

Special Collections Serial

KINESIS

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies



DEC 13 1990
 BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mothers & children—
 giving birth &
 taking care on
 the obstacle course

Plus news
 from Quebec,
 South Africa &
 Latin America

And arts:
 poems & plays,
 fiction & flicks

Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Call us at 255-5499. Our next Writer's Meeting is Thur. Jan. 3 at 7 pm at Kinesis, #301-1720 Grant St. All women welcome even if you don't have experience.

PRODUCTION THIS ISSUE: Christine Cosby, Nancy Pollak, Andrea Lowe, A. Alisa Nemesis, Jackie Brown, Maggie Roy, Sandra Gillespie, Sonia Marino, Janisse Browning-Levesque, Frances Wasserlein, Carol Lamarche, Jean Lum, Agnes Huang, Jill Mandrake, Heidi Walsh, Corlee Fox, Megan Artyche, Ann Rainbeth, Jeanette Ashley, Sandy James, Karen Martin, Winnifred's waxer and Christine's applesauce cakes

FRONT COVER: Belsan Zubi and Molly Kraft at vigil of the Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation, in Toronto—IWD, 1990. photo by Rachel Epstein.

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

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

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

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

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KINESIS

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MOVEMENT MATTERS



Movement matters listings information

Movement Matters is designed to be a network of news, updates and information of special interest to the women's movement. Submissions to Movement Matters should be no more than 500 words, typed, double-spaced on eight and a half by eleven paper. Submissions may be edited for length. Deadline is the 18th of the month preceding publication.

Strategies for Change: the book

The Women's Research Centre has prepared a book titled *Strategies for Change: From women's experience to a plan for action*. The book is intended to assist women's groups in deciding on strategy. It starts from the assumption that once we raise an issue, how we work for change has a real impact on the results.

The book is divided into two parts. "The Story of Three Issues" looks at wage discrimination and pay equity, wife assault, and custody and access laws. Each case study begins with a brief history of the issue and a discussion of how the issue was defined. At the heart of the exploration is a roundtable exchange with a women's group which has been actively involved in the issue.

The second part describes "Four Steps to a Strategy for Change." Each step outlines the key questions groups should answer in strategy development and offers some how-to's. As the authors say, "Planning a strategy is not difficult. It's a matter of asking the right questions and building upon answers. This book shows you how."

To order *Strategies for Change* (90 pgs., spiral bound) send \$9 plus postage and handling (\$1.50 for the first book, \$.75 for each additional item) to: Women's Research Centre, 101-2245 W. Broadway, Van. BC, V6K 2E4. (Call 734-0485 for information on discounts for multiple orders.)

Support nat'l daycare assoc.

The Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association (CDCAA) had its funding slashed by the Secretary of State by 15 percent in 1989 and frozen in 1990. The CDCAA is on a membership drive to fund continued lobbying of the federal government for a comprehensive child care system in Canada, and to continue its public information campaigns on the need for affordable, high quality, non-profit child care in Canada.

Consider supporting the work of the CDCAA by becoming a member or by having your organization take out a membership. Included is a regular publication on child care developments. Two-year memberships are \$10 (individual), \$20 (family) or \$30 (groups/organizations). Send cheques or money orders with name and mailing address to The Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, 323 Chapel St, Ottawa, Ont. K1N 7Z2

Women of colour collective in Calgary

The Women of Colour Collective is a feminist collective of Canadian women of colour committed to the empowerment of all women. The group does educational, advocacy and support work, and links with other organizations committed to economic, social and political change. The collective makes presentations on racism to various groups and in September 1990 published the first of its quarterly newsletters, the only paper in western Canada produced and written entirely by women of colour.

For further information contact Women of Colour Collective, 319-223 12th Ave. SW, Calgary, Alberta, T2R 0G9 Tel. (403) 262-1873

Queer Press seeks queer readers, writers

A new Canadian publishing company, Queer Press, is calling for innovative lesbian and gay writing. Queer Press is Canada's only lesbian and gay book publishing firm. They are committed to prioritizing the publication of lesbian and gay voices which are historically marginalized and socially disempowered. Queer Press are currently in the process of acquiring non-profit status.

Queer Press is committed to donating up to three percent of each press run of every title to lesbians and gay men incarcerated in prisons and psychiatric institutes. Yearly memberships to the press are also available for \$25. Members are entitled to a 20 percent discount on all Queer Press titles, which will be available by mail.

Publication of both fiction and non-fiction titles is planned. The press is particularly interested in material produced by the poor or working class, rural, disabled, young, old, political radicals, people of colour, and the culturally and religiously diverse. Queer Press is now soliciting articles for an anthology of writings by and about lesbian and gay survivors of childhood sexual abuse. The working title is *Living in Fear*. The press is seeking the following sorts of articles: political analyses, autobiographies, poetry, graphics, legal information, fiction, therapy stories, etc. The deadline is Feb. 1991.

Address all letters and queries to: Q. Press P.O. Box 485, Stn. P Toronto, Ont. M5S 2T1

One evening in early December last year, a group of women from *Kinesis* met in a restaurant to discuss editing—how to, when to, why to—the range of practical and philosophical questions confronting a feminist newspaper. One woman arrived late and told us the news. News from Montréal about shootings at a university, about women being dead—vague news, horrific news. December 6th, 1989.

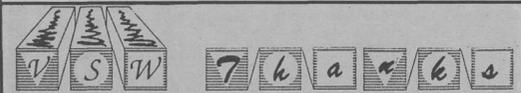
A year later and many more women have died. For being women, for disobeying orders, for being—or appearing to be—feminists, for being women in their own right. Women have called for December 6 to be designated the national Day of Commemoration to mourn all female victims of male violence. Even without official recognition, that day will be one on which feminists remember with anger and grief the women who die—and remember too our determination to change the world.

You'll notice a new ingredient in this issue of *Kinesis*. At our last Editorial Board meeting, we decided to ask authors of features and arts stories to submit a one-line autobiographical description. Until now, we would occasionally supply that information for stories where the author had an obvious stake or bias: if so-and-so was the campaign manager for such-and-such, we thought you had a right—and a need—to know that her glowing account of the campaign came from that perspective. Now, you'll routinely get that kind of information, as well as any other the author deems pertinent to your understanding of her writing.

Speaking of writing, we welcome several newcomers this month: Cathy Griffen, Shlomit Segal, Allana Murray, Meg Edwards, Lily Yuriko Shinde, Lizann Foster and Karen X. Tulchinsky. Arriving on the scene with a combination of writing and production duties are Agnes "Most Wanted" Huang, Heidi Walsh, Jeannette Ashley, Jill Mandrake and Carol Lamarche. New production workers this issue are Karen Martin and Corilee Fox.

The big story on the production front, of course, is our new typesetter, Janisse Browning-Leveque. After an intense seven-day rite of passage (the evidence of which you now hold in your hand), Janisse has shown herself to be a worthy successor to the long line of *Kinesis* typesetters. She's clearly a woman of great skill, caring and nerve—things do get a little ripe on press night—and we're lucky to have her. Welcome, Janisse.

And two women who contributed to *Kinesis* need thanking. Sylvia Hunt has done our camera work at *The Peak* for well over a year, and she's done it wonderfully. Well, she's *Peaked*, so it's thanks and goodbye. We also say thank-you to Ginger Plum who did a great impromptu job as relief typesetter recently. Thanks a lot, Ginger.



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

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Kinesis Women of Colour Caucus

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contact Terrie at 321-0575
for more information

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

The index is a reference guide to articles about women printed in more than 80 English and French periodicals, for use by researchers, lecturers, students and anyone else interested in women's studies.

This alphabetized hardcopy of a comprehensive computerized index is produced three times a year by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, and is available on a subscription basis.

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Legal status of fetus:

Ruling on midwives crucial

by Joni Miller

When the Supreme Court of Canada rules on the conviction of Vancouver lay midwives Gloria LeMay and Mary Sullivan, the ruling may well define the legal relationship of Canadian women to their fetuses.

It will also impact on Canadian midwives, whose struggle for legal recognition as a health profession is slowly progressing throughout the country.

LeMay and Sullivan have been embroiled in court battles since

1985 when a home birth they were attending resulted in the suffocation death of the baby.

The BC College of Physicians and Surgeons filed a complaint against LeMay and Sullivan, a complaint which eventually resulted in the women being convicted of criminal negligence causing bodily harm to the mother.

The women appealed their conviction to the Supreme Court of Canada, where the case was argued at the end of October, 1990. A ruling is expected anytime within the next six months.

Jewel Voth, the pregnant woman in the 1985 home birth incident, experienced a very painful and difficult labour. The baby's head was born alive, but the body became stuck. Voth was transported to hospital by ambulance, where her baby was delivered with forceps, dead.

At issue in *Sullivan and Lemay* is the question of when a baby becomes fully human under the law. At stake is a woman's right to control her own body.

The midwives' legal path has been long and twisted. LeMay and

Sullivan were initially charged and convicted of criminal negligence causing the death of the child. The trial judge sentenced them to probation and ordered them to stay away from women in childbirth.

A BC Appeal court judge, arguing that a fetus is not a person but a part of its mother, acquitted the women on the first count and substituted a conviction of criminal negligence causing bodily harm to Jewel Voth.

In Supreme Court, Sullivan and LeMay's lawyer, Thomas Berger, argued that, legally, a fetus should occupy an intermediate position. If a fetus is neither a "person" under the law nor a part of its mother, LeMay and Sullivan cannot be convicted of either of the charges they faced.

LeMay is confident they will be acquitted. "Our lawyers always told us you'll never win in BC, but if you can get this case out of BC, you can't lose," she said.

LEAF (Women's Legal Education and Action Fund) acted as an intervenor in the Supreme Court hearing, arguing against Sullivan and LeMay's position.

"This case raises important questions," says Vicky Grey of West Coast LEAF. "It's a unique opportunity to consider the relationship of the fetus to the mother." According to LEAF, *Sullivan and LeMay* has the potential to affect women's rights to equality and self-determination, especially those relating to child-bearing capacity.

LEAF believes the case has been presented in a way that fails to place the pregnant woman at the centre of the legal analysis.

In LEAF's brief, lawyers Lynn Smith and Mary Eberts state: "Jewel Voth desired a baby. She experienced pregnancy, a lengthy, painful and wasted delivery, and anguish due to the loss of that expected baby. Yet Jewel Voth has receded into the background of this case as legal issues relating to the characterization of the fetus are defined and then debated."

Smith and Eberts argue that a pregnant woman has a unique relationship with her fetus—that the fetus is "in her and of her," and harm to the fetus in the process of giving birth is harm to the woman.

"We hope the court will conclude that the fetus is a part of the mother," says Grey. LEAF also argues that a woman's right to choice of care in childbirth is a sex equality issue.

Midwives are also watching the case. "We don't expect this case to have any direct effect on us," says Linda Knox of the Midwifery Association of BC (MABC). "It will have an impact on women, though, and that may affect us."

The association has always carefully distanced itself from LeMay and Sullivan because of their status as lay—unlicensed—midwives. Members of MABC are

generally trained and licensed in other countries and adhere to strict guidelines.

LeMay and Sullivan followed a more informal approach to training. LeMay became involved in labour coaching after the birth of her daughter. She trained initially as a prenatal instructor and began attending hospital births as a labour coach. Her home birth practise evolved in response to repeated requests. In 1983 she met Mary Sullivan at the birth of a mutual friend and took her on as an apprentice.

LeMay regrets the lack of communication with MABC but disagrees with the association's guidelines. "The more rules there are for midwives, the less choices there are for women," says LeMay.

Home birth options seem to be closing down in BC, possibly as a result of Sullivan and LeMay's conviction.

"Home births are still happening," says MABC's Knox. "The demand exists, but there are few practitioners around." Knox says she is in the process of winding down her practise. Several other midwives have quietly withdrawn from their home birth practises over the last few years.

"It's a case of burnout," Knox says. "There's a lack of support—politically, emotionally."

"When you're a midwife, you're on call 24 hours a day," Knox believes the current situation, with no regulations in place, offers no protection for consumers.

"As qualified practitioners give up," she says, "unqualified ones will pick up the slack."

Knox sees a possible avenue for regulation of midwives under the recently declared "Health Professions Act" put forward by the BC government. But the BC Medical Association—the doctors—stands squarely in the way of such a development.

"They keep dragging out the same tired arguments," Knox says, "about continuity of care, duplication of services."

LeMay advocates for the decriminalization of midwifery and believes that without lay midwives, women in BC lack alternatives to the medical establishment. Back in business after her court-ordered hiatus, she has no shortage of customers. She rejects the argument that uninformed women may turn to lay midwives.

"My last few clients included a registered nurse, an optometrist and a dentist. These are not exactly vulnerable people."

LeMay says the trial has changed her practise. "I won't be naive again," she says. Prospective clients are fully informed about the trial, and LeMay says she is less inclined to present herself as an expert.

"Nobody can guarantee you a safe ride," she says.



photo by Jackie Rhonan

Women protest doctor's presence at commission

by Nancy Pollak

Women's groups protesting the activities of a California-based physician who condones the practice of feticide reacted angrily to the doctor's appearance at the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies in late November.

Dr. John Stephens of San Jose requested and received permission to appear at the commission's public hearings in Vancouver. Stephens recently targeted the Indo-Canadian community in Vancouver in a campaign advertising an ultra-sound scanning technique that he claims can determine the sex of a fetus as early as 12 weeks into a pregnancy.

The doctor acknowledges that his test is used to detect "unwanted" female fetuses, which are then aborted.

Stephens' campaign, which included direct mailings to thousands of Indo-Canadian households and advertisements in newspapers, enraged women of the India Mahila Association and the South Asian Women's Group,

and his presence at the Royal Commission hearings did more than anger women—it left others feeling threatened.

Sunera Thobani of the South Asian Women's Group contacted the commission in Ottawa to protest the doctor's planned appearance. "I told them that a number of women who had wanted to attend the hearings had decided not to because of Stephens," said Thobani. "They just felt too intimidated."

Thobani also wanted to know why an American doctor would be granted a berth at Canadian proceedings. (Stephens applied for a hearing many months past the deadline.) Denise Cole of the commission's Ottawa office informed her that anyone, regardless of nationality, could have the commission's ear.

Citing the example of Dr. Henry Morgentaler, the abortion rights activist, Cole pointed out that the commission had already demonstrated a willingness to hear from controversial doctors.

Anger at Dr. Stephens stems from two related factors: his apparent indifference to the practice

of feticide, and his publicly stated opinion that the Indian community is anti-female.

Thobani has led the protest against Stephens' racism. "He's claiming that this anti-female bias is part of our cultural tradition," said Thobani. "I want to say that there is also a tradition of resistance. And the women who are active around this issue represent that tradition of resistance."

While the doctor addressed the hearings, representatives from over 12 women's and anti-racist groups protested outside.

Amazingly, Stephens presented himself as a "pro-life and anti-abortion" doctor who offers "true freedom of choice to women." His patented procedure, he further claimed, "allows a woman to exercise her right to reproductive options."

Stephens is by no means the first to co-opt the language of choice. Many advocates of reproductive technologies—processes which are invasive and controlling of women's bodies—use choice-talk to legitimize their interests.

See page 9 for more on the Royal Commission's hearings.

Child care program:

City's first step applauded



photo by Rachel Fox

by Cathy Griffen

Daycare. It's a word that can evoke fear in working parents. It's always in your thoughts because when it collapses, so does your stability and peace of mind. Fortunately, if you live in Vancouver, the new Civic Child Care Strategy may benefit you and your children.

On October 23rd, 1990, Vancouver city council unanimously adopted the Civic Child Care Strategy prepared and presented by the Children's Advocate, Rita Chudnovsky.

Chudnovsky's report, 18 months in the making, addresses the critical shortage of affordable, accessible, quality licensed child care in Vancouver.

Highlights of the strategy include:

- spending about one million dollars in operating and start-up costs for daycares. \$300,000 will be allocated to non-profit daycares to help stabilize and enhance existing programs without raising parent's fees; \$650,000 will go to buy portables for daycare facilities as well as assembling land for these sites

- providing operational funding to high need areas, such as inner city pre-school projects; services for infant toddlers and emergency shift work situations; and salary enhancement grants

- appointment of a committee made up of councillors and community members to press the provincial government to amend its GAIN (welfare) program guidelines to give single mothers a choice regarding employment and work outside the home

- appointment of a child care coordinator for ongoing administration of the city's childcare policies and programs

- encouraging developers to build and equip daycare facilities as a condition of rezoning.

Vancouver, like other urban centres across Canada, is desperate for a comprehensive child care program.

In this city alone, there are approximately 32,000 children under the age of 12, yet there are only 3,800 licensed group and family daycare spaces. The federal Conservatives have withdrawn support for a national child care program.

and parents scramble to use whatever meager facilities are available.

The City of Vancouver's response to this crisis is a first step in the right direction, say community organizations.

Penny Coates, president of the Canadian Daycare Advocacy Association, calls the report terrific.

"It addresses all the major problems and concerns," says Coates, "although only time will tell if Vancouver city council is serious about implementing the policy." She has been appointed to the committee which will lobby for the province to amend its welfare policy which labels single mothers with children over 6 months "employable."

Jean Swanson of End Legislated Poverty was also appointed to the committee. She was surprised the report passed unanimously and is generally satisfied with the policy.

The timing of the proposal—it went to city hall a few weeks before the November municipal election—may account for its unanimous passage.

"The NPA had no choice but to vote for the policy," says Libby Davies, re-elected COPE councillor. "It was too close to the election for them to do much else."

NPA mayor Gordon Campbell, also re-elected, was unavailable for comment but a spokesperson from his office described the daycare issue as "close to his heart." Says Muriel Honey: "Mayor Campbell hopes council will continue to support the policy."

Davies and the other COPE councillors, who gained two seats in the election, are serious about ensuring a financial commitment to daycare services in Vancouver.

"This policy is a first step in a series of steps," says Davies, "and we should applaud the city's progressive stance."

She warns, however, that long-term success depends on the federal and provincial governments committing themselves to cost-sharing arrangements, since the city cannot bear the expense alone.

For Davies, the city's child care strategy is only one facet of the larger problem facing women—the problem of pay equity. While there is money in the strategy to enhance salaries, the appallingly low pay of child care workers must be systematically addressed.

It is the usual dichotomy. "We value our children," says Davies, "but not the women and men who care for them. Caregivers are in stressful and demanding jobs, with an alarming rate of turnover."

"High wages and good benefits must be available to these individuals to ensure quality child care."

Dictionary chokes

Choice of wrong word or no word

by Carol Lamarche

An illustrated dictionary for children widely circulated in school libraries includes anatomical drawings of a naked man and a naked woman in which the women's genitals are labelled "sex."

The man's penis is labelled—a penis.

Stoddart's *Junior Visual Dictionary*, published in 1989, also correctly describes heads, legs, necks and the like—but evidently choked on the words vagina or vulva.

According to Don Bastian, an editor at Stoddart's in Toronto, the *Junior Visual Dictionary* was developed and edited by another company and Stoddart merely owns the Canadian rights.

Bastian said the "sex" reference was a mistake and employees at Stoddart "don't know how [the label] got there."

The book was originally published in a French edition in which the woman's vulva was labelled "la sexe." Stoddart sales manager Rick Walker believes the English version simply followed the original edition's terminology.

Trisha Joel of the Vancouver Status of Women described the

book's drawing as "either a sexist joke that should never have gotten past the editorial staff, or a reflection of how sexist the English language is—or both."

Said Joel: "There are so few words in common usage to describe women's genitals that are specific and respectful. This reflects the discomfort society feels about women's bodies and sexuality. Girls can grow up not even knowing they have vaginas, let alone that there is a word for that part of our bodies."

Stoddart has responded to the outcry with a revised edition. Now, the woman's genitals are unidentified.

The book also depicts Caucasian people only. An unidentified editorial assistant at Stoddart's said that racial representation was a "question of detail" and that there are "[publishing houses] that specialize in those issues."

Currently there are 110 copies of the *Junior Visual Dictionary* in Vancouver schools, with one or more copies in every elementary school. Several teacher librarians in the Vancouver School District have complained to the school board about the book.

The dictionaries have been in

the schools for more than a year and a half.

The manager of the Processing Centre for Vancouver schools, Penny Haggarty, said some librarians have withdrawn the books and others have relabelled the illustration, yet many copies remain unaltered on the shelves.

Liz Austrom, the District Principal for Curriculum and Resources for the Vancouver School Board, said that "not all books

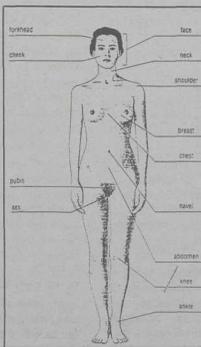
can do everything for everyone."

According to Austrom, the book was originally ordered by a teacher working with children with learning disorders because it provides clearly labelled illustrations which are useful aids in encouraging vocabulary development.

Phyllis Westhara is the Coordinator of the Status of Women Program of the British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF). She said that a book like the *Junior Visual Dictionary* would not be removed from the shelves for what might be considered a "small infraction" because of money—economy plays a significant role in dictating what materials will be available in the schools, a view echoed by Austrom.

Westhara said that taking action to have a book evaluated depends on individual teachers or librarians (or parents), whose sensitivities detect the problem and whose persistence brings it to the attention of a committee such as the BCTF's Status of Women.

Elaine Decker, spokesperson for the BCTF said that: "In 1990, when we are grappling with the Montreal massacre, little girls are still being told their bodies are a joke."



The NDP in ONT:

To govern in a new way?

by Susan O'Donnell

When the Ontario New Democratic Party swept into office in September, many feminist activists happily claimed victory—of the three major parties, the NDP has long been considered champion of women's rights. However, feminist delight turned to apprehension when the province's supposed \$20 million budget surplus turned out to be a \$2.2 billion deficit.

Clearly, finding the money necessary for reform is not going to be an easy task.

Despite the daunting financial situation, the signs are positive for women in Ontario. For starters, many of the NDP politicians now trying to juggle the government budget are women, a reflection of their party's efforts to bring more women to Queen's Park.

During the election campaign, the NDP offered their women candidates extra campaign workers, a women's support group and a telephone hotline. The strategy helped elect 19 NDP women, 11 of whom were then appointed to cabinet; women make up 50 percent of important cabinet committees.

Before the budget deficit was revealed, the NDP made campaign promises on key women's issues, including proposals to extend pay equity to all women, provide more subsidized daycare, raise the minimum wage, and stop collecting income tax from people below the poverty line.

As the honeymoon period accorded a new government ends and the province enters what will likely be a long, cold winter—complete with recession—the women who elected the NDP government will be expecting action.

Two pressing feminist issues are support for abused women and abortion rights, and the three cabinet members who will be dealing directly with these two issues—Anne Swarbrick, Evelyn Gigantes and Zanana Akande—have a firm commitment to feminism.

Anne Swarbrick, minister responsible for women's issues, has a strong labour background. She was the founding organizer of an advocacy centre for working immigrant women and an executive assistant at the Labour Council of Toronto, where she lobbied for pay equity, employment equity and choice in reproductive issues. Swarbrick served on the board of directors of a shelter for battered women and an affordable housing group. Swarbrick has said the women in the party will avoid "the sandbox mentality" of Question Period and try and respond to issues in a more cohesive and responsible way.

Health minister Evelyn Gigantes has been a solid supporter of feminist issues for many years. First elected provincially for an Ottawa riding in 1975, she has served as the NDP critic for several portfolios. Gigantes successfully introduced legislation to amend Ontario's human rights code to include protection from discrimination because of sexual orientation.

Zanana Akande, community and social services minister, is no stranger to feminist activism. Co-founder of *Tiger Lily*, a magazine for visible minority women, she also worked with a shelter for abused women. Akande has been involved with the National Black Women's Congress, the Elizabeth Fry Society, and the Federation of Women Teachers' Association.

Soon after her cabinet appointment, Akande spoke publicly of the change that the women will make. "We're not comfortable in being part of a government that governs [the old way]," Akande said. "I think sometimes we make the men rather frustrated in that we're reluctant to move in a piecemeal way. Women have a style that says it all has to be integrated. And we're insisting that it be done."

Akande and her staff in community and social services will be feeling some heat this winter from activists working to improve the condition of abused women. Public and domestic violence threatens women across the country and the problem is particularly acute in Ontario, where the rapidly growing population of Toronto has severely strained the city's capabilities to offer support and solutions to the many women seeking escape from violence in their homes.

The System is Strained

A woman arriving on the doorstep of a

lent homes. More than two years later, not a single unit had been built or modified.

According to OAIH, the needs of abused disabled women and women from diverse cultural backgrounds continue to be inadequately addressed by government housing programs.

Ontario's family court justice system has failed single mothers—90,000 children are affected by non-payment of court-ordered support payments, and as many as 80 percent of women who were abused while living with their mates continue to be abused or threatened with assault after separation, usually during court-ordered access visits.

OAIH is hoping the NDP will respond to the issue of domestic violence more positively as a government than it did as an opposition party. In a progress report issued at the time of the election, OAIH stated that the NDP "needs improvement in their attitudes and commitment to battered women."



Zanana Akande

women's shelter in Ontario stands a 50 percent chance of being turned away because of lack of space. Shelter workers' salaries continue to be low—as do staffing levels.

In an eight-month period monitored by the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAIH), Metro Toronto Police investigated less than 10 percent of the 31,000 cases of "domestic disputes" reported. The most common sentences for wife battering are absolute or conditional discharges, and many violent men may have their charges dropped altogether in a criminal justice system straining under a 14-month backlog of cases.

Abused women have nowhere to go—affordable housing is almost impossible to find in Toronto. In 1987, the Liberal government pledged to create 1,000 new units and modify 2,500 units for women escaping vio-

lences to reevaluate their funding formula for shelters and services, and commit more money to the program. However, it is not yet clear if Akande will be able to loosen her ministry's purse strings enough to begin meaningful reform.

Abortion rights promises to be another hot topic in Ontario this winter. (Passed by the House of Commons and awaiting approval by the Senate as *Kinesis* goes to press, Bill C-43 makes women who have abortions and doctors who perform them liable for criminal prosecution.)

"The NDP government has given some signs that it's not like the [previous governments], and we're very hopeful" of Ontario government intervention into the federal legislation, Jane Holmes of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL) told *Kinesis*. She explained that the NDP has commissioned a study to investigate access to abortion by adolescents, is actively consulting with pro-choice groups, and is looking at challenging C-43 under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Very Much a Pollyanna

Within weeks of being named to the cabinet, Anne Swarbrick and Evelyn Gigantes met with federal justice minister Kim Campbell to explain Ontario's opposition to the bill. After the meeting, during which Campbell insisted that C-43 would not limit access to abortions, Swarbrick told reporters she believed Campbell was "being very much a Pollyanna in terms of how she's looking at the reality of the impact of that bill on the streets."

Actively lobbying against C-43 in the federal arena is one sign pro-choice activists are looking for. Another is a strong statement from the province's attorney-general Howard Hampton that the bill would be unenforceable. Soon after his appointment, Hampton said it would not be proper to say in advance that his government could not administer the law, but a cabinet committee is now studying the possibility. CARAL's Holmes, noting that the Quebec government declared the abortion law unenforceable in 1976, said she expects the Ontario cabinet "to use their imaginations, be creative, and come up with an effective statement." At press time, the women of Ontario are still awaiting that statement.

In mid-November, the NDP announced its intention to extend the province's health insurance funding to free-standing abortion clinics and to provide travel money to women in rural areas who must go to cities for abortions. The province also plans to instruct police to get together with protesters who harass women outside abortion clinics.

Response to the government's abortion plans were lukewarm. Cherie MacDonald of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics told *The Globe and Mail*: "The funding of the clinics probably would have come through even with a Liberal government." MacDonald stressed the importance of the NDP declaring C-43 unenforceable.

Clearly, Akande, Gigantes, Swarbrick and their cabinet colleagues will be working overtime in the long months ahead—but will they be able to fulfill the high expectations of the many Ontario feminists hoping for substantial social change from the province's first NDP government?

Susan O'Donnell is a writer living in Toronto.

Anne Swarbrick,
Evelyn Gigantes
and
Zanana Akande
have a firm
commitment
to feminism

WHAT'S NEWS?

by Linda Choquette

Longer leave for parents in Québec

Québec parents could get up to 34 weeks parental leave if legislation introduced mid-November becomes law. The bill is part of the Québec government's continuing effort to increase the birth rate in that province. The 34-week leave would be unpaid and could be taken by either parent to care for a newborn or newly adopted child.

Presently, women in Québec are eligible for 18 weeks unpaid maternity leave. Amendments to Québec's Labour Standards Act, also introduced mid-November, extend eligibility to all pregnant women regardless of the number of weeks worked. If the proposed legislation becomes law, a woman choosing to take the 34 weeks parental leave immediately after her maternity leave would have a full year to spend with her child while her job is held. Full-time or part-time workers could claim the benefit.

"This is only the first step toward paid parental leave," said Violette Trépanier, Québec's minister responsible for the status of women and for the family. After this bill is adopted, she said, the next challenge facing the government will be finding an efficient way to provide paid parental leave. "We want to make it easier for parents to reconcile their professional and family obligations," said Trépanier.

The federal Unemployment Insurance Act provides 15 weeks unemployment insurance benefits to women only. Amendments to the act, effective Nov. 18, 1990 provide 10 weeks unpaid parental leave for men or women, subject to the approval of employers.

Women pleased to win Supreme Court appeal

The Supreme Court of Canada agreed in November to hear the case of a Williams Lake woman who was denied the right to sue her doctor for negligence and sexual assault. Laura Norberg's claim was earlier denied by the BC Supreme Court on the grounds that she had no right to sue because her own conduct was "illegal and immoral."

Norberg, addicted at the time to a barbiturate compound called Fiorinal, had sex with the doctor in exchange for drug prescriptions. Denied the right to sue in March 1988, Norberg appealed. Two years later the BC Court of Appeal upheld the lower court judgment, citing a legal principle, *ex turpi*

causa, which states that persons involved in illegal or immoral acts cannot have legal redress against each other for the consequence of their actions.

Norberg had argued that the doctor had exploited her addiction and had therefore not consented to have sex with him. Pleased with the court's decision, Norberg said, "I felt in the beginning that because I am a nobody, just this little person . . . that people wouldn't listen, people wouldn't care." According to Norberg's lawyer J.J. Camp, it is unusual for the Supreme Court to agree to hear appeals of civil cases. The court apparently wants to deal with "the issues of whether a female can give a viable consent to a medical practitioner where he is trading drugs for sexual favours," said Camp.

Norberg is supported in her appeal by the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund who will intervene when the case is heard.

Tackling the male model of scientific research

Sexist attitudes in science and medical research discriminate against and downgrade work by and about women, said the president-elect of the Canadian Psychological Association.

Speaking at a Toronto symposium on gender, science and medicine in November, Carrie Stark-Adamec said the "old guard" of male academics who control institutions and determine project funding are responsible for the sexism. "There has been only one model for scientific research. That has been a male model," said Stark-Adamec.

Women and issues relevant to women are not considered appropriate research fields by the men who control funding, Stark-Adamec told conference delegates. Women often have to finance research out of their own pockets. Then, because their work often "rocks the boat, makes waves and offends reviewers," the research is rejected by traditional, mainstream academic journals. Publishing in these journals is requisite to secure tenure or to qualify for positions on the boards which rule on research funding.

"For women, therefore, it becomes a vicious circle if they want to change things from within," said Stark-Adamec.

Another speaker, Ursula Franklin, professor emerita of engineering at the University of Toronto, said that women branded

as feminists or troublemakers are denied academic recognition and tenure. "Gender bias is alive and well in the dean's office," said Franklin. "As women get more sophisticated, the opposition gets more sophisticated."

Dioxins furans on the rise in breast milk

Furans and dioxins found in breast milk are 16.5 times higher than acceptable government standards for ingesting toxic chemicals, a federal study has found.

Officials said that the joint health and environment department study—released in November—revealed toxins in several other foods, but that the average daily intake of dioxins and furans over a lifetime remains well below what Ottawa considers a threatening level.

An official conceded that breast-fed infants consume the chemicals at levels exceeding government standards but said it occurs over a short period of time.

The medical director of the Vancouver Breast Feeding Centre, Dr. Verity Livingstone, said she finds the whole thing scary. "It should alert us that we are probably using more [dioxins and furans] than we ought and at some stage in the future it should alert us that future buildup could be dangerous," said Livingstone.

However, people must remember the benefits of breast-feeding, she said, and not drop the practice. "We should try reducing the use of dioxins."

According to health department spokesperson Bev Hous ton, much of the food on the marketplace would have to be removed if the current federal regulation on dioxin in food were applied. "The health department is considering whether to introduce a new dioxin standard to get around this problem."

Greenpeace activist Stan Gray said Ottawa is preparing to legalize dioxin pollution in food rather than eliminate the sources. Gray has been researching dioxins for the past year and accuses federal officials of concealing the risks. "They've deliberately ignored and tried to explain away powerful evidence—that they themselves have produced—of extremely high toxic doses, rather than act to reduce it."

The facts on how little formal power we have...

Women are vastly under-represented in formal politics at all levels, particularly in the House of Commons. Compared with 1984, only 12 more women took seats in the 1988 federal election. At that rate gender parity won't be achieved for 45 years, says a new study commissioned by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW).

Primed for Power: Women in Canadian Politics, written by Chantal Maille, traces the development of women's representation in Canadian political institutions. Although political parties are nominating an increasing number of women, men have a much better chance of being elected. CACSW president Glenda Simms said that men are tied into financial and political networks, and are overwhelmingly selected for the courts, the Senate and as managers in the civil service.

As of January 1, 1990, only 40 of the 295 seats in the House of Commons were held by women. Of 625 full time positions with various federal boards, agencies, commissions and Crown Corporations, women filled 181 jobs. Of 850 federally appointed judges, only 73 are women.

The paper suggests a series of initiatives to increase the number of women in elected and nominated positions of power. Among them are the suggestions that political parties should adopt numerical targets for female candidates, and that the government should establish a fund for female (or male) candidates who wish to run for election but can't afford it.

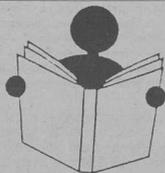
Shabby treatment for women seeking abortions

In Nova Scotia hospitals, getting an abortion is often a painful, humiliating, frustrating and even dangerous experience according to 25 women who gave complaints to the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL).

A recently released study done for the Halifax chapter of CARAL listed complaints ranging from family doctors who refused to refer them for abortions, to mental and physical pain caused by the operation. The study contrasts praise by four women who received services at the Morgentaler clinics in Montréal and Toronto with descriptions of Nova Scotia hospital experiences.

Several women said they received little counselling in the hospitals and were treated roughly by doctors and nurses. "There was no nurturing or caring or anything," said one woman.

The Halifax abortion clinic established by Dr. Henry Morgentaler re-opened in November after an 11-month closure. The clinic was closed while Morgentaler and pro-choice activists successfully fought legislation the province introduced to make all but hospital abortions illegal. The law was struck down by a provincial court judge last October and the Supreme Court of Canada has refused to review the decision. Morgentaler has also run into opposition in St. John's, Newfoundland, the site of his newest clinic.



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Madeline Parent: A voice from Québec

as told to Ellen Woodsworth

At 72, Madeline Parent—feminist, trade unionist and peace advocate—continues to play a key role in shaping the history of contemporary Québec. She became an activist in the late 30s while a student at McGill University. There, she campaigned for scholarships for poor people. During the war Parent organized in the textile and manufacturing industries and was arrested on several occasions for her activities. In the 50s, she co-founded the Canadian Textile Workers Union and in 1969 she helped establish a Canadian union central, the Confederation of Canadian Unions.

Parent is no stranger to feminism. In 1972, she attended the founding meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). Today, she is Québec's regional representative to NAC. Although she retired from her union position at the age of 65, Parent remains an active member of the coordinating committee of the Solidarité populaire Québec, a coalition of union, church, women's and community groups.

Madeline Parent visited Vancouver in October. The following is excerpted from her speech and an interview with Ellen Woodsworth.

Ellen Woodsworth: Who were the significant people who shaped your life?

Madeline: I was born in the East End of Montréal in 1918. I had a widowed grandmother who spent a lot of time with me. Her husband had been a nationalist and an active spectator, to say the least, in the demonstrations and protests of the time. She was an influence on me because she told me those stories with so much vividness and drama—as though she lived them again.

For example, [she described] the very great protest and mourning at the hanging of Louis Riel and the defeat of the Metis and Indians who were fighting for provincial status in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. She also had a critical eye for the right-wing of the Catholic Church. Although she was a believer herself, she made a distinction between those priests who stood with the people on issues and those who stood with the government against the people.

I was also inspired by Dolores Ibarruri for her role in the Spanish civil war, and by Idola St. Jean and Therese Casgrain in their fight for Québécoise women's right to vote, and for equality and rights for working class women. And I was especially inspired by Simone de Beauvoir.

The first women's strike of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union were in 1937. Lea Roback was a key organizer there. She taught me many things and by the end of my years at McGill, I knew that I wanted to be a union organizer. I had to keep it a big dark secret because everyone would have thought that I was crazy. But I confided in Lea and she said, "why of course." That was very encouraging to me.

In the spring of 1942, the American Federation of Labour unions launched a campaign to organize workers in the war industries which employed a large number of women. I was an office secretary—the only job they would let me have at the time—but

it gave me time to be at the factory gates in the mornings as long as I was at my desk at 9 a.m. After work I was free to attend union meetings to help organize and visit workers in their homes, and to work on pamphlet composition and translation.

I came in touch with some magnificent women in these industries who just took hold of the unions. In 1943 we organized the cotton mill workers in Montréal, choosing a mill that had had strikes since the 1890s when women had organized for pay increases for themselves and children. We still had child labour in the 1940s.

These strikes were very successful, although Parent and others were arrested; she was charged with sedition for her role in the massive strike at the Valleyfield mill. Parent continued to organize in Montréal but was forced to move to Toronto in 1967 because of the pressure from the right-wing. She now resides in Montréal.

Madeline: When I was a young girl and later as a young organizer, the predominant myth was that a woman's place was in the home looking after husband, children, the sick and the elderly—even though in actual fact a lot of women were out working in cotton mills, woolen mills, tobacco plants, in the food industries, as domestics, in department stores and offices.

Every time women in the cotton mills would complain about their conditions and



Madeline Parent

unpaid maternity or paternity leave with maintenance of benefits.

Also at this time, community health clinics were being set up all over Québec. Doctors were able to perform abortions in them, ignoring the federal law. The first one was in the headquarters of the National Trade Unions.

There are over 1,500 women's groups in Québec today. In the movement itself, I would be glad if there was more cohesion and support. You have one group that is very good and that is the network of women's centres. We have about 80 centres all over Québec and they are very grassroots—85 percent of the women who use them are housewives. However, the cen-

trust of minorities—as though they were the ones who threaten Québec. So there was a protest and a boycott of the ceremonies.

The Québec Native Women's Association is well-rooted in all of the reserves and in Montréal runs a transition house. During the Mohawk crisis [in the summer of 1990], their one goal was to get money and food and medicine through the police and army lines. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) offered them help as did some other women's groups. However, some elements in the women's movement were reluctant to [get involved]—they were cooled off by Bourassa's portrayal of the struggle as the work of Warriors and that Native people were being used by the Warriors.

But it was Bourassa's violent military attack on the Mohawks that made the Warriors indispensable. And he was so violent because he didn't want Native people to gain any more power [and] block his plans to build the James Bay II hydro electric plant on Native lands.

The women's movement helped organize over two dozen demonstrations in support of the Mohawks, but the mass media didn't tell you about them. You must remember that when you think of the people of Québec, make sure you don't confuse us with Bourassa and Parizeau [leader of the PQ].

Ellen: Who are the key players in the movement for Québec independence?

Madeline: The Parti Québécois is now led by bourgeois nationalists. Lucien Bouchard's group [Bloc Québécois] is conservative and hasn't even criticized Mulroney. The commission Bourassa set up [after the failure of the Meech Lake Accord] is chaired by two big bankers and has representatives from the Liberals, the PQ, the Equality Party, four union representatives, one representative of culture—but no representatives from Native, women's, immigrant and visible minority groups.

Then there are the progressive movements for self-determination that consist of the women's movement, churches, unions, Native groups etc. which want a Québec that has strong social programs and social justice as part of a new society.

Ellen Woodsworth is a long time political activist, a characteristic she shares with her 77-year-old mother

The women's movement helped organize over two dozen demonstrations in support of the Mohawks, but the mass media didn't tell you about that

begin to organize, the reaction was: "Your place is in the home," although the employers were very happy to exploit them.

Ellen: What is the situation of the women's movement today?

Madeline: In the 1960s, the Fédération des femmes de Québec was the main women's organization. It concentrated on women's rights and for choice on abortion and was mainly a young women's organization. This was a time of rebellion against the controls of the church. Many of the movements to organize the nurses, teachers, government workers, and other hospital workers were driven to organize women.

A lot of the nationalist movement which brought the Parti Québécois (PQ) to power in 1976 [came from] the support of public sector workers where women were very active and strong. When the PQ turned against the public sector during the recession of 1982, they lost their volunteers and lost the next election. It was as simple as that.

In the public sector negotiations in 1979, workers won 20 weeks of maternity leave at 93 percent of their pay while still accumulating seniority, pensions, health benefits, and paid vacations—as well as two years

were hurt very badly by the Secretary of State cutbacks [in February, 1990] and are fighting to survive.

The women's movement in Québec's trade unions is greater than anywhere else on the North American continent and represent hundreds of thousands of women. There is also a strong women farmers union which supported the Mohawks and also the rights of immigrant women in recent demonstrations.

There are women organized in the pro-choice movement, the welfare movement, the lesbian movement and others. Violence against women and children is a very important issue right now and includes the struggle against child sexual abuse. This movement has been fighting the right-wing dominated court system, the Catholic School Board and the Québec Education Department.

Minority, immigrant and women of colour have had to stand up within the women's movement—which hasn't been easy because of elitist tendencies. For example, last April there was a celebration of 50 years of [non-Native] women's vote. The honorary godmother of the event was Lise Payette who had made a film that promoted fear and dis-

At UBC

Dealing with harassment

by Agnes Huang and Heidi Walsh

Some women won't acknowledge the problem. Some drop courses because of it. The issue is sexual harassment on campus.

In light of the recent Vanier Park incident—when male students sent violently sexist handwritten notes to women's dorm rooms—we went to the University of British Columbia to find out more about its formal structures for dealing with harassment complaints and to determine how effective they are.

In 1988, UBC introduced definitions of sexual harassment and set up guidelines for handling sexual harassment complaints. The university was forced to formalize its approach to harassment for several reasons, including many years of agitation by women students and the Supreme Court decision in the late 1980s which made sexual harassment the responsibility of the employer and deemed it a form of sex discrimination.

The Sexual Harassment Office was established in April, 1989. Margaretha Hoek, who counselled women at the post-secondary level for 15 years, and Dr. Jon Shapiro, professor of education, were hired as advisors.

The office's mandate is twofold: to receive inquiries and complaints from those who have been sexually harassed and, on a wider scope, to educate the campus population about harassment.

The office received 60 inquiries in its first year, but since September 1990 has already dealt with over forty. The proportion of incidents of harassment which are reported is not known—like rape, sexual harassment is frequently experienced and infrequently reported. The majority of those who visit the office are female students. Female staff and faculty members and a few men have also made inquiries.

"Ninety-five percent come in just to talk about the incident," says Hoek. "We do some problem-solving with them and give them a lot of support. They usually want to find some informal way of making [the harassment] stop."

The university has a four-step procedure for handling harassment complaints which

is only activated when the harassed woman makes a formal, written complaint. In the first step, the advisors take the complaint to the alleged harasser (respondent) and invite a written response. Copies of all written materials are given to the respondent's dean and kept on permanent record.

The harassed woman decides how far the complaint process goes. If she wants to pursue the matter further, she may ask for a mediated discussion with the accused and/or for an investigation. If the investigation confirms the harassment, the case can be given a formal hearing by a three-person committee. The committee can recommend disciplinary actions which may include anything from verbal admonishments to recommendations for expulsion or firing.

Only five percent of the women who come to the office make a formal complaint—the majority have been sexually assaulted. To date, no complaint has reached the formal hearing stage, although a few are now being set up for investigation.

Letting Off Steam

The overwhelming majority who visit the office simply want to let off steam. They most commonly report sexist remarks or threats of extortion made by professors or peers. Graduate students working under close faculty supervision are especially vulnerable to threats, as are students from Third World countries who fear losing their visas.

"The tendency is that [the complainants] don't wish to pursue [the incident] other than with informal mechanisms. They would rather do that and then drop [the matter], or choose to leave a class," says Shapiro. Some students even drop out of their programs entirely.

The advisors are recommending more flexibility in the policy to allow them to initiate conversations with alleged harassers without a formal complaint being made. "The changes that we're trying to make to recognize that sometimes the power problems are so bad that [the formal complaint requirement] doesn't work well enough," says Hoek. "As the university, we have to take on more and not leave it to the woman

herself." The Board of Governors will review the recommendations in December.

"A lot of women won't come forward because of concerns of confidentiality," says Linda Shout, coordinator of UBC's Women's Centre. "As well, many won't recognize what has happened to them as sexual harassment."

The term 'harassment' itself is problematic: rarely is it seen as referring to a legit-

their educational programs. They frequently talk to faculty groups on sexual harassment, but are having a harder time reaching the student body.

To increase their visibility, they hold workshops and information sessions for students. They have spoken at student residences, and have held group discussions with students involved in the Vanier Park incident. This year, the advisors were invited to give two lectures to first year en-



Graphic from Education des Femmes

imate and serious offence. Many feel an act of harassment only occurs when a conscious intent to harass exists. This attitude was illustrated in the Vanier Park incident when many female and male residents dismissed the offensive invitations as harmless pranks.

A major weakness of the UBC policy is that it has no mechanism for confronting systemic sexism. While the policy deals with conduct and comments of a sexual nature, it does not address the underlying issue of gender discrimination. Silencing women students, by disregarding their contributions in class and devaluing their achievements, are overlooked, although they are more subtle forms of sexual harassment.

Ellen Pond, a student affiliated with the Women's Centre, says the policy is also powerless to deal with harassment cases in which the perpetrator is unknown. The abundant misogynist graffiti on campus, for example, remains outside the policy's scope.

Hoek and Shapiro hope to help change the perceptions of sexual harassment through

engineering students on gender discrimination and sexual harassment.

Linda Shout believes the administration could do much more to create a less violent and discriminatory atmosphere on campus. Reducing the male bias in the curriculum and increasing female appointments to faculty and the administration are important first steps.

They are also steps that go to the very core of the university's power structures—structures that are distinctly patriarchal.

In the university environment, where problems are often intellectualized and then rationalized, how can more men be made to understand the seriousness of sexual harassment, and more women encouraged to complain and resist? Until these questions are resolved, no formal structure or policy alone can ever hope to effectively deal with the issue.

Agnes Huang aspires to be on the CSIS Most Wanted List. Heidi Walsh is a freelance writer in Vancouver.

Affirmative action for McGill students

by Allana Murray

By early 1991, the Student Society of McGill University (SSMU) may be the first of its kind in Canada to include an affirmative action clause in its constitution. In November 1990, Student Council passed a by-law amendment put forward by the McGill Affirmative Action Coalition. Clause 7.03 previously stated that: "the membership of each accredited Activity, Club and Functional Group of the Society must be open to all members of the Society" (emphasis added). The by-law now goes on to say: "does not preclude a distinction, exclusion or preference in membership or officers by a group, club or activity at McGill devoted exclusively to the well-being of a group disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or social class."

The amendment is the result of efforts by two student groups, the McGill Women's Union and the Walk-Safe Network. Their constitutions have remained unaffiliated because the Women's Union reserved the right to restrict its membership to women only, and the Walk-Safe Network required its executive to be a majority of women. Without SSMU recognition, groups on campus are unable to receive funding. Rather than alter their constitutions, the two groups formed the Affirmative Action Coalition with other progressive student groups in order to influence the SSMU to amend its own constitution.

According to Coalition member Monica Brennan, the by-law change is only the first step in a longer process to make the improvement of "conditions of disadvantaged groups an integral part of Student Society's constitution and aims." In order to assure a permanent place for affirmative action within the SSMU constitution, a motion is being prepared for Council to sponsor a referendum on the issue which would take place in the spring.

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Reproductive technologies:

Our voices must be heeded

by Bonnie Waterstone

On November 26, the Vancouver Status of Women presented the following brief to the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies.

The Vancouver Status of Women has responded to the invitation of the Royal Commission of New Reproductive Technologies because we believe that, under present circumstances, the development and use of new reproductive technologies (NRTs) does not support women's equality.

NRTs have serious negative implications for women, including a misplaced focus on technological rather than social solutions, the use of women as experimental subjects, increased exploitation of poor women and women of colour, and the threat that women will lose what little control they now have over their bodies.

NRTs are often presented as increasing women's choices with regard to reproduction, while in fact they limit women's control over their own bodies. Control is given over to the experts: medical and legal practitioners who understand the complexities of the new technologies.

What is being presented as choice is really only a set of consumer options, a Western version of freedom—the freedom to consume more. The foundations of authentic choice are dignity, integrity and self-determination. To discuss choice outside this context is to distort and destroy its meaning.

There are very real choices that women lack; for example, the choice of money, adequate housing, health care, physical safety, and access to child care and education. Women's options are constrained by a lack of basic economic and social justice. While money, time and energy is available to research and develop NRTs, measures which would improve the conditions which limit women's lives are not explored.

The so-called treatments for infertility—actually medical interventions which by-pass, rather than treat, infertility—are not available to everyone. Very few couples are being offered the consumer option of having a baby with the help of NRTs. This parallels the reality that we live in a world where the vast majority of people, resources and the earth itself are being exploited for the benefit of a few.

These technologies are not neutral and they are costly. The money and energy devoted to their development could be used instead to improve the conditions into which children are born, and the conditions in which women and children live.

If concern about infertility were genuine, then public health policy would be developed and implemented which investigated and acted upon the causes of infertility. Treatments for infertility in men would be as common as for women and accessibility to treatment would be equitable.

Preventing infertility would help many more people, now and in the future, than techniques of artificial fertilization. Action needs to be taken to eliminate the environmental and iatrogenic (doctor-caused) roots of infertility as well as infertility caused by sexually transmitted diseases, workplace hazards, contraceptives, industrial/agricultural chemicals, and hazards in consumer products.

Similarly, NRTs take a distorted approach to the issue of genetically-based disabilities. With their false promise of "perfect babies," NRTs actually threaten to erode the equality rights of people with dis-

abilities by implying that such people are—and should be—"preventable."

Further, the leading cause of infant disability is poverty. Genetic screening or genetic intervention cannot solve this problem, but funding for services could begin to.

The development of NRTs goes hand-in-hand with the creation of markets for proliferating pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. A "can do, must do" philosophy has taken over as the interests of scientists and corporations coincide. The commercialization of reproduction has dangerous consequences for women and for future generations.

Who benefits from this commercialization of the reproductive process? Doctors, lawyers, medical researchers and large corporations benefit. As body parts (eggs, sperm, embryos) become commodities to be

voted to improving technologies. Obviously, the emphasis is not on increasing women's ability to make informed decisions about their own bodies. Rather, the emphasis is on research without regard for the reality of women's lives.

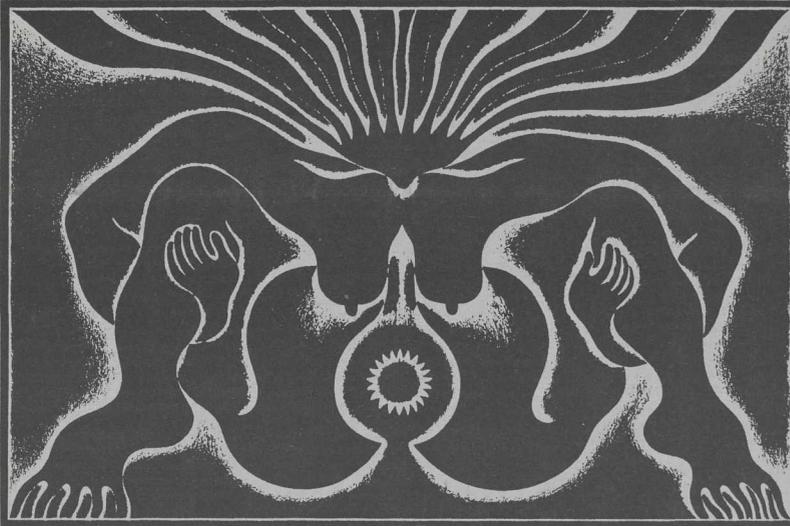
Women remember their experiences as guinea pigs for the old reproductive technologies. The new technologies are also full of risks. The long term effects of the new powerful drugs involved are not known. *In vitro* fertilization has such a low success rate and such attendant health risks that it can only be considered experimental.

The medical establishment takes advantage of the social conditioning to bear a biological child in order to secure willing—sometimes paying—subjects for their research. The choices not to have children, or to adopt or to foster a child, challenge

being done by groups such as the Immigrant Women's Health Centre in Toronto. Statutes providing for the sterilization of mentally handicapped people existed in BC and Alberta until the 1970s.

In all countries of the world, male children are preferred over female. It is also a well-documented fact that all sex selection clinics report a very high preference for male offspring. This is a form of oppression of women.

Medical interventions which by-pass infertility are marketed to white, middle or upper class couples. Women of colour, poor women, illiterate women, disabled, single, lesbian, mentally-handicapped women, or those who live in a country the West has labelled as over-populated and underdeveloped are not considered suitable.



Graphic by Judy Chicago

bought and sold, the danger to women increases. Poor and Third World women will be particular targets, as economic necessity forces them to sell body parts or enter surrogate contracts. This exploitation of women is presented as "sexual and reproductive choice," an example of using the rhetoric of choice against women.

Along with the commodification of body parts, the fragmentation of the reproductive process reinforces the idea of a separation between a woman and her fetus. This threatens a woman's right to bodily integrity. The woman herself must have decision-making power regarding her own body and must be given all necessary information to enable her to make informed decisions.

The complex and experimental nature of NRTs makes it extremely difficult for women to give informed consent regarding medical procedures. At the same time, these medical interventions are becoming routine. Health care education and preventative health care programs remain inadequate while money, time and energy is de-

the assumptions upon which the marketing of NRTs are based, and threaten the profitability of the biotechnology industry.

Reducing the issue of infertility to a debate between women who "just want their own baby" and feminists who are characterized as "anti-family" is misleading, dangerous and anti-feminist. This polarization side-steps the real threat these technologies pose to women's lives, pits women against each other, masks the actual villain—the sexist, racist, classist society upheld by the patriarchal status quo—and effectively prevents positive debate and change.

NRTs obstruct the equality rights of all women because of the context of racism and classism within which they are being developed. In Canada, as in all countries of the world, the practice of eugenics is a reality. The rate of sterilization of women of colour, disabled women and poor women is much higher than that of white, middle or upper class, able-bodied women. Sterilization abuse of Native women in Canada has been well-documented. Investigation into coercive sterilization practices in Canada is

It is within this climate of eugenics, of racism, classism and sexism that NRTs are promoted. The prejudice favours white, middle or upper class males. At the same time, it is women's lives and women's bodies that are at stake.

Much more public discussion on NRTs is needed, as well as more information, more public education and more consultation. Women's voices must be heard and heeded.

The Royal Commission has initiated public discourse. The commission should also ensure that information about these technologies, their effects, and their potential impact, is accessible to the public, in order that responsible public policy decisions can be made. We need policies which protect equality rights, promote the well-being and respect of women and their children, and benefit the majority of people in the present and for generations to come.

Please see next page for Vancouver Status of Women's recommendations to the Royal Commission.

Recommendations

From previous page.

The Vancouver Status of Women calls upon the Royal Commission to recommend public policies as follows:

- 1) Improve social and economic conditions:
 - to combat the increasing poverty of women and children, make guaranteed annual income, universal child care, and educational opportunities a priority
- 2) Expand women's autonomy and self-determination and create the possibility for real choices:
 - increase funding and support for parents raising special needs children, to make raising a disabled child a positive choice
 - make adoption more accessible
- 3) Improve health care, and take pro-active steps to ensure that informed consent with regard to NRTs becomes a reality. In particular, we endorse the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIA/W) recommendation:
 - Publicly funded locally-based reproductive clinics should be established to provide information and counselling on all aspects of reproduction and to practise those reproductive technologies established as legal. These clinics would offer services for birth control, adoption, infertility counselling and treatment, abortion, hormone replacement therapy, treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and menstrual disorders, and birthing. Women must play a cen-

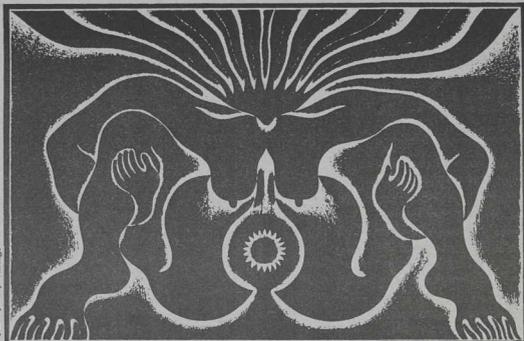
tral role in the planning, regulation, and implementation of these reproductive clinics.

4) Take the initiative in de-commercializing NRTs, including implementing strict controls for research:

- prohibit testing for sex selection
- prohibit research into human cloning, ectogenesis (developing a human fetus outside the womb), and growth or use of fetuses for tissue or organ transplants
- prohibit import of ova, sperm, and fetal tissue from other countries
- treat embryos and other human genetic materials in the same manner as the Canadian Red Cross treats blood, i.e., they must be considered a gift, and cannot be bought or sold

5) Redirect research funding into:

- causes of infertility—environmental, iatrogenic causes, as well as infertility caused by sexually transmitted diseases, industrial/agricultural chemicals, workplace hazards, contraceptives, hazards in consumer products, emotional factors.
- long-term effects of all reproductive technologies, new and old
- research into rates of infertility for women of different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds in Canada
- causes of male infertility
- funding for educational programs about



Graphic by Andy Ching

the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases, including programs in the schools

- research into safe contraception
- 6) *In vitro* fertilization (IVF) programs:
- there should be no criteria other than medical for entry, but the eligibility period should be extended from one to two years (i.e. infertility should be re-defined to mean "the failure to conceive after two years of normal intercourse.") We endorse the CRIA/W recommendation that women undergoing IVF must be considered experimental subjects and provided with appropriate information on the medical risks to their own bodies and the uncertain long-term effects on the potential fetuses.
- 7) Artificial (alternative) insemination:
- there should be no requirements for medical supervision for this process and no restrictions on access.

8) Surrogacy/contract motherhood arrangements:

- There should be no commercialization or financial transactions allowed in the contract motherhood arrangements. Further, these arrangements should not be regulated by law, except that:
- the payment of money should be prohibited
 - commercial surrogacy arrangements should be made a criminal offence
 - the advertising of contract motherhood arrangements should be banned
- 9) Facilitate continuing discussion on NRTs by:
- consulting with feminist organizations
 - funding feminist groups to provide public education.

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End the Occupation

As Jews, feminists, activists...

by Rachel Epstein

The last Thursday of every month the Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza (JWCEO) stands vigil from 5:30 to 6:30 pm in front of the Israeli Consulate in Toronto. We dress in black and carry our banner and signs that say "End the Occupation."

Response to our vigils is varied—recently we got some encouraging honks from passing cars and a few thumbs up signs from people passing by. We were also told by a Jewish couple that we "should have died in the camps" and that we "are traitors to our own people;" another woman took a swipe at one of our members with her briefcase.

Our Thursday vigils are held in solidarity with Women in Black vigils organized by women in Israel who are opposed to their government's policies and actions in the Occupied Territories. The current Palestinian uprising or Intifada, which began in December 1987, has swelled the ranks of the Israeli peace movement and there are now hundreds of groups in Israel and the Occupied Territories working for a peaceful solution

In Israel and in Canada, it is difficult to speak as Jews against Israel

to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Women's groups, including Women in Black, are central to this movement.

Women in Black began in Jerusalem and has now spread to more than 80 locations throughout Israel and around the world. Every Friday from 1 to 2 pm women gather at a busy intersection, dressed in black carrying signs: "Stop the Occupation".

The responses we encounter in Toronto seem mild compared to reports from women in Israel. There they are subjected to intense verbal and sometimes physical abuse from right-wing Israelis who disagree with them. Women have been called "whores of the Arabs," they are told "all you girls need is a little rape to make you feel better" and "what's the matter, ladies, fucking Arafat is better?" Some people throw things—eggs, fruit, tomatoes, water. There have been incidents of men beating women and the police continue to be hostile to the vigils.

In Israel and in Canada, it is difficult to speak as Jews against Israel. It can feel like you are going against your own people and indeed, we often risk losing ties not only to the larger mainstream Jewish community but to our immediate family and friends. It is difficult for some Jews to accept those of us who are critical of Israel's actions.

However, as Jews, as feminists, as political activists and as people committed to fighting for justice, the women in JWCEO feel we cannot stand silent while Israel commits acts of violence against Palestinians. Our group is not completely unified politically but we agree on the need for an immediate end to the occupation in the West Bank and Gaza and for Israel to negotiate with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) towards the creation of a Palestinian state (although our anarchist member gets uncomfortable when we talk about the creation of any state). We want to dia-

logue with other Jews and to put pressure on the Canadian and Israeli governments to recognize and negotiate with the PLO.

Confusing, Painful Journey

We come to this position from very different experiences. I am unusual in that I come from a family that never supported the existence of an exclusively Jewish state. Most of us come from backgrounds where an uncritical allegiance to Israel was a given. For many of us it has been a confusing and painful journey to discover that much of what we were taught about Israel is not true and to confront the reality of the Israeli Occupation.

Our group has its roots in some workshops held in 1988 to look at what blocks or prevents Jewish women activists from working in solidarity with Palestinians. We held two workshops, one to look at these blocks, the other to consider answers to some of the difficult questions we are asked when we do speak out against Israeli policies. The results of these workshops made it clear that there were Jewish women wanting to learn more about and be active on these issues.

In March, 1989 the Women in Black vigils started in Toronto, originally sponsored by women from Jews For a Just Peace, another Jewish peace group. Women who attended these vigils were looking for a way to be active as women around the Middle East. The JWCEO was formed to organize a special vigil on October 2, 1989 in honour of the Days of Awe, the days between the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanna and Yom Kippur, days traditionally committed to meditation, reflection and a recommitment to the values of justice and peace.

Vigils were held in 17 US cities and in Toronto in solidarity with Israeli and Palestinian peace groups. At the vigil in Toronto about 50 women came; we lit candles, sang, heard speeches and remembered in silence the Palestinians who had died at the hands of the Israeli military.

International Women's Day, 1990 was a coming out for the JWCEO. We made our first banner and marched with the Palestinian women's contingent, an historic moment in Toronto's women's movement. We had a table at the fair where we sold buttons and articles, displayed photographs of our vigils and gave out hamantaschen (Jewish cookies eaten at Purim). We held another special vigil in response to Women in Black in Israel's call to "all the women of the world" to hold vigils on March 8th.

The mainstream media has largely ignored us...

Since then we have maintained our regular vigils at the Israeli consulate and we've co-sponsored several educational events with other Jewish peace groups such as Jews for a Just Peace, new Jewish Agenda and the United Jewish People's Order. These have included a showing of the film *Shattered Dreams* and a speaking tour by members of Yesh G'vul, an organization of Israelis who refuse to do military duty in the Occupied Territories. In June, 1990 we joined with a local Palestinian women's group to organize a demonstration at the Israeli consulate to commemorate the 23rd anniversary of the occupation.

Our current project is to organize a series of workshops for Jewish women. The first workshop will look at questions of Jewish identity and experiences of Jewish oppression (I avoid using the term "anti-semitism" because it is an inaccurate term: both Jews and Arabs are semitic people but the term has historically been used only to describe the oppression of Jews.) The second will focus on the connections between Jewish op-

pression and racism, and will look at Jewish responses to the Middle East.

As a group we also want to make links with other anti-racist struggles. Last year we joined the Women's Coalition Against Racism and Police Violence, a Toronto women's coalition formed after Sophia Cook, a young Black woman, was shot and maimed by Toronto police. The shooting was another in a long history of state violence towards Black people in Toronto, and makes clear the need to protest state-endorsed racism, whether it happens in Toronto or in the West Bank and Gaza.

While our primary purpose is to organize politically as Jewish women towards an end to the Israeli occupation, we also exist as a group of Jewish women interested in meeting together. Our meetings are held on Friday nights and large quantities of food are usually involved. We often hold special gatherings on Jewish holidays and we choose different ways to recognize and celebrate our Jewishness.

We work in JWCEO because it is important that there be a loud Jewish voice in opposition to Israeli repression in the Occupied Territories. The voice does exist, in Israel and around the world, but it is difficult to hear. Most people in North America are unaware of the extent of the Israeli peace movement; most people in Canada do not hear about the activities of our group and other Jewish peace groups. The mainstream media has largely ignored us, despite our repeated efforts.

Ours is an unpopular voice but one we are determined to use. We encourage other women to join us and the thousands of other women around the world who make up the women's call for peace in the Middle East.

See "What you can do..." next page.

Rachel Epstein used to live in Vancouver, still considers it her home, and hopes to atiyah back there some day.



photo by Rachel Epstein

Fifth Encuentro Feminista:

3,000 feminists invade town

by Carmen Rodriguez

At the end of November, more than 3,000 feminists literally invaded every corner of San Bernardo, an Atlantic resort town over 300 kilometres south of Buenos Aires.

The reason: the Fifth Encuentro Feminista Latinoamericano y del Caribe—an opportunity to discuss the issues of organized Latin American and Caribbean women from all over the Americas and some European countries.

The powerful trade union representing Argentinian workers in the energy industry (Luz y Fuerza) had originally offered its gigantic hotel to the Encuentro—a location which could have lodged everybody, plus given space to the hundreds of scheduled workshops, readings, meetings and discussion groups. The union apparently withdrew its offer for “political” reasons: the word feminist is also an “F” word in Latin America.

Organizers were left with the overwhelming task of trying to accommodate everybody in the twenty-odd hotels in San Bernardo, and to schedule events in every possible

space, from hotel lobbies and empty storefronts to the central plaza—and, of course, the beach.

The opening ceremony, on the evening of Sunday, November 18th, took place in the plaza. Women gathered around signs with the names of their countries of origin and, after the organizer’s opening remarks and a performance by a dance troupe, every delegation went on stage to greet the crowd, talk about their expectations of the encounter, and even perform a song or a dance.

It was a vibrant and emotional ceremony—3,000 women celebrating their differences but, above all, their unity of purpose: to advance towards the construction of a truly democratic society, where women and men can live in peace and fully develop as human beings.

However, as the week advanced, several issues became apparent:

- Not all the women were represented; in fact, working class, Native, Black and other particularly oppressed sectors were minimally present
- Theoreticians and professionals became the “ruling class” of the event, while the

women doing concrete work on specific issues, such as battered women, rape, health, were relegated to a “second class” status

- Organizational problems hindered full participation: too many events happening at the same time, misinformation about times and places, long line-ups for lunch and dinner, inappropriate workshop spaces, etc. This led to a general feeling of frustration and alienation.

...feminist is also an “f” word in Latin America

At the same time, the growing awareness of these kinds of problems produced some important impromptu happenings: a group of women, tired of waiting at their hotel for news on the times and places of particular events, decided to do a workshop with the chamber maids, who were

happy to exchange views and experiences with the visitors; an Argentinian woman living in Toronto, exasperated by the commentaries on “the privilege of living in a ‘developed’ country” eloquently spoke to the media about the difficulties that ethnic minorities, and women in particular, face in Canada; a few Native women from different countries took a space and organized a workshop where they addressed their particular concerns.

All in all, with the event still so close to our noses and without the perspective that time and distance can give, we can say that this Fifth Encuentro Feminista of Latin American and Caribbean Women has been a fruitful experience. We have learned that feminists have come a long way and engaged in an infinite number of important tasks. Nevertheless, there is still much room to grow before we can actually talk about a continental feminist movement advancing towards a common goal.

Carmen Rodriguez filed this story from San Bernardo. Kinesis will carry more on the Encuentro in a future issue.

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To end the occupation

What you can do...

From previous page.

Many people are concerned about the continuing Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and support the idea of a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Here is a list of actions that readers can take to support the struggle for peace and justice.

To All Readers:

- Read up on the subject. We suggest: *Jewish Women's Call For Peace: A Handbook for Jewish Women on the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict*. Edited by Rita Falbel, Irena Klepfisz, and Donna Nevel, Firebrand Books, 1990. Also, check out the chapter “Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers” in *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation*. Edited by Zachary Lockman and Joel Beinin, Between the Lines Press, 1989.
- Write to the Canadian government to voice your support for Palestinian self-determination as well as Israel’s right to exist. Put pressure on the Canadian government to recognize the PLO.
- Write to the Israeli embassy and articulate your concerns about their government’s refusal to negotiate with the PLO. Urge them to move towards a peaceful settlement with the Palestinians. Voice your opposition to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.
- Write to your local newspapers to voice your concerns about articles or letters which tow the line of the Israeli government.
- Attend meetings and demonstrations which support an end to the occupation and a peaceful settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. (If you live in Toronto, join the JWCEO at our monthly vigils.)
- Send money to organizations like the Union of Palestine Medical Relief Committees (Box 19369, Jerusalem, Israel) or the Women’s Organization for Political Prisoners (PO Box 31811, Tel Aviv 61318, Israel)

To Jewish Women:

- Speak to your Jewish friends and family members about the occupation. The opinion of the Jewish community is gradually shifting in our direction. You can help to accelerate this process.
- Write to newspapers to respond to articles which tow the line of the Israeli government. Identify yourself as a concerned Jew who doesn’t agree with Shamir’s policies regarding the Occupied Territories.
- If you are a member of a Jewish group or synagogue, raise the issue of the occupation. Invite Palestinian speakers and speakers from the peace movement in Israel.
- Join Jewish groups which support an end to the occupation and dialogue with Palestinians. These groups include Jews for a Just Peace, New Jewish Agenda, Canadian Friends of Peace Now, and JWCEO. (PO Box 810, Station P, Toronto, Ont. M5S 2Z1).
- Form your own “Women in Black” group. Demonstrate in front of your local Israeli consulate and/or organize other relevant activities.

—Shlonsit Segal

Photo by Rachel Epstein

Against apartheid:

Until I stopped believing...

by Lizann Foster

"But how are you, Mummy?" she asks for the second time across the thousands of miles being bridged by the telephone call. Of course I give her the easiest answer: "I'm fine, baby. Now tell me about everything at home. How are things at school? How does the garden look these days? What were you doing when I called?" And so she tells me that the jacarandas are in bloom, carpeting the ground with their lilac blossoms; that it is so hot she went swimming the day before and that she has made a new friend who lives next door.

And when the call ends, I am struck once again by the irony in her question: "How are you?"

My daughter Candice lives in the civil war zone that Durban, Natal, South Africa has become. Bag searches at the entrances of all the shopping malls and bomb explosions are part of her daily life. She used to question the madness around her when she was a little younger, but now she seems as resigned as the adults around her appear to be. When the television news flashes scenes from yet another massacre, she sometimes says: "I wish they would stop fighting," but mostly she says nothing.

Candice goes to a school for children designated "coloured" by the South African government. The school used to be a white school but when it got too old the government handed it over to the "coloured" Department of Education, one of the 15 education departments in South Africa. The school is quite close to my parents' home in a "coloured" residential area to the north of Durban.

In the 10 years of her life, Candice has seen some changes. Some of the places she could not go to when she was six years old are now open to her. The fact that she has to live in a residential area set aside for people who are not white and go to a school especially designated for people her colour does not seem so important to her, yet.

It has always been important to me and the source of my frustration and resentment. The critical shortage of housing in Black residential areas when the white areas have hundreds of houses and apartments vacant is characteristic of a political system where 87 percent of the land is owned by 13 percent of the population. The shortage has resulted in astronomical rents in the Black areas and often one can only get an apartment through favours and bribes.

Candice and I got our apartment through a friend of a friend of a friend. We were luckier than most people, though. I was a teacher-counsellor in a secondary school and making just enough money to keep us sheltered and fed. In a country where jobs are reserved for those of fairer hue, teaching is one of the few occupations that is relatively easy to get into. Having a job as a teacher does not guarantee financial security and many of my colleagues moonlighted, even though this is not officially allowed.

The school where I taught was a converted factory situated right next to a chemical factory that emitted noxious gases all day long. The whole area was surrounded by heavy industry. In South Africa it is really easy to find the Black residential areas—just look for the industrial areas. The residents in the area have a drill they practice whenever the oil refinery on the east end of

the township goes up in flames. The people whose homes are just across the road from the refinery live in morbid fear of this ever happening; it is unlikely that they would be able to get out in time. Many roads in the township are not tarred and become impassable during the rainy seasons.

Some of the houses are actually converted army barracks and are totally unsuitable for

not born white, was what characterised my job as a teacher-counsellor. I used to tell them that they could not let the apartheid system win and add their names to the masses of unemployed Black people. I used to tell them that they could beat the system by getting a good education and leaving the township to make a better life for themselves elsewhere. For seven years I told them this, until I stopped believing that it

of the worst counselling experiences I had was talking to a parent who came to school in tears to tell us the reason her children had not been in school the day before was because their home had been razed by Inkatha, the Black political group headed by Mangosuthu Buthelezi and believed to be behind most of the violence in Natal.

After trying for seven years to battle a system that allocates 1,200,000 Rand for every white child's education and 430 Rand for every Black child's education, a system that ensures white children have schools with tennis courts, swimming pools, indoor gymnasiums and well-stocked science laboratories where they are trained to be the bosses—and Black children are lucky if their schools have electricity and one soccer ball as sports equipment for their "physical education" while they are trained to be obedient servants—after seven years I quit.

Perhaps I gave up too easily. Perhaps the experiences of friends who were detained in solitary confinement for months on end or who were beaten up for attending political rallies scared me too much. I lived in constant fear that I would be next. The night I sheltered a friend who was on the run from the security police was one of the longest I ever had to live through. I became like a lot of adults around me: numbed by the system we had lived in for so long.

Perhaps that is why the children took over the struggle. They got tired of waiting. Their natural impatience inspired them to speed the revolution up—to take it into the classroom and out into the streets. Many of them died but the pressure has not stopped and finally the government has begun to make the changes they demand.

Lots of things are changing in South Africa today but the changes are cosmetic and superficial. The foundations of apartheid are still very firmly in place. The Land Act of 1913, the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act are the cornerstones of the system and until they are removed from the statute books, no real change can take place. Even the few changes that President De Klerk has implemented are too much for the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement who have declared war on the government, a government already at war with most of its citizens, a government that provides the ammunition for those citizens who war with each other over the meagre resources they are allocated.

Even though the area that Candice lives in with my parents is relatively safe, there can be no really safe place during a civil war. Sometimes I wonder whether the decision to leave her until I had settled somewhere else was the right one. But it seemed as though I would be taking her from a bad situation into a worse one by dragging her along with me, not knowing if my quest for a better life would be successful.

What my daughter really wants to know is whether, after being here for eight months, I have made any progress trying to start a new life for both of us, whether I am any closer to being able to send for her. She wants to know when she can join me in this place on the other side of the world where freedom to choose where and how to live is taken for granted and is not a privilege for the few.

Lizann Foster is a South African woman of colour and a refugee.



Candice Foster, at age six

the families of 10 people or more occupying them. My pupils often came to school hungry, having not eaten since the night before. The economic evil wrought by the apartheid system ensures that poverty has a colour—Black. Most of the pupils I taught had at least one parent unemployed and knew lots of other people around them without jobs.

Helping my pupils to deal with the social and psychological problems associated with a political system that denigrated all those

was possible for as long as the present government was in power.

I risked losing my job by criticizing their syllabi, the examination system and all the other inequalities associated with an inferior education. Some teachers had been detained for doing just that.

I felt so powerless and so useless. All I could offer was a sympathetic ear while helping students to develop an attitude toward their circumstances that was non-defeatist...until I felt defeated myself. One

FOR THE BIRTH OF LOVE

by Pam Galloway

Birth has many rituals.

In Greece, an opening flower is placed beside the labouring woman. As the flower unfolds, the woman's body opens to give birth. In Africa, a Zulu woman labours in a specially prepared hut, the floor strewn with dried dung, the room decorated with wood carvings. There is a hole in the roof so the woman can look at the sky. It is said that at night, "she counts the stars with pain."

Sheila Kitzinger, writer, social anthropologist and birth educator, told these and other stories of birth to an audience of about 260 women at the conference "Crisis in the Perinatal Period" held recently in Vancouver. The women—nurses, midwives and childbirth educators from around BC—gathered to listen to Kitzinger's wisdom, wisdom which has inspired proponents of natural childbirth for many years.

Kitzinger comes from a family where women have passed their strength and passion from generation to generation. She calls it "a female cultural inheritance." Her mother helped set up one of England's first birth control clinics, and Kitzinger clearly feels the impact of growing up with a woman who was a midwife, a pacifist and a radical.

And Kitzinger's five daughters have learned from their mother, as she has from them. Three of her daughters are radical feminists who have played a large part in her own politicization.

Sheila Kitzinger began her life's work for and with women after studying social anthropology at Oxford—she realized she was reading only about men's lives.

"I wanted to look at the great transformations in women's lives, the bonds that linked women together and social systems that were meaningful [for women]," said Kitzinger. She began cross-cultural studies of women's lives, travelling extensively. Her focus came to rest on women's health concerns and, after her own babies, on women's birthing experiences. She saw connections between what she had learned about women and the way women were treated in the western medical system.

Kitzinger is known internationally for her books on childbirth and women's sexuality which have been translated into 18 languages.

In comparing the experiences of women in different countries and cultures, Kitzinger developed a strong sensitivity to the difficulties faced by immigrant women in Britain.

As she spoke—gently, almost lovingly—about birthing rituals in various cultures, she entreated her predominantly white, Canadian audience to be sensitive to individual women's personal rituals and to make them feel secure in labour.

Then, Kitzinger's tone shifted to a controlled anger as she spoke of the ritual of the modern, hospital birth in technological societies.

Rituals of Control

We assume that medical acts are based on good, scientific theory but Kitzinger believes many are actually part of patriarchy's rituals of control. She used the example of the common face mask which, she says, "is employed as a talisman against infection"—it is well established that masks do not prevent the spread of infection after 15 minutes of use.

In the hospital, it is important that women remain passive and numerous ritualistic acts are performed to maintain this control. Preparation of the woman for birth, including dressing her in de-personalizing hospital garments and exposing her genitals in a way which de-sexes her, begin the ceremony. The attachment of technological devices such as electronic fetal monitors and intravenous drips separate the woman from the natural rhythms of her own body. Birth attendants gather around her and cheer on her efforts in a ritualistic dance around her bed. "Immediately before delivery an act of genital mutilation is performed," said Kitzinger, referring to episiotomy, the cutting of the tissue between the vagina and the rectum to allow the baby's head to pass through without tearing. She said there is no evidence to support the value of episiotomy and believes it can only be seen as a form of punishment.

Kitzinger compellingly compared cultures where ritual serves to support and strengthen women in childbirth, with modern Euro-American cultures where ritual controls and hurts women—and where even the most straightforward, uncomplicated birth is turned into a crisis.

"Doctors define birth while women experience it," said Kitzinger. Modern obstetrics has taken the natural and normal life process of birth and turned it into an industrial procedure which must be managed. "The medical system is centred on crisis management...I think it [must] seem rather dull and tedious not to be managing a crisis," she said. Birth has become a crisis. It is, however, an artificial crisis in which women are defined as "feckless, stupid, egotistical and even dangerous to their babies," said Kitzinger.



Germany, 16th century: a midwife assists at the delivery of a woman on a birth stool. From a woodcut by an unknown artist.

When women began to be hospitalized instead of giving birth at home, every birth became like an illness to be treated with modern technology and drugs. "It's very difficult to turn birth into a crisis at home," said Kitzinger.

In one of her many studies, Kitzinger compared the language used during 40 home births and 40 hospital births. She found the language used in the home birth accounts was far more positive than that in the hospital birth accounts. Words like "bewildering" and "traumatic" were often used in hospital accounts and notably, words like "allowed" and "let" (as in: "the doctor allowed me to hold the baby straight away") which suggest the control lies with the doctor. At home, the women themselves were in control and did not use these or similar terms in any of their reports.

Technological intervention was common in the hospital births—only one in forty received no intervention—while in the home birth reports, 4/5 births had no intervention.

Hospitals are bureaucracies and as such, are extremely time-conscious. There is an emphasis on time management and, indeed, three-quarters of the hospital birth reports made frequent reference to time. Kitzinger described hospital births as "a race against time...the technology which is the most threatening and which has changed the character of birth has been around a long time—it's the clock."

Labour is deemed to be short or long, and long labours, being undesirable, have led to the use of drugs to speed up contractions. Drug-induced labours are more intense, which means that contractions of the uterus are stronger, forcing the walls of the uterus against the baby—an assault. Kitzinger said: "...the babies have no voice, we must speak for them."

She refers scornfully to what she describes as "the patchwork quilt syndrome" manifested in birthing rooms in hospitals. Pleasant decorations and furniture (including the patchwork quilt) change only the surface environment and not the attitudes that exist in the room.

Kitzinger believes women should be able to give birth in their own space: "Perhaps we can change hospitals so that they can become the best place for the birth of love...otherwise the best place for birth is at home."

To demonstrate this Kitzinger showed slides and shared the story of a home-birth of her own grandson, Sam. It was a water birth, a practice growing in popularity in Europe. Kitzinger's daughter, Tess, was seen at various stages of her labour both in and out of the small pool which had been brought into the home especially for the birth. It was clear the event was bathed in calm, and a close bonding was evident between those present; Kitzinger, Tess and her midwife and Tess's husband. Baby Sam was born, moving from one warm, water environment to another, from his mother's uterus to the pool.

There was a soft gasp of surprise in the audience when Kitzinger pointed out that in the whole event Tess's blood loss was about a teaspoonful. For Kitzinger, this underlined the gentleness and non-violent nature of both home and water births for mother and baby.

Hospital births are bloody not because blood is a natural component of the birth process, said Kitzinger, but because they are violent. She sees the experience of birth for many women to be "an institutionalized act of violence." Birth as rape.

Kitzinger believes that the disempowerment women undergo in birth leads to feelings of having been violated. This theory grew from Kitzinger's discussions with two of her daughters who work in the fields of rape crisis counselling and with survivors of child sexual abuse. Kitzinger noticed that in their descriptions of their experiences, women who had been assaulted and women who had difficult births used the same language. To further develop the theory, Kitzinger put ads in newspapers asking women to write to her about their birthing experiences. She received 345 letters.

She had not suggested what she was looking for. "I feel invaded and mutilated, I don't feel the same woman anymore," said one letter. Another: "I just didn't have the words to explain why I felt so violated." Words such as "skewed...trash...mauled...a bloody mess" were common.

Women had been robbed of their identity, their bodies fragmented with attention paid only to their genitals. Emotional blackmail was often used to gain a woman's compliance: telling a woman she may hurt or even kill her baby if she does not "go along" will usually guarantee her assent. Women felt they must have gratitude towards those who had "...given her a baby" and yet they also felt uneasy at the way they had been treated.

Women often blame themselves after rape and bear guilt and so did many of the women who wrote Kitzinger: "I ended up having an episiotomy because I didn't relax." If the woman doesn't blame herself then society will do it for her. Rape victims are often said to have "contributed to" or "provoked" the assault. Women often fail to report rape because they fear such a response. Likewise, few women ever complain about hospital care.

Post-Natal Depression is Grief...

The common thread running through all the accounts said Kitzinger, was a sense of powerlessness. After such disempowerment and emotional injury, many women become post-natally depressed. Kitzinger said, "post-natal depression is...grief that follows...violence."

In western culture, distress after childbirth is seen to be due to hormonal imbalances: "women are fundamentally flawed." Kitzinger believes that post-natal depression stems from attitudes in society which trivialize unhappiness or treat it as a mental illness.

Women's unhappiness is likely to be ignored until it has some effect on others. This view of women's emotional condition after birth deflects responsibility from the medical system and does not deal with how the system should be changed to prevent women's distress.

Kitzinger's analysis of modern, obstetrical birth as an act of violence drew a strong response from her audience. Some delegates disagreed with her, saying things have already changed, that they were working hard to bring further change and that, in any case, "it isn't like that in Canada."

Kitzinger acknowledged that the women at the conference were working for more supportive birthing environments and that her words may have seemed like an attack. She then invited women to come forward, to speak of their experiences in Canada either as women who had given birth or as birth attendants. And they did. For 45 minutes women spoke, often emotionally. And the room somehow seemed smaller as each one spoke to Kitzinger, allowing the rest of the audience to eavesdrop.

A trained mid-wife had left her profession because: "I couldn't handle what goes on in the delivery room. To constantly see this violation of women is upsetting." Women expressed more than distress. There was anger: "As women we are constantly oppressed and suppressed." There was frustration: "What can you say to this doctor who has so much experience?"

There was also strength. A nurse spoke of sending physicians out of the delivery room, and of challenging doctors on their arbitrary and possibly hurtful decisions. She urged women to speak up, to not be afraid.

Kitzinger responded: "There is a strength of power in this room amongst you as women which can change things."

So what of change?

Delegates at the conference seemed to believe that some of the things Kitzinger spoke of have already changed, but as one said, "the whole issue of turning birth into a violent act is very pertinent."

Another added, "You do feel awful because you're assisting at a birth with procedures you don't approve of."

Kitzinger described how things had changed in Britain. Women there are able to deliver on mats if they choose and, "once you get women onto the floor, obstetricians are no longer interested."

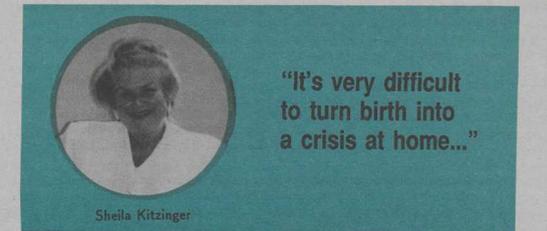
Eight hospitals in England have installed pools to enable women to have water births. The pools are in daily use and half the women who use them actually deliver their babies in the water. Eighty-five percent of babies are delivered by midwives in Britain. For Kitzinger, the midwife is the central person at a birth, the one who can balance the physical events with the emotional.

On midwifery in Canada, Kitzinger was completely positive. "It is coming," she stated firmly, as if to think otherwise might in itself prevent progress.

In the meantime, Kitzinger said it is important for women to take control of other health concerns. She sees the women's health movement as having helped many women to take care of themselves and to learn how to deal with doctors. She said: "When women accept responsibility for themselves...and are part of the decision-making process...we [remove] the basis of this expectation that doctors should take the whole responsibility for producing a perfect baby."

In Britain, there is a network of birth crisis counsellors who support women after difficult births and help them: "slot together the pieces of their experiences to make a whole." Kitzinger likened the service to rape crisis counselling and stressed how important it is for women to have someone to listen, to believe and to validate their experiences. She said that nurses, midwives and childbirth educators all have: "the natural power to heal, to make whole."

Delegates again responded to Kitzinger's words with examples of how nurses and midwives in BC are working to change birthing experiences for women.



Penny, of the Pacific Post-Partum Society, described her work in listening to women who call for general information but who, when gently encouraged, reveal that they are in fact depressed and need help. The society provides support groups as well as individual counselling for women. A nurse described pre-natal tours at her hospital which include open discussion of birth plans or other concerns.

Kitzinger underscored the importance of women working together. She suggested that women working within the medical system form study groups where they can share ideas and decide upon strategies. They should endeavour to hold workshops with obstetricians to look at recent research findings and to challenge doctors to consider the results and how hospital practice might change.

Kitzinger said: "This is politics [and] we need good strategies."

In the end, Kitzinger believes that we must look critically at the system and the society which continues to demean and disempower women. But she is optimistic: "We are like water that may seem weak...but, steadily, over time, we can gain the power to cut rock."

Pam Galloway is a writer with an interest in women's health issues.

In the year 5751:

We want you to pay attention

by **Silva Tenenbein**
and **Karen X. Tulchinsky**

So here it is, nearly Chanukkah. Time to dig out the draydels. Polish the menorah. Buy some latke ingredients. (Mmmm, sour cream.) Time sure has flown. It hardly seems like two months since Simhat Torah.

But then, that month, with Rosh Hashana and then Yom Kippur and then Sukkot and then Simhat Torah—all within three and a half weeks—always seems to make us exhausted. Exuberant, but exhausted. And this year, with the Christian Thanksgiving falling on the same weekend as Sukkot, those of us who were being polite and observing other people's festivals are really worn ragged.

Speaking of being polite, some of us decided, again, this year not to make a fuss about the Take Back the Night march being scheduled on Rosh Hashana. We just didn't go again. We wonder if the organizers have any idea how many more women would participate if it wasn't on this holy day. Would you come to our march if it was on Easter Sunday? Maybe we know you won't be in church, but still we think you'd be offended. No? We're not all in shul on Rosh Hashana, but it's still a special day, a tradition, and it's an ignor-nance, in the sense of being ignored, to have a march on such a special day.

We would never do it to you and we cannot understand why you persist in doing it. Do you not care? Do you think you will assimilate us? Not likely. We have a long history. This is the year 5751 by our reckoning. Maybe we don't want to be assimilated.

We've noticed that other people have other kinds of holidays. How could we not notice? Ever tried not to notice Hallowe'en? Then the day after Hallowe'en, down come the orange pumpkins and the black cats and up goes the red tinsel and the green bongus. How could we not notice?

You know, 3,000 years ago the Druids in England would sacrifice a white ox under an oak tree at the winter solstice—sun return, their New Year. They would hang the ox's entrails on an evergreen tree and predict the events of the new year by the entrails hung. People have been hanging long shiny red things on evergreen trees at the winter solstice ever since. Interesting tradition.

Also, there've been a couple of dozen messiahs in the last few thousand years, who were born of a virgin on the winter solstice,

died in the spring equinox and rose again three days later. It gets difficult to sort them out, there were so many. Of course we can recognize Jesus. The only Jew among them. One of ours that made good. We should be so proud.

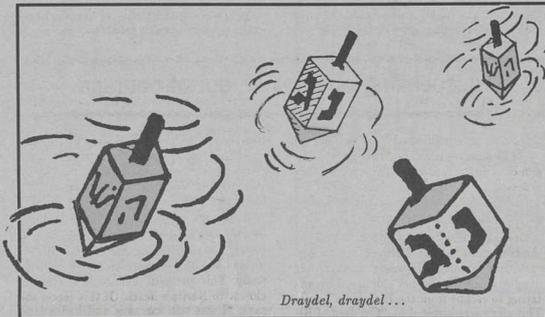
So, what's this about?

Difference. Different perspectives. Not everyone is a Christian. This is often forgotten at this time of year—except by those of us who are not Christians. Christmas. Christ Mass. Christmas is a Christian holiday. We often hear from people that Christmas is not a Christian holiday, that it's a

Christian calendar this year, it was September 20th and 21st. Yom Kippur is 10 days after Rosh Hashana. These ten days are called the Days of Awe. Yom Kippur itself is called the Day of Atonement. A week after Yom Kippur is Sukkot. Sukkot is the celebration of the harvest. Then a week later is Simhat Torah: a celebration of the Torah.

(The Torah? There is the Law, and then there is the Soul of the Law, called the Zohar, or Book of Splendor. The Torah is the Soul of the Soul of the Law.)

On Simhat Torah, Jews celebrate the existence of the Soul of the Soul of the Law.



North American festival celebrated by people who are not Christians, that you don't have to be Christian to have Christmas; a tree, some gifts, Santa Claus. Elves. What's the matter with presents and good cheer and a couple of days off? Why do we have to be strident? Denying people their traditions, their little bit of fun?

Our traditions get lost in your traditions. Would it be so difficult, in October, to wish us Happy New Year? Would you choke to wish us written in the Book of Life? We would have such an easier time wishing people happy holidays in December if you had done the same for us in October.

Not instead. As well. Us too. Them too. Everyone. With all our divergent pasts.

So, what's this about?

This article is written by Jews. Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Simhat Torah, Sukkot, Chanukkah are Jewish holidays. Rosh Hashana is the New Year. On the

It's quite a celebration. Of course, not all Jews actually do something to celebrate that day—or any other day. Not all of any group does any one thing at any one time.

Two months after Simhat Torah is Chanukkah. Chanukkah is the Festival of the Lights. It doesn't have anything at all to do with Christmas. Chanukkah is not Jewish Christmas. Jews don't have Christmas because we're Jews and by definition we don't have Christmas—even though Jesus was a Jew. Chanukkah is the celebration of a political victory of freedom from religious persecution. It is something of an irony that Chanukkah, of all Jewish holidays, is persistently mis-interpreted as some Jewish version of a Christian festival. Chanukkah is very much a Jewish holiday. It has been around much longer than Jesus (who must have celebrated it too, because, after all, Jesus was a Jew. A Sephardic Jew, incidentally. Not white).

In the spring Jews have Passover, a celebration to commemorate our exodus from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea. Many Christians don't even seem to know that the Last Supper was a Passover Seder. They make the story of the Last Supper have bread in it. There is no bread at Passover. Matzoh, unleavened bread, is eaten at Passover. No leavening.

So, what's this about?

What's this got to do with you?

With all due respect, we want you to pay attention. We live here too. Learn about our traditions. You might like them. We do. We know lots about your traditions. We can't help it. To learn the same amount about our traditions would take a little research. The information about our traditions isn't available in every store window, like it is about yours. But it is available.

Chanukkah is anywhere from early December to mid-January. The Jewish calendar is lunar and matches differently every year with the solar Christian calendar. This year Chanukkah is December 12th to December 20th.

At Chanukkah wish us Happy Chanukkah. In the fall, wish us Happy New Year. (We say L'Shana Tova. You could say that, too.) In the spring wish us Good Yontif. Chanukkah is not a difficult word to remember—and it's not Jewish Christmas. Don't wish us a Happy Jewish Christmas or Season's Greetings. We will just assume that you mean your season. Happy Holiday is not good enough either. Christians say Happy Holiday to each other at Christmas. We've noticed this. Don't ask us what we are doing for Christmas. We don't do Christmas.

Find out what we do do. Find out when our holidays are. Don't organize events on those days.

So, what's this about?

This is about mutual respect. We want you to start holding up your end of the relationship.

Silva Tenenbein is a Jewish dyke student at Simon Fraser University who studies the public discourse in psychology. Karen X. Tulchinsky is a Jewish lesbian political activist writer.

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Jude Narita

Compelling, brilliant theatre

by Lily Yuriko Shinde

Jude Narita, a Japanese American Sansei (third generation Japanese American) writer-actor performed *Coming Into Passion—Song For A Sansei* in Vancouver during the last week of October. Her show was a co-presentation of the Powell Street Festival and the Vancouver East Cultural Centre and was Narita's Canadian debut.

Coming Into Passion—Song For A Sansei ran for 19 months in Los Angeles and is now being produced in New York City. Narita received the 1989 Los Angeles Drama Critic's Awards, and a 1987 Dramatologue and Jimmie award from the Association of Pacific American Artists. In the last two years she has performed at over two dozen Asian events and women's festivals around the United States, and was chosen to represent American theatre in the 1988 Mark Taper/USIA tour of Poland.

Narita is a multi-talented performer; she not only wrote the script, but acted and produced this powerful and moving show. Her motivation to perform and produce this show resulted from her frustration with the limited and negative stereotypical roles given to Asian American women by the mainstream theatre groups.

Cobi Narita, her mother, was her biggest inspiration and supported and encouraged her to pursue a theatrical career. Narita acknowledges and credits her mother for her success as an actor.

The show is structured with "Judith" having a series of Night/Dreams in which Narita characterizes the lives of five different Asian women. The first vignette, "Good Job," was about a Vietnamese barmaid/hooker who survives by making her living through prostitution. She considers herself lucky to have such a "good job" because "she did not have to work in cages" like the other prostitutes on the street. She tells stories of her experiences with her customers and then reads an old letter from a

G.I. American ex-boyfriend who she naively believes will rescue her and her family to immigrate to Los Angeles, "the City of Angels." This is a painful story of a Vietnamese woman who is a survivor/victim living in a war-torn country.

In the second piece, "No. 852," Lita, a Phillipina is undergoing a preliminary video-taped interview—she is applying to be a mail-order bride for the United States market. While she has the hope of meeting "the perfect future husband," the interviewer, via taped voice, bombards her with condescending and degrading ques-

tions and manipulates and coerces her to agree to marry a possibly alcoholic, abusive and older future husband. The interviewer's obnoxious and exploitative tactics filled me with rage; I noticed other women in the audience hissing at his questions.

...speaking out was an act of courage

...speaking out was an act of courage. This story was inspired by Narita's mother, a Nisei woman who experienced the harsh realities of living in Manzanar, an internment camp in the United States.

The final act, "Karate/Bamboo," seemed to be the most popular with the audience. It was a lively vignette about a punky Sansei teenager who rebels against her family traditions and the pressure to excel academically. This energetic and comical story is closest to Narita's heart. Of this piece, she says, "I was tall, sarcastic and had a loud laugh. I reacted against that by dressing all in black, and though I was a high achiever, I created a lot of animosity."

The depictions of the Vietnamese and Phillipina women in the first two vignettes lacked depth and dimension. Is it culturally appropriate or politically acceptable for an Asian American woman to portray the lives of a Phillipina and Vietnamese woman? However, I would rather see an Asian American actor represent so-called Third World Asian women than white women actors. And I wonder if the rest of the audience analyzed these characters or did they see it as purely entertainment?

Narita minimized the political impact of her show with her closing personal message. She implied that in our hearts and souls we are all one and in the end nothing matters. It smelled of the esoteric new-age 'children of the universe' philosophy that is practiced by people with privilege. It certainly did not seem to have any connection with the five women in the show. Narita's show is brilliant enough without pacifying other people's liberal guilt.

Overall, I enjoyed *Coming Into Passion—Song For A Sansei*. Certainly it touched my heart and left me emotionally fractured as it took me on an emotional roller-coaster ride for weeks afterwards. I feel angry and sad that the oppressions of racism, sexual exploitation and victimization of Asian women around the world are still a reality.

It was heart-warming and empowering to see the inner strength and resistance to racism of the Japanese American women in the show; but most of all it made me proud of who I am, a Japanese Canadian woman.

Thank you, Jude Narita, for a most compelling show.

Lily Yuriko Shinde is a Japanese Canadian Nisei living in Vancouver and practising acupuncture and massage.

that we may learn something to our advantage if we know more about Toklas' successful forty-year partnership with Stein.

The stage at the Station Arts Centre is three-quarter round; there's no curtain and, on stage, the attractive set was minimally furnished with two chairs, a desk and a hat-rack. Danielle Cormier, cast as Toklas, and Linda Quibell as Stein, were charged with the responsibility of carrying us through the play from beginning to end.

It began by looking like a big job for two people. In short, I could see there was nowhere for any of us to hide if something went wrong. In those first few moments on opening night I felt some fear. But not for long. The action on stage intrigued me easily right at the start and continued to reward my attention throughout. And I did enjoy feeling encouraged and I think I can say why.

See TOKLAS page 18

No conquest, no invasion

by Sherrill Rowland

GERTRUDE STEIN AND A COMPANION

by Win Wells
directed by Sandra E. Fellner

Gertrude Stein And a Companion, a production of the BLT Theatre Company, played recently in Vancouver to audiences at the Station Street Arts Centre. I was there on opening night and I enjoyed the performance very much. In January, *Gertrude Stein And a Companion* will play at the First Seattle Fringe Festival.

As women we are in a process of claiming our literary inheritance from the women who lived and died before us, and we're examining closely the terms of our legacy. Director Sandra Fellner suggests this is why there's been a resurgence of interest in the lives and work of women such as Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas. Fellner believes that Stein's message continues to encourage, and

photos by Jay Thompson

Jude Narita

Jude Narita



Jude Narita

Who ordered this meaning?

Two kicks at the filmmaker's can

by Meg Edwards

NEW SHOES
by Ann Marie Fleming
Vancouver, Cinephile Dist, 1990

CONNECTING LINES
by Mary Daniel
Vancouver, CFDW, 1990

Cineworks is home to many alternative filmmakers—artists whose visions are opposed to the mainstream cinematic culture for political, aesthetic or structural reasons. These filmmakers challenge our traditional ways of assimilating visual images: by rejecting conventional forms of narrative, they comment on the political or aesthetic aspects of the filmmaking process itself. Experimental films therefore play an important role in the growing need for visual literacy in our image-laden society.

At the November evening of the special retrospective series hosted by Cineworks on their tenth anniversary, two films shown made an interesting comparison of the experimental genre. Both *New Shoes* by Ann Marie Fleming and *Connecting Lines* by Mary Daniel experiment with the conventions of storytelling and film narrative. They are both personal explorations into the nature of filmmaking and the expression of 'self'. And yet it is this similar process of self-discovery that lies at the heart of their differences. Daniel analyzes our need for order and organization in a carefully structured and insightful film. Fleming, in the same quest, rejects our need for structure in a patchwork of images and ideas from her life.

Ann Marie Fleming took the runner-up prize for Best Short Film at this year's Festival of Festivals in Toronto as part of the National Film Board's *Five Feminist Minutes*. According to Fleming, her short film (also titled *New Shoes*) has more of an expected "true form" and people are of-

ten surprised by the unstructured quality of her feature. In *New Shoes*, the art of filmmaking becomes transparently self-reflexive and Fleming's storyline is saturated with a self-conscious and mocking tone.

Fleming plays Emily, a character obsessed by an act of violence in the life of

romantic costumes playing in the snow. According to Fleming, it is a personal symbolic order, not a structural or thematic order, that pulls together the many ideas and images in this "long, short film."

Fleming poses many rhetorical questions. In one scene entitled "The Act of Violence,"



photo by Susan Edelfeldt

Ann Marie Fleming

her friend, Ellen (Valerie Buhagiar from *Roadkill*). The story moves from flashbacks of an episode in Ellen's life, in which an ex-boyfriend shoots her in the back and then kills himself, to the daily activities of an "emotionally neglected kid from Kitsilano" (Emily). Interspersed within this theme are mysterious and obviously symbolic scenes from her unconscious mind: black and white photos of a pregnant woman, or Emily and her friend dressed in

Fleming tries to connect an unsuccessful mugging—actually an attempt to snatch her purse—with the general sad and evil state of the world. As Emily rants about her feelings of inadequacy—"how can I carry on living when there is so much violence and pain in the world"—the scene is interspersed with close-ups of her silent male companion's smirking face, and romantic shots of Emily tossing her hair on the beach. Fleming's stream of consciousness style can be humorous but there were many times when some editing and ordering would have helped to hold my attention.

Another question Fleming poses: "Why does a man buy new shoes when he has decided to kill himself?" is answered with a life-confirming finale of polka dancing in which the narrator interrupts to inform the audience that her dancing was impaired by an infected toe. *New Shoes* is a whimsical and self-indulgent film which, like many first films, tries to say too much.

Mary Daniel's *Connecting Lines* is similar to *New Shoes* in that the narrator is both the filmmaker and a character in the film. As a narrator she discusses her past and her ideas about the structure we impose on life in order to find or create meaning. However, she is not a protagonist, as is Emily. In *Connecting Lines* the narrator gradually loses the main stage as we watch and listen to a parade of characters.

They sit in front of a fake train window while authentic landscapes of a trip across America fill the frame behind them. As in a real train trip, the audience sits back and listens to the tales as if we too had a scotch in hand and lots of time. And while the narrator still figures—sometimes as speaker and sometimes as listener—our interest transfers to the structure of the film instead of her character. We think about the

nature of storytelling between strangers, we think about the characters and where they come from and what they say about American society. We think about the nature of the human mind and its need for categories and organization.

In some scenes we watch two empty seats as we hear voices, and other times we see the face of a listener while someone else speaks. Characters appear and disappear, among them our narrator. At one point a listener falls asleep as the narrator begins a story about being on a train and watching a film about a woman being on a train.

Both filmmakers draw the audience into the process of filmmaking by making structure visible. But *Connecting Lines* is structurally intriguing where *New Shoes* is pedantic. Fleming insists that we step back from her film and examine the process of narrative filmmaking. Daniel's approach is more subtle and approachable. Her playfulness with structure and order in *Connecting Lines* exemplifies her personal search for meaning as the storytellers echo this continual quest through their conversations and monologues.

Daniel's film exhibits a thoughtful process that creates layer after layer of meaningful connections. Fleming's style is free-flowing and unstructured; she creates questions and hopes to answer them through the natural process of her mind. The general message of *New Shoes* seems to be that there is no order or sense to the world.

To my mind, we look to art for clarity and insights. Whether viewing art or creating it, we are constantly looking for patterns and connections. Even the action of reject-

...a potentially good film in need of a good re-write

ing conventional forms is an act of ordering. In fact, it may not be possible to reject the linear, logical side of our minds without creating an unsatisfying film. If we reject form and structure entirely, hoping to create meaning through haphazard editing, the outcome is a potentially good film in need of a good rewrite.

However, in the last analysis it is always interesting to see a woman tackling these issues and creating films that are wholeheartedly dedicated to her own life and her own visions. We have watched many a male artist express his views of life and love on film. It was an unusual and rewarding experience to view two female explorations into the meaning of order, or if you like, the order of meaning.

Meg Edwards is a freelance writer living in Vancouver.

TOKLAS from page 17

For much of the history of theatre, women weren't allowed to stand on stage; the few women's roles were played by men. More recently women have appeared on stage cast as objects to be acted upon by the subjects of the patriarchal drama; still, it is men only who act in the world, who are the real actors. Often, the scene outside unfolds not unlike the street scene where we learn that as women we don't really have a right to be there on our own. When men claim ownership of the street or the stage, women's fight for liberation becomes a struggle for reclamation of the right to be on stage or in the street, and in the world. When any woman successfully claims the stage, in so doing she asserts, "I am the door who does, I am the author of my acts."

It's clear that Gertrude Stein, in real life, in everyday life, was capable of giving just such a performance, a strong presence in the world. In this play, Alice Toklas is portrayed equally as doer, and author of her acts.

When she wrote *Gertrude Stein And a Companion*, playwright Win Wells created two powerful characters, each with an equal right to be present—heart and mind and body. In so doing, Wells draws a credible Alice Babette Toklas out of the shadows,

into the spotlight with Stein. Each owns the drama, each takes action in the world, and each is portrayed in possession of an active life of the mind, with a capacity for pleasures which are sensual and intellectual and comical. This is reclamation in process, and I find it heartening—and encouraging—to see quick-witted theatrical performances portraying women as thinkers and doers.

Danielle Cormier and Linda Quibell worked well together. Their performances were honest, well-researched and accessible—delivered straight-across. With intelligence, each firmly claimed the territory which was hers as performer; self-possessed, she owned her words and her personal space. On stage, there was a mutual respect displayed which seemed to extend itself to the audience. There was no conquest and no invasion.

Interviewed near the end of her life, Stein reflected: "Nobody enters into the mind of someone else, not even a husband and wife. You may touch, but you do not enter into each other's mind." And in *Tender Buttons*, she wrote, "There is no use, there is no use at all in smell, in taste, in teeth, in toast, in anything, there is no use at all and the respect is mutual."

Sherrill Rowland is the daughter and granddaughter of single mothers; her feminism marks their achievement and reckons the cost.



Lauri E. Nerman

**Ferron
PHANTOM CENTRE
Chameleon Records, 1990**

Ferron's fifth album establishes her once again as one of the most important and visionary songwriters of our time. After the critical success of *Shadows on a Dime* six years ago, I eagerly awaited the release of her new recording. Long time fans and new found fans will not be disappointed. That said, if listeners are expecting the acoustic and minimalist sound of previous recordings, you are in for a sound with a difference.

Phantom Centre contains the lyrical depth and density that has become the signature of Ferron's work. She quotes Marion Woodman from her non-fiction work "Addiction to Perfection" in the liner notes: *But if you travel far enough/one day you will recognize/yourself coming down the/road to meet yourself.*

This suns up the essence and power of Ferron's writing: the ability to capture and articulate the struggle between our spirit and the material world. Love is the cornerstone and in particular, self-love. As Ferron states in "Stand Up": *Now I can see love in the woman/and love in the man in myself.*

At first I thought the music was too orchestrated, overshadowing the power of her lyrics. Yet after listening many times, I think Ferron's music is also brilliant.

One of my favourite Ferron pieces was originally recorded on *Ferron Backed Up* in 1978. (It is now considered a collector's item due to limited distribution.) "White Wing Mercy" has been released on this album, literally a testimony to the timelessness of her work:

*I left my father as only daughters can
I chose to seem him as a monster of a man
I left my mother in her frameless cage
But never could I shake her rage*

This is an important album for any serious collector of contemporary music. Once again Ferron shares her prophetic world with us and in the process reflects our lives in a profound and uncompromising manner. Since words are such an integral part of her work, it is only fair to let you know that the CD released in Canada does not appear to include lyrics. Ask your favourite store people about this. (Ferron appears in concert on January 27 in Vancouver. See ad this issue for details.)

the jody grind
**ONE MAN'S TRASH IS ANOTHER
MAN'S TREASURE**
DB Recs, 1990

This album is sheer listening joy from beginning to end. Lead singer Kelly Hogan Murray originally co-founded the band to play jazz and country covers for the fun of it.

While this is still evident throughout their debut recording, what strikes me most is the versatility and seriousness of jody grind's songwriting. "Florida Maine" is one of the most riveting country ballads I've heard in a long time. Murray also covers Ellington's "Mood Indigo" in a unique and haunting manner. Her voice and phrasing is so powerful throughout the album that as much as I resist admitting to the following phenomenon: my feet could not sit still during her classic version of Burt Bacharach and Hal David's "Wishin' and Hopin'."

Jody grind takes its name from a world war two expression for men who dated "sweethearts" of overseas GIs. Most of their songs blend new sounds with a reverence for the classics. One of my favourite albums in the past year. Available from DB Recs, 432 Moreland Avenue N.E., Atlanta, GA, 30307.

**Alice Coltrane-Turiyasangitanada
DIVINE SONGS
Jowcol Music, 1987**

I wanted to review this cassette for a long time but hesitated because of the negative associations I have with most new age music. If you are similarly prejudiced, I recommend suspending judgement and listening to this astounding voice and chant work.

Alice Coltrane is no stranger to the music world. She is a prolific and has an important place in jazz fusion as a keyboardist. She and her late husband John Coltrane received a lot of attention in the early 60s as they introduced western audiences to Indian, African and Latin musical influences.

Alice Coltrane's passion for mysticism is highlighted in this collection of transcendental hymns (bhajans). Sung in Sanskrit, these

**Ferron's writing...
captures...the struggle
between our spirit and
the material world**

chants combine the melodic with the avant-garde. Her voice lifts the listener to a level of beauty and relaxation. I usually play this tape when I am feeling reflective and want the quiet of music. There are few words to describe this cassette except to say, whenever I play it for someone who is dismissive of new age music, I have discovered it a few months later in their music collection. Distributed by Avatar Book Institute P.O. Box 7434, Thousand Oaks, CA, 91359.

**The Graces
PERFECT VIEW
A & M Records, 1989**

Last year while visiting Vancouver, I had the opportunity to see The Graces at a local club. I knew about the gig because of a dynamic black and white poster that hit all the empty fences and outlets in the city.



photo by Joseph Adams

Anna Domino

To my delight, I discovered that one of the members of the band was Charlotte Caffey, formerly of that fab girl group The Go-Gos. There were less than a hundred people in attendance and all of us were witness to an evening of folk-rock harmonies extraordinary.

The point of all this is that I wish their record company had put the same thought into their record cover as the Vancouver person who promoted their show. *Perfect View* is an album I ignored for about six months due to the rather "bimbette" visuals on the front. I would never have imagined the level of intelligence and insight that is buried inside this awful cover.

The Graces are a great band specializing in a mellow, folk sound reminiscent of

Colouring in the Edge and the Outline explores a personal dream-like world in the pop vein. On a recent CBC interview, Domino discussed the importance of pop music in reaching a mass audience in an intelligent and thoughtful manner. Her pieces balance an upbeat dance sound with spoken singing.

"88" is one of my favourite songs these days. Her complex use of keyboards and electronic sounds complement the simplicity of her lyrics to create an intense piece. She states:

*Lost in imaginary mystery
a view that has no end
I am alone without laws of time or gravity
and I can dream where reality can end...
will wonders ever cease*

Colouring in the Edge and the Outline is a positive testimony to being alive in the world without sounding cliché. Contrary to her earlier work, Domino's lyrics reflect the personal without self-confession. It's time more people discover this powerful songwriter. Available from P.O. Box 800, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

A Postscript of Sorts: I am particularly interested in reviewing material by unsigned musicians in all genres. It is very difficult for me to access most of you due to distribution problems. In future columns I want to try and have a balance of local musicians as well as the unusual independent label material. Send me your tapes, how we can order them, how much they cost and bio information (a must). Send to: Lauri Nerman c/o Sub Productions, University of Victoria Student Union Building, University of Victoria, P.O. Box 3035, Victoria B.C. V8W 3P3 (no phone calls please.)

Gcina Mhlope — breaking the barriers

by Gcina Mhlope
as told to Louie Etling
transcribed & edited by Lizann Foster

Gcina Mhlope—South African praise poet, storyteller, actor, director—is featured in the film Songololo: Voices of Change which played this fall in various Canadian cities. Mhlope participated in the Vancouver International Writers Festival in October where she talked with Louie Etling about her childhood, her evolution as an artist and the politics of culture in South Africa.

I was born in Hammarsdale, near Durban. My mother was from a place called Mount Frere in the Transkei—she was a domestic worker—and my father was born in Hammarsdale. My mother was not married to my father—she had other children in the Transkei. It was considered a disgrace that she had had a child while working in the city. So she gave me to my father and he took me to his wife. He was married and had seven children. God knows what the woman said when my father brought her a present—a chubby little baby. So there I was. And that is how I got to be living with my father's family.

I was brought up by my father's eldest sister, who was much older than him. I called her Gogo, which is Zulu for grandmother. She had left her husband because he had wanted to take another wife because Gogo had not given birth after many miscarriages—but she did not want to share him with anyone. That was quite revolutionary in her time. She had built a house not far from my father's home.

Gogo had a garden with bananas on one side of the house and flowers in the front. One day I decided that I would play at being a teacher. I pretended that the plants were pupils and I was their teacher and would teach them all the things I had learned at school. When the flowers refused to learn, I would beat them up.

My grandmother would sit me down and tell me that everything that grows has feelings and that flowers had feelings in the same way I had feelings. It hurt them [to be beaten]. I never forgot that. These days when people are so concerned with the environment, I remember her telling me that. Although my grandmother was a strong woman and strong in her convictions, she was still very caring. Being with her was a lovely basis for my childhood.

When I was 10 years old, my biological mother came to visit me at Easter time. I had forgotten about her—I considered my father's wife as my mother. When she turned up, I remember how I used to laugh at her because she spoke Xhosa . . . She went away and she probably was sad that I had acted that way. My life returned to normal and I didn't think about her again until the end of the school year in Standard Two [Grade 4].

I was very excited. I had passed and we were going away with Gogo to Port Shepstone. Our bags were packed and everything was ready. I was alone at home when a white car suddenly showed up. In it was my biological mother and her madame—the woman she worked for in Durban. They had come to pick me up. They dragged me into the white car and 10 hours later I found myself in the Transkei.

I had been stolen. We children had grown up with a fear for a white car that would steal children who did not eat their food or polish their shoes. It was like the "bogyman." My family in Hammarsdale did not know where I was. They advertised on the radio and in the newspapers—they had descriptions of me and the clothing I wore that day. After three months, my mother told them where I was. She felt that I was her child. My grandmother was heartbroken. I had been her life.

In Hammarsdale I had been jolly and fun-loving. Now I cried all the time . . . I had to learn to fit into the lifestyle of the Transkei. There was no time for playing with dolls and teaching flowers. There was no fancy clothes or trips to visit relatives. In the Transkei one had to work. And probably because I didn't look like the Transkeian people (I didn't discuss this with my mother) my mother drilled me. Whatever the culture expected a little girl to do I had to do well. I had to learn how to balance a bucket of water on my head, to collect firewood to do all these things properly. My mother was very hard on me.

Because there was no hope of me going to highschool, I was terrified—girls my age were being married off. I was told many times that certain things had to be done because of tradition. And I knew any day would be my day. I used to listen to the horror stories of the first night of marriage when you got raped basically. There is no other way to describe that.

My oldest sister [my mother's child] had run away from her husband and come home, to everyone's surprise. She had heard how good I was at school. She knew that my mother wanted me married but she had saved money for me to go to boarding school. She presented my mother with the forms that said that I had been admitted to the boarding school and the uniforms for the school which was near Flagstaff. Within two days of her arriving I was off to boarding school. I couldn't believe it.

Let me just talk about my mother one more time. I've only been talking about the bad things I remember about her. There was a young aunt of mine who told me stories about my mother and the good times in her life. My mother's name was Nomanina which means "the favourite of the mothers." She was invited all over the Mount Frere region to dance at weddings. When I heard these stories I would try to imagine my mother smiling and happy and not angry about anything. My mother had a beautiful body and it was easy to imagine her a little younger dancing and being happy.

I Liked Myself, I Liked My Voice...

At boarding school I saw a traditional praise poet. A traditional praise poet is a person who dresses colourfully and accompanies the chief/king and performs poetry that boasts about the achievements of the tribe and its growth—about the way the king was elected and the tribe's history. He sometimes criticizes things, too.

When I was introduced to this praise poet, I felt that he baptised me when he shook my hand. And even though at that time I had never written a poem in my life I decided then and there that I was a praise poet. And that was a turning point in my life. I was 17-years old. When I got back to school I felt so restless but I didn't know what to do—it never connected that I was wanting to write, until I sat down and I wrote my very first poem.

When I had finished I stood up and said it out loud and it was so great to hear my voice . . . And that was the first time I liked my voice and I liked myself and I have never stopped writing since then.

I wrote about all kinds of things. My writing was like therapy. I could describe things on paper that I could not describe by talking to a person. My poetry was very personal and my short stories were very much about my inner feelings. I didn't particularly want to show them to anybody. But one day, in 1977, I decided to send a story to a magazine and they printed it and sent it back to me at school. And I saw my name in print: GCINA MHLÖPE. And I read the story with such interest like I had never seen it before. I put it under my pillow and ran around the whole school and looked at it again. It was a lovely feeling.

In 1978 I went to Johannesburg, looking for a job and for accommodation. I lived with my sister—although I was not allowed to because of the apartheid laws which prohibit domestic workers from sharing their rooms with anyone. I felt very lonely because the space was so cramped. We got on each other's nerves. I spent lots of time reading.

I finally got a job at a factory at Doornfontein in the centre of the city where I earned R11.00 [about \$22] a week. It was boring work but at least it was something to do. Because I was not allowed to live with my sister I had to leave the room at a certain time and come back at a certain time.

One day it was raining and I was walking toward the bus stop when I needed a toilet. I saw this public toilet and I went inside and closed the door and began to read. It was very cozy and very clean. For many days afterward I kept on going back there to wait for the bus. One day I decided to buy myself a notebook and I used to write in that toilet. I wrote my first English poem there. It was my little study.

I later went to live in Alexandra township where I met other writers, which was good because writing can be a very lonely thing. There was an organisation called PEN for writers and when they had a conference I went and met people like Ezekiel Mphahlele, Eugene Skeef and Nadine Gordimer and Lionel Abrahams. It was the first time I had met professional writers. It was from these meetings that I was introduced to the people at *Staffrider* magazine. I wrote an article for *Staffrider* and also had poetry published in other magazines. People began to hear about me and wanted to know who Gcina Mphlope was.

I started to go to poetry readings in the townships. They would have all-night poetry readings with the music of drums and flutes to accompany the readings. I felt so alive there. I felt that I could incorporate what I had seen a praise poet do with a contemporary style of poetry. One day I performed my poetry, without drums or anything. I was the only woman there but that did not bother me. I wanted to grow and become more involved with this kind of performing. I never wanted my poetry just for publication or to be read silently.

[Eventually] I performed at conferences and writers workshops and at rallies like those held by the South African Federation of Women, which I joined. That was my introduction into the life of public performances—I have never thought of it as show business. I am not a politician. I do not like writing speeches. Some people wrote speeches, I wrote poetry.

I lived in the women's hostel [in Alexandra]. These single sex hostels are the sickest thing that the apartheid system created. In this one building there were almost 2000



Those women will not stop fighting now. They had to fight for their children and now they are fighting for every child...



women. The building was five stories high. There were five women to a room. The room just had five beds and a single light. It was very difficult to be a writer under those circumstances.

But I persevered because there was something driving me inside. I really wanted to write. I used to wait until everyone was asleep and then I would light a candle next to my bed and write. I used to wait until people left on Fridays to go out or to visit their husbands. I would stay up all night and write. And that's how I would spend the whole weekend. Then one day someone gave me a typewriter because they could not believe I wrote all those pages by hand. I had never used a typewriter before but I sat down and just used it. It made a terrible noise. But I didn't stop. The day Gcina Mphlope stops writing is the day Gcina Mphlope stops living.

In the 10 years I have lived in Johannesburg, I have found myself growing and moving into all sorts of things. I still perform my poetry but I also act on stage and direct plays.



Gcina Mhlope

I have begun to write and perform children's stories—traditional African folk tales that Gogo told me. I think I am so busy because there is a shortage of women in the arts. I would have enjoyed being directed by a woman if there were more women directors. Instead I had to become a director myself. I would have enjoyed acting in another woman's play if there were more women playwrights. There is a shortage of dignified roles for women. I have had to try to create dignified roles for other women and for myself.

If They Do Not Have Skills...

I really love storytelling and I really love children. Storytelling incorporates so many different art forms—mime, singing, acting. Storytelling also breaks through cultural barriers: everyone loves listening to stories. And this is so important in a country like South Africa—a country of so many barriers. I transcend these barriers as I sit in front of poor white children. And when I stand in front of all these children at the school assembly I can feel my grandmother smiling at me.

I also use the opportunity I have at the schools to tell the children that even though the Bantu Education they receive is so inferior they should use it to get a better education for themselves. When I was at school, even though I had such a good academic record, I only knew about 20 percent of what I should have known. And I feel that even though protest and marches in the street are important, if we do not have any skills we cannot do anything really important. We cannot take over the country and rule it if we do not have skills. So at the end of my performances at schools when the children ask me questions I tell them to go for skills. I tell them that show business is not glamorous . . . So I tell them that they must go for skills and make that their weapon.

Living in South Africa in 1990 has been strange. It has been a very fast moving year. Everything about the country is so unpredictable. One never knows what is going to happen next week or next month. The release of Mandelas and other political prisoners and the political rallies in the streets of major cities were the high points. The killings among Black people were some of the low points.

It is very difficult for a writer to try to see where it is going. I do not even know how to write about it. It has been so weird. I visualize it as growing pains or teething problems. There are so many different ideologies and different ideas of how to get to the same goal: a free South Africa. But there are more than enough people who have a good heart in South Africa in order to make South Africa a peaceful country. People are very concerned about the children and they want to ensure that the children are able to have what the adults had to live without for so long.

The children of 1990 have suffered so much. They have been to jail and been tortured by security police who sexually molest them. They have seen their parents being killed in front of them. They have seen so many dead bodies. There is so much work to be done to correct these things. Sometimes people think that I am being too optimistic but I re-

ally believe that there are many people who are working to make change real. There are people who work in very minor ways, like the work done in literacy because the education systems failed so many children.

There are people who are working to alleviate the housing problem. There are so many homeless people in South Africa. People seem to worry more about the elephants than people without homes. Other people are working towards empowering workers so that they can understand the forces that determine their work lives. They learn about the economy and about recessions and how the fluctuations in the money markets affect them.

It is ridiculous the way the media has portrayed the fighting among the people as being tribal. The Xhosa and the Zulu have lived together for centuries and we do not hate each other because we speak a different language. My mother was Xhosa and my father was Zulu. I am the product of the love between these two cultures. People realize now that the [violence] was instigated to slow down the process of change. It was like someone put a boulder in the way of a fast moving car. Our struggle is moving very fast. We are very aware of the way that we have lost a sense of community.

The apartheid system divides families through things like the single sex hostels and the migrant labour system, where the father has three weeks of the year to visit his wife before he [returns to work], leaving her pregnant again. How can the feminist cause work in a situation like that?

The situation has made people who would not normally be involved in politics very politically conscious as their children were taken away and thrown into jail. Children and parents look to each other for support as they fought the system. They join organizations like the Detainees Parent Support Committee and learn more about politics. Those women will not stop fighting now. They had to fight for their children and now they are fighting for every child and that is really something . . .

I find it very strange that people from so many places all around the world say that they care about what happens in my country, but do they care about the Native people in their own country? How can they think that they can make my life better when they cannot improve the lives of the American Natives or the Aboriginal people in Australia? I feel a kinship with the Native people in these countries. I have been reading their poetry and I believe that all people of colour have a way of surviving. And I also think that they find it unbelievably easy to forgive. I do not ever want to hate every white person in South Africa. I have no right to do that. It is not true that every white person makes every Black person suffer.

War drives people to so many lows. They cannot accept that they were wrong. It's like a game of soccer. It is quite a male game. And I sit late at night and wonder what would happen if women had more power than they do. But I do not think that I will find out in the next fifty years.

Taking voice, shaking silence

by Gladys We

LANGUAGE IN HER EYE:

Views on Writing and Gender by Canadian Women Writing in English. Ed. by Libby Scheier, Sarah Sheard and Eleanor Wachtel

Toronto: Coach House Press, 1990

The editors of *Language in Her Eye* asked women writers in Canada for their opinions on feminism and writing: "Has feminism had an effect on your writing? Do considerations of race, class or sexual orientation affect how you write? Are you familiar with the various currents in feminist literary theory?"

There were as many types of answers to these questions as there are writers in this book. Some wrote stories, others wrote about the process of writing a story. Some wrote poems, others wrote mini-autobiographies. This collection was a place to express their feelings about the relationship of feminism to their lives, and the relationship of the politics of feminism to their writing.

For many women, writing is a means of self-discovery and finding a voice. However, for many other women, writing and language is just another means of colonization and oppression, not only by a patriarchal society, but also by other women. One of the major subtexts in this book is the issue of racism. Lenore Keeshig-Tobias and Lee Maracle write of the "loss of Native sensibility" in stories which are appropriated from Native women and told in white women's words.

Keeshig-Tobias prefaces her essay with the quote: "There are two things in life that must not be taken without consent.

One is the family story and the other is a song. To take these without consent is to steal—Akeywakyewassee (earth Elder) Saulteaux." Maracle writes: "women of colour are entitled to author their own stories...In the minds of some white women, and many white men, women of colour do not enjoy equal rights."

Anne Cameron, the non-Native author of *Daughters of Copper Woman*, tells of being asked by Lee Maracle "to take a step or two to one side. Not down. To one side," and to allow Native women to tell their own stories. Cameron equates this with her experience at a conference where "women with tenure were standing up in their expensive clothes telling other middle-class white women about the problems of welfare moms, working poor moms, my mom."

Marlene Nourbese Philip offers a broader context for the debate on the appropriation of voice by situating it in the context of censorship, which becomes a method of ignoring the racism inherent in the appropriation of another's words. When the Women's Press of Toronto refused to accept certain stories for an anthology because the writers were not part of the communities about which they wrote, the Press was accused of censorship. Philip notes, however, that "the 'right' to use the voice of the Other has...been bought at a great price—the silencing of the Other; it is in fact neatly positioned on that very silencing." If their stories are told by others, then women of colour are left with nothing to say.

Silencing Ourselves

The issue of self-censorship is another subtext in *Language in Her Eye*. This form of censorship is visualized by playwright Mar-

garet Hollingsworth as "a grinch, a gremlin, a gnome on my shoulder—a little voice that pipes up in my ear every time I put pen to paper: *should you?—is it correct?—how will this be evaluated?—how many friends will you lose?*" Paulette Describes feminist thought as "thought police," with "the obligation of worrying about whether my writing was 'feminist enough' or whether I would get criticized for writing in politically incorrect ways, and so on." Aritha van Herk warns, "Every politically appropriate position is dangerous because one can be appropriated by the position." Margaret Atwood adds, "Does it make sense to silence women in the name of Woman? We can't afford this silencing, or this fear." And Gail Scott wonders, "But how, precisely, does a feminist consciousness frame this movement towards the excessive (the unlawful?) without becoming law itself?" Feminist writers must explore this dilemma—of speaking outside a society without creating a new society with equally inviolable rules.

As I was reading *Language in Her Eye*, the writers of the essays began speaking to each other. They spoke of the voyage of self-discovery which each of them had taken. They spoke of the oppression women feel in a patriarchal society. They spoke of the oppression of racism, even in the women's movement, and of the fear of speaking out and being politically incorrect. However, they all speak out anyway, and open their thoughts to the reader. In their doubts and questions, they explore the pluralistic thought of feminists today. *Language in Her Eye* is a vibrant book, full of the voices of a virtual "who's who" of women writers in English Canada.

There are two gaps in this book. The first, as the editors acknowledge, is a lack of a Québécoise perspective, apparently due to lack of space in the book and time for

translation. This is unfortunate, as many Québécoise writers are working from a different perspective, of culture and history/herstory, and the contrast with the English writers would have been highly stimulating and provocative.

The other hole is the absence of Oriental writers. Many cultural origins were presented. Himani Bannerji wrote about the Indo-Canadian experience and the difficulty of translating, not just words, but entire thought patterns. Other women wrote about being Ukrainian or Jewish and Canadian and feminist, and of the clashes of those words/worlds. However, I would have enjoyed reading Joy Kogawa's thoughts on being Japanese-Canadian, or Evelyn Lau's thoughts on the differences between traditional Chinese and Canadian cultures. Still, on the whole, I feel that *Language in Her Eye* offers a comprehensive look at the state of feminist writing in Canada today. Some of the essays are academic in orientation and theory. However, most of the essays demonstrate the struggle for life, for place and for recognition in a patriarchal and racist society, a struggle in which feminists will see parts of themselves and their own lives.

I feel that feminism is a process, otherwise it becomes a stagnant ideology. I was once told, as I began the process of becoming a feminist, that there are as many types of feminists as there are women. In *Language in Her Eye*, a collection of essays by women on their thoughts on writing, this diversity of thought shines through. I am sure I will be dipping into this book for inspiration in the future.

Gladys We is seeking her own identity as a writer. She participates in the *Women of Colour caucus* at Kinesis where many of the issues raised in *Language in Her Eye* are also discussed. See *Bulletin Board* for information about the caucus' next meeting.

Heading into VIEW

by Jeanette Ashley

Vancouver audiences will be challenged by adventuresome performing arts in the upcoming Women in VIEW Festival when artists from across Canada perform at the Firehall Arts Centre and neighbouring venues Jan. 22-27. VIEW offers 76 performances of theatre, dance, music, performance art and literary readings, as well as a forum and a series of workshops. This year's forum will investigate racism in the arts. Here's a sampling of some of the festival's offerings.

Gina Bastone—a real clown—is back in a workshop called "Make Me Laugh and Make Me Really Laugh." "So Tell Me..." concerns interviewing techniques, and Rita Deverell leads the exploration of how to retrieve our personal stories. Marlene Swidzinski appears in her one-woman show *Confessions of a Polka Princess*, where she examines her prairie-Slavic origins. In *Tales from a Broken Heart* the audience is invited to join a group of friends who have met every year since high school to review what has happened over the past year. Random Acts returns with a presentation of *Coffee Break Characters*.

In dance, three local choreographers will be featured. Jennifer Mascall brings to the stage a new solo work. Gisa Cole's *Tabula Rasa* has gripping music and demanding choreography. Cole also collaborates with Katherine Labelle and Florence Lui (pictured left) to create three illuminating vignettes bridging the gap between abuse and the courage to heal. Barbara Bourget will perform her startling solo work, *Impending Death*.

The musical lineup includes the award-winning 35-member choir Elektra. Lori Freedman is back with her bass clarinet, and *Secrets of Suzanne* is a 20th century opera about a woman who is a secret smoker. Shawna Dempsey appears in her performance art piece, *Mermaid in Love*, a look at love, feminism and pollution. In *Nensuphar*, Sandra Lockwood explores a woman's relationship with her life support system. The festival's literary readings highlight two 90 minute exchanges of poetry, plays and short stories. Reading writers from western Canada include Maria Campbell, Susan Musgrave, Phyllis Webb and Helen Potrebenko.

Tickets and programs can be picked up at the VIEW Box Office, #14-2414 Main St, (875-6210) Dec. 3-Jan. 23. Gift certificates, bonus tags and super tags are available. Tag holders must choose shows and pick up tickets before the festival. Tag sales start Dec. 3 for one week. Individual ticket sales Dec. 14-19. Starting Jan. 24 the festival box office is at the Firehall Arts Centre.

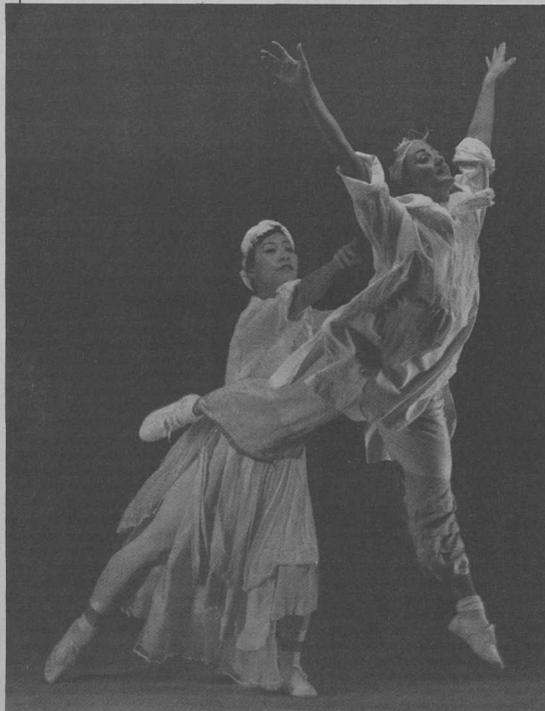


Photo by David Cooper

Changing language:

Being lost, then being found again

by Cathy Stonehouse

PROPER DEAFINITIONS
by Betsy Warland

Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1990
take the red marking pen
and write with it
your dialect...
i believe our survival depends on it

Proper Deafinitions is a collection of theoregrams, pieces of writing that map the edge between poetry and theory, between personal insight and political vision. Written between 1984 and 1990, each theoregram moves the reader in a radical way, shifting the very ground we stand upon—our learned assumptions about writing, the words we use to name our experience.

Betsy Warland writes as a feminist language-centred poet; her work takes off from the premise that the way we learn to put words together structures our experience. For Warland, a male-defined language underlies the silencing of women: "the masculine is not the masculine but the general." To challenge this is to make visible the roots of words, the way their meaning has changed, and to invent words and sentence-structures that name a woman's experience and call new patterns into being. For Warland: "to change language/is to change everything."

To read *Proper Deafinitions* is to follow Warland's questioning resistance through a labyrinth of spiralling words. It is an experience of being lost, then being found again. Warland interrupts herself with lists, word-play and quotation, blank spaces, her "texts" interrupting themselves to hear what is being said." As readers we are called upon to participate in her writing, to become conscious, for example, of articulating the word "mother," how this feels in the mouth.

Her journey is to make visible her own relationship to words and writing, as a les-

bian, an incest survivor, a white woman, to "speak the unspoken, the taboo of [her life]" and so discard the "precept that any good writer worth his salt can write about anything." This process of self-naming is for Warland one of taking responsibility. In "a white page" she writes as a white woman for whom "the bottom line is that I don't believe we (as women writers) can write as



Betsy Warland

a narrator or protagonist who is a person of colour." Naming herself involves naming who she is not. She has "finally come to listen, not to take."

Through her coming out, coming into herself as a lesbian writer, Warland calls upon us all as women to name ourselves, to "become self-responsible." In "moving parts," she traces her own path of self-

naming through four previous books of poetry. She shares her vision of the lesbian writer as "along with other marginalized writers, the voice(s) of the future."

Warland unravels the homophobic structures of language, the heterocentric conventions of love poetry, that conspire to silence lesbian experience, and reweaves them into her own chosen shape. She describes how, in her last collection *Double Negative*, writing in collaboration with her lover, Daphne Marlatt, became an integral part of this pro-

There are indeed
many paths
towards self-naming

cess, to bring both lovers into dialogue. In doing so, she calls upon us all as women to resist objectification.

For Warland, to claim her work as accessible to all women, would be to claim it as universal, a concept she resists. This tension, between speaking to and speaking for [other women], is one of the book's most powerful themes. She describes how, in *Double Negative*, "the lesbian body...enlarges its symbolism to embrace any woman who is impassioned with her own quest...for self-determination." At the same time Warland states: "as a lesbian i do not speak Universes."

After reading this, I wanted Warland to write in more depth about class and language. How work or poverty shape our relationship to words, how class structure has imprinted itself on language—for me these are silences too. In *Proper Deafinitions*, she has chosen at times a difficult, scholarly approach to English, with her use of dictionary definition, quotation, Latin and Anglo-Saxon roots of words. I wanted her to examine this choice in relation to the white European tradition of literature as a closed space, the property of upper- or middle-class, educated, (predominantly male) readers and writers.

When writing about her experiences of remembering incest, Warland's language becomes less playful, making clear that sometimes the process of "telling it" is challenge enough. She gives voice to the brokenness, the fragmentation of repressed memory: "that terrible nothingness...the thick membrane of amnesia i had to pass through."

The struggle involved in recollecting the pieces echoed for me the imaginative description of her Norwegian father attempting to write a letter in English: "every word had to be negotiated, every word had a life of its own." In reading this, Warland suggests there are indeed many paths towards self-naming, many strategies to challenge the 'deafness' of society's definition of words, its presumed 'proper' ownership of what we can and cannot say.

Proper Deafinitions is a rich and many-layered collection that resists summary. As Warland states: "It is in our difference that we perceive each other," and to read this book is to be challenged by her courage and passion, invited in to find your own voice.

Cathy Stonehouse is a British writer currently living in Vancouver.

Two poets worth a read

by Jill Mandrake

AGNES IN THE SKY

by Di Brandt
Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1990THE SPEED OF THE WHEEL
IS UP TO THE POTTERby Sandy Shreve
Kingston: Quarry Press, 1990

Contemporary small press poetry books do not generally meet with any sort of fanfare from reviewers—in fact, a lot of new poetry doesn't even get reviewed. There are two reasons for this. First, for some reviewers it is difficult to review a newer poet's work when she hasn't a lot of earlier stuff to compare it with. It's a bit defeating to write a 1,000 word review for 1,000 words of poetry—you end up talking extensively about poetics while almost ignoring the poems themselves.

Second, some reviewers feel that a large amount of the new poetry is poorly written and there is no point wasting paper (as in, save-a-tree) on reviews that just trash somebody's work—why bother trying to analyze poetry you are totally apathetic towards? If it really is poorly written, as opposed to just 20 years ahead of its time, it will trash itself sooner or later.

One way to avoid writing reviews of poetry which the reviewer finds mediocre is to focus only on poems which have a particular meaning and to concentrate on poets whose work stands out. Di Brandt and Sandy Shreve are both fairly new poets whose work is worth ferreting out, either by getting their recently published books or finding the various anthologies they've made their way into this past decade.

Di Brandt's poetry, like the way she reads it, is subdued—almost restrained—but with the angry force of unheard voices behind it. In fact, she devotes a whole section of *Agnes in the Sky* to this forced silence (the section is entitled "if i told even a sliver of what i know/who would listen"). Taking this further, a woman's view of the evolution of love-language is featured in "piecing together the alphabet of desire":

like a child's cry the first & oldest grammar torn from our lips & made eloquent through the years' twisting until we're stretched thin like parchment transparent if we're lucky & occasionally luminous

To be "occasionally luminous" is about all we can hope to achieve in this life.

"the dead father (after barthelme)" is

about piecing together a new plan for living. Brandt acknowledges that Donald Barthelme's novel *The Dead Father*, inspired her poem. The novel involves a group of people who are attempting to bury the dead father but are unable to do so, no matter how huge a hole they excavate, because "the dead father" is an ancient idea not a person.

Brandt describes this as follows: getting rid of the dead man that was the easy part digging uneasily through rubble to the fresh dirt growing new fingers to rummage in the earth under new seedlings

This struggle to let go of oppressive systems and then try to build something new is also painfully present in poems like "fathers never leave you" and "why my father beat us (when we were little)." The reason? "So we would swallow the Punisher."

Possibly one of the best poems in *Agnes in the Sky* is "teaching in prison (for my students at Stony Mountain)", for inmates living on the lonesome tiers inside, trying to continue with snippets of formal education as though grasping at straws, or more accurately: "the way you listen to words/not

See POETRY page 24

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People and book in trouble

by Christine Morissette

PEOPLE IN TROUBLE
by Sarah Schulman
New York: E.P. Dutton, 1990

The problem with book jackets is they make promises they rarely keep. The cover illustration may vaguely suggest the plot or the characters, but the liner notes invariably describe a story in some other book. Too often I wonder if, like the urban legend of babies switched at birth, someone switches books and covers before they leave the printer's warehouse.

Sarah Schulman's latest novel *People in Trouble*, is such a book. The opening lines sound promising enough:

It was the beginning of the end of the world but not everyone noticed right away. Some people were dying. Some people were busy. Some people were cleaning their houses while the war movie played on television.

The key people in trouble include: Peter and Kate, whose longtime relationship is shaken by Kate's lesbian affair and her increasing fascination with cross-dressing; Molly, who works in a dead-end job, has a dead-end affair with Kate, and "tries to keep her heart in one piece" as her friends die from AIDS; and the gay men in New

York City whose community is changed by this devastating health crisis. The characters connect through the impact of AIDS, through the actions of Justice, a guerrilla activist group (ACT-UP?), and through a real estate mogul, Ronald Horne (Donald Trump?), who "presides over the city with eviction notices and a strange new kind of census."

All of the characters are people in trouble, yet only some of them drew my sympathy. Kate, an artist, sees the disintegration around her in visual terms, responding through her art, but not through her heart. She plays at sexuality, at relationships, never truly connecting to the world around her:

...here we are trying to have an illicit lesbian love affair...and all around us people are dying and asking for money.

Peter remains inert throughout the story, sleepwalking through the turmoil in his personal life. Molly, a woman committed to AIDS activism, takes two years to realize she is getting nothing from her relationship with Kate. Despite their possibilities, the main characters seem contrived rather than complex. Kate's adventures while cross-dressing, Horne and his "invented real estate," and the armageddon-style ending all

seem caricatures, one dimensional, without depth.

Schulman has not written a very complicated story, but she has clearly evoked the distress of daily life with powerful detail. And it is this detail which provides

Schulman...has clearly evoked the distress of daily life.

the colour, though not the substance, of her book. She sets the disintegration caused by AIDS against the backdrop of a city disintegrating: street people panhandle in every neighbourhood, the homeless erect a tent city in a downtown park, drugs and gangs are a common sight. All represent the diminishing value of human life.

Into this tableau of New York City, Schulman places the people affected by AIDS, ordinary people whose lives are no doubt

as unnoticed as their deaths. But Schulman notices their lives with exacting detail.

At meetings, people's wristwatch alarms go off, reminding them to take their AZT; friends worry about each other when messages left on answering machines aren't returned (have they forgotten, or have they died?); shopkeepers have lesions on their necks, their wrists; young men walk the streets wearing black ribbons; afternoons are spent going to funerals of friends and strangers; those who have died are identified by their dates: Thomas Ho 1957-1987, Ronnie La Vallee 1954-1987, Joseph DeCarlo 1960-1982. Everywhere there is "a sincere and familiar grief, a practised one."

It is a time of confusion and a time of change. In *People in Trouble*, the main characters are unable to transcend this confusion, while the secondary characters, those most affected by AIDS, surmount their troubles and ultimately change.

Although not the story I set out to read, it is nonetheless a crisp and concise view of ordinary lives in extraordinary times.

Christine Morissette lives and writes in Victoria.

POETRY from page 23

for the meaning but for the sound of/ them deep in the throat the way you/remember behind these walls hunger..."

One thing *Agnes in the Sky* lacks which was present in Brandt's first book of poetry, *questions i asked my mother* (Turnstone Press, 1987), is a certain type of comic relief. For example, in *questions*, there was a series of six spiritual/sexual awakening poems called "missionary positions," followed by the one-liner: "just kidding ma".

I'm sure. In any case, *Agnes* contains some consistently good poems which are best summed up by the author's phrase, "prairie love songs."

The Potter's Wheel

Sandy Shreve's first book of collected poems, *The Speed of the Wheel Is Up to the Potter*, is designed to be read at a fairly quick pace. It is succinct and organized, with a language of flowing clarity. In other words, this potter's wheel has speed.

The collection is divided into three categories: "Alliances," about the au-

thor's friends and New Brunswick heritage; "Crumpled Smiles," work poems upon which Shreve has built her reputation; and "Vanishing Point," about violence against women and violence in general (titles like "public execution" explain it at a glance).

Representative verses for the first section can be found in "Distances," where the author compares rural memories with the present reality of city commuting:

the sterile scenery carries no fragrance, except for the fumes from other cars of other commuters or a poignant blast from a pulp mill imposed some miles up the coast

As a member of the Vancouver Industrial Writer's Union, Shreve has written a number of work poems, the best one probably being "White-Out." My introduction to this and other poems by the author was in a union newsletter almost a decade ago, when such work poems were long-awaited and tremendously popular. I've often wondered how many office assistants have read this stanza with a kind of boiling empathy:

the brain balks, savours four o'clock—then veers toward fears of permanent dyslexia from fluorescent-lit statistics

The situation gets worse. The boss—clearly a one-minute-manager type—comes in and says what an easy job it must be, copying someone else's work all day. The poem's ending seems to indicate that the best use for white-out is as a means to paint decorative, subversive messages on one's office bulletin board.

In her final section, "Taking Back the Night" stands not only as one of the best poems in the book, but as an urgent and motivating message to all women. These five stanzas tell us what we are doing instead of taking back the night. Time is ticking away.

If I say that "Taking Back the Night" is an example of a perfect poem, I'll define it this way: some poems are technically per-

fect but lack a compelling idea—like having nothing to say and taking a long time to say it. Others have brilliant thoughts behind them but the written expression is unclear. This reverts to what I was saying earlier about published poetry that ends up not getting reviewed. I can only add that at least people are out there writing—working at it, trying to share their experience—rather than, for example, zoning out for six hours nightly in front of the television. In



Sandy Shreve

terms of how to gauge a piece of work like "Taking Back the Night," imagine a poem is like an arithmetical computation: $3 + 3 + 3 = 9$. It's either the wrong answer or it's perfect.

The poem says that there is so much work to do, in the form of action more than words, before we can safely relax. Let's hope that lines like these can throw a little non-fluorescent light on the subject:

no time now for that after dinner stroll when we could breathe in the hush of early evening air. Already it's night, and so far only our slogan has retrieved it from fear

Jill Mandrake's poetry appeared in the anthology *East of Main* (Pulp Press, 1989).

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Di Brandt

Oka: from the other side

Kinesis:

I would like to respond to the letter in October's *Kinesis*, by Ellen Frank and Noreen Shanahan.

Frank and Shanahan wondered why there was not more attendance at the Oka vigil by members of the Vancouver women's movement and the left. Also why public response is "frighteningly quiet." I have some guesses about why and, since I live in a small community, removed from the Vancouver women's movement, I am not so intimidated by others' definitions of "politically correct" as a feminist living in Vancouver might be.

Like Frank and Shanahan I too have been appalled at the Canadian and Québec governments' heavy-handed approach to the Oka crisis. However, I do not, like them, see this as "not a complicated issue." (Most important issues do have some complexity, though this is not a popular notion among those who like their ideology as simplistic as possible so that they do not have to struggle with their own consciences or, heaven forbid, admit that the other side may have at least part of the truth.)

The way I see it, the Oka issue is complicated by the fact that the Warrior Society has involved itself. Even though they are Native and their original cause is just, the Warriors appear to me to be just another bunch of macho rednecks who haven't felt important since they were in the war.

I'm 42 years old. I remember the atrocities against women and children committed in Viet Nam. Most of these men are Viet Nam vets. Now I'm supposed to support a bunch of militaristic assholes because someone tells me the whole Oka thing is about the Canadian army persecuting women and kids? What about the Warriors using frightened children as shields? Do they think the Canadian people will blame only the government forces if those children get hurt? Have Frank and Shanahan wondered whether maybe the involvement of the Warriors may not be why response to vigils is lukewarm? (The very name "Warriors" speaks of patriarchal, militaristic values.)

Allow me to quote a letter from the Mohawk Council of Chiefs at Akwesasne that was reprinted in the *Green Mutilogue*. This letter was addressed to the Native people of Canada and it makes statements like the following:

"We understand the...community of Kanesatake had originally taken a peaceful route to settle the dispute before they were

invaded by the illegal warriors society from Kahnawake and Akwesasne...the existence of an illegal force such as the paramilitary group calling itself the warriors will only hamper matters and destroy real efforts of settlement...The leaders for the "Warrior...Society" a paramilitary force, are not sanctioned or approved by any Iroquois Nation government."

As for "the public in general" being "frighteningly quiet" on this issue I have not found this to be so at all. I am surprised and pleased at how many "ordinary people" are not taken in by the government line on this issue and have a great deal of sympathy for the Native people over it. This is a sign to me that the swing to the right that we suffered through during the 80s may be reversing itself.

In support of this I would like to tell you that the *Sechtel* newspaper, *The Press*, (not renowned for its leftwing views, to put it mildly) did a survey of passersby, Native and white, during the summer. People were asked for their reaction to the Oka crisis. I do not recall one person surveyed who did not have sympathy for the Native position, though some expressed reservations about the Warriors and their willingness to use violence. This crisis would have tremendous public support, the government would be made complete fools of, if Native people would take a non-violent, Gandhian approach.

Sincerely,
Anne Miles
Gibsons, BC

Oka: for justice, respect

Kinesis:

As citizens we wish to express our disapproval of the manner in which the Québec and Canadian governments have dealt with Native peoples not only in the case of the Oka crisis, but for many decades.

We believe the Mohawks as well as other Native peoples have full rights to self-determination as well as to the territories they have been inhabiting for centuries. It is about time our society recognizes the injustices that have been committed and that it at last respect the cultural, political and territorial autonomy that it has long sought to deny Native peoples.

The assault by the Sûreté du Québec against the Mohawks on July 11, 1990 which ignited the crisis was an intolerable act of aggression in a society which considers itself civilized. We refuse to see our society sink into racism and we publicly de-

nounce the abuses of power perpetrated by our authorities against the Mohawks and other first nations of America. We also denounce infringements upon the freedom of the press committed during the Oka crisis which threaten the integrity of our democracy.

We ask that the promised public enquiry into the events at Kanesatake and Kahnawake be convened as soon as possible; that it be independent of the government and that it be composed of individuals recognized for their integrity and competence. We ask as well that the members of this commission have full powers to investigate the actions of the army, the police and the authorities without restriction. Finally, we ask that this enquiry take into account the historic roots of the problem.

We believe that the negotiations with the Mohawks promised by the governments of Québec and Canada should take place in a climate of equality which excludes intimidation by the police or government. It is essential that our leaders acknowledge, in good faith, the fundamental claims of the Mohawk people, that they negotiate with a sincere desire to redress the wrongs of years of history. Our government must recognize that the Indian Act of 1869 imposed political structures foreign to the Mohawk Nation. It is imperative that the government accept the negotiators the Mohawk community considers to be their legitimate representatives.

Finally, we deplore our government's habitual relegating of Native issues to a secondary position. Priority must be given to many weighty and pressing issues such as the development of James Bay and NATO low-level flight tests in Mississauga, Labrador. We ask our government to adopt an entirely new attitude to Native issues, one that is based on a respect and concern for true justice.

Sincerely,
Freda Guttman, Carole Beaulieu
and over 250 others
Québec

[Ed. note: This letter appeared as a full-page ad in the *Montréal daily Le Devoir* in mid-November.]

So who licked the stamp?

Kinesis:

We're writing to say how much we relate to the dog in Liz Clark's cartoon strip.

Sincerely,
Jac (hu-wumin) and
Dandelion (canine bitch)
North Vancouver, BC

Aid for women prisoners

Kinesis:

I would like to bring to your readers' notice a small group of Israeli women volunteers, both Jewish and Palestinian, known as "Women's Organization for Women Political Prisoners." The group's aim is to defend the human and democratic rights of Palestinian and Israeli women imprisoned because of their social and political activity in the struggle against the occupation. The first such group was established in Tel Aviv in 1988 and the Jerusalem group in early 1989.

The latter group attempts to monitor the treatment of women prisoners held at the Russian Compound in Jerusalem, a prison known for its harsh conditions and brutal treatment of women and children detained there. It is the largest detention centre for women from Jerusalem and the West Bank and includes a Security Service Investigation Branch (SHABAK) which applies various pressures to squeeze confessions from detainees.

The group has produced two reports of conditions in this prison and of violations of human rights both of individuals and of detainees as a group. Members of WOFP are present at the prison every day and have a lawyer on call to assist them and unrepresented detainees.

All of this is expensive and WOFP would appreciate any financial assistance individuals or organizations can provide. If more information is desired please contact me at (604) 293-9638. Contributions can be sent directly to Legal Aid for Women Detainees, Account No. 707317, Discount Bank, Branch 63, 4 Shlomzion Hamalka St. Jerusalem, Israel.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Briemberg
Burnaby, BC

Ange Spalding

Kinesis:

The women's community in Vancouver has lost a proud, out lesbian—a lover, friend and ally to many. Ange Spalding, who turned 42 on July 30th this year, died of cancer on Thanksgiving Day, October 8, at St. Joseph's Hospital in Peterborough, Ontario where she had returned in late May of this year to dairy farm—the Big Love in her life.

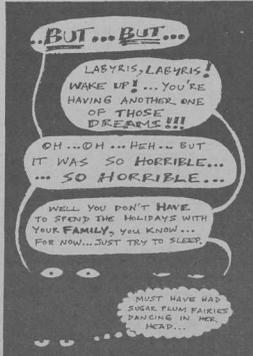
In addition to her brother Rog and many long term friends from the Toronto area, Ange's support team for the last 8 weeks of her life included friends and lovers from the west coast—Lamar Van Dyke from Seattle and Vicki Treiser and Pat Hogan from Vancouver.

Ange left an impression wherever she went, with whomever she touched. She will always be remembered for her bright and adventuresome spirit, her strong will, her love of animals, flowers, colours, little kids, her wonderful laugh, her total silliness two-stepping evenings together, and her pride in being a dyke for over 20 years.

We'd like to thank all of the women and groups whose donations helped us to be with Ange in her last days. If you'd like to help with outstanding debts and expenses, please call Pat at 253-7189 for more information.

Sincerely,
Pat, Vicki, Lamar
Vancouver, BC.

Abby & Bernaine in Wonderland



BULLETIN BOARD

READ THIS

All listings must be received no later than the 18th of the month preceding publication. Listings are limited to 50 words and should include a contact name and telephone number for any clarification that may be required. Listings should be typed or neatly handwritten, double-spaced on 8 1/2 by 11 paper. Listings will not be accepted over the telephone. Groups, organizations and individuals eligible for free space in the Bulletin Board must be, or have, non-profit objectives. Other free notices will be items of general public interest and will appear at the discretion of *Kinesis*.

Classified are \$8 for the first 50 words or portion thereof, \$4 for each additional 25 words or portion thereof. Deadline for classifieds is the 18th of the month preceding publication. *Kinesis* will not accept classifieds over the telephone. All classifieds must be prepaid.

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

EVENTS

WANNA GET INVOLVED?

With *Kinesis*? We want to get involved with you too. Help plan our next issue—come to the Writers Meeting on **Thurs., Jan. 3** at 7 pm at our office, #301-1720 Grant St. If you can't make the meeting, call 255-5499. No experience necessary, all women welcome.

WOMEN OF COLOUR CAUCUS

Women of Colour are organizing at *Kinesis* and we welcome all volunteers past, present and future to our next meeting on **Mon., Dec. 3** at 7 pm at #301-1720 Grant St. For more info, please call Terri Hamazaki at 321-0575.

VSU MEETINGS

All VSU members are welcome to attend Co-ordinating Collective meetings, held at our office at #301-1720 Grant St. Next meetings are **Dec. 10** (5:30 pm) and **Jan. 14** (5:30 pm). Call 255-5511 for more info.

LAMENTING THE MURDERS

"Threnody" an installation by Catherine Perrin: a lamentation on the deaths of 14 women in Montreal, **Dec. 6, 1989, Wed., Dec. 5, 1990, Candle Light Vigil** at 7:45 pm. Exhibition opens at 8 pm Women In Focus, 849 Beatty St, 682-5848. Exhibition runs to Dec. 14; open everyday from noon to 5 pm.

WOMYN'S COFFEEHOUSE

Sunday Dec. 2 Womyn's Coffeehouse with Chrystos, poet, writer, political activist and Martie van der Voort, lesbian songwriter/singer from Tucson, Arizona. Sliding scale \$4-8. Advance tix at Octopus Books and Ariel Books. Cappuccino, desserts, a good time in a smoke/alcohol free space. Cinderella Ballroom, 185 E. Main. Doors open 6:30 pm, Entertainment at 7:30 pm. All women welcome. Produced by Sounds & Furies. 253-7189 for info.

FILM TALKS

Cineworks invites you to an evening with British filmmaker Gurinder Chadha at 8 pm, **Dec. 5** at the Pacific Cinematheque. Chadha will introduce and discuss her films "A Nice Arrangement" and "I'm British But...". She will also lead a director's workshop on **Dec. 8**. Call Cineworks for info, 685-3841.

VIGIL

A vigil to commemorate the murders of the 14 women in Montreal last year will be held on the night of **Dec. 6**. Call WAVAW at 875-1328 for info.

EVENTS

INTL. CRAFT FAIR

Crossroads International will be hosting a fundraising fair at Kits House **Dec. 9** from 10 am-3 pm. A small entrance fee will be charged for the fair, which features world-wide crafts, music, food, entertainment, etc. For more info, call Angela Sasso at 251-9993.

PRAIRIE VIDEO

Video In presents two evenings of mixed video from the prairies: "Harsh Light: Prairie Video" **Dec. 13-14** at 8 pm at 1102 Homer St. Featured will be such artists as Sandra Tivy, Celine Godbersson, and Nikki Forrest. For more info, call 688-4336.

HORROR AUTOXICUS

Nell Tenhaaf's "Horror Autoxicus" will be exhibited at the Western Front Gallery, 303 E. 8 Ave., from **Dec. 15-Jan. 20**. This installation features computer interaction and is designed to look and act as an oracle. Opening is **Sat., Dec. 15**, at 2 pm.

DECEMBER READING

The Burnaby Writers Society will be holding their December reading of poetry and prose **Sun., Dec. 16** at 1:30 pm. Featured are writers such as Mary Higgins, Mavis Jones, Pam Galloway and Diane Salmon. Admission is free. For more info, call 525-7915.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Beat the January blues. Volunteer for the Women in View Festival, **Jan. 21-27, 1991**. Volunteer opportunities exist in production, publicity, hospitality, front-of-house, box office and other areas. For info, call Elinor at 875-6682.

BENEFIT SCREENING

Dec. 17, 7:15 pm Latin America Connexions Benefit night at the Starlight Theatre. "Funny, Dirty, Little War" and "The Official Story," two award winning films from Argentina. Tix \$7. Call 737-0188.

EXHIBIT POSTPONED

Andrea Lowe's photography show at the Vancouver Lesbian Connection has been indefinitely postponed. Anyone wanting to purchase cards or photos can call 876-3104.

PAY EQUITY SEMINAR

Wed., Dec. 5 Dr. Jane Gaskell, of UBC's Education Faculty, will be presenting a pay equity seminar at the Maritime Labour Centre, 111 Victoria Dr. The seminar is entitled "Measuring the 'skill' in Women's Work," and begins at 7:30 pm. call 255-7346 for info.

FEMINIST DISCUSSION

On Sun., Dec. 9, the Port Coquitlam Lesbian Support and Social Group will be hosting a discussion group on "Lesbians and Feminism" from 2-4 pm. For more info call the Port Coquitlam Women's Centre at 941-6311.

UNLEARNING RACISM

Weekend Workshops for Women: **Feb. 8,9,10**. For Women and Men: **Mar. 1,2,3**. Facilitated by AWARE (Alliance of Women Against Racism, etc.). Racism hurts all of us but its effects are experienced very differently by people of colour and white people. Sliding scale \$20-250. Held at Camp Alexandra, White Rock. Let us know access/childcare needs. Registration starts **Jan. 3**. Phone Janet 734-8156, Mari 872-1743 or Sarah 251-4601. Sponsored by the Unlearning Racism Workshop Committee.

EVENTS

PATTERNITY

This new three-hour video installation by local feminist video artist and historian Sara Diamond focuses on representations of memory, generational and gender differences and the family, through convergence of public/private histories. At the Vancouver Art Gallery, **Jan. 19-Mar. 3**

COFFEE BREAK CHARACTERS

Performers/writers Nora D. Randall and Jackie Crossland present their new work in upcoming shows: **Dec. 31** at First Night (8:30 pm and 9:15 at the VP Library); at the VIEW Festival **Jan. 24-27**, and in Victoria at the Open Space Gallery nightly at 8 pm, **Jan. 31-Feb. 3** (these shows include "Great Explanations"). Also, "Great Explanations" is available on cassette for \$11 plus \$2 shipping. Order from Random Acts, 4785 Gladstone St., Vancouver, BC, V5N 5A4 (Tel: 435-2273).

OPEN HOUSE

The Women's Research Centre at 2245 W. Broadway will be holding a Holiday Open House **Fri., Dec. 7** from 3-7 pm. Come and celebrate both the season and the release of their two new publications... "Keeping on Track" and "Strategies for Change." For more info, call 734-0485.

CALLING ALL LESBIANS

Your last chance to join the Intl. Lesbian Week Planning Committee will be the meeting held at the Vancouver Lesbian Centre **Sun., Dec. 2**, at 7 pm. Call 874-8567 for more info.

EVENTS

WHAT DOES SHE WANT

Nov. 24-Jan. 13, 1991. An exhibition of feminist video programs by women working in performance art, film and video, which deal with changing family roles and relationships, the nature of female desires and sexuality, how media defines identity and gender; the relationship between family history and the development of creativity. Among the artists are Yvonne Rainer, Martha Rosler, and Ardele Lister. At the Vancouver Art Gallery.

WORLD AIDS DAY

Is **Dec. 1**. Focus on Women. Events include:

- 1) A gathering, **Nov. 30**, Van. Art Gallery, 8 pm. Informal evening with music, entertainment. Proceeds to local and international women's AIDS groups;
- 2) Film Premiere **Dec. 1** *Too Close for Comfort*, Pacific Cinematheque, 1131 Howe St, 4 pm. A film about homophobia and HIV/AIDS. Call 685-3841 for info;
- 3) Discussion on Women and AIDS with international and Canadian speakers, **Dec. 1**, YWCA, 580 Burrard St, 3rd Floor, 11 am-1 pm. For info on World AIDS Day call 738-7075.

FOR BETTER WAGES

Women For Better Wages: next meeting on **Tues. Dec. 4**, 7:30 pm at the Newspaper Guild Offices, #301-828 W. 8th Ave., Vancouver.

FUNDRAISER

Dec. 8, 8 pm. Latin America Connexions Fundraiser at La Quena. Music with Zolty and special guests. \$3 Donation.

The Vancouver Folk Music Festival & Women in View Festival are pleased to present



FERRON

A celebration of the release of her new record "Phantom Centre". Ferron returns to Vancouver for her first full-length concert in a number of years.

SUNDAY - 8PM
JANUARY 27
PLAYHOUSE THEATRE
Hamilton & Duranuit

\$18 & \$16 at Black Swan Records, Highlife Records, the VFMF office, Women in View office or through Ticketmaster 280-4444. (service charges may apply)

The Vancouver Folk Music Festival is pleased to present

RANCH ROMANCE

These contemporary cowgirls, who opened 17 shows for k.d. lang, sing of open spaces, tall timberlands, and the challenges of going shopping for vintage western clothing. Their "regressive country" repertoire incorporates western swing, honky tonk, harmony yodelling, and acoustic rockabilly.

SUNDAY - 8PM
FEBRUARY 10
VANCOUVER EAST CULTURAL CENTRE

\$12 at Black Swan Records, Highlife Records, and the VFMF office.
RESERVATIONS 254-9578





BULLETIN BOARD

EVENTS GROUPS

MOISEWITSCH & LAURENCE

A collaborative installation by Carel Moisewitsch and Robin Laurence which combines fictional and graffiti impulses. Exhibition Companion essay by Holite Owens; chronology by Skai Fowler. Opening night Wed., Jan. 23 1991 at 8 pm. Exhibition runs to Feb. 25, 1991. The Lateral Gallery at Women in Focus, 849 Beatty St, 682-5848. Gallery hours: Wed.-Sun., noon to 5 pm.

JOIN MEDIAWATCH

Concerned about Media Exploitation of Women? MediaWatch, a national feminist organization concerned about the status and portrayal of women and girls in the media, works to improve and diversify these images through lobbying, education, and advocacy. Call 731-0457 for volunteer opportunities and other info.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

WAWAW/Rape Crisis Centre is looking for women volunteers to do rape crisis work. Training begins Feb. 20th and runs 11 weeks (Wed. 7-10 pm and Sun. 11-5 pm). Childcare and transportation costs provided. WAWAW strives to be anti-racist, anti-classist and anti-homophobic. Call 875-1328 for info.

SUBMISSIONS

SEXPORTEASE III

The Intl. Lesbian Week planning committee has space for approx. 10 performances of individuals or groups in their upcoming Sexpertease III event, Feb. 22 and 23. Call Mickey at 874-8567 or Mary at 254-2553 for info and/or auditions.

TRAUMA/SURVIVAL SHOW

The Women in Focus gallery at 849 Beatty St. is calling for submissions to their Trauma/Survival show, scheduled to open in the fall of 1991. This is a group exhibition encompassing all media and curated by Avis Lang. Deadline is Jan. 15, 1991. Call 682-5848 for more info.

ATTENTION WRITERS

Trivia, A Journal of Ideas, publishing radical, creative feminist thought in the form of essays, reviews, translations, and experimental prose, is now accepting submissions for issue #18, Spring, 1991. The emphasis of the issue will be on collaboration, though submissions need not be limited to this topic. Send two copies with SASE to *Trivia*, P.O. Box 606, N. Amherst, MA 01059. Deadline Feb. 15, 1991.

GROUPS

SELF-SUPPORT GROUP

Leaderless support group for women working in helping professions (medical, social service) who are survivors of child sexual abuse, exploring how we deal with our abuse while helping others and the issues that arise in our interventions as helpers. Preference for those already in therapy/supervision or who have been. 872-1144.

WOMEN WRITERS GROUP

I am interested in organizing a daytime group to seriously critique our work while creating real safety to share content and support process. Call Valerie 732-8927.

CLASSIFIED

UNIQUE GIFTS

Are you one of the many having trouble finding that one-of-a-kind unique eclectic special present for the one you love? Come to the Lonsdale Quay Christmas Market Dec. 1-12 and check out our beautiful, warm and cozy hand screen-printed shirts, buttons, and canvas bags. After the 12th come to our studio at 261 E. 1st St. North Vancouver; 11-3 pm Tues. thru Sat. Tel: 980-4235.

FEMINIST COUNSELLOR

Special interests: women's issues, child-hold trauma, substance abuse, and internalized homophobia. Sliding scale. Karen Lewis, MSW. Phone 254-8279.

COUNSELLING SPACE

Counselling office to share starting Jan. 1st. Available two-and-a-half days per week plus evenings and weekends. Commercial Drive location. For information phone Maggie at 254-2644 or Karen at 254-8279.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED

36-yr.-old lesbian wanting to find a place with another woman to share on west side. Call Sarah 736-4152.

FEMINIST AND LESBIAN BOOKS

Canada's largest selection in English and French: literature, theory, spirituality, incest, film, erotica and more. Just write for our free annotated catalogue. L'Androgyne Bookstore, 3636 St. Laurent, Montréal, Québec H2X 2V4. Tel: (514) 842-4765

FARSI LESSONS

I am offering to teach Farsi (the language of Iran) to interested students. Reasonable rates. Call 253-7673.



Constanza Silva, Terrie Hamazaki and Raven Courtenay perform *Storm After The Calm* at the Women in VIEW Festival in Vancouver, Jan. 22-27. See page 22 for more information about the festival.

CLASSIFIED CLASSIFIED

SHIATSU TREATMENTS

Ready to work on your stuff? Do it with your body. I work from the basis that our bodies remember joys, sorrows, fear, and frustrations. Unexpressed, these feelings play havoc in our lives, undermining our true potential. Using touch, breath, imagery and body awareness, my shiatsu treatments can help you free unexpressed emotions, and gain clarity. Astarte Sands, 251-5409.

TAIKO TAPES!

And t-shirts and CDs! Give the perfect holiday gift of music and heritage from Vancouver's own Japanese Canadian drum trio. "Chirashi" recording tapes \$10 ea; CDs \$15 ea; new "Uzume Taiko" t-shirts \$15 ea (female figure, white on black, M,L,XL). Include \$2 shipping per item. Send cheque or money order to: UZUME TAIKO, 1170 E. Georgia, Vancouver, V6A 2A8, or call 251-3908.

SHARED ACCOMMODATION

34-year-old lesbian seeks shared house or apartment (or other women who are interested in looking for a place together). I'm tidy, quiet, non-smoking, and vegetarian, into meditation and other similar pursuits. I enjoy living with people. I'd especially like to live in an all-women house. Maximum rent \$350. Phone 732-0792.

THERAPIST SOUGHT

Visible minority woman (woman of colour) therapist wanted to lead a group for visible minority adult women survivors of incest and sexual abuse. I'm looking for someone with education and work experience in this area. Also, the leader must have group work experience, knowledge and sensitivity to different ethnic groups, sexual orientation, and alternative spiritual and religious beliefs. The leader must have a clear understanding of internalized racism, systemic racism, oppression and individual differences. I will compile a proposal and have an agency sponsor this project. The earliest I could see this group beginning would be April 1991. If this interests you or for more info call Linda at 876-3506 by Jan 4, 1991.

A WOMAN'S PLACE

Emotional Fitness Centre: New counselling, educational and referral service on the North Shore. Offers feminist and lesbian affirmative counselling, workshops, support groups and information for general personal growth and healing and women's issues. Call Lou Moreau, founder and registered clinical counsellor, 984-8738 or 922-7930.

WOMEN'S STUDIES COURSES

Langara Women's Studies courses for Jan-April 1991: Women's Studies 116, an Introductory Perspectives on Women course, on Tuesdays 6:30-9:30 pm (at VVI) or on Wednesdays 3:30-6:30 pm (at Langara). 3 credits, university transferable, no prerequisites. Instructors: Deborah Dunne and Frances Wasserlein.

Women's Studies 274, Women and Sexuality, on Tuesdays 6:30-9:30 pm (at Langara). 3 credits, university transferable, prerequisites are W. ST. 116 or 216 or by permission of the program. Instructor: Patty Moore. Registration is week of Jan 1. Call Langara 324-5511 or Patty Moore 324-5370 or 254-4810 for more info.

CASINO VOLUNTEERS

WAWAW Rape Crisis Centre is looking for womyn to volunteer at a fundraising casino on the evenings of Dec. 10, 11, and 12th (5 pm-3:30 am). We will pay honorarium of \$50 to each woman. If interested please phone Sue at 875-1328 (pre ferably before Dec. 5th).

VILLA DE HERMANAS

Our all women's Caribbean beachfront guesthouse awaits you. Beautiful, LF owned Spanish style villa on long, secluded beach in the Dominican Republic. Small tropical gardens, oceanside pool, spacious comfortable common areas with large balconies and magnificent ocean view. Private, large, airy guestrooms, sumptuous meals and drinks, relaxing massages and healing crystals. Room rates: \$330 single; \$440 double per week. For reservations call our Toronto friend Suzi, at (416) 462-0046 between 9 am and 10 pm.

TRY CO-OP LIVING

City View Co-op, a 31 unit building near Victoria & Hastings, keeps an open waiting list for applications for membership. Rent for 1, 2 or 3 BR apts, is \$467, 589, or 683, plus a (refundable) share purchase. To apply, send a S.A.S.E. to: Membership Ctte, 1885 E. Pender, Vanc. V5L 1W6.

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