July/August 1986

KINESIS

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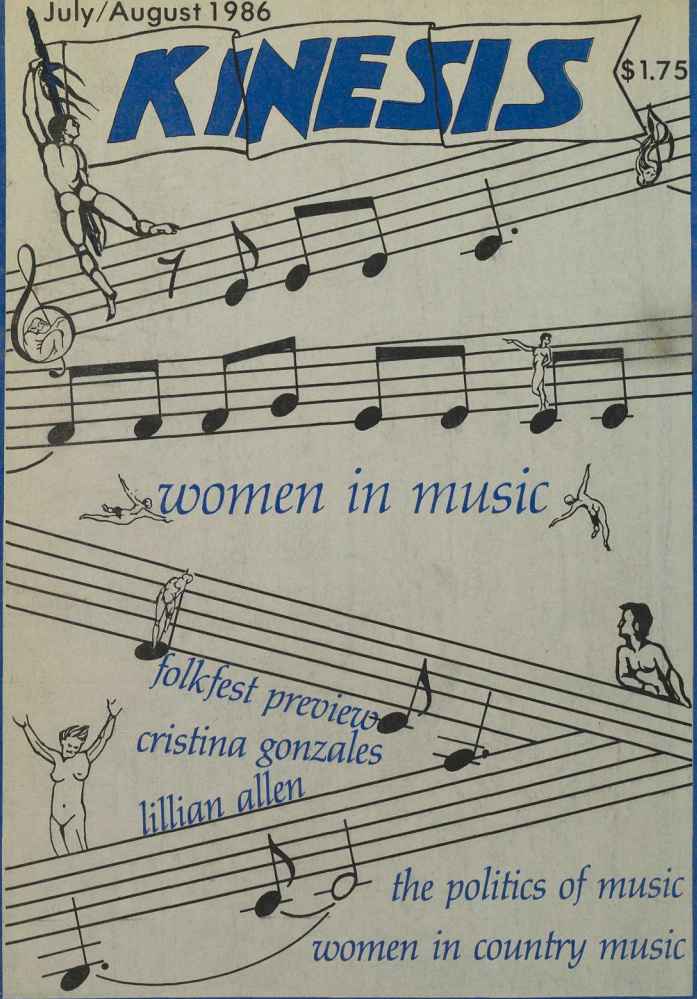


Transition House

MHR denies funds for city

by Esther Shannon

Vancouver City Council received word in late June that the provincial government will not participate in funding a city-run transition house for battered women.

Word of the province's rejection came in a letter to council from Ministry of Human Resources Minister Jim Nielsen, who wrote that the province "is unable to fund such a facility."

The city's proposal, which has also been forwarded to the federal government, calls for the establishment of a "residential facility" which would provide at least 15 beds, and an "advocacy centre" for advocacy and court accompaniment services for battered women.

The house itself would operate in the traditional manner with a confidential address but the advocacy centre would be set up separately "in a central location accessible to the public." The city's proposal for a separate advocacy centre is a unique idea which formalizes battered women's need for advocacy services.

According to the city, while transition houses have always done advocacy work "time required has always been time borrowed from the main activity of running the house."

A separate advocacy service would not be restricted to current and ex-residents but would be open to "women who may or may not need or use the residence."

In his letter Nielsen advised the city that "The ministry is committed to opening an additional transition house for ten residents in the lower mainland. The Ministry's preference is to have this facility located in one of the more suburban communities."

Nielsen went on to say that the house "...will be available to women throughout the lower mainland including Vancouver."

Megan Ellis, spokesperson for the Women's House Saving Action (WHSA) told *Kinesis* that Neilsen's decision "shows contempt for women in Vancouver."

"The government's decision," said Ellis, "wasn't proceeded by any serious negotiations despite the fact that the need for services is undeniable."

Gerry Fordyce, co-ordinator of the Salvation Army's Kate Booth House also expressed her disappointment at the decision saying "It's too bad really, especially as there's no rhyme or reason given."

According to Ellis there are rumours that the new house is to be established in White Rock. "Clearly," said Ellis "other houses are needed in other areas but that shouldn't preclude Vancouver having an adequate number of beds for battered women."

Fordyce says she's doubtful that women in Vancouver would use a house in the White Rock area.

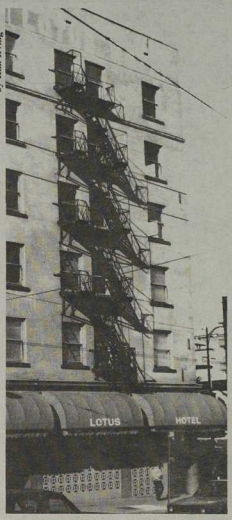
"Unless there was a special need for protection," said Fordyce, "they probably wouldn't use it. Also, if it's in White Rock it's going to cover the Surrey area and Surrey itself is producing a lot of problems."

In an interview in the *Vancouver Sun* Alderperson Bruce Eriksen said that "The government's priorities are not to the people of Vancouver. It's a slap to the people of Vancouver."

According to Eriksen, Nielsen "is so busy trying to take Mr Bennett's chair that he's lost touch with the important issues."

Megan Ellis says women must press the provincial government to "re-think its decision." Asked whether she thought the province could be persuaded to reverse its stance Ellis said she really didn't know.

"You have to wonder," she said, "if it's going to take some woman being beaten to death before it becomes politically necessary to open more beds in Vancouver."



by Kim Irving

Concern continues to be expressed among Vancouver women about the appropriateness of patronizing the Lotus Hotel's women-only disco because of fears that the hotel's increased rents may have forced some low income tenants to move. While the Lotus is not on any group's hotel boycott list, the newly formed Vancouver Lesbian Network intends to discuss concerns about the Lotus at a meeting slated for July 10th, 7:30 pm, at 876 Commercial Drive (VLC). If you want information about the situation at the Lotus come to this meeting.

PEI women lose only hospital abortion committee

by Eunice Brooks

This month, in Prince Edward Island, no woman can get a legal abortion. The 24 member board of directors of Prince County Hospital in Summerside, the only hospital which was doing abortions in the province, dropped its abortion committee in early June.

The committee wasn't up to much. It had not approved an abortion since October 1982. Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL) spokesperson Diane Mossman said: "Women knew that there was no use asking for an abortion in PEI. The committee was a farce."

It is estimated that 650 women left PEI in 1985 for Dr. Henry Morgentaler's clinic in Montreal, or a clinic in Bar Harbor Maine where they had to pay for an abortion. Nova Scotia, the neighboring province, does provide aboriton, but only for residents.

PEI women have been forced to pay between $275 and $350 at the Morgentaler Clinic, or $250 in Maine, plus the cost of transportation, according to CARAL. Last spring, Dr. Morgentaler offered to start up an abortion clinic in PEI but the Conservative government at the time turned him down. The new Liberal Health Minister, Keith Milligan, will not make a statement to the press on the Morgentaler offer.

The federal government has no plans to change Canada's abortion laws according to John Crosbie, Justice Minister. Her said Ottawa can't force provinces to provide abortions. He said that women could always leave the province if they needed an abortion. He did not take into consideration that many women live on the edge of poverty in PEI and cannot travel due to a lack of funds.

Ottawa has been asked by women's groups for more than a decade to remove abortion from the federal criminal code so that it is no longer necessary to get a hospital committee approval for a therapeutic abortion. Crosbie says Ottawa will not establish abortion clinics simply because a certain province has no hospital with an abortion committee.

Another CARAL spokesperson said of John Crosbie's comments that Ottawa can't interfere: "That's interesting. The government here says it's a federal responsibility." She said that PEI Justice Minister, Wayne Cheverie says it's up to Ottawa to decide what to do. Mossman said: "As long as we've got the law it has to be fairly applied. That isn't happening in PEI."

The Prince County Hospital executive director said: "It was known by doctors they were wasting time applying here, if it wasn't a medical emergency. The policy was only to permit abortion in a life threatening situation." He added: "The board is representative of the

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New porn bill escalates the censorship debate

by Elaine Littman

It's been called fascist, puritanical and victorian, and has raised a groundswell of protest--and thus far, little wholehearted support. It's the proposed Criminal Code amendments to tighten pornography laws--amendments critics fear will lump together violent porn and bestiality with nudity and kissing.

Justice Minister John Crosbie presented a whole package of sex legislation designed to control the use of children in porn and prostitution industries, and to amend the hate literature law to include sex, but so far it has been eclipsed by outrage over the porn bill.

The bill defines four types of pornographic material involving adults: three are specifically linked to violence or degradation, but the most contentious is a grocery list of sex acts ranging from "vaginal, anal or oral intercourse" to "incest, necrophilia..." and ending with the catch-all phrase "other sexual activity." Although this section has the critics up in arms, it will probably be the first to go if amendments are made.

Reaction from Vancouver feminists has split predictably, but both pro and anti-censorship forces object to the wording. Opinion is also divided over what will happen to the bill, but most feel it will pass with the most controversial phrases revised. Some, however, do not rule out its passage in its current form, especially if there isn't strong protest against the bill. Artist and anti-censorship activist Sara Diamond is one: "It really is a worst-case scenario of what could happen with censorship lobbying," she said. "It shows that despite intensive feminist lobbying, the federal government can't really differentiate between the clearly

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Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Call us at 873-5925. Our next story meetings are Wed., Aug. 6 and Wed. Sept. 3 at 7:30 pm at the VSW offices 400A West 5th Ave. All women welcome, even if you don't have any experience.

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

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KINESIS UPDATE

The *Province* did it. And so did the *Sun*. And now *Kinesis* is going to do it too.

Over the coming months we will be developing a new look which we will launch early in the new year. We are considering many changes, such as typesetting, and a change of format, to improve the paper. Our design committee will be working closely with Marsha Arbour, a local graphic artist.

Kinesis' new design will also owe much to the efforts of Anne Doyle who will be working on computerizing aspects of *Kinesis'* production, as well as VSW systems.

We would appreciate any comments or ideas which you have. Please call us at 873-5925 or write to us.

Concurrent with our new design, we are developing a promotion campaign to reach new subscribers. Such an expanded readership will give us a more solid base of support. Sharon Hounsell has been hired as our promotion coordinator.

Cat L'Hirondelle is taking over temporarily from Jill Pollack as our advertising manager.

And we would all like to say goodbye to Connie Smith, who has been covering women and music in her popular Rubymusic column since December '83. We hope she'll be able to come back to *Kinesis* soon.

BIG MOUNTAIN DEMO

A demonstration against the US government's relocation of 10,000 Navajo people has been called for: July 7 at 11 am at the US Consulate, 1075 West Georgia. July 7 is the official deadline date for the forced removal.

KINESIS RETREAT

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Phone **873-5925** for info.

Women's Tour of Nicaragua

The first women-only tour of Nicaragua from western Canada is well underway. This two week tour is being organized by the BC-Nicaragua Coalition, Women's section, and is expected to be in Nicaragua by Sept. 25, 1986. The only other women's tour of Nicaragua is leaving Toronto this August.

While in Nicaragua, the tour will be sponsored by the largest women's organization: AMNLAE. They will visit a host of organizations, including prisons, hospitals, daycare centres and military organizations. This tour will also coincide with AMNLAES anniversary celebrations.

The tour of 16 women consists of photographers, filmmakers, journalists, students, teachers, nurses, mothers, lawyers and more. Upon their return the women hope to continue solidarity work with the women of Nicaragua by presenting slide shows and talks, videos and hopefully produce a publication on the situation in Nicaragua.

In order to fully prepare for tour, the women are meeting regularly to discuss group process dynamics, and travel arrangements and are being thoroughly briefed on the history, culture and politics of Nicaragua.

The tour also hopes to raise enough money to subsidize expenses, especially for those women who cannot pay the full fare amount, estimated at $2,000. Therefore, tickets for a raffle draw are presently being sold and benefits are being planned.

Since information gathered in Nicaragua by this tour will be brought back for the women's community here in BC. Tour members are asking feminists to support the fundraising efforts.

If you are interested in assisting with fundraising efforts or would like more information on the tour, please call: 734-2228.

from previous page

community we serve, and we're responding to concerns in the community."

There is only one abortion unit in Nova Scotia, at Halifax's Victoria General Hospital. That hospital will not accept out of province abortions. To qualify a person must be a resident of Nova Scotia for three months. The hospital, however, takes out of province surgery patients for other procedures, such as neurosurgery.

Canada has seen a serious drop in the numbers of therapeutic abortion committees from 274 in 1975 to 244 by 1984. In that year, 1984, for which the latest statistics are available, only 34 hospitals performed 73 percent of Canadian abortions. At 47 hospitals none were performed.

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World's Biggest Bookstore
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I.C.I.—A Woman's Place, Oakland, Ca.
Laughing Horse Books, Portland, Or.
It's About Time, Seattle, Wa.
Old Wives Tales, San Francisco, Ca.
Room of One's Own, Madison, Wi.

NEW ZEALAND:

Broadsheet, Auckland
Women's Bookshop, Christchurch

ACROSS BC

South African women's day planned for Vancouver

Throughout the world women suffer against oppression and discrimination. We are given the worst paid and lowest status jobs. We are traditionally responsible for raising children and keeping house, whether we like it or not.

All women in South Africa are oppressed under the system of apartheid. But black women suffer the greatest burden of oppression. They are three times as oppressed because they are women, black, and workers.

On August 9th, 1956, 20,000 women representing millions of women from all parts of South Africa marched on the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the imposition of the pass laws on African women. Dressed in black, green and gold, the colours of the African National Congress, the disciplined and resolute women stood in silence for thirty minutes after the Prime Minister refused to receive the hundreds of thousands of petitions the women brought.

The silent vigil was broken by the singing of Nkosi Sikelel and Africa Morena Boloka. The delegates returned home to intensify their resistance armed with a new freedom song:

Now you have touched the women
you have struck a rock,
you have dislodged a boulder
you will be crushed!

On Wednesday June 18th the Southern Africa Women Against Apartheid (SAWAA) met with other women's groups to organize a celebration for August 9th, in Vancover. The celebration will be co-sponsored by OXFAM.

We committed ourselves to making this day not only a day to acknowledge the struggle of women in South Africa but also the struggles of our sisters in British Columbia.

Present suggestions are that we share experiences, films, literature and food. The day will explore the commonality of women's struggles in South Africa and British Columbia. With the aim of networking with women's groups in South Africa, we can learn from each other and help each other in our mutual quests for women's liberation nationally and internationally.

We welcome all women's groups and individual women to participate and attend our meetings which will be held throughout July.

For more information contact: Louie or Antoinette 738-5238 (days); or Adela 734-2376 (evenings).

photo by Francie Queyras

Vancouver's Gay/Lesbian Pride Festival stretches over 17 days this year. Beginning August 1 and running to the 17th, the festival's program includes two dances, one mixed, one women-only, the pride march, comedian Robin Tyler, the Vancouver Gay Theatre Company, a carnival/bazaar and many other events. Times and locations to be announced. Contact the Pride Festival Association at Box 111, 1221 Thurlow, Vancouver, B.C. V6E 1X4 or call the Vancouver Gay and Lesbian Community Centre at 684-6869 for more information. The official programme of events will be distributed early in July. Watch for it!

Kelowna centre active but underfunded

by Lynn Corrigan

The delay of Secretary of State operational funding grants for women's centres is disrupting our ability to serve the women in our community. We've been without paid staff since the end of February when our rapid growth caught up with us.

Calls, referrals, visits to the centre and library circulation have all nearly quadrupled over the past year. So we cautiously expanded another 200 square feet, doubling our space. This gave us enough room for the four regular office volunteers and five to ten visitors a day. We had to add another phone line to handle the twenty to twenty-five incoming and fifteen to twenty outgoing calls each day. We expanded hours, from twenty per week to thirty.

Now both the new space and the phone will have to be cut back and we've already had to close two days per week, cutting office hours back to eighteen hours a week.

There is still work to do so we drop by the office to pick up work for home. Everytime we do we find a woman on our doorstep looking for information, help, a book, and wonder where she and her sisters are going when we're closed.

It's particularly galling to be operating in limbo as the work of years finally bears fruit in the form of invitations to consult, take part in community decision-making and help plan development in several areas.

A member of our collective now sits on the Okanagan College Advisory Board, the Local Advisory Council to Canada Employment, and the Family Services Centre Board.

Planning is underway with the Ministry of Human Resources for a program for women who have been receiving financial assistance for five years or longer, with Okanagon College for pre-trades orientation programs for women, and with the school district for broader career/vocational access for high school women.

Despite the uncertainty and the hardship caused by insufficient funding for our work, we are in good spirits as a result of the formation of the BC and Yukon Association of Womens Centres at the 1986 Womens Centres Conference.

Another bright spot from the conference was the request for a Facilitator's Training Course, "Working Together for Change" (developed by North Island Women's Services Society) from the Williams Lake Women's Centre. We will be offering a six-day course there from July 20 to 25. For registration information call: Kate McDonaugh, 392-2446 or write the Williams Lake Women's Centre, Box 4094, Williams Lake, V2G 2V2.

Programs being developed for late summer and fall include a five-day course for women who want to start a small business, a ten-session course on intuitive management and popular education methods in business, workshops on handling sexual harassment and on counselling women who have experienced it, communication skills for immigrant women, and assertiveness training course that will be sponsored by the Kelowna Multicultural Society.

We find ourselves betwixt and between, working for change while saddled with the same old problems, excited by the opportunities coming our way while frustrated by the lack of energy, time and funding to take advantage of them.

FASWOC finally wins improved contracts

The Food and Service Workers of Canada (FASWOC) has emerged victorious from their most recent bargaining session with Kentucky Fried Chicken of BC, a division of White Spot. The contract provides a signing bonus for all employees of 15¢ an hour for all hours worked between September 1985, when the last contract expired, and May 31, 1986, with a $50.00 minimum bonus per employee. There are three 15¢ per hour wage increases effective in January 1987, '88 and '89 as well as some improvements in contract language. Gloria Dean, president of FASWOC Local 12 stated that "the bargaining committee believes that this is the best settlement possible without considering strike action, and the Bargaining Committee is recommending acceptance of the settlement offer." Voting will take place in early July.

Their FASWOC sisters who are employees of the White Spot restaurant chain have also settled a similar three year contract recently, which provides a wage increase in each year. A White Spot waitress at the current job rate of $6.75 an hour will earn $7.05 at the end of her second year and receive one-half the cost of living increase in her third.

Relations with the company have been strained since White Spot imposed a contract with a two-tier wage system last winter. The impasse ended when FASWOC indicated they would be increasing public pressure by rallying their supporters from other unions at the company's head office to launch a BC Fed boycott and picketting the expo site where White Spot has restaurants.

The union's bargaining committee is pleased that it forced White Spot to remove the clause that allowed managers to alter or cancel shifts on short notice. FASWOC's new contract stipulates that management must provide at least four hours personal notice, and if a shift is cancelled, another of equal or greater length must be provided. The seniority has been strengthened to ensure that workers who indicate their availability will receive extra hours in order of their seniority.

IMMIGRANT WOMEN

Conference focuses on employment issues

by Lena Warrington

Imagine yourself in a new country: you are the only "different" person in the city; you don't know the cultural do's and don'ts, you have little money left and very few friends. Having finally arrived in the land of your dreams you find that there are not jobs--and what's worse, you don't speak the language well enough to converse with employers. Would you go into business for yourself under those circumstances?

Over one hundred women from throughout British Columbia attended the seventh annual conference of the B.C. Task Force on Immigrant Women, held on May 23rd and 24th at Gordon Neighbourhood House in Vancouver.

"Among the unemployed and their families is increased separation, divorce, child abuse, wife abuse, children's behaviour problems, and the employed person themselves are more likely to suffer from a variety of disorders...." said Dr. Sue Penfold, Chair of Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University. She described the psychological stages of unemployment as being initial optimism, growing despair, chronic resignation and bitterness.

Penfold, the keynote speaker, concluded with a recommendation that our society make massive changes, including a shorter work week, male identity not connected to success in employment and reduction of stigma attached to unemployment.

The problem is, of course, what do you do in the meantime? Social change is a slow and painful process. Getting the necessary help while you are under stress is important, but judging from the experiences of the Panel of Immigrant Women, they did not have the time or the money.

Shaku Rashid, a teacher from India, started a most successful business with her husband to get away from her boredom with being a full-time mother and housewife.

Anna Yeung spoke of her language problems and lack of work experience. She decided to go into business in Canada by using her Hong Kong family connections to the fur business. "But," said the soft-spoken young woman, "I have to think ahead and work twice as hard as men...I cook dinner in the morning or night before to avoid conflict with the family."

Paulet Oujuri, a black woman from Jamaica, gave example after example of job interviews where racial prejudice may--or may not--have been a factor. Still unemployed, Oujuri is determined. "I won't give up," she said.

The problems of coming to a new and strange country are many: your qualifications may not be recognized; language courses are expensive, so you stay in job ghettos; lack of daycare funding forces women to stay home and often opens them to exploitation from cottage industry entrepreneurs. Depending on the category you're in, you may qualify for welfare, but then can't take courses; discrimination and a lack of "Canadian experience" are often impossible hurdles.

"It's time we did it ourselves. Immigrant women have to organize; we have to make the public aware of our special needs in the labour force and small business," said Khatun Siddiqi, chairperson of the Task Force. An English language teacher at King Edward Campus and herself from Tanzania, Siddiqi has no illusions: "We have to promote a dislogue with all three levels of government, promote networking and initiate programs. No one is going to do it for us."

Donna Stewart from the National Action Committee described their four million volunteers from 460 women's groups across Canada who act as a political lobby. "Status of Women does the research, and we push," she said emphatically. "We are not a minority in numbers--only a minority in power and wealth."

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, represented by Kilby Gibsons, stressed the importance of having the facts and doing the research before proposing legislation to the government.

Elizabeth Lee of the National Immigrant Women's Follw-up Committee, herself a long-time member of the Task Force said "Since 1981 we have lobbied the government. Immigrant women need a national body. It is time for us to be more organized."

Much of Saturday was spent looking at the golden lining around the dark clouds.

Judy Korbin from CP Air said they were hiring now, and speaking other languages was an asset. The Ministry of Labour Women's Programs representative was Sandra Molloy. She reminded everyone of the Pacific Rim's potential one billion customers, where multiculturalism is a most decided asset. Also, she continued, 80 percent of all future jobs are in small business. While women have a high success rate in business, access to English language training is "a big barrier to immigrants."

Marg Boyd, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Board, explained the Employment Equity Program. Women, native people, the disabled and visible minority groups need special help as these groups generally experience higher rates of unemployment and lower rates of pay than other workers. "The federal government has set their goals and the changes are being monitored, but it will take time," she said.

Liz Elliz from the Bank of Montreal and Helen Hossick from the Federal Business Development Bank gave sound advice on business planning and financing, saying that providing a service or starting a cottage craft industry has a low initial cash requirement. It was not until later that anyone mentioned that two thirds of all new businesses fail.

And what does one do if one's English skills are poor? Vancouver Community College offers an English as a Second Language Course entitled "How To Start a Small Business" and another ESL course for women interested in selling products they make at home. Alice Wong, an instructor at the VCC King Edward Campus, emphasized that if there are twelve or more people who want a course, VCC will provide a teacher, even to outlying areas.

Reva Dexter of "Employment Equity Consultants" and Louise Gallarneau of the CEIC Women's Programs described the Canadian Jobs Strategy Program, stressing that more money was being made available for women with daycare needs and language training requirements.

At this juncture a woman from Kelowna spoke out: "To qualify for job re-entry, you have to be unemployed for three years. Immigrant women do any work--dishwashing, picking fruit, cleaning--now we don't qualify. Only rich women who could stay home qualify." And a young Guatemalan woman said: "I don't speak English. I have four children and welfare says I cannot take the course."

The past chair of the Task Force, Edith Nee, struck a note of optimism: "There's a really good momentum on immigrant women's issues. We're at a critical juncture. How do we organize to become stronger? We have no real structure provincially, and it's up to the women to do it ourselves."

This seemingly tall order was partially realized at a Saturday workshop led by Nee. Twelve women from various BC towns and cities formed a working steering committee, complete with objectives and action plan.

Afternoon workshops on Small Business, Employment, Affirmative Action and Organizing were led by Alice Wong, Eva Waldona, Marianne Hoyd and Edith Nee respectively, to brainstorm solutions to specific problems.

"What exactly is the relationship between culture and employment?" asked Khatun Siddiqi at the close of a long but stimulating conference. "Canada is a multicultural society," she continued, "and we have to consider cultural integration. We have expectations from immigrants, but we also have to ask, what do they have to offer us? What can Canadians learn from other cultures? We make integration possible by giving *choices* to people, and for immigrant women to have a choice, their needs must first be met."

The reality that immigrant women have special problems apart from the mainstream was indisputable by the time the conference drew to a close.

The B.C. Task Force on Immigrant Women is changing its name to the Vancouver Society on Immigrant Women. They can be reached at 104-1045 West Broadway, Vancouver B.C. V6H 1E2. Telephone: 734-8386 if you need help, advice or information.

ACROSS BC

Women meet with MP to press social housing needs

The federal New Democratic Party housing critic Dan Heap recently spent three days in the West gathering information about local housing situations. At a meeting, hosted by Little Mountain Neighbourhood House, representatives from over 15 groups involved in work on women's housing needs talked to Heap.

In future the federal government will take responsibility for only native housing (both on and off reserves) and co-ops. In BC this has caused alarm among special needs groups.

Women at the meeting expressed dismay over the transfer citing two major reasons.

First they wondered if the BC government will do the same thing with housing money that they did with education funding. The entire federal education payment to BC went into provincial government general revenues and only a portion of it was spent on education leaving BC's post-secondary education system seriously underfunded.

The second fear expressed by women was that the Social Credit government is on record as saying that there is no housing problem in the province. They have no inclination to construct social housing in BC but would, if pushed, do something about people's housing problems, preferably a system of rental subsidies. This approach means that housing monies are transferred directly to landlords.

Many women were also alarmed at the thought of the provincial government administrating social housing programs. Again and again women stated the need for control of the programs by non-profit groups.

Women pointed out that it's hard to imagine the Social Credit government dealing fairly or even adequately with the housing needs of women released from prison and mental institutions, of street women, battered women, and sole support women including single mothers, lesbians and older women.

Many women representing support groups underlined the need for ancillary services along with housing. Women need housing but many also need, under the same roof, childcare, education and job readiness programs, counselling and support services.

The women urged Heap to press the federal government to release funds for 1986 social housing programs, but cautioned that before transferring funds to the provinces the government should demand that basic standards of control and maintenance by non-profit groups be established.

One woman told Heap to return to Ottawa and ask where the money is going to go, since 1986 is half over and social housing programs aren't even beginning to be constructed.

In some areas of Canada, for instance in the north, the building season is almost over. Nationally many groups have lost land they were holding in expectation of forthcoming funds. For many women, the primary consumers of social housing, this isn't just an opportunity lost, it's a waste of years of volunteer work and planning.

Heap urged women to contact Pat Carney (Member of Parliament for Vancouver Centre) and make their demands heard, asking her to represent women in Cabinet. The meeting closed with an agreement to form a women's caucus of the BC Housing Coalition at its next meeting.

For information on the Women's Housing Caucus contact Jean Swanson 879-2086. To contact Pat Carney write c/o Parliament Buildings, Ottawa Ontario.

Judge denies publication ban on rape victim's name

by Eunice Brooks

A request that is usually granted automatically was refused last month in a Vancouver court. Judge Stephen Harding insisted that Prosecutor Craig Dykes have a persuasive reason for banning publication of a victim of rape. The application was opposed by the defence lawyer for the two men on trial, Dennis Kontonis and Christopher Douthwaite.

They were each charged separately with sexually assaulting the same woman on August 9, 1984.

Judge Harding said: "A full and fair report of proceedings includes the names of parties in the proceedings. It strikes me as an extraordinary provision I am being asked to invoke, that on request I should make an order banning publication of such information." His ruling was made in absence of a jury.

The case will not be heard until the fall. Dykes indicated a new application may be made at that time to ban publication of the complainant's name, or any information that would tend to identify her.

Poverty in BC: school guide worth studying

"The nature of today's society is changing. It is evident that young people are more desperate today than any generation that has preceded them. With 70,000 unemployed youth in B.C. alone, it is vital that we act now to encourage and renew the hope of the people who are this province's most valuable asset."

This quote from the B.C. Youth Forum brief to the Special Senate Committee on Youth describes the concern behind *Poverty in B.C.*, a resource booklet for teachers and community groups on poverty and unemployment.

Poverty in B.C. contains lots of statistics helpful for preparing briefs, a powerful letter from a fourteen year old girl living on GAIN, suggestions as to how poverty and unemployment can be eliminated, student activities such as working out a budget on minimum wage, and an excellent list of resources, including community organizations.

The future for increasing numbers of Canadians looks grim. In the Report of the Special Senate Committee on Youth, Senator Hebert quotes an important study from the University of Waterloo which predicts that "rates of unemployment will increase to 20 percent and more through the year 2010" unless we, as a community, do something to reverse this trend.

Poverty in B.C. was written by the End Legislated Poverty Coalition, and was printed as a lesson aid by the British Columbia Teacher's Federation (BCTF). It has been endorsed by the Vancouver and New Westminster School Boards.

You could help get *Poverty in B.C.* used in your school district, especially in grades 10, 11 and 12 social studies, by encouraging teachers to use it. Also, you could go with a parent delegation to your school board and/or BCTF local, asking them to support *Poverty in B.C.* as a lesson aid for use in schools.

In order to obtain a copy of Poverty in B.C. *write to: Wes Knapp, B.C. Teacher's Federation, 2235 Burrard St., Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9. tel: 731-8121.*

Sitka co-op now open

The residents of Sitka Housing Co-op are taking occupancy on the July 1st weekend. "We're incredibly proud of our accomplishment. We've worked for five years to establish non-profit housing for sole-support women in Vancouver. It's hard to believe we're actually moving in. Some of the kids who are now in kindergarten were infants at our starting meetings. We're all really excited about having decent, secure housing, but also that we're creating a co-operative community of women and children", said Penny Thompson, one of the founding mothers.

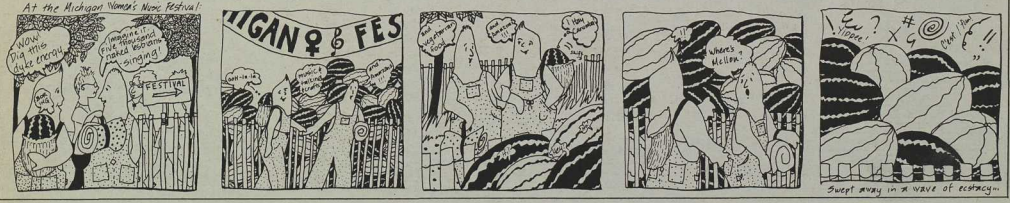
Another Sitka founder, Alex Maas, stressed "it's so important that women organize around housing issues, they're *the* basic bread and butter need that women have."

Sitka will be maintaining a waiting list for all types of units, including special suites for those with environmental allergies. At press time there is still a one-bedroom unit available.

For more information call 291-0703 or 255-6265 or write to Sitka, 1550 Woodland Drive, Vancouver, BC V5L 5A5

The Contemporary Saga of Little Mellon

by Terri Roberton and Harris Taylor



ACROSS CANADA

Court backs Blainey powerplay

Justine Blainey, the Ontario teenager who wants to play hockey on a boys team, is one step closer to her goal. The Supreme Court of Canada refused to grant the Ontario Hockey Association (OMA) leave to appeal an Ontario court ruling which struck down as unconstitutional a law that prohibited her from playing in a hockey league because of her sex.

Blainey's next step is to file a discrimination complaint against the OMA with the Ontario Human Rights Commission. After 13 months of legal challenges she still does not know whether she will be allowed to play hockey.

According to Blainey's lawyer, Joan Gilmour, a complaint has been laid with the Human Rights Commission but the timing of a hearing depends on hurdles, such as adjournments, placed in the way of the proceedings. Gilmour said she hopes the discrimination complaint is ruled on by the time the hockey season starts. According to Blainey, while the successful decision is, "wonderful", the entire process "takes way too long."

She says she will continue to fight because it's important for women's equality but mainly because she loves the game.

Blainey has tried out for several hockey teams, some of whom have said they would welcome her on their team "if I'm legal."

Justine Blainey

"It's not the coaches that are against it or the players," Blainey said. "It's the big guys (running the OMA) that never see me play. The guys with the gray hair."

Legislation is pending in Ontario to amend the Human Rights Act to remove the section of the act that permits sex discrimination in athletic organizations.

NAC meeting demands free trade referendum

Over 500 women representing more than 450 women's groups met in Ottawa in late May for the annual general meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). The weekend meeting was followed by NAC's traditional day-long lobby of the three federal political parties.

The theme of this year's meeting was "organizing for power" in recognition of the fact that women's concerns, regardless of how just or reasonable they are, are too often ignored by politicians.

According to NAC, women must consider innovative political strategies and concrete actions which groups can undertake, both locally and nationally to demonstrate that the women's movement is a powerful force that cannot be ignored.

Participants attended workshops on a wide variety of issues, including right wing women, going forward with native women, free trade and pornography. Delegates passed resolutions demanding a national referendum on free trade, which NAC fears will endanger jobs and social programs for women, and called for action on other issues, including full indexation of family allowances, family violence, services for immigrant and visible minority women, access to abortion, protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and sanctions against South Africa, among others.

At the lobby, attended by over 300 women, NAC representatives reminded Conservative MPs that in the last election they promised legislation to require equal pay for work of equal value and mandatory affirmative action programs and that the lack of government action in these areas is "disappointing."

The Conservative cabinet ministers at the lobby promised to announce concrete measures on family violence and to work towards more uniform access to abortion across the country (see abortion in PEI page one).

However, they offered little of substance on other issues.

According to Louise Dulude, acclaimed as the new NAC president at the meeting, NAC will "continue to lobby for change...the Conservatives will have to understand that if they want to get re-elected they will have to listen to us."

Access to abortion restricted due to Ontario doctors strike

Therapeutic abortion committees in five Ontario hospitals have been disbanded as a result of a strike by the province's doctors. The doctors, on strike for over three weeks, have withdrawn all but emergency services to protest Ontario's new laws banning extra billing. A recent *Globe and Mail* poll found that 77 per cent of Ontario residents disagree with the doctors' action.

Ontario's health ministry has asked the Toronto-based Women's College Hospital to increase the number of abortions it performs until the disbanned committees are re-established. The health ministry's request generated controversy when it was rumured that physicians were being offered double the usual rate for abortions.

According to Dr Henry Morgentaler the doctors' strike has also necessitated extended hours at his Toronto abortion clinic which, he said, has been "flooded" with women who have been turned away from hospitals. The Morgentaler clinic will now be opened on Saturday to "meet the demand".

Pro-choice activists are outraged at the withdrawal of the the abortion committees, charging that it "shows the fragility of access to abortion in the province when a few doctors can deny access to abortion."

Meanwhile anti-abortionists are continuing their efforts to put pressure on the Ontario government to close the Morgentaler clinic. Reverand Ken Campbell, the head of Choose Life Canada, has recently embarked on a hunger strike as another way to gain attention.

Campbell lost a bid recently to proceed with the criminal charges against Ontario Attorney General Ian Scott for refusing to close Morgentaler's clinic.

In November 1984 Dr Morgentaler and two associates were acquitted by a jury on charges of conspiring to procure a miscarriage. The Crown appealed and 11 months later the Ontario Court of Appeal threw out the jury's decision and ordered a new trial.

Morgentaler has appealed this decision to the Supreme Court of Canada which will hear the case in the fall.

Pension changes

A bill to amend the Canada Pension Plan and provide mandatory pension credit splitting on divorce or after a separation of at least one year was given all party approval in parliament late last month.

The bill, which implemented a federal-provincial agreement reached in December, received unanimous approval on the final reading and was sent to the Senate for approval.

Changes to the Canada Pension Plan Act require the approval of two-thirds of the provinces representing two-thirds of the population. The changes on pension-splitting will come into effect on Jan. 1, assuming enough provinces agree by that date.

In another amendment to the CPP act, widows or widowers will no longer lose their survivors pensions when they remarry, and an estimated 35,000 people who lost benefits in the past will have them reinstated as of January.

Mandatory pension-splitting had been informally agreed to by the federal and provincial governments last December. When the amendments were finally tabled in the spring, however, the mandatory pension-splitting was dropped. Renewed lobbying by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women ensured that the pension-splitting provision was re-introduced.

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(excerpt from 'women's day song')

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ACROSS CANADA

DisAbled women win NAC support

by Joan Meister

Approximately a year ago, the DisAbled Women's Network Canada (DAWN CANADA) was formed by disabled women from all across the country. More recently, DAWN BC held its founding conference in British Columbia, joined the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and sent Shirley Masuda and myself to NAC's annual general meeting.

The AGM sessions and workshops stressed actions to empower women in the coming year. The first day had sessions on organizational skills and NAC's main issues. These provided an overview of NAC's philosophy, practices and concerns. The second day included reports, candidates' speeches and afternoon workshops which had the overall perspective, "What Actions Can I and My Group Undertake in the Coming year...".

This series of workshops included many interesting subsections which ranged from "To Fight Against Free Trade, Privitization and Deregulation" to "To Go Forward Together with Native Women" and, "To Abolish Sexual Harassment from the Workplace" to "To Eradicate Incest".

DAWN CANADA led one of these workshops: "To Integrate Disabled Women into the Mainstream". Pat Israel and Joanne Doucette from Toronto, Maria Barille from Montreal and I faciliated the discussion. This session was attended by several Ottawa women with disabilities and provided a fourm for a discussion of the origins of DAWN and our reasons for participating in NAC. The non-disabled women who attended the session offered their support in various forms such as acquiring letters of support from their organizations for grant applications.

DAWN CANADA was formed in response to the need for disabled women to find a voice of our own with which to define and share concerns, first with each other and then with others. We felt that neither the disabled consumer's movement nor the women's movement had begun to understand or address issues of specific interest to women with disabilities from the point of view of women with disabilities. These are issues such as sexuality, assertiveness, parenting, affirmative action, and accessibility to the women's movement and to services and resources for women. The workshop in Ottawa helped us to view and clarify our concerns from a broader perspective.

Another important aspect of the NAC AGM for disabled and non-disabled women alike was the passage, at the business meeting the following day, of two emergency resolutions submitted by DAWN B.C.. The resolutions also received prior approval of DAWN CANADA. They first read as follows:

WHEREAS disabled women face economic, employment, transportational, health, educational, housing, communication and social handicaps, and

WHEREAS the women's movement has failed to reach out to disabled women or support us in fighting to eliminate these handicaps,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT NAC begin to work with the DisAbled Women's Network and/or other disabled women to develop and carry out strategies for overcoming these handicaps, and

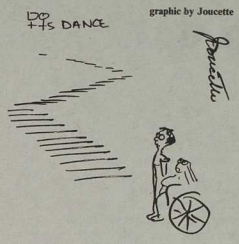
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT NAC urge all member groups to contact DAWN and/or other disabled women in their communities and determine how they can best lend support to their disabled sisters.

The second resolution addressed access and was passed as follows:

WHEREAS most women's events, services and resources are inaccessible to women with disabilities,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT NAC urge member groups to make accessibility (including but not limited to such things as washrooms, signers, technical aids, ramps, special diets, etc.) a high priority on their agendas in the coming year.

graphic by Joucette



In addition to these two important resolutions receiving approval by the NAC membership, Pat Israel (DAWN TORONTO) was elected to the NAC Board of Directors as a Member at Large. Now, disabled women are assured of a continuing voice and an ongoing opportunity to contribute to the decision making level of the national women's movement.

It would seem that for disabled women, the theme of the 1986 NAC AGM has already started to become a reality. DAWN, together with the rest of the women's movement in Canada, is organizaing for power and making things happen in 1986.

Study shows female students moving up

A newly released two-year study of Ontario students shows that girls are making better progress than boys. In advanced pre-university classes, the majority are girls. Girls are consistently achieving higher marks.

At Queen's University 55 percent of undergraduates are female, and this is expected to rise as those in high school now move up. The number of girls at grade 9 level planning to go to university is twice that of boys.

The reports show girls still avoiding mathematics, sciences, and computers. The girls demonstrate lower self-esteem than boys.

The report also showed that male and female students whose parents were born in China, Hong Kong, India and Pakistan got the highest marks. Most students like and respect their teachers. The report also showed that more career guidance is needed in Ontario schools. *Globe and Mail*

Ontario gays a step closer to protection

by Eunice Brooks

Don't start celebrating yet. The omnibus bill to bring Ontario statutes into line with the Canadian Charter of Rights, Bill 7, still has to struggle through the legislature, but there is a good chance for sexual orientation.

Bill 7, when passed, will add sexual orientation to the Ontario Human Rights Code. The amendments were proposed in committee by MLA Evelyn Gigantes (NDP-Ottawa Centre).

On May 6, the Coalition for Gay Rights held a press conference at the provincial legislature to present members with a brief entitled *Discrimination Against Lesbians and Gay Men: The Ontario Human Rights Commission.* Speaking on behalf of the coalition was Christine Bearchell.

She said: "The Ontario government's ommission of sexual orientation from Bill 7 is a disappointing and glaring one. We can only assume that the Liberals are in favor of discrimination of lesbians and gays."

Earlier briefs had been presented in 1975, 1978 and 1981.

When this new amendment was put to a vote in the standing committee to consider Bill 7, there were 8 in favor and 2 opposed, both PCs, MLA Peter Partington (Brock) and MLA Nobel Villenueve (Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry).

Bill 7 cannot be voted on in the legislature clause-by-clause because it is an omnibus bill. None of the MLAs outside the committee would comment to the press on how they meant to vote, but it should be noted that all the Liberals on the committee voted yes. In Ontario Liberals are the government.

Attorney General Ian Scott was unavailable for comment. But, in his speech at the opening session of the session of the standing committee he stated: "Bill 7 is concerned only with discrimination on already recognized grounds such as sex, age, marital status, and disability."

Quebec housing study

In Montreal, the Comite Logement Rosemont has recently completed a survey of women in rental housing who live with discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment. 297 women were surveyed. Half reported harassment during the past 4 years.

Sixty-eight of the surveyed women (86 percent of those on welfare) had been victims of discrimination, and 40 percent of harassment. Reasons for refusal of housing were unclear to the victims. Landlords question women about civil status, bank account numbers, welfare/work status, and number of children.

The five types of discrimination are: having children (12 percent), being on welfare (11.5 percent), being a woman (10.1 percent), being a young person (9.7 percent), and being a single mother (7.6 percent).

Harassment can be intimidation, such as prying into the tenant's personal life (23 percent), surprise visits (15.5 percent), or insults and threats (10.8 percent). It can also be sexual harassment, leering (15.5 percent), fondling (1.7 percent) and other approaches.

Seventy-seven of those harassing are landlords, while another 23.2 percent are neighbours. Because they feared the situation, only 12 percent of the women harassed have made any official complaints. 22 percent of the surveyed women had not previously known that Quebec has a Rental Board for their protection.

In Montréal 85 percent of tenants are single parents.

The survey report is available from the Comité Logement Rosemont, 3895 3rd Avenue, Montréal, Quebec, H1Y 2X2.

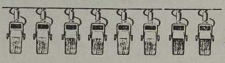
Communiq'elles

ACROSS CANADA

AMARC agenda assures equal time for women

What does feminism have to do with radio? The world will find out at the upcoming Second World Conference of Community Oriented Radio Broadcasters, July 25-29 in Vancouver, BC.

The conference, known by its French acronym AMARC 2, will play host to some 400 delegates from every continent who will discuss issues of mutual concern, exchange technical information, and set up international networks. Women's issues have been targetted as a primary focus for the event.



"Community radio is the only place where women from the grassroots have been able to get access to the airwaves," says Helen Dixon of the Agenda Committee. "This means that women can speak for themselves about issues that concern them. We can broadcast on a range of issues to a wide community of women, and we can address specific feminist issues of interest to women already organized into the feminist movement. We also have space to broadcast cultural work by women.

"AMARC 2 will bring together women programmers from a wide variety of contexts where the ways in which radio is being done can also tell us about how women are organizing in their communities."

Representation is expected from the full spectrum of community radio stations: listener owned and operated; campus stations; Native broadcasters; European free radio; development radio from the Third World; women's radio; and guerilla radio, like Radio Farabundo Marti of El Salvador, or Radio Freedom, the station of the African National Congress.

Women from across this spectrum will be at AMARC 2: Radio Raquel, an entirely women-run station from Norway. Formed in 1982, the station has taken courageous stands on several women's issues, and come under fire from the government for its controversial broadcasts on prostitution.

...CORADEP, the community radio organization in Nicaragua, which broadcasts programming aimed at rural women that has a primarily educational focus.

...North American Native women who are involved in stations that hold together isolated Native communities.

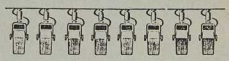
...And women from the listener-owned coalition stations like the host, Vancouver Cooperative Radio (CFRO-102.7) who put together feminist programming in the context of larger stations committed to broad social change and alternative culture.

Conference organizers have placed a strong emphasis on acquiring travel subsidies to offer to women broadcasters, and on ensuring equal participation on all panels. Workshops with specifically feminist content include: "Where to for women broadcasters after the UN decade for women?" "What models exist for encouraging programming by and for women?" and "Reaching women in non-mainstream communities."

There is space on the agenda for regular caucussing among women, and a women's plenary is scheduled for the closing day.

Interested Lower Mainland women may want to attend "Sounding Out: Community Radio at Work" a forum designed to introduce community radio to the public, on Sunday July 27th at 7:30 pm.

There will be a women's social evening open to both delegates and local women. On Saturday, July 26th (location TBA), the Vancouver Lesbian Centre at 876 Commercial will be open to lesbian delegates who want to drop in, at their regular Friday evening coffee house, and all day on Saturday, July 26th.



AMARC 2 will also include a film and video festival, a sound festival, and a resource and documentation center.

Billeters, translators and other volunteers are needed. For more information on volunteering, or to register, contact: AMARC 2, 337 Carrall St., Vancouver, BC V6B 2J4, or call (604) 253-0427.

Proceedings of AMARC 2 will be carried, live on Co-op Radio 102.7 FM on Friday, July 25, Monday, July 28 and Tuesday, July 29th. Broadcasts will also be carried at other times. Please check Radio Waves for further listings.

graphic from *Interradio*

Porn from page 1

articulated definition of pornography coming from feminist groups, and that of the right wing."

The public backlash has led many observers to declare the extreme portions of the bill a token gesture to the right wing fundamentalists, in the Conservative party. Crosbie, they say, doesn't expect it to pass as it stands.

"I'm hoping that as a politician, he can't afford to anger this group," says anti-porn activist Jancis Andrews. "He can bring forward this bill, and it will be thrown out. Maybe that's what he's banking on. He remains a "golden boy" between the two extremes--those who want everything banned, and the civil libertarians." Andrews hoped the final bill resembles the 1985 Fraser Committee recommendations.

But Diamond thinks the bill's references to "degrading" sex is as much of a token to the feminist lobby as the broad sex classification is to the Tory right. The real issue, she says, is the state's role in "shaping our sexuality." Diamond maintains that censorship does not serve the feminist community.

Megan Ellis of the Working Group on Sexual Violence is one of those who doubts the bill will pass. As it reads, she says, it would contravene the Charter of Rights. "But so far Crosbie seems to be standing behind it. I think they'll let it sit for a while. I think they'd be wasting their time (to take it to committee). But who knows?" Ellis supports a Canadian version of the "Dworkin-McKinnon ordinance," giving women the right to sue pornographers for damage. For her, overhauling the obscenity laws serves less purpose than examining rape, incest and child sex-assault legislation.

A more positive reaction comes from the Anglican Church's Task Force on Pornography. Although they are concerned with the "open-endedness" of the language, "on the whole we're very happy in terms of specific named areas, such as violent activity and bestiality," said Margaret Marquhardt, who prefers the term "restrictions" over "censorship". She feels most areas are clearly defined, and isn't too concerned about misinterpretation. "The bill will go to committee, there will be enough submissions and debate to clear up the vague language. I think it will pass. There's enough support, enough feeling that this is a grave, important issue."

Although both Marqhardt and Andrews claim the list of sex acts is clear enough to avoid confusion, they are quick to offer their own clarifications. The ban on "ejaculation" images is aimed at scenes where "a man is ejaculating in a woman's face," Marqhardt said. And Andrews, reading from the Canada Customs guidelines she favours, explains a restriction on "artificial phalli" is to prevent "showing women shoving cucumbers and bananas up their insides." Confusion could be eliminated here, she suggests, by making an exception for "material recognized as a legitimate sexual aid by a sexual therapist."

Crosbie's appearance at a University Women's Club luncheon in March gave no indication of the coming bombshell. He was asked about the Fraser Report, and the inclusion of sex under the hate propaganda section of the criminal code. "I didn't get any sense that he wanted to see a crackdown on erotic imagery," Marqhardt said.

The hate literature amendment has produced mixed feelings. "It's a step because it acknowledges that real hatred can be directed towards women," Andrews said. Ellis, however, is doubtful about its usefulness. "There have been almost no prosecutions under the hate literature section in Canada. It would depend on the provinces, on having a progressive attorney general, interested prosecutors..."

Whatever happens to the bill, feminists who don't believe it's the answer will continue working for sex education, alternative erotic images, or another area of the Criminal Code they consider more effective. Those with hopes for the new legislation must wait and see how it looks when and if it passes--1986 at the earliest--and how it is enforced if it does become law.

PRISONS

P4W Inmate Committee's warnings ignored

by Karen Gram

The Kingston prison for women has never been a very relaxed environment, but since January when two women were transferred from protective custody into the general population, tension has risen dramatically.

Protective custody is the area in prisons reserved for prisoners who have committed crimes morally repugnant to the other prisoners and whose lives would be threatened in the general population. Most protective custody women committed crimes against children. Their exact crimes are confidential so the prison population simply assumes the worst of any one who has ever been in protective custody.

The two women who were transferred, requested the move but the inmate committee who represents the prisoners urged the prison administration to deny the request because of the negative impact on the general population.

"Our grave concern is that a time bomb is ticking here. It may appear peaceful on the surface today but next week or three months from now, someone is going to get seriously hurt," said the inmate committee in a letter to the editor of the Kingston *Whig Standard*.

The inmates are angry about several things. First, that women who have probably killed children are in their midst, second, that these women just by their presence provoke violence which results in charges being laid against prisoners who otherwise would have avoided the trouble, and third, that the women have been moved into the most privileged wing in the prison.

A time bomb is ticking here. Everything may appear peaceful on the surface but someone is going to get seriously hurt.

All this exacerbates an already tense situation.

One recent prisoner at P4W, who was transferred out three weeks after the two protective custody women joined the general population, said Security started hassling prisoners about a week after the transfer.

"One girl was charged with not being in her cell by 11 pm and lost a visit with her old man." Said the former inmate who requested anonymity because she feared for her job. She said the woman had loudly protested the protective custody move.

Another woman was charged with having a dangerous weapon in her cell. The weapon was a fork she was using to hold up a plant.

"When I left that place there was a lot of tension," said the former prisoner. "The only way to stay cool was to take drugs, fall in love, and play music. You had to stay high."

To protest, the inmates have held sit-ins and refused to eat, work or study with the protective custody women.

One of the protective custody women was badly beaten twice in one day when prisoners caught her away from her guard.

Monique Hall, another recent transfer from P4W, said the two protective custody women were often hit in passing.

"You had to be pretty fast though." She added there was also quite a lot of verbal intimidation.

Despite the prisoners' concerns, Warden George Carron approved the transfer and has consistently refused to reconsider his decision. In an interview, he dismissed opponents to the integration saying they are a "small group of aggressors who don't have the will of the population behind them. These two women are trying to make it out in the population and it's not easy for them. There are some inmates with very little gray matter," said Carron.

When asked if he thought the protective custody women would be scapegoats for these "aggressors" he replied, "we have stabbings and beatings in here all the time and it's not just the protective custody women who are attacked. They attack anyone." Carron refused to permit interviews with prisoners until a full year had passed.

Bev Whitney, a former prisoner at P4W, said the members of the inmate committee are elected by the prisoners and represent all the areas in the prison. She said hostility toward the protective custody women is wide spread because so many of the regular prisoners were abused as kids.

Whitney said even prisoners who don't hate protective custody inmates would be angry about the transfer because they were moved to the wing.

graphic from *Canadian Dimension*

"The Wing used to be a cool place to be but now it's not even cool to smoke dope in there because the protective custody women are there (and their guards). They are turning a privileged area into another protective custody" said Whitney.

Karen Howe, coordinator of community programs for the Kingston Elizabeth Fry Society, said three quarters of all the women she has talked to expressed concerns about the integration. She said she is sure the inmate committee speaks for all the prisoners because prisoners are very sensitive about being misrepresented and wouldn't tolerate it.

Whitney said she believes protective custody is necessary because "people have the right to live out their sentences." She doesn't think candidates for protective custody should be given the option to refuse protective custody because it is unfair to the prison population and dangerous to the women who refuse the protection.

"If they aren't killed they are beaten very, very seriously," she said. Whitney said she doubts these two women will live to the end of summer.

Carron said the two women knew the risks involved before transferring.

"You have to understand the dynamics of the situation. These inmates were faced with double bunking in a little box and said they wanted out. They asked to take their chances."

Karen Howe said she thinks the two may have been pressured by the prison administration to transfer. "I think they were told if you get out we'll have some available space here."

Prisoners in protective custody lead very restricted lives. The wing is very small and crowded and they spend all but two hours each day locked in. They can only use the gym once a week whereas others can use it everyday, and can only exercise outside for one hour each day.

Their meals are brought to them on trays. Library use is restricted to once a week for two hours. If they want to study a teacher will visit them but only twice a week compared to full time for the others. Work is limited to an upholstery shop.

Howe said every concession that is made to provide protective custody women with better access to prison services restricts the general population's access because when the protective custody's are in an area, the others must not be.

"It causes resentment,"she said. "It's like forcing someone who gets one meal a day to share it with someone else."

Claire Culhane, a prison abolitionist for many years, said she is not surprised the system is encountering problems now. She says they should never have created protective custody in the first place because it divides the population.

"All it has done is set up a pecking order for prisoners, once you're in protective custody you are marked for life. You are at the bottom of the barrel."

Karen Howe agrees. "There has always been a moral code in the prisons but the prison administration bought into that code when they created a protective custody wing. They reinforced that code."

"We're going to have to find a way to break down that anger but I don't think the method they chose was the appropriate one."

At a recent general meeting, the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies passed a resolution which recommends one possible solution.

They suggest that protective custody wings be expanded to provide adequate space for all the prisoners and that prisoners be given access to social, health, vocational, spiritual, and pre-release programs in response to demonstrated needs.

Executive director of CAFS, Carol Faulkner, said the prison should also always consult the inmate committee before moving protective custody prisoners into the general population or introducing child abusers directly into the population.

"If the inmate committee says no way, they should listen," said Faulkner.

For Claire Culhane there is no solution. She says they created a monster when they established the protective custody area and no reform will solve the problems it created. "That's why I'm an abolitionist," she said.

Outdoor Club promotes friendly, non-competitive atmosphere

by Sylvia Arnold

Vancouver...B.C....the mountains, the ocean, the forests; an outdoor haven. They're just minutes away, yet can seem so unattainable.

They can seem unattainable especially for women; be it due to real barriers such as lack of skills or childcare, or due to the myths that outdoors exploration is only for the super-fit or competitive.

The Vancouver Outdoor Club for Women was formed to counter those barriers and myths--to make the outdoors attainable for women. In existence for seven years, the club sees its purpose as to offer to women an opportunity to learn skills, and to share the excitement of the outdoors in a friendly, non-competitive atmosphere.

One of the important aspects of the club is its emphasis on skill sharing. Women do not need to have any outdoor skills to join. Of the forty or so women who are members, some are skilled while others are not. Maureen Holt, a member of the club, laughingly told me that previously when she would go hiking she would bring nothing, not even a water bottle. Since joining she has learned to backpack. "It's a very good group for exchanging skills, I picked up a lot," said Holt.

Equally important is the club's non-competitive structure which puts as first priority enjoyment of the outdoors.

Jan de Grass, a member for a year and a half in the club, praised the fact that there was no real push in the activities. "I wouldn't have joined a club full of Phys. Ed. nuts," she said, and added "we eat a lot."

The club is an eclectic group, coming as Holt said "from every different kind of lifestyle." Sometimes women can share their city responsibilities so that they can be able to go on the weekend trips. For example, one such member, a mother, is looking for a second who will alternate childcare responsibilities with her.

The club's activities include hiking, canoeing, kayaking, cycling, mountain climbing, horse-back riding, skiing... they exclude next to nothing. A glance through some of the club's monthly newsletters revealed trip reports on a bike tour of Vancouver that culminated in Dim Sum; hikes in the International Women's Day and Peace marches; an overnight ski camping trip to Pemberton meadows, rock climbing in Lighthouse park, and an Easter retreat.

Twice a year they get together to schedule events. "That gives members a chance to plan" de Grass said, but added that trips also arise spontaneously. The club has a loose structure, and depends on the imput of members to initiate trips. Each trip is lead by a member so that members can learn leadership skills.

Annual membership rates are on a sliding scale, ranging from $15-$30. Fees are used for the most part for purchasing equipment. Major items such as tents, packs and camp-stoves can be borrowed from the club's equipment depot. "We try to keep costs down," said Holt.

Monthly meetings are held to plan trips, as well as to share information and socialize. Those meetings have included members sharing first aid, photography and camping nutrition skills, as well as slideshows. De Grass said she's amazed to see how the women really volunteer and are enthusiastic in the club. She reasoned that it is probably because "there's no real pressure, since it's for our own enjoyment."

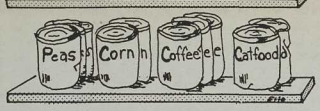
So for the women in the Vancouver Outdoor Club the mountains, ocean and forests are attainable.

The club's friendly, the club's fun. It's also liberating. Their club manual ends with this inspiring quote from Simone de Beauvoir:

Let her swim, climb mountain peaks, pilot airplanes, battle against the elements, take risks, go out for adventure, and she will not feel before the world . . . timidity.

If you're interested in joining the club, they meet the first Tuesday of every month at the CRS on Odlum Street. It's best to phone Linda at 876-3506 to confirm though.

No Name Column



by Nora Randall

Fate is twisted. I first went to the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House Immigrant Women's Group to talk to the women about their experiences of coming to Canada for the Women's Voices play I was working on. The group had such incredible stories that I wanted to keep in contact with them some way. So when the volunteer English teacher quit and another one couldn't be found to replace her, I said I'd do what I could. My only qualifications for this task were that I speak English (as an only language) and that I know other women who know how to teach English. This is pretty thin, I admit, but I was better than nothing which is what they had.

Those first classes provided the women with more entertainment than English, but we all persevered. Which is why I was there when the group leader had to move to Saskatoon and we weren't sure how we would go on. We were only sure that we wanted to go on.

The thing that made the group leader so important besides the fact that she's a wonderful woman is that she is the only person in the group fluent in English and Punjabi. Half of the group spoke little or no English, and I speak no Punjabi. I decided that what we needed was another volunteer who spoke Punjabi and English.

Of course, it would be a lot better to hire a worker who speaks Punjabi and English which is what they really need, but the city cut the funding for immigrant programs and the appeal is just coming up. (It's this little niggling bit of information that took the sparkle out of the Centennial fireworks display for me.) So it had to be a volunteer.

I asked a friend who told me to call a friend and she called a friend she knew and pretty soon a woman who speaks Punjabi and English called me up and offered to come meet our group.

She turned out to be terrific. Not only did she speak Punjabi and English so our group could continue, but she also was willing to help with the cooking for the ethnic lunch so it looked like our group could save the ethnic lunch from extinction too.

This is how we did it. I asked Gurmail if she'd ask Surjit if she was willing to continue cooking the ethnic lunch. Surjit said sure, Gurmail said she'd help and I said I'd arrange it. Then I told the people at the neighbourhood house that we were willing to take over the ethnic lunch. They said fine. I signed out the kitchen and made arrangements for Surjit and Gurmail to get the shopping money. Surjit and Gurmail decided on a menu and made a shopping list. Then we were all ready until the day of shopping and preparation.

It is still not exactly clear to me what happened on that fateful day, but as near as I can piece together it went something like this. Surjit went to the neighbourhood house and asked if it would be open until nine because they would be late with the groceries. Surjit speaks very little English or she could have done the whole thing herself, but as it is the staff didn't understand what she was saying. They thought she was looking for Gurmail who wasn't there.

Gurmail in the meantime got her cousin to come with his car and take her shopping. When she arrived at the neighbourhood house with all the food, it was closed, and nobody was around so she took all the food to her house. Surjit went to the neighbourhood house and couldn't find anybody so she called Gurmail and Gurmail told her what had happened. So Surjit went to Gurmail's house. Gurmail called me but I wasn't home from work yet.

Meanwhile, I'm standing by the door of the Vancouver Little Theatre trying to think about how the rehearsal went when the director of the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House comes around the corner. It's fate we should meet, she says. You know the women didn't show up today to cook for tomorrow. What! I said. You're kidding. No, she said. I said, I'll go home and call Gurmail and find out what happened.

So I went home and called Gurmail and she told me that she and Surjit and the food were all at her house. I borrowed a car and then I called the director back and talked her into driving over and opening the neighbourhood house. Then I drove over to Gurmail's and picked up Gurmail and Surjit and the groceries and Gurmail's daughter, Baljit, and we all went to the neighbourhood house and cooked for three hours. Gurmail and Surjit did the cooking and Baljit and I peeled ginger and potatoes. I figured out how to make the cuisinart work and I chopped up onions and chili peppers and garlic. I had never seen that many chili peppers before in my life. It was awesome.

While Gurmail and Surjit chatted away in Punjabi, Baljit entertained me in English. We played a game where I picked a colour and then a number and Baljit told me my fortune. She said I would become rich. Ha! She also told me about her baseball team. I was green with envy. She plays on a team that has real uniforms. She plays for Shoppers' Drug Mart and her brother plays for Army Navy and right now they're tied for second place, but Baljit assures me that's only because they haven't played each other yet. Baljit says her team always beats her brother's. Finally, about 11 pm we took out the garbage and piled in the car to go home.

Then next day the ethnic lunch came off like clock work.

LABOUR

BC nurses a growing working class consciousness

The following is an address by Bernadette Stringer to the Vancouver May Day rally held May 1st. Bernadette Stringer did not speak on behalf of the BC Nurses' Union (BCNU). She is the past vice-president of the BCNU and is currently a steward at Vancouver General Hospital.

The BC Nurses Union held its' strike vote in May. Ninety-one percent of the union's nurses voted to go on strike. As of press date the union has served strike notice, and is now in a legal position to strike, at 48 of the 135 facilities involved in the dispute.

I am a nurse. I have been for the past fifteen years. For ten years I have been active in nurses' unions. When I was asked to speak I kept thinking: May Day, Nurses. Nurses, May Day. Do the two have anything in common? What in heaven's name am I going to talk about? Then slowly, after some tossing and turning late at night it came to me. I'll talk about the fact that in the entire history of May Days throughout this country, and probably the rest of the world, nurses have not once been asked to lead the parade.

The point is, when you think of nurses you don't think of "working class"; when you think of May Day, you don't think of a twenty two year old woman taking the anal temperature of a newborn infant at four o'clock in the morning. Even here in this room with all the correct politics and lack of sexism not one of you in a free word association test when given May Day to respond to would have answered nurse. Not even me.

Working class means male. Working class means blue collar. Working class means factories or mines or forests. Working class means tough and rough and foul mouthed. Working class means controlling the means of production. Working class can mean women, but women who work for minimum wage. Women who work in huge offices. Women who do men's jobs. Women who act like real workers. Women steelworkers or construction workers or coal miners. Not nurses.

So what are nurses? Middle class professionals? The pay, the conditions, the being bossed around all day, tell me that isn't true. The fact of the matter is, we get paid less than unionized wood workers, work as hard or harder than miners, have worse shift work than anybody except busdrivers, get shit on all day by bosses and doctors, do as much lifting as longshoremen, have a horrible industrial accident rate, and yet we're not workers. I say we damn well are! I say our bosses can try to fool us by telling us what wonderful dedicated professionals we all are but we're not buying it anymore. Well, I'm not. Some of us aren't. And therein lies one story to be told here on May Day 1986.

What is the state of working class consciousness among nurses in the province of B.C.? What is working class consciousness?

For the purpose of this talk I'm going to say that working class consciousness is holding the belief that a large number of your fellow human beings share something in common with you as a result of what you and they do for a living. And that you have to stick together with these people in fighting for a better world.

How many nurses in BC would have working class consciousness defined in this way? Don't we wisn scientific socialism could answer seven thousand three hundred and twelve? The answer, of course, is not enough; but probably more than you'd think on first glance.

Nurses share all of the illusions, all of the mindless television dreams, all of the brainwashing, that capitalism uses to keep this society going. And then we have some of our own special little hang-ups. Like professionalism. Like wanting to marry doctors and escape this awful world.

Lots of young unmarried nurses are into the whole Whistler-skiing in the winter-sailing in the summer-night-club-Porsche-doctor-scene. But they're a small minority. Most nurses, like most women and ninety-eight percent of us are still women, come from working class or immigrant backgrounds.

Lots of us are married to bus drivers and wood workers and other regular working class people.

Nursing is an occupational goal for moderately well educated working class women. Nursing also attracts upwardly mobile women who historically have had only one other career choice, teaching. But this is breaking down as more choices become available for women. The fact is, most nurses have always viewed their jobs as a means to survive just as most other workers view their job.

The fact is, nurses in B.C. have belonged to an association with bargaining rights for as long as most woodworkers have been unionized: since just after the Second World War. An association dominated by head nurses and administrators for thirty years but able to bargain with employers nonetheless. Only for the past ten years have we had a separate union and professional association. And we have never had a major strike of the entire province to see what nurses here can accomplish.

Nurses in other provinces, most notably Alberta, have conducted and won major strikes which have not only accomplished major gains in their contracts but also have made nurses in those provinces come face to face with the fact that they are workers. It's going to happen here too. If not this contract then the next or the one after that. Employers will push us into it. The Socred government will push us into it if they hang around long enough.

Right now we're in contract negotiations and the government really thinks they have us on the run. Their demands have been almost identical to what they have offered the Hospital Employees Union and the Health Sciences Association. First they wanted all sorts of concessions, including giving away the first three days of sick leave, that we start paying half of our medical and dental plan even though the employer pays 100 percent now, then we pay them one dollar per union member to make out our cheques and lots more.

Although they have recently withdrawn these concession demands they are still only offering us a zero percent increase for last year, one percent this year and two percent next year, which is, of course, effectively a pay cut, once inflation is taken into account.

We've been negotiating for over a year and our bargaining committee has finally responded by calling a strike vote for May 21. I believe some of the negotiating committee and staff members from the BCNU don't really think nurses are workers either but the truth of the matter is that all over the province nurses are surprising them.

Over one thousand union members out of 15,000 have written letters asking for a strike vote in response to an ad in our union paper. The strike vote is going to take place in three weeks and I expect there will be a strong yes vote. Nurses are mad at the cutbacks in health care because it hits us directly. We have to do more work at jobs that were already too hard. We see people dying and we don't have the time or energy to look after them as they deserve. We see what militancy has accomplished in other provinces and know that we've fallen, in five years, from best paid in Canada to sixth best paid amongst all the provinces. We're not stupid. We're workers and proud of our skills.

Illustrations by Nola Johnston

We have a tendency to look up to doctors and down at other workers in hospitals but that is changing. The respect most nurses have for our co-workers in the Hospital Employees Union and the Health Sciences Association has increased tremendously. In 1976 during a Hospital Employees Union strike at Vancouver General, nurses and nursing students did all the HEU's work, from working in the laundry to portering patients. Now we have an official position to maintain only essential services and not to do work other than our own if any other union goes on strike.

The consciousness and conviction that we are all in this together would not allow the majority of nurses to be scabs today. We have some distance to go but we are clearly recognizing where our interests lie and I think with time, experience and a lot more working class feminist understanding, we'll rise to the challenge.

Incest survivors have always been talking. But it's probably only been in the last ten years that anyone has bothered to listen. Perhaps this is due to the increase in media attention to incest. Not only has the written media played its part,but also the visual media;witness the sudden increase of films and videos on incest.

by Kim Irving

What is unfortunate is that no feminist film on incest has ever been produced. With the exception of a few American videos, few films even come close to addressing feminist analysis or concerns. Most films take a safe, 'middle'of-the- 'e-road' approach, afraid to confront the controversies surrounding incest.

A new film, *Breaking Silence,* produced and directed by Theresa Tollini, must unfortunately be added to this collection. This recent purchase of Women in Focus premiered on June 2 and 3rd in Vancouver.

Even though it's produced by a feminist and distributed by a feminist centre, the film remains disappointing because it takes a middle-of-the-road approach to incest.

Tollini spent the better part of four years in research and production. During this time she interviewed several incest survivors and talked with educators and therapists. Her idea to make this film was initiated by a conversation with a woman police officer who was distraught over the lack of resources for incest victims. This is Tollini's first film.

While researching Tollini was able to solicit funds from foundations, corporations and church groups. *Breaking Silence* has since received a world-wide screening and picked up four awards, most notably the Chicago Hugo award for best documentary.

While I question the feminist value in Tollini's film, I beleive it has important content. For one, the women survivors who tell their stories in the film are, as in most incest films, inspiring and validating.

One woman is Nita who, as an incest survivor, is struggling to reclaim lost memories of sexual abuse by both her father and brother. Through journal writing and art Nita found she was always drawing flowers but couldn't understand why she was compelled to draw them. It wasn't until she discovered an old photograph of herself and her mother, taken in her parents' bedroom, that she recalled the flowered wallpaper on that bedroom wall. The memories came back.

Explaining her compulsion to draw flowers Nita explains: "As I was being molested, on my parents' bed, I would look at the flowered wallpaper and keep repeating flower, flower, flower."

Another aspect of the film which I liked was the series of drawings by sexually abused children. As the narrator explained, in order to understand the impact incest has on children we as adults must remember what it was like to be a child and to be powerless. The drawings were an effective way of connecting us, the audience, to those children--to ourselves.

Tollini's film fails with her decision to interview rapists and in particular, the sympathetic view towards these men. It begins with interviewing a male social worker who discloses being raped as a child, arguing that more empathy must be given to men raped as children. He implies that these men, as adults, may rape childre because of their previous abuse.

Later in the film, an offender interviewed in shadow admits to raping his daughter. He did this, he explains, because *he* was raped as a child. He then congratulated himself for speaking out because he was therefore "helping his daughter to stop incest when she grew up."

I asked Tollini why she included these rapists, who I found to be victim-blaming and irresponsible and therefore, I felt, made the film less credible. She explained: "I have priorities of what I wanted to connect with, where I want to put my energies, on what I want the film to evolve around. Therefore, in order to understand--I have to look at both sides."

Tollini continued to say that while interviewing survivors she found most women wanted to hear from the offenders, wanted to know why they raped. She felt that by including offenders in the film it was providing an answer.

I'd like to continue with this issue but other issues need confronting regarding the screening. I was disturbed that the panel invited to speak after the film was represented by professionals: a doctor, a lawyer and a psychologist. I agree that these women have done significant work on incest, but having them as the only "experts" alienates the work that has been done by grassroot organizations and, most importantly, incest survivors.

I question the appropriateness of allowing men to attend the film's premiere. Surely, as feminists, we recognize that men are the primary sexual abusers of children and many feminists believe that any man is a potential rapist. Would it have been too much to ask for a women-only screening? Having men present when discussing issues that largely affect women only threatens our safety. Although there were only a handful of men at the screening, and there were some women who spoke, I can't help wondering how many women *didn't* speak because of the men's presence.

The general empathy towards men was present in the first question asked after the film. "Why are men *excluded* from the film production and from the panel?"

I was confused by the question, because I didn't understand how men were excluded and also I was angered by the panel's mistake of not responding to the question. Instead, the women on the panel looked at the filmmaker, who choked out some answer about women as filmmakers and having the right to women-only production crews. Once again, this was an instance of how the controversial issues are evaded in order to stay middle-of-the-road.

And as if this woman's question was a cue, a man stood up and talked about *his* sexual abuse, *his* story, and how good it felt to finally talk about it. Thank you, he said, for listening. As if this wasn't enough, another man stood up and thanked his brother for speaking out.

I do strongly believe that men need to start addressing their own physical and sexual abuse towards each other but this obviously wasn't the intention of either the rapists in the film or the men speaking afterwards. Instead, as women, as survivors, we are once again asked to provide the emotional support to these men--a role women are always expected to fill.

After the screening, when most of the audience went out to the lobby to mingle with the panel, a group of women, all of us survivors, remained in our seats.

We talked about the divisions between *survivors* and *professionals.* About our anger at rapists being presented in the film--that once again they've invaded our space. One woman commented that as soon as the first rapist spoke, she "shut-down" and couldn't respond to anything else in the film.

We talked about our lack of safety--for any woman at this screening--and the fact that incest is rarely acknowledged within the women's community.

Through this discussion, we were able to comfort ourselves--that we are okay, that we are surviving. And we talked about how to continue surviving and to fight back. We talked and comforted each other, just as incest survivors have always been doing.

INTERNATIONAL

Military zapping Greenham women?

by Eunice Brooks

A group of English women have visited their doctors within the last 18 months with symptoms that included: nose bleeds, pain in head and ears, chest pains, palpations, swelling of the tongue, dizziness, sunburn in winter, sunburn at night, menstrual disturbances, loss of hair, impaired co-ordination, impaired short term memory, disorientation, deep depression, and unreasonable panic.

Some 50 of these women have made written statements of symptoms from the list. What makes these women special is they live around the perimeter of an American Military Base--containing cruise missiles--called Greenham Common.

Nowadays the press is turning a blind eye to the women's peace camp, but it's time for another look. Something is happening there that is more like a plot from Star Trek than most of us can imagine.

A group of doctors and scientists tested food and water in the peace camps. Measurements of low-level radiation were also taken. It was found that an increase in radiation could be provoked, simply by starting a demonstration in any place around the base. It remains to be proved that a weapon is being used on the women.

Greenham is 9 miles around the perimieter. Barbed wire and razor wire fencing protect it. For months after the arrival of the missiles hordes of military personnel inside and police outside guarded the place. Now there are none.

Over the past 18 months laws have been passed in secret to erode the women's right to protest. Trespass has never been a criminal offense before, but it is now. Police put out the campfires every hour in winter. Police do skin searches on women. Attacks on the women have come from men recognized as American personnel. Now the Yanks may be trying out a new weapon on the women.

Low-level microwave radiation has been used as a weapon for the past 33 years. It was used against the American Embassy in Moscow at one time. Back in 1930 the US Navy discovered that persons standing in front of aerials got weak and drowsy. More testing was done using 10 marines and the extra-low frequency at Clam Lake, Wisconsin. All but one showed a rapid build-up of serum triglycerides.

In 1955 the USAF found that anyone in the way of radar beams felt ringing in the ears, buzzing, vibrations and pulsations. In 1960 work at Cornell University proved that people could tell when they were hit be microwave emissions. Even deaf people could hear them. In 1972, a US Department of Defence document said that the army had tested a microwave weapon. There have been undocumented reports that armies could use low-level microwave beams as a battlefield weapon to immobilise and disorientate opposition.

Is this happening now at Greenham?

Studies in the US showed that irradiated mice had litters that were mutants. Recent data from Sweden shows that the normal balance between cell types in the central nervous system has been partially destroyed by exposure to microwaves. Brain tissue changes alter the exposed person's ability to concentrate and cause short term memory loss. It has been estimated that the CIA spent millions of dollars in the sixties on experiments with mind-altering drugs.

Electro-magnetic weapons are a new concept. What the women at Greenham need to know is: "How can this happen to us in our own country?" It is possible, that in England today, the penalty for opposing the government by peaceful protest, is a restructuring of one's brain cells plus the loss of any chance to give birth to normal children in the future.

Australian women's army

A group of women known as "The Sisters" are training women to defend themselves against men on a farm outside Sydney, Australia, according to local police. In a sensationalist report in the Australian *Sun Herald*, the police say they photographed the women dressed in army clothes, carrying out exercises and that the women have formed a special unit to take back their children from men, by force.

The police say there is nothing they can do officially as the women are training on private property. However, they have been using helicopters to photograph the land, and one was quoted as saying, "there has been a huge upsurge in the purposefulness of radical female groups, and it is difficult to keep track of them..."

Thompson/Kowalski case stalled

On March 21, the United States Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal filed by the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union (MCLU). No comment or explanation was given for the refusal.

This appeal is only one of the many legal efforts to contest guardianship awarded to the father of severely disabled lesbian Sharon Kowalski.

Kowalski's father has prohibited visitation of his quadriplegic daughter by her lover of four years, Karen Thompson, as well as any of her friends, or MCLU attorneys. In addition, he has failed to provide Sharon Kowalski with adequate rehabilitation therapy. (She was the victim of a drunk-driver caused car accident in 1984).

The appeal filed by MCLU contended that Sharon Kowalski's constitutional right to an attorney of her choice had been violated by Minnesota courts, which rejected her efforts to retain MCLU attorneys as her counsel.

Both Sharon Kowalski and her court-appointed lawyer, Thomas Hayes, had requested the MCLU to join the case. Hayes said he had neither the experience nor the resources to represent adequately Kowalski's interest in the suit against her father.

The Minnesota Supreme Court denied an earlier appeal from Hayes, upholding a lower court's ruling that Kowalski "appears" to be incapable of "independently retaining counsel."

A suit, filed by Kowalski's lover, Karen Thompson, is pending.

Off Our Backs

Nigerian women seeking donations

by Eunice Brooks

Money is needed in several countries in Africa, to educate people about the harm being done to females by the religious rite of circumcision. It involves a partial, and in some places total clitoridectomy.

In Nigeria a feminist Christian group strongly condemns the act. Genital mutilations are performed on females including: babies, little girls, and women, depending on the custom of the region. Persons who do the mutilation range from an old woman of the village, to barbers, to blacksmiths, to modern doctors in modern hospitals.

In Somalia, Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria, and Mali women who have not had the operation are called unclean. It is believed that the clitoridectomy will diminish a woman's desire for sex. The reasons given for it include hygiene. Yet, the health risks from an operation done outside of hospital are great. The exact numbers of women who have already been mutilated are unknown, but it involves tens of millions.

For sending funds, donations, or gifts, write to Hannah Edemikpong, Women's Centre, Christian Assembly of Nigeria, Box 185, Ekat, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Information for international stories from: Spare Rib, Off Our Backs, Outwrite, Globe and Mail.

US abortion victory

American women won a major victory in June when the United States Supreme Court upheld its 1973 decision, which established women's constitutional right to abortion.

The court's decision is seen as a major setback to the Reagan administration which, along with anti-abortion groups, urged the Court to overturn the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling.

Abortion came before the court again because of a move by Pennsylvania to limit state financial support to women seeking abortions. The Pennsylvania law also required that women doctors obtain the "informed consent" of women seeking abortions after telling them about the "detrimental physical and psychological effects," that doctors file various reports for the public record about each abortion performed; that doctors performing third trimester abortions use procedures less risky to a fetus capable of surviving outside the womb; and that two doctors be present at third trimester abortions. The law also required parental or judicial approval for minors seeking abortions.

In a five to four decision the court struck down the Pennsylvania law saying "The states are not free, under the guise of protecting maternal health or potential life, to intimidate women into continuing pregnancies."

"A Woman's right to make that choice freely is fundamental. Any other result, in our view, would protect inadequately a central part of the sphere of liberty that our law guarantees, equality to all."

Charles Fried, the Reagan administration's top courtroom lawyer repeated the government's opposition to the ruling but admitted it would be "slightly futile" to make the same arguments against abortion next year.

The Court's conservative bloc, led by Chief Justice Warren Burger, dissented on the ruling. Burger said he rejected the idea of abortion on demand and that the 1973 decision must be re-examined.

While American feminists can be pleased with the Court's ruling, the future of abortion rights in the United States is in no way secure. Reagan is intent on re-moulding the Supreme Court to his conservative philosophy. He has sufficient time remaining in his term to appoint justices who support his social agenda. The anti-abortionists' strategy, to over turn Roe v. Wade, may yet prove successful.

International Lesbian Conference

Critical access issues avoided, ignored

by Jeny Evans

Throughout this article woman is spelled womyn--the plural of womyn is wimmin.

At the end of March Louise Proux, from Vancouver's Dykes for Dykedom, and I attended the 8th International Lesbian Information Services Conference (ILIS) in Geneva, Switzerland.

In Geneva, for those of us who *listened*, the conference became a very necessary four day workshop on exposing the limitations of a predominently white middle class movement.

ILIS was formed out of a split at the International Gay Association Conference in 1979, from a real necessity to set up a lesbian only organization to deal with our oppression as wimmin. Each year, since 1979, lesbians and lesbian groups in various European countries have taken on a co-ordinating role for ILIS. This includes organizing the annual conference and working to maintain a growing network of lesbian organizations.

At this year's conference the theme was to consolidate that which unites us--resistance to patriarchy, and that which divides us--racism, classism, ageism, ablebodyism and others. Louise interviewed an organizer before the conference and asked what ILIS's expectations were. Four goals were clear: to reinforce an international lesbian network, to find ways we can work together and support one another, to find out what conditions other lesbians live under in different countries, to find out what other lesbians are doing to fight their oppression and build solidarity.

The conference was organized by members of a Swiss lesbian collective, Vanilla Fraise, who also produce the ILIS newspaper: Clit 007. It was attended by over 600 wimmin, most of whom were white, middle class and able-bodied. For the first time efforts were made to organize a truly international conference.

Organizing a conference of this magnitude is no easy task particularly when the collective--only eight womyn--are not part of a large challenging community and when 300 more lesbians than anticipated attend.

However, even given the organizing efforts of these wimmin, there were serious problems at the conference that need to be addressed if our movement is to grow.

The attempts to make the conference an international one, for instance, largely failed. The one token workshop on racism was scheduled at the same time as other workshops. There were no workshops for black wimmin and, in plenary sessions, they had to defend their right to meet autonomously. Although money was used to fly lesbians to the conference only one womyn from Africa was funded. When she arrived, from Kenya, she was housed with a heterosexual woman who was racist.

"I came here to fight racism and I cannot do that when it's practised where I am staying. So I would like it if ILIS, the honourable ILIS, could get me home as soon as possible. I am fed up with being ignored and I'm fed up with people practising racism on me. I didn't come here to be an object. I didn't come from the zoo. I don't see why they invited me here. There was no workshop on black womyn. We had a workshop on Third World Countries. How do you expect over 20 countries to work out in one workshop? I feel I was brought here so they could say they had a womyn from Kenya. I find that really disgracing."

Her reflections on the conference: "I came here to fight racism and I can not do that when it's practised where I am staying. So I would like it if ILIS, the honourable ILIS, could get me home as soon as possible. I am fed up with being ignored and I'm fed up with people practising racism on me. I didn't come here to be an object. I didn't come from the zoo. I don't see why they invited me here. There was no workshop on black womyn. We had a workshop on Third World Countries. How do you expect over 20 countries to work out in one workshop? I feel I was brought here so they could say they had a womyn from Kenya. I find that really disgracing."

"We did not come here solely to talk about access. The real issues facing all people with disabilities, lesbians included, are the ways we are feared and taunted. I have talked about physical image. I have talked about the ways in which we have been excluded. I've talked about the dependency we have experienced. I want you to hear one thing: we are proud to be disabled, that we enjoy our lives. That you and your ideologies about us being lesser are lies, are hatred, are fascistic. We will not accept such facism. We will demand to be heard. We will demand to be allowed to live and enjoy ourselves with our lesbian sisters. You have to move over and listen."

Disabled wimmin were particularly incensed that the location wasn't wheelchair accessible and that no signers were available. During the opening plenary, one blind womyn from Gemma spoke. Gemma is a London based organization for lesbians with or without disabilities which was formed to bring isolated lesbians together and enable them to join the lesbian movement.

She warned, "I shall not be remaining silent on the issues of how lesbians who are symmetrical and able-bodied shit on lesbians with disabilities." She asked for wimmin to do two hour shifts with her throughout the conference to make sure she could get around. Only two wimmin responded.

At the end of the conference, she had to conclude, "We did not come here solely to talk about access. The real issues facing all people with disabilities, lesbians included, are the ways we are feared and taunted. I have talked about physical image. I have talked about the ways in which we have been excluded. I've talked about the dependency we have experienced. I want you to hear one thing: we are proud to be disabled, that we enjoy our lives. That you and your ideologies about us being lesser are lies, are hatred, are fascistic. We will not accept such fascism. We will demand to be heard. We will demand to be allowed to live and enjoy ourselves with our lesbian sisters. You have to move over and listen."

There was no childcare. You had to pre-register, which denied mothers the right to spontaneity. A few did pre-register, but it was felt that the numbers didn't warrant structured childcare.

While there were many controversial issues around accessibility, racism was the conference's central problem. I'll give an illustration. At the opening plenary one representative was asked to speak from each country.

Powerful statements were made about the complexities of organizing around lesbianism in countries suffering from exploitation and poverty enforced by imperialism. The frustration lesbians feel organizing in the feminist movement were also revealed. With thirty minutes left in the plenary, a white womyn stood to speak for South Africa. The room exploded. Black wimmin called, "Where are our black sisters from South Africa?" The womyn was asked to sit down. She refused. Other white wimmin defended the womyn's right to speak and said that the black wimmin's anger was inappropriate.

A representative form the US National Lesbian Mothers Defense Fund, whose organization has fought custody battles in support of over 600 lesbian mothers, had to miss events to make sure her daughter was cared for. At the final plenary she had to point out that childcare is absolutely necessary if lesbian functions are to be accessible.

Wimmin said things like, "Let's try to show each other some love rather than hate." A conference organizer stepped in

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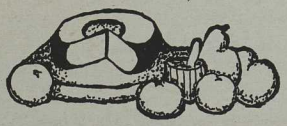

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and told the black wimmin they'd better behave and speak into the microphone when it was their turn to speak.

Finally, a womyn from Fiji spoke, "We're talking about racism here and for many of us it is an important issue. Wimmin keep saying "Well, we're wimmin here together". I realize that Margaret Thatcher, presumably, is a womyn but I don't feel any sort of solidarity with with Margaret Thatcher. So stop all this "We are wimmin here together" stuff.

While the debate went on indivdual white wimmin tried to divert the plenary's focus on the issue. Precious time was wasted with responses from white wimmin like: "I'm oppressed too, because I'm six feet tall" or "I too am discriminated against because I'm an older womyn." Some white wimmin dismissed black wimmin's critisism by saying, "It's very important that we do not waste time in disagreements and arguments on racism and other things like that."

Direction returned when an Asian-American grassroots activist from New York said: "As I look down at this panel, as I look around this room, what else did you expect black wimmin to do (but react against racism at the conference)? We lesbians must change our perspective. You must look at the poor, you must look at the working wimmin, you must look at my sister (from the South Pacific) who has been silenced for so long. I hope at next years conference I can look down at that panel and see black wimmin, poor wimmin and disabled wimmin."

Once again a black womyn offered some direction when she said, "Who was the first person to get the vote in America? It was a white man. Who was the second person? A white womyn. Who was the third person? A black man, and who was the last person? A black womyn. You say "don't separate being black from being a lesbian! Look at us today. I'm black, you're white. If I'm in a crowd I am a black womyn. I will be picked out."

As white people our skin is our passport, making it easier for us to travel internationally. Black wimmin consistently found they had to pay three times the taxi fare to go the same distances as white womyn. Hotels charged much higher room rates to deter black wimmin from registering. Service in restaurants amounted to sitting and waiting and waiting and waiting while all around whites were served. Intimidation and harassment of this nature is entirely racist and more importantly, can lead to serious consequences. Wimmin could face prison, upon their return home, if it was found out that they were travelling abroad for an international lesbian conference.

At the conference itself there were many instances of how white wimmins assumptions prevented womyn of colour from full participation. For example, the organizers planned a demonstration focussing on the right to political asylum for all lesbians, which didn't take into account wimmin of colour's reality. They took for granted the freedom that while wimmin have to demonstrate and didn't research or prepare for any legal problems if there were any arrests that could have resulted in deportations. So black wimmin didn't participate and the demonstration was exclusively white.

Some white wimmin *were* outraged at the conference's racism and a white wimmin's meeting was called to deal with the lack of support for black wimmin at the conference's opening plenary. This meeting, attended by 30 wimmin and called to challenge white wimmin's racism, became another forum to criticize black wimmin. In frustration a group of anarchists decided to meet separately to prepare a statement for the closing plenary which would expose the conference's racism. Exhaustion and lack of time, however, meant the group could not develop a statement that was satisfactory. Throughout the entire conference only one white womyn publicly confronted the conference's racism.

It was frustrating, amidst these barriers and defensiveness, to get down to doing international lesbian solidarity work. Some networking was accomplished at the conference. Black, Asian and Latin American lesbians were able to meet each other for the first time and do serious work in organizing around international lesbian struggles. Wimmin with a committment to struggle came with a focus to gather, interview and record information to bring back to our own communities. Vancouver lesbians will share the benefits of Louise's work to prepare a slide and tape show about the conference. Quotes from the plenary sessions used in this article came from Louise's commitment to record conference proceedings.

White lesbians can no longer declare that it is our movement. Our defensive responses to issues of racism, classism and able-bodyism were an outrage. Such defensiveness is a repeatred tactic used by the middle class. Its intent is to silence and block rage.

Many wimmin came, however, with little interest in active participation in participation in political issues. Their focus at Geneva was one of personal pleasure.

I went to Geneva with many illusions about an international lesbian conference. Lesbians at the conference should have left much more politicized on issues of race and class. Excluding these concerns make sexuality a privileged focus.

There are horrific oppressions we have chosen to ignore. There was no workshop on lesbians in physiciatric institutions, on pornography or prostitution. No workshop dealing with the realities facing isolated and poor wimmin, or on the affect relocation has on the aboriginal peoples of the world. No workshop on the survival issues facing Central America or black wimmin's resistance to apartheid in South Africa.

We have to seriously make the links to see the racism inherent in using our privilege, our money, time, access to print and mobility, only to better or maintain our own status.

White lesbians can no longer declare that it is our movement. Our defensive responses to issues of facism, classism and able-bodyism were an outrage. Such defensiveness is a repeated tactic used by middle class. It's intent is to silence and block rage.

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Our movement has to go beyond simple recognition of our varied privileges and develop concrete strategies to create a wider and stronger vision of resistance. Lesbians will never be truly visible until all First Nation peoples no longer live under the oppression of white values and facist culture. ILIS has designated the first week in October as a time for action on international lesbian issues. This week gives us an opportunity to work within our communities to expand our political focus. For lesbians, this work is vital to a strong and responsible movement.

The 9th ILIS conference is tentatively scheduled for Mexico during the summer of 1987. The Basque country, in the north of Spain, was also being considered. A Black womyn from London proposed that next years' conference be five days: the first three days for First Nation wimmin and the last two days to include white wimmin on First Nation's wimmin's terms.

Louise Proux from Dykes for Dykedom, has prepared a slide show on the conference. The next scheduled presentation will be during the first week in October. Check with the VLC for other possible dates.

The next topic for the lesbian networking meeting, held the second Thursday of each month, is October's international lesbian week. If you are interested in getting involved, come to the Vanvouver Lesbian Center at 876 Commercial Drive, July 10th at 7:30 pm or contact VLC at 254-8459.

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Lillian Allen considers community, culture and criticism

Photo by Joanne Healy

by Kandace Kerr

Lillian Allen is a Toronto-based dub poet. Her work is rooted in community organizing and action, an outgrowth of her political and social involvement with black communities in New York and later, Toronto. She was interviewed for Kinesis *by Kandace Kerr.*

Dub poetry developed out of reggae music. Traditional dub poetry relies heavily on mainstream reggae rythms and, until quite recently, was almost exclusively male. Allen's work is very different: her poetry reaches across a wide spectrum of experience, speaking the pain of incest and teenage pregnancy, the angst of no money and no future, the anger of a community at the murderous actions of police, of racism and greed.

Community has always been important to Lillian Allen, from her childhood in Jamaica to her current work encouraging young dub poets in the Toronto area.

Born in Spanishtown, Jamaica the fifth of ten children, Lillian grew up in a tightly knit family. Her grandmother was a haggler, a market-seller: Lillian remembers her mother as "always working". As she pursued her high school studies, much to the dismay of her wealthier schoolmates, Lillian discovered the escapism of literature.

"I remember really grooving on literature...I'm the kid, you'd come over on a Friday night and see me reading stuff I'd have to read, and I remember people laughing at me, right, I found it interesting, man. The thing transported me and gave me an option...it gave me a place where I could be...and nobody else was there, and I could do anything I wanted, right...

"I remember distinclty figuring how groovy that was, and that in fact instead of somebody else taking me on their journey or taking me where they wanted to be, right, I could create my own world.

I didn't have to wait for somebody to create it for me.

I made stories up a lot and wrote it down, and told stories. I basically used my writing as a place where I could test my ideas, where I could work things out, it was a real special place, you know, it was a place where...I figured things out, I consolidated things, and I just go, you know...a real freedom trip.

But I didn't think of writing as social, it was more of a personal kind of thing...social, I mean, is making the connection to other people and to what's going on in a conscious way.

I remember when I came back to Toronto in '74 (from the States). I again sought out community...started to volunteer, joined organizations and so on, and I was writing still and I would begin to use my work there as part of that process of community organizing. When there was event, you know, stuff around police brutality, there was a lot of stuff happening in and around the black community, I would always offer up a poem or offer to write something about it, mainly because I figured that I could capture in a piece of work, in 3 minutes, what 3 speeches were trying to do...make an impact, right, and that's what I did.

At first it was a struggle, it was like they want you on during the break, or when everybody's getting up, right, or after 5 speeches, you know--"And good night everybody we'll take some money up now and now Lillian will..." (laughs) we sort of had to struggle to let them know it needs to be there, it needs to give people life, and then they started seeing it, you know, it started to happen, and people started looking for it, so people started asking for it. That's sort of how I got in.

Kandace: I'll be honest. When Lillian Allen's name appeared as one of the feature performers at Folklife, part of expo, my gut reaction was profound disappointment--a reaction shared by many others. To some, it was a sell out; for others, it was not quite that drastic, but mildly disturbing, nonetheless.

Kandace: The criticism has been expressed that if performers like yourself, political artists, were really political, they wouldn't have even considered playing expo in the first place.

Lillian: ...I don't know why people are surprised...this is what I can't figure out... it's like the domed stadium, and I can't figure out why people are targeting those things...it's an outgrowth of the capitalist system and in fact if you poll working class people they'll go with it because of the way they have been brutalized...made hungry and then given limited options, right, the actual work we have to do is with those people, we have to get into the community and get to the root of the matter and start tearing away at the sheen that's been placed over people...

I have ten years of politics in an ongoing way...playing at expo didn't seem any different than getting Canada Council or playing in a bar or something. A lot of people use those words because they're not engaged, they have to be out there, working in the community, you know, and they can stand around and be purists, right, because they don't have to be there making decisions on a day to day basis...so...what does it mean when people say you're not political?

All my life there have been people who've been telling me what to do, and I've done what I wanted to do, because if it's my mistake I have to be self-critical, it's my ass, right? When I was doing this album (Revolutionary Tea Party) with the Parachute Club (producer/musicians) people were saying: "Man, that's roots stuff, you can't let those guys do it... man, you need some distance..." everybody has something to say but ain't nobody comin' out, I mean I've been doing this stuff for a decade and I need to do an album, but there's nobody saying Lillian, you need to do an album, let's hep you do it...but the minute I'm getting it together everybody's gonna tell me how to do it...

Kandace: What kind of response are you getting from expo audiences?

Lillian: The piece that's getting the best response, that people have sat down quietly through, that people have applauded the introduction and applauded sustainedly afterwards, is Nellie Bellie Swellie, the piece about incest, about violence against young women.

I never thought I wouldn't play expo, what can I say. I mean, who in their right mind...expo is a natural outgrowth of the capitalist system, it happens every few years... it's their little whooppee.

Lillian: See, I never thought I wouldn't play expo. I mean, first of all I can't defend expo, what can I say? I mean, who in their right mind...expo is a natural outgrowth of the capitalist system, it happens every few years...it's their you know, their little whoopee right?

I find that, as a black person in this society, you know, I have less options than other folks have, than white folks have. I find I had to fight like hell for my voice to be heard. And I find that I emerged not out of any political process or out of the goodness of anybody's heart, but because I'm so good and so persistent. You know, I find that I need to speak. I cannot impose silence on myself once the door has been opened. Nobody can tell me what to say...

I mean, there are some women who come back and sit there, for the whole day, and there are people who are coming up, basically saying, you know, that they want to get us here, they want to get us there, they're making contact...people are saying "this is stuff I wished I'd known about, I'm longing to hear such stuff," so it's beginning to get to some people and the network is beginning to happen."

Lillian Allen is one of the few women currently writing and recording dub poetry. Male dub artists like Linton Kwesi Johnson and Mutabaruka often credit Louise Bennett as one of their main influences but, by and large, dub is a male preserve.

Lillian Allen continued next page

MAKING MUSIC

1. Liane Knight and Isis — Rockin' Harry and the Hackjobs
2. Lora Thakery — Bolero Lava
3. Maggie Benston, Marissa, Pat Davitt — Euphonious Feminists
4. Ferron
5. Vanessa Richards — Bolero Lava
6. Rachel Melas — Animal Slaves, Rockin' Harry
7. Grace Scott — Rockin' Harry
8. Nadine Davenport — Women's Music Project

1,2,4,5,6,7 photos by Nadine Davenport 3 by Claudia McDonald 8 by Jill Harland

Kandace: How did Curfew in BC/The Five *come about?*

Lillian: "...I wanted to do a piece to sort of pull together some of their (the "five's") ideas, you know, and in fact a lot of their ideas are in common with the ideas of progressive people all over the world. And I also keep hearing about how people in BC are feeling really down, really discouraged and I thought I wanted to do a piece to do what political art should do, revive people and get people up and around and, you know, funk down on the system...so I did *Curfew* which outlines the conditions in BC for the BC people and the actions of the Socred government....

When I was out here for the Folk Festival, or maybe some other time, I jammed with Rachel (Melas) and Roscoe (Hales, both of the Animal Slaves), two musicians I respect very much, and talked about my ideas and recording some music and basically getting it out. So when they came to Toronto last summer we sort of got it together, myself, Marian Lydbrooke, Elaine Stef (both members, with Rachel, of the Moral Lepers), Roscoe, Rachel..." (available on cassete).

Her new album, *Revolutionary Tea Party,* entailed a different approach to the melding of poetry and music.

Lillian: We met for a long time beforehand...before we actually got into the studio, and during that time we were meeting, we were talking a lot about my work and the approach developed, a philosophical approach to the work, which basically said that the poetry existed for itself and existed to breathe life into the instruments, right. As opposed to the other way I've worked with musicians before, where they've either played what they wanted to play, or played some music that the poetry had to fit into, right?

For me, it is a consolidation of the work that I've done over the past ten years and a lot of ideas that I've had. So it's like a writer with a book, now I have a chance to move on..."

De Dub Poets with Clifton Joseph and Devon Haughton, Curfew in BC/The Five (cassette), Revolutionary Tea Party

Lillian: "Reggae music (laughs) and dub poetry has been influenced by reggae stylistically (and) the reggae tradition is a patriarchal domain, it's a bullpen. So there's Breeze in Jamaica, and there's a number of other women. There's a compilation album out, *Womantalk* (on the Heartbeat label) with a number of women on it (who) haven't quite come into their voices yet, as far as I read the Jamaican scene. But I think my album will do a lot for those women.

In Toronto there are a couple, there's one person who is particularly good and is doing quite well, Audrey Zini Mandela. There also are lots and lots of other people who are doing one or two pieces, but there's a couple who are working at it consistently.

One of the things I've done in Toronto is to take the time to do the kind of nurturing, the kind of building that has created a movement of dub poets so that Toronto probably has more dub poets than any place else, and that's exciting...the biggest innovation in dub poetry is happening right here in Canada."

Kandace: Do you see your approach as breaking that patriarchal shell (of dub)?

Lillian: "Oh yeah, especially as I'm one of the pioneers...they call me the godmother of dub (laughs) especially that, again, a lot of the innovations are coming from here, coming from my spheres of influence."

Kandace: Such as...?

Lillian: "Technique, subject matter, musicality, everything you can think of. If you notice...a straight kind of delivery...based on voice just weaving around, which I say is based on reggae, the more classical beat, as opposed to some of the innovations I've put in, some of the emotiveness, some of the changes in internal rhythm.

Women in country music

Babies, Burdens and Broken Hearts

by Noreen Howes

If you can find it in your heart to just forgive/ I'll come back and live the way you've wanted me to live/ All I want is just to be your girl/ Please come and get me and take me to your world.

I'm a feminist. I'm also a proud lover of mainstream country music, some of it featuring lyrics such as these. It isn't an easy thing to admit, but I've struggled along and with every spurt of development within my feminist consciousness Tammy, Loretta, Dolly, Patsy and Kitty are right there with me. In fact, their music has helped *develop* my feminist consciousness.

My initial attraction to country music was for their powerful and passionate voices. I loved the whines, twangs and teardrops in every syllable. Then I began concentrating on the messages these women were singing, and my interest grew.

Loretta Lynn sings:

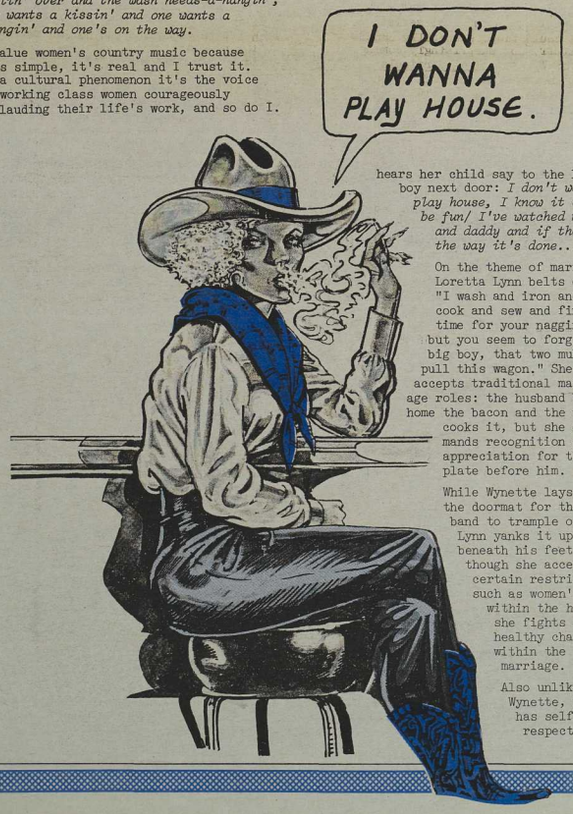
The girls in New York city they all march for women's lib/ and better homes and gardens show the modern way to live/ and the pill may change the world tomorrow but meanwhile today/ here in Topeka the screen door's-a-bangin', the coffee's boilin' over and the wash needs-a-hangin', one wants a kissin' and one wants a changin' and one's on the way.

I value women's country music because it's simple, it's real and I trust it. As a cultural phenomenon it's the voice of working class women courageously applauding their life's work, and so do I. I.

Loretta Lynn and Tammy Wynette are archetypal Nashville women. Both travelled the road to superstardom in the late fifties and arrived in the sixties. Both sang about the working class housewife. Although their words reached the same audiences the message each woman presented was remarkably different. A suggested clue as to why these differences exist: Loretta Lynn pens most of her own material, whereas Tammy Wynette's greatest hits are written by men.

Tammy Wynette is submissive to her husband. She doesn't hesitate to lay herself at his feet to be trampled upon. She appears to enjoy it, believing the ultimate marital crisis to be unspeakable--*D-I-V-O-R-C-E*. So Wynette whines her way through marriage, a 'good little doormat'. And if she finally decides to get off the ground it's only to stand by her man. "Here's a song I love to sing", she tells us "it's about the man that wears my ring/ and even though he's tempted he knows I'll make sure that he gets everything."

There is one gleam of hope within Wynette's musical marriage manual but it doesn't concern her situation as wife-protagonist, it's her young daughter who criticises traditional marriage. In *I Don't Wanna Play House* the mother weeps as she



graphics from *Honky Tonk Sue*

hears her child say to the little boy next door: *I don't wanna play house, I know it can't be fun/ I've watched mommy and daddy and if that's the way it's done...*

On the theme of marriage Loretta Lynn belts out: "I wash and iron and cook and sew and find time for your naggin'/ but you seem to forget big boy, that two mules pull this wagon." She accepts traditional marriage roles: the husband brings home the bacon and the wife cooks it, but she demands recognition and appreciation for the plate before him.

While Wynette lays down the doormat for the husband to trample on, Lynn yanks it up from beneath his feet. Although she accepts certain restrictions such as women's role within the home, she fights for healthy changes within the marriage.

Also unlike Wynette, Lynn has self-respect which further ignites her fire. Almost invariably the husband is a drunken fool whom she must nag, or he is yet another one of her growing brood, demanding attention. In "Don't Come Home A-Drinkin'(With Lovin' On Your Mind)" she throws him out of her bed. "Well you thought I'd be waitin' up when you came home last night/ you'd been out with all the boys and you ended up half tight/ well liquor and love they just don't mix leave the bottle or me behind..."

The implication is sexual: she has good lovin' and he won't get any of it unless he deserves it.

Sexuality is presented differently in Tammy Wynette's songs. She makes no sexual demand on her husband-lover and she therefore receives no pleasure. In fact, the whole sex thing sort of puzzles Tammy. "I don't know what I do that's right but it makes him come home at night" she sings.

While he is perpetually tempted by honky-tonk women out there, and like most men in country music, is led around by his libido, she remains at home to be sexually available and satisfying for him. The doormat *now* lies on the bed.

In *Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad* she decides to feed his sexual appetite with the delicacies he appears to like best. To resemble the other women (whom she believes he's attracted to) she'll paint up, powder up, dress up fancy and be the "swingingest swinger" he's ever had.

According to the wife in this song, appealing to the husband's sexuality regardless of her own identity and desires is an ingredient to a successful marriage. The implication is that she, as a wife, doesn't *deserve* sexual pleasure. She promises to "change if it takes that to make you happy/ from now on you're gonna see a different me." The title alone implies that 'good girls' don't enjoy sex while 'bad girls' do. Wynette identifies with the good girls, but she'll pretend if it will save her marriage.

In contrast, a predominant theme in Loretta Lynn's work is that women should be as free as men sexually. "As far as the Bible is concerned" she argues "it's just as bad for one as for the other". In *The Pill* she sings about the sexual freedom which accompanies freedom from pregnancy.

It's a funny and touching manifesto of a woman's liberation and her renewed sexual desire. "This incubator is overused because you've kept it filled" she sings "but feeling good comes easy now since I've got the pill". She continues to say that her old maternity dresses are going in the garbage (which suggest the 'bra burning' of the early days of women's lib) and that from now on she'll dress differently--"mini-skirts and hot pants and a few little fancy frills" to please herself, not her virile husband.

Like Wynette, Loretta Lynn makes a clear distinction between the sexuality of 'good girls' and 'bad girls', but unlike Wynette she admits having her own desires, and refuses to surrender them--and her good loving--to satisfy her husband (who is too drunk anyway to know the difference).

Another theme running through women's country music is the threat to hearth and home of the evil "other woman". Few songs present her compassionately.

Wynette depicts her as a well made-up, fancy-dressed creature who tempts the husband from the wife's loving arms. These loose women definitely swing, and some even drink whiskey. But, according to Wynette, a husband only cheats if he's not getting what he needs at home. It's therefore neither the other woman's fault nor the husband's--it's the wife's alone. And if he does stray into that illicit bed she

Loretta Lynn

assures him that she'll: "keep waiting in this lonely room just in case you change your mind" and return.

The other woman also plays a significant role in Loretta Lynn's songs where the husband walks into the path of temptation, trips, and falls into *her* experienced arms. But he is not promptly forgiven. He must prove himself worthy of his wife before returning home.

Although responsible for his actions, Lynn suggests that wives must expect husbands to 'stray', as though adultery is an inherent male quality. Their brains are dimmed by moonshine, she implies, and at best they're just irresponsible 'boys'. But it's when women act just as foolishly, such as the honky-tonkin' other woman, that she is least compassionate. "You ain't woman enough," she challenges her, "to take my man".

Women as friends or emotional support are absent in both Wynette's and Lynn's songs. The cast of characters include: husband, children, husband's drinking buddies ("old army friends") and the other woman. This absence of women friends suggests tremendous energy demanded by the housewife simply in running the house and disciplining children and husband. Not enough time for friends.

This phenomenon is particularly interesting when one considers well-known friendships between stars such as Loretta Lynn and Patsy Cline.

Another explanation for the absence of women as friends is that the mainstream country music industry is ruled by men who consider it easier to present women as rivals--their sole ambition being gettin' and keepin' their man--than to honestly present these women as coffee drinking allies sharing horror stories of husbands.

I enjoy country music even though examples of anti-woman propaganda--such as women as enemies--are often expressed.

As feminists rightly argue, the lyrics *are* sexist. But to dismiss the music for these reasons would be an unjust dismissal of the experiences of thousands of women--housewives, trapped in marriages.

I began this examination of women's country music with the most sexist lyrics I could find. Powerfully unpalatable stuff, not surprisingly coming from Tammy Wynette. That particular song *Welcome To My World* focuses on a woman's oppression and absolute self-denial: a song about a living death. What affect can these words have on women other than despair? None, I expect, except for the simple fact that Wynette is recognizing many women's reality.

The most harmful element in her lyrics is the inherent hopelessness. She repeatedly counsels women to accept, as wives, the anguish of marital servitude--as though the ring upon their fingers becomes a rope around their necks which they must continue wearing.

Lynn's music seems a response to Wynette, as if she heard *Stand By Your Man* once too often. (Incidentally, a tradition in country and western music *is* to respond to another artist's material). In Loretta Lynn's work she appears to have moved from despair into positive action, recognizing that there's a battle, but that she's armed and angry.

Granted, battlelines are strictly drawn and adhered to: within the marriage. Women's country music rarely examines alternatives to the nuclear family and (many) accompanying traditional values, but with Lynn the rules are bent and women's power realized. She inspires us with hope both through her honest and appreciative portrayal of women's work, and through her show of personal strength and dignity.

It's important to consider why divorce is rarely expressed as a viable alternative to marriage. It suggests that for the majority of working class women adequate alternatives simply don't exist. As tough as marriage may be, the divorced woman in country music has it tougher.

"The women all look at you like you're bad", Lynn sings of the divorced woman, "And the men all hope you are"--but go ahead and live your life, she advises her, and "let 'em talk".

The reality is, it's an incredible financial and emotional struggle for a woman with little education and no job skills to independently support herself and her children. In many ways it's understandable why women would choose to remain married, with the devil they know--and his paycheck, rather than experience the reality of single motherhood.

I trust and enjoy the music of Nashville women like Tammy Wynette and Loretta Lynn because in their unpretentious (yes--and sometimes even *corny*) way, they sing about what's happening out there. And through first recognizing problems and restrictions we can develop solutions. Also, by concentrating solely on those two artists and their different approaches to similar issues, I'm proving that country music is not monolithic (a common misconception) regarding its' presentation of women.

So don't be afraid. Tune into a local country music station and listen for yourself. One warning though: study has proven that Vancouver radio stations, like the music industry itself, doesn't fully appreciate women's music. Almost all the voices you'll hear--will be men's.

VLC Coffeehouse turning a new leaf

by Nadine Davenport

Currently there are four women in the collective that produces the women's coffeehouse. With a number of successful nights of entertainment under our belts we see the coffeehouse as a necessary part of this community. Although support from the community in recent weeks has diminished the collective is turning a new leaf which has lead to a new format for the summer months.

The coffeehouse doors will be open for three days out of each month in the summer, bringing in entertainment at each of these dates and charging a little bit more at the door to cover the cost and support of paying the performers.

You can look forward to a number of women musicans and performers including: We Three/Ezzel: July 17th (tentative booking) and six local women musicians and songwriters share the stage for a round robin evening with Maura Volante, Isis, Sylvie Murphy, Norma, Donna Lee, and Nadine Davenport: July 25 (tentative booking).

In late August/early September confirmation on an evening with Acting Up Theatre Group and Aya, a women's a capella group, are still under way. As well as a bill with Raw Sugar, a one woman show from Seattle and an evening with our own Marcia Meyer.

graphic by Liz Clark

Also in the works is a proposed ping pong tournament for the fall. Any women interested please get in contact soon with the collective. Ping Pong equipment donations will also be welcome.

In fact, the coffeehouse collective is always looking for new members to join our collective. New ideas and new energy will be most welcome to begin fall scheduling of events and music.

Being a member of the collective is easy. The coffeehouse evening workshifts are set up in pairs (perhaps three women are needed on busy entertainment nights) setting up tables, the coffee bar, and a sound system for the performers are the duties of each coffeehouse collective member. We run a rotating schedule and welcome women who are interested.

Any women experienced in MCing are also needed, as well as women with strategies on fundraising and publicity.

The bottom line is the women's coffeehouse needs to be supported by the community. The money made by the coffeehouse goes to the Lesbian Connection, which pays for rent and supplies.

Many of us remember six or seven years ago there was a coffeehouse. There hasn't been one for years and we all need to support and learn the skills again to share our women's music and culture with every woman in our community. We all, in turn, should support the women who make the music.

Any woman interested in joining the women's coffeehouse collective please call VLC 254-8548 or Nadine 254-7479 or drop by on a Friday night from 7:30 pm.

Look for advertisements on the confirmations on our summer concert line-up and tell your friends.

Let's all keep women's music and culture alive and well and living in Vancouver.

"I just love women who keep up with women's music and culture."

Networking music and culture

by Nadine Davenport

Some of us remember in 1982 an ad hoc group of women decided to produce a concert with Alix Dobkin, a well-known lesbian singer/songwriter. A workshop followed the next day. The concert was moving, the workshop inspiring. I was impressed with the concert's production team, although both events did not manage to break even. The group disbanded.

Many have tried since. Producing themselves if they're musicians. Working a gig for free, and barely making enough to pay the sound woman. The Vancouver Folk Music Festival has faithfully filled in the gaps over the years, bringing in various women's music artists of our industry. (Although first hand experience with the festival leads one to admit, breaking even is a foreign word in this business).

But is it possible in *this* city, in this women's community, (that is, perhaps too laid back to keep any kind of music project going and supported for more than one year) to turn a new leaf, to strive for quality in production, communication, administration, and a general networking of women's music and culture in Vancouver and Canada's west coast? A sort of San Francisco of Canada, if you will.

Ideas and possibilities for this project have been brewing for four years. We have just begun. Women are beginning to come out of the woodwork and voice interest in a project such as this.

A project that would be as diverse as our community. A project that would offer strength and organization to women's music and culture in Vancouver.

Women's music has many representations: a project as diverse as our community.

The goals are these: to build a network of women musicians/artists/technicians/administrators/producers that would pioneer a women's music and culture foundation in Vancouver and Canada's west coast. It's happening everywhere else, why not in Vancouver?

Long range goals include a network membership which would support a number of smaller projects. A newsletter with events local and national. A women's production company, producing concerts, workshops and festivals. A women's music studio, and a basic skill-sharing network between individual specialized groups. This would be housed in a 3 storey building in the Chinatown/Gastown area.

The possibilities are endless. I think it could happen, and many other women are beginning to think so too.

To make this project work we need to be strong. To say to our sisters whose struggle it was before, the time has come. Lend a hand to the women who will make this project happen today.

Women's music has many representations. Let's all see if we can share and live under one roof and be a city that's not only know for "where Ferron is from" but to stand for much more.

There is going to be a co-ordinators meeting on July 15 at 7:30 pm. You can call Nadine Davenport 254-7475 for location. Those women interested please phone for more information on the location.

There will also be a city-wide "project connection" meeting of all interested women who feel this project would benefit them.

This will take place at the Lesbian Centre, 876 Commercial Drive at 7:30 pm on July 22nd/86. All women welcome.

The Vancouver Women's Music Network project will only be possible with your support. Face the music! The time has come!

Any women interested in this project phone Nadine Davenport 254-7479 or VLC 254-8458.

CFRO 102.7 F.M.
RUBYMUSIC

by Connie Smith

This will be my last Rubymusic column for a while. But before I go, I want to tell you how this column came about.

The column was inspired by my radio program, *Rubymusic*, which went on the air May 16, 1981 on CFRO. At Cy-Thea Sand's suggestion, the first Rubymusic column appeared in 1982 in Issue Seven/Eight of *The Radical Reviewer*, a literary journal which Cy-Thea edited. Issue Nine, published in 1983, carried the first of my articles on "girl group" music.

When *The Radical Reviewer* ceased publishing in 1983, Cole Dudley invited Cy-Thea and myself to bring our columns to *Kinesis*. We did, and Rubymusic has appeared monthly since December '83. (With special issues included, this comes to a grand total of 35+ stories on women musicians and singers).

It's been an incredible experience having the opportunity to write history, and in some cases, to rewrite it. There have been many exciting moments, and I assume there will be more when I return.

Yo me declaro campanera con mi voz

photo by Kim Irving

CRISTINA GONZALEZ

by Kim Irving and Helen Dixon

Chilean singer Cristina Gonzalez recently performed in Vancouver at a Pena-concert organized by the Committee for the defense of Human Rights in Chile. For the first time, Cristina is touring Canada (she'll visit Calgary, Montreal and Kitchener) and she hopes to return for Winnipeg's Women's Music festival in September.

Her music is a mixture of soft ballads and semi-pop. She sings about peace, women's liberation and the continuous struggles faced by the people of Chile. Cristina reverse's the "r" in her name to indicate resistance, a subtle bit of activism that's necessary in a country that represses any political action.

Cristina has a year and a half old daughter named Victoria Luna, who lives with her father in Santiago. This interview was originally done in Spanish. Copies of Cristina's tape "Mensaero del amor" are available at the Women's Bookstore.

What is the situation for women in Chile now?

The participation of women in Chile right now is very important. That doesn't mean to say it's just right now that they are involved. Women have always been there, in all Latin America struggles. They are a very important element. Women in Chile are now much more organized. There is an understanding that the liberation of women will only come through the liberation of all the people. A lot of issues are coming up in every class, in every social layer. One thing that has to be really understood is everybody, men and women, have their responsibilities within the home.

Here in Canada women can organize separately, for instance there is "women's music". How does it differ in Chile?

Women in Chile are not really organized within a feminist movement. As I said, they are organized in a struggle which the whole population is involved in. We still see the issues of women in a similar way, like in Canada. We don't deny the struggles women must fight. But the struggles we have as women are going on in a different context. We are living in a situation that is so intense, so critical. So this means a specific movment just around women's issues hasn't developed. This doesn't mean to say that it'll never happen. It'll happen and probably it'll happen quite soon. But it's still missing a certain context.

How is the political atmosphere in Chile now?

The dictatorship is in a very critical period. It is in crisis. After thirteen years of dictatorship, the people have grown, we have understood the necessity of organizing ourselves at a much higher level.

All sectors of society are organizing: the women, the students, the shantytown dwellers, the workers...everybody in every sector.

The most predominant are the shantytown dwellers and the students.

What women have brought to this is very important. Women have been able to organize themselves with a very deep sense of unification. What that means is they are not only unifying but they are much more confrontational. They're much more outspoken, more militant.

El Comienzo de la Vida

"...Hay que romper con la apariencia
hay que romper con la rutina
hay que romper, romper la muerte
y morir por la alegria
que tu verso clandestino
se haga fuego y no cenizo..."

Porque vamos tras la paz
con la certeza del futuro
porque vamos construyendo
desde hoydia nueva vida,
porque somos fuerza joven
con mucho mas que una consigna
y veemos, lo sabemos
que la alcanzaremos.

El Comienzo de la Vida / The Beginning of Life

"...We have to break with appearances
we have to break with the routine
we have to break, break death
and die for happiness
that your clandestine verse
is made into fire and not ash..."

Because we follow peace
with certainty of the future
because we go on building
from today on, a new life
because we are a young force
with much more than a slogan
and we see, we know
that we will reach it.

How did you get started in music?

My family has always been connected to music (Cristina's mother *Myriam* is a popular singer in Spain). Because of that, I never wanted to get involved in music. I was around it all the time when I was living in Spain and getting involved in other kinds of work. I felt at one point that I really wanted to return to Chile, to get a sense of my country, where I was from...

So when I returned, I linked up with people involved in music and cultural work. I began to write songs, without being asked to. I realized I had to take it up in a much more professional and responsible way. Dedicate myself to it.

Can you tell us a bit about the history of women's music in Chile?

A very important woman is Violetta Parra. We still haven't been able to discover the context of her work, who she was...Violetta was involved in all forms of art, not just music. She was involved in making paintings, *arpilleras* (tapestries), ceramics, poetry, and music. She spoke and built a whole new language. She revolutionalized the sense of what could be done with art. We still don't know the full extent of all the work she did. I don't know if a new Violetta Parra has been born yet. At the same time there are women in Chile involved in music and art, some of them very good.

Isn't it dangerous for you to be touring and singing such political songs?

There is no alternative for me, it's my principles! Being a musician, I have a responsibility. I have in my hands a very important tool...to be on stage and communicate to large groups of people. That sometimes can be a lot more effective than a political speech. I've already been touched by the repression. I know that they could grab me again. I'm aware of that.

How were you touched by the repression?

In 1983, we were involved in one of the days that was called for the national protest in Chile. We went to a really militant sector of the city of Santiago, a shantytown called Pudahuel. What we were doing was music in the form of popular education. That's one of the things we use our music for. So, a group of us were there and it was raided. Three members of our group were taken by the CNI (Chilean secret police) and they were sent to internal exiles or regulated to very isolated areas of the country where they have to sign in with the local police everyday, sometimes several times a day. And there are other types of indirect repressions. For example, the lack of work and the fact that I can't communicate over the mass media.

There's no radio station that'll play your music?

There are two radio stations that do play our music, but it's only for an hour, much like Co-op radio in Vancouver. One of our stations is called Co-op radio, and the other is called Chilean Radio.

Are they alternative stations?

No, not exactly alternative in the way Co-op Radio is in Vancouver. A lot of their programming is organized by the Church. They tend to be mora democratic, have more space for national music, rather than the larger commercial stations.

The way we function is through other alternative channels. Like people record their cassettes, they don't wait for some bigshot to do it for them. A poet doesn't wait to get his or her book published, they go to political and cultural events and read. That's how we get our message across.

Is it difficult to tour in Chile?

Yes, it's very difficult to live for music in Chile. Most of my work is done for solidarity, about what's going on...it doesn't pay much!

How do you survive then?

I don't know! I do the odd thing here, the odd concert there. I try to organize my own things to make a bit of money. I'm always scrambling to make an existance.

Do you work with a group in Chile?

I just finished recording with a group called Santiago del Nuevo Estremo. The kind of music I like to do is popular music. I like jazz and blues. I'm trying to break from the very traditional view of what political music is, that being with the traditional instruments, like the *charango*, the *quena* and wearing the ponchos. We have to break out of that image and find new kinds of music. It's not that I have anything against folklore music, but that this music isn't for everyone. We don't need to be running around in the same uniforms all the time.

Who has influenced your writing and singing?

A lot of people! I've had a lot of influence from jazz music, from Chilean New Song Movement and specifically Patricio Manns. I've been influenced by the Cuban Nueva Trova and all the way up to Bob Marley!

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PLAYING ON THE EDGE

by Isis

Rachel Melas, Filis Iverson, Maura Volante and I are local musicians active in the alternative scene. We got together to discuss the relationship between our music and politics.

Isis: Right now I'm playing in one band, Rockin' Harry and the Hackjobs, and a lot of the appeal of that band for me is that we do play benefits and things like that.

Rachel: My name is Rachel and I play the bass in the Animal Slaves and Rockin' Harry and the Hackjobs. How about you Phyllis, what's your function in the universe?

Filis: I play bass in the Industrial Waste Banned, and in the basement and sometimes in the livingroom.

Maura: I'm Maura Volante, and I'm "just a singer", and I also play some percussion. I was working with Liquid Wrench.

Isis: I'm interested in a lot of things, how is our music integrated with our politics; what kind of music do we choose to play and why; where do we choose to play; how do we work together. Maybe that's a good place to start, how do we write our music?

Rachel: The Animal Slaves write collectively. We just go down there, and we start playing. There are power struggles in every band, people like to get their egos out to the world and they like to express themselves through their music. It's really close to the bone, very personal. If you write with people you have to really trust them, whether they're girls or boys.

Filis: We write quasi-collectively, but we all go over the lyrics and see if we agree on what we're saying. A lot of whatever is said reflects the views of everybody, not just the writer.

The lyrics I've written are usually something I feel quite strongly about, and it's the same, I think, for everybody else in the band. Things like housewives going insane, being brought up to be nice. About how all your life you're told--women don't do this, women don't do that. Also we have songs about people in prison, and the environment.

Isis: Rockin' Harry's lyrics are not particularly political...

Rachel: Not at all--"I wanna love you..."

Isis: Some of them are, but what we're doing is political beyond the songs themselves. Even realizing that we're all women up there, on stage playing the instruments. And we get really rocking at times. It surprises people, and it also inspires other women to start playing too.

Maura: I was thinking about that when Liquid Wrench played the anarchafeminist benefit house party. All the equipment was there, and women who normally don't have access to a drum set or electric instruments were jamming. That felt like a really good function of the band too. There's a lot of ways to be a resource to the community.

Rachel: The Animal Slaves don't play a lot of benefits. Our songs aren't overtly political but if you look at us we put out an extremely rebellious, weird vibe. And who knows...it's just something else in the world.

Maura: I think that the Animal Slaves are a political entity in terms of the lyrics. They're not the typical love songs that you hear on the radio, and musically it's quite a different style, it's challenging. It's important to do stuff that's outside the consumer trip in music because they can really control us if they can control what we listen to.

Rachel: I think our last gig was an adequate representation of what we're trying to do. (Rockin' Harry and IWB at Vancouver's Venue)--it was a great gig because it catalyzed people's approach to alternative culture. There were a lot of women, gay women really aware men, and people of colour together with a lot of different kinds of music and political perspectives. And it doesn't have to be a benefit necessarily but rather, just a place where people can go who feel that way. At least you have an alternative, you can see people doing something you like, and it's happening.

Filis: I think that when people come to alternative gigs, whether it's at a straight club or not, they come because they want to see what you're doing.

Rachel: And support you. And they are supporting you in a really concrete way because when that club gives you a guarantee or whatever, and you get your crowd out, they see there is some support for this kind of music and they'll be more likely to hire other weird bands in the future.

Maura: I have sung at rallies. I don't see as much use being made of musicians at those events. There could be either musicians, poets or theatre people there. I think that's another way for the political community to support artists and cultural workers. It would be a lot more interesting for everyone.

Rachel: For sure. Politics without culture is a big zero.

Maura: That's something that the Latin American workers have really got in their movement; a lot more feeling for music as an integral part of the struggle. I don't think that Chilean upheaval in the sixties would ever have happened without Violetta Para, Victor Jara and all those people who really catalyzed that political movement.

Filis: Vancouver is notorious for having totally boring demos. If they had some music it would probably pick things up.

Rachel: It's really going down the tubes, the whole demonstration thing.

Maura: Even at the recent South African demo there were no black people speaking and no black people making music.

Rachel: Were there any black people there?

Maura: There were, but not speaking, and the organizers didn't have enough music. What there was was very white sounding...folky.

Isis: For a long time I've been meaning to get together a little press kit with information from local musicians, and give it to all these progressive groups, saying we're available, give us a call, we like to do things like this. Because they don't think of us a lot of times. Or if they do they think, "It will be so much work."

Maura: It's like the musicians are an afterthought--"We'll have to have a song to open"--but they're not thinking that what the musicians would *choose* to do at an event would very often be as powerful a statement on the politics of that particular situation as anything in any of the speeches. Maybe we could look at the way we choose the forms of music that we do. Like why we do rock or blues or folk or whatever.

It's not nice, we don't play nice music. It moves my guts. I get a feeling inside from it.

photo by John Knowles

Industrial Waste Banned in an earlier incarnation

Filis: I never played anything before I played bass. I liked the bass, and I wanted to play the bass, so I got a bass. I listened to all kinds of music, but I worked out my own bass lines. I don't like commercial pop music, and the stuff on the radio.

Maura: Do you like the so-called "women's music"?

Filis: To tell you the truth, I really hate it.

Rachel: It's lame.

Filis: It's whining...

Rachel: ...it's incestuous.

Filis: It's cultural masturbation. It's not challenging in any sense of the word.

Isis: If "women's music" is, and I won't argue with you, "whining, incestuous, and not challenging", what's coming out in your music that differentiates it?

Filis: It's not nice, we don't play nice music. It moves my guts. I get a feeling inside from it. I'm not saying that our music is totally great. I can't dance to our stuff either. But to me, it feels like something.

Rachel: Your music is challenging. You really have to put energy into it to get anything out of it. It's not mellow, soothing music that you can nod out to or read a book to.

Musical politics continued next page

Resisting the Musical Rip-Off

by Maura Volante

It is very difficult for me to see...that a non-singing people can ever be free.

Bernice Johnson Reagon

Movements for change have always had their music. In pre-electric times and places, music has carried the news, has inspired people and has been used extensively in direct healing.

But the main function of music in a movement or a community is the making of music, rather than the listening to it. It is as natural to sing and play instruments as it is to eat and breathe. It is a way to express thoughts and feelings, together, and is one of the most powerful unifying activities for groups, large and small.

The bosses have attempted many times in many ways to destroy peoples' musical traditions. On the plantations of the Americas, for instance, instruments were taken from the African slaves, along with most of their time and energy. But the people kept on singing, and made instruments out of cast-offs, keeping African music alive.

Black people were still singing when the black liberation movement grew in the sixties, showing the progressive white movements how important it is to include musical participation in political events.

Women don't have an identity as a group with a unifying musical tradition, as the blacks have had in the Americas. Women have been there in every musical tradition, to a greater and lesser extent, and so we work in a variety of musical forms. (Women are socialized into the softer forms such as folk, country, pop and classical, but have also persisted in the rock and jazz worlds). There is a particular difference in the energy of women's compositions, surfacing in all forms, but there is no such thing as an all-encompassing women's music.

This diversity and isolation within different musical worlds has made women particularly vulnerable to the more sophisticated methods of muting that have emerged with recording and broadcasting technology. Radio, television, records and tapes now dominate the space so much that there's no need to take away our instruments.

Of course, what is used against us can be an important tool to use for ourselves, and I appreciate the technology that allows me to hear music from the other side of the world, or to listen to a tape of a band rehearsal at home and work on my parts. Listening to recorded music from the other side of the world, or to listen to a tape of a band rehearsal at home and work on my parts. Listening to recorded music is broadening for my own music and gives me a band to dance to whenever I want.

photo by Nadine Davenport

Leah Edgington and Joanne Maynard

However, the consequence of increased dependence on recorded music is the atrophy of the musical aspects of ourselves and of our music.

Children grow up now with a very different relationship to music than they did a hundred years ago. At that time, music was made in homes, churches, sometimes in concerts; mostly a neighbourhood and family activity. It wasn't on 24 hours a day. It was a gift each time, and different every time. A child would hear her mother and other people in the home singing briskly on a winter morning, languidly on a hot summer day, and sleepily at a 4 am feeding.

Now, a song is heard as a frozen moment in time, or several moments frozen together, through multi-track recording. Only the best moment is chosen, and it's electronically modified to sound more slick, more full, more balanced, than any one moment in time could ever be.

That is what children are growing up with as their main, sometimes their only, source of musical modelling. From home to daycare to school, more and more recorded music is being used as a background sound with no relation to the child's own voice and hands.

Very small children will still make music spontaneously. They haven't yet received the message about who can and who can't make music. Often the first silencing agent is a well-meaning parent asking a child who is singing a semi-conscious improvisation as she plays, "Oh, what song are you singing dear?" to which the child has no answer, because she doesn't know how to label it. She learns from this interaction that she's supposed to sing *songs* and that songs sound a particular way.

In school, children are taught, painstakingly, to sing cute children's songs. These are written, not for the comfort of young voices, but for the entertainment of adults, for whom they will bravely sing these dreadful things at a school concert. Far from developing children's ability to sing or maybe even create music, this kind of program weeds out the ones who will then be labelled non-musical, and pushes those who can keep up into a strictly defined musical form which is often alien to everything else in children's lives. What a choice! To drop out (or be asked to mouth the words) or to continue in a musical moulding derived mainly from white elite traditions. It's no wonder the majority of people I speak with about singing tell me flat-out that they can't sing.

Just as we are learning to accept and welcome the diversity in our bodies, we must learn to welcome each other's voices what we can do with instruments.

There are parallels to this specialization in other areas, too, such as athletics. Those who are good at it are pushed into a competitve funnel, while those who aren't good are weeded out, to let their muscles atrophy from lack of use until it is indeed true that they can't run or throw a ball.

In visual art as well, the good ones are allowed to get better, within a framework of what's considered good, while others "realize" that they aren't artistic and let the visually creative parts of themselves atrophy.

Obviously, each of us has special gifts for particular creative forms, putting more energy into the development of certain skills than others. And those who excel in a form can be examples of how that form can be used.

But the impossible modelling of a singer who has come through the competitive funnel, electronically modified and commercially manipulated, does not serve to encourage the musical sides of most people. What is essential to that encouragement is the music of friends and family, playing and singing, showing each other that it's fun even if it doesn't sound like the record.

The Shona people of Southern Africa say, "If you can talk you can sing. If you can walk you can dance."

What it takes is being open to the sounds of each other's music. Just as we are learning to accept and welcome the diversity in our bodies, we must learn to welcome each other's voices and what we can do with instruments. It may sound disturbing for awhile, but it's still fun to do it and it can't help but sound better if you keep doing it.

Many of us who want to be strong and resist are engaged in acts of resistance every day. Much of this activist work is tiring and emotionally draining. It is in these tired spaces that we are vulnerable to the lure of television, escape novels or bland commercial music. We need to engage in emotionally nourishing activities when we are verging on burn-out. Sometimes it seems like too much trouble to actually *do* something, but the wonder of doing creative work, such as making music, is that it is emotionally nourishing as well as being, in itself, a further act of resistance to the mainstream culture business.

It is an act of resistance to make music with children, enjoying with them the creation of songs of the moment.

It is an act of resistance to sing on city streets. It is an act of resistance to make music in the home, in the workplace, in the world.

Folk Festival

Women's line-up promises diversity

by Maura Volante

"Something for everyfolk" is the catch phrase this year for the ninth annual Vancouver Folk Music Festival, with a line-up that promises the kind of diversity we have come to expect from this three-day festival of music and theatre, held at Jericho Park, July 18, 19 and 20.

This diversity is reflected in the women's representation as well. Women are coming from many areas of North America and from England.

More jazz is happening this year, and Swingshift brings together a jazz feel with political lyrics and strong vocals. In addition to their usual combination of drums, bass, piano, flute, sax and vocals, the five women do an a capella set to fully showcase the vocals and to be adaptable to all settings, including rainy demonstrations.

Swingshift has been on the progressive community scene in the San Francisco area for five years, showing how polished you can get, even when you do other work and play a lot of beneifts.

Joolz is another example of the broadening of the scope of the folk festival. A poet of the rock culture of northern England, Joolz writes with a sometimes acid tongue, expressing the feelings of a variety of characters.

Denise
Then at 17 they told her Sorry, there's no work
No mills, no shops, no chance to earn
the cash she'd dreamed of
Just another scrapheap schooleaver
Sign here and join the growing queue
She sulked around the Youth Club
Laughing at the social workers
who told her how to make every penny last
Told her that she'd get satisfaction
From surviving and not spending...

Presenting herself in a theatrical way, with attention to costume and style, she's a performance poet, one of a growing number who are taking poetry out of the bookstores and into the clubs.

Last year there were only a few black women, and it seems that this year as well, the numbers are low, but certainly their presence will be felt.

Swingshift

Queen Ida is a singer, accordionist and leader of the Bon Temps Zydeco Band. Zydeco music is a rich Louisiana blend of French, English and African influences, that is guaranteed to get you up and dancing.

And what can I say about Sweet Honey in The Rock? That I was mesmerized by this a capella singing group in 1975, and fall into their spell every time I hear them. These women have brought black American women's voices to more white audiences than any other I know, drawing thousands of us into a deeper consciousness--of black experience, of our responsibilities to work against racism, and to the magic of music as a tool of resistance.

Obviously there are more women coming to the festival than I can talk about here. Lucie Blue Tremblay out of Quebec, Christine Lavin from New York, the Kentucky Warblers, Marcia Taylor, etc. I will try to find out who all these folks are at the festival and tell you about them afterwards.

But I do want to mention two women who are part of the Vancouver Folk Song Society. Lyn McGown sings with and without Michael Pratt at rallies and coffeehouses around town, and Hilda Thomas has continued to sing and play with Phil Thomas through an intense schedule of teaching commitments and political activity. It is good to see the folkloric work of the VFSS recognized this year, and it's good to see some local women on the program.

Musical politics continued from previous page

Isis: I always wanted to play loud and play electric. It took me a long time because I didn't know anyone else who was into it... and I didn't have an amplifier to plug my guitar into. There is a whole element of subversion and rebellion in electric music, in the roots of rock.

Maura: The "women's music" industry does not represent the whole picture of what women with a political consciousness are doing, musically. Using the term "women's music" to describe one segment of a diverse scene is an insult to all the women doing other kinds of music.

Isis: And all the women who listen to other music. You really notice it with a lot of the young women, they're just not into it. It seems to be a phenomenon of the women who came through the sixties and early seventies, when there wasn't anything, and it was really significant to have women run record labels--that was the first. These women were speaking to a culture. But now feminism is so much broader, and there's so many things that they don't speak to a whole lot of us. And like you were saying, it never was the music of all women. But what about our music--has it changed anything?

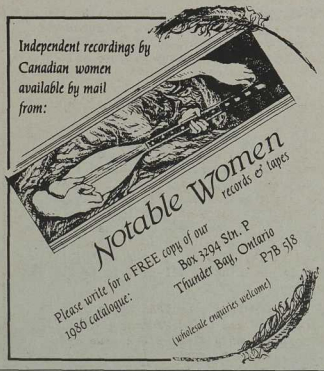
Rachel: It's changed my life quite a bit.

Isis: That's a great answer, in seven words or less.

Filis: I think that's the only answer.

Maura: I don't think that's quite true. Your music has changed my life as well, and that's probably true for us all.

Rachel: I've played for a lot of people over the years and I've got some good response from some and been ignored by others, so who knows? I've raised a lot of money for this and that, but who cares; I've put a lot of money back into the economy too. In fact, the Animal Slaves are thinking of doing an ad for PetroCan--Animal Slaves circle the globe in their pick up truck, we're keeping the Canadian economy afloat singlehandedly.



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Vancouver Folk Song Society

A stage for professionals or first-timers

by Nola Johnston

"And we won't be free until the humble women speak, No, we won't be free until the humble women speak, No, I won't let the world turn my head around..."

I am standing in front of a microphone at the International Women's day concert, singing a song made by For the Moment, an a cappella group of black women from Halifax. Beside me stand Lynn McGown, the Euphonious Feminists and Aya, belting out the refrain in multiple harmonies. Earlier we sang at the IWD rally, standing on the Art Gallery steps amidst a multitude of banners. Women are singing along, when I think: hey, these people are listening! And I think: How on earth did I get here?

Ten years ago and more I had a guitar and used to lock myself away in my room and sing to my walls. I even used to write the occasional (very bad) song. It was great therapy, but I didn't accomplish very much. Then through circuitous channels I heard about an organization of people who sang traditional folk music. I diffidently wandered into a get-together one night--and I was hooked. Here were people who sang wonderful chorus songs, who didn't worry if a voice wasn't of the highest quality--what closet singer could resist?

Since its inception in 1959 the Vancouver Folk Song Society (VFSS) has run a weekly coffeehouse, produced a national folk music magazine, and presented concerts, workshops, and much more. But at the heart of the Society is the Folk Song Circle, also known as the "folk", which I wandered into many years ago.

On the first and third Wednesday of every month members and friends come to play, to sing, and to listen to others. The open stage format provides an opportunity for musicians and singers of all skill levels to perform three pieces before a friendly and supportive audience.

Ten years later, I am still there. Why am I still going? And what has all this to do with women's music and International Women's Day? Indirectly, quite a lot.

There is a lot more to the VFSS than those great choruses. Some of it is expressed, some is not, most has, at times, been the subject of disagreement. The direction and emphasis of the Society depends on who is involved in it at any given time. It is in fact a kind of community.

Like any organization it has at times suffered from the strains of irreconcilable differences of opinion between members. People come and go, argue and struggle, but the structure remains, and the central belief in the importance of the music, despite differences regarding philosophy and direction, remains.

The VFSS is not an organization of professional musicians, though of course, some are included in its membership. At a Song Circle you are as likely to hear a terrified first-time performer as a polished professional.

Beside me stand Lynn McGown, the Euphonious Feminists and Aya, belting out the refrain in multiple harmonies,

This is not accidental.

The intention of the Folk is to encourage participation at all levels and interaction with an audience to remove, as much as is possible, the split between performer and audience. There is an underlying conviction that it is the music that is important and that while it is best to do it well, it is more essential to get people to do it, period. For this reason less accomplished performers are supportively received; it is recognized that space must be provided for people to learn and improve.

For me, the logical extension of this was a politicization of my view of music. I began to see that music is not something that simply fills a vacant bit of brain. Nor is it a pure art form existing in a void apart from the rest of reality. It is the sound of celebration, of remembering who and what you are, and where you came from. Of remembering joys and sorrows shared with the rest of the world.

Folk music in particular is a history of past, present, and future; it is the sound of context. This is true whether it makes direct political statements or is simply a reflection of people's lives, whether it is traditional or contemporary. Folk music is a useful tool for teaching people about themselves.

I have found it helpful, in working out my own feminism, to have folk songs adding a historical and social context. Much of the history of women has been lost or suppressed, especially that of "common" women; traditional folk music helps to preserve some of what has gone before, contemporary women's music puts it in context. All of it helps us to understand, renew and empower ourselves.

In the ten years that I have been a member of the VFSS, I have seen a large number of women come and go. Some have remained, others have moved on to other musical forms. Women in the Folk have been nurtured as musicians, some becoming polished performers, others simply losing the fear of presenting themselves in public. We have been conditioned against standing up for so long that it is never easy; but the VFSS has helped.

Many women, like myself, have received their first exposure to women's music here, sharing with other women, educating the men, and growing in strength. It has been an education and politicization not only in terms of music but of life.

You will have heard some of the songs we sing, and you will have seen women from the VFSS singing them. Most recently you have probably seen musical and political involvement from Lorraine Helgerson, Lynn McGown, Rika Ruebsaat, and Hilda Thomas, but there are many more of us.

We have sung at True Confessions, at IWD, at concerts and benefits and on street corners. We sing a lot of different kinds of material, but all with a sense of history and place.

I still get nervous when I stand up to sing in public, but less so. I know that I've learned a lot. I've learned that what counts is telling people a story about their own lives, or those of their sisters and brothers. I've learned that it is important to present it well, to make it interesting and accessible, but that the quality of my voice matters less than the content of the song. And I've learned that the most important thing is that we stand up and speak, or sing. I learned this at the Folk. I think we all did; it is why we are here.

The Folk Circle of the VFSS meets at 8 pm on the first and third Wednesday of every month at the ANZA Club, 8th Avenue and Ontario. Free. No minors allowed. For information call Leila or Dan at 879-8972.

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Von Trotta

My life, my obsession, my passion is filming

by Janet Duckworth

The methods of art are not the methods of marxism. It is the duty of the artist to speak the truth as s/he sees it. It can be tested later.

Leon Trotsky as quoted in the film *Zina*.

German feminist filmmaker Margarethe Von Trotta was in Vancouver recently for the screening of her latest film, *The Patience of Rosa L.*, a portrait of Polish Jewish revolutionary Rosa Luxembourg. She spoke with Janet Duckworth about *Rosa*, her earlier films and her thoughts on film making.

Kinesis: I'd like to ask you first about the quote in the Vancouver Sun, where Mark Andrews reports you as saying that you are not a radical feminist, do you consider yourself a feminist or don't you?

Von Trotta: Of course I do. I always have. It's just these journalists, you know, they must have simple statements for readers. They like to be able to define you.

Because to define is in someways to control?

Von Trotta: Yes, absolutely.

Who do you make your films for, do you have an audience in mind?

Von Trotta: No. That would be a sort of programmatic idea. I just make films because I love to make films and it's my life, my obsession, my passion. So I think that what I am living out, what I am experimenting with, and also my friends, I have many friends especially women friends, and so I think that what I am living out and what I can show people in films might be interesting for other people too. But it's not that I say I must make films only for women, or for a certain group of mankind (sic) it's my expression of my feelings. It's like other people write and do work in other ways. For me, my work is filming.

So would you say that to some extent the female characters in your films represent aspects of yourself?

Von Trotta: Yes, absolutely. That is why I must have two women characters, at least.

In Canada your films are very popular with lesbian feminists. Do you think that people take from your films what they want to take from them? Do you think that this is in the nature of a film anyway?

Von Trotta: Yes. I think that is good. Alexander Kluge, one of our first new German directors, a very intelligent man who writes a lot about theories too, film theory, always says that a film is finished in the head of the people, because in every head it's another thing, perhaps other ideas. Everybody looks in different ways and everybody gets or tries to get from the film what is in his mind. So I agree with that.

I'm thinking of Sheer Madness. *In that film the women were very strong, particularly Olga, the character that Hanna Schygulla played. The men were not. They were very weak, which I think appealed to many women, though not all. Do you see this weakness and strength as something that's happening universally with men and women or just in a particular setting?*

Von Trotta: I don't think that the men were weak. The men were insecure, because this sort of friendship between women (in *Sheer Madness*) is a very new phenomenon. Men's friendship was always accepted, it's even in the Greek myths and there have been myths of men's friendship all over the years and all over the centuries. Friendship in war, friendship in adventures, in fighting, and in colonising the world, there was always this great friendship.

Women's friendship was only accepted when they were coming together to talk about education of children, about the house and all these personal things. Now, since women are becoming more independent in their professions also, they have to talk about other things too. So friendship between women changed and it became more a little bit like men's friendship before.

So men are not used to this new sort of friendship and they become helpless. It's not weakness, it's helplessness. They fear that they lose something, they lose a possession of theirs. Love for many men means possession, means to possess the woman. Therefore, this man, the husband in *Sheer Madness*, he doesn't know anymore how to treat this, therefore he becomes afraid and fear leads often to agression, and so he becomes agressive, but it's not because he is a brutal character, it's just that he is helpless in front of this new phenomenon.

So with women becoming stronger both in the professional world and with them developing new friendships with each other, this means men have to redefine themselves both in relationship to women and in relationship to each other. Their old position is lost, they have to make a redefinition which is in itself scary.

Von Trotta: Absolutely, absolutely. But since they are still so *enracines* in their own tradition and in their old power games and competiveness and all that, it's...I think it's a lot of pain for them to redefine and reflect on all this.

It's like in The Patience of Rosa L. *when at one point Rosa says: "Although the bourgeoisis is stricken to the core, it will fight to the death for its position." In some ways that is a parallel with men.*

Von Trotta: I think so, yes, absolutely.

So rather than being anything inherently brutal they are simply fighting to try and maintain a position that is going.

Von Trotta: Yes, yes. And still we are living on power ideas. All the patriarchy since it has existed is based on power, on power over others, on hierarchies. So this is the point for men to learn really, I think, that this patriarchal period has to be over because we now know where it led us. Because all this nuclear war is now possible. It is leading us to total destruction, and if we are not now, if *they* are not willing to redefine and change, the world will be destroyed and we will all go bang.

In some senses The Patience of Rosa L. *is very different from* Sheer Madness *and your earlier films because in some ways Rosa's very important relationships are with men and it was interesting that when Clara Zetkin raised the question of female suffrage, Rosa said, "That's beside the point." Did you discover in reading her letters and while doing your research why she didn't seem to show an interest in so-called "women's issues"?*

It is leading us to total destruction and if the patriarchy is not willing to redefine and change, the world will be destroyed and we will all go bang.

Von Trotta: Oh, she did. That comment was only because at this lunch when they spoke about women's stuff...It's in general politicians are willing to give positions to women but only positions they are not interested in. So when you see in the normal governments the ministry of family or education and so on, that they give away to women because they are not interested in it. They think it is not important. It is important, family is important, but not for them.

And that's the point Rosa refuses herself. She said no. I want to share the important things, not only the things that are not important for you. But she was not anti-feminist or anti-women's movement. One of her best friends was Clara Zetkin, who was at that time the leader of the women's movement in the Social Democratic party.

Clara Zetkin edited a newspaper called *Gleicheit* (Equality). That was a magazine for women. Rosa wrote a lot for this magazine too. So it was just a point between Rosa and the leader of the Social Democratic party at that very moment.

I first read Rosa Luxembourg when I was at university, I went to the London School of Economics, and with Trotsky, Lenin and Victor Serge she was one of the cannon. When we read her we considered ourselves to be revolutionaries. When you first read her and learned of her when you were a student, did you consider yourself to be a revolutionary?

Von Trotta: I still think I am a revolutionary, in some ways. I made a film explicitly about terrorism, *Marianne and Julianne.*

Your films have sometimes been criticised because the milieu they deal with is a very bourgeois milieu. In Sheer Madness *in particular and in* Marianne and Julianne *almost everyone is a middle class intellectual. How would you respond to that kind of criticism?*

Von Trotta: I don't pretend that I am universal or that I want to be understood by everyone. But I can speak only of things I know. And this middle-class I know. I would find it pretentious to speak about a class I don't know and I am not living in. Because my view in my films comes out very often from the inner side of the characters, so I have to deal with people I know. At first it's a description of a class which is just very defined and reduced but the feelings and the people I describe, I think you can transpose it to other classes too.

Except that women like the one Hanna Schygulla played and the one Angela Winkler played (in Sheer Madness*) have a lot more leisure to deal with their feelings because of the economic situation they're in. A woman who gets up early, works all day and then has to cook and clean and feed her children doesn't have the freedom to examine her relationships and her feelings in the same way.*

Von Trotta: Yes. But the feelings are there. Perhaps they have no possibility to reflect on them but watching a film like that, perhaps they can find the same feelings in themselves.

In a country like Canada a working class woman probably wouldn't go and see your films. Would they in Germany?

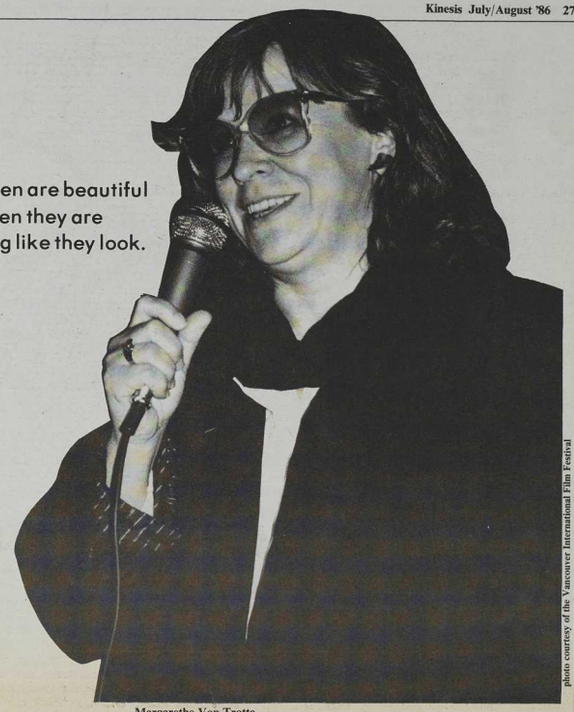
Von Trotta: On television. Not in the cinema. They rarely go to cinemas. But every film of ours is shown two years later, after exposure in cinemas, on television.

Do you ever get a response from these people, when your films are shown on television?

Von Trotta: Oh yes. People write to me a lot, especially women.

Now, I would like to ask a couple of theoretical questions. You are a filmmaker so you engage in practice, I mean you make films. Do you also read a lot of theory and does it ever influence what you do? Or is it afterwards you read theory and say, "Oh, that's what I am doing or that's what I did"?

Von Trotta: I used to read theories before I did films on my own. Then I read a lot but now I find it rather boring to read all that because it disturbs my intuition, and I'd rather have confidence in what's coming out of me just like an unconscious flow. I have confidence in that rather than in theories. Let them do the theories and do the interpretation after. You can't be your own artist and your own interpreter, not too much.



Women are beautiful when they are looking like they look.

photo courtesy of the Vancouver International Film Festival

Margarethe Von Trotta

I was thinking particularly of a theory that is quite current; that in cinema you have an active male gaze and a passive female object; that the way women are constructed on the screen is as objects and as the locus of male desire; that therefore this leaves women watching a film with nowhere to be. Yet in your films women are the protaganists, they are the important ones. Do you think in some ways in your films you break down this relationship, that you give the female spectator a place to be?

Von Trotta: Absolutely. And I felt it because in all the letters I get from women they are very identifying and therefore they love my films. Mainly women, because they identify, they have finally some figures to identify with and not be used as objects.

Some theories talk a lot about visual pleasure and the locus of desire. So do you think that it is possible in films for women to get this visual pleasure? Also, is it possible to articulate female desire on the screen?

Von Trotta: I don't know. You must know that if you interpret my films. You must ask others not me.

What I meant was I get what I think is visual pleasure from films made by men, because they are very beautiful to look at, for example The Round Up *by Miklos Jancso, visually it's very beautiful, particularly the scenes on the Hungarian plain. So I get a little confused when I read about visual pleasure, I know it's used in a very specific way, and I asked this question because I hoped you might clarify it for me.*

Von Trotta: Yes. Generally women in films of male film makers are much more beautiful, much more sterile perhaps also because they have to be the image of the desire of men. But for me women are beautiful when they are looking like they look. I have not the desire to change them to please me or to cause me an erotic feeling or so. So for me it's the inner side which is beautiful and so I try to catch this.

I am often asked the difference between men's aesthetic and women's aesthetic in film and then I answer that we are all, even all the women, educated by men's film. Because there were no films before, when we started there were not so many films made by women. So I started with Bergman, with Antonioni, with Pasolini. All these were my professors or my masters looking at their films. But the main difference I think is that we are choosing women for our characters. They are really women out of life and we don't try to make the make-up so pretty and we just portray them like we know them from our friendships and from our lives.

The Dutch film maker Marleen Garris, in her first film, A Question of Silence *and her second film,* Broken Mirrors *chooses, in a sense, to reverse the roles. So you get a very negative view of men and instead of relocating the position of women on the screen, she inverts it. For this reason her films are very unsatisfactory, the characters are very flat and almost boring. Is this something you try to avoid in your films, this simple reversal of polarities attempting instead to show a whole complex person of whatever sex?*

Von Trotta: Yes, absolutely. But I am always attacked that my men are much more one dimensional than the women are in my films. And that's true perhaps because I know women from both sides, from outside and from within. And for men, I don't. I am not able to feel myself as a man so perhaps that's why I show them only how they look to me from the exterior, less complex perhaps than my women.

Haunted Hamlet

On August 1 a very unusual performance of *Hamlet* opens at the Tamahnous House, and for a feminist audience this production provides a refreshing approach to one of the classics of the English speaking theatre. Directed by Kathleen Weiss, the artistic director at Tamahnous, and adapted by playwright, Peter Eliot Weiss, this production explores the oppression of paternalism and examines some of the choices that women make in a society structured by men, and why they make them.

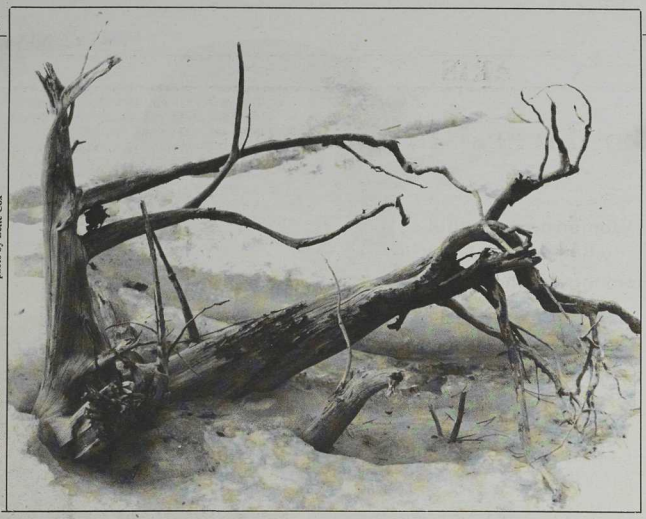
In this adaptation the character of Polonius (the senior state servant to the court of Denmark) is played by a woman. Polonius reveals the dilemma of a woman who strives for power in a man's world. In order to complete in this masculine environment she sacrifices her feminine aspect. This is a tragic choice that will ultimately destroy her and her family.

Gertrude, Hamlet's mother and the queen, also strives for political power. But bowing to the dictates of a masculine world she tries to rule through a man--Claudius, her new husband--rather than take power herself and function independently of the status quo.

The character of Ophelia reveals both the destructiveness of choosing a traditional woman's role and the paucity of alternatives available to women in a paternally structured society.

Director Weiss has long been associated with alternate theatre in Vancouver and her concept for this performance of *Hamlet* is entirely non-linear and encourages an active role for the audience. The show will take place on three levels of the Tamahnous House, where three different stories will develop simultaneously. The audience may move at will, watching whichever scenes they wish. Thus it would be possible to attend every show twice!

Tamahnous' The Haunted House Hamlet opens August 1 at 1885 Venables St., Vancouver. For box office and more information call 254-1911.



'Alone'–1982 photo by Bette Cox

Bette Cox

Revealing photos

The title piece of this exhibit of photographs by Bette Cox, on till July 5/86 at the West End Community Centre, shows a broken, boarded-up window in a crumbling brick wall. "It's what's *behind* the window that I'm showing you," says Bett. "Like looking benind the wall of someone's personality."

Bett's pictures do have a sense of secrets revealed. In one photo, the massive root structure of two tree trunks is exposed, but unnaturally exposed, as if the photographer had x-ray vision.

Other works are haunting. One untitled photo of a vacant chair against the wall of a burnt-out gas station--"so low-contrast it's almost colour," says Bett--has a real ghostly, dreamy feel, as if the chair were still occupied...

What attracts Bett to old abandoned or discarded objects? "I wonder, how did it get there? *Why* is it there? There's a story behind every photo."

Bett is also drawn to the abstracts of nature forms and the beauty of wild creatures. One photo of a wood duck has startling charity; another shows the soft grey of a twisted branch on softer white snow.

Bett has been taking pictures for the past ten years. She lists as favorite photographers Annie Liebowitz, David Hamilton and her father (a photographer in Victoria). Although basically self-taught, Bett is currently enrolled in courses through the New York Institute of Photography, and she hopes to pursue a career in the field.

All the photographs on display are for sale. If you're interested, please phone 875-9021 or 438-8398.

Wonderfully ambitious play

The Lost and Found by Nora D. Randall. Directed by Susan Astley and Suzie Payne. Starring Judith Berlin, Celeste Insell, Margo Kane, Angela Siu, Yamanouchi, Etsuko. Presented by Women's Voices: A Vancouver Mosaic.

"Have you lost something?" asks Lily, who staffs the city's lost and found department, of Mrs. Johnson, a nineteenth century ghost. "Only my name," she replies, delighted that Lily can see her.

So begins *The Lost and Found*, a play about the silencing of women's voices, the difficulty in being heard, the risk of speaking out, the separation from one's past and one's spirituality, the isolation silence breeds and the silence that is produced by isolation.

The Lost and Found represents the diversity of our women's community--the support, bickering, nurturing, frustration, loving, the resolution of differences, the respect for each other--as we attempt to avoid and overcome the traps of isolation.

Each of the six actors plays two roles, a ghost or spirit and a living woman. The twelve characters include: two Japanese, two Chinese, two Native, two Caucasian; one lesbian, one physically disabled, one "emotionally disturbed", four first generation immigrants, one of whom is American, four mothers, three project workers on a grant, one cleaning woman, one printer/singer, one office worker, one journalist, one woman who tackles issues alone, three who work collectively, one who does not speak English, one who does not read Chinese, and one who has been a translator.

I'm extremely partial to ghosts of our past trying to get in touch with us, to spirits trying to be recognized, to women of all ages (double entendre intended) occupying the stage together, and I found the play ambitious, uplifting and charming. Charm: an action, process or thing (word, phrase or verse) supposed to have magic or occult power. Some of the lines are excellent, as in the difference between a ghost and a spirit: "you don't have to be dead to be invisible."

At intermission I was surprised, and then, upon reflection, not surprised, to hear a youngish, short-haired, well dressed man say to another man "I'm not particularly interested in the subject." Immediately after, an old woman with bright eyes and a cane needed to tell me--in answer to how she liked the play--about her four children, one of whom died, she had a baby chair like that on the stage and a washboard and buggy and her life wasn't easy in 1922....

Cultural and racial heritage is the theme most developed in the second act of *The Lost and Found*, precipitated by the lost women's discovery of Surjit's spirit in the storeroom. (Both Surjit and her mother, Jaswinder, are excellently portrayed by Veena Sood.)

Surjit, the teenager, represents future and vision. All women unite around this crisis. Lily risks being thought "crazy" by telling the others that there are lost women as well as lost objects in the storeroom.

Six monologues follow, addressed to the living women/audience. After the frequently fast-paced and witty interaction between ghosts and living in the first act, two of the monologues sounded like textbooks--that of the Native woman, Bell Nah Naak (regally protrayed by Margo Kane), and Muriel Kitagawa's account of the Japanese-Canadian's internment.

I wanted to know what effect becoming a translator and marrying the Hudson's Bay Factor had on Bell Nah Naak's personal life more than I wanted to hear about alcohol, guns and disease. Her line of message, "you are valuable in your community", while textually splendid, was polemic overdrive. I also wanted to know more about Muriel's desperation in not being attended to when she wrote against racism than I wanted a description of how everyone was silenced by the internment.

However, Mrs. Johnson's courage in testifying before the 1896 Commission on Lunacy moved me very much. So did Rosa's bravery in opening a restaurant with only enough money for two chickens. These are specifics from women's lives, and it is through specific detail that one touches the viewers' emotions and avoids polemic.

Again, the most poignant part of Chu Moi Lan's account is her knitting cowichan sweaters for four dollars and discovering the store sells them for fifty. Though I wondered what Bell Nah Naak thinks of immigrant women knitting "native" sweaters and whether Randall had missed a moment for dramatic interaction.

I felt the cultural counterpoint most strongly in the conflict between Jaswinder and her daughter, and unassertive Jaswinder manifests the growth for all characters when she tells her boss she's taking the afternoon off: "tough beans to you!" Lily, who is about to lose the job she has had for eight years through the unwitting actions of the project women, acts as a metonym for the way in which women are divided against each other.

The Lost and Found is wonderfully ambitious in its attempt to pull the past into the present and --if not map the future, at least place a stone for the next step. To fault an effort because it is too ambitious is to fault our feminist vision. The play suffers from the roughness and rawness of too little time. It needs work to cut out the didacticism--all speeches are too long and polemical--and to push dramatic moments to their potential.

The Lost and Found is a poignant, empowering, and fun statement about us, the women of Vancouver in 1986. As such, it is a statement about all women. It ends on the note of reclamation and acceptance of all our lost women and our lost selves; a revisioning of the past in the present which is necessary to envision the future. To let *The Lost and Found* be silenced after only ten performances is to have it become its own message: we lose much of what is good.

Frances (Sandy) Duncan is a Vancouver writer. Among her books are The Toothpaste Genie *and* Dragonhunt. *She will be leading the prose section at WESTWORD 2 this summer.*

ARTS

Essays intriguing and irresistable

by Terri L. Jewell

Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers by Barbara Christian. Elmsford, New York: Pergamon Press, Inc., 1985. 261 pages. $29.95 hardcover, $13.50 softcover.

This collection of essays, written by Barbara Christian, Associate Professor in the Afro-American Studies Department at the University of California, Berkeley, is an acutely intelligent and irresistible resource for both the literary scholar and the lesiurely reader interested or curious about the published works of black women. May I quickly add this book is not a dry lesson on literary elements but stands as an intriguing examination of the historical and contemporary traditions of black woman as writer/storyteller/artist, mother/sister/daughter/lover/worker.

In her first essay, *Black Women in Afro-American Literature,* Christian discusses the early emergence of published novels in which the "tragic mulatto" prevailed to please the white and publishing audience. Other stereotypes--the mammy, the voodoo root woman, Sapphire--were widespread and indicated the black woman's *place* outside white and moral lady-hood. Christian provides a general overview of the strong cultural and folk influences in black women's writing and articulates her thoughts on how feminist issues of race, sex and class are approached in the

photo by C. Van Vechten

Zora Neale Hurston

literature of Zora Neale Hurston, Ann Petry, Gwendolyn Brooks, Paule Marshall, Nikki Giovanni and Toni Morrison. In the essays that follow, Christian explores in deptn the power and honesty of Alice Walker's poetry and prose. In her writing on Walker, Christian introduces the concept of *agwu,* or personal spirit, that seeks truth despite societal customs and restrictions.

What happens when a black woman goes against convention, transgresses a deeply felt taboo, and says no directly and aloud?

Such a woman strikes at the heart of hierarchy, which is central to racism and sexism, two variants of the patriarchal view of life.

Indigenous to the black community is the idea of *contrariness* attributed to women who seek a route to rebellion, to resistence against a troubling norm. Other routes are insanity and murder which are examined in Walker's work and run within the thematic concerns of other black writers.

Some attention is given to the creative process of novelist Toni Morrison in three essays which probe her use of place, or community, in relation to her development of characters.

Like the ancestral African tradition, place is as important as the human actors, for the land is a participant in the maintenance of the folk tradition.

In "The Concept of Class", Morrison's four novels--*The Bluest Eye, Sula, Song of Solomon,* and *Tar Baby*--are put to task in exposing the oppression of America's standard of (white) beauty, definitions of *woman* and *lady,* and materialistic aspirations which systematically devalue black women and require total denial of self for acceptance.

The novels of Paule Marshall cross these same thematic lines. Her books are firmly rooted in her Caribbean background

What happens when a black woman says *no* directly and aloud?

and each one approaches the problem of nurturing a culture in America that is not Euro-centric, of preserving a community and a past and still reaping the fortunes of a country that detests you.

In a piece written in 1982, Christian confronts the historical development of a black and female poetic aesthetic in the face of the sad fact that:

Still, today, forms that are specifically Afro-American in nature, whether poetry, painting, or music, are continually threatened by the dominance of Euro-American aesthetic concepts.

And she addresses universality in literature that excludes the wide and rich influences of Afro-centric art and culture.

No More Buried Lives, Christian's exploration of the theme of lesbianism in Lorde's *Zami,* Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place,* Shange's *Sassafras, Cypress and Indigo* and Walker's *The Colour Purple* was disappointing due to her chosen approach to the analysis:

I think it is important that I make clear the definition of lesbianism that I am using in this exploration. By lesbian I do not mean women-identified women, feminists, or women who are loving and supportive of other women. I specifically mean women who find other women sexually attractive and gratifying.

She does acknowledge the limitations of this less than enlightening approach. Nevertheless, she does perform an honest examination of the mentioned works in the context of how lesbianism is viewed by the community on the outside looking in. And there are disturbing problems of racism, intolerance and class hierarchy within the lesbian community itself.

photo from *Ourwrite*

Alice Walker

There could have been more of an analysis of African women's literature in *Alternate Versions of the Gendered Past.* There is so little opportunity to taste the lives of Bessie Head, Flora Nwapa and Aimee Aatoo through their own words, to touch our own selves and realize the source of creative strength that is shared on our mother continent. Also, more selective editing would have eliminated some of the lengthy and *repetitious* references made to certain novels, although the nature of Christian's book, composed of kindred pieces over a ten-year period, makes the tendency somewhat unavoidable.

The irony in the title of this particular essay of Christian's rests in her omission of the contribution that black lesbians have made in black feminist theory, in the women's movement, in the voice of women's literature from the very beginning. Not only is the *theme* of lesbianism being examined and becoming more acceptable in today's literature, but black lesbians are writing about their own lives and in turn, the lives of all black women and, finally, of all women.

The intensity of Barbara Christian's body of essays matches that of creating and maintaining as a black woman artist in this country and exemplifies a level of craft and scholarly devotion that must be nourished and honored. This book is highly recommended.

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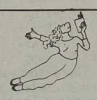

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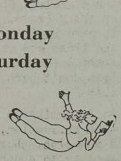

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Deitch on *Desert Hearts*

by Julie Warren

Julie Warren, Women in Focus' programming co-ordinator for the 5th Vancouver International Film Festival, interviewed Donna Deitch, director of Desert Hearts.

Desert Hearts *is based on Jane Rule's* Desert Of The Heart. *Set in the late 1950's, the novel tells the story of how two very different women meet and eventually become lovers. The story takes place in Reno, Nevada.*

Desert Hearts *was presented as part of the Women in Focus programme at the film festival.*

Kinesis: When did you first get bitten by the movie bug?

Deitch: I saw this film by Luis Bunel called *Los Olvidados*. I think it was the first film I saw which made me really take an interest in motion pictures.

What was it about this film which attracted you?

Deitch: I think it was the gutsy reality of the characters in the story... I had never seen a film like that before, it really did something to me... made me do a double-take.

How old were you at that time?

Deitch: I would have been in high school.

You were working for awhile as a camera-person on documentaries. What made you move away from your role as a crafts person and into directing?

Deitch: I was really directing first. I was making little independent films, avant-guarde and documentaries. But I was shooting them myself. So I was doing it all simultaneously--directing, shooting and cutting them all.

When you started making your documentaries, were you thinking of eventually moving into dramatic film?

Deitch: No. At the time I was doing them (documentaries), that's all I had on my mind.

What kind of documentaries were you making?

Deitch: I began in Berkeley when I was in college and I made some documentaries about the free speech movement, the people's park--political documentaries. And then the ones I did later--one was called *Woman to Woman*, a documentary about hookers, housewives and other mothers and another was called *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* about the painting of the longest mural in the world.

What was the focus of Woman to Woman?

Deitch: The first part was historical and it showed how women's work and roles have changed since the turn of the century, by decade, with the music of the time behind it. The balance was discussions between hookers, housewives and other mothers talking about their work and their lives.

I'm interested in your transition from documentary to dramatic film, they seem like very different skill areas...

Deitch: Well, I think that the goals of a documentary are really the same as a dramatic film. You really just want to get the character; you want the truth in the character. If somebody is playing themselves, you want to relax them in such a way that when you're filming what they do in their real life they can carry on in an uninhibited or natural way, in a way that you don't feel the camera is watching them. And with an actor who is going into a character, you want the truth in the character and you have to work with the actor to get to the same goal.

What attracted you to Jane Rule's novel, Desert of the Heart?

Deitch: I think that it was the central metaphor of the story, because I felt that it would translate well to the screen. The idea of the risk of gambling that was inherent in the main characters' relationship, set in the context of that gambling scene in Reno. I think that is what I found most appealing about the book. I also really liked the characters, the setting, and the area.

How did you manage to survive, emotionally and financially, that three year period it took you to raise the money to make Desert Hearts?

Deitch: Emotionally, it was my friends and people I was close to. Financially, I did manage to raise some money out of escrow (a locked-in bank account set up to facilitate any kind of financial deal) and I got some grant money that I used for expenses. Some investors did put their money up outside of escrow that I could use as capital and also I had savings; I had other businesses I was in...all sorts of other things, you know, just hustling.

How were you able to convince some of the more doubting potential investors since Desert Hearts *was not the usual mainstream script and it was your first feature film project?*

Deitch: Well, a variety of ways but I think what was more convincing than anything else was my obsession and my passion about it. I mean it's hard to state specific things that I did but it was my attitude, I think, more than anything else.

What was the hardest thing for you in doing Desert Hearts?

Deitch: The hardest time, aside from raising the money which was really the worst part of the whole thing, was my experiences with hiring and firing people. I had a very good cast and a very good crew. But there were some people that I did fire, when we started out. That was one of the hardest things to do, I think--firing people. When you have a project that is only six or twelve weeks in duration, you really have to make those decisions quickly and act on them.

They don't ask John Schlesinger if he will continue to make *men's films*.

Can you describe the key to your success with Desert Hearts?

Deitch: Well, I one time read this thing that Buñel said about if you really believe in something; if you have a real passion and obsession about something...chances are that there are other people who share the same feeling...it's sort of that finger on the pulse concept. In this case, I think that's what it was. I was driven to tell this story and I raised the money and I made the film and then it's out there being released and suddenly there's all these people, lines around the block, who want to see it.

The casting in Desert Hearts *is so strong--even the secondary or supporting characters are unforgettable. What do you look for when you are casting a part?*

Deitch: You imagine a character, as a director, and then you look for some of that energy or essence of that character in the actor's interpretation. The actor also has to be physically believable in the part. With Helen Shaver, it was important that there be a chemistry between her and Patricia Charbonneau (who played Cay Riivers).

Now that the movie is getting a lot of attention, do you find the media continually asking you if you're a feminist?

Dietch: No not really. What I am usually asked is would it have been easier for you to direct this picture if you had been a man? How can I know the answer to that--I'm not a man. Or they ask me if I will continue to make "women's films". You know, most directors are men. They don't ask John Schlesinger (*Midnight Cowboy; Day of the Locust*) if he will continue to make "men's pictures". It's like the oracle of the obvious. They have labeled or pigeon-holed you in some way. I make films--I happen to be a woman, so I make films from the perspective of a woman.

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ARTS

SPECULATIVE FICTION

by Melanie Conn

In the last few years, writers, reviewers and anthologists have been describing everything from old-fashioned ghost stories to encounters with aliens from other planets as "speculative fiction". While the lines between the various categories have always been somewhat blurred, the distinctions still have some meaning for me, especially when I'm choosing books to read or recommend.

The books I classify as *speculative fiction* are those whose central theme is the exploration of contemporary life (politics, economics, social behaviour) from the vantage point of the future, near or distant. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (written in 1948) is a classic example, as is Ursula Le Guin's latest work, *Always Coming Home*. And from the reviews, *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood sounds like speculative fiction.

The other categories that interest me are *science fiction* and *fantasy*. Though they, too, provide some commentary on modern life, the plot is the essential element. Science Fiction I define as futuristic, featuring travel through space as well as time. In science fiction earth is an important reference point, as a launching pad, or as a long-lost home. Fantasy adventures, on the other hand, occur in their own self-contained time and space, and rely heavily on magic and the supernatural.

While many books have elements of several categories, there's often more of an emphasis in one direction. The books for review this month are a perfect example of the problem of classification: all three are futuristic, relate to some contemporary issues, and have space travel as an important plot element. But, according to my "rules", *Darkchild* is fantasy because of the magical powers of the major characters, and the other two books are science fiction.

Admittedly, these distinctions are somewhat arbitrary! I'd be interested in other people's definitions. If readers write me, c/o *Kinesis*, we'll print some opinions in the September issue.

1. Darkchild, by Sydney J. Van Scyoc, Berkeley paperback, 1982, 249 pages $3.50

Darkchild is set in a matriarchal world where the inhabitants live in small communities under the leadership of wise-women--Barohnas--who have awesome elemental powers. They can absorb and radiate the sun's energy, animate stone to defend their way of life and communicate telepathically with the planet's animals. Barohnas also enjoy intense, symbiotic and lifelong relationships with each other.

Within this unusual culture, the book is really a psychological study about growing up and resolving internal conflicts. One of the main characters is Khira, a young woman in line to be Barohna after her mother steps down. As Khira sturggles in her adolescent rebellion against her destiny, Darkchild falls into her life, literally dropped from an alien spaceship, he has been programmed by his masters to be an instrument for information gathering. Only gradually, though, is the nature of his identity revealed.

What I liked best about this book was the slow and subtle unfolding of the characters as they approach self-knowledge. The process is assisted by Kadura, a wonderfully sensitive, retired Barohna who encourages Khira and Darkchild to accept the ambiguities in each other. The ultimate resolution of their identity conflicts has much in common with good therapy. I'm looking forward to reading *Bluesong*, the sequel.

2. The Exile Waiting, by Vonda McIntyre, TOR paperback, 1985 (revised), 248 pages, $3.50

You can count on Vonda McIntyre to write about women who are both believable and remarkable. In *The Exile Waiting*, (first published in 1975 and revised last year for this edition) Mischa is as tough as they come, fighting for her life and her dignity in Center, the last city of Earth. Although the city's dome protects the inhabitants from radiation and black dust storms, the people live underground in tiny niches carved out of earth and rock. A handful of families control the air, water, food and energy supplies as well as the launching pad to freedom. The theme of the book, not surprisingly, is liberation.

Micha's determination to escape off-world is repeatedly frustrated by formidable obstacles, from a mind-link with a demanding sibling to an apparently indestructable tracking device. But throughout her adventures, Mischa is always conscious of subtler forms of tyranny--a brother's addiction to drugs and despair, a friend's obsession with the past and above all, the mindset of the people of Center who "would never leave their caves, even for freedom. They were too frightened of the outside. They were accustomed to their fear of Center's rulers."

Mischa is also vulnerable to fear and loss, but like a good political worker, she challenges herself and all around her to dare to be free.

3. Daughters of a Coral Dawn, Katherine V. Forrest, The Naiad Press, 1984, 226 pages, $11.25.

If you like books about brilliant, beautiful and passionate women who create their own community on their own planet, you'll love *Daughters of a Coral Dawn*. It's a very entertaining story about *4,144* brilliant, beautiful and passionate women who engineer a clever escape from earth under the guidance of Mother, her nine amazing daughters and their chosen leader, Megan. The daughters, each named for a Greek goddess, are also specialists in essential areas: physics, astronautics, history, psychology and so on. But at the helm is Megan, a leader with such charisma, Joan of Arc seems bland beside her (more on Megan later).

The Unity, as the women are known, land on Maternas, a world of abundance and beauty with just enough quirks to make life interesting. An indigenous, woman-eating monster lurks in a lake (aptly named after Phyllis Schafly) and a fiercely destructive nightly wind challenges Megan's latent engineering talent. There's an invasion, too, but I don't want to give away the plot.

There's no lack of erotic scenes, but some readers may object to Forrest's consistent descriptions of female beauty in very traditional terms: "blade-slender", "perfectly formed body", "smooth and taut skin", etc.

What I didn't like was the books's constant affirmation of the need for very strong, almost mystical leadership by one woman in what was, after all, a community of thousands of capable women.

And depending on your own inclination, you will either love or hate the romantic portrayal of monogamy: there are many very happy long-term couples in this book in contrast to the one character who plays the field and comes across as a predator.

Still, it was fun to read, and I don't hesitate to recommend it.

Tesseracts is a new anthology of Canadian science fiction, edited by Judith Merril. It includes several stories by women, some who've never been published before. It's available at Ariel Books, 2766 West 4th Ave.. The Women's Bookstore, 315 Cambie St. also has a good selection of science fiction and fantasy.

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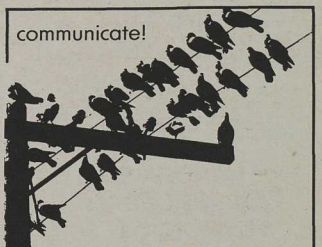

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LETTERS

Sexual abuse between women

Kinesis:

Articles in the June issue on the subject of violence and sexual abuse perpetrated on women by women have prompted me to add my two cents worth on this debate.

I must say, first of all, that I am encouraged to see a feminist publication taking issue with the right of lesbians to total sexual freedom.

It is often estimated that only 3-5 percent of children who are sexually molested by adults are molested by a female agressor. Interestingly enough, Kinsey also estimates the number of self-professed lesbians to be between 3 and 5 percent. I greatly fear that if the number of self-professed lesbians rose to 10 percent the number of children sexually molested by women would rise proportionally.

This is not to say that I believe that all children sexually molested by women are necessarily molested by lesbians. Rather, I think that the percentage of women who are able to be self-professed lesbians in our society is an indication of the extent to which we as women have begun to understand the parameters of our own sexuality.

In the past, women were not viewed as being sexual by others, and did not see themselves as being sexual either. With our increasing freedom to explore the possibilities of our own sexuality comes the freedom to use our sexuality in negative, destructive, and most of all, exploitive ways. Only by recognizing that some women do in fact use their sexuality in exploitive ways can we, as individual women, consciously opt out of this kind of behaviour.

It's time to stop telling politically convenient lies about lesbianism, and about gender differences in general. To claim that to allow women to talk about abusive situations that they have been in with other women amounts to fanning the fires of homophobia is patent nonsense. However, forcing women to go outside of the feminist community in order to be able to talk about their experiences, probably will have that effect.

There can be no doubt that various types of sexual abuse do exist between women. And to hide that fact, either from ourselves, or from the outside world, isn't wise. Let me explain:

On Dealing With the Offender:

Ann Cameron, in the June issue, suggests confronting the alleged offender. But given the size of the lesbian community, and the emotional nature of the issue, this vigilante style jsutice could well result in the lynching of more than one innocent lesbian.

I don't think it's desirable, or even possible to deal with these problems within the confines of the lesbian community. I don't even think that an adequate form of justice can be achieved within the confines of the much larger feminist community. The best solution (imperfect though it may be) is to try the alleged offender in as calm and rational an atmosphere as possible. She should be brought before the courts just as any male offender would be.

Many lesbians will take issue with me on this point, saying that allowing such cases to come before the courts will create bad publicity for the lesbian community. Certainly there was some bad publicity around last winter's lesbian child-support case, but on the whole, I believe that this is still the best solution. It is high time for lesbians to be fully integrated into the community, and this has negative as well as positive aspects.

On Dealing With the Survivor:

Once again, I don't think that real and adequate solutions can be found within the confines of the lesbian, and/or feminist communities. The survivor needs to be given as wide as possible an array of options for healing herself. What is important is that she not be *excluded* from our communities for saying/trying to say something that we would rather not hear.

In conclusion, homosexism has long been a problem in the feminist community, and I am pleased and encouraged that it is at last being discussed. I hope that the future will continue to see this kind of honest discussion of sexual issues.

In sisterhood,

Joan Woodward

Rape Relief responds

Kinesis:

I am writing in response to Karen Gallagher's letter in the June '86 *Kinesis*. I regret that Karen got the impression from my letter in May '86 *Kinesis* that I was being disrespectful to women working in transition houses in B.C.. This certainly was not my intent, and I am glad that Karen responded to my letter.

In my saying, "many shelters choose to take the per diem rather than close their doors", I was wanting to indicate that this was the choice the government gave women struggling to open and maintain shelters for battered women in B.C.. I was wanting to indicate respect for those women's choices to keep shelters open and to be clear that the bind of the per diem contract and the inherent conditions is of the government's making. My intent was to credit the women working in shelters who were not willing for battered women to have no shelters available at all.

I also regret the impression that I left Karen with from my statement, "women who are ineligible for welfare are welcome at our shelter". I wasn't referring to shelters that have per diem contracts with MHR when I raised this point. I was trying to anticipate and set straight a fairly common misconception about Rape Relief and Women's Shelter. In the past, some women have argued that since we ask women to pay rent at our shelter then women who are ineligible for welfare and who have no waged work must be denied housing with us. I was wanting to point out that this is not the case and that those women are welcome at our shelter, just as they are at the other shelters in B.C..

I appreciate Karen's correction of my statements regarding what the government is prepared to provide to a woman in many houses in B.C. with per diem contracts. I stand corrected. However, my point about cash and not vouchers in a woman's hands is still valid. And I urge MHR to respond positively to negotiations with the Society of Transition Houses.

In closing, I regret my phrasing that led to Karen's impression that I was "trashing the many women working in transition houses in B.C." and I hope that I have corrected that here. I appreciate Karen's response, her corrections and the opportunity to respond myself.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Agnew for Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter

Atlantic feminists under attack

Kinesis:

We are calling for your active support on an issue which may well affect all feminist groups in Canada.

The Atlantic Region of the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC) organized, with the major assistance of the Charlottetown Rape Crisis Centre and Secretary of State, a conference on women and violence. The conference, open to all centres in the Atlantic provinces who were working with women in crisis, was held in PEI in August, 1985.

The conference followed a familiar format for many centres: rounds, identification of the issues and problems, analysis, identification of the vision, and discussion of action necessary to make the vision a reality.

For many centres, it was the first time that sexual assault was seen in a broader context and the result was a highly charged, emotional, exciting and consciousness-raising weekend.

Among the issues addressed (and there were many) was oppression, in all its forms, and the need to educate ourselves about and support oppressed people, particularly women.

We discussed lesbianism, and how choices for women must include all choices. We talked about now important it is for all feminists to create a "safe" place for lesbians, because there are so few safe places, especially in small communities.

Women, many for the first time, felt truly in a safe place. The conference helped to focus our energy, and recharge our batteries, and it gave us the support we needed to return to our isolated settings and continue our anti-rape work.

Unfortunately, the experience was not positive for some. A group of women from one centre left after rounds, the first day, as they "did not see women's issues as a priority."

One woman left toward the end of the conference, leaving behind the two women who had come with her.

This particular woman was involved in problems in her local centre (Pictou County) after the conference. The result was a brief, submitted to Secretary of State, denouncing the conference and her own centre.

It was felt, at that time, that there was no point in responding to this action, other than supporting individual women, as we were sure that Secretary of State would not take the accusations of one person seriously, when the evaluations from everyone else were so positive. It was also felt that accusations such as "funding feminism" would hardly be seen as negative, as that is within the mandate of the Women's Programme.

LETTERS / BULLETIN BOARD

The problem, however, has escalated. This particular woman, with the assistance of local right-wing support, has participated in an active campaign to discredit her local centre, centres in the Atlantic provinces and, ultimately, centres across Canada (mostly through the organization known as Realistic, Equal, Active for Life (REAL) Women.)

One of their ways of doing this has been a telephone and mail campaign to Secretary of State and Brian Mulroney, complaining about funding "radical lesbian feminist centres." Pictou County was identified as one such centre.

Another tactic has been to discredit the local centre, and its members in the community, through the media and local churches.

We are very concerned, in the Atlantic region, about the effect that this might have on feminist organizations in this country, particularly on the majority of those centres who are struggling in isolation to live their feminist principles, often in an anti-woman, homophobic environment.

We need to put forward to everyone, including the government, that, yes, we do see this society as lacking when it comes to the treatment of women; yes, we support women having choices in their lives; yes, we will create a safe place for them to do that; and yes, we have the right to ask for government money to continue our work.

We have reason to believe that the Prime Minister's office has been "flooded" with telephone calls from right-wing groups, protesting the funding of the Pictou County Women's Centre, and of the Atlantic conference.

The Pictou County Women's Centre's funding may be in jeopardy, and whether the government will ever fund another Atlantic conference is hard to say.

Feminists in the Atlantic region need your support.

We are requesting that you do the following immediately:

- Send a letter supporting the Pictou County Women's Centre to Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister, House of Commons, Ottawa; and Benoit Bouchard, Secretary of State, House of Commons, Ottawa (No postage necessary).
- Send a copy of your letter to Pictou County Women's Centre, P.O. Box 750, Stellarton, N.S. BOK 1SO (phone 902-752-4865).
  it's important for these women to know the support that is out there!
- Ask other groups in your network to do the same.
- Find out what the right-wing organizations in your community, including REALwomen, are doing to keep women in their place, and share that information. Only by maintaining our network can we remain strong.

In sisterhood,
Diane Duggan for C.A.S.A.C., Atlantic Region, P.O. Box 6072, St. John's, NFLD. A1C 5X8.

from page 21

You have to recognize that in Chile our culture is much broader than only the indigenous element of our national culture. There's all kinds of influences coming into our culture all the time. We are invaded constantly by English music, on the national networks. All throughout Latin America, it's the same thing. We hear music from different countries.

Have you toured Latin America?

No, we haven't had a chance to do a good tour of Latin America. I'm much more interested in doing a tour of Latin America than North America. In order to extend my work, I have to begin with those closest to me. I think I'm going to do a tour for sure next year.

What role does your music play in women's lives?

When I show up, I am bringing women into our music. When we're there singing to our *companeras*, the women feel very identified with us because women are singing. The relationship is quite clear. As women, we identify our own shared problems. When I talk to women, they are very interested that I compose my own songs. There aren't a lot of women composers.

Is there anything you'd like to say to women here?

One thing that's been really exciting and valuable for me is having been able to talk to Canadian women. I realized that in spite of the kilometers between us, we are still very much plugged into the same circuit.

My own personal reflection, is that I'm glad to be able to do this interview because it takes some of our experiences and puts them across to other women. At the same time, for me to have these copies of *Kinesis*, to take home with me, is good. That relationship is really exciting.

EVENTS

- THE VANCOUVER LESBIAN CONNECTION at 876 Commercial Drive hosts a coffee house every Friday between 7:30 and 11 pm., including guest artists, jam sessions and open mike. Performers, theatre groups, comic, and poets welcome. Phone 254-8458 for more info.
- YOU CAN JOIN A JAM, sing a song, tell a tale, or just lie low and listen any Wednesday evening from 7:30 pm to 10:30 pm at the Little Mountain Neighbourhood House, 3981 Main St. The informal setting and supportive atmosphere make this an ideal spot for less experienced performers and more seasoned performers. Admission is free and coffee, teas, juice and homemade treats are available at rock bottom prices. Phone Barbara at 879-7104.
- WOMEN'S FESTIVAL, AUGUST 2nd and 3rd at the Vallian Whole Community Centre. Lots of fun, and music. Billeting and camping. Call Nelson Women's Centre 352-9916 or write 307 Vernon St., Nelson BC
- THE OLDEST LIVING BY PAT SMITH (Lazara) a performance from the play to launch the book at Octopus E. 1146 Commercial Dr. on Saturday, July 5, at 8 pm.
- NOBODY WANTS TO MOVE INTO THE HOUSE at 1885 Venables Street. The neighbours say they've heard creepy things happening in that house every night. Creepy things that sound an awful lot like Hamlet... Tamahnous Theatre presents *The Haunted House Hamlet*. A unique adaptation. Opening August 1, in Tamahnous' own haunted house: 1885 Venables Street. Information and box office: 254-1911
- JOIN YOUR NEIGHBOURS for a home cooked meal every Friday at the Little Mountain Neighbourhood House, 3981 Main St. from 4-5:45 pm. The $3.00 ticket price for adults and $1.50 for children includes soup, salad, dinner, rolls and butter, dessert, and coffee or tea.
- DAY CAMP REGISTRATION FOR CHILDREN aged 6 to 12 has begun at the Little Mountain Neighbourhood House, 3981 Main Street, Cost is $30.00 for a two-week session between July 7th and August 29th. Camperships are available. Drop by the House to fill out a form, or phone Carol at 879-7104 for more information.
- VANCOUVER LESBIAN NETWORK MEETING July 10, 7:30 pm at the Vancouver Lesbian Centre, 876 Commercial Drive, 254-8458. We have been meeting on the second Thursday of the month for the past five months. Network meetings are open to all lesbians to discuss ideas, exchange information and develop political strategies and actions. The Lotus Hotel will be topic of discussion at July 10th meeting.
- STANDING ON CEREMONY: Julie Dushenes, Marcia Pitch and Ingrid Yuille, guest curated by Jill Pollack. Early and current works that reflect each artist's evolution beyond the conventions of their medium and materials. July 16-August 16--opening July 16, 8 pm. at Women in Focus, Suite 204-456 West Broadway. Gallery hours: Wednesdays 12 pm to 8 pm and Thurs. to Sat. 12 pm to 5 pm.
- SOUNDING OUT: COMMUNITY RADIO AT WORK. A public forum. Invited speakers: Armand Mattelart, communications scholar and activist; Bernelda Wheeler, Native Canadian programmer; Lorenzo Milan on the development of US community radio; a representative of Nicaraguan community radio. A representative of the station of the African National Congress; and a feminist programmer from Scandinavia. Part of AMARC 2, the Second World Conference of Community Oriented Radio Broadcasters. Sunday, July 27th, 7:30 pm, Britannia High School Auditorium, 1661 Napier, Vancouver. For more info. contact: AMARC 2, 337 Carrall St., Vancouver, B.C. V6B 2J4 (604) 253-0427.

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Sitka Housing Co-op is a 26 unit housing co-op especially for women and women with children in East Vancouver. After months of work the building has started and we are excited to begin accepting applications for membership.

If you are interested in applying please contact Sitka by phoning 255-9265 or 291-0703, or write to us at Sitka Housing Co-operative Society, 1550 Woodland Drive, Vancouver, B.C. V5L 5A5.

BULLETIN BOARD

•SO YOU WANT EQUAL PAY for work of equal value, you what recognition and pay for housework, you want increased services for women and children who are victims of violence, and more? And when they tell you there is no money to pay for all this, what will you say? Come to the Women's Economic Agenda workshop on alternative economics and find out how women can get what we want! There will be speakers and discussion groups. Monday, July 14th, 7:30 pm. La Quena, 1111 Commercial Drive. Wheelchair accessible, childcare provided. The August WEB meeting will be a potluck supper, followed by speakers and discussion groups. Wednesday August 13, 6 pm at Britannia Community Centre L5/6. All women welcome. Childcare available and wheelchair accessible. For more information call 291-4360.

•THE 3RD ANNUAL CANADIAN WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURAL FESTIVAL will be held September 5 and 6, 1986 at the Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain. As yet we do not have a final schedule. But be assured that performers are being contacted, women artists are being sought, and visual artists are being eyed. We will be having a more extensive visual arts program including film and video showings and workshops. Information updates and memberships can be obtained by writing to us at: The Canadian Women's Festival, 3-161 Stafford St., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 2W9 or by calling: (204) 477-5478.

GROUPS

•GIRLS ONLY DISCUSSION GROUP is happening now at the Little Mountain Neighbourhood House. Cost is $1.00 per out trip which takes place once a month. Girls Only meet every Friday night from 7-9 pm. With ages from 12-19. Drop in and meet new people and talk about anything on your mind. For more information call Corinne or Mary at 879-7104.

•BATTERED WOMEN'S SUPPORT SERVICES: Support group leaders training programme. The lower mainland group leader training programme will take place in October and November again this year. There will be an initial two-day workshop on Saturday and Sunday, October 4 and 5. Six weekly follow-up sessions, and a final day long workshop on Saturday, November 29. These dates are tentative at present. Participants are expected to attend all sessions and be prepared to co-lead two 8-12 week support groups for battered women under BWSS auspices, within a year of completing the training. Contact the BWSS office by July 31. Phone 734-1574.

•THE SUPPORT, EDUCATION AND PREVENTION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT (SEPSA) group will be sponsoring the following support groups (if numbers are sufficient) for those who experienced sexual abuse as children: adult women group in both the Vancouver and Coquitlam areas; adolescent women (ages 13-18) in Vancouver; adult male group in Port Coquitlam area; mothers' group in Maple Ridge area. These groups will start in the middle of September so interested persons should contact SEPSA at 734-9471 by Sept. 1, 1986.

•SEXUAL ABUSE SUPPORT GROUP: I am interested in organizing a support discussion group with women who have done some emotional work around physical/sexual abuse. I have spent years in therapy working out the physical and sexual abuse that happened to me. I want to share my awareness and experience with other women in similar situations, so we can empower and learn from each other. The goal is to have a feminist support group where there is no money involved and no experts. If interested please call Miljenka at 251-3708.

SUBMISSIONS

•RESEARCH INTO WOMEN'S SEXUAL IMAGE. I am currently undertaking research into Women's sexual imagery (both heterosexual and lesbian) and am particularly interested in imagery made by women for women, in photographic media (both historical and contemporary). Anyone who has information on this subject and who would be interested in sharing research information and suggestions. Please write: WSIP c/o The Toronto Photographers Workshop, 80 Spadina Ave., RM #310, Toronto, Ontario M5J 2J3

•IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH a talent bank of feminist cartoonists across Canada, women who would like to be included are invited to submit their names, addresses, and a sample of their work to Susan De Rosa c/o *Communiqu'Elles*, 3585 St. Urbain Street, Montreal, QC H2X 2N6. The bank will be accessible to feminist magazines and associations across Canada.

•Cy-Thea Sand is a guest editor for a special class issue of *Fireweed*. Deadline November 1, 1986. Please send ideas, suggestions or works in progress to her c/o #417-675 East 5th, Vancouver, BC V5T 4P1 or c/o *Kinesis* ASAP.

WORKSHOPS

•CONTINGENT ON FUNDING, Women in Focus will sponsor a three-component video workshop series to begin in August. *A Retrospective of Canadian Feminist Production: Renee Baert*, August 16-17, 1986. *Addressing Social Issues: Video as Theory and Practice: Sara Diamond. Part 1: The Community Use of Video.* Sept. 27-38, 1986. For more information please call Kellie Marlowe, the production coordinator at 872-4332. Women in Focus is now also offering introductory video production workshops by appointment. Women in Focus, Suite 204-456 West Broadway, Vancouver.

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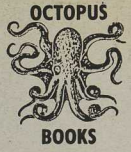
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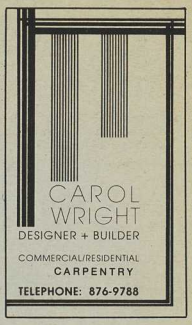
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•THE VANCOUVER WOMEN'S HEALTH COLLECTIVE will be presenting a workshop on premenstrual syndrome, on Monday July 28th, at 7:00 pm, at 888 Burrard St. Many women experience physiological and psychological changes premenstrually, such as irritability, tension, depression, headaches, breast swelling and tenderness, weight gain, and cravings for sweets and alcohol. We will be presenting up-to-date information on the causes of premenstrual syndrome. As well, we will be looking at what women can do through diet changes, vitamin supplements, exercise and stress reduction to cope with these symptoms.

MISCELLANEOUS

•1986 UPDATE TO THE GUIDE TO THE BC WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: Is your group in the 1985 *Guide*? Do you have changes in your address or phone number? Do you know of new women's organizations or ones we missed before? Please send name of organization, address, phone number and a brief outline (2 or 3 lines maximumof the functions of your organization as soon as possible to VSW, 400 A West 5th Ave. V5Y 1J8. Attention: Janet Shaw. If you know of new groups, send their name and address and we'll send them a form to complete.

•DO YOU HAVE ANY MUSIC equipment that you'd like to give to the women prisoners in Lakewood? Please call Isis 872-4251 or Grace 327-8534.

•A NEW PUBLICATION: "Working With Survivors of Sexual Assault" provides an overview of the various systems and procedures that a survivor may encounter during the process of dealing with a sexual assault. Aimed at the many professionals and volunteers in the helping community, this informative manual details a survivor's response to the assault and its aftermath while offering helping strategies. $6.50 each plus postage and handling. Available from: Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre, 1045 Linden Avenue, Victoria BC V8V 4H3

•LA QUENA URGENTLY NEEDS VOLUNTEERS. Summer months are a crisis period and you can help keep La Quena open by donating four hours of your time per week. Call: 251-6626 or drop in to 1111 Commercial Drive.

•OFFICE SPACE TO SHARE available 3 or 4 days/working week. June 2/86. 888 Burrard St. (heart of downtown) in Women's Health Collective. Cost: 3 days = $112.50 per month 4 days = $150. per month. Contact: Canadian PID Society, 684-5704 or Women's Health Collective 682-1633.

•TRANSLATORS NEEDED FOR AMARC 2, 2nd World Conference of Community Oriented Radio Broadcasters. July 25-29, Vancouver. French, English, Spanish. Phone 253-0427.

•SLEEPING ACCOMODATION NEEDED FOR AMARC 2, 2nd World Conference of Community Oriented Radio Broadcasters. July 25-29, Vancouver. If you have extra room, phone 253-0427.

•WOMEN"S GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL WOMEN are invited to participate in organizing a celebration to honour South African Women's Day, August 9th. Please phone Louie or Antoinette at 738-5236 days or Adela 734-2376 evenings for more info.

JOBS

•TEMPORARY POSITION AVAILABLE AT VSW (Sept. 1-Dec. 15) for an office administrator/bookeeper/fundraiser. Salary $1415/month. Submit application in writing to VSW, 400A West 5, Vancouver BC V5Y 1J8. Attn: Hiring Committee, by July 11, 1986. Job description available at VSW.

•MANAGEMENT POSITION: Job opening for general manager of CRS Workers' Co-op in Vancouver. The general manager is responsible for the overall operation of the co-op and its business; for planning for administration of personel and ultimately, for the success of the co-op. CRS is a worker-owned and controlled co-operative with two businesses: Uprising Breads Bakery and CRS Food Wholesaler. CRS standard working conditions, salary and benefits will apply to the general manager. Please submit applications c/o Board of Directors, to the above address before July 18, 1986.

•FEMINIST MAINTENANCE PERSON needed. Must be skilled in plumbing, electrical and carpentry repairs. Please apply in writing with a resume to: Repairs, P.O. Box 33904, Station D, Vancouver, V6J 4L7

CLASSIFIED

•DO YOU HAVE A HEART? Young, early thirties gay woman, hospitalized and partially paralyzed due to an overdose desperately needs visitors and friends. She's intelligent, humourous, kind, and loving, but her friends have deserted her. Will you? Info. call Lynne 521-0954 (evenings)

•SATURNA ISLAND RETREAT enjoy the unspoiled quiet of island life in a 12-room historic farmhouse nestled in 28 acres, with a private beach. Reasonable rates for groups and individuals. Breezy Bay Bed and Breakfast, Saturna Island, B.C. VON 2YO or call (604) 539-2937.

•MUSIC FOR NICARAGUA, a component of Tools for Peace, was founded last year by a group of Vancouver cultural workers to collect musical instruments, sound equipment and funds for use in Nicaragua. If you have instruments of any description in repairable shape, audio equipment or sound equipment, please bring it to: Folk Festival Office, 3271 Main Street, Vancouver. Get involved! The people of Nicaragua need your aid!

•COMMUNITY SOUND SERVICES: Complete three-way p.a. plus operators and truck available at socialist rates. Phone Communiqué 253-6222.

•VANCOUVER WOMAN SEEKS HELP with simple sewing to be done. Contact 253-8308. My hours are variable, please keep trying.

•WOMAN GUITARIST/SONGWRITER/ARRANGER/VOCALIST looking for woman or gay male keyboard player/composer. Must know equipment. For collaboration on an original funk/jazz/fusion project. Also needed to complete this political dance oriented band, lead guitar/vocalist, harmonies, horn player. All inquiries call Nadine 254-7475.

•ONE WOMAN LOOKING FOR TWO OTHER lesbians to share large sunny east Vancouver home. Two living rooms, fireplace, two baths, 1½ bedroom each, non-smoking. $300 includes rent, heat, phone, cable. Available Aug. 1 Call Barb 876-0953

•GIVE YOURSELF OR A FRIEND AN UNUSUAL GIFT. A psychic reading of your aura (the electro-magnetic field surrounding your body) and your chakras (energy & information centres). At your place or mine only $20 for an hour long reading. Call Judy at 736-4825.

•WOMEN TO SHARE fully equipped black & white darkroom. $50/month. Gastown. Susan 734-0449 evenings or 596-7461 work.

•MANUSCRIPT READING SERVICE will critique prose and non-fiction particularly if written from feminist or social issue perspective. Contact: Tanya Lester, 394 Simcoe St., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 1W2 ph. (204) 774-4372.

•WOMEN's COLLECTIVE A CAPELLA GROUP (Aya) needs 5th member to sing lead and back-up, wide vocal range (preferably low), write, arrange, one year commitment, audience, feminist, political activist, peace, anti-nuke, Central American. 251-6725.

•FOR RENT JULY FIRST--basement apartment to share with non-smoking female student or worker. $250/month includes washer and dryer and all utilities. No pets please. Call Lucinda at 253-2881.

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TAKE ACTION AGAINST APARTHEID

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney will be meeting with Commonwealth countries this August to determine whether the Commonwealth will impose sanctions on South Africa.

The African National Congress has called for total economic sanctions against the aparthied regime.

Do your part.

Write the Canadian Government and demand that Canada back the call for action on sanctions.

Write:

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney *and*

External Affairs Minister Joe Clark c/o Parliament Bldgs., Ottawa, Ontario.

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from illustration by J. Halfpenny

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