FEB. 1992

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KINESIS

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News About Women Th[illegible] In The Dailies

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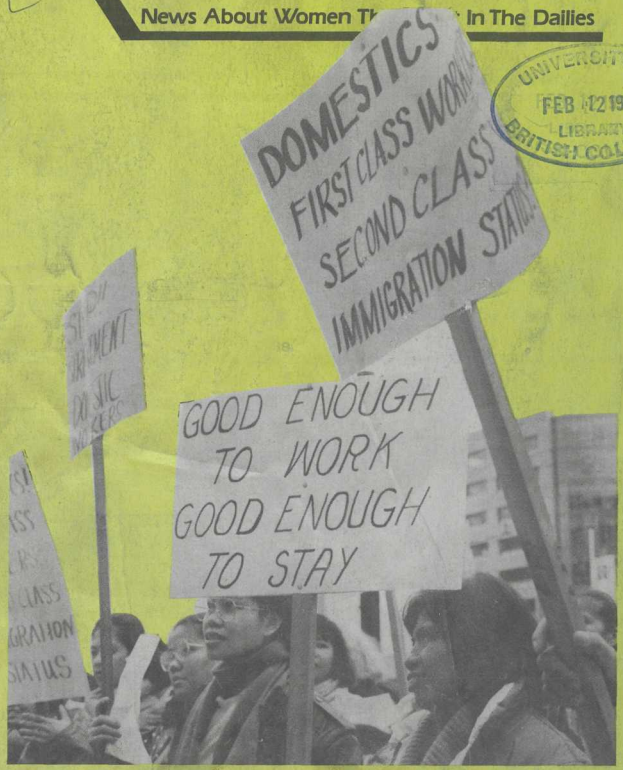

Domestic workers fight back

Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Call us at 255-5499. Our next Writer's Meetings are *Tues. Feb. 4* and *Tues. March 3* at 7 pm at *Kinesis*, #301-1720 Grant St. All women welcome even if you don't have experience.

PRODUCTION THIS ISSUE: Fatima Jaffer, Nancy Pollak, Janisse Browning, Agnes Huang, Gladys We, Cathy Griffin, Gabrielle Chew, Ria Bleumer, Donna Dykeman, Kelly O'Brien, Christine Cosby, Libbie Morin, Frances Wasserlein, Janette Hellmuth, Harriet Fancott, Deborah McInnes, Chris Meyer, Marsha Arbour, Debbie Bryant, Luce Kannin, Tamara Mac Kenzie and Susan John

FRONT COVER: The Domestic Workers Protest rally, Vancouver, January 12. Photo by N.J. Pollak.

EDITORIAL BOARD: Nancy Pollak, Heidi Walsh, Agnes Huang, Debbie Bryant, Christine Cosby, Sandra Gillespie, Lizanne Foster, Gladys We, Fatima Jaffer.

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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.

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

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

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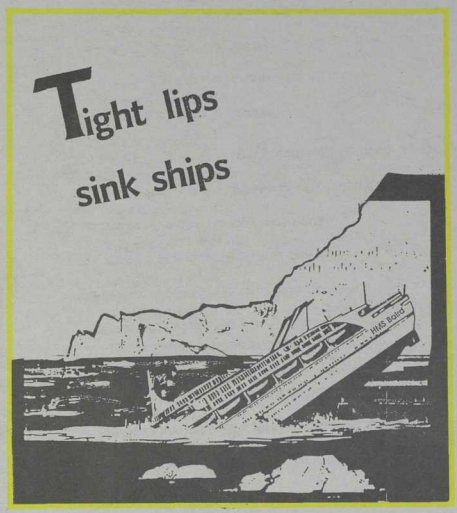
KINESIS MEANS MOVEMENT

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies



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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.

Canadian Women's Health Network

A dream of many women is becoming a reality: a Canadian Women's Health Network is being formed. Women Healthsharing, a feminist organization which promotes women's health through the quarterly magazine *Healthsharing*, has received funds from Health and Welfare Canada to establish links among organizations, groups and individuals throughout Canada working on issues which affect women's health.

This three year project aims to lay the groundwork for the network by: 1) gathering information about women's health activities and organizations in six Canadian regions to create a current resource bank; 2) devoting an issue of *Healthsharing* to each region (the issue will include the region's resource bank and will be freely distributed within the region); 3) organizing a Canada-wide conference on women's health which will focus on sharing resources, linking our struggles and determining a structure and direction for the network.

This is an opportunity for women to share resources, analysis, vision, and strategies for change. Links can be made between women's health and social problems such as poverty, sexism, racism and heterosexism. Women Healthsharing will do everything we can to help the network develop in a way that represents, and includes the concerns of, women from diverse classes, races, cultures, sexual orientations, ages and physical abilities.

Please contact the organizers as soon as possible if you would like to be involved in the network, have your work listed in the regional resource bank, or write an article for *Healthsharing*.

If you live in British Columbia or Alberta, contact Anne Fraser, Regional Animator, BC and Alberta, 131 East 27th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5V 2K5, (604) 879-1747. If you live anywhere else in Canada, contact Hazelle Palmer, Project Coordinator, 14 Skey Lane, Toronto, Ont., M5J 3S4

"Faces of Feminism" seeks support

Faces of Feminism is a portrait and text series documenting the Canadian women's movement. For five years Pamela Harris researched, photographed and collected the words of women across Canada. The selected exhibition of *Faces of Feminism* is now touring Canada, and includes women from all provinces.

Urban and rural women, individuals and groups, women from different races, ages and lifestyles have all contributed to this important historical document.

Second Story Press plans to publish *Faces of Feminism*. The book will include 75 portrait and text combinations, with an introduction by Angela Miles and an afterword by Pamela Harris. In order to make the publication possible, people are invited to pre-order an autographed, cloth-bound limited edition of the book, printed in duotone, at a cost of $50.

To order, or for more information, write to *Faces of Feminism*, Second Story Press, 760 Bathurst St., Toronto, ONT. M5S 2R6 Tel/Fax: (416) 537-7850. Cheques should be made payable to Second Story Press and include $8 for mailing and handling to locations outside of Canada.

Ante up for WomenFutures

The WomenFutures Loan Guarantee Fund was established to help women working collectively to secure financial support for new projects. The Vancouver-based fund, administered by WomenFutures Community Economic Development Society, is designed to help women participate in community-based businesses while balancing the social, economic and environmental needs of the community.

A recent WomenFutures' study showed that women doing business collectively were having a very hard time getting credit from financial institutions. Sexism, racism, homophobia and the lack of acceptance of non-traditional structuring of business all create barriers for women trying to obtain loans.

In November 1991, WomenFutures negotiated their first loan guarantee—$5000 to help Press Gang Printers buy a new printing press. Press Gang is a feminist printshop, owned and managed collectively.

To support other community-based initiatives by women, WomenFutures is launching a campaign to obtain returnable contributions and donations to expand the Loan Guarantee Fund. A returnable contribution is a contribution of at least $100, to be returned with interest after a stipulated period of time.

To make a returnable contribution, a donation or for more information about WomenFutures, contact WomenFutures 217-1956 W. Broadway, Vancouver BC V6J 1Z2. Tel: (604) 737-1338

Correction

In our December/January 1992 issue, we misspelled the name of budding photographer, Hula Cad Goldsmith (page 18).

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Inside Kinesis

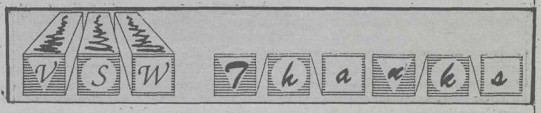
Kinesis is offering readers a new feature—"Paging Women." We've pulled together brief descriptions of recent books, to keep you informed—and to entice some budding (or established) book reviewers to join the crew of *Kinesis* volunteers. "Paging Women" appears on page fifteen.

As well, check out page 7 - a feature from the *Kinesis* Women of Colour Caucus.

We're bidding a sad farewell to Lauri E. Nerman's "Making Waves" music column. Lauri is just too damn busy, which is too damn bad since we appreciated her tips on what was movin' 'n groovin' on the women's scene. Lauri will now write for *Kinesis* on an occasional basis—watch for her interview with Ferron next issue.

Hello this month to Gabrielle Chew, who is doing her Simon Fraser University Women's Studies practicum with *Kinesis* this term. And greetings also to our many new contributors this month: new writers include Sharon Saunders, Pat Barter, Harriet Fancott, Catherine Burke, Jesse Sutherland, Shani Mootoo and Janette Hellmuth. New production volunteers are Ria Bleumer, Libbie Morin, Susan John, and Luce Kannin.

And last, but not least, *Kinesis* is in the market for an Editor. For details, see our ad in Bulletin Board.



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 response to our direct mail appeal in December and January:

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We would also like to thank the following volunteers for their many hours of work at our recent charity casino event:

Christine Cosby • Anne Filipowski • Miche Hill • Cat L'Hirondelle • Patricia Lust • Alex Maas • Leslie Muir • Nancy Pollak • Esther Shannon • Penny Thompson • Terry Thomson • Heidi Walsh • Gladys We

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Domestic workers:

Good enough to fight back

by Vera Ritt

Domestic workers and nannies across the country are angry and concerned that the federal government is shutting down their access to full Canadian citizenship—and doing so in a particularly back-handed way.

Their concerns focus on an abrupt change made to the Foreign Domestic Movement program (FDMP) in December. The FDMP included an overseas selection process which screened women on their eligibility to apply for landed immigrant status after two years in Canada.

This feature of the program, won by domestic workers after extensive lobbying in 1981, was widely regarded as a crucial acknowledgment that domestic workers were not just "good enough to work" but also "good enough to stay" in this country.

In mid-December, domestic workers' organizations learned that Canadian embassies had been instructed to suspend the overseas selection process and to grant foreign domestic workers temporary work visas only.

While the government says the move was a relatively insignificant step prompted by a recent court decision, domestic workers believe a badly flawed program has now been made worse.

The majority of domestic workers and nannies coming to Canada— 10,000 a year, by some estimates—are from the Philippines and other Third World countries. For many, employment in Canada is marked by exploitation and insecurity, factors built into the FDMP itself. With the apparent loss of one of the program's few good features, domestics expect their circumstances could deteriorate, and they've launched a nation-wide campaign to force the government to restore and improve the program.

Aster Chua works with the West Coast Domestic Workers Association (WCDWA), an advocacy and support organization in Vancouver. "The problem with this [move]," says Chua, "is now domestic workers are not really sure if we will be able to become landed immigrants." With this uncertainty, says Chua, workers will be less willing to speak up if they have problems with their employers.

And the problems can multiply. Under the FDMP, women are required to live and work in their employer's home for two years. They cannot work part-time elsewhere or live outside, and they have no entitlement to overtime pay.

"I worked 12 to 16 hours a day when I was a nanny," says Chua, who has completed her two years and now works at the WCDWA. Chua reports that in January, a domestic worker in BC grossed about $880 a month (based on a $5/hr for a 40 hour week) which dwindles to $509 after deductions for room and board, CPP and taxes.

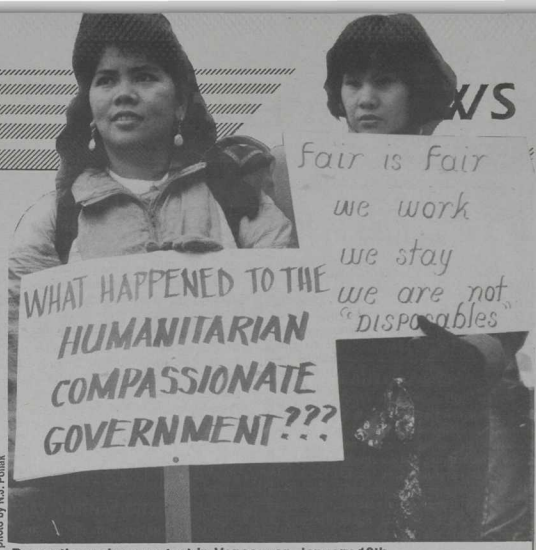

photo by N.J. Pollak

Domestic workers protest in Vancouver, January 12th.

In order to qualify for landed immigrant status under the FDMP, the women are required to show proof of savings, perform volunteer work in the community, and take training courses—to demonstrate their worthiness to be Canadian citizens.

"We are supposed to get two days off a week," says Chua, "and our employer is required to give us three paid hours a week for training." While the women rarely get the three paid hours off, "it's really common for domestic workers to spend one day off doing volunteer work and the other day off taking a course," says Chua.

Besides the obvious economic exploitation and loss of freedom, domestic workers may also be subjected to harassment (sexual and otherwise), forced to live in laundry rooms or with young children—all against a backdrop of powerlessness. Complaints about working or living conditions may be met by an employer's threat to report them to Immigration for trumped-up violations of their employment contract.

Without a guarantee that they are eligible to apply for landed immigrant status, live-in domestic workers will be even more vulnerable to exploitation, says the WCDWA. In fact, says the WCDWA, the new policy "goes back to the pre-1981 situation where visible minority women are brought in to perform domestic duties and provide 'cheap labour' for Canada's daycare crisis, but denied any right to stay, even after years of service."

The Philippine Women Centre in Vancouver agrees. In an information flyer circulated at a rally on January 12th, the PWC says domestic workers: "have enabled many Canadian women to work outside their homes and contribute to the Canadian economy ...

"Now that Canada is in the midst of a recession, these women have been found unworthy of becoming Canadians ... in short, they have become expendable and have to be sent back to their countries of origin."

Employment and Immigration Canada has been less than forthcoming in publicizing or explaining its December move. Domestic workers groups heard of the policy change through newspaper reports, which were based on an internal External Affairs communication to overseas visa offices. After over a month, the West Coast Domestic Workers Association is still awaiting a reply to its concerns from Bernard Valcourt, the Immigration minister.

According to a public affairs spokesperson with Immigration, the government changed its policy as a result of the Pinto decision in the Federal Court. The Pinto decision, brought down early in 1991, involved a challenge to the criteria by which immigration officers selected domestic workers. The Federal Court found the criteria too rigid (in fact, their ruling was considered progressive) and dictated changes to the overseas selection process.

"From this, the ministry decided to trash the whole process," says lawyer Lois Shelton of the WCDWA. "We believe there were other ways the ministry could have responded to the Pinto decision. We're suspicious about the motive behind the change. Our association is concerned that [the government] has a desire to restrict the number of women immigrants of colour."

According to Ottawa, the FDMP is "under review."

Domestic workers are asking all concerned people to pressure the Minister of Employment and Immigration Bernard Valcourt to restore the FDMP and allow domestic workers to be assessed as potential landed immigrants before coming to Canada. Write to him at the House of Commons, Ottawa, ONT. K1A 0J8

Sexual assault bill:

Defining 'no means no'

by Karen Duthie

Proposed amendments to Canada's sexual assault laws, announced in December by Justice Minister Kim Campbell, have been received by women's groups with a mixture of hope and skepticism. While Bill C-49 does not replace all the protections of the old "rape shield" law, struck down last August by the Supreme Court *(see Kinesis, Sept. 1991)* it nevertheless introduces some progressive reforms.

The rape shield law (sec. 276 of the Criminal Code) was designed to protect rape victims from being cross-examined about their sexual history. The proposed legislation includes a definition of consent to sexual activity (a new feature), guidelines in determining the admissability of past sexual history as evidence, and procedures to be followed in admitting such evidence.

The bill also includes a preamble outlining how Parliament "believes that at trials of sexual offence, evidence of the complainant's [women's] sexual history is rarely relevant and that its admission should be subject to particular scrutiny, bearing in mind the inherently prejudicial character of such evidence." This is the first piece of Canadian legislation to include a preamble.

Consent is defined as "the voluntary agreement of the complainant to engage in sexual activity." The proposed legislation also recognises situations that do not constitute consent, such as a woman "expressing by word or conduct, a lack of agreement or revocation of agreement to engage in sexual activity" —in other words, when she says 'no' or physically resists.

Also, consent must be expressed by the woman, not by a third party such as a pimp saying a woman was available for sex. As well, consent will not be deemed to exist if a woman was too drunk or if she engages in sexual activity because the accused held a position of trust or authority, such as a doctor, teacher or family member.

The amendments also say that a woman's past sexual history cannot be used in a trial if it is being used to suggest that "the complainant is more likely to have consented to the activity in question or is less worthy of belief." A list of eight factors a judge must consider before determining whether the evidence should be admissible at trial includes: the right of the accused to make a complete defence; the need to remove "discriminatory belief or bias" from the process (i.e. sexist attitudes about women's sexuality); and society's interest in encouraging the reporting of sexual abuse.

The procedure in admitting past sexual history in a trial requires the defence to submit a written application to the judge, who will in turn consider the defence's application in the absence of the jury and the public.

As *Kinesis* goes to press, representatives of 60 women's groups are meeting with government and judicial officials in Ottawa from January 27–29 to outline their responses to the proposed amendments. The bill receives the second reading in February.

Anita Braha, of the National Association of Women and the Law believes the law is generally positive and "reflects the concerns of a broad coalition of women's organizations."

Braha is pleased the definition of consent recognizes that women must voluntarily agree to sexual activity and that the onus is on the accused to make sure the woman wants to have sex. She is concerned, however, that too much discretion is vested in judges who are vested with the power to decide whether the woman's sexual history is admissible.

"It's ironic," says Braha, "that trial judges are themselves the subjects of at least half a dozen studies on judicial gender bias, yet will be entrusted to make unbiased decisions on sexual history evidence." She urges Campbell to implement a mandatory gender bias program for the judiciary.

Linda Schulz, spokesperson for Women Against Violence Against Women Rape Crisis Centre in Vancouver, believes the new bill is not really new at all, but simply embraces the Supreme Court's thinking in the rape shield decision. "We will still have the same old judge who says 'no' may be 'maybe' or 'wait awhile'," Schultz says.

Feminist lawyer Megan Ellis is also unenthusiastic about the proposed law. "All amendments and prior attempts to amend the Criminal Code ... have been undermined in implementation," says Ellis, and the same thing will happen now. Ellis says that a huge amount of resources are allocated to law reform and not enough into reforming the judicial system, leaving gender bias still rampant.

"Besides," Ellis says, "you can reform an automobile, but if it's on a dirt road, who cares?"

Karen Duthie is a regular contributor to Kinesis.

Women strike in Powell River:

Don't bank on the Commerce

by Pat Barter

Bank workers at the Powell River branch of the Imperial Bank of Commerce have been on strike since November 20, 1991. The issues behind the strike are:

- seniority call-in for casual employees;
- wages parity between branch employees doing similar jobs; and
- contract language to prevent harassment.

The women workers originally joined the United Bank Employees in 1985. After that union dissolved, they joined the BCGEU (BC Government Employees Union) in December, 1990.

All 29 employees (not including the manager and administrative officer) are in the bargaining unit, which is composed of 13 full-timers, 6 part-timers, and 10 casuals. Everyone in the bargaining unit must pay union dues, but they do not have to belong to the union (Rand formula). There are 24 union members and combined branch seniority among them totals 155 years. Eight of the strikers are single and of these, five support children or other family members as well. Of the five employees who are not union members, three scabbed for the first 13 days of the strike.

The branch closed briefly, 13 days after the strike started, while the bank tried to obtain a court injunction limiting the number of pickets. Madam Justice Kirsti Gill refused the bank's demand, and instead directed the union to simply refrain from intimidating scabs and customers. "We never did intimidate anyone," said one striker, "it's not our fault that scabs are intimidated by a picket line." The bank is in a mall, which allows only strikers to picket in front of the bank entrance.

Powell River is a coastal community of about 18,000, about 100 miles north of Vancouver. Major employment is provided by a large mill owned by MacMillan Bloedel and unionized by the Canadian Papermakers Union (CPU). Banking services are provided by single branches of the Royal, Nova Scotia and Commerce banks, two branches of the bank of Montréal (one, certified with SORWUC's United Bank Workers Union in the late 70's, has since decertified) and one credit union. The credit union, founded by the CPU, is also unionized by the BCGEU. Its employees achieved parity with unionized credit unions on Vancouver Island after striking for several months two years ago.

Public support for the strike is strong and few people cross the line to use either the Instant Teller or the services of the scabs. Picketers spend a lot of time advising customers on how to handle banking without crossing the picket line, and the union leaflet describes how to make alternate arrangements for loans, mortgages, direct deposits and automatic debits. Many people have transferred their money to other banks in town, or to the local credit union. Of those who do cross, the majority are women—the strikers say this is what hurts the most.

Currently, every employee at the branch has a different wage, the average being $10.50 per hour. As one striker points out: "The bank would have us believe that wages and promotions are based on merit and performance, per our yearly reviews, but this isn't really true. Two people doing the same job and with the same length of service may both receive a satisfactory rating on their review—and still get different wage increases."

"The personnel reviews are based on the supervisor's personal opinion of our work, not on a standardized evaluation of job performance," said one woman.

Seniority for casual workers is very important for all working women because it is the cornerstone of job security. As the people with the major responsibility for children and domestic work, women are often forced to accept casual work. At this bank, casuals who are union members are not offered as much work as non-union casuals.

Protection from harassment is on the table because the bank refuses to write its own harassment policy into the collective agreement (where it would be subject to the grievance procedure). The strikers say sexual harassment is not the problem, rather it is the petty, day-to-day stuff, and performance reviews that made this a major issue.

"The bank seems to criticize and belittle some union members in many petty ways—dress, sick leave," says one woman. Says another, "These incidents don't seem to happen to the non-union employees."

The BCGEU is supporting the women with strike pay at 70 percent of their wage, if they picket. The union has initiated a boycott campaign. Local unions and their members are being urged to withdraw all possible accounts from the Bank of Commerce. The strikers are also circulating a petition to federal labour minister Marcel Danis, asking him to intervene and force the bank back to the bargaining table.

If you have ever worked for a large, non-union company you know the score: favouritism, petty power trips from low level management, lousy wages and no recognition of the value of years of service. These things all foster competition between employees, creating anxiety about job security and financial instability. These women deserve and need your support. Please withdraw any accounts you have with the Commerce Bank, and tell the manager why. Please ask your friends and organizations to do the same. You can send letters to the strikers at: Judi Parsons, 3712 Mackenzie Ave., Powell River, BC V8A 3E8

Pat Barter is a former SORWUC member who has lived and worked around Vancouver for 40 years, mostly as a waitress and office worker. She now lives in Powell River and is working on a women's research project.

Panel on violence:

The public process begins

by Karen Duthie

The Canadian Panel to Address Violence Against Women launched its public process in Vancouver in January, and amidst the frowns of frustration from women who have seen many panels come and go on the same subject, there were expressions of anticipation and determination—especially from the panel members.

Through "interactive, responsive and grass-roots dialogue", the panel, appointed by the federal government in August, intends to encourage women to discuss violence from their own perspective and enable participants to form their own solutions to the problem.

"We're here in response to thousands of women and organizations" said co-chair Pat Marshall. She hopes a blueprint for action including a "road map for zero tolerance of violence" can be achieved from the panel's work in the next year.

Marshall said the two objectives of the panel are to fill in the gaps about the existing information on violence—including pornography, violence against the aged, and Native and immigrant women—and to develop a comprehensive set of solutions to help combat the problem.

The nine-member panel is working with a 23-member advisory committee and four-member Aboriginal circle. In the first phase of consultations, the panel will visit 100 communities, starting with BC and Alberta and ending in April with the Yukon and the North West Territories. The second phase will involve more formal hearings.

The panel has a way to go to win credibility among women. In Vancouver, groups were frustrated by poor organization and scant publicity on the panel's public meetings.

As well, there are concerns about co-chair Pat Marshall's use of the phrase "zero tolerance"—a phrase that has also been used by both Canada Customs officials and George Bush on the subject of illegal drugs.

Trisha Joel, of the Vancouver Status of Women, says that while women obviously want a society where violence is never condoned, the panel may lose credibility by using the phrase "zero tolerance".

"I'm afraid this slogan is one the Tories could easily co-opt," says Joel. "Soon we may be reading ads in the papers about how the government endorses zero tolerance on violence. Well, big deal. After all, the Tories are also promising to end child poverty by the year 2000. These are all great slogans with little behind them.

"As well, I'm concerned the zero tolerance slogan won't ring true with many women who are experiencing violence. They'll think, 'yeah, sure.' And that will damage the effectiveness of the panel."

Lee Lakeman of Rape Relief, a member of the panel's advisory committee, says the Vancouver meetings left her "impressed and encouraged by grass roots women's work, still alive after 10 years of the Socreds". Lakeman has concerns about the panel—how the information it gathers will be used, and how short and intense its time frame is. She is also concerned that the advisory committee has an unclear role.

The panel has not had the chance to make any real social or bureaucratic waves yet, says Lakeman. She is skeptical that the media, in its shallow coverage of the public hearing and its ignorance of the issues thus far, will be able to sway public opinion.

Lakeman believes women in BC will be making a judgement on what would have been the best way to deal with the panel—to boycott, to protest, or to offer one agreed-upon set of resolutions. She hopes that feminists elsewhere will get together for a strategy by the time the panel arrives in their town.

Woman charged with aggravated sexual assault:

Dangerous, insulting charge

by Jackie Brown

Feminists and AIDS activists across Canada have expressed outrage and dismay at Nanaimo Crown Counsel's decision to charge an HIV-positive woman with aggravated sexual assault after she allegedly had unprotected sex with two men.

Not only does the charge insult all women who are victims of male sexual violence, critics say, but it also ignores men's responsibility to practice safe sex and will do nothing to help stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. From a legal standpoint, lawyers suggest the charge—never before laid against a woman in Canada— will be difficult to prove.

The 20-year old woman was charged in December, 1991 with one count of aggravated assault and two counts of aggravated sexual assault after the two men filed a complaint with Nanaimo RCMP. Attorney General Colin Gableman has been reported as saying the woman was under a previous court order not to have unprotected sex.

(*Kinesis* was unable to interview the woman and has decided not to report her name out of respect for her privacy. As well, there is a ban on evidence so details of the charges cannot be reported.)

The woman was granted bail on condition she stay at a Nanaimo women's shelter until her trial date, not have unprotected sex and report to health and probation officials. She left the shelter late in December and was picked up by police several days later at a Nanaimo hotel. She was then charged with three counts of breach of bail conditions and released. Her trial is scheduled for February 24, 1992 in Nanaimo Supreme Court. She has elected trial by judge alone.

In the meantime, women's and AIDS organizations are rallying to her defence. The Vancouver Island AIDS Society has started a legal defence fund and the Nanaimo Sexual Assault Centre is circulating a petition calling for the charges to be dropped.

Nationally, the AIDS Committee of Ottawa, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC) issued a joint press release stating that aggravated sexual assault laws are designed to protect women from violence and should not be used to incriminate women "for the failure of consenting partners to engage in safe sex." They too are calling for the charges to be dropped.

CASAC's Caroline Ford called the charge "unconscionable" particularly since, she said, it is rarely used against men who commit the vast majority of sexual assaults. (Men are rarely charged with aggravated sexual assault—the most serious charge. More often, a lesser charge such as sexual assault is used.)

"It's unbelievable and I want an accountability check," says Ford. "I want to known why, if the state has all the resources to go after this woman with full guns, that they're not also turning this kind of full effort against the men who rape and kill women and children."

And, says Ford, attempting to protect society by singling out and punishing people who supposedly willfully infect others will not help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, which is a health issue and must be dealt with in that context.

"No one disagrees that something has to be done if people are deliberately infecting others," says Ford. "But that's not the issue because the fact is, most people who are spreading the disease are doing it unknowingly." The solution lies in education, not criminalization, she says.

Tina Hurd, co-ordinator of the Nanaimo Sexual Assault Centre, also questions use of a charge associated with forced sexual activity when the men involved consented to intercourse but chose not to wear condoms.

"The aggravated sexual assault charge is designed to protect women but it is now being used against a woman because men didn't engage in safe sex. Where is men's responsibility in all this?" asked Hurd, whose organization is calling on government to examine the use of criminal law in relation to AIDS and to recognize HIV as a health issue.

B.J. Traynor, staff person at Women Against Violence against Women in Vancouver, adds that charging a woman with aggravated sexual assault also undermines the real trauma and suffering women experience during any kind of sexual assault.

"With this charge, you first have to be committing a sexual assault, so what is being implied here?" says Traynor. "That the men were in fear of their lives and had no control over the situation? I guarantee you those men didn't experience that."

According to the Criminal Code, a person who commits an aggravated sexual assault is a person who "in committing a sexual assault, wounds, maims, disfigures or endangers the life of the complainant." The maximum sentence is life in prison.

What's more, says Traynor, the charge implies that women—historically and falsely blamed for spreading sexually transmitted diseases—are also responsible for the spread of AIDS within the heterosexual population, even though it is far more likely that women get HIV through sex with infected men.

Beth Easton, co-ordinator of Vancouver's Women and AIDS project agrees. "Research clearly shows that women are anywhere from 10 to 17 times more likely to get HIV from an infected man [than a man from a woman]. This is understood so I feel this woman is being scapegoated," says Easton.

Adds Michael Rekart, director of the BC Ministry of Health's STD division: "The likelihood of a woman transmitting the AIDS virus during vaginal intercourse to a man is minimal compared to transmission the other way around. It does happen, but the likelihood of a man transmitting to a woman would be another power of almost one hundred."

Rekart adds that some American research suggests that the possibility of a woman infecting a man during one episode of vaginal intercourse without a condom is less than a thousand to one.

For Easton, the greatest source of frustration is that after years of AIDS prevention education stressing the individual's responsibility to protect themselves and their partners, women are still being made responsible for safe sex.

"As if women have final control over whether men use condoms or not," says Easton. "There seems to be a surprising lack of awareness of what goes on between heterosexual partners."

> **"As if women have final control over whether men use condoms..."**

Legally speaking, lawyers suggest the charge will be hard to prove. For example, says lawyer Jessica Gossen, it will be difficult to establish that an assault took place since in criminal law, a charge must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt by the crown. That will mean proving that the men were harmed or at risk even though by all reports, there is no evidence that either are infected with the virus, she says. Even if they were, adds Gossen, how can anyone be certain the woman was the source?

And there are the questions of intent and consent. "You would have to prove she intended to harm the men and that they didn't consent to the sex," says Gossen. "But men know the risks involved so if they don't wear a condom then they are voluntarily taking on a risk in terms of any sexual contact—including with a person who may or may not have the HIV virus."

Jackie Brown is a freelance writer.

photo by Gabrielle Chew

Remember the Gulf War?

Yasaman Hossein *(pictured above)* was one of a small group who gathered for a candle light vigil in Vancouver January 16th, marking the anniversary of the start of the Gulf War, the war most westerners would rather not remember.

According to international reports, more people are dying in Iraq now than were killed by the saturation bombing last year. Massive destruction of the country's infrastructure—hospitals, sewage treatment plants, agricultural resources—have lead to widespread hunger and disease. One million Iraqi children are malnourished and another 100,000 are starving, according to public health specialists who toured Iraq last summer. The country's infant mortality rate has tripled.

Activists are angered that the US-lead alliance (including Canada) still enforces sanctions against Iraq, sanctions which prevent repairs to the country's damaged civilian facilities and hence prolong the civilian suffering. To get involved, or for further information, contact the Middle East Peace Action Coalition, PO Box 69202, Stn. K, Vancouver V5K 4W4 (Tel: 298- 9638).

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WHAT'S NEWS?

by Gladys We

Abortion clinic wins charitable tax status

The Everywoman's Health Centre Society, which operates an abortion clinic in Vancouver, is now legally a charity. After a three-year struggle to obtain a charitable tax number from Revenue Canada, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled in November 1991 that Everywoman's was entitled to register as a charity because their services are "beneficial to the community." This means that financial contributions to the society are now tax-deductible. Calling the decision "a tremendous victory for women," Everywoman's Hilda Thomas thanked everybody who has supported the clinic without a tax break.

Everywoman's has been forced to do extensive fundraising because the Social Credit government refused to provide standard health care funds to their free-standing clinic.

The ruling holds several implications for Canadian women. Abortion rights groups predict the clinic will receive more revenue, and pointed out that other abortion clinics across Canada may now be able to gain charitable status. Thomas also felt the ruling would give women across Canada greater access to abortion clinics. Lawyer David Mossop, who represented the Everywoman's in court, said that the ruling could be a basis for future challenges to the Canadian Charter of Rights because abortion is not equally available to all Canadian women.

RU-486 research coming to Canada?

The controversial drug RU-486, called the "abortion pill," may soon be tested in Canada as a treatment for breast cancer. As an abortifacient, RU-486 interferes with the normal action of the hormone progesterone. Some researchers believe this ability to block the action of progesterone may make RU-486 a natural weapon against some breast tumours, which seem to be dependent on the hormone for growth.

The proposed study is called a "coup" for Canadian researchers. While American researchers have wanted to test the drug, the French manufacturer, afraid of retaliation from the strong American anti-abortion movement, has been reluctant to supply the drug to American researchers.

Dr. Elizabeth Eisenhauer, director of the new drug program of the clinical trials group of the National Cancer Institute of Canada, said that final details of the study are being worked out with the Montréal-based subsidiary of the French firm. However, no trials can begin until they are approved by the federal government's health protection program.

Deplorable ruling in rape trial

In a rape trial in January, judges on Australia's Supreme Court ruled that: "Prostitutes suffer little or no sense of shame or defilement when raped," and reinforced their support for a 1981 ruling that said raping a prostitute was "not as heinous as when committed on a happily married woman." The judgement touched off protests by women across Australia, and may contravene the 1984 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Madam Justice Elizabeth Evatt, president of the Australian Law Reform Commission, said: "The idea that it is a less serious offence to commit rape against a prostitute is a dangerous concept for the law to take up. It suggests that one category of people is less entitled to the protection of the law than another."

Except in Tasmania, prostitution is legal throughout Australia. A Melbourne University study found that men who rape prostitutes tend to receive shorter sentences than men who rape other women, even though rapists are more likely to use violence and weapons against prostitutes, and that, as a consequence, prostitutes suffer greater injuries.

Paulette, a Melbourne street prostitute whose rape was the subject of the 1981 ruling said: "I'm a working girl but that doesn't mean I have to put up with such violent behaviour." She added that the recent judgement would encourage men to attack prostitutes because they knew the courts would treat their crime lightly.

Hospital workers seek pay equity

Negotiations between the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU), which represents 35,000 hospital workers in British Columbia, and their employers were suspended on December 19 by mediator Stephen Kelleher. Despite the NDP removal of wage controls instituted by the previous Social Credit government, the Health Labour Relations Association (HLRA) has been unwilling to table a wage offer. In fact, wage rollbacks remain on the bargaining table. HEU members were taking a strike vote as *Kinesis* goes to press.

Pay equity is one of the major demands the HEU has taken to the bargaining table. Women make up a majority of the members of the HEU, but earn only 63 cents for every dollar earned by men. The HEU has demanded that the current base of $12.34 for jobs normally performed by women be raised to $14.22, the base rate of jobs normally performed by men. Other demands include an adequate wage increase to offset the past years of wage controls, better working and caring conditions, and improved benefits.

Repetitive strain injuries:

An epidemic at work

by Sharon Saunders

Sunera worked for 25 years at the same job in a garment factory. She was employed as an invisible mender, required to sit in a hunched position over a magnifying glass and do fine and intricate stitching. Sunera was highly skilled and her company saw her as an expert. Because of this, she was sent garments for fine mending from other factories in Canada and the United States.

Ten years into the job, Sunera experienced pain in her arms, shoulders and neck. She did not think her pain was from her job duties. Two years later, the pain became severe and Sunera sought medical help.

Her treatment began with injections in both shoulders, and continued over a 12 year period, involving 8 surgeries. She returned to work after each treatment, but 14 months ago, her doctor finally advised that she should no longer work.

Sunera filed for Workers' Compensation, appealed, but was turned down. Workers' Compensation says that there is no medical evidence to show that her condition is work-related.

Sunera's story is one of several in the booklet *Repetitive Strain Injuries in the Workplace*, recently published by Women and Work Research and Education Society. In talking with clerical workers around BC, project co-ordinators Lois Weninger and Lynn Bueckert discovered there was a critical need for information on what has become North America's number one occupational health problem, Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSI).

What is RSI?

Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSI) is a term used to encompass a number of physical problems that result when muscles, tendons and joints are overloaded, problems such as tendonitis, tenosynovitis, tennis elbow (epicondylitis), carpal tunnel syndrome and bursitis.

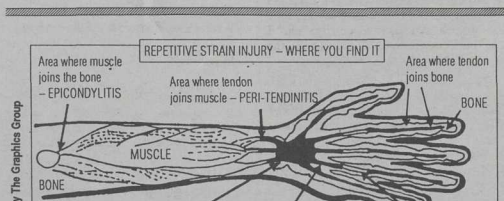
It is estimated that over 50 percent of the workforce is at risk from RSIs. In some occupations, workers see injury as part of their job description. Fish plant workers, typists, bakers, garment workers and meat cutters and processors have suffered for years from RSIs.

But it is the introduction of the computer, wide-spread mechanization of work and the demand by employers for greater and greater productivity levels that have created the current epidemic of injuries. Clerical workers, cashiers, assembly line workers, bindery workers, bank tellers, airline reservation personnel, telephone operators, data processors, mail coders and sorters, musicians and library workers are just a few of these high risk occupations. A high percentage of women work in these occupations.

RSI victims face more problems than their injury. There are still doctors who are not familiar with work-related RSIs and some have treated sufferers as hysterical or simply unhappy with their job or home life. Even with a sympathetic doctor, accurate diagnosis and effective treatment is a problem. Furthermore, workers who continue to perform the same work under the same conditions risk developing a chronic problem or a more serious injury.

Such injuries have been recognized in athletes for years, resulting in the growth of the field of sports medicine. However, their role as an occupational hazard has been very slow in gaining similar recognition and attention.

The Workers' Compensation Board of BC still denies a great many cases, forcing costly and time-consuming appeals to review boards, medical panels or the new appeals division. This places added stress on the worker and also strains union resources or the understaffed Workers' Advisors who represent non-union workers. Too many workers do not file compensation claims and many more don't bother to appeal when their claims are denied.



Prevention is Key

RSIs in the Workplace offers information which can prevent injury or help a worker cope with an existing injury and claim for compensation. Written in plain, accessible English with many illustrations, this booklet is also being translated into Punjabi, Chinese and Spanish.

RSIs can be prevented, but it will take changes to practices in the workplace to make a serious impact. Employers must redesign workstations and equipment to meet the needs of the worker rather than the needs of the job. Jobs must be redesigned to limit repetitive tasks and eliminate pacing and electronic monitoring. Education and training programs should be implemented to provide information on healthy postures and motions and how to adjust chairs, desks, workstations and lighting.

Prevention is the key to dealing with RSIs, but as long as employers, doctors and the WCB refuse to recognize the problem, prevention programs will not be implemented and workers will continue to be injured.

Repetitive Strain Injuries in the Workplace *is available for $2 per copy. Women and Work provides information on all aspects of RSIs and is available for workshops and discussion groups. Call 430-0458 or write to 4340 Carson Street, Burnaby, BC, V5J 2X9.*

Women and Work is sponsoring a conference on RSI on April 10th and 11th, in Vancouver. See Bulletin Board for details.

After developing an RSI in 1988 as a result of VDT use, Sharon Saunders began working with her union (The Communication Workers of America) and Women and Work on RSI prevention and support.

NOT JUST ANOTHER PAGE

Who we are and why we are here

The *Kinesis* Women of Colour Caucus was formed over a year ago to attempt to fill a void in the predominantly white feminist press. Through the caucus, women of colour have accessed *Kinesis* as writers, illustrators, staff, and editorial board members. We wanted to make ourselves known to *Kinesis* readers, and, for the first time, share our work on a page with each other. The caucus has a very fluid membership and encourages women of colour and First Nations women to join us. We provide childcare subsidies, and are currently organizing to meet at members' homes. We meet on the last Thursday of each month. Details for meetings are advertised in each issue of *Kinesis*. Our next meeting is set for Feb. 27th—call 682-0080 for details.

Our objectives as a caucus are to:

- Make *Kinesis* more accessible for women of colour and First Nations women;
- Encourage work by women of colour and First Nations women for publication;
- Create a safe space to express our diverse realities and diverse interests within ourselves and with each other (eg., with respect to age, ability, mothering, class, economics, sexuality, spirituality, and humour).
- We share our food, our stories, and exchange seats. We invite women of colour and First Nations women to eat with us, share seats and stories.

I think the caucus should continue to reconsider changing its name to be more welcoming for First Nations women. Maybe we can name the caucus something more inclusive which respects our diversities. I've written this publicly so readers may also ponder this question, with all its implications. *NOTE: since I have written this piece, caucus members proposed a new name: "The Not Just Another Page Collective".* And now, a story: According to popular Western stereotypes, children suck their *thumbs* for security and comfort. But I was different. I sucked the index and middle fingers of my right hand.

My mom tried several home remedies to thwart my bad habit and warned that my teeth would grow in crooked, but I was really hooked. Only an ugly mouth infection finally stopped my finger sucking.

Without praising nasty habits, I think finger sucking helped me get a head start in the Canadian public school system. As a young student, I was asked to rest my head on my desk after finishing class assignments. I saw that as an invitation to suck my fingers in private—cradling head and fingers in the comfort and darkness of my folded arms. Much to my teachers' amazement and chagrin I became better and faster at completing class assignments for a few brief moments of finger sucking. I was motivated to finish my school work efficiently, correctly, and quickly. So, I wonder whether that early habit actually helped me hone some skills early in life so that grad school would take me three years to complete instead of five or twenty. —*Janisse*

ICE-OH-LAY-SHUN
my pain
caresses (CARESSES)
my body
licks my wounds
my heart
screams (SCREAMS)
for touch
which burns away
the agony —*Farhat*

artist unknown

I encourage all readers to educate themselves and support Aboriginal women by attending the premiere of "The Strength of Indian Women," a Storyteller Theatre production by Vera Manuel. Based on the ordeals of four Native Indian women, the play focuses on their strength and determination to survive. Respectful use of stories related by older women highlights the sense of strength, wisdom and endurance that they pass on to the next generation. The cast includes a daughter and a granddaughter of one of the survivors. **Jan. 31-Feb. 2.** See the Women in VIEW Festival program or call 685-6201 for times and ticket information. I believe this work is part of the new wave of cultural expression empowering Native women. —*Allisa.*

graphic by SSCCJ

I say, don't ask me where I'm from. I'm from Vancouver. And you say, "No, I mean, where are you *really* from? And I say, London, Ontario. "No, I mean *before* that. Where are you really . . . " And I say Montréal. And I say London, England. And I say Colwyn Bay, North Wales. And I say Mombasa, Kenya. And you say, "But you don't look African." And I say I'm Indian, my parents are Indian. And you ask, "So they came from India?" And I say no, they were born in Africa. And you say, "oh." I guess you're tired now. We talk about the latest movie everybody saw.

Who is that? Who's talking, who's interpreting, who's judging, who's listening? Who's searching for meaning and truth? The Women Of Colour Caucus at *Kinesis* is asking and talking and listening and interpreting and reviewing. We're not telling you if you don't want to know, but if you want to know, listen and you'll hear us. —*Fatima*

Are we are we are we
finished yet? You tell me
You know what I like don't you
don't you
Ham or bacon honey
Which is it that I prefer, I forgot
You see.
But, I will not sing in a locked cage
Oh my lords,
Then, I am of no use to you
Take me away, I say take me away
take me away
You put a nail in my head, took it out
and told me
There is no hole there. —*Burcu*

graphic by Manisha

No soy Latina
I'm not black.
I'm brown.
I'm Indian
Travelling the world,
forever running
forever searching
forever escaping
into worlds which
aren't my own
Trying in vain to become
a Latina,
a black woman
where to next Natasha?
where to next? . . .
Faker.
Liar.
Stealer
"Fucking Paki—go home."
Yeah.
Yeah motherfucker,
I think I just will. —*Natasha*

To the beautiful asian
girl dancing in white circles:
In smoke-filled dance halls I can
smell you first
We are the same; chameleons of denial
silencing our past into unknown futures
creating ourselves in shadows
We are the lost
what face do you see when you
look in the mirror
blond madonnas or black geishas?
with age your cute exotic desire
will fade and your disguise fall
looking at you
looking at me
white is an ideal we are not
I see you
do you see me? —*Susan*

words words words words words
words words words words words
words words words words words
words words words words words
I'm not a poet but I try.
If you've got words to write but cry
at being silenced and are a woman
of colour or a First Nations woman
the W.O.C. Caucus at Kinesis
a great space to be is.
I'm not a poet but I try
I hope this attempt didn't make you cry. -
Fatima

天宬.
Vancouver B.C.

亲爱的祖母,

我很想念您。我在这里不知道您在新加坡做什么。我希望您健康好。

我现在写给您,因为我要告诉您个很重要的事情。我在加拿大已经五年。在这五年的期间。我小最慢找到我真正的我。祖母,我是个女同性。我不要您,开始想,我是个罪人,因为我自己知道我不是。

我从小的时后,已经知道我喜欢女人,可是,因为我爸妈是基督教的,我早早不能让人知道。现在,在加拿大,因为不和爸妈住,我能生存个女同性。

我现生告诉您,3,希望您还能爱我,和我来信,因为我还是您的天宬,只是个更真真的天宬.

天宬.
一月二十日 一九九二年.

Women in Focus:

Damage beyond repair?

by Nancy Pollak

Actions by the directors of Vancouver's Women in Focus—and inaction by its membership—have done irreparable damage to relations between women of colour and white women, say some women of colour artists.

Since last spring, the feminist arts and media centre has been in constant conflict, largely due to decisions by the board to engage in legal actions against In Visible Colours (IVC), a woman of colour film and video society, and by the board's refusal to heed the wishes of its membership to stop the harassment of IVC and call an annual general meeting (AGM). On January 24th, the WIF membership finally took the WIF board of directors to court for its refusal to call an AGM.

WIF's legal fight against IVC has centred on the ownership of almost $50,000, the profits from IVC's internationally acclaimed 1989 festival in Vancouver *(see Kinesis, June 1991 for details.)* The In Visible Colours Festival was co-sponsored by WIF and the National Film Board.

Despite a court ruling in September which awarded 75 percent of the festival profits to IVC (and 25 percent to WIF), the WIF board, represented by director Sue Jenkins, returned to court in December to prevent the money being dispersed to IVC's account. (The money was being held in IVC's lawyer's trust account; WIF launched its action the day it was due to be released.)

Jenkins, the only elected director, was acting with the support of three other directors she appointed—Judith Mastai, Sherry Grauer and Shelley Novazek. The three resigned shortly after for a variety of personal reasons.

In the December 19th action, WIF's lawyer argued that IVC's money should not be released until WIF had completed a thorough audit of the festival's books, suggesting that IVC and its directors may have breached their duties with respect to the festival's funds. According to WIF's lawyer, the money left over from the IVC festival could not properly be described as profits until the audit was completed and it was established that WIF was in good standing with its funders.

IVC's lawyer, Kyong-ae Kim, successfully argued that the September ruling had settled the question of whose money was whose, and after an almost three-week freeze, the court released IVC's funds.

In fact, an audit was completed and financial statements were presented to the WIF board in early December, before the December 19th action. They were signed by all directors except Jenkins.

Former WIF director Judith Mastai, who heads public programming at the Vancouver Art Gallery, says Jenkins didn't sign the audited financial statements because she was working night shift at the post office. (Jenkins would not be interviewed by *Kinesis*, saying the matter was before the courts.) In Mastai's view, the action against IVC was just part of the effort to tidy up WIF's books.

"It's not a scenario that has anything to do with being vindictive." says Mastai. "It's to do with bringing order to the house, to be able to carry on, make arrangements with creditors, reduce the deficit and straighten out internal difficulties. If you have an organization that is unable to give audited financial statements, no funder will touch you."

Mastai, who was out of the country for much of the fall, said that meetings with funders in September impressed on the board the need for a solid financial picture. Further, says Mastai, "the difference between the membership and the board is that the board is liable."

To date, no WIF board member has explained what liabilities they fear, which creditors are at the door, or which funder is threatening to withdraw.

Fumiko Kiyooka, an independent filmmaker and WIF member, has been active in the struggle to bring WIF under the control of the membership.

"After the original court decision [in September], people didn't feel great, but it was okay," says Kiyooka. "Then Sue Jenkins tried to freeze IVC's money—for a long time—which could have caused IVC to go under. She had *no regard* for how this action would affect IVC.

"The membership has been left out and left uninformed, because the AGM has been [repeatedly] delayed—and now we have to try to get an AGM through the courts."

The active membership has tried since May 1991 to hold an AGM. In July, 10 percent of the membership legally requisitioned an AGM under the Society's Act. The board scheduled a meeting for September 30th, rescheduled then indefinitely postponed it, citing delays with the audit. As recently as January 24th, Jenkins—who has appointed several new directors—refused to call an AGM when asked to do so by a lawyer for the WIF membership committee.

(Among other reasons, WIF members retained a lawyer because Jenkins would not turn over a list of members or allow access to financial records, when requested by member Lorna Boschman. She finally did so on January 24th.)

Haruko Okano, an artist who actively campaigns against racism, says the WIF membership has to take responsibility for their board's actions. "Condescension and apathy within the organization allowed this to happen. The membership moved too slowly—and the damage has been to In Visible Colours, who have spent almost $20,000 on legal fees ... How many members will examine what happened? There is a complacency built into the dominant culture—you just fall asleep and let things happen.

"On one technical level, IVC is conceived to have won [the court cases], yet this has damn nearly crushed a group that was so successful. The actions of this predominantly white organization [WIF] is so typical of a colonialistic, imperialistic attitude: to solve the problem by taking advantage of a group that trusted you."

Farhat Khan of the IVC board echoes Okano's view. "We had a lot of frustration and anger about not going public when [the harassment] first started," says Khan, "but the WIF membership were concerned it would all just be seen as 'feminists against feminists.' We thought we had a strong case. And we felt frustration and disappointment that nothing much was being done by the membership."

The legal action by the WIF membership committee re: the AGM will be heard on January 29, after Kinesis *goes to press.*

Lesbians and immigration:

Breaking down borders

by Harriet Fancott

January 14th, 1992 may well be an historical day not only for Christine Morrissey and her lover Bridget Coll, but for gay and lesbian citizens throughout Canada. On that day Morrissey filed a statement of claim to the federal court asserting her right to sponsor Coll, her life companion, for immigration to Canada.

Morrissey's challenge is the first of its kind and may well be a precedent-setting case. Her lawyer, Rob Hughes, will argue that the Immigration Act discriminates against same-sex couples on the basis of sexual orientation, a violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Morrissey, a Canadian, and Coll, an American citizen, have been in a committed relationship for over 14 years and are financially and emotionally dependent upon each other. They met in 1977 and have lived together since 1979.

Coll has been living and working in Vancouver for three years under various work permits, a situation that has proved increasingly difficult. Unwilling to risk being rejected for another work permit, Morrissey and Coll decided to apply for immigration under the "family class."

Morrissey's application was returned, unprocessed, with a note stating that Coll did not fit into any of the categories. Because the application was not officially rejected—Coll, in this case, simply did not "exist"—Morrissey had no right to appeal. The only route available to the two women was to challenge the regulations through Federal Court.

They received funding through the Court Challenges Program, which provides monies for test case litigation on equality and minority language rights. "Ms. Morrissey's case will be the first test case to challenge the Immigration Regulations for discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation," said Andrée Coté, director of the program. When cases like this are won, they set important legal precedents that clarify the scope of equality rights in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

Morrissey is challenging the "family class" section of the act which is defined in terms of individuals related by blood, marriage or adoption to the sponsoree.

The Vancouver-based Lesbian and Gay Task Force on Immigration said the existing law encourages gays and lesbians to lie and cheat in order to gain entry into Canada by entering marriages of convenience. The Task Force, co-chaired by Morrissey, is based on one established in Australia which provided the pressure necessary to gain same-sex sponsorship there.

New Zealand, Australia, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands all permit sponsorship of same-sex partners.

Harriet Fancott is a whirled traveller.

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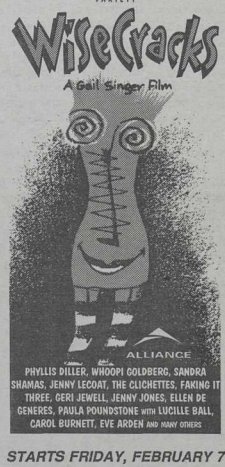

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Constitution:

Looking at the latest con job

by Catherine Burke

Ottawa's latest constitutional proposals, unveiled September 1991, do little to address the needs of the politically powerless or the average woman on the street. This is nothing new.

So far, no First Ministers' meeting has been called to hammer out the final proposals, likely because such behind-closed-doors scenarios were heatedly criticized during and after the failed Meech Lake Accord. Instead, the Dobbie-Beaudoin committee (the federal parliamentary committee) and several private research institutions have been commissioned to study and review the opinions of constitutional experts, interest groups and provincial politicians.

The 28 proposals to amend the 1982 Constitution can be divided into three broad categories: citizenship, institutions, and economic/federal-provincial relations.

Under citizenship, the proposals include: the reaffirmation of the rights and freedoms of citizens (the "Canada Clause"); the acknowledgement of Québec as a distinct society; the entrenchment of property rights (a new element); and a commitment to some kind of Aboriginal self-government.

Under institutions, the proposals address: Senate reform; appointments to the Supreme Court; allowing MPs more free votes; and a formula for amending the constitution.

The proposals involving economic/federal-provincial relations include: the division of jurisdictions and power between the federal and provincial governments; special power granted to the federal government to "manage the economic union;" limits on federal spending power; and the creation of a Council of the Federation.

Most 'ordinary citizens' are overwhelmed, exhausted and angry about the state of the constitutional debate, and critics have given the Conservatives low marks for handing out such a complex set of proposals.

Outside Québec, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) has provided the most tangible feminist reaction. Evaluating the proposals from the perspective of women's equality, NAC finds them likely to "threaten social programs; to jeopardize the rights of women and other disadvantaged social groups; and to further entrench the power of male economic and political elites."

NAC also comes out strongly supporting the right of Québec to define itself as a distinct society, with distinct powers to protect its language and culture (the "asymmetrical federalism" concept). NAC also agrees with the constitutional entrenchment of Aboriginal peoples' inherent right to self-government.

Property Rights Wrong Women

One of the new proposals in the package was the entrenchment of property rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The business community hails the idea, while feminists, Aboriginal peoples, environmentalists and the labour movement are strongly opposed to such a move. "Property" is a concept that goes far beyond personal possessions or real estate. NAC points out that, with entrenched property rights, employers can challenge minimum wage and pay equity laws, landlords can fight rent controls, and restaurant owners can fight anti-discrimination laws—to name a few scenarios.

Vancouver lawyer Fran Watters says that property rights could have far-reaching implications for women in family law matters. For example, if the marital home is in the husband's name, guaranteed property rights could allow the courts to award the man exclusive use of the property in a divorce settlement. At present, a woman can obtain an order to live in the house under the Family Rights Act. With a conservative judiciary, there are no guarantees that women's rights would be upheld.

Devolution: Who Survives?

However, the proposals to alter federal/provincial jurisdictions (devolution) and to restrict the federal spending power are the ones that could have the farthest reaching consequences.

The proposed devolution would involve transferring power from the federal government to provincial governments in areas such as job training, housing, forestry, mining and municipal affairs. Partial power transfers would occur in immigration, culture and broadcasting. NAC is concerned that without federal initiatives in these areas—particularly housing and job training—provinces may be slow or simply unable to respond to women's needs. NAC believes that granting the provinces greater power in immigration could lead to even more restrictive and racist immigration policies, especially if right-wing parties are in power. Says NAC: "These policies would be justified by the 'high' economic cost of social services and language training; protecting the cultural identity of their province by . . . selecting a population with western values (namely European)..."

The proposal to restrict federal spending power would force Ottawa to first get majority approval from a Council of the Federation—a body composed of provincial appointees—before embarking on any new programs.

Ottawa's current spending power affects welfare, health care and education programs, among others. A restriction on federal spending power, says NAC, "would prevent for all time the introduction of a Canada-wide system of child care and severely restrict the initiation of any other major social programs." NAC is further concerned that Ottawa would be unable to either set or impose national standards on programs, thus deepening the regional disparities already existing across the country.

To safeguard the rights of Canadians against provincial abuses of power, progressive organizations have proposed that a Social Charter be entrenched in the constitution. Briefly, a Social Charter would give citizens a constitutional guarantee to a certain standard of living, just as the current Charter guarantees legal and civil rights). At present, basic social programs such as education, health care and housing are enforced through statutes that can be repealed or amended. A Social Charter would guarantee a basic and equal right to such services. (Another approach would define social programs such as health care, education, employment, housing, income and child welfare in The Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A more radical approach would be to define poverty as a disability in the Charter. However there is of yet no clear idea on enforcement. The labour movement is against the courts ruling on the definition of a Social Charter given the overwhelming conservative nature of the judiciary.)

But as NAC's Judy Rebick says, "We don't want to trade federal spending power and national standards for some vague wording in the constitution on social rights. Federal spending power and national standards stop the erosion of social services such as health and education."

"Federal spending power...stops the erosion of social services such as health and education."
-NAC

However, University of British Columbia political scientist Avigail Eisenberg says that provincial governments may set up far better social programs than the federal government. Currently, social programs must meet a federal minimal standard which may not meet a provincial need. With more progressive governments at the provincial level, social programs could receive more attention.

For example, Québec opted out of the Canada Pension Plan and replaced it with a far better program of its own. (If a provincial government does opt-out of a federal government program, it still receives federal funding.) The Fédération des Femmes du Québec firmly believes more autonomy for Québec will have a positive effect on social projects, and will eliminate the inefficient duplication of bureaucracies.

NAC's alternative to these constitutional proposals seeks to strengthen federal spending power and to entrench federal responsibilities (outside of Québec) to ensure accessibility and universality of social programs.

Aboriginal Self-Government

The Meech Lake Accord was roundly condemned by First Nations peoples for its failure to address their right to self-government. Since September, the Assembly of First Nations has conducted an extensive consultation with Native communities on the matter of self-government. Gloria Nicolson of the BC Professional Native Women's Association says that Native people must be allowed "to determine our needs and prioritize them, and provide services to our people by our people. In order for us to be a strong component of this country, we must be able to govern ourselves."

Ottawa has proposed that the concept of self-government be studied/developed for 10 years before being constitutionally entrenched. Some Native leaders oppose that delay, but the National Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) welcomes it. Nicolson agrees: "Once the agreements have been formed, it needs to be set up over time so that it will serve the purpose it was meant to." Nicolson uses the analogy of the medicine wheel—everything must be looked at in a holistic manner. She says that Native leaders must go back and regain the value system of their ancestors and share in the "inherent wholeness of life."

Other differences have emerged as well. While the AFN believes Aboriginal government should not be bound by the Euro-Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the NWAC opposes that view. The NWAC is concerned that existing Native councils—largely male-dominated—will not necessarily respect women's rights.

Senate Reform

The proposals set forth in the institutions section are straightforward, dealing mostly with a triple E Senate (elected, effective and equal are the buzzwords), with the Supreme Court of Canada appointments and the Constitutional amending formula.

Strong differences exist among provincial leaders regarding what "equal" means (the same number of Senate seats per province vs. representation by population). For many feminists, however, "equal" has come to mean 50 percent of the Senate and Supreme Court of Canada seats must be held by women.

NAC believes the overall direction of the Tory proposals is to safeguard the interest of the economically privileged at the expense of women, people of colour and other disadvantaged groups—and has advocated that "mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that women are represented politically in proportion to our presence in the population. We make the same argument for visible minorities and people with disabilities."

NAC's response to the Tory's proposals also include a rewording of the equality section of the Charter (sec. 15). Rebick says that section 15 is based on the old notion of equality. A new definition is being worked on by the West Manitoba Women's Group.

On February 6, Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark will host a round-table discussion on his proposals with women's groups from across the country.

The Special Joint Committee (Dobbie-Beaudoin) must report back by February 28th. The proposals will then be reshaped and passed on to provincial governments to approve. Some provinces have discussed putting these proposals to a referendum before going to their legislatures for approval. NAC continues to call for a Constituent Assembly to hammer out the various options which are emerging from the committee's consultations. All this must be accomplished before Québec's referendum on sovereignty which must, by law, occur before the end of October, 1992.

Catherine Burke is a freelance writer who dabbles in poetry.

Oft repeated:

Tale of campus violence

by Jesse Sutherland

A college student has been forced to leave school and Vancouver because of the systematic harassment and abuse she experienced on campus throughout the fall of 1991.

Kim Anda Jarzebiak, a student at Langara college, was a collective member on the college's student newspaper, *The Gleaner*. Jarzebiak was violently raped in the summer of 1991 and, in September, an article she wrote about her rape was published in *The Gleaner* under a pseudonym.

Shortly after, two students on the newspaper collective began harassing her. Mark Meheriuk and David Lundquist referred to Jarzebiak as "tits" and "babe," and told her that "rape isn't that bad." In *The Gleaner's* October 3rd issue, Lundquist and Meheriuk published a rape threat addressed to Jarzebiak, with her name spelled backwards.

At first, other male collective members protected the identities of the abusers. It wasn't until women on and off campus mounted a strong protest that Meheriuk and Lundquist were dismissed from *The Gleaner* collective. The mainstream media learned of the incident and, under pressure from media questions, the college investigated and reported they were considering expelling Meheriuk and Lundquist.

Meanwhile, Jarzebiak was relentlessly harassed and threatened by various male students on campus, on the bus and at home. She was called "dyke," "bitch," "slut," and asked, "wanna be raped?" A note asking her the same question was left on her bag in *The Gleaner* office.

Women from across Canada wrote letters to David Cane, Langara's principal, demanding the men be expelled. On November 4th, Jarzebiak was told by the college they would neither expel nor suspend the two abusers. Principal Cane, Jarzebiak says, then blamed her for the harassment she experienced because she "inflamed the situation by speaking to the media."

The "punishment" set out by the college administration for the offenders included writing a letter of apology, getting counselling and attending a seminar on harassment. The Vancouver Police Department was suggested as a source for a seminar on sexual harassment.

Ongoing harassment forced Jarzebiak to stop attending classes. Meheriuk and Lundquist continued as usual. Under constant strain, Jarzebiak developed ulcers, a bladder infection and a viral infection which led to her hospitalization.

On November 18, Jarzebiak received a letter from Cane stating that the college "regard[ed] the matter as resolved." In response, seven women stormed his office demanding further action be taken. Cane's response was that "the college feels there is nothing else to be done," and expressed concern that the college's reputation would be harmed.

During the next week, both the media and the Ministry of Education pestered the college for information about how it was handling the matter. Women on and off campus postered the college with the names of the offenders, started a petition inviting the entire student body to add their support, and organized an information march and demonstration on December 4th.

Sixty women marched through the halls chanting slogans like "David Cane we've had enough, we don't want your lip service." Women made their demands, presented petitions and accused the college and its principal of condoning and encouraging violence against women on campus.

Currently the college claims nothing else can be done because of possible "legal ramifications." Meheriuk and Lundquist have obtained lawyers, and one is represented by Harry Rankin, a Vancouver alderman. (Rankin refused to talk about his involvement). In a recent open letter to the campus community, Cane writes that he is saddened that Jarzebiak "found it necessary to leave Langara because of what she perceives as ongoing harassment of her by a number of men."

Jesse Sutherland is a student at Langara and was active in the protests.

photo by Salan Pazurik

Langara students confront principal David Cane (at left).

Tale of resistance

The women who came together to support Kim Anda Jarzebiak found ourselves challenging the very system we thought would protect us. We were a diverse group of women who came together—many of us had never met before—to fight something that spoke to all of us: violence against women.

Indeed, for many women, the published rape threat brought out their own histories of abuse. Trish Muehleback tells of how she started to recognize sexual harassment; before, she just "internalized it as a joke . . . Through the Langara experience, I re-experienced past sexual harassment."

For Lily Petrovic: "Once I connected her [Kim Anda Jarzebiak's] pain and re-lived my own, I became much more personally connected." Jarzebiak herself was thrown back into flashbacks and countless terrifying nightmares.

For survivors of child sexual abuse, it was just another reminder that the war against women and girls is not over. Other women organized not from a place of past abuse, but with a commitment to social justice and a realization that the fear of violence against women affects all of us daily. "This experience reinforced my feeling of not being able to go outside and feel safe," said Sherry Preston, "not being able to go to school and feel safe—not being able to do anything."

For many, this was our first experience organizing as women against something that affected us as women—and we were deeply politicized by the process. "I thought we could go through legitimate channels to deal with something so clear-cut," said Yvonne Madill. "I found out those channels don't really exist." Beth Hardy believed: "All we had to do was write letters, explain why they have to kick them [Meheriuk and Lundquist] out and they would."

Our organizing first focused on doing educational work on sexism, writing letters and meetings with Langara principal David Cane. After confronting the individual and structural sexism that permeated Langara, our focus shifted to protesting the system: we took over Cane's office, demonstrated, marched through the campus, petitioned and postered the names of the two offenders.

More women became involved when Jarzebiak decided to leave campus, "I remember the day Kim decided to leave," said Petrovic. "I felt so horrified. Here is a woman leaving school and here are two guys attending Langara. This was a changing moment. I had to do something. I realized that the school system was made for men."

Women became aware that everyone knew who the rape threat was directed at, while no one knew the faces or names of the perpetrators—so we decided to poster Lundquist's and Meheriuk's names throughout the campus. Immediately Cane called security to remove the posters, protecting the offenders. The system's focus on protecting and helping the offenders was reflected in the fact that the college is paying for counselling for Lundquist and Meheriuk, while none is offered to Jarzebiak.

It also became clear that it is not safe to speak out about violence against women. "The one thing that struck me throughout was that it wasn't safe for us to even try to do things about it," said Preston. "Postering was not safe. Trying to get photos was not safe." Almost all women echoed Preston's words, and many women were afraid to get involved. Michaela Fox recalls: "I was scared I would be picked out."

Our fear of speaking out was radically transformed after we marched through the halls, chanting slogans. All women interviewed talked of the march being the most powerful experience. Dega Omar said that after the march: "I felt so powerful with women. Together we can do anything we want to."

Because of our activism, many women are no longer afraid. Being witness to Jarzebiak's courage to continue to speak out has given us the will to speak out for ourselves and each other. Moreover, students are starting to make the connections between the institutional racism, sexism and heterosexism that is built into the school system. While the organizing did not solve the problem, each one of us will approach the next situation with more experience, confidence—and with a network of solidarity.

J.S.

South Asian women:

Whose point of view?

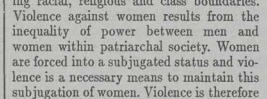
by Sunera Thobani

The following commentary is, in part, a response to several articles published in the Vancouver Sun *in December, 1991.*

The issue of violence against women has assumed some urgency in Canada and the extent of this violence has become the subject of much media coverage over the last two years. The idea that acts of violence against women are not a series of isolated incidents, but a reflection of the subordinate position of women in society, is now widely accepted.

However, for Canadian women of South Asian origin, the manner in which sexism and violence are being addressed poses a threat which needs to be addressed with equal urgency. And this is the threat of increased racism against the South Asian Canadian community, and particularly, against South Asian women.

...this blaming of the South Asian culture for the oppression of South Asian women...



Sexism and violence against women exist in all Canadian communities, crossing racial, religious and class boundaries. Violence against women results from the inequality of power between men and women within patriarchal society. Women are forced into a subjugated status and violence is a necessary means to maintain this subjugation of women. Violence is therefore an essential feature of patriarchal society: ultimately it keeps women in place.

Yet in the case of women within the South Asian community, sexism and violence are increasingly being defined as arising from a static, "backward" South Asian culture which condones this oppression of women. The defining of sexism and violence in this manner is nothing other than perpetuating and re-creating racist definitions of people of colour as being "backward, traditional," and resisting modernity by clinging to oppressive cultural practices. And when we have South Asian women parroting these racist "causes" of sexism and of violence in the *Vancouver Sun*–as happened recently—it is a disturbing illustration of how serious the problem of internalized racism has become in our world.

There is a growing tendency to blame South Asian women for the horrific violence they are subjected to by arguing that the women lack assertiveness or education, and that somehow rejecting the South Asian culture and embracing a "fresh, vibrant, Canadian culture" is the answer to South Asian women's oppression. Well, if the problems of South Asian women arise from a "frozen" culture, let us look at what the experience is of our white sisters in the mainstream of this fresh, vibrant, Canadian culture:

- 70 percent of women lawyers have experienced "career sex discrimination," they reported in a survey;
- 60 percent of adult Canadians living below the poverty line are women;
- One in four Canadian women are sexually abused at some time in their lives, half of these women have been abused before they reach age 17;
- One woman in ten is a victim of domestic violence;
- In the last two years over 100 women per year were killed by their male partners.

These depressing statistics go on and on, violating the lives of all women in Canadian society. And while this oppression of women and violence exists in all cultures, women have resisted and continue to resist this oppression in all cultures. Sexism and violence have become endemic features in the lives of all women, and to present this as being a problem of the clash of cultures, of women being conditioned not to change, as in the case of South Asian women, is cruel and adds insult to injury.

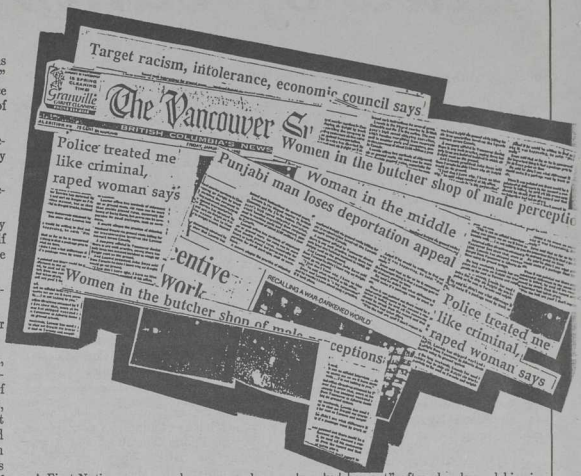
There is no culture in Canadian society in which women have not resisted and stood up against the violence wreaked upon us. South Asian Canadian women are no exception.

And while services to women in the South Asian community are grossly inadequate, this blaming of South Asian culture for the oppression of women works against the interests of South Asian women, for whom our culture is a source of pride and inspiration in our struggles to live lives with dignity and equality, and yes, lives which are free from violence.

A Racist Justice System

We know that the justice system in Canada suffers from a gender bias. Peoples of colour also know the justice system suffers from a racist bias. And this racism is encountered at every step of the way, beginning from encounters with the police.

Recently, Black activists in Toronto said the police have declared open season on black youths after a Black man was shot by the police in a purse-snatching incident.



A First Nations woman who was raped was treated like a criminal and arrested after she failed to appear as a witness in her case. Acknowledging racism in Canadian society at all levels, one of the recommendations made by the Economic Council was that "Police need more race relations training."

Given this experience of racism, women of colour have come to mistrust the police and avoid involving them in conflicts. This is a *practical* response to a racist environment, it is not any culturally-based love of suffering or self-sacrifice that makes women react in this manner.

Sentencing within the justice system also tends to have a serious impact on the lives of immigrants. A South Asian immigrant jailed in Vancouver for sexual assault was ordered to be deported. As the majority of South Asian women immigrants come into Canada under the family class, this threat of deportation impacts upon the entire family. The immigration process, disorienting for all immigrants, continues to maintain the vulnerability of women.

Compare the treatment in the above case with the case where a judge ruled that a real estate developer was justified in assaulting his wife when he "punched and kicked her in the face and back, broke her glasses and knocked her out" after she slapped him in a fight. Or with the incident when a judge dismissed sexual assault charges by saying "at times 'No' may mean maybe, or 'Wait a while'." Or the case where a man who was convicted of the sexual assault of a mentally handicapped woman which led to bodily harm was given a sentence of 90 days to be served on weekends.

When we have members of the South Asian community remaining oblivious to the systematic and structural racism which people of colour face at every level in Canadian society, especially when these members work within the legal profession, one can only fear for the fate of the women these members claim to represent.

Racism and sexism continue to increase the vulnerability of South Asian women, whether within the home or in the larger society. It is the systemic and structural nature of racist and sexist oppression which needs to be addressed and changed, and South Asian women have a culture and tradition of resistance which we will continue to draw upon in our struggles for equality.

Sunera Thobani is a founding member of SAWAN (South Asian Women's Action Network.

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Tight lips sink ships

When the government fired four members of the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies last December, women lost their strongest advocates and the commission lost its credibility. Or did it?

by Heidi Walsh

If you are totally confused about exactly how the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies proposes to affect your life, don't feel ignorant. Four members of the commission don't know either and when they tried to find out, they were fired.

In December 1991, the federal government fired four of the commission's nine members after the four initiated a lawsuit against the government and the commission *(see box)*.

There are several issues involved in the controversy: allegations by commissioners that commission chairperson, geneticist Dr. Patricia Baird, controls the commission almost single-handedly; allegations by a researcher that information in at least one of her reports was altered by commission staff; and the long-term implications for future Royal Commissions regarding protection from government interference.

Louise Vandelac, a Montréal sociologist and one of the fired commissioners, says the basic problem was that Baird had a fundamental lack of respect for basic rules of democracy. "We [the commissioners] never had an open agenda and we were not involved in the major decisions of this commission, such as in the budget or deciding on research projects," says Vandelac. She stresses neither she nor the other fired commissioners were interested in the day-to-day management of the body, but they did want input into its major orientation. "If you look at the law on Royal Commissions," she says, "commissioners have the power to establish procedures and organize work. Pat Baird hijacked the power and the roles of the commission from the beginning, and some of us refused to be part of a process of window-dressing."

Vandelac says the inner core of the commission was veiled in secrecy. Commissioners were not given access to the list of titles of research projects, their budgets or the researchers hired. When they were given some projects to review, they discovered the research had already been approved in a global plan 5-6 months earlier. She says Baird did not consult with commissioners before asking the government to extend the commission's mandate by one year, nor were they shown the short list during the hiring of the Research Director, a process which took 8 months, a delay which seriously affected the commission's research mandate.

The fired commissioners—Vandelac, Ottawa lawyer Maureen McTeer, Calgary physician Bruce Hatfield, and Montréal lawyer Martin Hebert—wrote several times to Baird and the government, asking for more involvement in the commission's decision-making process. In August 1990, after the four had complained to the Privy Council—the highest level of the civil service—the government passed an Order-in-Council removing the commissioners' power to arrange meetings and hire experts, conferring this same power on Baird. Two extra members were appointed to the commission, thus breaking the dissidents' majority.

In a *Globe and Mail* interview published in late December 1991, Baird said: "We've done more than any other commission in history to have each commissioner participate, and still that's not enough for them." But Vandelac argues Baird is deft at appearing to consult with others while simultaneously carrying out her own agenda. She also disagrees that Baird was 'just doing her job'.

"We've checked with many other people in Royal Commissions," says Vandelac, "and the majority are astonished at the way things are done in this commission. We also have testimony from people involved in another committee she chaired. She seems to have been the same there."

Vandelac refutes press reports stating ideological differences were responsible for splitting the commission. "This is not a battle between commissioners," she says. "It's not between anti-science and pro-technology sides. It's normal that people on a commission have different analyses. That's why we have Royal Commissions—to have debates. If there is a real division in this commission, it's around the way Pat Baird is organizing it. The other [commissioners] have a great respect for hierarchy and authority."

Margrit Eichler, a sociology professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, organized the coalition which initially lobbied the government for the Royal Commission. In addition to increasing public awareness on issues surrounding reproductive technologies, Eichler says, "We were hoping to get good research out of this commission that would allow us to come up with a careful assessment as to the effects of the various technologies, and also to let us know who is profiting from them, and the role of the pharmaceuticals in their development."

From the information available to her, Eichler says many of the research projects so far are literature reviews rather than ground-breaking studies. "It's clear the questions which need to be asked have not been asked," says Eichler.

Research That is Political, Cultural, Economic

Another dissatisfied member of the coalition is McGill epidemiology professor Abby Lippman. "One problem I have with the commission's credibility is that I don't know what research it's doing—it may be terrific, but I have no way of knowing, because no one ever tells you what they're doing," Lippman says. She explains that for months, she and several others attempted to find out the titles of research projects, the researchers' names and the budgets assigned to the projects. "All other granting agencies put out lists of the names of people they are supporting, but this commission refuses to give out any information," she says.

(A newsletter issued by the commission in January 1992 lists the titles and researchers' names for three projects, and titles of two others. Approximately 90 other projects are described in very general terms.)

"This commission was an opportunity to do first-class, empirical research that none of us who want to do research in this area can get money for," says Lippman. "[The research needed] is political, it's cultural, it's economic—it's not just science. It's the links—what are we doing to animals that can be applied to humans? We seem to think nothing of breeding plants or fish to fit our needs. Are we going to think much differently about people? We used to say 'it can't be done,' but these are non-issues now. Yet they have to be brought out into the open."

Varda Burstyn, co-chair of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women's Health and Reproductive Technologies Committee, has seen part of the research plan list—made available under the Access to Information Act—and is disturbed by the quality of the research. "There is one report looking at the consequence of pharmaceutical companies in this field," says Burstyn. "NAC suggested this was perhaps the single-most important issue to address concerning the momentum for these technologies. The report was done by a public relations company. It is shocking that a public relations company would be entrusted with an issue of such major economic and social importance."

Eichler and Lippman also have concerns regarding the role of Baird in the commission. "Our coalition pressed very strongly that the chairperson be neither a medical nor legal specialist, because these are the two professions that profit directly from the technologies," says Eichler.

Lippman adds, "A person who comes out of the biomedical community, and who has been trained, socialized and acculturated in a biomedical context, is likely to take a very biomedical approach to these problems. From this point of view, these [technologies] are seen as therapeutic, as important for dealing with health problems. My guess is that this will be the direction of anything that comes out of the commission."

A Government Agenda?

Appointing Baird as commission chair "indicates the presence of an agenda on the part of the government," says Burstyn, "even though it is automatic and unconscious. From their point of view, the person with the most authority in this investigation would be a person who has professionally invested in these technologies, one of the many constituencies [such as infertile women] affected by the technologies."

The dissident commissioners are not the only ones taking the commission to court. Toronto researcher and journalist Ann Pappert is suing the commission for an alleged breach of contract and copyright infringement. Her complaints concern the commission's staff, rather than the commissioners.

Pappert had been doing research for the commission for a year and a half when her contract was terminated by Research Director Sylvia Gold last June. Pappert says the terms of the contract had been renegotiated earlier and had included the appointment of a liaison person to her. "Before there were a number of people [on the commission staff] giving me instructions which were often totally contradictory," Pappert says.

She is suing for copyright infringement based on a concern that the contents of two unfinished research projects in the commission's possession, for which she has not yet been paid, may be altered by commission staff. "That's based on the fact that they've done this before with previous work of mine," says Pappert.

In an earlier report she had prepared for the commission, Pappert had recorded the summaries of papers given at a World Health Organization meeting on the role of *in vitro* fertilization in infertility care. Part of the meeting's mandate was to produce public policy recommendations. "[The commission staff] changed some of the factual information and some of the points of view expressed in the summaries," says Pappert. "They also changed two of the draft recommendations that came out of the meeting."

Speaking in general terms because of limitations imposed by her court case, Pappert says, "I was told my work was changed because the person who read it thought it might contain points of view the commissioners didn't agree with. The commissioners hadn't seen the document.

"I know I'm not the only person this has happened to, but I can't talk about it."

Because They Were Women

Many in the feminist and research communities feel the commission has been profoundly compromised and that its final report, scheduled for completion by October 1992, will have no credibility.

NAC's Burstyn however, is concerned that the general public may quickly forget the debate surrounding the commission, and will look to its report as the definitive statement on new reproductive technologies. She suggests there is a need for an alternative, well-prepared report to counteract the effects of the commission's report, but notes women's organizations will have difficulty raising the kind of funds allocated to the commission. At present, NAC is preparing proposals to address the situation.

Feminists are also raising concerns about the long-term implications of government intervention in the commission. "Never before in the history of Canada has a government interfered in such a heavy-handed manner in the workings of a Royal Commission," says Margrit Eichler. "As of now, it seems to me that no Royal Commission can be sure that it will be at arms-length from the government."

Speaking on behalf of the government, Barbara Uteck, Director of Operations in the Privy Council Office, says, "The government acted reluctantly in this particular case, because it felt the commission would only be able to complete its work if the four commissioners in question were removed." She adds that while Royal Commissions are conducting their enquiries, they operate independently.

Burstyn believes the government ignored the arms-length principal of Royal Commissions because "most of the commissioners were women and most of the people who are really upset about these technologies from an oppositional point of view are women. I don't think they would have ever done this to one of the constitutional committees roaming the country."

She feels the Tories are not worried about paying a great political price for their actions because they do not expect significant opposition from the public or interested groups. "I fear because it's happening around a 'woman's issue'," says Burstyn, "the Bar Association and various groups of constitutional lawyers—all the people who make it their business to care about what the government does in more formal terms—won't look at this or act." She says NAC has talked to lawyers, doctors, research scientists and politicians, all of whom have privately admitted concern, but few among them are prepared to air their view publicly.

In the meantime, many feminists remain frustrated at the lack of public debate on new reproductive technologies. "The press is covering this because it looks like a scandal," says Louise Vandelac, "but there's no word about the real issues." She reiterates her concerns regarding Patricia Baird's style of leadership and says that as things stand, she will not support the final report when it is issued by the commission. "It's impossible that, for such important questions, things be left essentially in the hands of one person," Vandelac concludes.

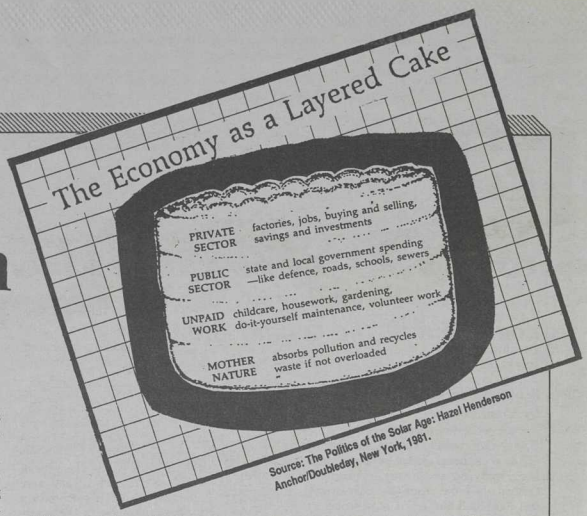
Heidi Walsh is a member of the freelance liberation army.

In the beginning, there was trouble...

- October 1989: The government establishes the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies and appoints a geneticist, Dr. Patricia Baird, as chair;
- The commission's mandate includes researching, evaluating and making recommendations about new reproductive technologies (NRTs) in terms of their social, legal, ethical, economic, research and health implications on individuals and society; the commission's budget is $25 million;
- August 1990: the government passes an order-in-council conferring almost full power on Baird, after four of the seven commissioners complain to the Privy Council of her excessively authoritative manner. The government also appoints two additional commissioners, a move designed to reduce the dissidents to a minority position on the commission;
- Summer 1991: Toronto researcher Ann Pappert, who has prepared reports for the commission, files a lawsuit against the commission. She is suing them for alleged breach of contract copyright infringement;
- December 1991: after failed attempts to extract information from Baird and help from the government, the four commissioners launch lawsuits against both parties, asking—among other things—for a reversal of the August 1990 order-in-council;
- Ten days later, in an unprecedented move, the government fires the dissident commissioners, among them two outspoken feminists, Montréal sociologist Louise Vandelac and Ottawa lawyer Maureen McTeer;
- Shortly after the firings, Baird announces the commission is "on track, on time and on budget" and promises a final report by October 1992.

Economics:

Taking women into accounts



IF WOMEN COUNTED:
A New Feminist Economics
by Marilyn Waring
HarperCollins, New York, 1988
by Ellen Woodsworth

Have you ever wondered why women's work doesn't count or why it is economically profitable to cut down trees but not to preserve clean water? Then read this book. *If Women Counted* is a passionate, scientifically-based book which critiques the exclusion of women's work and the environment from mainstream economic models.

When New Zealand economist Marilyn Waring began studying women's work globally, she encountered a serious lack of statistics. Searching for what was behind the void, Waring examined how economists decide what is considered to be "of value" and "work" and "economic activity." She concluded that mainstream economic theories are based on a value system not only set up by, but *based on* what men do.

These values are then imposed and maintained using the United Nations System of National Accounting (UNSNA). The UNSNA had its origins in a report written in the 1940's by an Englishman, Richard Stone, in his paper called "The National Income and Expenditure of the United Kingdom and How to Pay for the War." Stone's document formed the basis of the accounting system adopted by the UN and by the major industrial nations. Subsequently, the UNSNA was forced on 'developing' nations as a condition of receiving aid.

This system of accounting (based on a war economy) helped me understand how the Canadian government would get involved in the Gulf War during a recession rather than spend money on a child care system which would create permanent jobs. Child care work is invisible, it isn't valued and it isn't seen as profitable. Under our system of accounting, however, war is all those things. When women aren't seen, then neither are children— and children are poor if their parents are poor. I get really angry at all the talk of child poverty when the structural causes of poverty are ignored.

Waring illustrates how the system works. As a wife and mother, a woman "spends her days preparing food, setting the table, washing dishes, dressing and diapering children, disciplining her children, taking the children to day-care or to school, disposing of garbage, dusting, gathering clothes for washing, doing the laundry, going to the gas station and the supermarket, replacing household items, ironing, keeping an eye on or playing with the children, making the beds, paying the bills, caring for pets and plants, putting away toys, books and clothes, sewing or mending or knitting, talking with door-to-door salespeople, answering the telephone, vacuuming . . . " Under the UNSNA, she is considered unproductive, economically inactive, not working and not part of the country's Gross National Product (GNP).

A soldier who spends eight hours a day in an underground bunker waiting for the order to push a button to fire a nuclear missile is considered economically active, valuable and worthy of pay. His work is part of the GNP and is calculated as contributing to our national growth, wealth and productivity.

Writes Waring: "Nowhere is there an account for death, poverty, homelessness, refugee populations, ruined food sources, the enormous waste in investments in armaments, and an increasingly fragile and exploited environment."

Because of our invisibility in the system, planners don't know what women need or even *do* when cities, buildings, roads or international 'aid' are planned. For example, farm aid sent to Africa was given only to men while women—who normally did the agricultural work—were sent to home economic classes. The implements rusted, women were displaced and poverty deepened. Go to Vancouver City Hall and ask for information on women in order to set up a benefits plan for single parents. They don't have the information.

Mainstream economists have argued it is impossible to gather data on women's work and the environment since they cannot be quantified. (Rubbish. Divorce courts have measured women's work to determine matrimonial settlements—although rarely fairly. Resource industries measure the environment when they want to exploit it for hydro electric power or for logging.) Waring thoroughly examines these arguments and their origins and carefully discredits them. She argues that patriarchal systems of government, big business, the church and the law do not want this information and deliberately do not hire (or fire) feminists who would calculate and include it.

How do we fight back? First, Waring suggests we need an economic model and system of accounts designed to include women, children and the earth. She offers several models, including Hazel Henderson's (author of *The Politics of the Solar Age*) and Kilkka Pietila's, which Waring prefers because it is more integrated.

Secondly, she agrees with Helen Ware of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) that all official data must be accurate and therefore include women, and if it doesn't then *the data is false*.

In Canada this means we must demand that the government implement the 1985 Nairobi resolution contained in the document *Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women*, a document the government endorsed: "The renumerated and, in particular, the unrenumerated contributions of women to all aspects and sectors of development should be recognized and appropriate efforts should be made to measure and reflect these contributions in national accounts and economic statistics and in the gross national product. Concrete steps should be taken to quantify the unrenumerated contribution of women to agriculture, food production, reproduction and household activities." This would mean that both federal and provincial budgets would reflect both our work and our needs.

Finally, Waring calls us to action. She asks us to fill in all census and other forms with our unpaid work. Our lives, our children's, our sisters' and their children's lives and the earth are at stake. Women and men, whatever their level of power, must use everything within their means to implement these measures.

Ellen Woodsworth is involved with community development and research.

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Incest:

Surviving through creativity

SHE WHO WAS LOST IS REMEMBERED:
Healing From
Incest Through Creativity
Ed. by Louise M. Wisechild
Seattle: Seal Press, 1991

by Shani Mootoo

When I was asked to review *She Who Was Lost Is Remembered: Healing From Incest Through Creativity*, I thought: "Oh oh! Another book about incest and child abuse. I'll have to hold my breath—contrary to all advice that one keep breathing—and brave myself because, well, remember all those books that helped me to get in touch with my anger and to quit feeling guilty and all those broken silences that had indeed helped me to heal. But didn't I first have to 'go through to get out?' Of course, I'll be challenged all over again to look deeply and critically at self and family—and all kinds of memories will surface—do I really have time to devote to any resulting depression? I'll need a support system around me, my therapist, my friends, etc. etc. etc."

Yet I decided to go ahead and review this book because it was about healing through creativity, a pet subject of mine, having not long ago completed a body of paintings and poems on the same subject.

The book came to me by courier and when it arrived I held it unopened for a good minute, bracing myself toward the weeks to follow when I would read and, I assumed, face up to my own childhood experiences all over again.

I opened the package with some trepidation, and out came a thick book with a sunshine yellow and sky blue cover with a detail of a painting by Kim Newall that was all at once passionate, angry, assertive and celebratory. I flipped through the book and from then on I could not put it down.

The essays which told the story behind the creativity of more than 30 women contributors were each followed by the art works themselves: poems, paintings, drawings, music, sculpture and photography. *She Who Was Lost Is Remembered* is a celebration of survival, glossing over the truths of abuse, without pussyfooting—and definitely without whispering.

Editor Louise M. Wisechild was inspired to create this book after a conversation with Alice Miller, author of *The Untouched Key: Tracing Childhood Trauma In Creativity and Destruction*, and *The Drama Of The Gifted Child*. Miller's study of the work and lives of well-known artists suggests that artists are unconsciously driven to create works which speak what was forbidden them when they were children. Influenced by Miller's debunking of the myth that art comes, in the words of Wisechild, from a mysterious impersonal place that has little to do with the experience of the artist, Wisechild writes:

> In choosing work for this anthology, I looked for art and writing that reached below the surface to give voice to the complex emotions and experiences that incest survivors face. I wanted creative work that honestly confronted the reality of childhood. Work that spoke to the diversity of women's experiences—both in childhood and in recovery.

Detail from "Who, What, Where, When, Why" Series, by Patti Levey, from *She Who Was Lost Is Remembered*.

Our patriarchal, elitist, exclusionist society insists that we make clear distinctions between art and art therapy. While mainstream/malestream galleries refuse to show works about incest and other forms of abuse, and publishers deny survivors a public voice because the works are "too painful, too personal", an herstorical survey of the cultural production of women (indeed, of all people) cannot possibly be complete without the expression of this dreadful but almost integral assault on the childhoods of more than one female in three.

The works in *She Who Was Lost Is Remembered* go beyond being personal—this is the story of too many women for it to be personal. And there is the other aspect of the story, here, too: the responsible agent, the abuser. The reason abuse appears to be a personal issue is because only one single person dares to stand up and tell a story that involves many more people, none of whom will talk.

The works in this book go beyond being too painful. Certainly, and naturally, they do not mince words and images about the anger or pain, but precisely because of this total honesty and openness they result in a reclamation of voice and power, they give hope, celebrate and encourage survival and healing.

Women from diverse cultural and social backgrounds, heterosexual women and lesbians, offer us this body of art and literature that rightly belongs within mainstream cultural production and ought to be included in any survey of fine arts and literature, instead of the usual relegation to way outside, to psychology, self-help and women's studies—as if incest and child abuse were a special branch of life that applied only to women and to those with personal problems.

It is this kind of relegation, by those with power and their vested interests, that perpetuates abuse and protects the abuser, by refusing to acknowledge that childhood abuse is everyone's business and is, in fact, an everyday, every minute, everywhere occurrence—right in one's own backyard. In the preface, Margaret Randall writes:

> Our society is permeated at every level with this tolerance, this protection. Look for a moment at our wars of aggression. Vietnam. Nicaragua. Grenada. Panama. The Persian Gulf. Violation is the name of the game, aggression by the powerful against those with less power. What we are asked to accept, indeed be proud of at the national level, repeats itself on a reduced scale in the home, at school, on the streets.

The women in the book tell stories of abuse by family members, uncles, cousins, brothers, fathers and, yes, mothers too. Some of the survivors have no mental memory of the abuse but their stories are stored in the trauma of their bodies. The book has become a safe place for the writers and image makers to share their stories, to break silences and to metaphorically cry out their anguish. With so many voices, all speaking out the same stories—the details differ but the scars all look and sound the same—there is solidarity, validation, belief and support. In a word, there is power. Strength.

By going public with their stories, the contributors empower those of us for whom the mere act of survival is a vital act of creativity, a cause for celebration. Author Julie Blackwomon writes:

> Healing from incest is like slowly pulling off scabs and letting the wounds get some sunlight, because things do not heal in damp, dark places.

Amidst all the other brilliant catalyst books on dealing with and healing from incest and childhood sexual abuse, *She Who Was Lost Is Remembered* lends balance and breathing space. As a collection of creative works by women, it stands up well. In doing this review I had to restrain myself from the urge to endlessly quote huge chunks of texts that I found inspiring, awakening. My copy has a long waiting list.

Shani Mootoo is a Vancouver painter, writer and video artist.

PAGING WOMEN

by Gabrielle Chew

Looking for a new read? We've compiled a diverse list of recent publications to keep you informed and to satisfy any bookworms with healthy appetites. *Paging Women* is itself a new addition to *Kinesis* and will be a regular feature. Besides giving you a brief lowdown on these titles, we are hoping to entice some budding (or established) book reviewers to contact us. The following books merit further attention, so call 255-5499 if you want to review one.

Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots Two plays by Monique Mojica. *Also includes* Bird Woman and the Suffragettes: A Story of Sacajawea. *In both plays, actor and playwright Mojica explores the histories of First Nations women in the Americas, in particular examining the myth and legend of the 'Indian Princess.'* (Women's Press, Toronto 1991)

How Many Miles to Babylon by Doris Gercke (translated from the German by Anna Hamilton). *This novel features a female police detective who travels to a remote German town for some peace and quiet, and instead uncovers a string of unsolved murders and a legacy of violence underneath the calm village surface.* (Women in Translation, Seattle 1991)

Midwives in Passage by Cecilia Benoit. *Author/sociologist Benoit examines the practice of mid-wifery in 20th century Newfoundland as it faced the rise of bureaucratized health care and increasing male-medical dominance over childbirth.* (ISER, St. John's 1991)

InVersions: Writing by Dykes, Queers and Lesbians ed. by Betsy Warland. *This major collection of works by contemporary North American women writers explores questions of sexual identity and politics, creativity, cultural community and literary theory. Includes work by Judy Grahn, Suniti Namjoshi, Jane Rule, and Gloria Anzaldua, among many others.* (Press Gang, Vancouver 1991)

Looking For Livingstone: An Odyssey of Silence by Marlene Nourbese Philip. *Philip's narrative of poetry and prose explores Africa and explodes Western assumptions about language and silence, particularly the "silence" of indigenous peoples.* (The Mercury Press, Stratford 1991)

Seasons of Ordinary Time by Robyn-Marie Butt. *A collection of stories in two sections; the first encompassing a variety of points of view, from a little country girl to a Trappist monk, and the second being comprised of longer stories about a young artist named Bea Chambers.* (The Mercury Press, Stratford 1991)

dark diaspora....in DUB: a dub theatre piece by ahdri zhina mandiela. *Born in Jamaica and now living in Toronto, dub poet, parent and artist mandiela has produced a stage script composed entirely from dub poems.* (Sister Vision, Toronto 1991)

The Body Bilingual: Translation as a Rewriting in the Feminine by Susanne de Lotbiniere-Harwood. *Translator de Lotbiniere-Harwood writes in both French and English, examining the complex terrain of translating the work of feminist writers.* (Les editions du remue-menage, Montréal/ Women's Press, Toronto 1991)

Salvage by Daphne Marlatt. *Part poem, part fiction, part autobiography, Marlatt's latest book spans 20 years of life and experience in the art of one of Canada's established feminist voices.* (Red Deer College Press, Alberta 1991)

Wiles of Girlhood by Joanne Arnott. *Moving in and out of memories, Arnott's poetry and prose trace the transition from girlhood to womanhood, and the worlds of working-class and Native experience.* (Press Gang, Vancouver, 1991)

Shakespeare and patriarchy:

Was the Bard a feminist?

by Janette Hellmuth

Should Shakespeare be discussed in a feminist newspaper? Where does a 16th century white Renaissance male playwright fit in with today's feminist concerns? Of what relevance is *Macbeth*, or *King Lear* to women struggling to change a male-dominated society?

According to University of British Columbia English professor Kate Sirluck, Shakespeare has a great deal to contribute to contemporary feminist concerns through his investigation and critique of patriarchy. From Sirluck's perspective, Shakespeare is a feminist. "He was a supreme analyst of the malfunctioning aspects of human culture and human ideology," says Sirluck. "He saw patriarchy as dehumanizing, not just dehumanizing for women, but dehumanizing for men."

Not all women would agree with the notion that Shakespeare is a feminist. Vancouver-based actor and director Diane Brown believes asking whether Shakespeare is a feminist is "an ethnocentric question ... asking something from your own time period and context about another time period and context where it's not applicable. When you judge from 1992 what somebody wrote in 1592—that's 400 years in between, a time difference that's important to remember."

Despite discrepancies in time and culture, Sirluck still sees affinities between Shakespearean and feminist thought. "Patriarchy [wasn't] formulated by Shakespeare in precisely the terms it is by contemporary feminists," says Sirluck, "but [his formulation was] not so different." Shakespeare was in a good position to critique his culture because he was writing at a time of great turmoil. Says Sirluck: "He was caught in the centre of two conflicting ideologies: one of them Christianity and one of them the common sense political realism of the capitalist state becoming swiftly an imperialist state." Shakespeare saw how both ideologies thrived on the "masculine" values of aggression, dominance, control, linear drive and power at the expense of compassion and ethic responsibility—"those very qualities which humanity needs to survive," says Sirluck.

Shakespeare obviously couldn't have labelled himself a feminist, but his manner of critiquing a society governed by aggressive masculine values is, in Sirluck's view, similar to that of some contemporary feminists. Still, many women view this playwright as no different from his other male contemporaries in his demeaning view toward women. After all, who are the women in Shakespeare's plays? Cleopatra, Desdemona, Lady Macbeth, Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*—all are victims, caught in the stranglehold of a system which devalues any qualities traditionally associated with the feminine. Desdemona is strangled to death by her husband Othello. Lady Macbeth goes mad and commits suicide when her attempt to deny her femaleness as a way of surviving in Scotland's warrior society backfires on her. In *Taming of the Shrew*, Kate is both physically and psychologically beaten into submission by Petruchio, her husband and "trainer." In what possible sense is Shakespeare's portrayal of these tortured, oppressed women feminist?

In Sirluck's view, Shakespeare's acknowledgement of the victimization of women in his plays is not a validation of women's inferior positions in society. The playwright, says Sirluck, "did not intend merely to represent the institutionalized power relations in his society, let alone to celebrate them." Shakespeare set out to portray the unequal relations between men and women satirically, as in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and/or tragically, as in *King Lear*, and in such a way that we, the audience, don't doubt where his sympathies lie.

According to Sirluck, Shakespeare is concerned not only with exposing, but challenging patriarchy. He challenges primarily through his portrayal of complex female characters. The women in his plays are victims, but not passive victims. They defy the restraints put upon them, as Cordelia in *King Lear* defies her father's wishes "to prostitute herself to him for one third of his kingdom," or Isabella in *Measure for Measure* refuses to prostitute herself to Angelo to save her brother from execution. Shakespeare's female characters struggle against the men who victimize, as Desdemona wrestles with Othello for her life. They reject the silent, enduring roles prescribed to them by patriarchy.

The male figures in Shakespeare's plays are also victims of patriarchy. The men destroy and even, "mutilate themselves by denying the qualities and voices within them which their culture has labelled feminine, and therefore devalued," says Sirluck. "Shakespeare shows us the tragic consequences of human beings who are divided by an ideology so that they have to deny one part of themselves in order to fit a social idea of what a man is, or what a woman is."

King Lear is a prime example of the oppressive and dehumanizing nature of patriarchal decorum. Lear banishes Cordelia because she refuses to obediently play out the role envisioned by Lear of the good daughter. Thus begins the tragedy.

"Tragedy is about waste, the waste of the possibility which is never allowed to be fulfilled," says Sirluck. "We glimpse it, we long for it, but the seeds of its own destruction are already buried. And very often they're buried because of patriarchal values. The devaluation of the feminine, the commodification of love, the objectification of the "other," the pursuit of the masculine identity through aggression, violence and destruction—those are the causes of tragedy."

Whether Shakespeare intentionally set out to portray the tragic consequences of male domination is not certain, and feminism is but one of the many approaches from which Shakespeare's plays may be perceived. His plays are alive with a multiplicity of meanings, meanings which are there for us to explore in whichever way is significant to our experiences and relevant to our times.

Says Sirluck, "The playwright can't change the world. He can portray it. He can question it, he can make you feel how wrong it is, but only the audience can change it."

Janette Hellmuth is a student at the University of British Columbia.

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Domestic workers:

Brown women, blond babies

BROWN WOMEN, BLOND BABIES
written, produced and directed
by Marie Boti & Chit Bautista
Productions Multi-Monde, 1991
28 min. (video)
as told to Cecilia Diocson

Brown Women, Blond Babies *is a groundbreaking new video which examines the experiences of women who work as live-in domestics in Canadian homes—and the politics behind their exploitation.*

The video is a collaborative effort by a white woman and a coloured woman. Producer Marie Boti, is a long-time supporter of the national democratic struggle and women's movement in the Philippines. This is her second documentary about Filipino women. Her first video, Kababaihan, *concerned the Filipino women's movement and the various organizations involved in the struggle to bring about emancipation in the Philippines.*

Director Chit Bautista—or Sister Chit as she is popularly known—is a Filipina nun who worked as a domestic worker in Canada in the late 80's. Her personal experience and contacts with Filipino domestic workers, both in Hongkong and Canada, have given her deep understanding of the situation and issues confronting domestic workers. Sister Chit was also very active in social and women's issues when she lived in the Philippines during the Marcos period and the early days of the Aquino government.

Cecilia Diocson is the chairperson of the Philippine Women Centre of BC She is also a volunteer in one of the working collectives of the Vancouver Status of Women. She interviewed Chit Bautista about her video.

Cecilia Diocson: Tell us how the idea for this video came about.

Chit Bautista: When I started the seminars on awareness-raising and leadership training for domestic workers in 1989, I thought the awareness-raising should not be confined to the domestic workers alone. Somehow their employers and the Canadian public as a whole should be made aware of the existence of this group of domestic workers and the difficult situation under which some of them labour, so that the latter would be more understanding and supportive. But I did not know just how I could reach them.

Then, a Filipina friend of mine introduced me to Marie Boti of Productions Multi-Monde who happened to be in Toronto for a festival of video documentaries. She and her partner, Malcolm Guy, had done other documentaries on Philippine subjects. When they learned that I was working with the domestic workers, Marie commented that they would make a good subject for another documentary. That's how the ball started rolling.

Cecilia: How did the domestic workers react when they learned you were going to film their story?

Chit: They were excited. They all wanted to be in it. Yet when we started the shooting and we needed some to talk about the difficult situation they are in, those who were still going through some real serious problems with their employers did not like to come out in the open for fear of reprisals.

Cecilia: Some people who have seen the video said that the growing number of domestic workers in Canada is part of the feminization of labour migration all over the world. Will you comment on this?

Chit: It is easier for these women to migrate and to find work in the more developed countries because they are willing to do any kind of work, including domestic work, which women in the more developed countries, especially middle-class women, would not like to do.

Cecilia: In your talks with the domestic workers, do you see signs that they are aware of the connection between the economic and political problems and their conditions?

Chit: Some are aware. But a good majority of them have not learned to analyze this connection. If they have some inkling at all, they feel hopeless at the vastness of the problem so they would rather escape than confront the situation. Besides, they are always afraid to do anything that might jeopardize their stay in Canada. That's why I

Still from Brown Women Blond Babies

"...the situation of domestic workers...[is] a micro-version of the whole struggle of women for liberation."

In countries like the Philippines, where the economy has been controlled by transnational corporations, large domestic industries have not been allowed to develop. Instead it was tied down to small and relatively backward manufacturing. Also, our main exports of coconut and sugar have been drastically cut by the United States, our prime importer of these commodities. This resulted in massive dislocation of agricultural workers. Because there are not enough industries to absorb them, unemployment and poverty increased tremendously. So the families were left with no choice but to send their more able children to look for work outside the country.

As poverty in the Third World countries becomes more acute, and thousands of women look to other countries for better opportunities, the demand for cheap labour in the private homes of the more developed countries also increases because these women from the Third World offer a more attractive alternative to day care centres and the much more expensive cleaning services.

find that it is very important to raise their awareness, empower them, so that someday they will learn to stand on their own and tackle their problems individually or collectively. This is what we are trying to achieve in our seminars ... very slowly.

Cecilia: Do you see any connection between the video and the women's movement?

Chit: The video actually wants to project the situation of the domestic workers as but a micro-version of the whole struggle of women for liberation. In this highly competitive system, women are always in a disadvantaged position. This is doubly true for the domestic workers whose work is considered inferior work because it is done mostly by women, inside the home, and so it is not given value financially or otherwise. That is why we have the phenomenon of rampant violation of contracts. These women are made to work 8, 10 even 12 hours a day without over-time pay. Their contract says they are nannies yet they also are made to do the laundry, clean the house, and even cook—all these at no extra compensation. Also, there is sexual harassment. We know there are many who fall victim but they fear coming out in the open because they are afraid to lose their job or worse, to be sent home.

Cecilia: Did you have any support from different women's organizations in Canada, especially white women's organizations?

Chit: Yes, we did. Several women's organizations gave us letters of endorsement. The Confederation of Trade Unions in Quebec—its women's committee even helped us obtain part of the funding. In general, I can say that it was the enthusiasm and encouragement shown by these women's organizations—either white or multi-racial—that's enabled us to go on.

Cecilia: Did you have any reaction from white women and white women's organizations about the video? If so, what are these reactions?

Chit: Yes, and they are positive reactions. For many, the video has been an eye-opener. So far everywhere we show the video there is a lot of enthusiasm and positive comments about the video as a whole.

Cecilia: How did the Filipino community in Canada react to the video?

Chit: Also very positive. They felt strong empathy with the domestic workers and some even offered their support to our endeavour. Others expressed interest in joining advocacy groups such as the one I have in Toronto, so they can also give their share in doing whatever little they can to make these women feel supported.

Cecilia: How did the employers in the video react to the story, especially the employers who appeared in the video?

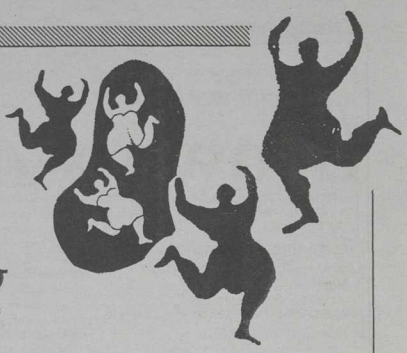
Chit: Two employers who were at the launching came to me after the showing with tears in their eyes. They said the video was so powerful, they were touched by it. One even apologized to her former nanny right there in front of me, for whatever pain she might have caused the latter. I was also touched by her gesture.

As for the employers who appeared in the video, one saw herself the way others saw her and she wanted all her parts taken out. She threatened us with a lawsuit if we did not, but we told her we couldn't do that.

Cecilia: What is your next project?

Chit: We're launching the video and distributing it in various cities where there are many domestic workers. Future plans will depend on reactions to the video and developments in the Immigration Office. Like now there is a move to stop the Foreign Domestic Movement program which allows these women to apply for landed status after at least three years of continuous work in Canada. Immigration now wants to go back to the pre-1980 situation where the domestic workers were made to go home at the end of their work contract *[see story page 3.]* I think this is unfair and discriminatory. If they are very much needed here—and they are—then they should be treated just like other workers who are needed in Canada. So this will be the focus of attention for all of us who are involved with the cause of the domestic workers.

Brown Women, Blond Babies *premieres in Vancouver on Feb. 23 at Video In, 2-4 pm. (See Bulletin Board for details). Distributed by Le Vidéograph, 4550 Garnier, Montréal, PQ, H2J 3S7 (Tel: 514-521-2116).*



Women's theatre:

Surfaces that need breaking

by Janisse Browning

"Breaking the Surface," a festival and conference staged by Maenad Productions (a Calgary-based feminist theatre company) and The University of Calgary Drama Department, was a rare event that brought together women performers, theatre workers and academics from around the world. For four long days last November, about 500 women gathered to share constructive criticism, exchange ideas, enjoy the fruits of women's artistic labour and explore the theme of "Women, Theatre and Social Action."

Throughout the conference, several women expressed their confusion or discomfort with what appeared to be an unpromising and unclear vision of "social action"—especially since most of the women who organized or participated in the conference were not survivors of racism. So, several women had to challenge and revise their understandings of what constitutes meaningful social change. Lizbeth Goodman, a keynote speaker and literature professor from England, suggested social change is sometimes something less public than that which is expressed on the stage. In her keynote address, she said personal change is necessary to layer the more public forms of social change. Goodman noted: "...as women from diverse experiences we have different relationships with words and different ways of working. Women in performance are interacting in the social sphere as active subjects, rather than (or as well as) the object of someone else's or some generic gendered gaze."

Most theatre history and plays taught in schools represent male visions of women's realities. These plays have been written and primarily performed by men, reflecting male perspectives. The headaches and burnouts created by sexism are core to the frustrations that brought women together at "Breaking the Surface."

Questions central to the process of exploring women's theatre echoed throughout the conference: How have education and training institutions brushed over issues relevant to women's lives and ambitions, and how can this ambivalence be changed? What is the relationship of critical inquiry and cultural theory to women's theatre production? How can women be better encouraged to explore their lives and visions through theatre? What funding opportunities are available for experimental women's theatre? How can the diversity of women's experiences (especially regarding class, abilities, racial and sexual identities) be more clearly and accurately represented on stage—and what sources are available to fund, support and recognize these works?

Women at "Breaking the Surface" could provide some, but not all, answers to these questions. Since we have diverse priorities, we also have different visions for creating social change. Privileged women's visions must become more flexible and answerable to our diverse needs as women. Notably, there was an absence of differently-abled participants.

With these and other limitations accounted for, I give the "Breaking the Surface" organizers credit for getting this event off the ground since it was the first of its kind and scale in Canada, and it happened despite insecure funding sources. They created a space for women to discuss issues relevant to our work and personal lives. We were able to get acquainted with delegates from various parts of the world and acknowledge how much needs to be done to voice our varying perspectives.

Sistren's work is about survival, not just fashion or commentary.

I was invited to the conference as a panelist to discuss "The Politics of Gender and Race" with four other women. I was disappointed to discover I was one of only two women of colour on the panel. Other than myself only one panelist, Rosemary Curb, a women's studies instructor, adequately addressed the structural racism that has excluded many women of colour from fully participating in theatre production as playwrights, performers and directors. Several colleagues shared my opinion on the lack of interest and critical insight displayed by other panelists regarding the politics of race.

The panel hardly got beyond discussing the basics of systemic racism before time ran out. We failed to explore vital issues, such as forging strategies and options for women of colour and First Nations women to gain more influence in Canadian theatre circles (for example, as critics, educators and cultural theorists). In fact, it was surprising that the first two women who spoke on this panel (Canadians Christine Boyko-Head of McMaster University and Denise Lynde of Memorial University), did not explicitly mention the politics of racial privilege. They were either not concerned or experienced enough to address the topic of racism—a grim reality that many First Nations women and women of colour encounter in our daily lives as well as in theatre circles. Then again, this particular panel was created as an afterthought, so these women may have been invited to speak on their topics of interest or specialty—unaware of the implications of disregarding racial politics. The only other woman of colour panelist (Vancouver-based Indo-Canadian performer Veena Sood) was too busy talking about her own personal success to adequately represent the difficulties that many women of colour and First Nations women face.

Because "Breaking the Surface" was a festival as well as a conference, we could give debates a rest and watch some live theatre by and about women in the evenings. Omaha Magic Theatre's *Body Leaks* was a layered multi-media event that defies any explanation of plot. Magic Theatre combined overhead projector art, unintelligible screams and intense musical, visual and meta-narrative anti-plots that kept audiences zooming through something like a collective acid trip. The performers' energy was boundless as they maintained carefully orchestrated control over the endless, radical scene and character transitions throughout this piece. Truly experimental, this performance was a refreshing break from some questionable comedic efforts and liberal attempts at social commentary.

Another memorable performance was *Shelter From Assault* by the Toronto-based Company of Sirens. These women portrayed real-life situations faced by survivors of male domestic violence. The play also portrayed the insensitivity of some social and welfare workers, and the disregard and ignorance of many state authorities who deal with domestic matters. *Shelter From Assault* was informative and provocative. It portrayed and confronted racism, homophobia, language oppression, and showed the dilemma of mothers who want a better life for themselves and their children. Afterwards, the performers and director spoke about the play's production, where it has been staged (ie. for high school students and police) and answered some audience questions.

Maenad Production's performance *Aphra*—about the prolific playwright, novelist and poet Aphra Behn—was a memorable experience. The action took place in 1689 as Behn struggled to complete her final play during a feverish illness. *Aphra* was a moody, poetic portrayal of vignettes of Behn's life and work. *Aphra* placed Behn and her closest women friends in a complex web of relations which integrated Behn's commentaries on male dominance, heterosexism and slavery.

I also participated in a workshop with Sistren Women's Theatre Collective of Jamaica. Having heard and read about their work for several years, it was an honour to see workshop leaders Rebecca Knowles and Pauline Crawford in action. They used popular theatre techniques, taught folk songs, and talked about the immediate needs and concerns of working class Jamaican women like themselves. Sistren's work is about survival, not just fashion or commentary. They are on the cutting edge of women's theatre with regard to social action.

Unfortunately, some events were scheduled to overlap rather than complement each other. Some of us had to miss the second day of Sistren's workshop, since the only woman of colour academic (other than myself) was slated to speak at the same time. Sandra Richards spoke on the panel "Revolutionizing the Curriculum: Teaching Women's Theatre," and located her work on African- American playwrights in a predominantly white women's discussion.

A highlight of the conference was the three-hour storytelling workshop led by Lana Skauge, a Calgary theatre worker. With skill and sensitivity, Skauge managed to create a safe emotional space for about 25 people who were mostly strangers. By emphasizing the importance of "telling our own stories," and by demonstrating with some of her own stories, Skauge had people telling stories in pairs, with different people, and as a whole group. By focusing on different senses and using different objects, we embarked on a journey inside ourselves in search of our unique, individual stories.

Despite Skauge's workshop and other redeeming features of the conference, "Breaking the Surface" had just begun to live up to its name. By the end, I felt as if we had only scratched the surface.

At the closing plenary, some First Nations and Métis women suggested there be more direction by women like them from the start rather than part way through, or not at all. This point was of vital importance, since there were surprisingly few voices which articulated the unique struggles of First Nations women.

It is an act of cultural survival, not simply a matter of pleasure-seeking, for women who defy racist stereotypes to use artistic means of expressing our realities, desires and imaginings. Those of us who spoke out with a critical perspective on the theme "Women, Theatre and Social Action" did so with conviction at every possible moment. It was an act of resistance to the "glossing over" of our experiences. If conference organizers expect women of colour and First Nations women to participate in a meaningful and co-operative way, our needs and concerns will have to take more priority.

Janisse Browning has studied representations of race and gender in theatre. She is a recent graduate from Simon Fraser University's masters of communication program.

Dear Reader,

***Kinesis* loves receiving mail. Please get your letter to us by the 18th of the month.**

If you can, keep the length to about 500 words (if you go way over, we might edit for space).

Hope to hear from you soon.

love,
Kinesis

Ecofeminists say what?

Kinesis:

I read with interest Sarah Hutcheson's review of *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ecofeminism* by Janet Biehl ("Humanism or feminism?" Nov. 1991.)

The reviewer speaks of Biehl's contention that there are "some centralizing themes in the [ecofeminist] literature," one of which is "women have innate and superior capacities for caring and nurturing." I have read several magazine articles by ecofeminists and the essay collection, *Healing the Wounds, The Promise of Ecofeminism* (edited by Judith Plant). I do not recall reading the word "inherent" in reference to women's nurturing qualities in any writings by ecofeminists. Yet I keep hearing those who do not identify as ecofeminists saying that this is what ecofeminists say about women. Has some ecofeminist actually said that we women are inherently more nurturing? If so, who is she? What is the complete quote?

I hear ecofeminists saying that because women have been lumped together by the patriarchy with animals and nature that we've been socialized to identify with nature and our nurturing role and that this identification could be harnessed to help save the planet instead of being used by men and by ourselves to keep us in a downtrodden position. In other words, let us use the potential power in women's traditional way of being in the world to heal the planet and ourselves! This is very different from saying that nurturing qualities are more "natural" to one sex than to another. Indeed, I would think ecofeminists would welcome men's development of their own nurturing qualities. It makes more sense than women becoming liberated by taking on male values!

In sisterhood,

Anne Miles,
Gibsons, BC.

Another version of what's true

Kinesis:

I am responding to a letter from Catherine Kerr in the Dec./Jan. issue of *Kinesis*. The letter, a warm defense of Marsha Trew, Director of the Women Students' Office at the University of British Columbia, is unfortunately in error on two issues. The first issue is the one of Trew's appointment as director of the WSO, which appointment, says the author, was made by choice of "a large committee of women's representatives on the UBC campus." The statement is incorrect. Dr. Kathryn McCannell of the School of Social Work was the unanimous first choice of the Search Committee. Trew may not have been a clear second choice of this committee.

McCannell's job was taken from her by K.D. Srivastava, Vice-President, Student and Academic Services, undoubtedly for political reasons. I believe the President's Office had an agenda for the WSO, and Srivastava felt that he had more control over a professional appointment than an academic one.

The second issue which Kerr raises in her letter is the matter of Marsha Trew's leadership of the Office. The writer sees Trew shining above "dedicated and well-informed feminists in Vancouver." This statement is in contradiction to Trew's record in her trial months on the job at UBC. She began by informing staff that she had asked Daniel Birch, Vice-President and Provost of the University, "What can we do to help you?" She continued to follow this unusual "feminist" path by consistently telling staff who demurred with her arbitrary dictums, "I have to answer to my boss, too." (She meant boss Srivastava).

Repeated attempts by seasoned staff members of the WSO to have any dialogue at all with this director were met with rudeness. One by one long-time staff members—who had held the Office through all kinds of political hassle—gave up and either took unpaid leave or resigned positions. Trew quickly filled the positions with part-time or temporary workers—a dangerous precedent in a male hierarchy as powerful as UBC's.

Under Trew's direction the WSO has become handmaiden to the President's Office. The WSO was assigned this role in a December 6 event staged in the Student Union Building theatre—ostensibly to remember 14 women who were killed in Montréal, but in reality an affirmation of male engineering students on campus.

I believe Trew has been used by a powerful male bureaucracy at UBC—one in which she has no history and no experience. Had she been open to advice from colleagues and staff she might have learned ways to save the Women Students' Office.

Yours sincerely,

Nancy C. Horsman,
Former Assistant to the Director, WSO,
Vancouver, BC

A matter of invisibility

Kinesis:

[The following letter is in response Jeanne Mourney's letter.]

Dear Ms Mourney:

I am writing in response to your letter in the Dec./Jan. issue of *Kinesis*. It seems that the wording of my ad has caused a strong reaction in yourself. I would like to clarify my reason for writing it in this way.

For me it is a matter of invisibility. As a lesbian I am aware of invisibility in my life on many levels and lesbians are invisible in the term women, as are many other identities and experiences. If I advertised that I work with women, then lesbians would not particularly identify with me—and at the same time I do work with all women. Where I feel a connection with women the most is through my own community and I want to advertise that in particular.

To me it is obvious that lesbians are women and as I was trying to make the above points, it did not occur to me that women may see me as saying that lesbians are not women. If this is the impression, then that concerns me a great deal. Since your letter came out I have discussed this with friends and all the women I know have seen my ad in terms of the points that I wanted to make. However, I have slightly changed the wording so that hopefully this will be clearer.

I hope that this has gone some way to clarifying my intentions at least.

Sincerely,

Delyse Ledgard,
Vancouver, BC

Understanding ritual abuse

Kinesis:

I have read some articles about sexual abuse in *Kinesis*, but have never seen the subject of ritual abuse covered at all. There are many of us who consider ourselves feminists doing a lot of work in this area, work that is rarely talked about or written about from a survivor's point of view. I thought this letter may help some women feel validated, recognized and honoured for what they have been through, although I do not speak for the community as a whole. Also, some people may want to know more about the subject of ritual abuse generally.

Ritual abuse is a systematic series of rituals which satanists use against their victims (often their own children) to destroy the minds, bodies and spirits of those they perpetrate against. Some people call it a religion, although I would certainly never put it under that heading. Cult members can include a variety of professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, psychiatrists and policemen as well as non-professionals and church leaders (usually respected members of the community). The main objective of their rituals is to create people who, because of their history of programming, are not equipped to deal with life in society at large and who therefore will return to the cult later in life.

Children are prepared from the time they are babies through torture, humiliation and mind control to either return to their abusers, commit suicide or go insane. Some of us have gotten help and have avoided these things, but our lives have not been easy. We are programmed to forget, or store our abuse, and as adults we may have no memory of it at all. We may become addicted to drugs or alcohol, become involved with prostitution or abusive relationships.

When memory of the abuse starts to occur, some of us are unable to cope with our jobs, our children, our relationships and our lives. At this point, if we happen to fall into the hands of a psychiatrist or inexperienced therapist, he or she may label us as delusional and paranoid, prescribe drugs or disbelieve us entirely.

Our stories are not pretty but they are real. People do not want to believe that these things exist and push their own denial onto us, thereby repeating the cycle of abuse. We must begin to accept what has happened in the past, and that which continues to happen in the present.

It is time to bring our experiences out into the light where we have a chance of dealing with them. When people begin to understand, we can begin to put an end to this kind of activity which has damaged many children and adults so deeply.

As survivors, our resources are limited. Therapists are costly and heavily booked. We have no role models for healing and often don't do well in groups. People can't understand why our pain is not as manageable as their own and become afraid of us. Our fear levels can be extreme. Newspapers sensationalize our trauma, but what we need to know about is healing. I believe that our real help comes from each other, but in-

Continued on next page

Int'l Lesbian Week

by Karen X. Tulchinsky

Vancouver's sixth annual International Lesbian Week (ILW) runs from **Saturday February 22 to Sunday March 1, 1992.** For what's happening during ILW, your best bet is to find a program (at the usual locations, the Vancouver Lesbian Connection at 876 Commercial Drive, for one) with details of time, contact phone numbers, locations, events and particulars. Meanwhile here is a glimpse of what the ILW committee is serving up:

Sat. Feb. 22: "Recovery Workshops in AA & Al-Anon." A day of workshops dealing with staying clean and sober, relationships, and family issues. Native Education Centre, 285 E. 5th. Begins at 9:30 am.

Sun. Feb. 23: "Dykes On The Drive" will march down Commercial Drive. Any women or men who support lesbian rights are welcome to march. Starts at McSpadden Park on Victoria Dr. near 5th Ave. at 1 pm.

Sun. Feb. 23: "Amazons, Dykes and Witches," a wicca ritual for lesbians who are witches. At Josephine's, 1716 Charles St. 8 pm.

Mon. Feb. 24: "Lesbian Art Show" is a non-juried show featuring neighbourhood artists. At Josephine's, 7-10 pm.

Tues. Feb. 25: "Women's Video Night" will present a selection of lesbian videos (not recommended for children). At Josephine's, 7-11 pm.

Tues. Feb. 25: "We Are Family." An information and discussion session on same sex benefits and fighting homophobia in the workplace. Vancouver Lesbian Connection, 876 Commercial Drive. 7:30-9:30 pm.

Thurs. Feb. 27: "Is it love or is it lust?" A forum to discuss the fine art of dating with success: the trials and tribulations of the single lesbian. Cherrytree room, The Holiday Inn, 711 W. Broadway. Advance tix advised. Doors open 7:30 pm.

Fri. Feb. 28 & Sun. Mar. 1: "Sexpertease IV." Sensual, erotic, steamy and raunchy. This show is too hot to touch. Treat yourself to a little heat. The evening of entertainment your mother warned you about. The Lotus, 455 Abbott St. Advance tix advised. Doors open 7:30 pm.

Sat. Feb. 29 & Sun. Mar. 1: Volleyball, open to any women of all skill levels. Form a team or come on your own and join a team. Spectators welcome. Location TBA. For info: Brenda, 275-7556. 8 am-6 pm.

Admission to any event is on a sliding scale basis beginning at zero. Each event committee is organizing its own free childcare. Advance booking is required. Better to book early and cancel later than try to get in at the last minute. Some events are signed or wheelchair accessible—check program for specifics.

Volunteers are still needed for door shifts, childcare, publicity, security. If you'd like to volunteer, please phone the info number for the event you'd like to work on (see program).

LETTERS

From previous page

formation from ritual abuse survivors who have gone through the healing process is almost non-existent, because we have been programmed to believe that disclosure has fatal consequences. And so we are caught in a real dilemma. Some of us would like the opportunity to tell our stories but we are afraid, sometimes even of each other.

I feel a sense of urgency here that as a group of people we must be better understood. More of us are beginning to have these kinds of memories but the support structure is not growing to meet the demand. We cannot afford to lose any woman through suicide because information and support was not available to her. We cannot heal in an atmosphere of isolation.

Please consider covering some aspects of sexual abuse or ritual abuse in the future. There are many of us who would feel a better sense of community for it. All that I can do is hope that I have provided some information that might be useful and ask you to give your support to one of us when the need becomes apparent, and it will.

Please understand that I am unable to sign this letter for reasons of my own safety.

[Ed. note: Kinesis *will carry more information on ritual abuse in a future issue.]*

Red and Black Books respond

[The following letter is in response to Terrie Hamazaki's letter in the Dec./Jan. issue.]

Dear Terrie:

Thank you for taking the time to put in writing your experience of attending the afternoon event for people of colour with bell hooks on November 2nd. We regret that the presence of European-American people at this event dismayed you and we certainly understand why you felt this way.

In anticipating this event the collective's intent was to have it attended only by people of colour. However, as I explained to you on that day at Broadway Performance Hall, there were non-collective members on the bell hooks production committee, and one of these, an African-American faculty member of the community college, asked all the students in her classes to attend this event. This created an awkward situation for us and, until we got that sorted out, some of those European-American students coming to purchase tickets at the store were initially turned away.

It is because we respect the need and right of people of colour to create their own identity and space, that we bring people such as bell hooks and Luisah Teish to Seattle and plan for part of their time to be dedicated toward that purpose. Neither bell hooks nor the other people of colour on our committee wanted to create a hostile confrontation over this issue. Rather, the choice was to ensure that the event was focused by and for people of colour and to insist that this be respected by the few present who were not of colour.

In answer to your question, the collective has never attempted to develop a formal definition of "for people of colour". Our working principle has been that people must define themselves. Members of the collective had extensive conversations with a Jewish woman who defined herself as "of colour" and wanted to attend the Saturday event with bell hooks. One of the collective members who tried to dissuade this woman from attending was herself Jewish.

These are complex issues and, given the historic and current racism we live under, are almost always emotionally and politically charged. As a collective we strive to unlearn our racism, seek leadership from and ally ourselves with people of colour. In general we devote ourselves to ensuring a place for the voices of those marginalized in our society. Some of what we do is controversial even in our own ranks and we strive to learn from our differences and agree to disagree when we need to. There are also times when we make mistakes. The evolving unclarity that occurred with regard to decisions about allowing European-Americans to attend the Saturday bell hooks event is something we regret and have made note to try not to repeat in the future.

Thank you again for taking the time to speak with us and to write.

Sincerely,

Margie Carter,
Red and Black Books Collective
Seattle, WA.

A New Year's Eve bash

Kinesis:

This December 31st, my lover, a sister dyke from Montréal, and I decided that we would celebrate with our five-year-old child. To welcome in the new year, we went to a friend's house, where most of us were lesbians and people from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Our child's presence was not questioned, voted for, nor did it politically or personally offend anyone. He was comfortable and wanted.

When the dinner party was over, we all wanted to dance. Alia was not tired and he was on his holiday from school. We had all been taking care of him collectively, consciously, and we were all sober. So, at this point, we decided to phone a lesbian organized event to see if their entrance fee still applied, and found out that it was free and the party was still on. I hesitated because of my child, but our friends assured us that it would be alright to go with him. The event wasn't at a bar, it was almost over and for women only. "1992 here we come," we thought.

I wondered if there were any or how many mothers and women of colour would be there—organizing, dancing or cleaning the tables. I don't want to think politics or suspect anyone. A half hour of dancing left, we'll hold Alia so he won't be in the way.

As we neared the York Theatre, my mind wandered back to my childhood, to the "women-only" gatherings I had attended as one of many male and female children. Blood mothers, other mothers or a female neighbour would bring us. They would dance, drink, laugh and tell stories, while children usually fell asleep either held in someone's arms or put to bed by someone. These were not mothers-only gatherings. Most of the other mothers were not blood mothers—they were simply mothering.

However, the place of my memories is in the heart of the city of Izmir in Turkey, called Tepecik, Gingene Teneke Mahallesi, a Gypsy shantytown. The words feminism, lesbianism, separatism and mothering were not named as they are in the white West and debated in conferences. Here were women, lesbians, mothers, children and a few men, living what were "issues" in the white West. One thing for sure, almost everyone recognized that "vesting one person with full responsibility for mothering a child may not be wise or possible."

In the lesbian and feminist movements I have been involved with here, I have very rarely encountered women and lesbians who look to non-Western or non-Christian models of realities and ways of feminism, lesbianism, mothering and even merely being as worthy of imitation. I am not talking about appropriation.

I feel that it is necessary to stop comparing and measuring oppressions with the colonizers if we are to sit together at the same table and build realistic scenarios for real change, without having to be "sub" to anyone . . . white Western feminists, lesbians and non-mothers might even discover that healthier models of many "ism's" are as close as Native, African and African-American communities. They might even earn the right to benefit from their ways and better their ills themselves.

Back to the celebrations . . .

I said my "Bismillahirahmannirahim" as we walked in. Our party was given noise makers and party goodies at the door. We felt welcome and relieved as we listened to music and looked around. I decided to dance with Alia. That's when the beatings began.

I remember being kicked and thrown under the cigarette machine, thrown in the fire escape, the cold concrete alley in front of Alia. I remember at least four women/lesbians who came at me with supernatural vengeance. "Get your friends, son, and attitude outta here," "You are asking for it," "You deserve this," etc., etc. Yes, even though the party was almost over, they did have a liquor licence to worry about, but really . . . there was no reason for such excessive force to remove one mother and her three-feet-tall child.

After the first beating, our child was taken home and I returned to the "bash" to claim our space with my sister dyke friend from Montréal. I simply could not go home and sleep after this and needed to understand, or else be left alone to dance. I had a right to be there. But, once again, we were met with hostility and violence. I told them our child was at home, and asked what the problem was. Apparently, it was our attitude. They refused to sell me any kind of a drink when I went to purchase one. I returned to stand with my friends.

Throughout the first, second, and third beatings, I was mostly in shock, which many people misinterpreted as drunkenness. I kept going in and out of shock in between the beatings.

While I was being assaulted, music played on and most people continued dancing. When women (especially lesbian of colour supporters) tried to protect me, they received rough treatment. I say this because my lover was gently pushed away and told to leave when she tried to pull them off of me the first time. She is white and big as them. But when another friend who had been with us tried to help, her neck was twisted and she too was thrown onto the street violently. The force seemed greater because she was a woman of colour.

While the "bouncers" weren't busy bouncing me, some other women/lesbians continued physically and verbally assaulting me on their way in and out of this event. It seemed that we had ruined their evening.

Another mother passionately claimed that someone could have looked after my child. She accused me of being a bad mother along with other xenophobic comments, and hit me. Her friend said I wasn't even worth touching. I told her to go ahead and hit me, that it did not matter anymore.

I want a response. How did these people sleep that night, what were their dreams like? Who is accountable? Do women/lesbians of colour, mothers and lesbian mothers (especially of male children) have to continue being silent-stifled partners in their own oppressions? How many of us are living this violence in our own supposedly supportive communities? How can we all chart out our own territories as we see most fit together? Please, respond.

Burcu Ozdemir
Vancouver, BC

Black History Month

Black women will be a focus for this year's Black History Month celebration in Vancouver. Using film, theatre, workshops and panel discussions, Black women will express the diversity of their cultures and experiences as part of the African diaspora. You won't want to miss this chance to share the richness of our cultures and visions, so mark your calenders with these events:

Sun., Feb. 2: Free film screening of *Sisters in the Struggle*, 7:30 pm, and *Remember Africville*, 8:30 pm at Pacific Cinematheque (PCP), 1131 Howe St.

Thurs., Feb. 6: Free public lecture with bell hooks on Race, Gender and Representation. Robson Square Conference Centre, Judge MacGill Theatre, 7:30 pm.

Fri., Feb. 7: Free public lecture with bell hooks on Feminist Theory as Liberatory Practice. University of British Columbia, Lecture Room 6, 12 noon.

Sat., Feb. 8: Free public forum at V.C.C. King Edward Campus Auditorium, 1155 East Broadway, 9 am-3 pm. The theme will be"Understanding Our Realities: Black Women's Perspectives". Dr. Noga Gayle, moderator. Panelists will speak on a variety of topics: bell hooks—"Black Women as Cultural Workers;" Janisse Browning—"Generations After the 'Freedom Train';" Sylvia Hamilton—"Reflection: Uncovering Black Women's History in Nova Scotia;" Dr. Lynnette Menesah—"The Black Family: The Mythical Mother;" and Sophia Nsiah Yeboah—"Recognizing Our Differences, Acknowledging Our Commonalities."

Sun., Feb. 9: Free film screening of *Lady Marshall* and *Mary Lou Williams: Music On My Mind*, 7:30 pm. *Black Women of Brazil* and *Gotta Make This Journey: Sweet Honey in The Rock*, 9:30 pm. Both films at PCP.

Wed., Feb. 19: *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Enuf*, Vancouver East Cultural Centre, 8 pm. Phone 254-9578 for reservations.

Sat., Feb. 22: Multicultural musical concert—Black people sharing their cultural experience. Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut. Phone 875-1763 for details.

Sun., Feb. 23: Tribute to Martin Luther King. Dinner and gospel show at Swedish Hall, 1320 E. Hastings, $15.

Feb. 24-26: Play *The Dream Continues* at Vancouver East Cultural Centre, 8 pm. Phone 254-9578 for reservations.

Sun., Feb. 23: Free screenings of *Picking Tribes* and *Naked Spaces: Living is Round*, 7:30 pm at PCP.

Tues., Feb. 25, Wed., Feb. 26: Workshop with Black British film director Maureen Blackwood. "Black Directors: Different Visions." Tues., 9am-1pm, Wed., 1-5pm. The workshop will examine current media images of people of colour and explore the wide range of representations that are now available. Pre-registration required. Recommended for teachers, persons in multicultural education, journalists and filmmakers. Limited space. Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut, $50. Phone 875-1763 for details and registration.

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*.

Classifieds are $8 (plus $0.56 GST) for the first 50 words or portion thereof, $4 (plus $0.28 GST) 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 issues. Come to the Writers' Meetings on **Tues. Feb. 4** (for the March issue) and **Tues. March 3** (for the April issue) 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 **Thurs. Feb. 27** at 7:30 pm. For info on location and to arrange childcare subsidies, please contact Agnes Huang at 736-7895 or Janisse Browning at 255-5499

VSW WANTS YOU!

Want to get more involved but not sure where to begin? Join us . . . become a volunteer at Vancouver Status of Women. VSW volunteers plan events, lead groups, raise funds, answer the phone lines and help to connect women with the community resources they need, organize the library and other exciting tasks! The next volunteer orientation will be on **Mon. Feb. 24**, 7-9 pm at VSW #301-1720 Grant Street. For more info call Jennifer at 255-5511

EVENTS

VIDEO ON DOMESTIC WORKERS

Screening and panel discussion: *Brown Women, Blonde Babies*. **Sat. Feb. 23** 2-4 pm at Video In, 1102 Homer St. Co-sponsored by the Philippine Women's Centre (see review page 17). Director Chit Bausita will be present

LEGAL CLINIC

Battered Women's Support Services and the UBC Students Legal Advice Program are co-sponsoring a series of free legal clinics for women on Tuesdays from 6:30-8:30 pm; **Feb. 4, 25, March 10 and 24**. For more info call 822-5791

CAREER PLANNING

The Learning Resources Society hosts a series of noon hour career-planning seminars for women. The Segal Room, SFU Harbourfront, 515 W. Hastings St., **Feb. 5, Feb. 12, Feb. 19, Feb. 26,** and **March 4**. 12:10-1 pm. cost for each lecture is $5. Seating is limited to 45 women on a first-come, first-serve basis. For more info call 251-7476

FRESH TALK:

Youth and Sexuality, four-part documentary. Youth talk about how their sexuality is influenced by family, gender, class, religion, and media. Join in discussion. It's hot! It's fresh! Premiere **Sat. Feb. 8**, 7:30 pm, Kits Neighbourhood House, 2325 W. 7th Ave. Call 251-4923. Also, screening **Sat. Feb. 29**, 7:30 pm at Video In, 1102 Homer St. Call 688-4336

CONSTITUTIONAL TALKS?

Explore the constitution from a labour/left perspective at a rally/conference. **Fri. Feb. 7**, 8 pm: A free evening event including speakers Shelagh Day, Monique Simard, Tony Clark and Joe Mathias, plus entertainment. King Edward campus (VCC) auditorium. On **Sat. Feb. 8** workshops, strategy sessions and entertainment at the Maritime Labour Ctr., 111 Victoria Dr. Register at 8:30 am, $25

REPETITIVE STRAIN

Women and Work sponsors a conference on repetitive strain injuries, **April 10 and 11** at the Maritime Labour Ctr., 111 Victoria Dr., Vancouver. Delegates will hear from injured workers, health and safety activists, government and WCB reps. Workshops include: ergonomics, collective bargaining, treatment, rehabilitation and filing compensation claims. The cost is $25, includes lunch. Call 430-0458 to register

EVENTS

BREAST IMPLANTS: FACT OR MYTH?

If you are or have had any difficulties with these devices or you are contemplating breast implant surgery and would like more information, I Know/Je Sais support and information network is holding a public meeting on **Feb. 27** at the Hotel Georgia, Vancouver, from 7:30 pm-9:30 pm. Support is our biggest weapon, together we can help each other through this devastating controversy. For more info call Linda at 594-4048 or Joanne at 462-0299

IWD ALERT

Interested in helping organize for International Women's Day in Vancouver? For info about future meetings call Jackie at 253-5068. Also, phone in any info about IWD events already planned

RECLAIMING PRIDE

Chrystos, Native (Menominee), lesbian, poet, activist, will be the speaker at: "Reclaiming our pride as Native two-spirited (lesbian, gay, bisexual) people in a world that has forgotten us." **Sat. Feb. 8** 7-10:30 pm at the Native Education Centre, 285 E. 5th. Also, Wesley Thomas, Native (Navajo) two-spirited, an anthropology student, will speak on being a member of the Nadlêêh (berdache) tradition. Date: **Feb. 22 or 23**. Phone 251-2635 for details on both events

UNION WOMEN

There will be a summer institute for union women **July 12-17** at SFU in Burnaby. Open to all BC union women. Cost: $450 plus GST (room and board included, but since there is limited accommodation there is a discount for women living at home). Theme of the institute is "Political Action for Union Women". If interested contact your union or call Kate Braid at SFU, 291-4177

VLC VALENTINE'S DANCE

The VLC is throwing its annual Valentine's Day Bash **Sat. Feb. 15** at The Heritage Hall, 3102 Main St. This dance promises to be a VLC Valentine's adventure. Wheelchair accessible. Childcare available off-site. Tix $4-6. Doors open at 8 pm. Call VLC, 254-8458 for info

FEMCAB

A feminist cabaret and artisans' market in celebration of IWD **Sun., March 8**. Tix go on sale **Feb. 14**. A co-production of Women in View and Tamahnous Theatre. For info call 685-6684

EVENTS

REALIZING LEADERSHIP

A conference for women in sport and recreation administration and coaching at The Arbutus Club, Vancouver, **March 6-7**. Keynote speaker: Margaret Fulton. Cost: early registration prior to Feb. 14, $75, after Feb. 14 $85. For more info contact Promotion Plus, #305-1367 W. Broadway, Van., V6H 4A9. Call 737-3075 or Fax 738-7175

DEIDRA McCALLA

"Inspiring, evocative performer, with a wicked sense of humour and a rock solid back beat" appears in concert during International Lesbian Week **Sat. Feb. 29**, 8 pm. From California, Deidra has won awards for 2 of her 3 albums. Sliding scale tix $8-$15. Info on concert location at Little Sister's, Josephine's and Ariel's. Presented by Sounds & Furies 253-7189

BENEFIT

Benefit for the Vancouver Women's Health Collective at LaQuena **Feb. 29** at 7 pm

MUSIC AT JOSEPHINE'S

Sue McGowan, Jacqui Parker-Snedker and Carol Weaver will be joined by Andrea Kohl and Patti Powell to perform the music from *Collateral Damage: The Tragedy of Medea* as well as new material! **Sun., Feb. 9**, 8 pm at Josephine's, 1617 Charles St. Doors open at 7:30 pm. Sliding scale $5-10. Proceeds go towards a recording project

TWO SPIRITED SOCIETY

Vancouver Two Spirited Society is hosting the 1992 5th Annual Native Gay and Lesbian Spiritual Gathering to share traditional beliefs. We welcome all Native Two Spirited people. Call Michelle at 687-4100 (weekdays)

ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING

Are you interested in leading Assertiveness Training Workshops? The Vancouver Status of Women is offering a weekend training session for women wanting to run groups. **Thurs. Feb. 27**, 6-10 pm, and all day **Sat. Feb. 29** and **Sun. March 1**. There is no fee. Trainees are expected to run two workshops for VSW. Please call Trisha at 255-6554 to set up a meeting before Feb. 19. Assistance with child care costs is available.

THE FAMINE WITHIN

Benefit for the Vancouver Women's Health Collective—the film *The Famine Within*, an acclaimed Canadian film on

The Vancouver Folk Music Festival *is pleased to present . . .*

Rosalie Sorrels & Melanie Ray

Rosalie Sorrels, one of the most influential, respected and loved artists on the American folk music scene teams up with Vancouver storyteller, Melanie Ray, to swap tales of life, love and ornery cats.

◆ ***Sunday, February 23 8 pm $15***

Judy Small & Lucie Blue Tremblay

It's a delight to present two of the most accomplished and influential artists in women's music in the course of one evening. This show is co-presented with *Concerted Effort Productions and Random Acts.*

◆ ***Wednesday, March 4 8 pm $18***

TICKETS available at Black Swan Records, Highlife Records, the Vancouver Folk Music Festival office, 3271 Main Street, 879-2931 or by calling 254-9578 to reserve. Both concerts are at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, 1895 Venables at Victoria.

Concerted Effort Productions, Women in Music and Random Acts *present*

♀ ♀ ♀

CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

So many talented women, we needed 2 nights to fit them all in — Music, Stories, Poetry, Lots of Fun with Aya, Bonnie Ferguson (with Rhodea Auriel Lancaster & Colleen Savage), Razom Sestre, Janisse Browning, Random Acts, Penny Singh, and Sue McGowan (with Jacqui Parker-Snedker and Carol Weaver). For more information call 254-9578. Reservations only. $10 per evening.

◆ ***Thursday, March 5 & Friday, March 6 8 pm $10/evening***

Special ticket package *including the Judy Small & Lucie Blue Tremblay concert — $30 for all 3 nights. Available through the Festival office only at 879-2931.*

BULLETIN BOARD

EVENTS

eating disorders and body image will be shown at 7:30 pm, **Tues. Feb. 25** at Pacific Cinematheque, 1131 Howe St. Tix $10 at the door

PROCEED WITH CAUTION

The Centre For Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations at the University of British Columbia presents "Proceed With Caution: Looking At Ourselves, Looking At Others", a workshop examining issues of power, responsibility, and expropriation in research and creative production. **Fri., Mar. 6**, 1:30-5 pm. Angus 308, UBC. The workshop is free and open to everyone. Please call 822-9171 for further info

SORROW & STRENGTH

"Sorrow & Strength: The Process", a 2nd annual conference about childhood sexual abuse for the adult survivors, professional helpers and other support people. **April 9, 10 & 11**, 1992, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. For more info please contact: "Sorrow & Strength: The Process," Coordinating Committee, 160 Garfield St. S., Winnipeg, MB, R3G 2L8

BENEFIT CONCERT

Sanctuary Foundation's benefit concert and art show presents music by Amanda Hughes and Oh Yeah, Art works by Joanne Parker and Ronaye, **Sun. Feb. 9**, 1992, 7 pm, at the Hyatt Regency 655 Burrard St., Van. Tix $12 at Ticketmaster, or charge by phone: 280-4444. Proceeds to the Sanctuary Foundation which intends to establish a second-stage transition house

GROUPS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

South Surrey/White Rock Women's Place needs committed women to take on the challenge of being volunteer Director of the Board. Previous experience in the area of women's groups, collectives, non-profits, and community organizations would be ideal but not mandatory. Interested women should submit a letter of intent to the current board, outlining their personal interests and experiences. For more info call 536-9611, or write South Surrey/White Rock Women's Place, #1-1349 Johnston Rd., White Rock, BC, V4B 3Z3

JOB SKILLS DIRECTORY

Vancouver Society on Immigrant Women is updating their Job Skills Directory. It is a chance for immigrant women to find work and potential employers to advertise at no charge to either group. For more information about the directory call Carolina Wong at 731-9108

GROUPS

SUPPORT GROUP

If you would like to join a bisexual women's support group Tuesday evenings 7-9 pm, please call Sandra at 299-4199

WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES

Learn about them and help teach others. Join us at the Vancouver Women's Health Collective. Next volunteer training starts **Feb. 24** and runs for six weeks. Call 255-8284

DONATIONS

We are looking for free furniture/office supplies to set up a new drop-in centre in the Downtown Eastside area. Please call Martine after 6 pm at 873-2260. Thank you to all donators!

CREATIVE WRITING

"Off the Line: A Creative Writing Course for Women" with author J.A. Hamilton begins **Feb. 17** and runs 8 Mondays from 5:30-7:30 pm. $160-$80 sliding scale. Registration deadline **Feb. 10**. Pre-registration required. A group to help writers new to creative writing to develop their voices and hone their craft. Call 254-1617

WOMEN'S CHORUS

Do you enjoy singing with other women? Come and rehearse with a Vancouver Women's Chorus on Thursday evenings. A challenging opportunity and lots of fun. No auditions. We will perform for the Gazebo Connection in May and plan other performances later this year. Do join us! Call 438-5442

WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

"Women's Support Group" is based on loving acceptance of self and others. There is an 8-week commitment. $10-$15 sliding scale. Thursdays, 7-9 pm. "Circle of Love" is a safe space to give and receive love and nurturance. Fridays, 7-9 pm, $5-$15 sliding scale. Also, anger work for women. Please call Susan Elek, transformational therapist at 983-3056

ART THERAPY GROUPS

Art therapy groups for women; childhood trauma, creativity, eating disorders and general therapy. Ten week sessions. No art experience necessary. All groups begin week of **Feb. 10**. For info and registration call Monica Thwaites at the West Side Art Therapy Centre, 732-0390 (after Feb. 3) or 327-0390

GROUPS

WRITING THE HEALER

"Writing the Healer Workshop" with author J.A. Hamilton begins **Feb. 17** and runs 8 Mondays from 8-10 pm. $160-$80 sliding scale. Registration deadline **Feb. 10**. Pre-registration required. A group for women only, using writing as a healing technique. Call 254-1617

WOMYN WANTED

Wyse Womyn, Wyld Womyn Concerts, is a monthly series featuring womyn musicians, song writers, poets, performance artists, and speakers. Women interested in presenting group goals, organizational objectives, earthy experiences, body beliefs, soul sensations and artistic expressions are welcome to attend. Burn the stage with grace or rage. If you are interested we meet the **3rd Friday** of each month at La Quena, 1111 Commercial Dr., or call 253-1240. Alcohol free space.

SCIATIC PAIN?

Since giving birth to my daughter 6 months ago, I have been experiencing increasing pain in my hip and foot, numbness due to damage to my sciatic nerve. I would appreciate talking to any woman who's dealt with sciatic pain. I'm looking for mutual support and learning what heals. Donna 322-9411

FEELING ISOLATED?

If you are lesbian and have chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) and would like to form a support group where sharing feelings, emotions, and knowledge are important, then please call Patty at 420-7238

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter has a volunteer training group beginning in January. Women who are interested in volunteering on the crisis line, in the transition house, in fundraising events, or in any other part of the women's organizing centre are invited to call us for a training interview. Volunteers for reception, with access to Word Perfect, are also needed, Mon. to Fri. 9-5. For further info phone 872-8212

SELF-HEALING CIRCLE

The Indian Homemakers' Assoc. is sponsoring a weekly Eagle Women's Self-Healing Circle on **Thursdays** from 3:30 pm-5:30 pm, Suite 201-640 W. Broadway. Elders will share their traditional ways. Please contact Florence Hackett at 876-0944 or 876-1468.

VLC SERVES YOU

You're not only wanted, you're needed at the Vancouver Lesbian Connection. Help keep the centre open, put on events or workshops, update resources, organize the library or clean up the filing system. Call Ginger 11 am-4 pm, Wed. and Fri., at 254-8458 for details. Group meetings at the VLC now include: a support group for lesbians who have been involved in psychiatry; a group for lesbians who want casual social contact and discussion; a women of colour support group; legal advice; free massage and counselling; a Sex, Love and Addiction support group, and Coming Out groups for women exploring their sexuality and trying to accept themselves as lesbians. Call 254-8458 to sign up for these or to find out about other lesbian groups and events.

SUBMISSIONS

LESBIAN ART SHOW

Final call for entries for a non-juried art show for International Lesbian Week. All lesbians are encouraged to submit up to three slides of their work to L.A.S., 3391 Victoria Dr., Van., BC, V5N 4M3, or call Anne 874-2329 or Carole 253-6190. Deadline for submissions: **Feb. 10**, 1992

LESBIAN RIGHTS CONF.

Vancouver is hosting the second Pan-Canadian Conference on Lesbian and Gay Rights in the fall, 1992. If you'd like to organize a workshop or have ideas about topics you'd like to see covered, we want to hear from you. Send proposals and ideas by **March 15**, 1992, to 321-1525 Robson St., Van., BC, V6G 1C3. For more info, call barbara findlay at (604) 251-4356

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Forbidden Subjects: Self-Portraits by Lesbian Artists. Please send self-portrait(s) (slides or black and white photos) along with statement (1-3 pages) discussing the process and importance of making a self-portrait. Include some biographical info and a SASE. Deadline: postmarked June 1, 1992. Mail only to Gallerie Publications, Box 2901 Panorama Dr., North Vancouver, BC, Canada, V7G 2A4. Phone (604) 929-8706

CLASSIFIED

HOUSING AVAILABLE

A nearly "character" 3-bedroom house in Strathcona needs someone to share for next 6 months. $280 plus one third of utilities and oil heat. 251-9471. Women only. Available immediately

bell hooks in Vancouver

♦

Thurs, Feb 6, 7:30 pm
RACE, GENDER AND REPRESENTATION
Judge MacGill Theatre
Robson Square Conference Centre

♦

Fri, Feb 7, 12 noon
FEMINIST THEORY AS LIBERATORY PRACTICE
Lecture Room 6
Instructional Resources Centre UBC

♦

Sat, Feb 8, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
UNDERSTANDING OUR REALITIES: BLACK WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES
(with co-panelists Sylvia Hamilton, Janisse Browning, and Julie Darboh)
Auditorium, King Edward Campus, VCC

Sponsored by the Black History Month Committee; InVisible Colours; Women's Studies and the Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowed Chair, SFU; and the Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations, UBC
For information call: 291-3593 or 875-1763 *Admission: Free*

TAPESTRY A celebration of Women of Colour and Immigrant Women of Colour.

TAPESTRY A major gathering of women of colour who will come together for 2 days to celebrate our lives and our experiences.

TAPESTRY Will take place:
March 21 at the Aboriginal Friendship Centre: 1607 East Hasting St. and
March 22 at the Sunset Community Centre: 404 East 51st Ave.

TAPESTRY Will bring together Women of Colour in a celebration of our diversities and realities as we enjoy skits, poetry, music and dance.

Organizers have set up committees to work on every aspect of this ground breaking Festival. Volunteers are needed for all committees now.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: Amrit or Jazmin at 255-6554

BULLETIN BOARD

CLASSIFIED

SATISFY YOUR CURIOSITY!

Have you been curious about Shiatsu? Wondering about Astarte's work? This Shiatsu demo and info night is for you. **Thurs. Feb. 6**, 7:30-9 pm, 1-509 Carrall St. (at Pender). Free. 251-5409

COUNSELLOR-HYPNOTHERAPIST

Judy Forester, BPE. Certified counsellor and hypnotherapist. Through the use of Ericksonian hypnosis you can effectively change behaviours that limit potential, overcome personal blocks, and increase self-esteem and self-confidence. Learn to take charge of the present and build the kind of future you really want. Call 873-5477

JOB OPENING

At the Vancouver Women's Health Collective. Starts 1st week of March, 30 hours/week, salary $21,060. Duties include grant writing, fundraising, payroll, office management & reorganisation, & light bookkeeping. Qualifications should include proven success in fundraising, proven experience in non-profit organisations & administration, grant writing experience, computer skills, conflict resolution skills, interest in women's health, ability to motivate others, dedication, motivation, enthusiasm! Deadline for applications is **Mon., Feb. 17**, 4 pm. Send resumes to Vancouver Women's Health Collective, #302-1720 Grant St., Van., BC, V5L 2Y7. For more info, call 255-8284

SURVIVORS OF INCEST

Share your story, learn coping skills & explore feelings safely in a 9-week group starting **Wed., Feb. 5**. Reisa Stone's therapy-counselling practice is now in the South Granville area; new clients accepted. Sexual abuse, body image, eating disorders, ACOA & ACDF issues. Please call 732-9753 for an appointment.

ACUPRESSURE

Jin Shin Do Acupressure. A gentle, mindful, non-violent therapeutic touch. The art of energy balancing. Release and body/mind/spirit centering. Allow yourself the gift of enhancing relaxation and continue to discover self care. 90 minute sessions. Sliding scale. Call Lisa 685-7714

AROMATHERAPY/MASSAGE FOR WOMEN

I do a beautiful body, face and scalp massage using a variety of aromatic essences from plants and flowers. These essences specialize themselves in stress reduction, cellulite, pre-menstrual, menopause, headaches, muscular pain, asthma and relaxation. I am Christine at 737-7233. Student rates available

BED & BREAKFAST

Rocking Horse Inn, Seattle: Unique bed and breakfast on Capitol Hill. Great views, hot tub, warm hospitality. (206) 322-0206

SURROGACY RESEARCH

I am a female researcher interested in the question of surrogacy. I am interested in contacting women who have been or who are surrogate mothers. Please contact: Fiona Green, Women's Studies, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 2E9. (204) 786-9295

SHARING CHILDCARE

Mother of small child (8 months) looking for another mother who is interested in trading babysitting. I love playing and interacting with children but also need breaks! Would like to trade with other mother holding feminist socio-political views. In Kits, UBC and Dunbar areas. Mielle Chandler 263-2383

BODY THERAPY

The Trager Approach gently encourages relaxation, self-acceptance and respectful change. Chris Bruels will share the theory supporting this non-intrusive approach, Mentastics and samples of tablework. No charge. For women. **Tues. Feb. 11**, 7:30 pm at Women's Counselling Services of Vancouver, 1662 W. 8th Ave., 738-4298

OFFICE SPACE

For rent. Two counselling rooms available beginning **March and April**. Full-time and part-time. Very reasonable rent. Commercial Drive area. For more info, call 253-3146 and leave a message

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Apprenticeship with agricultural consultant leading to self-employment. Business involves monitoring pests, predators and diseases in orchards and advising farmers on control, emphasizing least toxic methods. Must have some biological or agricultural training and own car. Please send letter and resume to Box 2667, Station R, Kelowna, BC, V1X 6A7

HOUSING/WORK

Small two-story post and beam house with large yard and fruit trees in Kelowna for rent to non-smoking single woman or lesbian couple in exchange for part-time help on nearby farm. Must be physically fit and have car. References to Box 2667, Station R, Kelowna, BC, V1X 6A7

FEMINIST FARMER

Feminist farmer with interests in music, books, natural sciences, environmental issues and social change seeks self-employed lesbian feminist companion willing to relocate to Kelowna area. Could become involved in farm and cottage industry if desired, or pursue separate work. Please reply to Box 2667, Station R, Kelowna, BC, V1X 6A7

PT. TIME WORK

Part-time handy-woman wanted for non-profit women's housing in downtown eastside. Fix-it skills, carpentry, minor plumbing, bi-fold doors. No electrical. Own tools would be helpful, also tenant interaction skills. Hours and scheduling flexible—approx. 20 hours per month (2 days) or 40 hours every two months (4 days). $14.50/hr. Call 253-9333 or write office at 430 E. Cordova St., V5V 4R9

FABRIC BANNERS

Strong colourful long-lasting banners for indoors and out. Made to order by well-known Vancouver artist Sima Elizabeth Shefrin. From the maker of the beautiful banners for *Kinesis*, *Angles*, Ariel Books, AIDS Vancouver, Tools for Peace & many other organizations directly to you. Reasonable prices. 734-9395

HOUSING WANTED

For **March or April 1** ... shared or private rental ($300 range), short term sublet or house-sitting arrangement by non-smoking, 100 percent vegetarian ecofeminist coordinating "Women and the Earth '92." A comfortable, quiet room in well-loved Vancouver character home with garden space or similar nearby country (island?) abode—also transit accessible—is longer term vision. Open to myriad possibilities, but conscientiously practised communal living skills are essential. Please call before mid-February. Thank you! Dianne (935-6647 collect).

HELP WANTED

Press Gang Printers, a feminist, worker-owned print shop is looking for a new collective member. The position would involve working in printing production—press and pre-press—and eventual training in production coordination. We are implementing an affirmative action policy in our collective and are looking for women of colour to apply for this position. The job will start on or about March 1. Please send resume to: Press Gang Printers Ltd., 603 Powell St., Van., BC, V6A 1H2. Deadline for applications: **Feb. 14**, 1992

LARGE ROOM

Large room available for rent in quiet Kits. House for mature woman to share with two feminists. Includes ensuite bathroom, washer/dryer, dishwasher, piano, microwave, etc. Rent is $475 a month (negot.,) plus a third util., (approx. $15/mo.). Non-smoker. No pets. Security deposit required. Available **Feb. 15/March 1**. Call 737-9840

FEMINIST COUNSELLOR

Delyse Ledgard—I work with lesbians and other women. I offer individual and couples counselling. My interests and experience are in substance abuse, child sexual abuse and childhood trauma, relationship issues, violence against women and poor self esteem. I use an experiential approach from a Gestalt framework with use of visualizations/imagery and dream work. Sliding scale. For more info, tel: 873-4495

FREE THE SINGER WITHIN!

Singers of all levels can increase range, tone and power while developing confidence to sing out and speak up! Expert vocal coaching in a supportive, accepting environment. A holistic and effective method for personal empowerment, joyful creative expression and a great voice! On Commercial Drive. $30/session or 6 sessions/ $150. Penny Sidor 251-4715

VILLA DE HERMANAS

All women's Caribbean Beachfront Guesthouse: Beautiful spacious L/F owned guesthouse on long, secluded beach in the Dominican Republic. Tropical gardens, pool, large, private guestrooms, sumptuous meals, massages, and crystal healings. Room rates: $330 single; $440 double per week. Call our Toronto friend, Susan, at (416) 463-6138 between 9 am-10 pm

HOUSING

How much do you need to buy your own? What will your monthly payments be? How much of a downpayment is necessary? Where can you afford to buy? Today interest rates are the lowest they have been in 25 years. Variable rates are about 8 percent. If you are thinking about buying or selling, let me put 14 years experience to work for you: Linda McNeill (298-0795); Seasons Realty Ltd., (435-8893)

Position Available
Program Coordinator

The Vancouver Status of Women has an opening for a full-time Program Coordinator, beginning March 18.

The Program Coordinator:

- organizes educational programs in the community;
- coordinates assertiveness groups and trains facilitators;
- works in coalitions around various women's issues;
- lobbies government and does media work

Qualifications:

- an ability to plan and run public programs and events;
- familiarity with assertiveness and experience training;
- knowledge of women's issues and organizations as well as social services and other community groups;
- experience with media work and lobbying;
- an ability to work alone as well as collectively.

Women of colour and First Nations women are strongly encouraged to apply. Affirmative action principles will be in effect for this hiring.

Salary: $23,805 (under review) plus benefits

Deadline for Applications: Feb. 25th

Send applications to:
VSW Hiring, #301 1720 Grant St.,
Vancouver BC V5L 2Y6. A full job description is available at our office. Drop by or call 255-5511 for more information.

Position Available
Kinesis Editor

Kinesis requires an Editor beginning March 9. The Editor works with an Editorial Board and is a full-time staff person at the Vancouver Status of Women.

The Kinesis Editor:

- oversees the publishing of a feminist tabloid newspaper, 10 times a year
- solicits, writes and edits articles;
- recruits and assists volunteer writers;
- keeps abreast of issues, debates and news relevant to a feminist newspaper;
- maintains contact with women's and community groups;
- works closely with production, advertising, distribution and circulation coordinators.

Qualifications:

- editorial, writing and copy editing skills, and familiarity with feminist journalism;
- an ability to work collectively;
- broad-based knowledge of women's issues and organizations;
- an ability to work under deadline pressure;
- knowledge of production techniques;
- organizational skills.

Women of colour and First Nations women are strongly encouraged to apply. Affirmative action principles will be in effect for this hiring.

Salary: $23,805 (under review) plus benefits

A full job description is available. Drop by our office or call 255-5499. Send applications to: Kinesis Hiring, #301 1720 Grant St., Vanc. BC V5L 2Y6

Deadline for Applications: Feb. 19

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