at the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control, "the unfortunate thing is that a child is usually infected during the birth process, and the younger you are when you get hepatitis B the more likely you are to become a carrier." There is a strong correlation between hepatitis B and AIDS—more than 90 percent of people with AIDS also carry hepatitis B. Screening of pregnant women for hepatitis B is widespread in Alberta and Manitoba and NACI believes it could easily be implemented in most provinces. *Source: Globe and Mail*

Nova Scotia

Organizing against abortion restrictions

by Esther Shannon

Nova Scotia feminists will meet in early April to organize against the recent provincial government decision to outlaw free-standing abortion clinics.

According to Cathy Coffin, vice-president of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL), her organization is also "contemplating legal action against the Nova Scotia government's new restriction on access to abortion."

In mid-March, Nova Scotia's ruling Progressive Conservative government announced that abortion in the province can only be performed in provincially approved hospitals. The government also said that provincial medical insurance will not pay for abortions done outside Nova Scotia hospitals. The penalty for violating these new regulations in the Hospitals Act and the Health Act is a maximum of $500.

According to Coffin, the government move is aimed directly at preventing Dr. Henry Morgentaler from opening a clinic in Nova Scotia.

"The government believes that Henry Morgentaler brings chaos and disruption everywhere he goes. They established this policy simply to keep Henry Morgentaler out of here."

Despite the new regulations Morgentaler, whose successful 1988 Supreme Court appeal led to the abolition of Canada's abortion laws, has vowed to open a free standing clinic, the sixth in Canada, in Halifax.

"These regulations have no justification and their sole motivation is to prevent me and my colleagues from opening a free-standing clinic in Halifax," Morgentaler told reporters four days after the Nova Scotia policy was announced. Morgentaler says his clinic, while based in Halifax, will serve women from all over Atlantic Canada.

Coffin said that pro-choice women in Halifax will be supporting Morgentaler's effort to open a clinic. "But, our first priority would be to develop a free-standing clinic which provided medically insured abortions in feminist clinics. That option may be further down the line, but obviously that would be our ideal."

Coffin noted the provincial government is wrong when it says Nova Scotia women already have access to abortion and so free-standing clinics are not necessary.

"There are supposedly 12 hospitals in the province which do abortions, but in fact one, Halifax's Victoria General, did 83 percent of the 1400 abortions performed here in 1986. And the Victoria General has a quota – seven abortions, five days a week – and it will not perform abortions for women from out of province.

"Morgentaler estimates that over 500 women come to his (Montreal) clinic from the Atlantic provinces, and we know, from our abortion referral service, that at least a further 200 travel to the United States.

"So access, particularly for rural women, is a major problem here. But, another really big problem is that doctors will not refer women for abortions. A lot of women go to a doctor to talk about abortion and are just told to,'Get out.' We have been collecting this information and it is one horror story after another. We have pressured the Nova Scotia Medical Society to try and work with physicians and ensure that they will offer the *full* range of pregnancy counselling, not just tell women to get out. If they don't want to do abortions that's fine, but they are obligated to tell women what is available.

"But the Medical Society will not speak out on abortion even though they have adopted the Canadian Medical Association's position (that a decision on abortion should be a matter between a woman and her doctor). While CARAL has a wonderful list of pro- choice doctors who will do referrals very few will speak out in support of abortion. At some hospitals here, in order for a doctor to get operating privileges, they have to make a commitment not to do abortions, or even speak out on the issue."

According to Coffin the provincial government's ban on free-standing clinics is catering to a small minority of anti- abortion fanatics. "During the last election," she said, "you could drive around and see 8 and 10 foot signs that said 'The Unborn: Let them Live' and you'll see maybe 1,000 people at the Roman Catholic Basilica where they have masses for the unborn.

"But the Gallop poll we did in October of 1988 showed that sixty-five percent of people in Nova Scotia supported women, in consultation with her doctor, having the right to choose. That is unqualified support for a woman's right to choose and that support has gone up. Opinion on the right to choose used to be pretty close to 50/50 here."

Fuming from pg. 3

"We're in the early stages of just talking about it with LEAF and between ourselves," said organizer Betty Baxter, "But it's an option we're definitely considering."

Another channel of attack, also in it's early stages, is exposing REAL propaganda—particularly that which is directed against gays and lesbians—as 'hate literature', and as such contravening Canadian law.

Andre Buchanan of The Gazebo Connection (a Vancouver-based lesbian group) says through funding REAL the Canadian government tacitly accepts the groups' invective and is therefore also spreading hate.

"Rather than leaving the door open for REAL to obtain funding in the future under the women's program or any other federal program," said Buchanan in a 1987 parliamentary brief, "... We contend the government of Canada has a responsibility to demand that REAL cease it's distribution of hate propaganda against lesbians and gay men."

On other fronts, stemming from January's consultation in Toronto with Secstate, women's groups are organizing a feminist lobby to stem the right-wing funding swing and to ensure the survival of progressive women's organizations.

An initial item on their agenda was a mid-March meeting with Barbara McDougall, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. (Jerry Weiner, Secretary of State, refused to attend this meeting.)

"McDougall's response to our criticism on REAL funding was more or less—"Give me a break!" said Phil Masters of Resources for Feminist Research in Toronto.

"She figured the funding was so little and she didn't want to talk about it or look at it's broader implications."

A second consultation is underway for June, with the hope that more ministers and women's groups will attend. "And we don't want just Secstate-funded groups, but the women's movement more generally," said Masters.

Meanwhile, postcards bearing the NAC logo are being shot off to Ottawa from all corners of the country, condemning Secstate for it's erosion of the program, and an April meeting between NAC and Secstate is planned at which the issue of REAL funding will be addressed.

Bye Bye *Broadside*

by Noreen Shanahan

Broadside is folding.

Expect your next issue to be your last issue, and after reading it file it away under 'history of 1980's feminist journalism.'

Broadside, published in Toronto, hopes to sign off with a special ten year anniversary issue featuring a 'decade of feminism': a 1980's retrospective.

But there's another story here.

Before the decision to cease publication, *Broadside* intended to apply to the Secretary of State for enough money to publish the anniversary issue and tide them over.

"Secstate said it sounded like a really good project, and that we should request $10,000 instead of the $5,000 we first considered applying for," said editor Phil Masters.

"But before we even got the chance to apply, Secstate called to tell us not to bother, that we didn't have a chance."

The rejection came just days before REAL received their $21,000. (See story page 3)

"There was an ironic twist to it all," said Masters. "In rejecting us Secstate asked, 'Who do you represent?' Meanwhile, there they are funding REAL!"

Broadside believes the rejection was in large part due to their lesbian and pro-choice content.

"We're considered to be a lesbian publication simply because we don't mind using the word 'lesbian.' Also, our position on abortion is clear."

Broadside still intends to do the anniversary issue, but without the Secstate cheque a publication date is indefinite. They're presently fundraising and hope to publish in June, but may have to wait until October.

Concerning their decision to fold, Masters says it isn't just financial restraints but also a question of personal energy and commitment.

"We've been doing it a long time, never with very much money, and we're tired of the juggling act. We've gone through slump periods before, but people just don't want to do it anymore."

However, doom isn't pervading the newsroom. According to Masters there's the hope and belief that a new crew of feminist journalists will inherit the paper and carry it into future decades.

Inwood free

by Kinesis Staff Writer

Ontario's highest court has ruled against increasing the sentence Kirby Inwood received from a lower provincial court for his assault on Tanya Sidorova, his former wife.

The Inwood case was perhaps the most notorious wife battering incident to ever come before the Canadian courts, partly because Sidorova immigrated to Canada from Russia after widely publicized efforts by Inwood to win exit visas for her and their son, Misha. Adding to the controversy about the case was Inwood's defense against the charges which depended largely on his contention that Sidorova only married him so she could become a Canadian citizen. During the trial such tactics made Sidorova's credibility as much of an issue as Inwood's assault on his wife and Misha.

At his trial, Inwood was found guilty of assault causing bodily harm on Sidorova and common assault on Misha. He received a three month suspended sentence for the assault on Sidorova, served one month in jail for the assault on his son, and was placed on three years probation. The Crown appealed both sentences arguing that they were too lenient.

The Ontario Court of Appeal decision upheld the original sentences and also concluded that the incidents by themselves did not make Inwood a wife beater.

Speaking for the court, Chief Justice William Howland said a predominant characteristic in battered wife cases "is the persistent or repetitive and escalating nature of the violence.

"In my opinion, the case before this court is not a 'battered wife' case in that sense. It might have developed into one if the relationship between Inwood and Sidorova had not terminated."

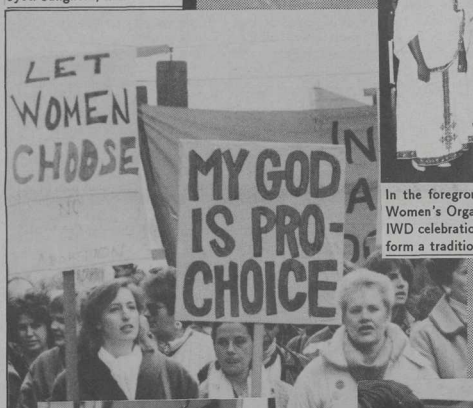
In comments on the Ontario decision, Vancouver transition house worker, Jan Ford told *Kinesis* that the court's decision is "really very ironic. Often we hear of women staying in a battering situation for a long time and people ask 'How come you didn't leave?' And really they can't believe her situation was that serious or else she would have left. Here we have a situation where the woman got out right away and the court says it means she really wasn't a battered woman.

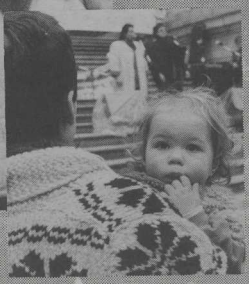
"A decision like this," said Ford, "points to tacit approval for this kind of violence. It's very demoralizing and discouraging for women who have to deal with the courts because the situation seems to be getting worse and worse. Judges seem to be 10 or 15 years behind the times. People are not getting a message from the courts that violence against women is wrong and will be dealt with."

I.W.D.

Jyoti Sanghera, India Mahila

In the foreground, Mulu Beiene of Vancouver's Eritrean Women's Organization speaks at this city's first Eritrean IWD celebration. In the background, Eritrean women perform a traditional dance at the event.





photos by Jennifer Ellis, H. Sharma, Jen Walton, Yemane Fecadu

During 1989's International Women's Day celebrations organised around the theme of pro-choice, the India Mahila Association (IMA) was asked by the organizers to represent the concerns of immigrant and visible minority women.

Jyoti Sanghera was chosen by the members of the IMA to speak at the International Women's Day rally at the Robson Square. She was one of the three major speakers at that gathering.

In her speech, the IMA representative sent out her greetings and solidarity on behalf of her organization to "all the brave women and oppressed peoples of the world struggling to build a better tomorrow, struggling for self dignity, economic independence and self determination."

Alluding to racist discrimination directed towards the South Asian community, Jyoti Sanghera said that every man and woman that came to Canada did so for precisely the same reasons that the South Asians have come here for.

"Then why are we being shunned, denounced and hated as pariahs by those who happened to come here earlier, who also happened to be of a colour, creed and religion different from those women and men who originally lived here? We do not come here to destroy and impose---to colonize," she said. "We were lured here as this country needed cheap labour."

She further added that pillage and domination of their countries' economies by colonial and now imperialist powers have created a situation of extreme poverty and unemployment in those societies. Therefore, women and men immigrate to different parts of the world as workers, searching for better life prospects. "Unfortunately, in the west, our people are ridiculed on account of their colour, and scapegoated," she added.

Sanghera cautioned the women's movement in Canada to not merely pay lip service to the concerns of these immigrant and visible minority women, but to reach out and incorporate these concerns in their agenda; "Only this effort on the part of all of us will give the women's movement strength, energy and dynamism."

Addressing the issue of pro-choice and abortion, Sanghera reiterated her organization's support for the Everywoman's Health Centre. It was demanded that the federal government not pass any more laws on abortion, and that the provincial government extend full nancial assistance to the Health Centre.

South Asian women rise

by Jyoti Sanghera

Each year on the 8th of March, women in every part of the world celebrate a historic day; the International Women's Day. A rapidly growing awareness of women's rights, a proliferation of women's groups, and a mass level mobilization of women in every continent of the globe today makes the women's movement an entrenched and unshakable reality. No nation can ignore any longer, the rumblings of discontent and struggle that its women are stirring up. No state or regime can repress with impunity any longer, the demands raised by its women citizens for social justice, equality in wages, access to education, health services and to legal recourse.

These have been achievements of a long and glorious struggle of women, globally. And these gains have not merely been handed to the women out of magnanimity or a sense of fair play. Women activists in every part of the world have shed blood, and suffered untold horrors at the hands of the powers that be.

Women in India: A Profile

In India, tens of thousands of women in the cities and countryside were mobilized to walk shoulder to shoulder with men, and in some instances lead them in the struggle for India's national independence.

In the 20's, 30's and 40's, women of the urban middle classes, for the first time emerged out of the confining walls of their homes to experience a new found sense of self-worth, dignity and freedom. For the first time, these women found themselves entering the public arena of civic and political life with a sense of confidence and equality. This experience of struggle changed the world view of the middle class women of India; no longer would they be content with their second class status in a country which claims to have shaken off the yoke of colonial rule, and professes to be the largest democracy in the world.

However, after India achieved political independence in 1947, to their chagrin the women found that they, like some other oppressed groups had merely been used by the politicians to catapult themselves into positions of power. Though some paltry concessions were made to the women, yet the fundamental promises made to them were belied, and their hopes squashed.

In the countryside, poor peasant women continue under the grind of economic want, indigence, superstition and ill health. Patriarchal and feudal values deeply entrenched even among large sections of the women continue to take their toll on the lives of women in the form of female infanticide, bride burning for dowry and female feticide. Women's freedom certainly did not come with India's freedom.

The organised sections of the women's movement in India has resolved that if the women could rise to fight for the independence of India and her people, they would not rest until that task is completed. Four decades have elapsed since India gained political freedom, but her women, her religious, ethnic and linguistic minorities, her children and her poor are not free.

Women as a gender and women as members of these disadvantaged groups suffer the worst atrocities and hardships. According to official figures published last year by the government of India in a *Draft National Perspective Plan For Women: 1988-2000 A.D.*, 150 million of India's 370 million women live in conditions of gruelling poverty and many more close to it.

According to the same document, by the year 2000 A.D., there will be 20 million more males in India than females. Even though more female children are born in India than males, due to preferential treatment given to the male child in terms of nutrition and health care, this report says that, "age specific death rates indicate higher rates for female children and women till 35 years of age."

As per the 1981 census in India, 75 percent of the women are illiterate. This is compounded by the high drop out rate for girls which is 55.5 percent at the primary stage and 77.7 percent at the middle school stage. The same census reports that 89.5 percent of the women workers were engaged in the unorganized sector. Of these, 82.3 percent were in agriculture and allied occupations. In the organized sector, only 13.3 percent of all employees are women.

We also learn from the *Draft Plan* figures that female job seekers through employment exchanges increased from 1.12 million in 1975 to 5.1 million in 1986. Currently 51 *lakhs matriculate* women in India are unemployed. If we look at the representation of women in some government jobs, a very bleak picture unfolds. In the Indian Administrative services (IAS) there are only 339 women as against 4,209 men (7.5 percent), and in the Indian Police Services (IPS) only 21 women as against 2,439 men (0.9 percent).

The women's movement in India has a long and arduous path to traverse, and it has indeed risen to the call of the day with dynamic energy and an ingenuity of which we are all proud.

Women of South Asian Origin in the Vancouver Area: A Profile

Over the last 20 years in particular, the South Asian community in the Vancouver region has grown manifold. Approximate estimates place this population in a range of 90 to 100 thousand. Given the trend in international migrations, this figure will swell considerably by the turn of the 21st century.

The advent of an uprooted people from the other side of the globe into Canada, lured by the dream of a better future and a welcoming home is bound to conflict with reality and create tensions. The women of this community who find themselves being stamped with the label 'immigrant and visible minority women' discover their dreams of 'Bread and Roses' wilting before their eyes.

These visible minority women are pushed into dingy pockets of the Canadian economy. They scurry in and out of these pockets, remaining virtually invisible in the labour force. An overwhelming majority of the South Asian immigrant female labour force in the Fraser Valley is huddled on farms as seasonal farm workers; ghettoized into poorly lit, smelly fish and food canneries; isolated in huge offices and urban buildings at night, scrubbing the floors and toilets; scuttling around in hot, stuffy kitchens in restaurants, washing dishes; bent over sewing machines for long hours in garment factories; or sitting crouched behind the walls of their own homes sewing or knitting for contractors.

photo by Jyoti Sanghera

In British Columbia, an overwhelming majority of the South Asian immigrant female labour force works as seasonal farm workers, in canneries and in garment factories.

The women discover their dreams of "Bread and Roses" wilting before their eyes.

All these jobs which absorb South Asian women workers, effectively remove them from the purview and concern of the unions, labour legislation, benefits, employment securities, and health and day care regulations. Unaware of their rights and regulations, constrained by their lack of the English language, and pressed by economic need, these immigrant and visible minority women are the most ideal workers as far as the businesses and management are concerned. They are easily exploitable and yield large pecuniary gains for their employers without questioning, without ever striking work and without ever asking for more. Furthermore, their obedience, diligence and lack of information makes them easy prey to manipulation and sexual harassment.

One janitorial worker reported that for six months she worked under constant fear of being sexually harassed by her supervisor who would lurk in the corridors and pounce upon her each time she went to clean the men's washroom. Scared of losing her job and being scolded and misunderstood by her husband, her only recourse was fervent prayers to avert the untoward.

Lack of any stipulated facilities in these marginalized sectors of the economy are fairly common knowledge to those of us who are concerned with these issues. On the farms, women workers crouch under bushes to relieve themselves, and children invariably come home each night with their little limbs scratched from playing around the thorny berry bushes.

However, these are the least harmful of the occupational hazards. Allergies, on account of protracted contact with pesticides and chemicals are very common among women and children. Garment workers regularly complain of failing or watery eyes and cricks in their necks and shoulders.

One woman, who was a dishwasher in a seafood restaurant developed blistery eruptions all over her hands and forearms on account of an allergy to seafood. Besides, having their upper limbs soaked in hot water with detergents for eight to ten hours of the day is bound to corrode even the most hardy of skins.

The hazards at the work place for immigrant women of the South Asian community are many and severe. These, combined with the strain of all the housework and child care take a serious toll on their health. Pressures of being suspended between two cultures, racial discrimination, rebellious and truant children and the constant pain of an inner isolation often transforms the domestic sphere into an arena of scarce emotional nourishment and much abuse and violence.

The women, more than any other section, misunderstood and ignored, appear to be living like prisoners of war in a strange concentration camp in an alien land. On account of this, they are truly a group at risk, and their situation cries for immediate attention. It may be true that to some extent, the South Asian immigrant men share the same predicament and prejudices. But it must never be forgotten that in a male dominated society governed by patriarchal norms, men on the whole still have far more options and choices than women.

A few groups have mushroomed in the South Asian community over the recent past to address social concerns. Some of these are overtly political groups, while others focus on the advancement of cultural and social issues. Some of these organizations have also tried to address the specific concerns of the women of this community. One such organization that is exclusively a women's organization is the India Mahila Association (IMA), formed in 1973.

The India Mahila Association is one of the earliest established women's group in the South Asian community. It is comprised of women who trace their origin to the countries of the Indian subcontinent and has since its inception continued to represent the women of the large and growing South Asian community in the Vancouver region.

It must be noted that this organization has built considerable credibility in the South Asian community as well as in the mainstream women's movement by sponsoring joint programs and events with other women's groups.

The India Mahila Association is in the process of mapping out its activities for the upcoming year. For further information on IMA contact Jyoti Sanghera 420-2972, Balinder Jahal 327-1855, Harjit Dhillan 325-2820 or Harminder Sanghera 325-1662.

India

Population controls override choice

by Dorothy Kidd

"We ask for bread, they give us pills."

"Abortion, we didn't have to fight for it, we were just given it. The women's movement in India never had to struggle for it ... abortion has been given as a legalized thing to control population so it can be used in all sorts of ways to which we have objection ... The fact that women also now are being pressurized into sterilization and all sorts of contraception can be linked to that right to abortion which we have got."

No mountains, but the view of open blue sky across the wide expanse of ocean took me home in my mind. I was waiting for a Bombay bus on a marine drive much like the one in West Vancouver. I had just spoken to Nandita Gandhi and Nandita Shah of the Forum Against Oppression of Women. Nandita Gandhi's statement that the Indian abortion law does not guarantee reproductive rights also reminded me of Canada. After a year without one, it seemed that a new Canadian abortion law would only hinder choice.

Pushing to get on the bus, I started to think about the very different kind of struggle that women in India wage for reproductive rights. They are not fighting for abortion on demand. The 1971 Indian law guarantees that. Instead they are fighting to choose to have children and to choose the circumstances, regardless of their economic or social status. While in Canada, the campaign for choice has to counter many religious beliefs, in India the strongest belief women have to counter is a secular one, that the need for population control overrides women's choice.

It's a belief that Nandita Gandhi said, "is reinforced by your own immediate experience of people ... you go in buses, you go in trains, loads and loads of people. You also keep feeling I'm not getting certain things because there's too many people asking for it."

I climbed through the passengers to get off the bus, thinking about what Nandita Shah had said in response: "There's too many people in the cities because there are no jobs in the rural areas, so most people come to cities ... It has been adequately proved that there is enough food in India to be able to give it to everyone. There is enough space in India so that everyone can be housed and there is enough resources in India so that everyone can be clothed and be properly in a living style.

"But it's the whole question of distribution ... so the rich get richer and the poor get poorer and the propaganda is that only the poor are producing more ... I suppose that in the West that's the propaganda about all Third World countries, that women produce so many children ...

"(Yet) if you look at infant mortality in India, a mother who produces five children is never sure that even two of them will survive. There is also no system of (the) state taking responsibility for old people ... You have to have one or two children survive and for that you have to produce."

It's an old belief—that people are poor because they have many children, rather than they have many children because they are poor. A belief about the same age as the massive Victorian buildings I walked through in downtown Bombay. But there's a new wrinkle to the Malthusian idea that population has to be checked in order to guarantee food supply. Now the belief comes not just from the British mercantile interests that built Bombay, but from the World Bank.

The World Bank provides India with capital for development—to increase their food and other commodity supplies. As part of the collateral India must provide a target for population control. The pressure to fill those targets, and thereby get more capital into the country, drives the Indian government to use drugs and birth control methods that are banned or no longer used in most Western countries.

This kind of thinking and financial pressure led to Indira Gandhi's programme of forced sterilizations in the mid-1970's. The violent reactions to the programme were also a major factor in her electoral defeat. Since then, Nandita Gandhi told me, "the Indian government has learned its lesson."

For one thing, they rely much more on incentives to convince people to voluntarily sterilize, and "the incentives are linked up with the socio-economic conditions at that time, so it's during the lean period that a lot of people get family planning methods inserted or get sterilization ... Or a lot of times family planning is linked with relief work in places of drought."

The Indian government uses drugs and birth control methods that are banned or no longer used in most western countries.

For another thing, from a programme where 79 percent of the sterilizations were on men, "they've shifted to all the methods oriented to women." Nandita Shah added that the "whole hysteria about population explosion and what's going to happen to India" is used to justify drugs such as Depo Provera and Netan that have been banned in the West. The government thinking is that "women are illiterate and they don't understand what is good for the country so we have the right (to use these drugs) ...

"Women are not even told they are part of an experiment so there is no question of informed consent and it completely violates the WHO's (World Health Organization) recommendation on how research should be conducted."

After a campaign against Depo Provera, women's groups in India are trying to have Netan banned. Like Depo Provera, Netan has a lot of nasty side effects. This West German surplus product has been found to be carcinogenic and causes tremendous chaos in the menstrual cycle, including heavy bleeding—very dangerous in a country where many women suffer from anemia. The dangers and the unethical testing procedures are part of the argument five different women's groups are using in cases in the Indian Supreme Court against this drug.

Nandita and Nandita talked to many other women's groups as part of a book they are compiling on the Indian women's movement. None of them, as Nandita Shah said, "have agreed to the general propaganda of it being population explosion. Most of the groups are talking about having more control by the women to decide if they want the birth control methods and not by the state imposed."

Calling for bans on drugs and technology imported from the West is only one of the approaches, for they know that as soon as one technique or drug is banned, then another will be introduced. For example, as Nandita Shah said, "Because there's been so much hue and cry about Netan, they're planning to use subdermal implants which are implanted under the skin and go on for two years."

photo from *In Search of Answers*

The dangers and the unethical testing procedures are part of the argument five different women's groups are using in cases in the Indian Supreme Court against this drug.

Another approach of women's groups has been to advocate experimenting with more natural methods. "There is no interest by the state or other companies because there's nothing to sell in it, so it will have to be women's organizations' responsibility to actually create new methods." The researchers testing these methods with village women have also taken care to involve them in the research.

The talk with Nandita and Nandita was on my last day in India. Later that day a taxi rushed me north past all the huge modern houses of Bombay's wealthy, then slowed down through the crowded streets of one of the city's largest slums before reaching the airport. A stark contrast for sure.

But I also remembered the new song popularized by Jagori, a women's resource centre in Delhi. "We ask for bread, they give us pills." They have not stopped asking. Indeed as Abba Bhayya from Jagori told me: "We are demanding greater and greater control over our own bodies, as well as giving a critique of government policies and programs." For Abba, Nandita and Nandita, as well as the women and men in many other groups, the campaign for reproductive choice continues to be linked with ending poverty by redistributing wealth.

Mozambique

Building equality among nations

as told to Louie Ettling

Graca Machel, currently a member of the Mozambique's Secretariat of the Women's Organization, was in Vancouver in mid-March on a speaking tour to raise support for Mozambique, adding that country's voice to the call of the Front Line States for sanctions against South Africa. Since 1982, Mozambique has been severely disrupted by Pretoria backed RENAMO forces which have attempted to de-stabilize the country through an unrelenting campaign of guerilla warfare.

Machel was trained as a freedom fighter in the fight against Portuguese colonialism and was Minister of Education in Mozambique for fourteen years. She is currently a member of the Central Committee of the Frente de Libertaco de Mozambique (FRELIMO) the only legal political party in Mozambique. She is also a Deputy of the People Assembly and President of the Mozambican children's organization.

Graca Machel's speech was recorded by Louie Ettling at a press conference and at a public meeting. What follows is a shortened transcript of Machel's speech in which she posed and answered a series of questions which painted a picture of life in Mozambique today.

Who do I represent? I represent whatever you want! (she laughs heartily). You can look at me as a person, you know. I am just Graca Machel. I think people have invited me (to speak) because of what I have been in the government and in the party. I am involved with women and children. I can talk about different aspects of Mozambican society. I have no *right* to be here. It's just one voice more from Mozambique.

Why are there not peaceful negotiations in Southern Africa?, you may ask. A number of points: The sixties was a decade of independence in Southern Africa, but today, twenty years later, the struggle in the region still continues. The reason is that white minorities have been trying to monopolize this part of Africa. There was Rhodesia and now there is South Africa.

FRELIMO was the first movement in Southern Africa to win against colonial power (Portuguese, 1752-1975) followed by Angola and Zimbabwe and today we are hoping for Namibia. When FRELIMO came to power it changed the dynamics in the region. In 1976 the struggle in South Africa entered a new phase (the student uprisings in Soweto). We defined ourselves as antiracist societies. We understand that people are equal and we are trying to build this equality among nations. South Africa cannot accept this obligation of equality at its front door. That is why they have this strategy of destabilization, to put Mozambique underneath. So we have not experienced peace since independence.

What is the main problem in Southern Africa? On the one hand there are people working towards developing the well being of their own people and, on the other hand, there is South Africa that wants to be the representative of the West in the region. South Africa is trying to impose domination and economic control, to destabilize and to counteract the revolution we are trying to build in our own countries. The main problem is not between Mozambicans and Mozambicans. This is not a civil war but aggression by South Africa.

What is the attitude of the rest of the world? Why is our suffering not shaking the consciousness of the world to say *stop it*? Since independence, 100,000 people have been killed by the bandits (RENAMO) backed by Pretoria. Over two hundred thousand children have been orphaned. Pretoria can only sustain this because South Africa is one of the richest areas in the world and the West wants its natural resources, agricultural products and minerals. As well as access to its geographically strategic positions. There is no reason why people in Southern Africa should continue to die because of gold, diamonds, etc. Why should we be abused, raped and deprived of our families!

What will happen to our children over the next decades? Other than military and economic destabilization, the problem today is social destabilization. We have decided that we don't want orphanages. We would like families to adopt the children. Preferably in the same area where the children lived and where their mother tongue is spoken. We react to destruction by rebuilding normal life. This is our response to apartheid. We can rebuild houses, schools, hospitals, but how do we help traumatised people? How far will we be able to rebuild children emotionally, psychologically and mentally—now that they have become victims of the war?

Despite the destruction of schools we try to reorganize education in camps for the displaced, in refugee camps. We don't need buildings first. We need teachers and students. Schools are being rebuilt with the help of communities. We are developing in the areas of illiteracy, adult education and the training of teachers to deal with the problem of traumatised children, to help children become children again. We need help with this. Support and education is not only building infrastructures and schools, but also creating programs for teachers. The impact of what has been done to children will be felt much longer than the war.

What are women doing in the struggle? The Organization of Mozambican Women (OMM) is one of the mass organizations we have that allow people to organize themselves. There are also youth, workers, writers and many others.

OMM was formed as a response to what women felt as a need for participation in society. This came during the armed struggle. It is the most powerful organization in Mozambique. Let's hope that youth will try to become as strong as the women.

We understand that women have been discriminated in different ways in colonial times, and in traditional life. So, with a struggle for independence all of us, men and women, had to liberate ourselves. Men would not liberate women. We have been helping to promote participation of women in different areas of national activities. Also on different levels of the decision making process, you know.

It's an encouragement for women to bring their energy and potential and to exercise their rights as citizens and participate in all things. We don't see women as closed to themselves. No. It is to bring women in as part of the whole process. Now we say economic and social development is our task. On the other hand, we have to defend the country to maintain sovereignty and fight the bandits. Women defend their belongings, families and villages. They also participate in different fields of economic development. Either in agriculture where they are the main producers, or in industry, education, health—whatever you want. Even in the Party—also in People's Power—these are the different areas which are elected to represent the people. Women are increasingly participating.

How is culture expressed in a country that is in the midst of war? It is not easy to talk about the vitality of culture in Mozambique. You have to see it, touch it, experience it. The government is not able to give a lot of material support. We have been encouraging those who call themselves artists to express what they feel. The artists are not only trying to survive, like the whole country, but also to be spokespeople for what we all experience; our hopes, our dreams, our setbacks. They have been part of the society and of the political process that is taking place.

But we understand culture also not as something which is made by those who are known as *artists*, because who builds culture are people themselves. That's why we encourage art wherever we are—in villages, in schools, even by workers in hospitals.

See **Mozambique** pg. 16

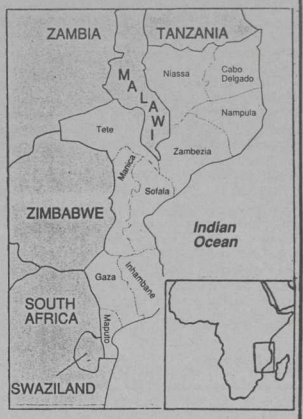
POSITION

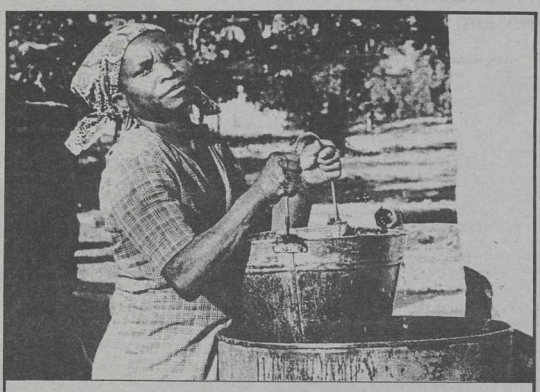
Mozambique's geographical position should make it the ideal trade and transport route for its landlocked neighbours.

But South Africa has an iron grip on the economy of the region, making a $1,800m surplus from its trade with the six Front Line States.

To break this dependence on South Africa the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) was formed in 1980 by Zimbabwe, Botswana, Angola, Mozambique, Malawi, Lesotho, Tanzania, Swaziland and Zambia.

South Africa is trying to spike the plan by destabilizing two key countries---Mozambique and Angola.





EQUALITY

Frelimo insists that women 'must emancipate themselves'—but tradition is not so easily overcome.

- 90 percent of Mozambican women are unpaid, peasant farmers. Yet there is no mechanism for consulting them about agricultural policy.
- Although 40 percent of primary school entrants are female half of those will drop out before reaching secondary school---usually due to domestic duties.
- Sexual initiation rites take two months and reinforce the traditional attitudes about women's role and status.
- Polygamy persists (though the Party disapproves) and often results in women with children receiving insufficient support from their menfolk.
- **Lobolo** or bride price can be exorbitant and turn marriage into a business deal between men with the women as the merchandise.

But the legal status of women has improved dramatically under Frelimo.

- On divorce the woman is entitled to half the family property and has child custody rights that are at least equal to that of the man.
- Sexual discrimination in employment is illegal. Paid maternity leave is a statutory right and workplaces employing a large number of women must provide creches.

Yoli Garcia:
A new design for freedom

photos by Cyndi Mellon

as told to Cyndi Mellon

Yoli Garcia is a Guatemalan sculptor, now living in Vancouver. Her work has begun to attract attention. In 1988 one of her sculptures was commissioned by the B.C. Human Rights Coalition to be used as the organization's Renata Shearer Award.

It will be presented each year to a B.C. resident who makes an outstanding contribution in the area of human rights.

I spoke with Yoli about her life as an artist and as a refugee.

Kinesis: Can you tell me a bit about your childhood and youth in Guatemala?

Yoli: What I have to say about my childhood isn't very pretty. There are some interesting things, of course, but I would say that I had a very hard childhood, since at about the age of ten I began to have work responsibilities that I believe aren't fair for a child. A child should live its childhood. A young person should live their youth, and then when we are adults, well, then we should take up our responsibilities. But, unfortunately, the system in Guatemala doesn't permit us to have a real childhood or youth.

Take school, for example. The percentage of children who get to go to school is very low. In my case, I was lucky enough to finish primary school on the banana plantation where I grew up. After grade six I wanted to go to secondary school, but for that you had to go to town–a bus ride of about an hour. My parents' economic situation was such that there wasn't enough money for me to pay the bus fare and also eat lunch. It was impossible.

When I was about sixteen, one of the unions decided to do something about the kids living on the plantation. They got us a little bus–it was really little and we were really crowded. But we went to town that way and I was able to go to high school for a while. But this only lasted a little over a year.

Something that I'd like to mention is that while this was going on, the sons and daughters of the farm administrators had a special little train that would come to take them to a school where they were learning English, among other things. But that was just for them. We weren't allowed to use it.

When I was eighteen I moved to the capital and when I was twenty I got married.

Yoli: No. Unfortunately I hadn't yet discovered that I had any ability. My time was very limited, because I was busy taking care of the children and going to school.

The only thing I did was make clothes, because I liked doing it. And...I admire my father. I never lived with him. I didn't meet him till I was grown up. He was paralyzed as the result of an accident. He could only move his fingers! Not even his hands, just his fingers. And he made sculptures. He lived in an institution and he had won several competitions for his sculptures. I must have inherited some of his ability.

Kinesis: When did you start doing sculpture?

So, when I started feeling good, I went back to school again. Only this time I went to art school.

Pretty soon my first daughter was born, so then I waited till she was old enough to start kindergarten so I could get back to school. I started going to a *colegio* (a private school) because the public schools wouldn't let a married woman attend classes.

But then my second child was born so I had to quit again. To make a long story short, I did it. I nearly finished secondary school. I never got my diploma, but I just about finished. By then I had three children.

Kinesis: Were you doing any art work at that time?

Frontera/At the Border, 1984

Yoli: To answer that question I have to tell you about why we left Guatemala.

When I lived in Guatemala, I think we were experiencing the same kind of thing that most other families were living. We were concerned with our own survival problems. At that time I never really thought about the political situation. I mean, I could see the problems, but I didn't have time to think about what was behind it all...what was causing it. Because the situation is such that one spends all their time trying to get enough money to keep going.

Anyway, one day my husband's younger brother–he was a student at the university–disappeared. If I'm not mistaken, it was on a Thursday night. He just didn't show up. But we just figured he'd run into some friends. Maybe he'd had a few drinks and didn't want to deal with his parents. Something normal, right? By Friday we began to get worried. We started looking in the hospitals, at the police stations, in the morgues...talking to his friends.

Kinesis: Were disappearances as common at that time as they are now?

Yoli: There were disappearances, but usually the person reappeared, only they were dead. They didn't go to as much trouble to hide what they were doing. Looking back, I think it was the beginning of a new era.

Anyway, after a while his body turned up and we went to the morgue to identify him. It was terrible to see. He was unrecognizable because he had been tortured and then buried and then dug up again. His knees had been broken. The doctor told us it seemed as if he had been pressed with a heavy weight, since all the bones in his upper body had been smashed to the size of about one inch. They'd cut out his tongue. And finally they had shot him through the mouth and the bullet had come out his left ear. It was completely savage. His body had turned grey from being buried and his poor father had to scrape his skin with a knife in order to look for identifying scars.

That's enough about that. He was a very human and a very helpful person, and many people loved him a lot.

Anyway, after that they began to harass us. We started getting anonymous phone calls. Some of these were aimed at coming between my husband and I. For instance, someone would call and demand that my husband start paying child support to a woman who was supposed to have had his child.

Then they started intimidating our friends. They would stop them on the corner near our house and tell them to avoid us because we were dangerous.

One day, while at work, my husband received a direct death threat. We knew we had to get out of the country. We had the children to think about.

My husband left first, and, for a time, I stayed on with the kids. That was a terrible time. Every night a patrol would come and harass us. There was a little window in my front door, and they would shine a spotlight through it, as if to say:"Here we are!" It was psychological torture, and, as you can imagine, my nerves were shot.

Right around that time I heard about a family who had been cut up into little pieces. They put the pieces into some oil drums and carried them out of their house that way. I was afraid that was going to happen to us!

The first place we went was Costa Rica, but we never really felt settled there. We decided to go to Nicaragua.

And it was in Nicaragua that we finally began to live a different sort of life. For the first time in a long time I could send my kids to school in the morning knowing that they would come back in the afternoon. Because I had gotten into thinking that every time I said good-bye to them, I was seeing them for the last time.

So, when I started feeling good, I went back to school again. Only this time I went to art school.

Kinesis: Why art school?

Yoli: Because, ever since I was a little girl, I had always liked to draw. But then, as I said, I had to start working very young and all that was put aside. But then I remembered it, and I thought that was what I wanted to do. At the art school we also had to take courses in anatomy and in sculpture. And it was in the sculpture workshop that I really felt like I'd found myself. I really enjoyed it! And I started to sculpt.

Kinesis: What year was this?

Yoli: This was in '82 or '83. Anyway, after a few years we decided to move to Mexico. The company my husband worked for offered him a job there. I really wanted to go–not because I didn't like living in Nicaragua, because I did–but because I hadn't seen anyone in my family for so long. I had this idea that it might be easier to see them. I thought we might be able to bring some of them to Mexico.

Anyway, we went. Unfortunately, the job didn't work out. I think it must have been the worst year of my life! (laughter). We were in really bad shape financially. We were there about a year.

Anyway, someone told us that the government of Canada was accepting families who were in real need of help. We were, so we went to the embassy and they accepted us. And so we came to Canada.

One positive thing that happened while we were living in Mexico was that I got to know a Guatemalan sculptor called Edgar Guzman. He is a recognized sculptor and he is also a refugee. He became my teacher and he really helped me a lot.

Kinesis: What would you say are the central themes of your work?

Yoli: I think the most important theme I am working with is human rights. I also try to show people in other countries what life is like in Guatemala. I want them to know what's happening in my country. And not just in my country, but in other parts of Latin America as well.

It makes me sad when people ask me where I'm from and when I say, "I'm Guatemalan," they say, "Where's that?" "Is that near Australia?" "Isn't that in the Philippines?" Anyway, I think it's important for people to learn about what's happening in other places.

Kinesis: I notice you use a lot of images of women and children in your work.

Yoli: Yes. Those are the themes I'm working with. The violation of human rights, the situation of women, and the situation of children. As I said before, a child is a child. It's not right that a child four years old, who can barely lift a *machete*, should have to work in the fields with its parents.

Inocencia/Innocence, 1988

We want a just society. We want our children to have the same opportunities that children have here. We want to be valued as human beings.

Kinesis: Some of your sculpted images show women wearing traditional ethnic dress.

Yoli: My sculptures often portray injustice, and the indigenous people in my country have experienced tremendous discrimination and exploitation.

Guatemala is a small country, but it has a complex society. There are a lot of different ethnic groups, and they each have their own clothing. This clothing is very beautiful to look at but it has often been exploited in tourist advertising.

In some of the traditional dances, the dancers wear masks. I would hope that anyone who goes to Guatemala–and believe me, it is a very beautiful country–would try to look at what is hidden behind the masks. People say that our country is backward. *We are not backward. We are exploited* That is quite a different matter.

Kinesis: Where do you get ideas for your work?

Yoli: Usually my first inspiration for a piece comes from something I read. I like to read about what's happening right now. And I look at photographs, because it's impossible for me to work from a model. And when I think there's something other people should know about, I go to work.

All my sculptures have a message. They're personal. They express what I feel. There's a reason for everything in them.

Kinesis: What are you working on right now?

Yoli: Right now I'm working on a series. It's a project I'm doing with Edgar. It's going to consist of twenty pieces. I would like for this series to travel around the world so that a lot of people can see it. I would also like to find a way– right now I don't know how–for this series to generate some money. And some of this money would go to the projects of the Guatemalan refugees living in the camps in Mexico, and some would be used to help me continue doing this work. I need to re-work pieces sometimes to keep the series up-to-date.

Esperanza/Hope, 1987

I want to help my people and I'd like to get really good at what I'm doing...become a really good artist. That's my dream.

Anyway, when the twenty pieces are ready, we want to find an organization that can take charge of the collection and see that it can travel.

I keep saying "we" because I couldn't possibly do this work alone. I get a lot of support from my family. There is also a group of Canadian people who help me in all kinds of ways.

I am in the process of having pieces cast in bronze. This would be very expensive to do in Canada. But since I know the scene in Mexico I've been able to have it done at a much lower price. Some people here even paid for my plane fare to Mexico so that I could begin the process.

Other people have photographed my work and a series of postcards have been made up. These used to be for sale, but now I save what's left of them. I send them to people who are interested in helping with this work.

Kinesis: Where have you shown your work?

Yoli: The fact is that I don't really have very many pieces yet. I've only been doing this for about five years. I had one show together with some paintings by a Guatemalan painter named Roberto Cabrera. That show was only for one day. I've also shown my work at activities organized by churches and, in one case, at a women's event.

One thing that happened was the human rights award. The piece commissioned by the B.C. Human Rights Commission portrays the head of an indigenous woman. At the present time, the bronze statue, entitled "Why," sits in the office of Vancouver's Persons With AIDS Coalition," where founder Kevin Brown was the 1988 recipient of the award. The office is located at 1170 Bute Street in Vancouver, and staff members say that visitors are welcome to drop in and view the sculpture.

Kinesis: As a working person, what have you been doing in order to earn a living and still keep going artistically?

Yoli: When I first got here I thought I'd go to work. My husband and I both got factory jobs. We saw pretty quickly that with what we were earning, we could barely make the household expenses. And we'd come home drained.

There was no time to do art. As I said, before I can make a sculpture, I have to go through that whole process of reading, thinking. Something has to compel me to do it. And in those days the only thing I wanted to do was go to sleep!

So I finally decided to work at home at what I know how to do. I started making clothes for people. But it's funny. Sometimes people call me and they say, "Are you sure you can make a dress without a pattern?" And I say, "All you have to do is show me what you want." But when they hear my English, they think I don't understand them. Sometimes they prefer to go elsewhere. But little by little people have been coming. It's barely enough to survive on, but I keep doing it.

Kinesis: Where do you see yourself going from here?

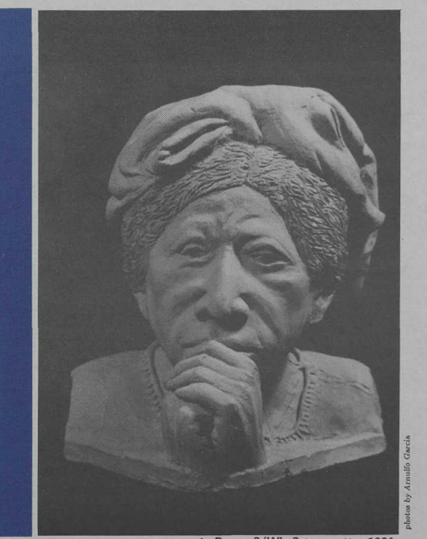
Yoli: Well, I've got a couple of objectives. The main thing is, I want to help my people. I feel my work is a contribution that I am able to make. And as I said before, I'd like to be able to give some economic support to the refugees in Mexico.

And the other thing I'd like to do is get really good at what I'm doing...become a really good artist. That's my dream. It's going to be difficult. I don't know if I can do it here because of the language, and not having enough time, and so on. Anyhow, those are my main wishes.

Kinesis: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Yoli: Yes. I'd like to thank *Kinesis* for giving me the chance to talk to people about my work. And I'd like to thank all the people who've been helping me, for example the photographers who have volunteered to take pictures of my work. To all of you I'd like to say thank you, in the name of my people.

Yoli's sculptures are currently part of a show called "Refugee/Refugiado," which will take place at the Langham Arts Centre in Kaslo, B.C. throughout the month of April.



photos by Arnaldo Garcia

¿ Porque?/Why? terracotta, 1986

Decision supports equality demands

by Gwen Brodsky

Equality rights activists awaited the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Andrews*, anxiously. This was the first challenge to be heard by the highest Court of Canada, under s. 15, of the *Charter* which guarantees equality before and under the law, and equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination on the grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability.

On February 2, 1989, the decision was released. Headlines in major Canadian newspapers said: COURT RULES LAWYERS DON'T NEED CITIZENSHIP. *Andrews*challenged the British Columbia legislation restricting the practice of law to Canadian citizens. In a 4-2 ruling, the Court held that British Columbia's citizenship requirement violated s. 15, and struck it down. This was the bottom-line, so to speak.

Of concern to equality rights activists, however, was not so much the bottom line, but the manner in which the Court dealt with the question of how the equality guarantee should be interpreted.

The fact that the first Supreme Court of Canada case was about lawyers' professional concerns and not about pay equity, accessible buildings, the problem of sex harassment, minimum wages for domestic workers or any other item high on the agenda of equality seeking groups is a disappointment, and a reflection of a larger reality about *Charter* litigation. Most *Charter* litigation has been initiated by privileged individuals like the white male professional who initiated this court challenge. Members of truly disadvantaged groups have lacked the resources to get their equality concerns before the courts. Nonetheless, disadvantaged groups are affected by judicial interpretations of the *Charter* in wide ranging circumstances, including those concerning privileged professional men.

There is some good news. First, the judges paid a lot of attention to the concept of disadvantage, saying things like, "[legislative] distinctions should not bring about or reinforce the disadvantage of certain groups and individuals by denying them the rights freely accorded to others," and " . . . s. 15 is designed to protect those groups who suffer social, political and legal disadvantage in our society . . . " (Wilson J.). This is a definite improvement on the decisions of judges in the lower courts who, in four years of preliminary grappling with s. 15 have failed to acknowledge even that there are disadvantaged groups in Canada.

A second piece of good news is that the Court acknowledged that s. 15 provides much more extensive protection than the equality clause of the Canadian Bill of Rights. The Court recognized that the wording of s. 15 was deliberately chosen to overcome defects in the Bill, and it explicitly rejected narrow interpretations of equality which led to such narrow rulings under the Bill as *Bliss* in which it was held that discrimination on the basis of pregnancy is not discrimination on the basis of sex.

The main context in which the Court concerned itself with the concept of disadvantage was in deciding whether to extend the protection of s. 15 on the basis of citizenship discrimination. Because citizenship is not expressly mentioned in s. 15, although certain other grounds such as sex and race and disability are, the Court had to articulate a rationale for extending s. 15 protection to non-citizens.

...suffers from thinness...

The judges focussed on the concept of disadvantage as the determinative theme for extension of s. 15 protection. For example, La Forest noted that non-citizens are a group of persons who are relatively powerless politically whose interests are likely to be compromised by legislative decisions. And, McIntyre, who wrote the majority judgment on this issue, indicated that s. 15 protection could be extended to unenumerated grounds if they were "analogous" to the enumerated grounds which, he felt, reflect the most common and probably the most socially destructive and historically practised bases of discrimination.

This interpretive approach to the question of who gets s. 15 protection helps women when applied to sexual orientation, another unlisted ground. It points in the direction of inclusion rather than exclusion. In other words, on the basis of *Andrews*, it is fair to say that lesbians have constitutional equality rights. But this was never very contentious. As far as lesbian equality rights are concerned, the big question is not whether s. 15 protection will be available to lesbians to litigate such issues as entitlement to employer-sponsored health benefits, but rather how meaningful that protection will be when judges are actually confronted with lesbians rights claims to specific benefits.

This approach, that is, focussing on disadvantage as a central criterion for inclusion in s. 15, is potentially more significant because it gives us language with which to differentiate women's s. 15 claims from those of advantage groups such as men using the sex equality guarantee to challenge rape laws, maternity benefits and other "special" laws for women. In view of the high number of such challenges that have been launched in the lower courts, and the consequent losses that women have experienced, it is critical that the courts begin to understand that inequality is a problem of women and of certain groups of disadvantaged men such as gays,men of colour and men with disabilities, but not of men generally or of the business sector.

If the courts persistently adopt the view that equality claims of all groups and individuals are essentially on the same footing, s. 15 will become at best meaningless, and at worst it will be detrimental to the equality aspirations of the groups that need it the most. Fortunately, in future cases it will be possible to draw on the language in *Andrews* to support women's demands for measures that will promote their equality of condition.

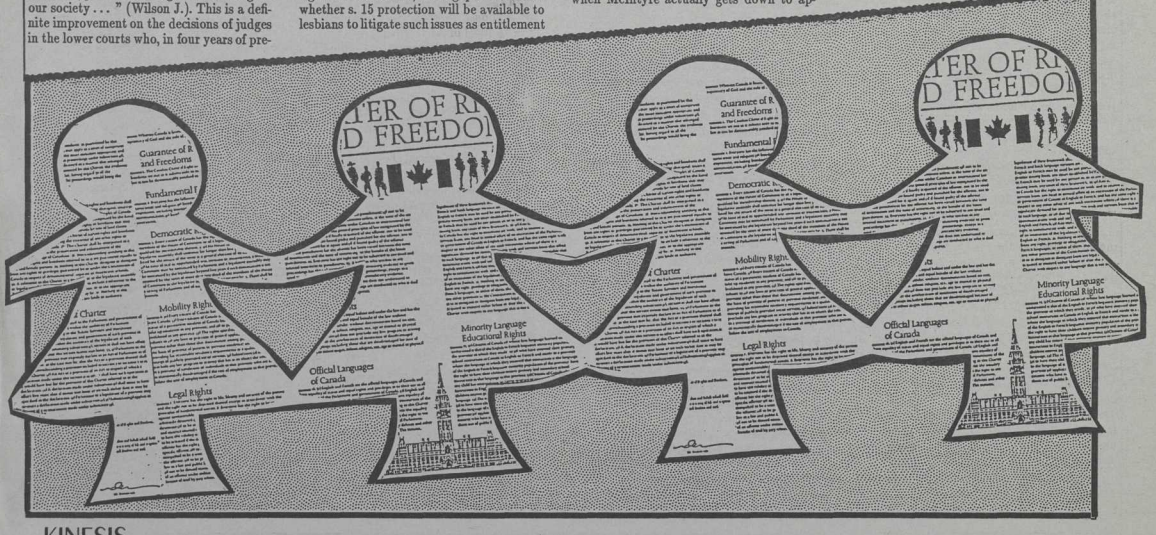
The bad news is that the court's commitment to the concept of disadvantage does not bear close analysis. For example, while McIntyre adopts what he calls an "analogous grounds" approach, he does not actually come out and say that a man's sex equality claim would not be placed on the same footing as a woman's sex equality claim.

An analogous grounds approach will not on its own direct courts to distinguish between claims arising from the women's rights movement and those forming part of a 1980's conservative strategy to roll back reforms won by women in the political arena during the 60's and 70's. Indeed, when McIntyre actually gets down to applying his analogous grounds approach to the ground of citizenship he makes no mention whatsoever of disadvantage. He says that not all distinctions based on citizenship may amount to discrimination, but not why it is that distinctions based on citizenship may amount to discrimination. In fact, his judgment is silent even on the question of how citizenship is analogous to the grounds listed in s. 15. Although Wilson makes a special point of emphasizing the importance of assessing groups disadvantage in the context of the entire social, political and legal fabric of our society, her comments are very cursory.

The *Andrews* decision suffers from such thinness, in important places, that it would be going too far to say that the Court has established a definite, new, and favorable course for *Charter* equality rights. It will take more than this to make s. 15 into an effective tool for proactive litigation by women and to allay fears that s. 15 will result in more losses than gains in rights for women.

To get a clearer idea of how s. 15 is going to affect women's inequality in the long run, women will have to wait and see how the Court deals with a variety of s. 15 equality cases, particularly sex equality challenges. However, *Andrews* does reflect some recognition that s. 15 should assist women and other disadvantaged groups in overcoming their inequality. In this respect the decision is very encouraging. Women, in particular, can take heart from the open repudiation of the Bill of Rights interpretations. This, at least, is a clear reaffirmation of the success of the lobby women mounted almost a decade ago to secure strong and broad language for Canada's new equality guarantee.

Gwen Brodsky is a lawyer at the B.C. Public Interest Advocacy Centre, in Vancouver. B.C. PIAC, a not-for-profit law office, does impact litigation for groups, such as women, whose interests are systematically under-represented or unrepresented in the courts and political arena. In 1987 when she was the Litigation Director for the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, she participated in the development of arguments for an intervention by LEAF in Andrews, *the case which is the subject of this article.*



graphic by Nancy Pollak

NAC: the struggle continues

The May, 1988 Annual General meeting of the National Action Council on the Status of Women (NAC), made the front pages of newspapers across the country which cited its divisiveness, explosive debates, resignations and walkouts.

The focus of the discontent at the meeting was the organizational review of NAC and its proposed implementation. The review, which had been discussed throughout the preceding year in all regions of the country, was undertaken in an effort to decentralize NAC decision-making from its traditional Ontario base and re-distribute power to grassroots women's groups in the regions.

Re-organizational review resolutions were passed at the 1988 meeting and are in the process of being implemented. But the debate among member groups about NAC's role and function continues. The following article discusses NAC's process and recommends a radical re-structuring of both NAC's process and goals; a restructuring that advocates a return to organizing via basic feminist process. The next NAC Annual meeting is upcoming in Ottawa in May.

by Gillian Michell, Lorraine Greaves, and the London Feminist Process Group

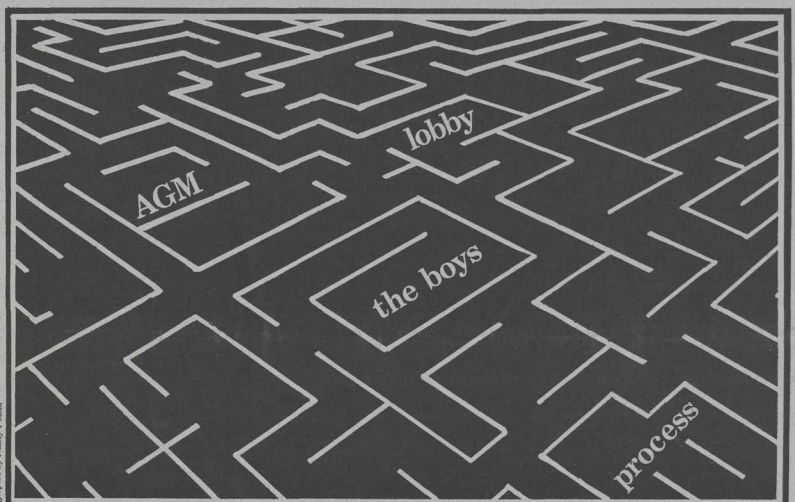
For the last eight months, some feminists in London, Ontario have been meeting to talk about feminist process and how it might help to solve the organizational and process problems which we believe threaten the National Action Council on the Status of Women (NAC)'s continued existence. Sensing that our fears for NAC may be widely shared, we offer our ideas here in the hope that they may help move us towards a better future for NAC in particular and Canadian feminism in general.

The central problem, as we see it, concerns the suitability of using traditional process in feminist organizations. NAC is certainly not the only feminist organization relying on traditional process; nevertheless, it is the largest and most visible one in Canada. What blew the roof off for NAC was its success. The recent dramatic increase in the number and diversity of NAC's member groups was so unprecedentedly rapid that it was "unmanageable." It was impossible for so many new groups to be socialized gradually into the hitherto unquestioned process followed by NAC. And this non-integration made possible the expression of a dissatisfaction that had stayed underground in the past. NAC's growth has revealed feminist process to be a crisis in contemporary Canadian feminism.

NAC has been highly successful in coming to be seen as the visible feminist presence in Canada, but its internal process has diverged from feminist values. It is at risk of becoming a voice that doesn't represent Canadian feminism. But with appropriate action, the painful events of recent NAC history may come to be seen as simply symptoms of rapid growth, symptoms which can serve as a catalyst for change within NAC and result in a NAC which could serve as a model for its member groups. Ignored, the same symptoms may signal the beginning of the end of NAC, which would be very sad—but it might be preferable to a continuation of NAC as it currently.

Discussion of feminist process is of course not new, so the London Feminist Process (FP) group turned to the literature on feminist process. This literature is insightful and practical as far as it goes, but reading it in the light of the NAC experience brought a striking oversight to light: it is all written built on the fundamental assumption that feminists agree that a different way of working together is essential for achieving the feminist enterprise of overturning the patriarchal world.

The truth is, however, that the need for a feminist process is not universally acknowledged, and the problems of NAC arise to an important extent from this lack of agreement. It is clear that many of the main actors in NAC are quite happy with traditional process as epitomized by the rules of parliamentary procedure familiarly referred to as "Robert's Rules." In fact, the skilled use of these rules was what made the 1988 Annual General Meeting (AGM) a "success" for them, despite the fact that those same rules made the meeting distressing and disempowering for many of the participants.



graphic by Nancy Pollak

So what leads us to persist with traditional process in NAC? The same reasons that foster its use in most feminist groups: first, it *seems* to get our feminist work done, and second, it *seems* to be a fair way of operating.

Robert's Rules (and alternative versions such as Bourinot's, which are used by Parliament and some Quebec feminist groups) operate primarily to organize participation so that no one person can dominate the discussion, discussion stays on topic, and discussants treat one another with civility.

It doesn't sound bad so far, does it? So what's the problem?

First, the rules are very complicated and use a specialized jargon, so that people who don't know them can be silenced by those who know how to work them. The result is dramatic disparities of power which undermine egalitarian values and the feminist commitment to empowering all women.

Second, the rules work best when the issues are fairly well-structured and clear to everyone in advance. Since the chair can rule out of order any questions that fall outside this assumed structure, the rules can be used to make free-flowing, spiralling, thinking-it-through discussion impossible. Which can rule out just the kind of discussion of the "given" that has led to the major reorientations in thinking that feminism has produced.

Let's look more closely at this focus on "getting the work done," which makes NAC—or any other feminist group—so loath to abandon formal patriarchal process. This focus reveals the primacy of task over process in feminist practice.

The NAC Executive's current primary task, what NAC "does," is to lobby the federal government on legislative and policy issues. The issues NAC addresses are very often issues which are raised by the government; that is, it is *in response* to government action—like the election or the Meech Lake accord or free trade or legislation affecting pornography. Even though NAC may have been writing briefs to the government for years on battering or childcare or rape, NAC's timing is dictated by the government. NAC's agenda is thus very frequently reactive, not proactive, and as a result both the issues and the timing of any action in response to them may often be outside the control of NAC. Hence, as a result of this reactive task orientation, adoption of feminist process gives way to the temporal and strategic demands of the task.

Further, because it is believed that in dealing with The Boys, we have to play by The Boys' rules, we adopt The Boys' strategies—including The Boys' process. One of The Boys' most crucial strategies has also been an important operating assumption in NAC, namely, that effective political action on any issue requires a single, unified, "correct" position on that issue.

Strategically such a position offers undeniable advantages. A unified position allows NAC to:

- show the strongest possible face of the women's movement ("Three and a half million Canadian women believe/protest/demand ... "),
- display a more understandable, accessible position to the public,
- facilitate dealing with government and media,
- operate with clarity of focus.

All of which are desirable and make the NAC Executive's perceived mandate easier to carry out. But the cost is considerable, including:

- the alienation of women or groups who do not share the unified position, or who do not share the perception that that particular issue is a priority,
- the necessity that NAC use a process which will either squelch dissent or allow it to be ignored to the extent that the unified position can be ramrodded through,
- the obliteration of the record of this dissent in briefs, position papers and media reports of the women's movement, all of which adds up to
- the stifling of the diversity and development of opinion among women.

It is easy to see that the quest for unified positions to support swift, reactive response to government legislation creates a major incentive for NAC participants to abuse or manipulate NAC's process. And the cost appears to outweigh the benefits in terms of the feminist enterprise. So one question for NAC to ponder, then, is: Would NAC serve the goals of Canadian feminism better by abandoning the search for unified positions on the issues?

A larger question is, of course, whether the focus on lobbying activities is, in fact, the best use of NAC and its executive's energies. NAC old-timers remember that prior to the '80s there was a much greater focus, at least at the AGM, on the goal of educating and empowering women and women's groups, while lobbying played a less major role.

The advantages of returning to this balance of functions are several:

- the outcome would be the development of skills at the grassroots level, as opposed to the concentration of skill and power in the hands of a few old pros, usually from central Canada and particularly from Toronto
- member groups could speak for themselves more often, which would strengthen the regional expression of feminist concerns, make it easier to air a diversity of viewpoints, and lessen the tendency of the media to call upon NAC for a monolithic and sometimes over-simplified response to any issue, which would ultimately result in

See **NAC** pg. 16

Mozambique from pg. 11

Singing and dancing are common wherever we are. It affirms our identity and our personality. This is what we've been trying to do. Making culture is something that is not only there to keep our identity but to affirm struggle and resistance in Mozambique.

What can Canada and friends in the West do? You can broaden and enlarge numbers of people who know what's going on. Sometimes people know something about South Africa but not enough about the Frontline States, and in this case about Mozambique. Knowledge will bring awareness. This will lead to action. It's important that what we are building should be strengthened by international solidarity. Especially in areas that we priorize, like agriculture. It can gradually reduce our dependence on international food aid. We also need support to rebuild infrastructures—schools, hospitals, health centres ...

Of course it is also possible to put more pressure where decisions are made, where it is possible to accelerate the downfall of apartheid. We need to build a large front in the world. That's why I'm here.

The Canadian government has given support to our efforts of development. Canada is supporting projects within the SADCC countries. Non-governmental organizations and COCAMO (see below) give a lot of priority to rural development. This is good ... rebuilding roads, health centres, helping to train. But what is still of a small dimension is bilateral projects—direct government-to-government assistance in agriculture, fishing and mining, etc ... Political statements have to be followed by economic pressure. Sanctions will help dismantle apartheid. We expect the government of Canada to implement this.

We are victorious! The picture of Mozambique in the world is that of children with big bellies, displaced people. I am saying that we are people struggling for independence and our right to stand as equals in the community of nations. RENAMO has managed to destabilize the country through guerrilla warfare. However, the mere fact that they started after our independence, it is now fourteen years, and that they have not overthrown the government, shows our victory.

The simple fact that we are still The People's Republic of Mozambique from north to south, from east to west, means that we are victorious. We are still there, a people united and strongly identified, you know, with the government and the party. We are not only suffering, we are also a struggling people and we resist strongly.

Graca Machel's visit was sponsored by the World University Service of Canada (WUSC).

The NFB film that accompanied her presentation, "Mozambique: Riding Out the Storm," was funded by WUSC and COCAMO (Cooperation Canada Mozambique), a Canadian based consortium of about 20 non-governmental development agencies. COCAMO is raising funds for education projects in Mozambique as well as educating the Canadian public. COCAMO can be contacted at (613) 236-4547 or 1 Nicholas St., Suite 300, Ottawa, Ont. K1N 7B7. Locally you can contact the anti-apartheid network or OXFAM for more information.

Graphics and statistics are available from the New Internationalist *No. 192, Feb. 1989, and "Mozambique—Apartheid's Second Front," a resource kit produced by COCAMO (available at OXFAM).*

WAR

Since the war started in 1982 its costs have been ...

Human:

- 100,000 lives---as a direct result of Renamo activity.
- 100,000 more in the famine of 1983-4 which was caused by a combination of drought and war.
- 25 percent of the population forced to become refugees.
- One Mozambican child dies every four minutes.
- 400 teachers assassinated, kidnapped or mutilated.

Material:

- $6,000 million---twice the country's foreign debt and 60 times the value of 1987 exports.
- 31 percent of health posts destroyed with a loss of health care to 2 million people.
- 36 percent of schools destroyed or forced to close, causing a 25 percent fall in school attendance.
- 1,300 trucks, tractors and buses, 164 locomotives, 352 wagons destroyed.

But there are signs of hope ...

Amnesty: During 1988 the Mozambican government offered an amnesty to Renamo guerrillas. Around 2,000 (of an estimated force of 20,000) accepted it.

Victories: Large parts of Renamo-held territory, especially in Zambesia province, were recaptured by government forces aided by Tanzanian and Zimbabwean soldiers in 1988.

NAC from pg. 15

- a more powerful grassroots women's movement which could be heard by federal politicians at the local level, instead of just at the national level.

The disadvantage is that there would be some loss of power for NAC at the national level, a disadvantage which must be weighed against the overall goals of the organization.

So a second question is: Should NAC focus less on lobbying and more on education and empowering women and women's groups?

Another question about process has to do with size. Is there a limit on the size of group which can function with feminist process and allow room for diversity and differences? Certainly, an AGM which adopts a process allowing for every one of the hundreds of participants to express her views about any resolution and be listened to is hard to imagine.

An obvious strategy long used by group facilitators is to break any large group down into groups small enough to allow for real discussion. The views of each small group can be reflected by group representatives who meet in turn in other small groups, and so on, so that any action that develops arises from a multi-faceted base expressive of the full range of individual experience, rather than from one imposed by strong-arm tactics in a disempowering AGM that exploits Robert's Rules. A strengthened regional structure could result from the operation of the same process.

In sum the question here is: Can the use of a different process allow NAC to benefit from its size and diversity?

Finally, there is the question of the AGM and what its function should be. From an earlier form, when it functioned primarily as an educating and empowering experience for representatives of NAC member groups from across the country, it has evolved into a hideous marathon the goal of which is to hammer out resolutions and unified positions, frequently in reaction to government agendas. The focus on gaining media attention brings even greater pressure to stifle real discussion.

The need to achieve these goals has made the meeting into an experience which most women find disappointing at best and painfully alienating at worst. First-time attendees—50 percent of all participants—arrive with high expectations at what should be an energizing and transforming feminist experience and instead, disenfranchised by mysterious and dehumanizing rules that preclude meaningful participation, leave angry and disappointed. The opportunity to get a sense of the breadth and diversity of Canadian feminism is lost. In fact the membership has no real role in setting the next year's agenda, since it is in the hands of those who can play by the rules. It is a sad pretense to claim that NAC's annual meeting is in any way a feminist meeting.

Why not focus instead on ways of recognizing the strength and knowledge and experience that each woman brings as the amazing resource it is, as a resource which can give each of us revitalized ideas and understanding and energy?

Can we use NAC's annual meeting to expand our understanding of feminism and women's experience and thought, not to narrow it?

Since we tend to accept that it is time pressures that often justify our abandoning feminist process, perhaps it is also time to reconsider the assumption that feminist political action will have no impact unless it takes place at the very moment when the issue catches media or political attention. We need to appraise whether in acting swiftly and ignoring feminist process we have accomplished so very much. Many of our gains are in retrospect minor, temporary, or questionable, as the legislative initiatives regarding pornography have made only too clear.

We might have to move on to quantifying instead what we have lost by ignoring feminist process. It is hard to find a committed feminist these days who is not at least a little dismayed by the prevalence of burnout, by the refusal to engage or stay engaged in the feminist enterprise, and, perhaps most distressing of all, by our failure to attract young women to the movement in significant numbers.

Something we might consider is abandoning the task orientation of the feminist movement altogether, in favour of a process orientation. The feminist revolution is in the way each of us lives her life, and that revolution is now. Nothing could be more revolutionary than doing all our feminist work using feminist process. If we choose our agenda in terms of what we can do using that process, rather than having it chosen for us by the patriarchy, who's to say we wouldn't be further ahead in 20 years?

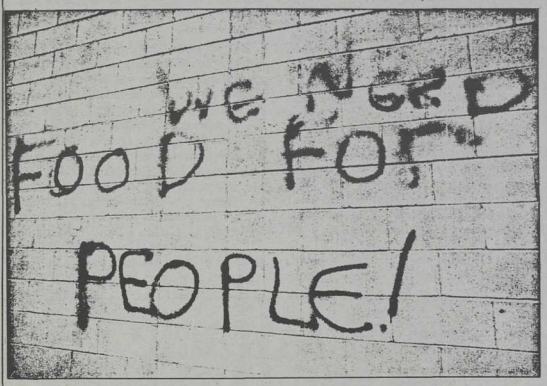
So our last question is: Why not make feminist process into the focus of the feminist revolution?

The London FP Group has included at one point or another Connie Backhouse, Margaret Buist, Marene Cope, Kathy Dance, Lorraine Greaves, Gail Hutchinson, Sandi Kirby, Julie Lee, Diana Majury, Gillian Michell, Janet Money, Candice Schachter, Eleanor Schnall, Barbe Slavko and Barbara Todd. The diversity of their views is not necessarily captured by this paper.

Head count on hunger

by Gillean Chase

The Canadian Association of Food Banks (CAFB), deeply concerned with the growing problem of hunger and malnutrition in Canada, is calling upon food banks and emergency food services across the country to join in a National Hungerwatch. According to CAFB Chairman Gerard Kennedy, the objective of Hungerwatch is to "serve as a catalyst for communities and governments to understand and act on the underlying factors responsible for acute poverty" in Canada.



During March 1989, all emergency food services across Canada will keep records about the number of people who must rely upon emergency food services for their survival. Called Hunger Count, this effort will serve as the basis for public education campaigns regarding the problem of hunger in Canada. It is hoped that over the next year this "head count on hunger" will result in community efforts to reduce the numbers of those who go hungry in Canada by "as much as 50 percent."

Such advocacy by the CAFB may not have a stunning effect over so short a time, but it will add fuel to other fires lit by anti-poverty groups. Here in British Columbia, communities like Vancouver, Burnaby, Surrey, Nanaimo and Kamloops are organizing forums on hunger for April and later on this year. Some are focussing on the issue of children who come to school hungry, a volatile subject in a province whose premier has stated that these children's parents do not care enough to send them to school with a decent breakfast.

The Socred government will not contribute to hot lunches for school children until educators have identified the children who are going hungry, a pre-condition which is considered by many parents and teachers to be unacceptable. Many parents on social assistance fear that divulging such information will result in losing custody of their children.

The Attitude Problem

Feeding poor people is an immediate problem. Related to this problem is the larger one of social attitudes towards poor people—that those who are unemployed or hungry are jobless and starving because of some fault of their own.

It is a popular misconception that unemployment in B.C. is on the decline, that the worst of the hard times are over. Some sectors of the economy are thriving—such as the real estate market and land development projects, for example. The result is that unemployment in Vancouver is marginally less than it was in the summer of 1988. Statistics Canada places the rate at 9.9 percent for February 1989, down from 10.6 percent last summer.

There is a real problem, however, with using numbers to measure poverty. Numbers can conceal as much as they reveal, especially since unemployment figures consider only those who are registered with employment centres. Governments are too apt to point to economic indicators of prosperity rather than to focus any attention on the growth of poverty in Canada.

For a certain class of people, things in Vancouver are going very well, with houses bought, sold/resold or demolished by developers at a great pace. Shelter costs, however, in a city which already suffers from a low vacancy rate, are skyrocketing. For those on fixed incomes, increasing shelter costs means that even less money can be spared for the purchase of food. High rents inevitably lead to homelessness, at least for some.

That, says the Vancouver Food Bank's Sylvia Russell, is intolerable. The Food Bank has successfully asked Vancouver Mayor Gordon Campbell to proclaim April 10-16 as "Local Hunger Awareness Week."

"During this week," said Russell, "we are appealing to residents of Vancouver, Burnaby and the North Shore to initiate food or fundraising drives for people who go hungry in these communities. So far, we have approached some sports and service organizations, businesses, educational institutions, labour unions and other concerned groups to direct their energies towards alleviating the problem of hunger in the Lower Mainland during the Awareness Week."

"In Vancouver, and across Canada, we must not lose sight of the fact that social programs to assist the poor are totally inadequate. Our greatest challenge today is to completely eradicate poverty."

Donations Down

It is a challenge which the Vancouver Food Bank has met with increasing difficulty over the last few years. The Food Bank currently distributes over 90,000 bags of groceries a year, with an estimated value of $1,512,000, through eight depots in the Vancouver, Burnaby and North Shore area. Of those who receive assistance, over 88.14 percent are on welfare with an additional 3.58 percent receiving unemployment benefits. Another 4.78 percent are on disability or old age pensions and 2.88 percent report no income of any sort. Only .62 percent are employed, either full or part-time.

Meanwhile, as the economy appears to improve, donations to the Vancouver Food Bank are down—by about 12 percent in each of the last three years. Many in B.C. and in Canada as a whole believe that there are all kinds of jobs for people who want to work. Being a chef or a cook, a waiter/waitress, teller, service station attendant or sales clerk may not be glamorous, they say, but they do provide people with the dignity of paying their own way in the world.

At present, there is a decline even in the availability of these jobs, which pay the worker lower wages and which are considered by employers to be more expendable jobs. Included in this sector are jobs in the manufacturing trade, like the garment and textile industry, which are traditionally filled by women and immigrant labour. These groups are often the object of hidden—and not so hidden—sexual and racial discrimination which is often expressed as wage inequities. As well, employment gains in services, transportation, manufacturing, construction, the retail trade and tourism are often poorly paid and undervalued.

In B.C., employment fluctuations are caused by the fact that the province's economy is resource-based. Resource industries are influenced by the demands of the world market and subject employees to seasonal layoffs according to whether or not a particular resource is in short or heavy demand. The food lines contain many of the resource-based unemployed.

Other factors affect the Canadian work force as a whole, such as a high level of job dislocation resulting from technological changes. Even in the clerical sector, once thought to be an unending source of jobs, women are being replaced by computerization. Part-time employment is on the increase, but part-time employees do not have job benefits or job protection equal to full-time employees. Part-time workers are also the first ones to be laid off when a company "downsizes." The question to be asked is whether women can exist on part-time salaries since their pay cheques are often essential to the survival of their families.

Challenging Stereotypes

The biggest single challenge to food banks and emergency food services across Canada continues to be the stereotype of the "welfare bum," led to poverty by nothing more than alcohol or drug abuse, emotional and mental problems. Some women on welfare are considered to be promiscuous or irresponsible parents. It is certainly true that for some, poverty can lead to addiction, to criminal acts or mental breakdown. It is also true that many of the poor have an astonishing ability to make too few dollars go farther than other Canadians could stretch them.

For "communities and governments to act on the underlying factors responsible for acute poverty," a lot will have to change in people's attitudes towards poor people, and in their acceptance of poverty. Poor people will be with us so long as we blame them for being impoverished.

Donations of food or cash with which to purchase food can be directed to The Food Bank, 1650 Quebec St., Vancouver, B.C. V6A 3L6; or call 689-9663 for more information about "Local

photo by Kim Lyng

Hunger Awareness Week." Food bins will also be placed in the rotunda of Vancouver's City Hall during the week of April 10-16.

But don't just donate. You can also write your provincial and federal representatives and demand adequate and universal social and income security programs.

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Healing fair a magick festival

by Jeannie Lochrie

In early March the Waxing Moon Healing Village Society (WMHVS) organized a successful fundraiser healing fair at the Native Education Centre in Vancouver. The location could not have been more perfect and the fire pit in the centre of the lodge burned brightly from noon till night. Children—some with exquisitely painted faces—and women sat around the fire, some deep in contemplation, others amicably visiting and eating.

There was something for everyone: workshops ranging from chanting to art therapy, to a workshop on Healing the Child Within; and, in the day-care there was singing with the kids, clowning and other good things. Two healing rooms were created, one for body-work: Reike, Trager and Rosen-method massage, Shiatsu. Healers and psychics were kept busy in the second room with women consulting chanellers, tarot-card readers, astrologers, and choosing healing flower essences.

Because all the healers charged by donation it was easy to access different healing techniques. As well, crystals, stones, jewelry, shirts and divers kinds of magick items were for sale. As one healer who attends many similar events told me, "It's really mellow!"

Indeed, the festival-like atmosphere was very peaceful. Soothing music played all day, mingling with the aroma of delicious

Indeed, the festival-like atmosphere was very peaceful. Soothing music played all day, mingling with the aroma of delicious food. Children and womoon, (WMHVS literature uses the latter spelling as well as womyn/women) talked, laughed, touched and healed one another. Healers and the healed sat around the sacred fire- pit in the evening enjoying a variety of singers and poets.

I became aware of the Waxing Moon Healing Village Society a few years ago mainly through seeing ads for their meetings. I was curious about the work of the group, but too busy to get to yet another meeting.

Well. These dedicated feminist-healers have been busy laying down the theoreti-

graphic by Joanna Roy

cal groundwork for the future woman-only-healing village. The core members continue to hold the vision for the future village while also working on issues such as male-access and conflict resolution, which they say is a large part of the ongoing work. And, most importantly, they are fundraising.

Registered as a non-profit society in 1987 they have actually "translated the Society's constitution and by-laws into plain English to provide womyn with more information on this project." Dedicated to freeing women from economic bondage, the WMHVS organizers hold the firm utopian vision that the earth is our healer, and she cannot be bought per se.

"Land Trusts are a way of pooling resources, using and sharing privileges, eliminating (land) owner-tenant power relationships, and taking control of our lives. We seek to implement the ancient belief that land is a community resource to be taken care of by and for the common good. It is not a commodity to be bought, sold, or controlled by a few. The Waxing Moon Healing Village will make land accessible to those of us who would not ordinarily have that chance, providing long-term security."

Some of the services the Waxing Moon Village will include: a safe and supportive space for womyn in transition and in need of healing; an alternative home base for aging and differently abled womyn; retreats; workshops; international networking; a moon lodge; organic gardens; and practical considerations: job training programs to provide education opportunities for women, which teach rural skills, ecological awareness, energy conservation.

Until the money or land womynfests, the WMHVS is looking for interim land "to hold workshops and retreats, thus building our support and skills." If this well-organized healing fair is an example of the WMHVS' work there is no doubt they will, indeed, find the perfect spot of land, creating a healing oasis. For all of us. In the meantime, hopefully the Waxing Moon Healing Village Society will hold regular healing fairs.

The Native Education Centre, with its high ceilings, cathedral glass windows and central fire-pit made some of us feel as if we were already there, sitting in an outside courtyard in a womyn's healing village! I went for a couple of hours only to find myself spellbound by the event and stayed late into the night. There was talk among some women that there was a healing of another sort happening at the fair: a coming together of the political and the spiritual. Utopia indeed.

For those too busy to be directly involved, the WMHVS encourages interested women to take out a membership. Cost is on a sliding scale: $50-30, more or less, depending on your finances. Their publication, Waxing Moon News *is available for $12 a year. The society has an international membership with support coming from Europe, New Mexico, the western United States, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and throughout B.C. For further information call Brenda/Jan at 536-2960; or Gitta on Pender Island at 629-3745. Or write the Waxing Moon Healing Village Society, c/o 14115 Marine Drive, Whiterock, B.C. V4B 1A6.*

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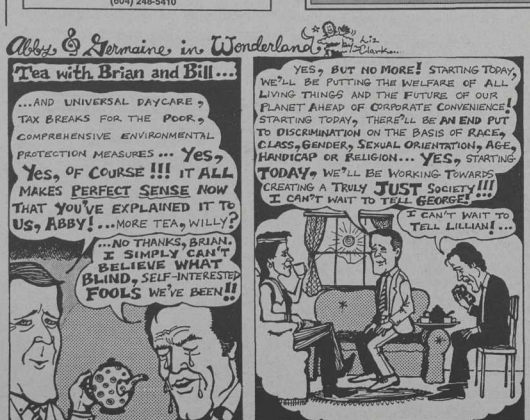

A Guide to Feminist Expertise

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

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MayWorks springs into second year

by Maura Volante

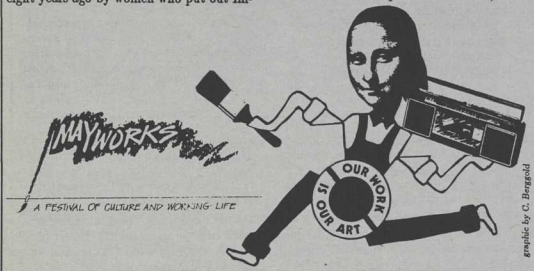
Newspaperwomen who also sing, a poet who also dances, a writer who also acts, and clerical workers who also produce theatre. These are just a few of the women who will be sharing their divers talents with audiences and participants during the second annual MayWorks Festival, running from Monday, May 1 to Sunday, May 7.

The newspaperwomen who also sing are the Images Ad Hoc Singers, formed seven or eight years ago by women who put out Images, the women's paper from Nelson, B.C. "We're not in it for performance," said Bonnie Evans, talking about how they practise every Tuesday night whether or not they have a gig coming up. "In fact, some of us prefer it when we don't have a performance to prepare for, because we spend more time working on new songs. We're really slow to learn, so if we have a lot of performances we end up polishing old material instead of learning new stuff. Others in the group love to perform."

Those women should be happier these days because Images Ad Hoc Singers have gained a reputation, and are being called upon more and more. They'll be singing at the Anza club during MayWorks, sharing a bill with Nora Randall's play, "Mavis Tells the Story of Marlene and the Chicken Yard."

Randall is the writer who also acts, transforming her story into a performance piece with the help of director Jackie Crossland. Running about 45 minutes, with some costumes and simple sets, "Mavis ... " was a big hit at the Women In View festival earlier this year. It tells the story of two sisters who work as bus drivers, and is hilarious in true Nora Randall fashion. This play will also be part of a new facet of the MayWorks Festival—Art in the Workplace.

This program will take performances and visual art to lunchrooms and dockyards, affirming the philosophy of connection between artists and workers that is the basis of the festival. As part of this effort, Randall will take "Mavis ... " to the Kenmar (a bus company) lunchroom, for the benefit of the staff.



graphic by C. Bergold

As well as taking theatre into the workplace, MayWorks will also be taking the workplace into the theatre. Readings and shows of work-related writing, visual art and video are too numerous to list, but one very interesting event is a theatre piece to be developed (in five days!) by clerical workers with the help of Headlines Theatre Company, called "Not Just Nine to Five: Surviving the Modern Office" (see page 20 this issue).

As for the poet who also dances, Ahdri Zhina Mandiela is a Jamaican-born Toronto based dub poet, who is also involved very much with theatre and dance. "Sometimes I work with a band," she said, "but this time I'll be solo. What I'll be doing for MayWorks will be poetry, but with a lot of movement and melody as well. It's mostly a theatre package, issue-oriented with dramatic delivery."

The issues she speaks about run the gamut from feminism through imperialism, poverty, pain, youth concerns, Native rights and exploitation of the Third World—all from the perspective of a Black woman living in Canada.

As well as doing her own show at the IWA hall cabaret, Mandiela is taking part in a group reading at the Octopus bookstore, May 6, called "Telling It Like It Is: Racism Doesn't Work." Including such poets as Jenny Gunn, Lee Maracle, Surjeet Kalsey and Evelyn Lau, as well as several male poets, this event will focus on the experience of racism in the workplace.

Across the street at La Quena, on May 1, will be an all-women reading of Working Writers including Kate Braid, Zoë Lambert, Kristen Emmott and more.

Selected Events

MAYWORKS OPENING SPLASH, Mon. May 1, Noon: Art in the Workplace kicks off on the waterfront docks, at Canadian Fish Co. (at the foot of Dunlevy), with renowned Japanese-Canadian drumming group Katari Taiko performing for cannery workers of the United Fisherman and Allied Workers Union.

CABARET DOUBLE BILL, "Same Cage, Different Age," & "Arlene Mantle," Tues. May 2, 7:30 pm, Tickets $5/3, I.W.A. Hall, 2859 Commercial Dr. (13th Ave): Vancouver Sath's latest production dramatizes domestic relationships in the Indo-Canadian community; Arlene Mantle with special guests Marilyn Lerner and Kris Purdy.

CABARET DOUBLE BILL, "Not Just Nine to Five: Surviving the Modern Office," & "Rebel Peaches," Wed. May 3, 7:30 pm, Tickets $5/3, I.W.A. Hall, 2859 Commercial Dr. (13th Ave.): Headlines Theatre Co. Power Play with the Clerical Workers Health and Safety Project; Rebel Peaches Debut! Vancouver's Julie Blue, Bo Conlan & Friends present R & B dance tunes.

ANZA CLUB DOUBLE BILL, Including "Mavis Tells the Story of Marlene and the Chicken Yard," May 4-6, 7:30 pm, Tickets $7/5, 3 W. 8th Ave., Thurs., Fri., Sat., 1st Show: Nora Randall relates the humourous conflict arising between two bus-driving sisters when one is promoted to management. Also poets galore on Thurs only. **Fri. & Sat., 2nd Show: "Images Ad Hoc Singers":** Vancouver Premiere. Twelve women present harmony direct from the Kootenay highlands.

COMMUNITY VOICES, Fri. May 5, 7:30 pm, Tickets $5/3, I.W.A. Hall, 2859 Commercial Dr., (13th Ave.): Downtown Eastside Poets in ranting, raving and righteous poetic performance; Dignity Players workshop theatre on social realities; Arlene Mantle on stage or on a picket line, she's one of Canada's favorite labour musicians; Keychange—feminist rockers!

TELLING IT LIKE IT IS, RACISM DOESN'T WORK, Sat. May 6, 2-5 pm, Free, Octopus Books, 1146 Commercial Dr.: Poets Sadhu Binning, Jim Wong-Chu, Ahdri Zhina Mandiela, Neil Benson, Sarjit Kelsey, Ajmer Rhoda, Jenny Gunn, Lee Maracle and Sky Lee.

SHINDIG COUNTRY DANCE, Sat. May 6, 8 pm, Tickets $10, Maritime Labour Centre, 111 Victoria Dr.: Rustle up your partner for some two-steppin' with the popular Sue Medley Band, country dude Roy Forbes, and underground stompers The Hard Rock Miners.

To ensure MayWorks is a great success again, we require your support. Financial donations are gladly appreciated. Every Festival needs volunteers. Please help us make a strong labour positive culture grow. MayWorks offers free event passes in return for your time. For more info call MayWorks Hot Line 321-8821 and speak with our new co-ordinator, Rachel Rocco. See you all soon.

Melvin remembered

by Jill Pollack

When she died in 1977, Grace Melvin requested there be no funeral or memorial service. As her nephew said, "She wanted to be remembered by her work."

Not only has she been forgotten, but her other last 'wish' has also fallen by the wayside. It was her intention that illumination and lettering become accepted as popular contemporary art forms. Her words were, "I resolved ... to pioneer the revival of illumination."

Her sights may have been unrealistic. Yet Grace Melvin does deserve to be remembered, if only for her work at the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts (VSDAA), now the Emily Carr College of Art and Design, and for her collaborations with Marius Barbeau.

Grace Melvin was born in Scotland. During the late 1920's, she studied at the Glasgow School of Art. It was then that she first discovered a collection of lettered and illuminated manuscripts in the library of the British Museum. She had an immediate reaction to them, and was to devote a large part of her life to practicing this art form.

Grace's brother-in-law was Charles H. Scott, the first principal of the VSDAA. In 1927, he asked her to come to Vancouver on a one year's leave of absence to help set up the school's design department. She went on to become its head, until her retirement in 1952.

Grace Melvin had a lot of strong opinions. She found that most modern illuminators (there were some) were "too fond of ornamentation." She believed the art had "reached its zenith in the 13th century, and that the long-forgotten masters were better craftsmen than their followers today." So in 1930, she published *Basic Lettering for Art Students*. Even in 1977, it was still the main text used for this subject.

Melvin also had much to say about her own profession. She said teaching was " ... such fun ... that's why I never went back to Glasgow. I still believe in constructive teaching, drawing, design. After that is the time for the artist to express his own ideas. Few artists make a living by selling their paintings. They must teach or do commercial art. Teaching is undoubtedly the best secondary occupation because a creative teacher can get something as well as giving.

Melvin supported government grants to artists in order to sustain their growth. "One can usually spot real talent very early in the development of an artist. An artist can't afford to measure success in terms of money or publicity," was how she put it in 1974.

Along with illuminating manuscripts and teaching, she also painted and did book illustrations. In the 40's she focussed on black and white pen and ink drawings. At the same time, she travelled around B.C. and Alaska with the ethnologist, Marius Barbeau. They collaborated on two books about the Northwest Coast Indian culture and lore. She made hundreds of drawings, trying to " ... bring out the strong imaginative nature of the Indian of our coast."

Then in 1956, after one of many trips to Hawaii, she won an award for her watercolour, "Coral Reef—Morning Honolulu," at the second Winnipeg Art Gallery juried show.

In 1972, Grace Melvin had a 50 year retrospective at the Vancouver Art Gallery. She had been trying to convince the Gallery to set aside space to " ... show more work by established local artists ... the publicity is very important to the welfare of an artist."

Her last years were spent living alone in a cottage just off southwest Marine Drive. It had been designed and built by Charles H. Scott, and "was almost hidden among big trees." She painted every day: "As soon as the breakfast dishes are done, it's into the studio for two or three hours."

She had, she said, "A zest for life."

graphic by Grace Melvin

In Visible Colours: International buffet

by Terri Hamazaki

"There is an incredibly rich and varied cultural diversity in Canada that needs to be expressed," said organizers of In Visible Colours, a local film and video festival to be held November 15-19.

Aimed towards fostering political, cultural, social, economic and gender awareness, this five-day, multi-venue event will showcase works by women of colour and Third World Women. An accompanying symposium will address the surrounding issues of production, distribution and economics.

Within their respective roles as Distributor of Women's Programs and Distribution Manager, Festival organizers Lorraine Chan of the National Film Board (NFB) and Zainub Verjee of Women in Focus (WIF) were dismayed to discover the lack of films that reflected the experiences of women of all cultures; films that reflected their own reality.

The dialogue between the NFB and WIF about the lack of film resources was joined by voices from Immigrant Services and the Vancouver Society on Immigrant Women, and two years later, a dream has become a reality.

The festival's title 'In Visible Colours,' describes the invisibility of the various cultural groups in North America, and the need to assert their rights to have access to the media. It also reflects the lack of representation in film of women of colour and Third World women.

Explained Verjee, "Within the context of imperialism and colonialism, there is a long history of silence; of not being represented." The festival will attempt to address the relationship between the dominant (white) culture and other cultures, in addition to promoting the works of women of diverse cultural and political perspectives.

A preliminary list of film and video makers reads like an international buffet and confirms the organizers' desire to look at representation from various cultural groups. Here's a sampling taste from the list: Sumiko Haneda (Japan), "The Cherry Tree With Grey Blossoms;" Vijaya Mehta (India), "Rao Sahib;" Sara Gomez (Cuba), "One Way or Another;" Heiny Srour (Middle East), "Leila and the Wolves;" Sylvia Hamilton (Canada), "Black Mother, Black Daughter."

Submissions are still being accepted and are urgently requested; the only criteria for acceptance being that the film or video be directed, written or produced by women of colour or Third World Women. Suggested themes for the work include: cinema resistance, cinema in exile, women's sexuality, land and development, and violence.

photo courtesy of NFB

Lorraine Chan (left), and Zainub Verjee, co-coordinators for the In Visible Colours Festival.

The need for cultural diversity and gender awareness in the cinematic world is highly undervalued in our society. Traditionally, women have only participated as 'images' and the festival will " ... also be used as a vehicle for women of colour to see themselves as producers of culture, to give them a sense of empowerment," said Chan.

Added Verjee, "There are people who are interested in producing community-based videos, for example, but there's no money to produce them, and even if there is, there's no way to distribute them." Included in the festival is a two-day symposium, led by guest film and video makers, for those seeking information on the actual development and distribution of works of film and video.

"Initial response to the festival has been generally favourable; and hopefully, the event will create an appetite and a demand for films/videos of this kind," said Chan. In Visible Colours is a cultural event, after all, stressed organizers.

However, plans are already underway to build an educational, anti-racism programme, creating a catalogue of videos which will be taken around to schools. "We w[illegible] to hold workshops for school children, to familiarize them with the equipment and talk about cultural differences," said Verjee.

Continued Chan, "In Canada, what multiculturalism means is never really discussed, and with a festival like this, we are able to politicize one another."

Targeted towards feminists, film/art communities, ethnic groups and the general public, the WIF and NFB co-sponsored festival has already received support from the Vancouver Society on Immigrant Women, the government of Norway, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). And organizers hope for additional support from other federal agencies.

Volunteers are also needed to help with all aspects of the festival. In Visible Colours will be a celebration of cultural diversity, promise festival organizers. You are strongly urged to join in the festivities.

For further information on volunteering or entry forms for submission of work, please contact: Lorraine Chan or Zainub Verjee, Festival Co-ordinators, c/o National Film Board of Canada, 300-1045 Howe Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 2B1 or call (604) 666-3838, FAX (604) 666-1569.

Clerical work on stage

by Diane Strandberg

Stuck in poorly ventilated offices in badly designed work stations, women clerical workers are plagued by a bewildering array of health problems.

But according to the Clerical Workers Health and Safety Project, knowledge of the issue is only half the battle. They want to see women take positive action to change their work environment, spokesperson Lois Weninger says. "Because of the subtle nature of office hazards, office-related illnesses often go unacknowledged. Clerical workers suffer in silence because they don't realize their health problem is real; it's not just in their heads."

Her group is working to raise awareness and build a network of women interested in solving this problem. One way of focusing attention on the issue is to involve clerical workers in a way that enables them to take action.

On April 22, about 20 clerical workers will participate in a theatre event that presents the issues in a unique way. Not only will they act in the play, but they will write and produce it.

They will work together with Headlines Theatre, a popular local theatre company that has built a reputation for producing socially relevant plays with community groups throughout B.C. Weninger says the theatre idea is a good way of raising public awareness of office issues because it involves women concerned about these hazards and brings to life their experiences.

Called *Not Just Nine to Five, Surviving the Modern Office*, the play will also encourage audience participation, offering a unique opportunity for dialogue about this crucial issue.

"We're excited about the show because it gives clerical workers a chance to explore issues affecting their daily lives," says Weninger. "We hope to get the message across that the office environment can have a direct impact on the quality of women's lives. We're saying, 'Here's an opportunity for women not only to talk about this issue but to build an agenda for change.' "

graphic courtesy of Headlines Theatre

Beginning at 8 pm, at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, *Not Just Nine to Five* will also feature entertainment by special guests Aya, the Euphoniously Feminist Quintet, Helen Potrebenko and Sandy Shreve. Tickets are $6 and can be ordered through the VECC box office.

The Clerical Workers' Health and Safety Project is a project of the Women's Skill Development Society and is funded by Health and Welfare Canada, Health Promotion Directorate. For more information call the project at 430-0458.

Rites best of Riches

by Eunice Brooks

RITES
by Brenda Riches
Erin, Ontario: Porcupine's Quill, 1988
84 pages

Brenda Riches writes from the Doris Lessing school of how-to following the words from *The Golden Notebook*: "One novel in a thousand has the quality a novel should have to make it a novel—the quality of philosophy."

Rites is a collection of the best of Riches' previously published short stories, 15 in all. Each of her tales has found a metaphor. In "A Small Room," the opener, a man and a woman are tangled in the sort of sleep that comes after complete physical and mental union. The woman dreams that she is wearing a green dress, and he has allowed her to lead him into mysteries known only to women. Her journal has a green cover. His being is the ink in her pen.

Rites is Riches' second book. *Dry Media*, 1980, was mostly poetry, but it is in prose that Riches reaches her power as a writer. *Rites* is in no way didactic or political. Rather it is a brilliantly conceived collection of strong characters, and long on description that leaves one in no doubt about the writer's vision. Perhaps comparing Riches to Virginia Woolf would not be out of place. Although her word pictures are perfect, she is far from verbose. Spare is a better way of describing her stories.

"The Maid" is set in some time that is not present or past, and some place that is neither here nor there—precisely. The plot is simple. An angel gets curious, and God dumps her onto earth to live. The maid takes over the bodily needs of the heavenly visitor. They both have a weakness for Chablis and I got a chuckle at the homey wisdom of the interaction between the women. Yes, angels are women. So is God.

"Hannah's Day" is my favourite. Hannah also likes wine, and in the glass she finds such truths as: "At rock bottom life is ineffable." Hannah writes, but she has more strength than either Riches or me, since Hannah commits each poem to memory, then burns the paper it is written on. Hannah takes buses every day without noticing destinations. She disembarks "lord knows

See **Rites** next page

More on stripping

Kinesis:

It's great that *Kinesis* printed Joanne P.'s commentary about lesbians supporting the striptease at the gay club. I also feel disappointed that lesbians are exploiting women in this way.

I would like to think that lesbians, with our outsider view, our love of women, would be *outraged* at this objectification of women's bodies (and it's always bodies that fit the heterosexual standard—not fat, old, scarred, or too damn butchy).

I would like to think that as lesbians we are creating our own sexuality—not just copying the hets. Striptease has nothing to do with being "liberated" about sex—it is completely confined within the male imagination of sex.

I want to be treated better, and to treat other women better, than men treat us. So don't be totally disillusioned, Joanne: there *are* dykes that share your point of view.

Bonnie Waterstone

Health fund

Kinesis:

A point of clarification regarding Jackie Brown's article on the Women's Health Fund (*Kinesis*, March '89, p. 5):

In describing the origins of the Health Fund Jackie refers to the particular situation of Barb Hayman, a WAVAW staff worker who at the time of her illness "had not been at WAVAW long enough to qualify for disability benefits." It should be noted that the requirement of a qualifying period was not WAVAW's but the insurance company's. For readers unfamiliar with such matters, qualifying periods of three to six months are standard in the insurance industry. The employer, in this case WAVAW, does not have the power to set or waive the requirement; control rests with the insurer.

WAVAW as an organization was tremendously supportive of Barb during her illness. In addition, individuals within WAVAW gave unreservedly of their time, effort and money assisting in the various fund-raising activities on Barb's behalf.

As an update to Jackie's story, we are very excited at the successful launching of the Women's Health Fund. Response from the community has been great. Of course, many hands and many dollars are needed. Readers wishing to make a donation or to get involved in the Fund can contact us c/o 101-2245 W. Broadway, Vancouver V6K 2E4.

For the Women's Health Fund,
Lisa S. Price

Clarifying criticism

Kinesis:

Dear Betsy Warland, et al.

After I sent off the response to J. Lochrie's review of *(f.)Lip*, I realize that I'd left room for misinterpretation. My criticism was not directed at *(f.)Lip* so much as at the perspective of the review.

I understand the role *(f.)Lip* is trying to fulfill and the need for that voice among many. I was objecting to a review that accepts the style of *ecriture feminine* as a valid form of expression and change and yet denies the possibility of difference on the level of actual language. I interpret this as a privileging of a certain style over a broader—again no pun intended—issue of content within context.

Perhaps my point was simply that there is an implicit hierarchy of identities (and possibly even of class) that is created when *ecriture feminine* is canonized and French writing is criticized in the same breath. Particularly under the banner of 'accessibility.'

Sincerely,
Karen Herland

Adoption guidance

Kinesis:

I'm writing because I've just finished reading Cyndi Mellon's article on the kidnapping of Guatemalan children for adoption. As someone who is now in the process of adopting a child from another country, I want to say that not all international adoptions are illegal. The child I hope to bring home with me is now five years old, and has spent most of her life in an institution. I cannot see any way it would be doing her a service to leave her there.

Many of the women I have met who have adopted or are trying to adopt internationally are women on their own who, for all practical purposes, would not be eligible to adopt in British Columbia because they do not have husbands. They are very concerned that they are proceeding in both an ethical and a legal manner.

If Cyndi Mellon or the Christian Task Force on Central America can pass on any guidelines for avoiding illegal adoptions, or can expose the names of groups or individuals who are dealing in children for profit, I would like to give that information to the Adoptive Parents Association of British Columbia to print in their newsletter.

Elizabeth Shefrin

Thanks from DEWC

Kinesis:

We celebrated IWD in the Downtown Eastside with a Women's Cabaret at the Pitt Gallery. We enjoyed four hours of music, poetry, comedy and a bellydancer.

I'd like to thank the performers for donating their time and energy: Artemis, Sheila Baxter, Sylvi, Gretchen Haywire, Renee Rodin, Diane Laloge, Cuba Dyer, Jean Yoon, Micki and Uschi of AYA, Pam Fleming Sand, Jean Smith of Mecca Normal, Lovie Sizzle, Jan Berman, Norma Brow, Lone Nielsen, Biruta and Erin Corday. You were wonderful!

We raised $120 for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre by asking for $2 at the door. Thanks also to a warm, supportive, vocal audience. As the woman who wandered in looking for the Ladies' Auxiliary Meeting said, you were "lovely." Please come visit us at 44 East Cordova, round the corner from Pigeon Park and Co-op Radio. We're open Monday to Friday 10-5, with free soup and bannock at noon Mondays and Thursdays.

Diane Wood
for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

Rites from pg. 20

where" to have adventures. "Once she went into a bar and ordered three strawberry daiquiris, thus breaking the alcoholic regime of a lifetime." Hannah writes villanelles, a form of poetry I first learned about by reading the biography of Sylvia Plath. I've tried them, and that ties me to Hannah. Someday I may even be her.

An example of Riches' strong description lies in "Trappings." She writes: *A gentleman sat in an elegant chair. His left leg was stretched out in front of him; his right leg bent, the foot pressing into rich rug. He held his hand against the side of his face, the forefinger slowly tapping a thoughtful upper lip. Though he leaned slightly away from the lady, his head was tilted in concern for her wilful words which gusted through him like wind through a cold chimney.*

She really takes me there. This piece is more a fragment than a story.

The same could be said of "The Concert Master." One line stands out: "The violin strings turn into worms that wriggle and multiply." Then later: "Notes fly out, shocked birds, blundering against windows, dropping feathers."

Rites cannot be classified as feminist, exactly, nor can it be called Canadian literature, exactly. It can be called well written without stretching truth, and interesting too. It isn't the book for someone looking for serious answers to social problems, or to finding a better way to pay the rent. I will be surprised if it goes to second printing, but I treasure my copy, have read it several times, and can recommend it to those of you who are tired of Marilyn French and Germaine Greer for the nonce.

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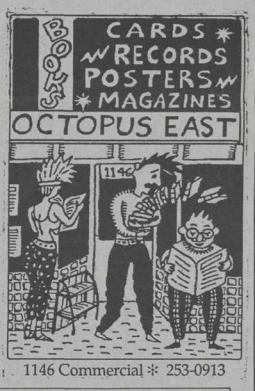

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All listings must be received no later than the 18th of the month preceding publication. Listings are limited to 75 words and should include a contact name and telephone number for any clarification that may be required. Listings should be typed or neatly handwritten, double-spaced on 8 ½ by 11 paper. Listings will not be accepted over the telephone. Groups, organizations and individuals eligible for free space in the Bulletin Board must be, or have, non-profit objectives. Other free notices will be items of general public interest and will appear at the discretion of *Kinesis*.

Classified are $6 for the first 75 words or portion thereof, $2 for each additional 25 words or portion thereof. Deadline for classifieds is the 18th of the month preceding publication. *Kinesis* will not accept classifieds over the telephone. All classifieds must be prepaid.

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

EVENTS

BOOKWORKS AT R2B2

April 14 lawyer Ruth Lea Taylor will be holding a free discussion on Women, Money and Relationships; **April 21** Ekeen Ghattas and Hassan Shaban will read Palestinian poetry in English and Arabic. Both events will be held at 8 pm, 2742 W. 4th Ave. For info call 732-5087

WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

A public forum entitled "Off the Record: an inside view of women in the media" will be held **April 10**, 7-10 pm at the Pitt Performance Gallery. Register by calling 875-6695 or send $5 to VIEW the Performance Arts Society, #14-2414 Main St., Van., B.C., V5T 3E3. For more info call Laura MacMaster 737-0714 or 521-4785

TWO WOMEN, ONE NIGHT

A concert performance with Deidre McCalla and Kris Purdy on **April 21**, 8 pm at Christ Church Cathedral (Burrard and Georgia). Tix are $12, on sale at Ariel Books, Highlife Records, The Women's Bookstore and the VLC, which is the pay what you can ticket outlet

EVERYWOMAN'S HEALTH CENTRE

The first Annual General Meeting and elections for the Board of Directors will be held on **May 7**. (For more details see Movement Matters)

EVENTS

AIDS: THE WOMEN

Ines Rieder will be talking about women and AIDS and discussing her book *AIDS: The Women* on April 17 at 8 pm at Octopus Books, 1146 Commercial Dr. (For more info see Movement Matters)

EVENING LECTURE

Margaret Iverson, a feminist art historian will be speaking on feminism and psychoanalysis in contemporary art practice at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Annex 4th floor, **April 13**, 7:30 pm

CHILDREN OF PALESTINE

Dr. Jacqueline Sfeir's lecture Sat. **April 15**, 8 pm at the Vancouver Planetarium will address how the Israeli occupation affects the Palestinian children of the West Bank and Gaza. Sponsored by the Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada. For info 298-9638

DIOXINS IN HOWE SOUND

Come and have your questions answered at a public forum on the threat of dioxins in Howe Sound, Thurs., **April 13**, 7 pm at Howe Sound Secondary, 3800 Buckley, Squamish

WRITING RETREAT

A summer school/writing retreat for women will be offered **Aug. 13-26** at the Van. School of Theology, UBC. Fee $525 (partial scholarships available). For application instructions write to: West Word V, West Coast Women and Words, 210-640 W. Broadway, Van., B.C. V5Z 1G4 or call 872-8014. (See Movement Matters for more info)

THEATRE

The clerical workers Health and Safety Project present Not Just 9 to 5: Surviving the Modern Office, a forum theatre play developed and performed by clerical workers will be held at the VECC, **April 22**, 8 pm, $6

CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

The Van. Children's Festival will be held **May 15-22** at Vanier Park. 23 companies will be presented in ticketed performances and an additional 20 groups and artists will rove the site and perform on the free open air stage. Ticket sales begin Mar. 11 at all TicketMaster outlets. Festival programmes are available at all ticket outlets, libraries and community centres or by calling 687-7697

EVENTS

VIGIL FOR PELTIER

April 16-18 ... Solidarity vigil for the release of Leonard Peltier, American Indian movement leader. The Supreme Court of Canada, on these days, hears information on the fraudulent extradition to the U.S.A., 12 years earlier, of this internationally recognized political prisoner. All-day events at the vigil include speakers, videos, poets, drummers and singers offering words and music and prayers for an understanding of Native history and struggle. Freedom for all Native political prisoners! Phone the Carnegie Centre at 665-2220 to check the detailed schedule of events. Carnegie Centre, corner of Main and Hastings.

SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN'S DAY

South African Women's Day is celebrated on **August 9th**. Women organizing this annual event in Van. invite groups and individuals who would like to work on the day or to participate in it, to contact Sadie at 266-6830 or Louie at 251-7880

GIVE PEACE A DANCE

Will be held **May 13** at the Plaza of Nations, 4 pm-midnight. Proceeds to International Defence and Aid Fund for South Africa and the Pacific Peace Umbrella Society. Admission: $10 to April 15, $12.50 to May 11, $15 from May 12. For more info call 322-8873

OLDER LESBIANS

The West Coast Celebration and Conference by and for old lesbians II will be held at the conference centre in San Francisco State University on **August 4th, 5th & 6th**. For further info regarding billeting and pre-registration write: Natalie Zarchin, 8259 Terrace Dr., El Cerrito, CA 94530 U.S.A.

"CELEBRATION" BOOK LAUNCH

Presenting 18 poets with readings from *A Labour of Love*, an anthology of poetry on pregnancy and childbirth, edited by Mona Fertig, Sun., **April 16**, 8 pm at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Admission free

UNLEARNING RACISM

An Unlearning Racism weekend workshop will be held **June 9, 10, 11** at Camp Alexandra in White Rock. Childcare subsidy is available, sliding scale fee: $20-$150. Register between May 1-15 by calling Celeste George 251-2635 or Mari Wright 872-4079. (See Movement Matters for details)

GROUPS

WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

Looking for 4-5 women, who are enthused, motivated and committed to organizing an ongoing, annual Womyn's Performers' Festival in B.C. (probably lower mainland). The vision is to eventually move it out of Vancouver and onto rural land to create a womyn's community of music, workshops, working and playing together for 3-4 days. (Yes, we *still* need space to ourselves to celebrate at least once a year—we don't have to apologize for it!) In the meantime it's possible to get a mini indoor event together for this year. At this time, skills/experience needed are: organizational, business, including financial planning, budgeting, fundraising, knowledge of music industry, contacts—and a strong desire to see this happen. If interested, call Pat at 253-7189

TENANTS RIGHTS

To find out what you can do to fight a rent increase call the Tenants Rights Coalition 322-5800

MISC.

THE FOOD BANK

Donations of food or cash with which to purchase food can be directed to The Food Bank, 1650 Quebec St. Donations of non-perishable food can also be dropped off in the Rotunda of Van. City Hall **April 10-16**

WOMEN IN VIEW

VIEW, the Performing Arts Society, is now accepting proposals from female writers, choreographers, musicians and artists for **Jan. '90** festival. Deadline: **May 31**. Send to #14-2414 Main St., Van., V5T 3E3 or call 875-6695

RESOURCES FOR LESBIANS

We are pleased to announce the publication of the new, updated and expanded *Lavender Guide*—a listing of over 100 resources for lesbians in the Montreal area. If you are planning to visit Montreal, order your copy now. The *Lavender Guide* is available at cost—send $2 plus stamped, legal size envelope (76 cents) to: Project Lavender, C.P. 105, Succ. Delorimier, Montreal, Quebec H2H 2N6

SELF DEFENSE

Wenlido courses are held regularly in a number of locations. The cost for 12-15 hours of instruction ranges from $25-$45. For more info and location of classes call 876-6390

857 Beatty Street

Women in Focus Arrives in Yaletown

Visit our new location as of April 1st

April 29th – Opening Exhibition & Party – A Retrospective & Reunion

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HOUSING AND WORK

Woman needs to share residence/quarters somewhere in East Vancouver. $100-$200 monthly. Non-smoker and non-drinker. I do not want to live with men. Moving on May 15th from Edmonton. Originally from Montreal. I also seek employment. Resume at Kinesis. Have cooked in CAF stint; worked on dairy farm—like horses too; can type; especially seeking permanent full time work in security and investigations or correctional services. Write c/o P.S.S.E. Box 4279, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4T3 or contact Kinesis

WOMEN'S COUNSELLING

My specializations include depression, sexuality, sexual and emotional abuse, adult women survivors of childhood sexual abuse, identity issues, self-awareness, relationship issues, decision-making and career explorations. I work using verbal and expressive therapies, gestalt and guided imagery. Sliding fee scale. Janet Lichty. B.A., M.Ed. Counselling Psychology. 874-2593.

WANTED:

Inactive farm with acreage—can do repairs—prefer lease with option to buy—3-6 hrs from Van. Contact G. Ridder, Murray Rd., Pender Island, B.C. B0N 2M0

MOVEMENT CLASS

Women's Contact Improvisational movement class—beginning level. Thurs. 6-7:30 pm, 185 E. 11th. Low cost, drop in OK. For info call 253-8645

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WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN

Sandra Butler workshop—Balance or Burn Out: Women's Commitment in the Political World, **May 27 & 28.** This workshop will explore the ways in which the escalation of commitment, of energy, of time, of skills is an inevitable part of living political lives. How do women handle the constantly shifting relationships of their private and public lives when their life is a politically based one? How do we know when it's time to shift to taking care of ourselves instead of others? This workshop will combine political theory and analysis, personal exploration, group process and discussion to describe and connect the many-layered landscape in which we live. Sandra Butler is an internationally recognized authority on issues of child abuse and violence against women. She is best known for her pioneering book: *Conspiracy of Silence: The Trauma of Incest*. Sandra has over the years developed unique therapeutic techniques that explore the relationship between creativity, community and healing. The workshop will be from 9-4:30 on **May 27 & 28** at the Justice Institute, 4180 W. 4th Ave., Van. (classroom 2, Blake Hall). Cost $125. For further info call 327-4427. Enrollment limited

SITKA HOUSING CO-OP

Sitka Housing Co-op, a 2-year old, 26 suite complex for women and children, is creating a waiting pool for future vacancies (1-4 bedroom suites and townhouses). Priority will be given to sole-support women, single mothers, women with environmental allergies. Call Belle 255-0046 for info.

photo by Irene Young

Deidre McCalla, Olivia's newest recording star, joins with Winnipeg's Kris Purdy for Two Women: One Night of laughs, rock, salsa and blues, April 21, 8 pm. Christ Church. See BB listings for ticket info.

JOB OPENING AT VSW

Fulltime position open for INFORMATION OFFICER

Closing Date: April 27 Start Date: May 15

Primary Responsibilities

researching issues pertaining to women, including sitting on one or more issue committees; coordinating public relations for the organization; acting as liaison for VSW with other women's and community organizations; lobbying politicians at all levels of government; organizing educational programs; sharing in general day-to-day and administrative tasks of VSW.

Qualifications

good writing, public speaking and public relations skills; ability to network with other groups/organizations; knowledge of women's issues; ability to work collectively; willingness to work occasional evenings and weekends.

Send Resumes to **Vancouver Status of Women**
301-1720 Grant Street
Vancouver, B.C.
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255-5511

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ALCHERINGA

Springtime comes to Salt Spring Island where that special hide-a-way cabin for women awaits you. Isn't it time you treated yourself and took a break from regular life? Rates are $30 single, $40 double through May. Call Phyllis at 537-4315 for information and reservations (evenings are best).

GOLDEN THREADS

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

CHARLES SQUARE CO-OP

Charles Square, a 36 unit housing co-op in East Van. has a very short waiting list for 1 and 3 BR units. Rent is $460 and $705, with $1000 share purchase (financing can be arranged). To get on waiting list, send SASE to Membership Ctee., 1555 Charles St., Van. V5L 2T2

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STRESSED?! BURNT-OUT?!

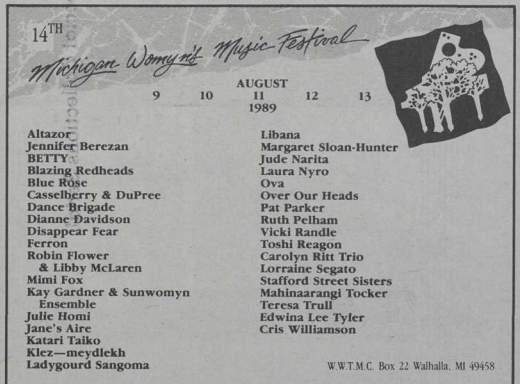
Do you believe that if you relax you won't get anything done? You may be surprised to learn how effective you can be without feeling stressed. In this participatory workshop, we will use body awareness to explore the effects of stress and to experiment with simple stress-reducing techniques that will leave you feeling at ease, yet alert. The workshop, available on request, is especially designed for community groups and can be altered to suit the needs of any particular group. Offered for donations or honorarium. Astarte 251-5409

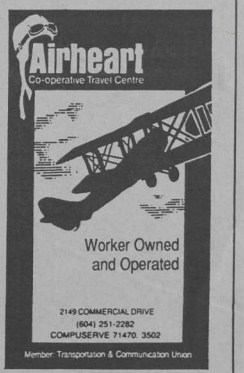
WANTED

Non-smoking woman to sublet very large, bright bachelor apartment. May, June, July and August. Broadway and Granville Streets area. $400/month includes heat and hot water. Sorry, no pets or children. References please. Call Lesley 736-2332

OCEANFRONT RETREAT

On Gabriola Island. $330 per week or $50 per night. Sleeps six. Available year round. Lots of space and privacy. Phone 248-5742 evenings for reservations and information.





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