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NOVEMBER 1993 Post-elections coverage.....page 3 CMPA $2.25

KINESIS

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies

世界各地都有女性

Les Femmes sont Partout

Frauen sind überall

Women are Everywhere

INSIDE

KINESIS

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Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Our next Writers' Meeting is**Nov2** for the November issue at 7 pm at *Kinesis*. All women welcome even if you don't have experience.

Kinesis is published ten 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,classism, homophobia, ableism, 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, telephone number and SASE. *Kinesis* does not accept poetry or fiction. Editorial guidelines are available upon request.

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Add paste-up, general layout and design to your roster of skills this fall in the production room with a view at *Kinesis*! Call 254-8691

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It's been a long, long, lo-o-ng election month! The suspense, the depression, the fears, the waiting...is over! We now know where we stand. Sort of... The results are in and we've got ourselves a one-party state. **The liberals...oops, that's a capital L...have the majority.** We were putting the paper together on election night and were so sick of the hype, we almost forgot to switch on the talking-heads election coverage on TV when an ex-Kinesis-ite expatriate Vancouverite in Toronto called to tell us what was happening—how the Liberals were devouring Ontario (98 of 99 seats), how the Bloc was devouring Quebec (54 of ... We turned on the TV as soon as the polls closed in BC and heard how the Reform was devouring the West... *[For details, page 3, and for reactions page 8].*

In some ways, it's actually a relief to see the Liberals take the majority. And the Bloc (54 seats) form the official opposition. Anything, rather than a Liberal-minority Reform balance-of-power nightmare. We'll admit it, **Reform terrifies us...** they've been quite vocal about their commitment to the destruction of equality-seeking groups/peoples...Then again, the Bloc's disregard of Aboriginal peoples in Quebec must be equally frightening to some in Quebec right now...

Then there's the **NINE-seats-for-the-NDP catastrophe (just heard about the ninth seat):** NDPers Betty Baxter (Van Ctr) ran fourth, Winnie Ng (Toronto Trin-Spad) ran second *[see last issue for Ng interview]*, Margeret Mitchell (Van East) ran second, Dawn Black (New West) ran 3rd—Dawn Black, former NDP women's critic lost to Reform! Audrey MacLaughlin kept her Yukon seat! The NDP are no longer an official party in the House...unless Chretien's government allows them to keep their party status...?

Once the election dust (mud) clears, we'll be able to get on with...wait a minute. Did we forgot someone, something...something we can barely see for red dust ...it's...it's...Kim Campbell! Well, Campbell's certainly taken the fall for Mulroney...for herself too...for her recent cabinet shuffle alone, for starters—the one where immigration got moved to the ministry of public security, and **secstate women's programs got swallowed up into a new mega-ministry of human resources and labour.** We're going to track down that story for next issue...

Back to the **Tories: they got wiped** and we're feeling good about something at least. Two seats for the Tories! Someone heard from someone that Barb Byers of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour says the only good thing to come out of this election is that the Tories have finally achieved gender parity in the House of Commons! One woman, one man...get it? Yeah, guess they did something right...?!

It's going to take a while for us to find out what's what where and why—we promise you more depth, more analysis, more (but not too much more) on the elections in the next issue...in case you find any typos in the stories, we had less than 24 hours in which to do the post-election coverage...

We're not done yet with elections in Vancouver though. Lest you forget, the municipal elections are on November 20 and we may be looking at **the first woman mayor of Vancouver ever—Libby Davis,** long-time supporters of women's and community groups/issues! She's not alone on the COPE slate—feminists Frances Wasserlein and Sadie Kuehn are on it too. We'll bring you more on that too next issue...

Well, it's true! We read it in The Globe and Mail. A survey of 500 feminists reveals that "feminists wear makeup" too! And more so than non-feminist women. And we like to shop too! But...gee, they don't say anything about sleeping or eating, i.e. do feminists sleep? Do we eat? Well, if we shop, we probably can't afford to eat... That wasn't in the survey.

By the way, the Victoria-based Feminists for Life organization (billing themselves as pro-woman pro-life) just opened up a branch in Vancouver. They're probably thrilled to hear that Reform took BC. These are very scary women—they borrow the rhetoric of the women's movement and uses it to discredit "the early feminists" who still believe in a woman's right to choose?!!

Back to *The Globe and Mail*...Not only did this national newspaper openly "campaign" for the Reform Party in editorials, they had the nerve to ignore (not report) that fabulous spoof of *The Globe* called *The Glib and Stale*...giving us the goods on NAFTA and its many-faceted ways in which it solidifies the control of transnational corporations on global (in this case, Canada the US and Mexico) economies...*The Glib and Stale* was wrapped over *Globe*s the country over...the ones in dispensing boxes. So if you have a sub to *The Globe*, ...well, shame on you...hope you get *Kinesis* too, just to balance things out a bit...anyway, if you have a sub you probably missed out on The Glib. However, word has it, the Glib was so popular that they reprinted a million copies, so it's still out there...it's worth a read. There's **still time to stop NAFTA...**the Liberals aren't going to be easy to turn around on this one, but with enough pressure, they just might....

The thing about the Liberals getting in (we keep going on about the elections, don't we?) is that they aren't the Tories. Sure they're on the right of the political spectrum but so is almost everybody these days (nationally speaking, not on the ground)...We think we're going to have some interesting days ahead of us...

The Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies will be making its final report on November 15...*[read our story on page 10]*...maybe... The latest in the mainstream newspapers is that US geneticists can now clone human embryos, i.e. split them into twins and store one up "for later"... new reproductive technologies and eugenics are a scarier and scarier reality that needs to be addressed...and women are organizing to address the Royal Commission's report (incidentally, the chair of the commission is a geneticist herself...!!!) when it gets released this month. We'll bring you more...

Speaking of genetics, another assault genetically speaking is that on seeds and plants...a United Nations report last month warns that unless urgent action is taken to preserve species of plants, the world's food crisis will accelarate..."biodiversity" (basically means the natural diversity of seeds) is essential. Genetically uniform seeds are being used in the growing of wheat, rice, maize and potatoes...natural seeds (there can be tens of thousands of naturally diverse seeds for rice, for example) are being lost. ...Aboriginal women in particular are speaking out and organizing around this...there may be an article with more (accurate) details in next month's special issue on Aboriginal women...

There *are* some good things happening...like the funding of seven new women's groups in the province *[read page 5]*, which will probably lead to several new facilities being opened...one of them, the SAWAN centre, will be the first South Asian women's centre in BC ever! This is quite a landmark—there has been a South Asian community in BC for over a hundred years now...and South Asian women's groups have operated in the community for many many years without funding...This is truly a first.

Hey, we just checked our mail, and guess what we found out....The PEI rape and sexual assault centre is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. Congrats. We're really into anniversaries these days...maybe 'cos *Kinesis* is celebrating our 20th anniversary...actually the next issue will be the 200th time that Kinesis goes to press...!

THANKS

VANCOUVER • STATUS • OF • WOMEN

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 to VSW in October:

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We would also like to say a special thank you to those who have responded to our fall appeal and whose support is so vital in this time of government cutbacks. VSW is about half-way to our goal for donations this year and the support of individual donors remains crucial to VSW:

Laureen Anderson • Jean Bennett • Priscilla Boucher • Jennifer Bradley • Kate Braid • Ruth Bullock • Betty-Ann Buss • Janet Calder • Rita Chudnovsky • Karen Egger • Anita Fortney • Jeanette Frost • Pat Fuller • Deborah Gibson • Cindy Holmes • Leslie Kenny • Inger Kronseth • Heather Leighton • M.K. Louis • Judith Lynne • Lynne MacFarlan • Sandra Mayo • Christine McDowell • Heather McLean • Patricia McNeill • Diane Mercy • Patricia Murray • Margaret Norman • Susan Penfold • Catherine Revell • Hulda Roddan • M. Scarlett • Anita Skihar • Helen Sonthoff • Veronica Strong-Boag • Johanna Te Boekhorst • Helen Walter • Susan Wendell

And, thank you, to the volunteers who helped stuff, seal and stamp all the letters in October:

Carol • Cat • Jennifer R. • Karen • Lisa • Miche • Shamsher • Roisin

Next writers' meeting
November 2 @ 7 pm
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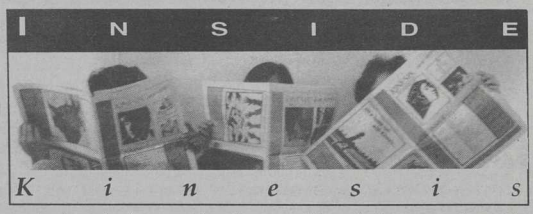

As always, here's a seasonal weather update: it's raining in Vancouver but it's sunny at *Kinesis*.

We are happy to welcome—and welcome back:

Kathleen Mullen who, as we speak, is hard at work developing a marketing/distribution plan designed to launch *Kinesis* into new and exciting frontiers. Kathleen has been hired on a Section 25 grant and will be with us until January. Among other things, Kathleen will be helping us design a readership survey of *Kinesis* readers, which we'll be running in our next issue. We want to know what you think of its content, layout, where you find *Kinesis*, where you don't and what you think about it and much much more. As always, your feedback is appreciated and helps us realize the potential of the paper.

The *Kinesis* Editorial Board has grown by two and diminished by one since last month. Long-time contributor to *Kinesis* and "friend-of-the Ed Board," Manisha Singh is now a member of our board, and has plans to take us into unchartered global territory. Agnes Huang returns after a six-month leave of absence (she was not, however, absent from the pages of *Kinesis*). Ed Board member Kathleen Oliver has left the Ed Board temporarily to wrangle two full-time festival jobs.

We'd also like to welcome our new writers this time around: Judy Morrison, Christine Massey, Sharon Lewis and Lezlie Lee Kam.

This production we were thwarted by our own darn computer. Yes, it was virused. So anyone out there who's inserted one of their disks in our (ahem) drives, please check it. Chances are it has a virus as well. We now have a virus detector if you want to check it here.

New volunteer this issue—Anita Fast!

A big thanks to all the people we called in a panic—Stewart Morris and Ed Progar—and a big, big thanks to Gladys We and Eric Yang for helping us back into action.

There's a new, improved sub drive this issue...starting this very minute...and there's a prize involved! Anyone who gives three gift subscriptions to *Kinesis* before January 30 can get her very own 1994 Everywoman's Almanac. This perfect-bound edition is packed with useful information and looks oh-so-good next to your copy of *Kinesis*! See our back cover for details—unfortunately, we couldn't afford the printing costs to bring it to you in colour, but take our word for it, it's colourful!

Another reminder: our next issue features the Indigenous Women's Issues supplement compiled by guest-editer Viola Thomas. It's shaping up to be one of the most exciting projects we've ever been involved in...we won't give away anything. This is a Wait and See issue!

One more thing...our 20th anniversary is still coming up next year so stay tuned for

Post-election round up:

Living with the Liberals

by Jackie Brown

In a massive Liberal sweep that put more Grits into the house of commons than the "Trudeaumania" tizzy of 1968, Canadians have said No to the neo-conservative agenda of the Tories and Yes to a party that could mean at least some improvements for women.

Compared to the regressive, deficit-reduction based policies of the progressive conservatives, new Prime Minister Jean Chretien has promised to retain funding for women's advocacy organizations and front-line agencies dealing with violence against women and other issues. Chretien has also said he will remove federal immigration from the Public Security portfolio--a move that, if carried through, could mean positive changes for immigrants overall and, particularly, immigrant women and children.

It remains to be seen if the Liberals are more than just talk. As National Action Committee on the Status of Women president Sunera Thobani points out, women will have to lobby hard to make sure their voices are heard above the regressive agenda of the Reform Party--now a considerable force in the House of Commons.

In the end, it was a romp for the Liberals, who won 178 ridings (including six in BC) compared to 54 for the Bloc Quebecois--the official Opposition Party, and 52 for Preston Manning's Reform Party (including 24 in BC). The NDP was trounced, taking just eight seats (two in BC) and losing its official party status in the House of Commons (12 seats is the minimum).

For the Tories, election '93 was a laugher. The party won just two ridings and as such, also lost its official standing in the House. Not since 1945 and McKenzie King, has a Canadian prime minister lost an election and their own riding. So it was for Kim Campbell, who fell in Vancouver Centre to Liberal Hedy Fry. NDP candidate Betty Baxter placed a disappointing fourth behind Reformer Ian Isbister.

While NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin managed to hang on in the Yukon, gone are some strong NDP advocates for women from BC, including Vancouver East's Margaret Mitchell, who lost to Liberal unknown Anna Terrana. Mitchell is a long time supporter of women's, workers' and immigrants' rights. Also not returning to Ottawa is Dawn Black, who fought hard for abortion and other women's rights, but lost in New Westminster-Burnaby to Reform candidate Paul Forseth.

Joy Langan (Mission-Coquitlam) and Lynn Hunter (Saanich-Gulf Islands), who also lobbied strongly on behalf of women, are gone. Burnaby's Svend Robinson, and Nelson Riis of Kamloops, were the only NDP survivors in BC.

On the other hand, Preston Manning's Reform party did very well, missing out on official opposition status by just two seats. It appears that Manning's BC victories may have in part been due to NDP supporters voting Liberal.

So, now that we have a Liberal majority, what's in store for the women of Canada? NAC's Thobani is, for now, feeling quite positive about the outcome, which she says is a "resounding rejection of the neoconservative agenda" which was bad for women and just about everyone else.

"People did not buy into the agenda of destroying social programs and eroding social justice in the name of deficit reduction," says Thobani. "And our issues have at least been addressed by the Liberals. They have said they will fund advocacy groups, and provide more money for health care, breast cancer research, and pre-natal programs for example. Chretien has also renewed his commitment to social justice and says he supports women's equality."

Also positive is the number of women elected to the house, says Thobani, noting that the overall total is up. "So while we did lose some good NDP women, we have not lost ground and I think some of the liberal women elected will play a positive role in countering the anti-woman Reform party agenda. "It's clear that Reform will try to push the Liberals to the right so they must stand up to reform."

But, she adds, much will depend on Chretien's cabinet choices. "He has a lot of women to choose from and if he makes good choices, we could see some changes for women. The Tory record was so bad that this is a time for us to work for some gains."

Thobani says she hopes the Liberals will also keep their promises with regard to immigration policies, including removing immigration from the Public Security portfolio. "In Ontario, many of the liberal ridings that won are multi racial and multi-ethnic. That has made a difference."

NAC will do its part by lobbying the Liberals to deliver on election promises and make changes in other areas. For example, she says, Chretien's job creation plan needs work because road building and other infrastructure jobs don't represent jobs for women.

And, she says, the proposed childcare program is tied to a three percent growth in the economy--the only liberal policy conditional on economic growth. "Good care for children enables mothers to work. Poverty of women and children rose enormously under the Tories."

Linda Marcotte of End Legislated poverty predicts that very little, if anything, will change for low income and poor people under the Liberals, who she calls "Tories with kind faces."

"It will still be the privileged who benefit the most," says Marcotte, adding that just like the conservatives, the Liberals also have strong ties to big business, which will continue to have a strong influence on the political process. Nor is she confident that the Liberals will be able to effectively counter the Reform party's right-wing presence in the House. The Liberals, she says, are often "wishy-washy" and easily swayed.

Commenting on the job creation scheme, Marcotte says while it's well and good to build roads and create short term jobs, "What we really need are permanent, higher paying jobs and that means reversing the trend of government downsizing and instead putting more money into health, education and welfare. For the last 15 years, there have been nothing but cuts to these areas, which has not only meant bad services, but the loss of thousands of jobs. The trend is to listen to big business interests and reversing that would make for big changes, but I don't think the Liberals are going to do that."

Describing the loss of BC MPs like Margaret Mitchell and Dawn Black as "sad," Marcotte says the federal NDP's stand on the referendum and provincial NDP policies, had much to do with the party's disastrous federal showing. "The NDP has lost touch with the people. The party's base is working people, low income people, environmentalists, and unions. They feel alienated and that is something the party needs to look at."

Like NAC President Thobani, NAC BC rep Jackie Larkin is somewhat positive about the Liberal majority, because compared to the Tories, the party is at least more open to women's issues and concerns and has said it will continue funding women's advocacy and other organizations. "I think that will give energy to the fight because under the Tories, there wasn't much point, says Larkin. "I also think the strength of the Reform Party in the west will give energy to our fight and could prompt a closer examination of the NDP's base of support."

But she also sees problems with the job creation scheme, which she says won't do much for women. Larkin doesn't think the Liberals will challenge NAFTA and believes a national childcare program is iffy because of the economic growth qualifier.

Larkin agrees that the NDP's poor showing is connected to its position on the referendum, which she believes resulted in the party missing an opportunity to take a strong stand on women, Quebec and Native Rights. And, she says, disillusionment with provincial NDP policies have really hurt. "You can't say you're a social democrat and then not follow through."

Madeleine Parent on the Bloc Quebecois

by Dolores Fitzgerald

Madeleine Parent, a long time Quebecoise feminist and labour activist, believes Quebec's rejection of the Tories and its strong endorsement of Lucien Bouchard's Bloc Quebecois (BQ) could mean that the women's and progressive movements in Quebec "will have a real voice in parliament."

Parent says that prior to the election, the Quebec women's movement mounted a non-partisan coalition campaign to press all parties, especially the BQ, to support women's issues and social programs. Post-election, Parent says she is hopeful that women's groups, working in coalition with various democratic organizations and unions, will continue to pressure the Bloc.

"The women's movement in Quebec is in better condition than it ever has been to work as a coalition to hold the BQ to its promises," says Parent. "We've come out of the election campaign significantly strengthened and we [have been offered] the challenge to hold the BQ accountable."

The election saw the BQ take 54 seats and become Canada's official opposition party. The Liberals won 19 seats in Quebec, with the Tories only able to keep leadership-contender Jean Charest's seat. Nine BQ women candidates were successful.

Parent is not overly enthusiastic about the BQ's women MPs, but she believes the social democratic ideals of many of the Bloc MPs will benefit women and progressives generally. She notes that women's groups will have to educate the BQ on issues such as pay and employment equity.

According to Parent, the BQ's sweep of Quebec was the result of two major factors: "...strong suuport of for sovereignty, and a strong desire to wash away the Tories".

In the next 12-14 months, both the BQ and the Liberals have to be concerned about damaging their provincial counterparts' chances in Quebec's upcoming provincial election in 1994. While Quebec sovereignty will be an election issue, so will social programs, which are strongly supported by the Quebec electorate.

Failure by the BQ, as official opposition, to hold the Liberal majority to their promise to protect social programs would damage the chances of the PartiQuebecois of coming to office. And failure by the Liberals to maintain social programs would severely undermine the chances of the provincial Liberals.

Parent sees the Reform's Party's success in the West as "very unfortunate" and believes Reform has "made inroads on [Quebec's] backs through a racist call to oppose Quebec."

NDP wipe out—what happened?

Thirty-three of the 44 New Democratic seats in parliament went down to defeat in the 1993 federal election. It's a result which, while long predicted, is still sobering.

In Ontario, for the first time since the NDP was formed in 1961, no NDP candidates were elected. In BC, the party returned only two members, losing long-time MP Margaret Mitchell and the party's women's critic, Dawn Black. What happened?

According to Judy Rebick, a member of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women executive, "...people stopped seeing the NDP as a real alternative when [the NDP] joined with the Tories to support the Charlottetown Accord. And in the case of the Ontario NDP's Social Contract and the BC government's stand on Clayoquot Sound, Audrey McLaughlin didn't differentiate between the federal and provincial party positions and lost further support."

Rebick's analysis is backed up by BC feminists, some of whom won't publicly comment due to fears of a potential negative impact on provincial funding. One says, "The referendum on the Charlottetown Accord was the first time that people really saw that the federal party was no different from the other parties. The NDP's base in progressive movements had started to erode. In BC, Clayoquot Sound was the cherry on the cake."

Another BC activist believes the NDP's fate was sealed by such events. "It would not have mattered what they did, they were going to lose big...it will be very difficult to get the NDP powers-that-be to understand this."

Quebecoise feminist Madeleine Parent believes the federal party's fatal mistake was Audrey McLaughlin's dismissal of federal MP Stephen Langan as the party's finance critic after Langan criticised NDP Ontario Premier Bob Rae's Social Contract legislation. Says Parent: "The NDP has never been clear on what its role is and what its relationship should be to the provincial NDP parties, which are often to the right of the federal party."

According to Rebick, the women's movement's relationship with the NDP "... has always been fraught. The NDP has never been an adequate parliamentary opposition although it has had the best positions on women's issues.

"Once again, it's time for the NDP to do some soul searching," says Rebick. "We have never seen them do a 'balance sheet' where they take a real look at their mistakes. They always seem to just make some excuse. If this loss means such an examination really happens, it may turn out to have been worthwhile."

Press Gang Printers:

The presses stop

by Agnes Huang

There were good times, there were bad times...and now there will be no more times. Vancouver-based, Press Gang Printers, the only feminist print shop in North America, is shutting its doors after 23 years.

Press Gang Printers, a feminist, worker-controlled collective, and unionized print shop, has been forced to close down because of financial problems. "Our debts just caught up to us," says Sheila Gilhooly, a former collective member who was laid off when the print shop closed. "The recession is on and times are tough. Suppliers and creditors want to get paid faster."

Over the years, the print shop has accumulated about $75,000 in debt. In October, Press Gang Printers formally closed its doors and began liquidating its assets to pay off its debts. Press Gang owes $10,000 in bank loans, $40-$50,000 to suppliers, and $15,000 in loans from individuals. Its total debt is more than the value of the company.

Press Gang Printers was not just a business, but was also an integral part of political organizing in Vancouver. "Press Gang consistently and frequently made printing donations to political causes," says Sarah Davidson, a former collective member who worked with Press Gang from 1972 to 1980.

The closing of Press Gang Printers is a devastating loss for the women's community, the lesbian community, and the progressive community, says Catherine Ludgate of West Coast Environmental Law, a client of the print shop.

Press Gang was formed in 1970 as a volunteer-run print shop, with both women and men working there. In 1974, the men left and Press Gang became a women-only collective. A highlight for the print shop was in 1987 when Press Gang became unionized by the Communications Workers of America *[for a herstory of Press Gang, see* Kinesis, *May/93.]*

In the 70s and 80s, there were a number of women's presses in Canada and the US. But by the mid-80s, San Francisco Women's Press, Storefront in Seattle, UI Press in Palo Alto, and Iowa City Women's Press had all closed down, leaving Press Gang as the last remaining feminist print shop.

The Press Gang collective also ventured into publishing in the mid-70s. As the publishing work grew, a new collective was formed within Press Gang in 1982. In 1989, Press Gang Publishers became a separate legal and financial entity. The print shop's financial difficulties do not affect the operations of the publishing company. In fact, Press Gang Publishers is thriving, with the recent publication of new books by Shani Mootoo *[see review, page 19]* and two-spirited First Nations poet, Chrystos.

Press Gang Printers has a long history of money problems, says Sarah Davidson. "Financially, Press Gang ran small losses at the end of most years, and the losses added up. The cumulative effect of the losses made it more and more difficult to pay off the debt." Last year, the print shop was on the verge of closing, but the community rallied around Press Gang and the print shop was able to stave off its demise for another year.

In order to pay back some of its debt, Press Gang is holding a garage sale in November. "Small presses and equipment, furniture, paper, and collectors' items such as posters will be for sale," says Lynn Giraud, a former collective member who worked with Press Gang for ten years *[see Bulletin Board for details]*. The proceeds from the garage sale will used to pay off the bank loan first, then the creditors.

Press Gang relied on community groups for its client base: women's groups, co-ops, lesbian and gay groups, social service agencies, political groups, unions, and community artists. While these community groups were committed to Press Gang, many were strapped for cash and had to search for cheaper printing houses because printing services were often more expensive at Press Gang.

Raine MacKay of the Vancouver Women's Health Collective, says the community Press Gang served didn't have the money to give Press Gang enough business. The Health Collective was only able to have some of its materials printed at Press Gang. "We didn't get enough money ourselves to be able to turn around and buy printing services at Press Gang."

Even Press Gang Publishers, who used to have its books printed by Press Gang Printers, has been sending their print jobs back east because Press Gang Printers is too expensive.

Ludgate is critical of community groups who used other printers. "Westcoast Environmental Law takes stuff to Press Gang to be supportive of a collective, feminist print shop, but a lot of groups don't print with Press Gang," says Ludgate.

During its 23 years, Press Gang has tried different creative solutions to help meet the bills. Benefits, such as open houses and dances, were held regularly, says Sarah Davidson. "Benefits were used partly as community events and partly to support the printing and publishing business."

While many in the women's community came out to support Press Gang at their events, the benefits were not enough to stem their growing debt.

The recession and the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) appear to have been the main culprits for Press Gang's demise. In the last four years since the FTA, a considerable number of smaller print shops have gone out of business, and even the larger shops are cutting back staff and equipment.

Many big print shops in BC began taking on the smaller jobs—jobs that shops like Press Gang used to get. "We were competing for jobs with much larger print shops because a lot of jobs they were getting before were now going out of the country," says Gilhooly.

Giraud says another reason why Press Gang Printers began to lose clients is that "the political times have also changed." When Press Gang started in 1970, many political groups, such as lesbian and gay groups, couldn't find a printer that would print their materials. Press Gang was willing to do the work with no questions asked. But now, there are fewer groups who are refused printing services.

However, Kiss and Tell Collective member Persimmon Blackbridge says that Press Gang Printers is still needed by those that challenge "the line." In 1991, when Kiss and Tell, a lesbian artists' collective, tried to print their book of lesbian erotic postcards based on their show *Drawing the Line*, most printers refused to take on the job. Press Gang offered to print the book even though its presses were not ideal for this type of printing job.

Eventually, Kiss and Tell was able to find a printer but, says Blackbridge, "this proves the saying, 'freedom of the press belongs to those who own the presses,' and that's why Press Gang is still so important."

Press Gang also got caught in the fast technological changes of the printing industry. Lack of investment capital made it very difficult for the print shop to purchase more modern presses. Says Giraud, "Our equipment is outdated, and without equipment we couldn't be competitive." To buy a press that would make Press Gang more competitive, the print shop would have had to come up with $50,000.

The focus Press Gang placed on training women also made its operations more costly, says Giraud. "Training is an expensive proposition. And because Press Gang was committed to training women, it often took longer to produce the work and used more materials."

Press Gang was a remarkable training ground for women, says Nancy Pollak, who worked at Press Gang from 1978 to 1982. "Press Gang was one of the few places where women had the opportunity to learn how to operate complex machinery," says Pollak.

"Press Gang was an important symbol for a lot of women in terms of doing non-traditional work," adds Davidson. "I think for the various women who worked at Press Gang Printers, it was a huge place of learning."

When Press Gang started, there was no place for women in trades, says Gilhooly. But now there is WITT (Women in Trades and Technologies) and "it's not such a wasteland for women in trades."

For many of the women, like Gilhooly, the closing of Press Gang Printers is painful. "Press Gang lasted 23 years, so I guess it's a success story. But it doesn't seem like a success right now."

Agnes Huang is a regular contributor to Kinesis.

Abby & Jermaine in Wonderland by Liz Clark

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BC and Yukon Association of Women's Centres:

7 centres get funding

by Fatima Jaffer

Seven additional women's organizations in BC will receive funding from the BC Ministry of Women's Equality this year, according to a Ministry announcement last month. The groups are among 11 new members of the BC & Yukon Association of Women's Centres (BC&Y), a loose coalition of 41 largely geographically based organizations.

To qualify for operational funding from the Ministry, groups have to be members of the BC&Y. The government established the criteria in April 1992, when they reinstated core funding to 28 women's groups *[see* Kinesis, *Apr/92]*. Other criteria are: groups have to be non-profit, community based, primarily serving women, and registered under the BC Societies Act.

The seven organizations, at least three of which are not yet established centres, will receive six-month contracts worth $17,500, and an additional $10,000 in start-up monies. If they qualify for funding next April, they will be eligible for annual core funding of $37,500, the amount allocated to the 28 centres already being funded by the Ministry.

Centres with new funding are: the Boundary Women's Coalition in Grand Forks; the Philippine Women's Centre in Vancouver; SAWAN (the South Asian Women's Action Network) in Vancouver; the Sunshine Coast Women's Resource Society in Sechelt; the Vancouver Lesbian Connection; the Vancouver Women's Health Collective; and the West Coast Women's Resource Centre in Ucluelet.

"It's good news for women in BC," says Jennifer Johnstone of the Vancouver Status of Women and a former member of the BC&Y steering committee. "Women in BC&Y worked hard last year to increase the number of member centres, and to lobby for additional funding."

Johnstone says the news is particularly good for groups that have been struggling to establish a centre for a long time, like SAWAN.

A week before the announcement of the funding, a UI-top-up grant worker, Shamsher Pannun, was hired by the Vancouver Status of Women to assist the SAWAN collective in opening BC's first South Asian women's centre.

"It's perfect timing," says Pannun, referring to the announcement of the funding. "South Asian women have not had access to information about what our legal rights are, about where to go or where to phone to get services in a language other than English and in a place other than a mainstream agency, and so on."

Pannun adds that "young South Asian women especially have not had a place that is anti-homophobic, anti-caste/classist and that meets the various needs of women of different South Asian backgrounds."

She says consultation with South Asian women's groups in BC, Montreal, Toronto and New York have begun, all-day planning meetings have been scheduled, and the search for a centre in East or South Vancouver is underway.

Hannah Heidikein of the Sunshine Coast Women's Resource Society says the funding from the Ministry means the end of a long wait for women in the Sunshine Coast. "Women have been attempting to get a centre together in the Sunshine Coast for about 15 years."

Heidikein says the society has held a number of networking and outreach events over the years and has a mailing list of about 300 women.

Sunshine Coast received initiative funding for communities from the provincial government three years ago to determine the need for a women's centre. Heidikein says 87 percent of the women surveyed supported the project. Sunshine Coast has already formed a committee to hire a coordinator and plans to open a centre within the next six months.

<subhead>But not funding for all

Four of the 11 new members of BC&Y did not receive funding from the Ministry, namely Maple Ridge, Hundred-Mile House, Parksville, and Women Aloud in Surrey.

Joan Cowderoy of the Ministry of Women's Equality Grants Branch says, since the Ministry did not have enough monies to fund all the new BC&Y centres, it set priorities for funding.

Cowderoy says, Sunshine Coast, the Boundary Women's Coalition, and the West Coast Women's Resource Centre were funded "to get the dollars out to women in rural areas that have been underfunded and underserved for a long time."

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective's funding came from a joint arrangement between the ministries of Women's Equality and of Health. The monies will be administered by the Women's Equality's Grants Program.

Cowderoy says, funding SAWAN, the Philippine Women's Centre and the Vancouver Lesbian Connection allowed the Ministry to meet its goal of "providing some support for groups working with women who face additional barriers in society."

One of the Ministry's criteria, that groups be members of the BC&Y, has been criticized for excluding women's groups that haven't joined or choose not to join the BC&Y. In particular, there are no Aboriginal women's groups who are members of the BC&Y, and the only two women of colour groups in the BC&Y have just recently become members.

Cowderoy admits that the Ministry has received feedback from the BC&Y member groups saying that the membership criteria should also be dropped because of the additional pressure that the criteria has put on the association.

Cowderoy says it will keep membership in the BC&Y as a criteria this year, but that the Ministry will review the criteria for funding over the next year in consultation with the BC&Y and other women's centres. Cowderoy says she also plans to meet with Aboriginal women's organizations to look into the issue of funding their centres.

<subhead> BC&Y AGM - Part Two

The Ministry's announcement of new funding last month coincided with the BC&Y's second attempt to have an annual general meeting this year. The first attempt, last May, never got off the ground. According to the May AGM attendees, the BC&Y ran aground for a number of reasons. Representatives from women's centres were unable to agree on a definition of feminism; held conflicting political visions of the role of the BC&Y; and were unprepared to address strategies around funding, anti-racism training, and lobbying. Following the AGM, the Steering Committee members resigned. *[see* Kinesis, *Jul/Aug, 1993]*.

The following is reconstructed from the October AGM documents. Some members of the BC&Y agreed to talk with *Kinesis* on condition they not be quoted or named.

About 60 representatives of women's groups attended the three-day AGM in Richmond last month. This time the AGM business was completed, but there was still little substantial discussion and many of the contentious issues raised in May remain unresolved.

Concerns by members of the BC&Y around the membership requirement for funding were not dealt with at the AGM. A resolution proposing that membership in the BC&Y not be used as a criteria for funding or as the definition of a "women's centre" was tabled for next year's AGM. The resolution calls on the Ministry to adopt the BC&Y's definition of a "women's centre" instead. However, last year, members had found that the BC&Y's definition was too broad and, in particular, lacked a definition of the word "feminism." Since the resolution was tabled, no discussion of the word "feminism" was held.

The BC&Y decided to leave consultations with the Ministry of Women's Equality over changes to the funding criteria in the hands of the Association's Government Liaison/Negotiation Committee. But as issues around the funding criteria didn't get addressed at the AGM, the ability of the Committee to lobby around funding and revision of criteria is limited.

As well, lobbying priorities for the upcoming year were not identified. Proposed committees on Finance to look at federal and provincial lobbying, and on Lobbying on political issues were tabled for the next AGM.

However, women at the AGM brainstormed on general priorities for the organization. Top priorities are to continue addressing racism and homophobia in member centres through the Training Strategies Committee, and networking between women's centres. Other priorities will be discussed at the BC&Y's coordinating collective meeting later this month and a game plan will be developed.

An anti-racism policy was adopted which includes requiring the BC&Y member groups to seek anti-racism education for all staff and volunteers, and to develop and implement affirmative action policies and procedures.

The most interesting developments of the AGM appear to be the creation of the women of colour and First Nations women and the anti-homophobia committees.

The former, proposed by the women of colour caucus at the AGM, will look at policies and procedures of the BC&Y and ensure that the voices of women of colour and First Nations women are being heard. The committee plans to facilitate networking in BC among women of colour and First Nations women staff, volunteers and clients of BC&Y member groups. They also plan to implement "affirmative action" to ensure at least one woman of colour and/or First Nations woman staff member or volunteer from each member group attend the AGM next year.

The structure of the BC&Y was changed from a coordinating collective consisting of a five-member steering committee with 9 regional representatives, to a coordinating collective made up of 19 women. Essentially, the changes include the addition of one more representative from the Vancouver Island region, and the replacement of the three co-chairs by six members-at-large.

photo by Lynne Wanyski

"Hey hey, ho ho, sex selection has got to go"

Over 250 people, mostly South Asian, marched through the Punjabi market in Vancouver on October 2 to protest the targeting of the South Asian community by an American doctor promoting racist and sexist fetal sex determination services. The rally was organized by the Coalition of South Asian Women's Groups Against Sex Selection to support their boycott of four South Asian newspapers who refused to permanently remove Dr. John Stephens' ad *[see* Kinesis, *Oct/93]*.

The march wound up on a field outside Sunset Community Centre, where members of the Coalition and other community groups spoke to the assembled crowd. Speakers included: the South Asian Women's Action Network), India Mahila Association, the Punjabi Women's Association, the Vancouver Status of Women, Woman to Woman Global Strategies, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

Since the demonstration, two of the newspapers, *The Link* and *The Indo-Canadian Times*, have told their advertisers they will stop running the offensive ad. Confirmation of this has still not been received by the Coalition.

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 and may be edited for length. Deadline is the 18th of the month preceding publication.

by Anita Fast

Counting women in BC

The Ministry of Women's Equality has released a statistical profile of women in British Columbia called *Women Count*.

Intended as a reference for government ministries, women's groups, community organizations, and the general public, the document is billed as including "a demographic overview of women in British Columbia as well as details of the specific conditions that limit women's opportunities and choices—in their homes, in their workplaces and their communities."

Women Count statistics have been gathered from several sources. Primary sources are: Statistics Canada 1991 Census profiles; *Gender-Equity in Post-Secondary Education 1992* by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology; and BC Stats, Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations' *Family Status of Working Women*. Examples of statistics are: women make up 50.5 percent of the population of BC, five percent of whom are Aboriginal women, 16 percent are women with disabilities—stats on women of colour are listed as "not available at the time of this printing"; women continue to earn less than men in all occupations, even those in which they dominate; 60 percent of BC women participate in the paid labour force; 70 percent of mothers with children living at home participate in the labour force; 28 percent of women work part-time, compared with 10 percent of men; and 62 percent of women in BC work in clerical, service and sales jobs.

To receive copies of this publication, contact: Ministry of Women's Equality, Policy, Planning and Evaluation Division, 2nd Floor, 756 Fort Street, Victoria, British Columbia, V8V 1X4. Phone 953-4532; Fax 953-4529.

UN World Conference on women part IV

Gertrude Mongella of the United Republic of Tanzania has been appointed Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The conference, which takes place in Beijing, China in September 1995, has a mandate of defining a platform of action for the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women to break down obstacles to the advancement of the majority of women in the world.

At the time of her appointment, Mongella was Tanzania's High Commissioner to India. Previously she was Tanzania's Minister of State responsible for Women's Affairs. Mongella participated at the Third UN Women's World Conference in Nairobi ten years ago. She has since represented her country at numerous international meetings and conferences, particularly on issues relating to women and the environment.

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Forming a Canadian grassroots network

Women in Ontario and British Columbia are planning to form a Canadian grassroots network of women of low income and their allies.

The proposal originated at the National Congress of Neighbourhood Women Institute conference in the US last August, there, four Canadian women met with women from the US and Mexico who are part of the North American Region of GROOTS (Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood).

GROOTS, first organized by women at the 1985 Women's World Conference and Non-Governmental Organization forum in Nairobi, is made up of women from 16 countries in seven regions of the world: Africa, South Asia, Caribbean, South Pacific, Central and South America, Europe, and North America.

GROOTS is intended to create links among women at the grassroots level, provide a forum for grassroots women leaders speaking out on international issues, and to support attendance and participation in the Fourth UN Women's World Conference in Beijing in 1995.

The proposed Canadian network of grassroots women and women's groups is intended to bring forward the voices of Canadian women of low-income, to help clarify the issues and priorities of grassroots women in Canada, and to prepare them for participation in a national meeting as well as the 1995 Women's World Conference.

If you are interested in joining GROOTS Canada in developing and planning a Canadian grassroots women's network, or would like information about GROOTS, or Canadian events, call Marnie Tamaki at (604) 682-6679, or write to: GROOTS BC, 314 Powell Street, Vancouver, BC, V6A 1G4.

Learning resource society closes

Learning Resources, a Vancouver-based non-profit society, closed its offices last month due to a lack of financial and human resources. With its closure, Creative Career Choices for Women, a program assisting women in making informed career choices, also ended, creating yet another gap in services for women seeking to make satisfying changes in their career or find more fulfilling work.

Recent projects by Learning Resources include: a video entitled *The Cinderella Myth*, which addresses the issue of preparing younger women for the realities of the work world; the comic book, *Summer Love*; and the book, *Jobstories: I Like the Work; I Like the Pay*, which provides information to both the adult worker and the woman preparing to re-enter the job market.

Learning Resources also provided programs such as Nowskills, which trained and placed women in non-traditional fields of employment. Their Job Seekers' Network program and Women's Career Choices offered affordable employment counselling to women. The group has also been involved with advocacy groups concerned about improving employment and training opportunities for women.

Learning Resources asks that they be removed from routine mailing lists. Any mail sent to the society will be forwarded to a Board member until further notice.

Twenty-five years of health publishing

The Montreal Health Press is celebrating 25 years of feminist publishing. The Health Press began publishing in 1968 with the *Birth Control Handbook* at a time when it was illegal to give out information of birth control. It became a feminist collective in 1972 and went on to produce and distribute three other works on health and sexuality: the *VD Handbook* (1972), *Sexual Assault (1979), and A Book About Menopause* (1988). French and English manuals have been distributed to clinics, hospitals women's groups, universities and high schools across North America.

In honour of its 25 years of publishing, the Montreal Health Press has issued revised editions of three of its books: the *STD Handbook, les MTS*, and *L'agression sexuelle*.

For more information, contact the Montreal Health Press, Inc. CP 1000, Station Place du Parc, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2W 2N1.

Books by Women's Media Circle

The Women's Media Circle in Manila has recently released two books. *Who Calls The Shots?* carries the proceedings of the First International Conference on Women, Media and Advertising, and *Sisterhood is Global: Dialogues in the Philippines*, examines the status and role of Filipina women after Corazon Aquino took over as President.

The Women's Media Circle in the Philippines was established in 1985 and provides radio and television programs by and about women, as well as public service notices and educational materials. It is also an advocacy group against pornography, stereotyping of gender roles, and domestic violence, and works for women's health and environmental awareness.

Who Calls the Shots? is edited by journalist and feminist Rosario A. Garcellano. In 200 pages of text and photos, the publication compiles the papers, presentations, group discussions and workshops of the five-day 1991 women's media conference in a readable format. Included are the uncensored proceedings of more than 150 broadcasters, television producers, media executives and journalists from African countries, the Americas, the Asia Pacific Region and Europe who share experiences, identify specific problems related to women and the media, and propose concrete resolutions.

Participants included Makhosazama Xaba, Donna Allen, Ludmila Enuitina, Inge von Bonninghausen, Margaret Gallagher, Selina Chow, Malou Mangahas, Teresa Monteiro Otondo, among others.

The second book concerns the exchange of ideas, ideologies and experiences between Filipina women and the members of the Sisterhood is Global Institute's Asia-Pacific Task Force on Women on a two-week mission in 1988. Task Force members Robin Morgan of the US, Marilyn Waring of New Zealand, Mahnaz Afkhami of Iran, Keiko Higuchi of Japan, and Madhu Kishwar of India meet Filipina women leaders, activists from the Women's Media Circle, Gabriela, Pilipina, Kalayaan, KaBaPa, Mt. Banahaw, the Concerned Artists of the Philippines-Women's Desk, Cordillera Women's Center, Women in Nation-Building, and many more.

To order copies, write: The Women's Media Circle Foundation Inc. 96 Maningning St. Teacher's Village, Quezon City, Philippines 1101, or call (632) 921-2222.

Anita Fast is a first time volunteer writer for Kinesis.

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WHAT'S NEWS

by Mariam Bouchoutrouch

Clayoquot Sound update

Although MacMillan Bloedel (Mac-Blo) has been convicted of over 25 offences in the past three years for logging violations, it is the logging protesters at Clayoquot Sound who will be serving jail terms this fall.

In what Friends of the Clayoquot (FOC) spokesperson Tzeporah Berman is calling "an outrageous decision," the first few of over 750 protesters arrested during the summer blockade of a logging road in the Sound were sentenced in October to 45-60 days in jail and fines of $1,500-3,000.

The typical sentence for this type of action is community service and/or a fine of not more than $700, although some second offenders have received 20-to-30-day jail terms.

"You'd think the government would be able to see that, if 750 people are willing to get arrested and more are getting arrested each day, then this is probably a good indication of what the public is thinking," says FOC spokesperson, Bonny Glambeck.

After railroading the first group of 45 protesters through in a mass trial, without giving them enough time to prepare a defense, BC Supreme Court justice, John Bouck convicted a second group of 22 protesters on charges of criminal contempt of court and sentenced them to 21 days in jail with fines ranging from $500 to $1,000.

Glambeck says, "Usually you have about a year before the trial to get a lawyer and prepare a defense. Essentially, [the protesters] weren't able to prepare a defense."

In his judgement, Bouck said the tough sentences are intended to "dissuade others, who appear to have the idea that first-time offenders will be treated lightly."

Says Berman, "It's clear that the judiciary is trying to intimidate people from [carrying out] further protest." She adds that the court is merely supporting the provincial government's position on the anti-clearcut logging blockade. The blockade was set up on July 5 by FOC to protest an April decision by the BC New Democratic government to allow logging in 63 percent of Clayoquot Sound.

FOC is currently fund-raising for the Clayoquot Defense Fund, to help support a First Nations application for an injunction against logging. The First Nations injunction is expected next month, and is intended to stop Mac-Blo from logging until a decision has been made on the First Nations' claims to the land. The Tla-o-qui-aht, Hesquiat, Ahousahat, Toquaht and Ucluelet peoples have never ceded the title to the Clayoquot region and were neither informed nor consulted in the decision to allow Mac-Blo to clearcut.

A protest is being held every Monday at noon in front of Mac-Blo's offices in downtown Vancouver. Other actions are also being planned. For more information, call FOC at (604) 725-4218.

by Lissa Geller

Morgentaler sues Nova Scotia gov't

Well-known abortion rights advocate Dr. Henry Morgentaler has filed a lawsuit against former top Nova Scotian legislators. The suit follows the unanimous ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada that struck down the provincial law enacted to keep Morgentaler and others from opening free-standing abortion clinics in the province.

The law, which imposed heavy fines for doctors performing abortions outside of hospitals, was struck down as unconstitutional in October. The court found that the provincial government does not have the right to legislate in the area of abortion rights and had overstepped its constitutional jurisdiction.

The court also found that the law "was intended more to keep Morgentaler out of the province than to protect the health and safety of women or prevent the emergence of a two-tiered medical system." According to Morgentaler, the ruling supports his claim that former Nova Scotia premier John Buchanan created the law strictly as a "fraudulent and dishonest way to keep [him] out of Nova Scotia."

"The government should be taught a lesson so that other provincial governments will not feel they can do anything they like simply because they don't like a cause or a person," says Morgentaler of his lawsuit.

The suit names former Nova Scotia premier John Buchanan, former attorney general Thomas McInnis and former health minister David Nantes, and alleges grounds of malicious prosecution. Morgentaler was charged with 14 counts of performing an abortion outside of a hospital in 1989.

The current Liberal government in Nova Scotia has issued a statement that no further legislation regarding abortions will be forthcoming from the health ministry and that abortions performed outside of hospitals will now be covered under Medicare.

Defense campaign for women prisoners

The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) is calling on the federal government to review *en bloc* the cases of 15 women currently serving time for killing their abusive spouses.

This call cites the landmark Supreme Court decision in 1990 which found a woman innocent of murder after killing her spouse following years of physical and emotional abuse. In the case known as Lavallee, the court ruled that, when a woman is charged with the killing of her mate, evidence of his prior abuse and the effects of long-term abuse on her may be heard, where such information shows she acted in self-defense.

The decision has obvious ramifications for other women convicted of killing abusive mates, and CAEFS has identified 15 women across Canada who would qualify to have their case appealed using the Lavallee judgement.

Despite the ruling, the ministry of justice is refusing to allow the women's cases to be heard *en bloc* and is insisting that the women pursue their cases individually.

But CAEFS spokesperson Kim Pate says an individual review will not provide the women with appropriate justice. "Crown Attorneys and judges are using a rigid, stereotyped understanding of who is a battered woman," says Pate. "Women who are assertive, who have been violent themselves, or who have criminal records have been unable to qualify for self-defense."

This narrow interpretation of "battered women" has had a particularly harsh impact on First Nations women and women of colour, whose lives and behaviour are judged through a racist *and* sexist lens.

As well, some crown attorneys and police are focusing on the women's failure to resolve their problems non-violently, rather than locating the problem on the shoulders of violent men and on the inadequate response of the justice system to violence against women and children.

And Pate points out that some of the women had already exhausted the appeal process prior to the Lavallee decision, or had lawyers enter guilty pleas on their behalf and who are therefore not eligible for further appeals. This means they cannot use the progressive judgement in Lavallee to fight for their rights individually.

CAEFS is calling on women's groups across the country to support the call for an *en bloc* review of these cases. For more information, or to participate in the E Fry postcard campaign, contact your local Elizabeth Fry Society, or Kim Pate at (613) 238-2422 or fax (613) 232-7130.

Implants fund not a boon

Canadian women have little to look forward to if a proposed $4.75 billion US fund is set up to help women harmed by silicone breast implants, says Joanne Tomlin, a BC woman who became ill after receiving implants. Between 100,000 and 200,000 Canadian women received implants from 1969 until 1992, when a moratorium on breast implants was imposed because of health risks.

The fund was proposed as a global settlement to thousands of lawsuits against manufacturers of implants. Lawsuit defendants include US-based Dow Corning Inc., the leading manufacturer of silicone breast implants. Findings have shown that the implants have lead to severe medical problems including pain, rejection, and cancerous growths.

If the fund is approved, it would allow women to make claims against Dow Corning and other defendants, and receive settlements from the fund. Similar funds have been used to settle claims against the makers of the intrauterine device known as the Dalkon Shield, which led to severe complications, including death, during the 1980s.

Tomlin says the fund would largely benefit women in the US at the expense of other women in the world. "It looks as if $200,000 would go to every sick American woman when they put in claims...Women in Canada (would get) $5,000 to $10,000 tops," she says.

Deborah Acheson, a Victoria lawyer representing about 50 Canadian women, also pointed out that Australian and New Zealand lawyers have pulled all their clients out of the litigation because it is so biased in favour of American women.

Acheson is encouraging the BC government to pass legislation that would allow women in the province to launch a separate class-action suit against Dow Corning. Similar legislation was enacted in Ontario and has allowed women to pursue claims against the company.

The BC Attorney General's office is currently reviewing the request.

Pro-lesbian law in New Zealand

Lesbians, bisexuals and gays are among several groups celebrating the passing of an anti-discrimination bill in the New Zealand legislature. The bill, which was passed this summer, outlaws discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, disability, family status, age, political opinion and employment status.

Lesbians, gays and bisexuals are now able to complain to the Human Rights Commission if they feel they have been discriminated against. If their case is substantiated, it will be sent to mediation or a judicial body for review and judgement. According to Juliet Jaques of the Tamaki Makaurau newsletter, the bill has major implications for the legal rights of lesbians in New Zealand.

"Most people respect the law even if they don't agree with it. Perception of what's okay is influenced by whether it's legal," she said. "Many people will be persuaded [to act fairly] without going to the Commission."

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Election reaction:

Sounding off, liberally

as told to Nancy Pollak

The morning after the election, Kinesis *got on the blower to ask women from various sector for their reaction.*

· **Child Care:** *Rita Chudnovsky is a Vancouver-based child care advocate.* "The Liberals at least have a positive agenda that acknowledges the value of a publicly-funded, national child care program. [The Liberal platform calls for the creation of 50,000 spaces following each year of three percent economic growth, up to a maximum of 150,000 spaces.] But their agenda is modest, and the way they have tied it to economic growth represents a fundamental misunderstanding of child care. We see child care as a key tool in economic recovery, not as a luxury we can only afford if there is an economic recovery. Women continue to identify the lack of child care as the key barrier to going to school and getting a decent job--it's an economic issue. Our challenge as advocates is to convince the Liberals that child care is as important a piece of the infrastructure as roads and sewers.

"Generally, we have concerns about the Reform Party members being racist. This could mean adverse policies for Aboriginal people. And the Bloc Quebecois always seems to forget the Aboriginal people."
-Barbara Weiss

"Other aspects of the Liberal platform also concern us. They're calling for 40/40 percent cost-sharing with the provinces, plus a 20 percent user fee. They want a mixed system--some not-for-profit and some for-profit care. These issues need addressing, but the bare bones are there."

· **Labour:** *Barb Byers is president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour.* "We need to hold the Liberals to their promise of jobs, but the type of jobs is key. During the election, they talked about creating traditional male jobs and nobody ever corrected them on that vision. We need to re-frame [their] thinking.

"For example, a national child care program is not simply [beneficial] to working mothers, it would also create employment opportunities for women. And jobs in a child care system are long-term, not temporary.

"We need to analyze why so many people voted Reform. Canadians have long traditions and beliefs about equality issues--have they really taken a massive turn to the right? With the Reform in parliament, we'll have a chance to see if people really like their policies. People were discouraged with how government operated and the election was a message to all parties. The Conservatives are responsible for the cynicism--the idea that it didn't matter who you elected--and they got the largest punishment. Hopefully, Canadians won't be punished, too.

"It's very sad the NDP lost so many seats, since they are the party that puts forward equality issues. It's also important that Audrey McLaughlin won her own seat--it shows her willingness to go out and connect with the real grassroots. The NDP needs to re-build and reflect, over a long time. The problem wasn't with their program, which is good, but with people's cynicism."

· **First Nations Women:** *Barbara Weiss is with the BC Native Women's Society.* "It's too early to tell how Aboriginal women will be affected by this new government. While he was campaigning, Jean Chretien said he was willing to meet with Aboriginal people. We're hoping for a more sympathetic ear than from the Tories, who refused to listen to First Nations women [during the constitutional talks]. But it means starting the lobbying process all over again.

"Generally, we have concerns about the Reform Party members being racist. This could mean adverse policies for Aboriginal people. And the Bloc Quebecois always seems to forget the Aboriginal people. They believe the Quebecoise are the founders of Quebec, with no mention of the Aboriginal people who were there for thousands of years before."

· **Abortion:** *Hilda Thomas is a pro-choice activist and a founding member of the Every Women's Health Centre in Vancouver.* "If there are enough Liberal women, the [abortion rights] situation may not [fare] too badly. But there is also a solid, hard-line anti-choice block in the Liberal caucus, including many powerful members [like John Nunziata]. Jean Chretien supports the move to make private members' bills easier to bring to the House. These anti-choice Liberals could make a move to bring in a bill to re-criminalize abortion.

"Then there's the Reform Party, who are absolutely anti-choice and are determined to do away with the Canada Health Act. This would be a total disaster. The CHA guarantees the right to universal health care in every province. Without it, provinces could de-schedule [stop paying for] any medical procedure they wanted to. We saw how [former BC premier] Vander Zalm tried to do that to abortion in 1988--he lost on a technicality. And Morgentaler wouldn't have won his recent case in Nova Scotia if it hadn't been for the Canada Heath Act. Many provinces would be vulnerable without the protection of the Act."

· **Lesbian Rights:** *barbara findlay is a Vancouver lawyer and activist in the lesbian and gay rights movement.* "What we're looking for from the new government is amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act that clarify the partnership rights of lesbians and gay men--including financial and non-financial rights, custody and adoption rights, sponsoring a same-sex partner for immigration, etc. In civil rights terms, this is what we need to push for. But it's hard to predict what the Liberal majority will do, for two reasons: The party has no official policy on lesbian and gay rights, and Jean Chretien opposed the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms [in the early 1980s].

"Personally, I heaved a sigh of relief that the Bloc Quebecois is the official opposition. If it was the Reform Party, the pull to the right and, in particular, their approach to lesbians and gays would be horrifying. The Reform Party has no official policy, but it is a party of Christian fundamentalists who believe that homosexuality is a sin that should perhaps be criminalized."

"The loss of the NDP is grim. The combination of losing the left and the rise of the right means we're in deep trouble. The women's movement needs to be strong to make these guys live up to any promises."
-Bonnie Agnew

· **Free Trade:** *Ellen Woodsworth is with Women-to-Women Global Strategies in Vancouver.* "Essentially, there is no difference between the Liberals and the Tories on free trade. The Liberals might be more amenable to environmental protections being included in the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA], and they feel different pressures [than the Tories] because their corporate base is more national. But the Liberals won't stop anything--in fact, they want to expand free trade to include Asia. And the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois will do nothing to stop NAFTA.

"The Liberals will probably go along with [US president] Clinton's latest position, which is to pass NAFTA now and re-negotiate it in three years. That is what Clinton is offering [his opponents] in order to get NAFTA through Congress on November 18th.

"With NAFTA, we'll see hundreds of thousands more jobs going south. This is big trouble for women, who will be further pushed into doing unpaid work in the home. Liberal job creation schemes are obviously jobs for men, not for women. At no point have the Liberals commited themselves to undoing the damage the Tories did to job training for women and to social programs in general. So the Liberals' economic policies will push women back into unpaid work, and the Reform Party will provide the moral rationale for why women should be there."

· **Violence Against Women:** *Bonnie Agnew is with Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter.* "The Liberals promised to increase funding for [anti-violence] programs, but that doesn't necessarily mean much--it could be 5 cents worth. Hedy Fry [the MP from Vancouver Centre] has promised to fight for direct federal funding for transition houses, rape crisis centres and services for battered women and children. [Currently, only Quebec receives direct federal funding.] She claims to have Jean Chretien's ear, but isn't that always where women are--at the man's ear?

"What we want is for the violence against women programs to be removed from the Health and Welfare and Justice ministries, and put under the auspices of the Status of Women, and the Secretary of State Women's Programs. Under the Tories, these offices have been [virtually] dismantled.

"The loss of the NDP is grim. The combination of losing the left and the rise of the right means we're in deep trouble. The women's movement needs to be strong to make these guys live up to any promises. But now we need to be even louder, because the elimination of the left from parliament means our voices are the only accountability that will work. All progressive movements will have to work extra hard."

Reaction From the Atlantic Provinces

by Dolores Fitzgerald

Federal election history was made in St John's last night as two traditional Progressive Conservative seats were won by Liberal women candidates. The victories mark the first time women have won federal seats in Newfoundland. (Presumably the victory would be all the sweeter for Jean Payne who took St John's East, a seat most recently held by the Tory's notorious sexist John Crosbie.) The new Liberal women MP's level of support for women's issues is unknown. According to Michelle Skinner, Newfoundland/Labrador's regional representative for NAC and a member of the Bay St George Coalition to End Violence, women are feeling "... very positive about the defeat of the Tory government. The Tory defeat clearly indicates Canadians believe Tory policies are bad for [them]. We only hope the Tory defeat sends a message to the Liberals that they had better not try to run in Tory shoes."

The Liberals won 31 of the 32 seats in the Atlantic provinces. New Brunswick, however, returned a single Progressive Conservative MP, Elsie Wayne, a St. John mayor.

Skinner notes that, although the Reform Party had not made an impact on Newfoundland ridings, women are concerned about the Reform Party's success in the West.

"We are well aware of Reform's extreme right wing agenda and are worried about the impact they will have on parliament and the other political parties, particularly with regard to their support for the corporate agenda. We know they are a sexist, racist and homophobic movement."

Valarie Killfoil, of the New Brunswick Coalition of Women's Groups and NAC's provincial representative, also calls the Liberal majority win "...beneficial to women in the Maritimes." She points out that the federal Liberals should be able to work well with Liberal governments in Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

"If the Liberals come through on promises such as infrastructure improvements, there will be an overall benefit to the area," says Killfoil. "Unfortunately when ideas for stimulating the economy are only focused on highway construction and sewer repair, you don't provide any direct way to get women back to work and that is a big problem since so many women in the region are unemployed or working at very underpaid jobs."

Killfoil hopes Chretian will stand by his promise to protect social programs, which have been devastated by Frank McKenna's deficit-cutting provincial Liberal government. "McKenna has cut everything here. He even cut funding to New Brunswick's only rape cris centre. Our only hope is that some of Chretien's promise to maintain social programs will trickle down to McKenna."

Killfoil says the NDP might have been poised to make a breakthrough in New Brunswick this election, but that that hope was dashed by Ontario NDP government attacks on public sector workers which "blew away all of Bob Rae's and the NDP's creditability."

Interview with NAC's Sunera Thobani:

From the ground on up

as told to Fatima Jaffer

Kinesis *spoke to Sunera Thobani, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), in Vancouver a couple of weeks before election day (October 25) about the election campaign and the role of the women's movement.*

Fatima Jaffer: The election campaign is almost at an end. When we compare NAC's popularity during last year's referendum on the Charlottetown Accord and the lack of attention NAC and women's issues in general have received this year in mainstream election coverage, it's obvious women have been excluded from the agenda. What's your analysis of the way this election campaign has been run?

Sunera Thobani: The referendum showed how women across the country are frustrated and alienated and have had enough of the political elites in this country setting the agenda in a way that is undemocratic, unaccountable and unrepresentative. Women across the country played a really strong role in defeating the Charlottetown Accord—the women's movement was out in front, but there were also many women in the labour movement who broke from the position of their unions and women from the NDP who broke from the position of the NDP [to vote "No" in the referendum.]

[In this election campaign,] the political elites have fought to regain control over the political agenda in this country, and one of the ways they have done that is by completely silencing women's issues at the national level. The right-wing political agenda is marginalizing any progressive movement fighting to democratize the political process.

Women's issues have been distorted. The talk about women is focused on the gender of the prime minister: Kim Campbell is a woman, how is she doing things differently; is she able to draw the vote of women for her party because she is a woman? That's the level of the discussion. [This] focus has silenced the discussion on the issues.

But, in this election, we have also seen that it is not enough for women to get into positions of power. We have learned that a Kim Campbell can continue to put forward and support the same kind of empty Tory policies. Women aren't fooled. We are not going to vote on the basis of gender, and it was a miscalculation by the Tory party [to suggest] that if the Tories had a new face, a woman, somehow that would be enough to appease everybody.

When NAC came out criticizing Tory policies [under Campbell], there was some concern we would be set up as women fighting women. But by focusing on policies, on the systemic forms of discrimination women face, systemic racism, and inequalities built into our structures of power, we were able to avoid letting the discussion disintegrate to that level.

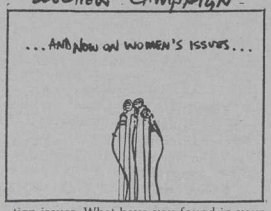
Jaffer: There have been all-candidates debates on women's issues in most parts of the country, and yet, that hasn't happened at the national level. What happened to NAC's campaign for a nationally televised debate on women's issues?

Thobani: The NDP was the only party committed to doing it. The other parties, the Tories and Liberals had decided from the beginning that they were not going to address women's issues.

One of the arguments we heard was that there isn't an interest in women's issues. It's so obviously not true—there have been numerous forums, all-candidates meetings, town hall meetings where women have been raising these issues. During the nationally televised debate in English, as soon as they opened the floor to the audience, women stood up and asked questions on child care, violence against women, and abortion.

NAC also conducted a survey of about 10,000 people, and 80 per cent of the people polled said that if NAC were to organize a debate on women's issues they would be committed to watching it. Women want these questions answered. The politicians are not responding to them, deliberately not responding.

Jaffer: Women's voices may not have been carried to the public in the mainstream media, but I know, at least in BC, women have been actively organizing around elec-



tion issues. What have you found in your travels across the country during the campaign? Is that progressive voice still alive on the ground?

Thobani: Absolutely. There is no doubt about it. There are all these incredible things happening all across the country. NAC has been organizing events across the country and the number of people who have come to them is incredible. Women are turning out in record numbers.

When I was in PEI, I met a 13-year-old woman who wants to start a woman's centre in her high school! There is definitely an interest in what's happening in the women's movement and in NAC, and real enthusiasm and energy about the changes that are taking place in society.

I believe [NAC is getting that interest] because many see NAC as a strong, progressive alternative and because there is no progressive alternative at the national level right now.

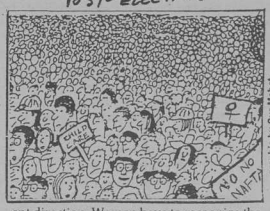
Women of colour across the country have also been interested in NAC to an unprecedented level and they are taking space and finding ways to be active in NAC. Certainly, NAC has been trying hard in our election campaign to focus on the rise of racism in this society, like the changes proposed to immigration, particularly with Kim Campbell assigning immigration to the portfolio of public security and thereby associating all immigrants with criminality.

If you look at the rise of the Reform Party, the outcome of this election directly affects women of colour and immigrant communities. Reform is running on a clear and open agenda—anti-woman, anti-immigrant, anti-people of colour, anti-francophone. They have been running that campaign quite successfully and have attracted some of the most right-wing and racist candidates. The policies they put out will have very racist and very sexist consequences.

Overall, the campaign has shifted the national discussion to the right. You see it reflected when people talk about how "we can no longer afford social programs." It has become "common knowledge" in this country that we can no longer afford social programs. Yet social programs redistribute wealth in this society. They are based on the principle that everyone, regardless of income, has an absolute right to health care, education, housing, income assistance and so on.

When you cut social programs, you attack equality rights. What people are saying is, "Sorry, we cannot afford equality." We hear the same kind of arguments when we talk about employment equity and pay equity: "Yeah, they're nice ideas, but we just can't afford them." People across the country are learning to defend inequality, to value inequality and to say, "Yes, that is how we have to go into the future." It's a really destructive path to be going down.

The women's movement's campaign has been geared around arguing that we *can* afford equality, we *can* be moving in a differ-



graphic by Sue Mehat

ent direction. Women have to recognize the right-wing political agenda as an attack on equality rights.

Jaffer: So where will we be after October 25th?

Thobani: Well, there is no doubt that social programs will be targeted for cutbacks. We are facing a dismantling of the welfare state. The question is, how far will the next government go. Whatever the government looks like after the 26th, there has to be an all out fight to protect social programs, to protect medicare. That is an absolute necessity.

In terms of violence-against-women work, the Liberals say they will continue to fund women's groups. But we know that the Reform Party is absolutely opposed to that, and if they have the balance of power, we are going to see them put pressure on the Liberals.

Jaffer: How about the Bloc Quebecois?

Thobani: I don't think the Bloc is going to target women's programs as the Reform Party will clearly do. The most serious threat comes from the Reform. No matter what government comes in, we have to be out there fighting to protect that funding. Funding for women's groups is going to be a big battle.

If advocacy groups and equality-seeking groups are all cut back, only people who are wealthy will have a voice and representation. That's the clear political agenda in this country—that only the elite can set the agenda and have representation. We have to continue to say that it is not acceptable.

Jaffer: Yet, it's getting harder for progressive movements to manoeuvre with this much right-wing pressure on us.

Thobani: There is a crisis in the sense that there are very few national bodies to look up to. There are no political parties offering alternatives which have any chance of getting support. The most tragic thing that has happened to the NDP is that it is no longer seen as an alternative—and it never will be in the sense that people used to think it could be.

It's on the ground that all these changes are taking place. Right now, the women's movement is seen as the most progressive force there is in this country, not only in the sense of representing women's issues, but also in doing anti-racism work.

While we are often told that the women's movement is a white women's movement and that it is now being "inclusive of women of colour," what is really happening is that feminism is being redefined. Women of colour have been feminists since feminism existed, and groups that want to defend an exclusionary definition of feminism are not going to survive. It's not a question of being inclusive and opening the doors. It is one of looking at how exclusionary organizations are, and how to change that. We need to look at how priorities have been defined in ways that have silenced huge communities of women and say this is not acceptable. The priorities of organizations are under question and we are really learning to define our issues and our struggles in ways that are empowering, that bring us together, and give us strength.

Whatever the government looks like after the 26th, there has to be an all out fight to protect social programs...

When I became president [of NAC], there were all kinds of predictions of doom—that the organization would disintegrate, that things would change for the worse. In fact, quite the opposite has happened. By dealing with racism and making anti-racism a central part of our work, we are essentially democratizing the feminist movement so people have control over their lives and how they represent themselves. NAC has come out stronger, not weaker.

We have learned something really valuable, that [broadening the feminist movement] is something that needs to happen more because it strengthens our movement and builds coalitions in a way where it is no longer [as easy to] divide and rule [us]. NAC is now seen as a credible force. People are learning that lesson, learning to recognize that we are experiencing the attacks in different ways, but from the same source, and that we need to be fighting the right-wing, and building coalitions.

Jaffer: The women's movement is also the strongest socially progressive movement globally right now, in every country. Women globally are recognizing how the war against us is being fought, and how we are being oppressed and marginalized by capitalism and global restructuring. In Canada, we have been moving towards what I think is going on internationally—building a very powerful women's movement.

Thobani: Yes, and it is a very different women's movement which is emerging now because we've realised the attacks on women's rights in Canada are not just happening here, they're happening across the world. Even though in the past there have been some international networks and international women's groups, the kind of growth we're seeing today is qualitatively different. It is much more rooted in women's lives, in the grassroots, with an analysis of class and race. It is more on the ground and much more radical globally, and [that's why] women's groups across the world are a real force for change right now.

Thanks to Anita Fast for transcribing.

Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies:

Been a long time coming

by Judy Morrison and Christine Massey

Margaret Atwood's novel *A Handmaid's Tale* describes a bleak society where a class of women has been reduced to baby machines, walking wombs. Written 20 years ago, this tale might have been seen as science fiction. In our present day context, it has the potential to become science fact.

Researchers conducting medical experiments in reproductive technologies apparently seek ways of artificially reproducing what women have always done naturally (and quite successfully). Artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization ("test tube babies"), surrogacy, freezing of embryos, ova and sperm, experiments on embryos, prenatal diagnosis, and other techniques are among practices designed to further alienate women from our bodies and affect our ability to choose what happens to our bodies.

In Canada, women have been witness to the virtually unfettered growth of these medical techniques and there has been growing concern at the lack of legislation, dialogue or even public awareness.

In 1985, the Ontario Law Reform Commission produced a report called *Human Artificial Reproduction and Other Related Matters*. It was the closest Canada ever came to legislation that could confront the myriad of reproductive and genetic techniques in practice. But it was woefully inadequate—an effort that represented only the views of five male lawyers and involved no public input.

Dissatisfied with government inaction, feminists lobbied for an assessment of and public education around these technologies, who profits from them, and the role of pharmaceuticals in their development.

One group of feminists, organized by Margrit Eichler, a sociologist professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, formed- the Coalition for a Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies. The coalition lobbied the government for a public process—a royal commission—to critically and publicly discuss the many issues related to reproductive and genetic technologies.

In October 1989, the federal government of Canada announced the mandate of the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies and feminists looked forward to a truly public dialogue on these vital issues. Four years later—after three extensions of their deadline and numerous controversies that have largely discredited the commission's validity—the Commission is finally going to make public its report on November 15.

The coalition saw in a royal commission firstly, an opportunity for focusing the public and media's attention on the issues and bringing forth public debate, and secondly, the possibility that a royal commission could allocate funds for desperately needed research. Royal commissions can be potentially valuable tools for tackling issues of national scope. Despite their limitations—appointed and funded by the state, royal commissions can be subject to political pressures—no other state instrument is as open, public, flexible or free to consider almost limitless policy options. At a time when our system of representative democracy has revealed its weaknesses, royal commissions offer a unique opportunity for a meaningful public role in decision making.

Within a year, however, this royal commission began to raise concerns among women in three main areas: its administration; its research; and its public consultations *[see* Kinesis, *Feb/92]*. As these became more alarming, the coalition and other women's groups withdrew their support of the commission and the coalition became its outspoken watchdog.

A commission gone awry

When the commission was first appointed, responsibility for its administration was given to a UBC geneticist, Patricia Baird, the only full-time Commissioner. This was contrary to the coalition's demands that a social scientist not a biomedical expert be appointed chair of the Commission. The other six part-time commissioners were never included in decisions regarding the commission's work even though they were led to believe that they would be.

They made repeated requests to Baird and the government for more involvement in the commission's decision-making process. In December 1991, four of the commissioners filed lawsuits against Baird and the government asking, among other things, for a reversal of an August 1990 government order-in-council conferring almost full power on Baird. They were fired.

Their being fired removed their legal standing to sue and they were forced to drop their suit. While the official Commission stand, as reported by the mainstream media, attributed the dispute to "ideological" (read "feminist") differences, extensive evidence of Baird's refusal to share power is contained in federal court documents laid out in the suit.

The research plan was also the focus of many complaints and struggles, and is mentioned in the lawsuits. For good reason. The research plan was cloaked in secrecy. At the time of the suit by the four commissioners, there remained 50 research projects that the commissioners had not been allowed to see.

This research should have been used in the recommendations of the Commission to the federal government which, in turn might use these recommendations as the basis for creating laws and policies governing reproductive and genetic practices. Feminists, long concerned with the dominance of reproductive technologies by medical experts, wanted to ensure that some critical analysis of the social and political effects would be included.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and the Coalition had to resort to a freedom-of-information request to get copies of research contracts. In a classic example of conflict of interest, it was discovered that one of these contracts was awarded to an international public relations firm, Burson-Marstellar, which counts among its clients several pharmaceutical firms. This company was paid $66,000 to produce a report on the commercialization of new reproductive technologies.

Furthermore, there was concern about the public and democratic element of the Commission: the education of, consultation with and debate among Canadians. Expectations were high regarding these issues. The feminist community in particular felt considerable urgency over the work of the Royal Commission and was eager to be involved in the hearings. The Commission further fuelled hopes for widespread involvement of Canadian citizens by proclaiming its "total society" approach to public participation.

The "total society" approach raised hope that the royal commission was truly interested in effectively engaging the public in discussions of complicated and little-known issues like reproductive and genetic technologies, and would realise the need for public education above everything else. People have to be able to cut through the exclusive and intimidating scientific jargon in order to grapple with the crucial social issues of reproductive technologies. This Royal Commission failed to adequately perform this role. The public, without the benefit of an educational campaign, has been relegated to the periphery, while members of the medical and scientific community, having been allowed to conduct an exclusive debate in their own "language" continue to dominate the centre.

Hearings are one way of generating discussion and gathering information about a subject. Some inquiries provide intervenor funding to help gr roots groups develop their own expertise and organize a submission to a commission. This Commission provided no such funding.

The Commission also chose to conduct the hearings in an intimidating and unfriendly format. Commissioners travelled to seven major cities in Canada (we will never know how many rural women were excluded by this action) where they were set up in large ballrooms of luxurious hotels. No child care was offered. Seating arrangements at the hearings were such that the commissioners were seated at a large table in the front of the room, facing a smaller table where the speaker sat. Communication was a one-way process, from the intervenor to the commissioners. Opportunity for questions was given only to the commissioners. There was no opportunity for formal discussion among participants.

The lack of funding and public education, scientific jargon and format of the hearings all favoured experts and doctors over ordinary women. The hearings, which could have been a site for effective public involvement, were instead constructed in a way that prevented them from contributing significant input to the Commission's work.

Even under these circumstances, feminist communities were still somewhat represented at the hearings and made some valuable contributions in every city.

Nov 15—How women will proceed?

On November 15, after three extensions as well as a federal election and a potential change in government, the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies will deliver its long awaited report. If women are not satisfied with the Commission's work, there is still time to make their voices heard. We must approach the Commission's recommendations with a critical mind. Reproductive and genetic technologies have implications for not only women, but people with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, people of colour, and lesbians and gays. Recommendations designed to strike a compromise between the medical community and these peoples are not acceptable. What appears to be compromise only serves to uphold a power structure favouring the medical and scientific communities in place.

As we survey the report of the Royal Commission, here are some questions we can ask:

- Have these technologies been proven to be effective and safe?
- Are long term risks known? Are women advised of them?
- How do the touted benefits compare to the risks, both known and unknown?
- What kind of choices do these technologies offer women that they didn't have before? Are we going to be able to make informed choices?
- Are all choices actively supported: for example, the choice of a woman to refuse technological intervention into her pregnancy?
- In light of society's current attitudes toward people with disabilities, how will the technologies impact upon this community?
- What is the difference between these technologies and eugenics?
- Are expensive reproductive technologies the best way to deal with routine pregnancies or infertility? What does it say about health care priorities?
- Are equivalent amounts of money being directed to education and prevention?
- Are pregnant women being "treated" more and more as sick patients?
- Should these technologies be upheld, are they going to be made equally accessible to all groups in society?

This list is by no means complete in responding to this report. It is imperative that we draw upon our own experiences to make real the impact of these technologies. Whatever our assessment of the Commission's work, we now have an opportunity to advance the debate beyond the scientific and medical language in which it has been cast. Rather than let another government report sit on a shelf, we must actively insist on a more inclusive debate that will allow us to better reclaim our bodies.

Judy Morrison and Christine Massey are members of Vancouver Women's New Reproductive Technologies Coalition and study and write about the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC.

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Taking back the night

by Zeenat F. Aman

Women took back the night this year in record numbers, in more places in Canada than ever before...and were louder, prouder and livelier at most of the Take Back the Night marches that took place last September!

Of the 43 marches across the country, 12 were held in BC communities alone—the BC communities of Prince George, Cranbrook and Penticton held their first Take Back marches ever. And while it was the second Take Back the Night march in Victoria, the 600-strong march was held without a City permit for the first time and was not shut down by the police.

Most surprisingly, the largest Take Back the Night march in the country was the almost 4,000-strong one in Vancouver on September 24. The march, traditionally held without a City permit, also took place without police interference.

"Ours is supposed to have been the biggest, loudest and liveliest," says Mary McAlister of Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter. Rape Relief has organized the march in Vancouver every year since its inception in 1978. McAlister was a key organizer of the event this year.

Not only was it the largest crowd the Vancouver march has ever drawn, there was a noticeable increase in the number of younger women present. Coincidentally, the march was led this year by younger women on skateboards from the Vancouver chapter of Riot Girls, a feminist organization for women aged 14-25, which originated in the US.

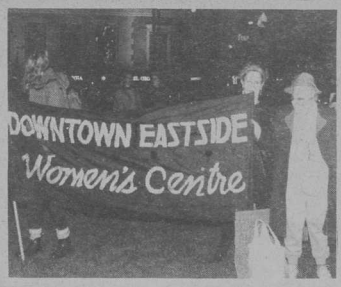
"We were thrilled with the attendance," says McAlister. She points out that another highlight of the night "was the number of women's groups who were in attendance. There were many, many, transition houses, women's centres...It was wonderful to have those women's groups named [by emcee Elvenia Gray] because it was an opportunity to acknowledge the work all year of those groups.

"It also was a demonstration of the level of unity in the women's movement locally, which is great."

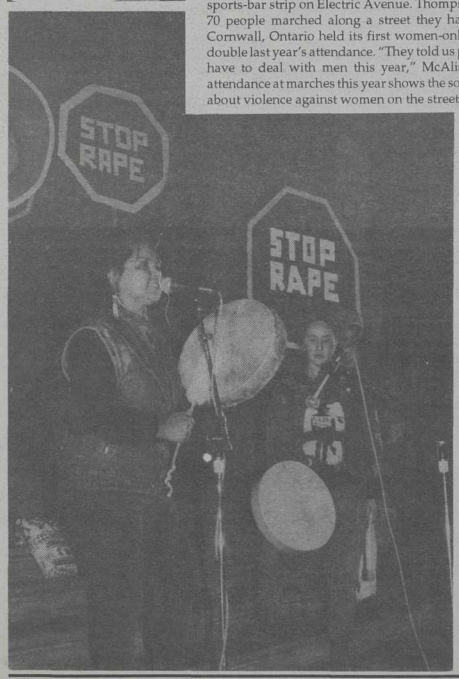
Speakers at the Vancouver march included a surprise appearance by Sunera Thobani, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), who happened to be in town on a speaking engagement; Fawzia Ahmed of Women Against Violence Against Women/Rape Crisis Centre; Monique Wilson of Rape Relief; and Kelly White.

Political actions announced at the march included: NAC's postcard campaign to demand a pre-election, party leaders, nationally televised debate on women's issues; Elizabeth Fry Society's postcard campaign to protest the incarceration of women prisoners for defensive crimes against their abusers; and the South Asian Women's Coalition's petition supporting the boycott of local community newspapers that promote female foeticide by publishing advertisements of sex-selection services.

McAlister points out that other Take Back marches across the country also had remarkable highpoints this year. Calgary's march drew a record 500, who marched along the sports-bar strip on Electric Avenue. Thompson, Manitoba held its largest march ever; over 70 people marched along a street they had identified as needing better lighting. And Cornwall, Ontario held its first women-only Take Back march, which drew 150 women, double last year's attendance. "They told us perhaps more women came because they didn't have to deal with men this year," McAlister reports. "Whatever the reason, the high attendance at marches this year shows the solidarity of women and the high level of concern about violence against women on the streets across the country."



Clockwise from upper right: About 4,000 women in front of the art gallery; the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre with their banner; Elrenia Gray of Rape Relief emceed the rally; Kelly White and Cecelia Wyss performed a song about Anna Mae Aquash, a Native activist who was murdered; a Riot Grrrl and her skateboard with friend; and unidentified woman holding one of the many anti-rape signs in various languages



Anti-racism and feminism

Confronting the backlash

by Agnes Huang, Smita Patil and Lynne Wanyeki

The following is a conversation on the "backlash" against women of colour in feminist communities which focuses on the reaction to an incident at a transition house in Toronto [see box]. *A longer version of this conversation, done as a two-media project, aired in June on* Obaa, *a show produced by and for women of colour and First Nations women on* Co-op Radio *in Vancouver. Agnes Huang is a Chinese feminist activist; Smita Patil is a Kenyan-born South Asian lesbian feminist who works at a women's centre, Lynne Wanyeki is a* chotara *Kenyan and a member of the* Obaa *collective.*

Lynne Wanyeki: The point of this conversation is to talk about "Callwoodism"—not just June Callwood, but what she stands for. It's interesting we've started using this term Callwoodism—we have to question the kind of attention [Callwood] has drawn to herself. She has become a symbol of the resistance to anti-racist work being done in feminist and other communities across the country. I've already heard at meetings Callwood's "example" being used when someone doesn't want to deal with something racist that's being addressed. You know, someone mutters defensively, "Oh, this is just what women of colour did to June Callwood."

Smita Patil: Yet it's not a new thing at all. We've all encountered the attitude: "we've done our anti-racist work, can't we put it aside now that you've got your power and get on with the 'real' work of feminism?" Basically, most kinds of anti-racist work are being considered a plot by women of colour...to take over, to steal power from white women.

In fact, that is how Callwood put it in some of the interviews she has done with the media; that she, as a woman, has no power so why are women of colour accusing her of having power over them?

Agnes Huang: Well, as a white woman in a white supremacist culture, she has power. Women like Callwood deny their power because they don't want to take responsibility for addressing their racism. She certainly can't deny she has influence in this society.

Patil: Yes. And what was particularly appalling is that she used every bit of that "influence" to attack the women of colour at Nellie's. Callwood took her story to the media shortly after she resigned. The story was written by a national wire service, so almost every local paper picked it up. I read versions of that story in *The Globe and Mail* and *The Vancouver Sun*. Yet there has only been one side of this issue: the mainstream media has not published a story from the perspective of the women of colour at Nellie's, just a couple of opinion pieces.

Huang: I also haven't seen any feminist newspapers talk to women of colour about the incident. [The Womanist *has since featured Black feminist Carol-Anne Wright's account of the events that took place at Nellie's in their August issue. CKLN community radio in Toronto also broadcast a conversation with feminists of colour responding to the media attention that the incidents at Nellie's have received.*]

Every article that has been published so far has focused on Callwood, her contribution to the women's community, and the "falseness" of this charge of racism by women of colour. *Quota*, a lesbian monthly in Toronto, ran an interview with Callwood, a straight woman, that basically portrays her as a "victim" of these "angry" women of colour, reflecting very much the attitude Callwood has: that, "after all she's done for women of colour...

Patil: "...the minute women of colour have power, they grab and use it against white women; [that] women of colour have the power to call a white woman a racist and therefore to silence her."

Huang: Even *The Globe and Mail* in presenting this issue in an editorial basically said: June Callwood is a racist, but that means so are all of us because look at the work June Callwood has done. [In this way, they've] negated what racism really is.

Patil: Yeah, and it's not just the mainstream media, that same thing happens all around: "we don't call you paki or nigger so how can we be racist? We let you into our feminist collectives, we work with you, we give you jobs through affirmative action, what more do you want?"

Huang: And "we go through a few anti-racist workshops too."

Patil and Wanyeki: ... oh, yeah, the workshops...

Patil: ... which is all part of the work, but they're not doing it for women of colour. The whole assumption here is that racism is a "women of colour" issue. But it's not our issue or our problem; it's the problem of white society, of white culture. White people are racist, they're always going to be racist; they don't suddenly become not-racist. It's an unlearning process, but as long as they live in a society whose structures are inherently racist, they're part of and profit from those structures. We're talking about systemic racism.

Wanyeki: It's tedious to go through this, but I do feel it's important to say "white" is a race too. [White people] have never been specific about where they come from. If they're not specific about where they come from, they can't be specific at all about their relations to different specificities.

One of the things I wanted to bring us back to was the idea that "women of colour are taking over." Callwood says that there's a notion of superiority that seems to underlie most women of colour's activism. Well, I think we've seen that idea play itself out with what happened with Sunera Thobani [National Action Committee on the Status of Women's president].

Patil: I think Sunera is a classic example. That assumption of taking over has very much to do with a sense of being threatened, and the fact is, when white women address their privilege, they are going to feel loss. Feminists, of all people, should understand that. There's been an enormous backlash against women from men. With any loss of privilege, there is fear, there is a sense of threat, and there is backlash.

To bring it back to Sunera, everyone was up in arms about her election as president of NAC, defending her or attacking her—it was such a big deal. Yes, it is a big deal: she's the first woman of colour president of NAC, a very important organization in this country. But nobody cared in the same way when Judy Rebick became president of NAC. The kind of attack we saw on Sunera was just unbelievable.

Huang: It's a flipping of the issues. Women of colour have been raising issues about racism and about white privilege. And now, we are seen as "privileged" because we can call Callwood and other white women racists. Meanwhile, nothing has changed, we still live in a white supremacist state. We're just not as silenced as we once were.

Wanyeki: Yeah. It was just a year ago that feminist communities across the country were up in arms supporting *Pandora's* right to be a woman-only space. That case hinged upon the notion that reverse sexism cannot occur when you live in a society that's sexist and misogynist. Yet here's women saying "well, reverse sexism can't occur, but reverse racism certainly can."

Patil: Yes. In Callwood's case, all the articles refer to how much she's done for the women's movement, where she's come from, everything she's had to live through... We see that all around as a defense, like: "after the enormous contribution we've made, we've done our work, leave us alone, we're exempt. We don't have to be accountable for our racism." That's not a defense, that's obscuring...that's a red herring.

Everyone recognizes the work women do as feminists. When feminists of colour work in feminist organizations, we also do so in good faith—it isn't about wanting to become part of a movement that basically excludes us, it's about changing a movement so that we can operate in it. Yes, there is going to be pushing. The women's movement is stronger than it ever has been and women of colour are at the forefront of that, the changes in the women's community have been phenomenal, we've come a long way...baby. [*Laughter*] Enough of this attitude that anti-racism has nothing to do with feminism anymore. But *that's* just what Callwood is saying on a national scale... which is the only reason we're talking about her...

Wanyeki: Yes, it's not just about what Callwood is saying, but about the kind of resistance to anti-racist work that is suddenly legitimized by the symbol that she's become. I think all of us have heard the term "Callwoodism" in the past few months in very different situations.

Patil: I've used it on a few occasions myself, but I think I mean something entirely different. [*Laughter*]

Wanyeki: But it's being used against women of colour and we're quite resentful that we feel the need to talk about issues of backlash because it takes time away from our own issues and struggles.

Huang: Yeah. We spend most of our time now defending the work we do. I talked to Carol-Anne Wright, who does a lot of other things apart from being on the women of colour caucus at Nellie's. She said that because her name has been made so public as one of the "foes" of Nellie's, everywhere she goes, she has to defend the work she does. She's one of the women being held accountable for this "victimization" of June Callwood, this "attack," this "confrontation" with Callwood.

Patil: Yes, it's women of colour who are losing their jobs in feminist centres because of the backlash Callwood has legitimated.

When feminists of colour work in feminist organizations, we also do so in good faith—it isn't about wanting to become part of a movement that basically excludes us, it's about changing a movement so that we can operate in it.
-Smita Patil

by Smita Patil

In 1991, issues of representation, access to services, and power sharing at Nellie's Hostel in Toronto were raised at numerous meetings between staff, board and the women of colour caucus. In May 1992, board member, June Callwood resigned from the board, claiming she had been "falsely" accused of racism by women of colour staff and board members.

Following Callwood's resignation, a number of articles capitalizing on the anti-racism and feminism debate in the women's movement were published in mainstream newspapers and magazines. The following is a summary of some of those articles.

On June 15, 1992, *The Globe and Mail*, published a story on Callwood by Canadian Press reporter Jean Kavanagh. Callwood, a long-time "pioneer" in social agencies, writer, fund-raiser, director of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and recipient of the Order of Canada, is portrayed as a victim of the Nellie's women of colour caucus.

The opening paragraph reads: "Today, devastated by charges of racism from some of [Nellie's Hostel's] newest members, Callwood...is dealing with a pain she says is as paralysing as losing a loved one."

The reporter writes that "neither Callwood nor board members at Nellie's will discuss details of the accusations and ensuing arguments." It then quotes Callwood's version of the events that led to her being called a racist. The Canadian Press story was picked up by a number of newspapers across the country.

In March 1993, a nine-page article on Callwood by Elaine Dewar called, "Wrongful Dismissal: Angry Anti-racists drove June Callwood from Nellie's..." was published by *Toronto Life Magazine*.

The article, a long, convoluted attack on many people working in different progressive and political communities in Toronto, attempts a detailed portrait of anti-racist, communist "conspiracy;" and alleges that the feminist movement has been taken over by largely working-class people of colour, their white allies and other left-wing "predators" on "broken-winged victims."

The article also makes detailed references to the funding sources of every feminist organization with women of colour staff or women of colour organizations, and alleges ways in which funds are being (mis)spent.

Callwood is portrayed as a victim of "the new anti-racism movement," as are other white people drawn into Dewar's commentary. Terms like "women of colour" are deemed part of "the language of anti-feminist Black American nationalists...language [that] spread over Nellie's like a thick cloak over a pit trap."

The article repeatedly reinforces stereotypes of Black women and women of colour as evil, venomous and inhuman. It suggests that Black resistance to racism is destructive and that anti-racism is a plot designed to destroy feminism and society in general. Dewar cites as an example workshops she attended at the Canadian Research Institute on the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) conference, *Making the Links: Anti-racism and Feminism* held in November 1992. She describes CRIAW as a white feminist organization under seige by anti-racist activists. She ends her description of a presentation at the conference called "Deconstructing White Supremacy" with: "In short, feminist attendees [white women] were told how to become handmaidens to their new leaders [women of colour]."

The Dewar article prompted a large protest by feminists and other progressive communities outside the offices of *Toronto Life*.

The following month, *Saturday Night Magazine* published a 12-page story on Callwood. "White Woman's Burden" by Adele Freeman carried the sub-title—a summary of sorts of the article's contents—"June Callwood seemed like the last woman anyone would call a racist. Was she insensitive to the needs of an institution she created or did the politics of anti-racism push her over the colour line?"

While the writer attempts a less vitriolic, more balanced tone, and unlike the *Toronto Life* article, quotes a couple of women of colour from Nellie's, a large part of the article focuses on Callwood's childhood, life, family and career. Ultimately, this article sketches a portrait of Callwood as a woman wronged and battered by charges of racism, and women of colour as victims of their own rage.

Five complaints to the Ontario Human Rights Coalition have been filed by women of colour at Nellie's and are pending or under investigation. Two groups have formed to deal with the ensuing backlash against women of colour: Coalition of Woman of Colour Working in Women's and Community Services; and the Women of Colour former Staff and Board Members Still Struggling for Justice.

One of the things I find really exciting right now is that women of colour are at the place where we can examine our relationships among ourselves ... We're coming to the place where we *are* dealing with all this backlash, but at the same time, we *are* leaving it behind.
-Lynne Wanyeki

Wanyeki: Among our own circles, we sort of go "Yeah, yeah, Callwoodism, nothing new." It's just a new version of how the term "politically correct" is being used.

Patil: You mean using the term "politically correct" to basically shut us up when we say something that is considerate of or sensitive to other people? And now it's "Callwoodism." You're right, it's a different word, but it's the same old thing, basically.

Wanyeki: But Callwoodism is still quite serious because it's undermining everything we work for, it's undermining the entire Left.

Patil: And the kind of power Callwood has wasn't available to us 20 years ago. She's the icon of the non-profit sector in Toronto and has national standing. That kind of power is frightening, especially when she lets it be used against progressive movements. The women's movement has to move together, and for the most part there is that kind of change, that kind of movement. For instance, NAC's popularity has been largely due to the pushing of women of colour from within the organization, changing the organization to make it more grassroots and accountable, strengthening the women's movement. But it's becoming extremely dangerous for us because women like Callwood, who do have access to some power, can undo the work we do. It has become twice as difficult to be out there as a woman of colour because there is this new defense: people sit in the room and say "this is just like the June Callwood thing. I'm not a racist." And women of colour shut up, because if we don't, we're liable to get fired...and what happens to the work that needs to get done?

Wanyeki: I want to come back to the idea that we are fragmenting the movement. Was it two years ago that the conference in Banff for feminists working in mental health was held? A South African woman, Rozena Maart, who's now based in Toronto, read a poem about anti-racist work over dinner and the white women got quite upset. First Nations women offered to have a circle to try to bridge what was going on. So it ended up that the "good" brown women were the First Nations women and the "bad" brown women were the Black women. Of course, the media picked it up and loved it because the women were fighting again. Back to the old stereotypes about "hen-pecking" among women, the feminist movement coming apart and so on. And that's the perception—that when we do anti-racist work, when we challenge the white supremacy of feminists, we become the people who are tearing the movement apart *and* we're doing it just to hurt them. They come up with words like "wounded" and "battered." It's repulsive.

Patil: [Like] the pain of us holding them accountable is overwhelming, never mind the pain of us having to deal with their racism.

Huang: White women have to get off this trip. This is what the feminist movement has been and is about, because women of colour have always been involved and we've always been doing this work. We've fought for the visibility we now have. I don't think any one of us is trying to negate or deny the history, the work that white women have done. But, for sure, that is what's happening to us as women of colour. Look at Sunera and what happened when she was elected to the presidency of NAC. White women were so focused on her immigrant status that they seemingly forgot that she put NAC on the map in terms of new reproductive technologies, and that she's done a lot of work around violence against women.

Joan Johnson, a Black staff member, was one of the women at Nellie's calling Callwood on her racism. Callwood basically turned around and said "how can Joan say all this after all we've done for her?" Meanwhile, Johnson's saying, "how long do I have to continue to pay for it?"

Wanyeki: Well, that's another white supremacist notion. All of us who come from ex-colonies or are living here in Canada, which is essentially still a colony in terms of First Nations peoples, know the missionary syndrome of white people, like, "we're *helping* you, be grateful for our help" even though that "help" is actually dependent on our being grateful. We don't need it, it's not suitable to us. They're new age missionaries! [*Laughter*]

Patil: That being said, I think one of the dangerous things about something like this is that it can turn into more of an us-and-them situation than is actually the case. There are a lot of white women who *are* allies, who are doing the work, who are working in good faith with us. That is going on in the women's movement, which is why it's so strong—and why we're under such attack. It's that old divide-and-rule maxim. Although that doesn't explain or justify what is happening within the movement, our white women allies get called "sell-outs," which discourages white women who *do* want to work with us. There is the tendency to make white women fear us and they've got to overcome that.

Wanyeki: I'm not denying there are white women allies. But at the same time, a lot of white women who call themselves allies are used to listening to women of colour for direction. So when something like this comes up, all of a sudden, they're on their own, and there's confusion.

Huang: Many of them can't take a stand unless women of colour say "this is the stand to take."

Patil: Yet something like "Callwoodism" undermines *all* women, all our work, and I don't know why they need us to tell them that.

Huang: And they're totally confused when there's two women of colour with different perspectives. Who's the "good" woman of colour?

Patil: The Callwood incident is not isolated, but it's the largest one because it played itself out on a national level. In May this year, the BC & Yukon Association of Women's Centres (BC & Y) had a meeting, and some of the same issues came up. There were 65 women present, six of whom were women of colour. Some political choices had to be made around accessibility and being inclusive. The women of colour were scapegoated for talking about anti-racism work. BC & Y didn't finish their agenda, and women of colour—or anti-racism—have been identified as the cause. But it's not women of colour who bring up racism, it's white women. The racism of the white women in that room was incredible, so the women of colour responded to it and worked with it—they didn't walk out, they stayed through the entire thing, trying to explain, trying to make the white women see what they were talking about.

We're running out of that kind of patience. What's happening is that women of colour are saying "enough, you want to catch up to us, catch up to us, but we've got other work to do." Enough explaining. If they really are trying to move ahead, they can't make women of colour deal with white women's "pain." What we're saying over and over again is global, we're sharing our experiences, we're learning how systemic this is worldwide. "This" is not just anti-racism, it's feminism, it's the women's movement, it's the fight against the new world order or whatever you want to call it.

Wanyeki: One of the things I find really exciting right now is that women of colour are at the place where we can examine our relationships among ourselves, and specifically, in the Canadian context, we can stop, re-focus our goals and talk among ourselves about how we can make genuine and useful alliances with First Nations women. We're coming to the place where we *are* dealing with all this backlash, but at the same time, we *are* leaving it behind.

Patil: And getting on with the work of getting along and making alliances.

Thanks to: Eun-Sook Lee for sending us a copy of a piece on Callwoodism done for CKLN Radio *Toronto, during their coverage of International Women's Day 1993; Dionne Brand, Punam Khosla, Rita Kohli and Carol-Anne Wright who were featured in that piece; Lydia Masemola for technical assistance at* Obaa; *and Sur Mehat for transcribing.*

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Film review: The Burning Season:

Burning for whom?

by Yasmin Jiwani

THE BURNING SEASON
Directed by Harvey Crossland,
Produced by Annette Cohen and Amarjeet S. Rattan
Vancouver International Film Festival, October 1993

It's night time. A young, attractive, South Asian woman leaves the motel office with keys and heads to her room. Outside, an older South Asian man waits at the door. As soon as she comes, he accosts her. "Where is she?" he cries out.

She braces herself against the door, as if to protect a cherished possession inside. A struggle ensues. Suddenly, the man pulls out the woman's hands. He gazes at the intricate henna designs painted on the palms of her hands. He backs off, goes to the hood of his pick-up truck positioned a few yards away, doubles over and starts to cry. She, triumphant, gazes at him, then slowly goes into the room. Over the bathroom sink, she wipes the lipstick off her face and smiles at her own image."

So ends *The Burning Season*. Directed by Anglo-Canadian Harvey Crossland, the film took five years to make and had a budget of $1.5 million. It was the Western Canadian Gala film at last month's Vancouver International Film Festival.

The story traces the evolution of "oppressed and frustrated South Asian-Canadian wife" to "liberated woman." That liberation is catalyzed by her having an affair with a Rajput prince and following him to his ancestral home in Rajasthan. There, even though she is already married into a Brahmin-caste household, she undergoes a second marriage and becomes a Rajput princess.

The henna designs on the palms of her hands signify her new status. It is this that stops the man in the scene above, her Brahmin father-in-law, from his original intent—striking her.

The power of tradition, signified by the Rajput symbol of aristocracy (the henna), contests the power of an imported tradition—the Brahmin allegiance as practised on Canadian soil. Yet, *The Burning Season* makes no attempt to explore the intricacies of the caste system, nor does it make clear why the Rajputs (in India) exercise more social and cultural power than the Brahmins (in Canada). Instead, the film deals with the emancipation of one woman who flees an "inherently oppressive and tradition-bound cultural system."

That South Asian cultures are oppressive, backward, tradition-bound and rigid, is part of a larger stereotype that has now invaded popular culture. Arranged marriages, the subordination of women, barbaric cultural practices, et cetera, are signs in the language used to construct this stereotype. *The Burning Season* furthers this stereotype with much fanfare.

A characteristic theme of most colonial literature is the "exotic" contextual background against which the white hero's adventurous exploits occur. The recent mainstream, *City of Joy*, carried this theme to its very end, where white hero Patrick Swayze (patronizingly) rescues the inhabitants of an Indian slum.

Unlike *City of Joy*, a Hollywood product, *The Burning Season* is a Vancouver production, and focuses on a young South Asian-Canadian woman, Sanda (played by Akesh Gill). But it utilizes the same thematic by providing an "exotic" cultural backdrop against which Sanda discovers herself. According to director Crossland, *The Burning Season* "is not an ethnic film [but a film] about a woman's journey."

If this were truly a film about a woman's journey, why does the journey take place in India? Why not in Surrey or at 49th and Main, the Punjabi Market area in Vancouver? Does Sanda, as a South Asian woman in Canada, have "to go back" to rediscover herself? Or is it another twist to the colonial plot, where the colonizer sought to discover himself in an exotic setting.

Producer Amarjeet Rattan has stated that: "The reason we made [*The Burning Season*] was to entertain people, and through entertainment people develop ideas. There are people who don't know anything about India, have never been to India, or might just have some Indian friends. This is going to give them more insight into the culture." So Indian culture(s) are once again fitted into stereotypic paradigms of white consumption. This time, under the guise of a woman's liberation.

The Burning Season breaks one mould by focusing on the life of a woman as opposed to a man, in contrast to the male focus of recent films dealing with India or South Asians in the West, such as *Masala*, *Sam and Me*, and *Lonely in America*. Another point of departure is that *The Burning Season* deals with the archetypal phenomenon of "going back," of liberation through a rediscovery of tradition and a rejuvenation of the weight of that tradition. Sanda "goes back" to India, but to a particular part of India—Rajasthan—and she poses as a Rajput. Regional differences take the place of the colonially inscribed cultural/national differences.

Crossland plays with a paradox—the weight of tradition that constricts 23 year-old Sanda, compelling her to leave her uncommunicative husband (he doesn't say a word throughout the film), and her tradition-bound father-in-law, and then rediscovering tradition in Rajasthan, through the Rajput prince she has fallen in love with and followed to his ancestral home. One interpretation of this paradox could be that tradition, as exercised in the Canadian context is oppressive, but that rediscovering and revitalizing tradition, especially if that tradition is the "genuine article," can be a source of strength, identity, affirmation and liberation.

In the Canadian context, Indian practices and tradition are signified as being patriarchal, oppressive and rigid. Humanity is significantly absent.

In The Burning Season, women are constrained by these cultural structures when they rebel against them. Sanda is a subdued woman who only comes alive in a classroom context. Even her interactions with her child are low-keyed. Most of the time she is quiet, burning with contained frustration and anger. That frustration arises from her unhappiness over an arranged (first) marriage that contains her within rigid, traditional familial structures. She is under pressure to produce a male child, but cannot because her husband has a low sperm count. Her mother-in-law is similarly quiet, watching her daughter-in-law act out, but seemingly helpless to do anything about it. She is the archetypal self-sacrificing, suffering mother.

The story follows Sanda as she has an affair with her Rajput tutor who turns out to be a prince. "Prince Charming" Patwant (played by Ayub Khan Din) fails to rescue her and returns to his ailing father in India. Sanda follows him there after their affair has been discovered and her life is endangered by her brutal father-in-law and her angry husband (who still hasn't spoken a word).

Once in India, Sanda rediscovers the weight of tradition as she fits into her lover's Rajput household with its tradition-bound rituals and stratified roles. Patwant, her lover, becomes as uncommunicative as her husband. Patwant's mother is a strong woman, but her strength is derived from "knowing her place and her role" in the Rajput artistocracy. Patwant's father is about the only humane character in the film. He is a kind, old, and rather ill man who can no longer fulfil his duties.

phot by Kiku Hawkes

Akesh Gill as Sanda

In this context, in Rajasthan, on the agricultural lands owned by Patwant's family, Sanda comes to play a more active role. She accompanies Patwant around the countryside, explaining to women in the villages the dangers they face if they agree to industrialization. This she does for Patwant—as she says to him, it is the only way she can "be with him." Hence, her activity, emancipatory as it seems in contrast to her previous life in Canada, is male-defined, and ultimately in service of the man in her life.

Nonetheless, that is not enough, for Patwant will not leave his traditional duty as zamindar (landowner) for Sanda. His father has died and his mother will not let him go. So Sanda returns "home", back to Canada. After giving up on her tradition-bound and silent husband, she similarly gives up on Patwant, her tradition-bound and now almost silent, lover. She has come unto herself. She now knows who she is. Hence the last scene, where Sanda stands before the mirror in her motel room, gazing at herself, deliberately wiping off the lipstick, and smiling. She is her own woman!

A clichéd ending as any, but absurd in the context of a South Asian woman liberating herself from a supposedly oppressive cultural system. What does lipstick have to do with anything? Sanda's liberation from her father-in-law comes through showing him the henna design on her hand. If that is her ticket to liberation, why the lipstick? Sanda in fact wins her freedom by alleging she belongs to the Rajput artistocracy, which is ultimately constructed as yet another tradition-bound cultural system.

Crossland's film has to be gauged within the context of South Asian realities in Canada. These realities are constantly struggling against dominant stereotypes which typify South Asian cultures as being highly oppressive, backward and tradition-bound. Tradition as a link, as a source of grounded identity in the flux of a diasporic existence, is hardly ever entertained in the dominant interpretation except in those conditions where it serves to affirm existing stereotypes—where South Asians are seen as obsessively in need of a cultural leg to stand on. The film stereotypes South Asian cultures as oppressive to such an extent, that its weight completely silences those who are victims of it. Even Sanda hardly speaks. There are moments in the film where the term "pregnant pause" would have to have an amazing degree of elasticity if it were to apply. As a viewer, there were times when I wanted to scream, "Say something, anything, but say something."

One wonders what burning reasons prompted the production of *The Burning Season*? Was it to reaffirm a contemporary and popular stereotype—that South Asian women are being oppressed by their backward cultural traditions, and we need to go home to rediscover our true selves? Is it that South Asian men are brutal oppressors or wimps at best, and a woman's only source of freedom is to leave them and, in that sense, leave the upholders of patriarchal cultural tradition?

If these are the messages the *The Burning Season* hopes to communicate, it will surely succeed, as its audience is largely white.

In this film, it seems the only way for women to be emancipated is by following "the route" laid down by the white version of "the feminist movement." Yet it has long been argued, validated and re-articulated that, for women of colour, the family plays a different role—rather than simply being a site of oppression, the family often plays a supportive role, acting as refuge, sheltering individuals from the harsh realities of living in a predominantly white, racist environment.

Moreover, within communities, women play a pivotal role as cultural bearers, transmitting traditions from one generation to another, orally and through networks of communication. The family then is critical as a source of rejuvenation, strength and identity. Yet men are part of this familial structure, and men do exercise patriarchal power, as is the case in virtually all cultures, the dominant society included.

But none of this comes through in *The Burning Season*. The film identifies the source of oppression of South Asian women as stemming from cultural tradition rather than unequal power relations, as is the case everywhere. If oppression is located in a cultural system, what choice is there but to leave that system and join the world of the "liberated"—where structural inequalities are perpetuated in a myriad of ways?

The deliberate construction of South Asian cultures as oppressive, restrictive and rigid is made even more apparent in light of the principal female actor, Akesh Gill's own cultural background. According to a reviewer, "Gill... grew up in a family that encouraged her rather than restricted her." She had to learn how to act the oppressed South Asian woman so that she could show the audience the way to liberation. Yet, Gill plays a Sanda who is completely alone. Sanda does not interact with any other woman, she has no friends, she has no network of support. She is alone in a men's world where the only other women she encounters are defined by their relation to men in the household.

Alone, unhappy and enmeshed in a restrictive culture, Sanda opts to be alone, to make her own way. And her story, according to Crossland, "is about the difficult journey we must all take to gain control of our lives."

If that's the burning reason for *The Burning Season*, I can only surmise that Crossland has imprinted his own gender-biased, ethnocentric assumptions regarding the emancipation of South Asian women.

Yasmin Jiwani is a South Asian cultural theorist, writer and activist.

Reviews: Vancouver International Film Festival:

Viewers' voices

compiled by Anne Jew

Kinesis *decided to try something a little different in our review of films at this year's Vancouver International Film Festival. Instead of getting one reviewer to talk about the films she saw, we attempted a more collective format and asked several feminist filmgoers what they thought of films they had seen. Many of our reviewers write for or volunteer at* Kinesis.

The first five films reviewed were shown together under the title "Five Women Directors." Most of our reviewers had negative things to say about the programming choices and packaging. Reviewer Winnifred Tovey sums it up: "I guess they had five short films by women directors kicking around. I had assumed they were going to be feminist films and was surprised that that wasn't the organizing principle. The gender of the director and the length of the films just doesn't cut it as a unifying theme for a bill like this."

BEAUTY AND THE YEAST and MY LEFT CYST

Directed by Pat Barker
BC, 1993

Beauty and the Yeast *is a partly animated look at the director's experiences after discovering a cyst in her left ovary.* My Left Cyst *looks at what an animated Marilyn Monroe would do if she had a yeast infection.*

Lydia Kwa writes and works in Vancouver: My Left Cyst was small in scope—reduced to a left cyst—but funny. *Beauty and the Yeast* appeared to be a postscript to *My Left Cyst*. It was hilarious...and minimalist too.

Anne Jew is a Vancouver writer of Chinese descent and from a working class background: Both of Pat Barker's films are funny, especially the one with Marilyn Monroe. Women's health issues are too often featured as dour subjects in documentaries, mostly made by men. But this director treats "women's diseases" with a sense of humour. Yet both films had a serious undertone.

Winnifred Tovey is a white, working class lesbian and a frequent contributor to Kinesis: I thought, boy, if I ever get an ovarian cyst I'll be sorry I saw this movie. It communicated this weird sense of the inside of your body being terra incognita, like if you turn your back on it for a minute it will breed these terrible things.

THANK GOD I'M A LESBIAN

Directed by Laurie Colbert and Dominique Cardona
Ontario, 1993

Thank God I'm a Lesbian *is structured around interviews with lesbians on issues such as coming out, bisexuality, outing, s/m, racism and the relationship of feminism to lesbianism. The directors talk to Canadian and American lesbians like Dionne Brand, Lee Pui Ming and Sarah Schulman.*

Lydia Kwa: Thank God I'm a Lesbian is [a film of] talking heads. Some interesting things are said, but it doesn't sustain one's interest as much as a film like *Forbidden Love* does. The poetry interlude [where Nicole Brossard reads a poem] was nice, but didn't fit.

Kathleen Oliver is regular Arts contributor to Kinesis: *Thank God I'm a Lesbian* is rather textbooky. You know, it's like, "let's line up these 12 lesbians and ask them the same five questions, put them against a strange backdrop...and you have the answers!"

I guess it could be great if it's the first film you've ever seen about lesbians but, as someone who's seen quite a lot, it didn't break new ground for me. I think the film was talking to people from a relatively limited range of outlooks and experiences about various things. There was certainly some diversity among the women, but not a whole range of perspectives represented.

Faith Jones is currently enrolled in Women's Studies and English at SFU: The filmmakers—whoever they may be—really lost me when they showed that image of the pierced nipple being pulled right after Dionne Brand had said how difficult s/m imagery can be. As a Jewish woman, I really have a hard time with Nazi paraphernalia. So when Dionne Brand said that she felt differently about the slave images, the torture images, I felt the filmmakers shouldn't have turned around and showed us that. I don't care what their intent was, it was disrespectful of Brand and of all of us who have an emotional response to those kinds of scenes because of our ethnic history.

What saved the movie was how much I liked some of the individual lesbians who were interviewed. Dionne Brand, Sarah Shulman, and a few others were very brilliant and insightful. But I kept wanting more. The filmmakers kept cutting their comments up into sound bites. I don't think it's as useful to hear seven women talk for twenty seconds each on, say, bisexuality, as it would be to hear one or two women give complete thoughts.

Winnifred Tovey: It ought to be basic now that the audience should know who made the movie and who they are. I think it's part of taking responsibility for talking that you have to begin by identifying who you are and what sort of stake you have in what you've got to say.

There was a diverse group of white women, a Black woman, an Asian woman, and an Aboriginal woman. That's not good enough. It really felt to me that Lee Pui Ming's presence in the film was tokenistic. She did the music, but she didn't have the same presence in the film as any of the other women.

Both Dionne Brand and Laverne Monette kept referring to their colour and their cultures in grounding their positions. None of the white women did this. They didn't seem to feel any need to examine their positions or ground their positions.

Because Brand and Monette were the only ones doing this, and they were the only Black and Aboriginal women, it seemed as if the filmmakers were saying that every Black lesbian would have the same position, and every Aboriginal lesbian would have the same position.

photo courtesy Mina Shum

So Yee Shum, Mina Shum and Mona Shum in *Me, Mom and Mona*

ME, MOM AND MONA

Directed by Mina Shum
BC, 1993

In Me, Mom and Mona, *the director, her sister and mother talk together in Cantonese and English about their lives, including how they lie to the father about the relationships the daughters have with men.*

Lydia Kwa: I had a problem with the whole dynamic of the three women admitting they were talking about the father in secret and saying that the way they could have power was to just go behind his back and lie. Also, the whole thing was made into a joke and [the women] seemed really dysfunctional.

The film was potentially harmful in the sense that it perpetuates the image of women of colour as devious and very unconscious. It made the mother seem quite unconscious, [which] seemed quite trivializing. I didn't like the film.

Anne Jew: I had two very conflicting reactions to *Me, Mom and Mona*. The first one was it was the closest thing I've ever seen to my own experience on screen, because my family talks like that all the time, half in English and half in Chinese. We have that same kind of energy when we're all together and talking. So that was great to see.

But there they were talking about lying to the father. Mina asks at one point: "Do you think this is wrong?" And they all justify why they're lying to their father. I guess I've been thinking a lot about misogyny and sexism in Chinese culture and how that really hasn't gone away. It has just manifested itself in more subtle and covert ways. It's so obvious watching the film. I mean my family does that too.

I've also been thinking about how our history of misogyny affects relationships between women, how it creates competition and has probably done major damage to our collective psyches, and these women really stick together and support each other. But they're doing it partly by protecting the male, which is what we've always done and we shouldn't be doing it anymore.

Also, at the end, they say they can do anything they want—I guess they're in for a surprise.

Lorraine Chan works in film distribution at the National Film Board: I thought *Me, Mom and Mona* showed how some families talk and how you're always using a mixture of say, Chinese and English.

I thought it was also interesting how the mother delighted in colluding with her daughters to lie to the father. In some ways, it undercuts the whole notion of a Chinese patriarch because obviously, these women are carrying on with their own lives and they're doing whatever they want and they're lying to this father, keeping him in the dark and everybody has this big laugh about it in the film.

On one hand, it's dishonest and sneaky and underhanded. But here we have Chinese Confucian patriarchy, and there are these three very independent women who are yukking it up because, "boy, isn't dad kind of out of it, ha ha."

It's quite light, a fresh documentary and not too serious. It's definitely a different interpretation of what feminism means.

Cynthia Low is a Vancouver potter: Me, Mom and Mona didn't say anything or do anything for me. It talked a lot about heterosexual relationships, how women come together because of their relationships with men, either through lying to them, or how our relationship with our family is also defined by our heterosexual relationships.

Mona and Mina spoke too much. They kept interrupting their mother. That was really rude. I would like to have heard more about what their mother thought.

It also didn't seem to have any kind of analysis around the gathering of women, so to speak, or of families. What was good about it was it reflected the strength of women, the resilience in terms of the mom was always telling the girls to be independent and to be strong. And they certainly are that.

LETTER FROM FRANCIS

Directed by E. Jane Thompson
Ontario, 1993

Letter to Francis *is based on the short story "Second Spring" by Ann Copeland. A nun is sexually abused by a priest she comes to trust and respect and discovers how oppressive religious institutions can be.*

Lydia Kwa: It started to say some very important things about the Catholic church and portrayed the sexism and harassment that was going on, but it felt like I was left hanging. It could have gone much further and said some more things. I think it did make a point.

Anne Jew: I kept waiting for something to happen. I think that kind of stuff is really important: the whole institution of religion and how so many people use that power to prey on others. For example, this priest having all this power and using it sexually and how religion really denies your self, your sexual being, and how that was popping up in their lives.

I didn't know why it was programmed with all the other films. It just seemed so... liberal. Nothing happened in the end to change things. Okay, so she left [the church], got married and had kids, but the other woman was continuing her relationship with that priest. It just went on.

Winnifred Tovey: I didn't get this movie. I couldn't figure out why I couldn't get it. Coming after the lesbian movie, and starting out with the close friendship between those two women—I watched quite a bit of the movie thinking it was going to be about how heterosexuality betrayed what was happening between them. By the time I figured out that wasn't what was going to happen, it was too late for me to figure out what it was supposed to be about. Why program those films together if they weren't going to inform each other?

Kathleen Mullen, who recently moved here from Ottawa, is a bisexual, white feminist and

frequent filmgoer: I don't know how *Letter From Francis* got in there. It's traditional and boring. It was just about this woman leaving the order, and doesn't really deal with the different issues brought up.

IN THE GUTTER AND OTHER GOOD PLACES
Directed by Cristine Richey
Alberta, 1993
THEM THAT'S NOT
Directed by Christene Browne
Ontario, 1993

The first documentary follows the lives of three men who collect refundable cans and bottles and other miscellaneous items in the alley ways of Calgary. Them That's Not *is a documentary focusing on women and children in poverty and how racism, sexism and classism in society and institutions like welfare help to keep them there.*

Anne Jew: As I was watching *In the Gutter* I began to get this very creepy feeling. I'm not sure what the class background of the director was, but it seemed the film's perspective was very much one of being on the outside looking in, or vice versa. It was one of privilege.

Through interviews, the men, although they acknowledged how alcoholism played a major part of putting them where they were, made it seem like collecting refundables was a career choice. Instead of working in a highrise for some corporation, they were their own bosses in the business of recycling. The director didn't incorporate any analysis of how much the system is to blame.

Also, there were these romanticized scenes of one man pushing his shopping cart up a hill against a backdrop of the city as the sun was setting. It reminded me of those documentaries where some white guy or woman goes to a developing country and tries to "understand" the people and probably becomes quite attached to them, but never really understands the issues, especially the one of power.

So it was with great relief and excitement that I watched the second film *Them That's Not*. It had interviews with a wide range of women and children across Canada and, although it was obvious what poverty had done to their lives, they were all extremely strong and aware of their situations and why they were in those situations.

Also, everyone was mobilized to attack the system and all in different ways, from demanding a certain translator to actively suing the government. It was great to see women of colour portrayed in such an affirmative light, acknowledging racist and sexist oppression, and fighting it in every way they knew how.

According to the press release, the director grew up in poverty, so I'm sure that has a lot to do with the success of the film, in terms of really understanding the issues and the emotional and psychological impact of being poor, but also being able to present it without condescension or romanticization like the first film. And that's important and truly empowering.

LE SEXE DES ÉTOILES
Directed by Paule Baillergeon
Quebec, 1993

A 12-year-old girl longs for the return of her estranged father, Pierre. She lives with her mother in New York, and is well-loved by her. Her father returns, but the girl, Camille, has to deal with his return into her life as the transsexual, Marie-Pierre.

Kathleen Mullen: [The film] looks at a young girl's struggle with accepting her father's transsexualism. She's coming to terms with her father's transformation as well as going through her own childhood-to-adolescence changes. She wants her father [and mother] to be perfect and realizes her father is a person with faults.

By the end of the film, she comes to terms with her father's transsexualism and comes to terms with her mother. Even though her father had abandoned them, she has a romanticized idea about her father, and thought her mother was terrible. She comes to realize her mother is the one who has been there for her.

The film is depressing and sad, but is a realistic look at her struggle and her growing up into teen-hood, as well as in dealing with her father's becoming a transsexual and all the difficulties that come with that.

It has a realistic take on the gay male community as well—there's transsexuals, transvestites and hustlers, and there's your "average" couple too. By the end, Camille is able to see herself as not being as lonely and as alienated from everyone around her after all. It's worth watching.

photo by Rafy

Maria, with her children in Toronto, waiting to see a welfare worker in the documentary *Them That's Not* directed by Christene Browne

ONLY DEATH COMES FOR SURE
Directed by Marina Tsurtsumia
Georgia/Russia, 1993

The core of the story No One Writes to the Colonel *by Gabriel Garcia Marquez is transplanted from Central America to Caucasus Georgia.* No One Writes to the Colonel, *a tale of a retired colonel waiting in vain for his pension in a small town full of hate and intrigue, is essentially about a lonely, stifling journey into the self. In* Only Death Comes for Sure, *the setting is a present-day Caucasus Georgia laid waste by civil war and religious turmoil.*

Mariam Bouchoutrouch is of Moroccan heritage and took Russian Studies at McGill: It's about an elderly couple who live in a small village and are basically starving to death. They're very poor and don't have enough money to eat. The husband has agreed to take care of a fighting cock and spends all their money on feeding the cock and not feeding themselves.

It's similar Russian films I've seen so far—black and white, stark, drab, slow-paced and depressing. The photography is wonderful and [takes] new angles on things.

The good thing about it is that it focused on the wife. It points out how the woman didn't have any say in how to do things. She makes recommendations and suggestions, and her husband ignores her or treats her like shit. But it turns out she was right and he was wrong.

The wife is quite a strong character. The film mostly shows her frustration at not having any other access to power aside from her husband, and her husband not doing anything about anything. She's very isolated [from other women].

There's one other woman in the film who stands out—the wife of a rich man. She comes in, says things and has a very strong personality, but she 's always put down by her husband in front of other people. She's not a very strong character in the whole movie, but the way women are treated is not ignored [by the filmmaker]. She points out how poor people live and underlines it with the women [in the film]...like, look who gets the worst of it.

THE LONG SILENCE
Directed by Margarethe Von Trotta
Italy, 1993

The Long Silence *is about a gynaecologist who is married to a judge investigating corruption in politics. The gynaecologist lives under the constant threat of her husband's potential murder. When that happens, she deals with her grief, then continues to seek the truth in the case he was investigating.*

Mary Lou Esguerra, a Phillipina artist and art educator, is a recent arrival to Vancouver: I'm not too familiar with Italian actors, outside of the ones that come to Hollywood, but those in this film are very interesting. The woman who plays the lead has a very strong presence. She's not stereotypically beautiful or stunning, not a Sophia Loren. In fact she's middle-aged, and has a particular beauty and charm that comes through because she's a dynamic person.

[Her husband] is assassinated and we see her go through this process of first being with and worrying about him, then living through death threats by telephone, eventually finding out he died in an airplane crash, and living through the widowhood as well as wanting to continue his investigations.

The movie ends with bringing together all the other women whose husbands have died for the very same reason. They'd all been married to judges who have tried to open up this whole corruption ring. She makes contact with somebody in the media who tries to collect all the different voices of these women and has them come on television. But in the process of continuing this investigation, she gets killed herself and that's how the movie ends.

It's a very personal and moving account of her life as a woman who struggles through all this. But at the same time it raises some frightening things. On one hand, it's a fictional account of her life. On the other hand, it's not very unreal at all. In fact, it's a very real sense of what's going on.

In the film, she implicates all these particular centres of power, these corporations. I don't know if she names them, but somewhere in the film, one of the guys mentions these [corporate] people are going to various countries, creating little wars in developing nations, then selling them off.

The film shows to what extent people's lives were being affected outside that personalized account. It's much more global, it's happening worldwide and it's real. And that was very scary.

The scariest was watching her die. Her life is a parallel or analogy of what goes on everywhere on a much larger scale. It's very intense.

Lydia Kwa: There's quite a political message behind this film. Somebody made the point to me that the main character is always strong and not stereotypically female. All the women don't fit the stereotypical beautiful, gorgeous women, but they have a beauty about them.

The protagonist does really well in terms of portraying this strength and her resolve at the end of continuing with her husband's task by speaking out about what happened. In the end, she gets assassinated as well. That's powerful.

But I couldn't stand the music. It was overly dramatic in the background, heavy and too much.

AILEEN WUORNOS: THE SELLING OF A SERIAL KILLER
Directed by Nick Broomfield
Britain, 1992

Aileen Wuornos allegedly killed seven men in 1990 and 1991 while working as a sex-trade worker in Florida. This documentary focuses on the media attention she has received and the people who have tried to make money off her story. She is currently on death row.

Anne Jew: It was interesting watching this story. I'd heard about it briefly when it was happening, probably on one of those tabloid TV shows, but it was amazing to see how many people are sucking her dry, from her lawyer to some guy writing a book on her and complaining she didn't put enough effort into her appearance as a sex-trade worker. When that happened, a woman sitting behind me started yelling "Fuck you!" at the screen. That was great.

The enormity of the injustice—she said she killed the men in self defense as they were trying to rape her vaginally and anally—was overwhelming. It made me angry and frustrated.

And when we see her in the courtroom yelling at the judge or hear her in a taped conversation with her female lover, we really get the sense she is doing everything she can to fight back against all the utter insanity of the media and the legal system.

The problem is, the director is a nice guy or whatever and he's exposing the situation, but at the same time he's doing exactly what he seems to be criticizing—profiting from her story. And it's only because he has this "nice guy" persona that he is getting away with it.

Kathleen Oliver: This film is by a male filmmaker, but I hope it's shown again because it was a really interesting document about the way the patriarchal justice system sets a woman criminal up in dramatically different ways than a male in the same situation.

Although Wuornos is guilty of the crimes she's committed, the system is also guilty of "crimes" against her. She is far more humane for all she has done than a lot of the other people who are involved in this case. This is a clear, self-explanatory document of great injustice. I liked it a lot although it made me really upset.

Review: **Last Chance Cafe:**

Intrigue of the unknown

by Ria Bleumer

LAST CHANCE CAFE AND OTHER STORIES
by Anita Roberts
Polestar Press, Winlaw, BC, 1993

Roberts' first collection of short stories is a delicate weave of life's often unspoken and disturbing realities of growing up with an awareness, insight and appreciation that stems from a deep need to survive and become whole.

Through the stories, with their evocative illustrations, the reader witnesses the young girl Anna's journey through fear, sexuality and finally anger. Anna's most immediate and accessible realm of exploration is her own body, while conflicting messages and abuse mold her being into a kind of mechanism that soon knows how to feel safe in the world outside herself.

Childhood sexuality, so seldom talked about, is treated with an urge for acknowledgment and as part of the initial journey into the self and others. In "Mortal Sins," Roberts explores how the Catholic trappings of Anna's life shapes her interpretations of sexual self. Seven-year-old Anna and her nine-year-old sister Lou get caught "playing dirty" by their father, who has "very strong ideas about sex and sin." Accordingly, he beats Lou, who got caught with her pants down. In her child's mind, Anna comes to understand from her father's context how "playing dirty" is a mortal sin. Yet, according to her mother it is only a "sin of immodesty," as long as she confesses it. However, this too changes when Anna is forced by a priest to spell out her "sins" and feels ashamed.

The "blasphemous" experience of many a young girl's sexuality is liberated in the telling of "Kitty Love." Here, the nine-year-old Anna is always surrounded by her sisters and knows her developing body, explores it. Roberts describes a young girl who is proud of her body and fantasizes upon her newly discovered sensations, with help from Tiger, about being kissed "on those other lips, the secret hungry ones."

In "Last Chance Cafe," the first of the nine stories, Anna, "the third girl not born a boy," pulls the reader into her Catholic world of anxiety and guilt on a Sunday morning getting-ready-for-church routine. Ever aware of her father's looming presence, a "little bird of anxiety" inside Anna's chest lets her know where the anxiety barometer at home is at by flapping its wings. Life is controlled by the father's temper time bomb. Everything hinges on the constant threat of explosion. As Anna's mother reminds us, "...Dad's at the end of his rope!" and a final "ejaculation of rage" is inevitable.

No matter how hard Anna tries to protect herself from her father's beatings, if "she happened to be within reach when he was on the warpath, she got it just like her mother and sisters." Anna's coping mechanisms are as natural to her as the childlike, often humorous, observations of her mundane world.

This is explored even more fully during a leap far away from the realities of home on summer holidays. Anna wants "to be just like her dad"—that is, in control and courageous—not like her mother who "always disappeared when things got scary." The freedom and rawness of nature, the warmth of the water, bring Anna the safety of a "warm blue womb," while her father is more relaxed. Anna receives a glimpse of promise. The reader senses Anna's relief at finally feeling safe and strong with her changed father, but also anticipates the anxiety, "that prickly little creature that had been quiet all summer," as soon as things get back to "normal."

Later on, Roberts shows how the dynamics of Anna's relationship with her father carry over in relationships outside her family when Anna seeks the friendship of her class mate Wilemena, nicknamed Billy, in the story, "Nanny Goat and Billy Goat."

Anna is "consumed with a love for Billy that forgave all faults...Billy had a kind of power over [Anna]. [Anna] was adoring—Billy was the adored. [Anna] poured all her energy into charming and pleasing Billy. Billy was charmed and pleased as it suited her."

photo by: Jill Krementz

It's been a long time comin'

Last month, Toni Morrison (pictured above in New York in 1974) became the first African-American to receive the 1993 Nobel Prize for Literature. Born in Lorrain, Ohio, Morrison has been writing since the early 1970s. She is the author of six novels: *The Bluest Eye*; *Sula*; *Song of Solomon*, which won the 1978 National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction; *Tar Baby*; *Beloved*; which won the 1988 Pultizer Prize for fiction; and her most recent *Jazz*; and has written one play, *Dreaming Emmett*. The Nobel prize comes with an award of $1.1 million Cdn. Congratulations!!

Roberts' voice of the adult woman allows Anna's inner world to come to light. It allows her to share with the reader those secret pleasures, fears and longings. This exposure enables "Anna" to be released from the adult body and live on the outside as a whole. The very fine borders between inner and outer world depicted in Anna's life parallel the equally fine line between reader and words on a page—between Anna's experience and that of the reader. Roberts' graphic yet subtle, deeply moving approach to using language as a common thread linking Anna's experience with the reader's, inevitably explodes into an empowering release of the unspoken and echoes deep within our own female bodies.

Humour intertwines with harsh realities as though it were Anna's "little half-smile..., the one that made her feel like she was far away and separate from what was happening to her." In the reading process, this delicate use of humour creates a certain distance, permitting access to Anna's painful discoveries.

Through the immediacy of emotion and her tactile use of language, Roberts succeeds in allowing this reader direct access to Anna's experiences. It allows the borders between reading and being read to fade. The intimacy and familiarity with the need for safety, innocent childhood play, the promise that lies in a child's excited curiosity captures our own anxiety and relief. Anna's experience becomes the reader's. The stories touch our own lives and evoke our own experience.

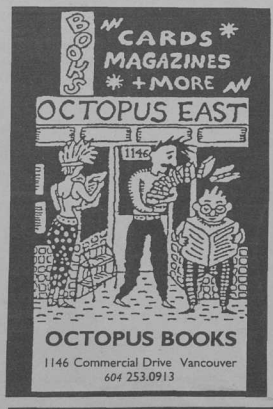
The strength of *Last Chance Cafe* lies in Roberts' conviction to tell Anna's "immodest sins"—so the shame no longer needs to hide in the dark and what is underneath can reveal its authenticity.

Reading Roberts' stories has been like opening a big old metal door squeaking into the abyss of patriarchal control. Once inside, the rumbling of fearful and angry voices caution the intruder. Yet, the familiarity with the bizarrely logical perception of a child also causes one to chuckle. I could not help but notice that, while arriving deeper into this abyss, inside my own body a rumbling had started—manifesting itself in tangible physical discomfort. Could it be that Roberts' stories have activated my own dusty stories in the Fear and Guilt Department of childhood? My mind ventured into this intrigue of the unknown, guided there by Anna.

Roberts' ability to give her language feeling and urgency will compel both adult and teenage women to read these stories and trigger a "coming out" of voices everywhere.

Last Chance Cafe will be launched on November 5 at Josephine's Cafe, 1716 Charles at 8 pm. Anita Roberts will be present.

Ria Bleumer is a Vancouver writer and bookseller who has a deep appreciation for literature that evokes a personal response.



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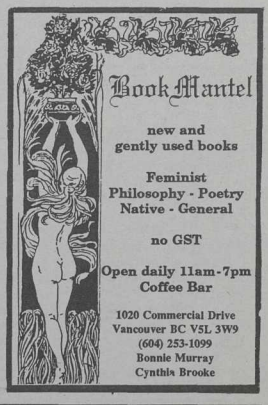


Two reviews of Out on Main Street:

Both hungry for more

by Sharon Lewis

OUT ON MAIN STREET
By Shani Mootoo
Press Gang Publishers, Vancouver, 1993

I *well* enjoy reading Shani Mootoo's collection of nine fiction short stories, titled *Out On Main Street*. It's a real treat to read stories that talk about my food, my people, my heartbreak ovah women dem. It was after the reading that it hit home I have to write a review. Critiquing another woman of colour, a lesbian, a struggling artist, ouch, scary! After a lot of chat with Lezlie, who is also writing a review of Mootoo's book *[see this page]*, I felt it was important.

I work as an actor-writer-director in Toronto and have experienced reviews by people who have little understanding of my culture. Sometimes it's hard, sometimes the review is useless, and sometimes the review has something for me, something that will push me forward or incite me to look further. I have never been reviewed by another woman of colour—a review from a woman of colour would begin with an insight that other reviewers do not have, hopefully it would be closer to her on an emotional level, my work would be vital to her, just as Mootoo's work is vital to me. It also means that a review from a woman of colour would hit harder coming from the same community. Ouch scarey, but *important*. So here I go.

Out On Main Street offers stories that I as a mix-up, Trin-Jam-Can bisexual feminist activist-actor can revel in, see myself in and have myself reflected. Mootoo's background as a visual artist supports her talent to paint breathtaking images in writing. The situations Mootoo offers of secret desire for a woman, silence around abuse, being brown but not "the right kind" of brown, trigger me on an emotional level. I'm hungry to see these (my) stories told.

My hunger is fed by the brilliant imagery throughout the collection, but at the end I'm left with a somewhat empty feeling of eating enough but not the exact food that I needed. The emotional journey of the character or the voice of the author isn't present enough for me to stay in contact with the subject of each piece. It seems that Mootoo tries to objectify those forces that act against her protagonist/subject, but instead what happens is we, the reader, also become distanced. Mootoo's pungent, large-size portions, of images are what allows me in to feed.

The collection begins with "A Garden of her Own." The story takes on one "day in the life of" Vijai, a neglected and emotionally bruised wife, attempting to cope with being an immigrant in an urban setting. We are transported to the tiny, cramped kitchen that Vijai is trapped in when she presents us with the image of the bird "trembling in my hand. I can, right now, feel the life, the heat in the palm of my hand from the little bird the fright in its tremble."

As the story unwinds, we are somewhat removed from the emotional life of the character—Mootoo moves from first-person narrative to describing the feelings of Vijai in the second person. "She slid back to her side of his bed, the other side of the line that he had drawn down the middle with the cutting edge of his outreached hand."

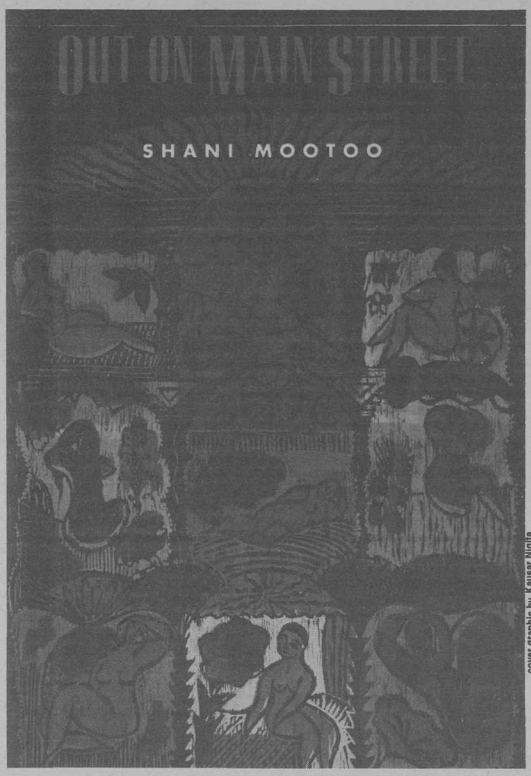
"Lemon Scent" is a sweet story, that reminds me of the numerous crushes I had on my aunties and distant cousins. Mootoo offers a delicious image of a "score of healthy-looking prunes slit slightly and stuffed plump with peanut butter, the slits sealed over with firm pink icing." The romance between Anita and Kamini is rich with erotic and lush imagery.

"Wake Up" is less image oriented and follows perfectly after "Lemon Scent" as the author's voice is stronger and follows an action-oriented narrative. I feel it is one of Mootoo's most revealing pieces in the collection and allows a peak into the not-so-pretty picture of growing up with an absent father and a mother who is beaten down.

"Out On Main Street" is the pivotal piece in the collection. It is the only piece written in Trinidadian dialect. I felt close to the piece, as the humour of being a brown girl, with a brown girlfriend in the middle of "Little India" in Vancouver is brought to life. I feel comfortable as "Janet and me? We does go Main Street to see pretty pretty sari and bangle, and to eat we belly full a burfi and gulub jamoon, but we doh go too often because, yuh see, is dem sweets self what does give people like we a presupposition for untameable hip and thigh." I also felt the uncomfortableness of Shani's struggle with being a transplanted brown girl in a white land, which at times is reflected in the awkwardness of the dialect.

Two of the strongest characters in the collection for me are the abusive boyfriend Bobby in "The Bright New Year's Eve Night," and the husband in "A Garden Of Her Own." In the former, Bobby does speak in the nar-

See LEWIS on page 20



cover graphic by Kausar Nighla

by Lezlie Lee Kam

OUT ON MAIN STREET
By Shani Mootoo
Press Gang Publishers, Vancouver, 1993

I was asked to write this review by the author of the book and immediately refused. I was flattered, but do not consider myself to be a writer. My refusal however, stemmed from the fact that I had seen Mootoo's work, had heard of her reputation as an artist and did not feel I had the right to critique her work, especially as another woman of colour and another Trini.

But Mootoo said it was precisely for that reason *Kinesis* wanted me to write the review and why Mootoo had asked me; precisely because of my Trini-callaloo-indo-dyke roots. So with much respect for Mootoo's work but great humility, I share my feelings.

Out On Main Street was pleasurable to read--both times. Like Sharon Lewis writes *[see review this page]*, it is painful to critique the work of another woman of colour, but I can only relate to what speaks to me in the work.

Mootoo's explosive imagery pervades her work. Her characters are so believable, they evoke powerful feelings and memories for me. The combination of these two factors makes her stories come alive. But I still felt and wanted that piece which seemed to be missing.

The nine stories in the collection speak to me of my life in Trinidad, my coming to Canada, my feelings of isolation, feeling different and not knowing why, not being able to fit in as "a Trini Indian". I feel at home with, and proud of the strong, brown Indo-Trini dyke content in *Out on Main Street*. Finally, someone is writing about me, some of my life, heartache over "dose nice brown women." I am one of those "kitchen indians...a cultural bastard,"--but I am proud of it. But I kept waiting throughout for one of the "indo-trini" women to fight back and be proud of her heritage, despite the fact it is difficult to assert and be a Trini-indian in Canada. I wanted to hear "Yes, I am a 'roti-indian' and proud of it".

"A Garden of Her Own" opens the collection. This story remind me powerfully of what I felt like being brought to Canada against my will, being forced to live in an apartment for the first time, having no garden of my own. I can relate to the character Vijai's intense feelings of isolation and loneliness, missing the strong vibrant colours, noises, flowers, birds and trees of Trinidad.

Mootoo's bold imagery in this story carried me back to my homeland and, like Vijai, I missed "the sunlight--and a sky ceiling miles high" and "rain, pinging on, winging off the galvanized tin roof. But always warm rain." The vivid imagery of sunlight, loss of warmth, no sound of rain on the roof, evoked powerful memories and spoke to my situation of my colour and my powerlessness.

This story set the tone for me of how I felt coming to this country, feeling still sometimes out of place, looking different, "afraid to smile at strangers...not like home...where everybody knows everybody."

"Lemon Scent" is playful yet full of despair. I too shared the experience of Anita loving and lusting after the unattainable Kamini. Being teased with Mootoo's erotic imagery and her creative use of language--"her fingers touch my lips. My tongue flits against her forefinger. The heat and smell of her cologne, like a pounding surf, fill up my mind,"--took me back to my first brown woman lover...who was also out of my reach in the heterosexual society/country in which we lived. And like this story left me hanging at the end, wanting more...

"Out On Main Street" was another favorite for me, funny yet giving a dose of reality. Like Janet and Pud, I still continue to experience being a "watered-down Indian, we skin brown, is true, but we ain't good grade A Indians." Yet I felt the Trini dialect in this story was a little awkward and sometimes forced--maybe because they are so far from home, but it is their way of still trying to show their "trininess?"

I enjoyed the strong brown dyke content and assertiveness of Pud, but I shared her feelings in Mootoo's graphic description of being "a gender dey forget to classify...with mih crew cut and mih blue jeans tuck inside mih jim-boots." Yuh know, is de same way I feel when I used to walk down Gerrard Street with my girlfriend "who so femme she redundant..."

Overall, this story illustrates what it is like, still, trying to fit in and deal with culture shock, racism and homophobia all at de same time. And dat is ah real struggle all de time!!

"Last Day Pandemonium and Heart Beats" will speak to any brown girl who has had to endure the regimented existence of a "convent school life" in Trinidad. There is nothing so nerve-wracking as the experi-

See KAM on page 20

LETTERS

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 very soon.

Love,
Kinesis

More on Clayoquot

Kinesis:

I'm writing from a small city in eastern Ontario, Brockville, and consider myself fortunate to pick up your publication whenever I make it to Ottawa, a two-hour trip from here.

As a feminist and as an aspiring writer, it gives me a tremendously good feeling to read *Kinesis* and to know that publications such as yours exist and are reaching people. Being from a small city, I am all the more isolated from the ideas and shared support of fellow feminists.

I was particularly interested in the article written by Shannon e. Ash on the blockade at Clayoquot Sound.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Grant
Brockville, Ontario

Gitskan piece hits spot

Kinesis:

Thank you for your September 1993 issue! I found particularly powerful the interview with Ardythe Wilson. The struggle of the Gitskan-Wet'suwet'en is a shining example of the long hard process that will ultimately transform Canada. Their example of patience and endurance is something I and many of European ancestry, can learn from.

And it was a privilege to read Shannon e. Ash's moving testimony of her time spent at the blockade at Clayoquot Sound. I honour the protesters that are putting their lives on the line for the rest of us.

Peace,
Erin Fletcher (Ms.)
Toronto, Ontario

The Importance of Email

Kinesis:

I've just read your article "Can email be female?" in the Sept *Kinesis*. Bravo! Very important and timely! I do hope that many more women will become aware of this important new medium.

I agree with your comments about its "potential to be a tool for progressive social movements." In the discussions that I've had/read/etc. with the few (very few) women that I've met/read who have become involved in "the Net," I've become a bit concerned about the direction in which things are going. It's important that women have (and take) the opportunity to represent themselves as "cyberspace" develops.

Cheers!
Kathy Mulholland
Vancouver, BC

Email can be female

Kinesis:

Enjoyed Gladys We's recent article on "email" *["Is email female?"* Kinesis, *Sep/93]*.

I agree with Gladys that the majority of subscribers to email are men. I am on three networks, which are all adult-education oriented, and the majority of subscribers are men from universities.

As a result of my circulating Gladys' article to numerous women at University College of the Fraser Valley, a few more women have been requested to be connected to email. Since most of the deans and program heads at UCFV are men, not as many women are connected to the system.

Regards,
Susan Witter,
University College of the Fraser Valley
Chilliwack, BC

LEWIS from page 19

rative but it's the images that work at defining him.

"Like a dragon protective of its existence, or on the scent of prey, he breathed long and heavy and hot. He gritted his teeth tightly against each other and gripped the steering wheel hard."

The husband in "A Garden of Her Own" is written in the second person. "But the husband would only pat on his face a stinging watery liquid with the faintest smell of lime, a smell that evaporated into nothingness the instant it touched his skin." Yet the images that Mootoo offers us of these male characters further the story along precisely because they are objects, outside of the control of the subject(s) of her stories. We just want to know more about the subject, what the character is feeling and what the story is, her story.

Sharon Lewis is the artistic director of Sugar and Spice productions in Toronto, atheatre company committed to the promotion of women of colour artists. She is a Trin-Jam-Can bisexual, feminist, activist, actor.

KAM from page 19

ence Mootoo so perfectly describes, like a life in prison, or hell. The story spoke to me of the mixture of races, white nuns, brown/black teachers, control by white perfects, feelings of powerlessness. The imagery of the "fishwives" is outstanding and is a brilliant way of making us realise the lack of insult that is usually intended when people say "you sound like a bunch of fishwives." For me, now, that term will always be a compliment!

Now I want more from Mootoo; more of women and girls who look and sound like me, eat my food, feel my life. Mootoo's explosive imagery and crafty use of words painted pictures of my life and my experience.

However, I sometimes felt I was only in a tropical setting without knowing it was Trinidad. Maybe this was done deliberately. I did want more emphasis on the influence of Canadian missionaries, the white British and the white Americans, on our way of life as "trinis." I felt that the majortiy of the female characters were unhappy in some way, wanting to be like their mothers, trying to find themselves.

The "trini dykes" seemed to be the most assured. In "Sushial's Bhakti," I enjoyed the strength and determination of the character, and the vibrant imagery of ritual in trying to find/create a new self, despite all the cultural obstacles in her way.

I found the male characters violent, unreliable and abusive. Maybe their redeeming qualities were not apparent, or not meant to be. This serves to make the voices of women strong and powerful.

Time for another book, Shani. These stories left me wanting more.

Lezlie Lee Kam is a Callaloo-Roti dyke. (She is not a writer.) Toronto has been home for the last 24 years, but her soul is in Trinidad. She enjoys a sweet mango and a hot "lime" anytime!

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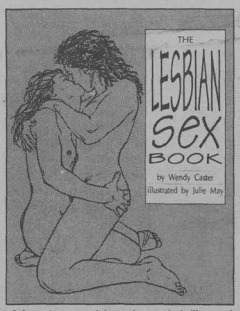

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New from Creative Publishers...
A Woman's Almanac 1994: Voices from Atlantic Canada
Marian Frances White

A Woman's Almanac 1994: Voices from Atlantic Canada, attempts to further unearth and preserve wise woman words. More and more it reflects women's vision of the world, while allowing an exchange of ideas and a way of connecting with others of similar interests. It celebrates women's honed ability to observe.

In its twelve profiles, women are also asking questions, rather than just sharing answers to their own particular dilemma.

While this almanac serves as a useful agenda book, it is much more than this. Along with the biographies, it provides astrological information, the phases of the moon, and a plethora of useful and interesting trivia.

Marian Frances White, a fifth generation Newfoundlander, was born at home in Carbonear, 1954. She makes her living by editing and research. Her first major book, *Not A Still Life: The Art and Writing of Rae Perlin*, was released under CREATIVE PUBLISHERS' literary imprint, KILLICK PRESS, in 1991. *The Finest Kind*, a compendium of biographies from six years of *A Woman's Almanac* was released by CREATIVE PUBLISHERS in 1992.

Marian makes her home in St. John's, Newfoundland, and is currently developing a film script—*The Untold Story*—about the 1920s Suffrage Movement, and has also written a young adult history of Newfoundland and Labrador for the *Discover Canada* series, to be released by Grolier Limited in October, 1993.

This is the eighth edition of *A Woman's Almanac*. It is available in most major bookstores.

ISBN 1-895387-30-2 160 pages, 5 x 8 $11.95

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BULLETIN BOARD

read this

Bulletin Board listings have a maximum of 50 words. 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 (+$0.56 GST) for the first 50 words or portion thereof, $4 (+$0.28 GST) for each additional 25 words or portion thereof and must be prepaid.

Deadline for all submissions is the 18th of the month preceding publication. Note: *Kinesis* is published ten times a year. Jul/Aug and Dec/Jan are double issues.

All submissions should include a contact name and telephone number for any clarification that may be required.

Listings will not be accepted over the telephone.

Kinesis encourages readers to research the goods and services advertised in Bulletin Board. *Kinesis* cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided or the safety and effectiveness of the services and products listed.

Send submissions to Bulletin Board, *Kinesis*, #301-1720 Grant Street, Vancouver, BC, V5L 2Y6. For more information call 255-5499.

EVENTS

WANNA GET INVOLVED?

With Kinesis? We want to get involved with you too. Help plan our next issue. Come to the Writer's meeting on **Tues, Nov 2** at 7 pm at our office, 301-1720 Grant St, Vancouver. If you can't make the meeting, call 255-5499. No experience is necessary, all women welcome.

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! Come to committee meetings; Finance/Fundraising, **Mon, Nov 15,** 5:30 pm: Publicity, **Wed, Nov 17,** 5:30 pm. The next volunteer potluck and orientation will be on **Thurs, Nov 18,** 7 pm at VSW, 301-1720 Grant St. For more info, Call Jennifer at 255-5511.

ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING

The Vancouver Status of Women is offering an Assertiveness Training course for women beginning in **Nov**. It will be conducted once a week for six weeks during the evening from 7-9:30 pm. The course is free, but pre-registration is required. Financial assistance with childcare is also available. For more info, please call 255-5511 **Mon-Thurs** from 9:30 am-5 pm.

EASTERN EUROPEAN WOMEN

"Eastern European Women say no to sexism and capitalism". An account and slide show by Portland Oregon Jewish activist Adrienne Weller and Seattle lesbian/gay organizer Susan Docekal following their 9 week tour of Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Poland, Serbia and the former Soviet Union. Weller and Docekal interviewed feminists, radical, anti-war and anti-fascist activists. Their international speaking tour will come to Vancouver on **Sat, Nov 20** at 8 pm at the Croatian Cultural Centre, 3250 Commercial Drive. There will be a $3 door donation with an eastern European buffet served at 6:30 pm for a $9.50 donation. For rides or childcare, call 874-0535 or 688-5195 two days in advance. Wheelchair accessible.

WYLD WYND

Wyld Wynd performs bold jazz that rocks the "norm". Writer, guitarist Sylvi & bassist Wendy Solloway perform at the Broadway Express on **Nov 25** at 9:30 pm. No cover. Performance takes place at 2733 Commercial Dr (at 11th Ave). For more info call 877-1699.

KATHLEEN SHANNON

Kathleen Shannon, founder of the National Film Board's award-winning women's studio, "Studio D", talks candidly about feminism, creativity and the spirit on Vision TV, **Nov 22.**

HISTORIC GARAGE SALE

Press Gang Printer's fab closing sale: Beautiful papers and notebooks, graphic arts supplies and equipment, office furniture and knick-knacks, computer, posters, shelves, etc. Get a piece of our history and show some support: **Fri, Nov 5** at 12-9 pm and **Sat, Nov 6** at 10-5 pm at 603 Powell Street. For more info call 253-1224.

REBEL VOICES

Janet Stecher and Susan Lewis from Seattle, in concert at Josephine's on **Nov 6** at 8-10 pm at Josephine's, 1716 Charles St. They sing about social change, politics, life, tragedy, humour. "Uncommonly powerful harmonies"; their songs have been described as "tasteful, tactless, tender, taxing, treasonous treasures, theatrical thrill, tongue-in-cheek tragedy." Advance tickets are $5-$10. For reservations/tickets call 253-3142.

LILLIAN ALLEN

A book launching, reading and signing of "Women Do This Every Day: Selected Poems" by Lillian Allen a poet, writer, activist from Toronto at Josephine's, 1716 Charles St. **Nov 8** at 7:30 pm. Free!

VIDEO NITE AT JOSIE'S

It's video night at Josephine's, 1716 Charles St. **Sat, Nov 13** for Part one of the Lesbian Soap, "Two and Twenty." It's free to the public, donation if you can to benefit the continuation of Josephine's. Part two of "Two and Twenty" is **Fri, Nov 19**.

RADICAL WOMEN

Radical Women has embarked on an international speaking tour to publicize findings from its recent trip to Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Russia. The sixth stop on the tour will be a public forum in Vancouver at the Croation Cultural Centre on **Nov 20**. For further information call 874-0535 or fax 688-5195.

AIDS IN ZIMBABWE

The world premiere of the film Side by Side: Women Against AIDS in Zimbabwe will be screened at 7:30 pm and 9:30 pm on **Dec 1**, at the Pacific Cinematheque. This film shows the positive work being done by many remarkable Zimbabwean women who are committed to stopping AIDS. This film features: Anatolia Mushaya, Dr. Sunanda Ray, and Tisa Chifunyise. Each of them exempli-

Shani Mootoo

Book Launching/Reading/ Fundraiser for Rungh

Press Gang Publishers and Rungh Cultural Society invite you to celebrate the launching of

Out on Main Street
by Shani Mootoo (Press Gang)
and
Van de Graaff Days
by Ven Begamudre (Oolichan)

8 pm
Tuesday, November 16
at the Heritage Hall,
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$8

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Call Della at 253-2537 for more information

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By women of colour for women of colour. Local community news and events, interviews and music not heard in the mainstream.
Friday, 8-10pm: *Rubymusic*
12 years on the air, *Rubymusic* features the best in music by women—old, new, lost and found.
For a free listener's guide call 684-8494 Monday-Friday, 10am-6pm

Book Launching/ Reading

Press Gang Publishers is happy to invite you to celebrate the launching of

In Her I Am
(a special edition of erotic poetry)
by Chrystos

8 pm
Friday, November 19
at The Lotus, 455 Abbott, Vancouver
Reading begins at 8:30 sharp
Snacks and signed copies of the book will be for sale
For more information call Della at 253-2537

BULLETIN BOARD

EVENTS

fies the hope of the human spirit, and the creativity and commitment of Zimbabwean women to fight AIDS. The film was produced by local film makers Harvey McKinnon and Peter Davis. Co-sponsored by the World AIDS Group-BC and the Academy of Cinema and Television. For more info contact Peter Gillies, World AIDS Group at 254-7052 or Harvey McKinnon at 732-4351.

NORA RANDALL

Nora Randall and CCLOW invite you the book launching and celebration of Nora's recent publication, "Back To School Survival Guide For Women". There will be food, drinks and an opportunity to discuss the book with the author. All are invited on **Nov 23** from 4-7 pm at Josephine's, at 1716 Charles St.

VLC EVENTS

On **Nov 5**, there will be a paint party. Come out and help revitalize the Vancouver Lesbian Connection Centre at 876 Commercial Dr. at 10 am. On **Nov 6**, come and join other Lesbians to discuss your work and share writing with each other at the Women's Writing Group, at 6-9 pm. On **Nov 7**, B-Average performance will be at the Lotus. Help support the VLC by attending this hilarious comedy at 7:30 pm. On **Nov 14** at 4-6 pm there will be an initial meeting to form a support group for lesbians investigating motherhood. Anticipated areas of interest are legal aspects, alternative insemination, parenting, etc. On **Nov 21** there will be a Lesbian Craft Fair & Coffee Shop, from 1-7 pm. Come out and buy lesbian-crafted presents for your lived ones and check out the centre. For more info on all these events, call the VLC at 254-8458.

VIDEO IN

The works of Lynn Hershman will be presented at Video In Studios located at 1965 Main Street, on **Nov 19** & **Nov 20**, at 9 pm. Hershman is known worldwide for her experimental videos fiction and fantasy, interrogating perceptions of the self as they entwine with contemporary issues of gender, desire, prostitution, abuse, eating disorders and just plain life. Tickets are $4 or $5. For more info call 872-8337.

LINA DE GUEVARA

Lina de Guevara is the artistic director of Puente Theatre, which she founded in 1988 to give a voice to the experiences of immigrants from Latin America. She emigrated to Canada in 1976 from Chile, where she was an actress, director and teacher at the Austral University. Members of Puente Theatre will join Lina to present an excerpt from their forum theatre piece "Canada Tango". **Fri, Nov 26** at Josephine's Coffee Bar, 1716 Charles St. Admission is $8/$5 for members.

KOKORO DANCE

Kokoro Dance presents Esse, the essence of a women, through a poetic narrative by Elizabeth Dancoes, dance by Barbara Bourget and music by Robert J. Rosen. Performed by Barbara Bourget, Elizabeth Dancoes, Barbara Pollard and Cellist Peggy Lee. **Nov 30 to Dec 4** (two shows **Dec 4**, 6:30 pm & 9 pm with a fundraising art auction/party after the 9 pm performance) at 8:30 pm at Vancouver East Cultural Centre, 1895 Venables St. Tickets are $16/$14 on **Tues/Wed/Thurs** (2 for 1 on **Tues**). On **Fri/Sat,** they are $18/$16. For reservations and info, call 254-9578.

CLAIRE KUJUNDZIC

Flying females, falling figures, and umbrellas are all subjects of Claire Kujundzic's current playful, colourful, and lively work on display at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre Gallery, on till **Nov 23**, 1895 Venables St. Amnesty International, Tools for Peace, and the International Confederation of Midwives are among those who have used her art-

EVENTS

work. VECC Gallery hours are 12 noon to 6 pm daily. For more info call 254-9578.

AMY HILL

Writer/performer Amy Hill's one-women "autobiographical romp" called Tokyo Bound chronicles a vivid and engaging coming-of-age story of the Japanese-Finnish-American author. She was labelled American in Japan and Japanese in America. Hill's voyage of self discovery is both humourous and poignant. This is a co-presentation with the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, the Powell Street Festival and the US/Canada Performance Initiative Project. On **Nov 24-27** at Vancouver East Cultural Centre, 1895 Venables St, at 8 pm. For ticket info call 280-3311. For reservations call 254-9578.

VOICES IN ART

Voices in Art: Tools of Resistance is a conference for women to continue the discourse among women about the different ways art can be political and cultural tools. This conference will focus on Aboriginal women and women of colour artists and the politics of feminism, to create a celebratory forum in which the creative strengths, voices and differences among Aboriginal women and women of colour are explored through panel discussions and/or performance of the artist's art. Speakers include Sunera Thobani (NAC), Marrie Mumford (Association for Native Development in the Visual and Performing Arts), Djanet Sears, Fauzia Rafig (Diva), Marlene Tsun, Sheila James (The Company of Sirens), Brenda Joy Lem, Winsom, and a production by Sugar 'n' Spice and many more. It takes place on **Sat, Nov 13** at Dunning Auditorium, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. Fees are $10-$25 sliding scale and childcare is available. The space is wheelchair accessible. For more info call the Education Commission at 519-545-2725 or OPIRG at 519-549-0066.

LESBIAN/GAY STUDIES

UBC's President's Lecture Series in Lesbian and Gay Studies has various speakers scheduled for the month of **Nov**. Daphne Marlatt and Betsy Warland will be speaking on "Together and Apart: Inside Collaborative Writing" **Tues, Nov 2,** 7:30 pm at Angus 110, University of British Columbia. Prof Monique Wittig and Susan Stewart (Kiss and Tell) will speak on "Lesbian Bodies and Lesbian Con/Texts" **Fri, Nov 12** at 7-9 pm at the Hebb Theatre, University of British Columbia. Admission is free. Deborah Britzman will speak on "The Significance of Lesbian and Gay Studies for Transforming Education" **Fri, Nov 19** at the Diamond Faculty Club, Simon Fraser University, 4-6 pm. Admission is free. Isaac Julien takes a look at "Race and Post-Colonialism in Cultural Production". A showing of *Looking for Langston* and *The Attendant* at Pacific Cinematheque, 1131 Howe St on **Sat, Nov 27**. Sliding scale admission. For more info on all these events call 822-5358

FREE LAW CLASS

The People's Law School is offering a free immigration law class. Immigration policy is ever-changing. To keep you up to date on the current trends there will be a free immigration law class at West Pt. Grey Community Centre, 4397 W. 2nd Ave on **Mon, Nov 29** from 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Wheelchair accessible. To pre-register call 224-1910.

ECONOMIC WORKSHOP

The Ministry of Women's Equality, in cooperation with Status of Women Canada and other provincial/territorial women's directorates, is organizing an "Economic Equality Workshop" on **Nov 29-30** in Ottawa, Ontario. This event will provide a forum for feminist economists to present their papers/research/ideas and policy directions, and will serve as a medium to improve the links between economic researchers and policymakers in Canada. The proceedings of the

EVENTS

workshop will be published and tabled in **Jun** at the annual conference of federal, provincial and territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women. The document may be made available to women's groups, provincial departments throughout Canada. Please call Zeynep Karman at (613)992-7099 for more info.

FREE LAW CLASS

The People's Law School is offering a free law class about Small Claims Court. Small Claims Court offers a way for people to settle legal disputes cheaply and easily, without a lawyer. The Small Claims Court has changed many of its forms and procedures to make it even easier. Get the latest info about these changes by attending the free law class at Kensington Community Centre, 5175 Dumfries St on **Wed, Nov 24** from 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Wheelchair accessible. To pre-register call 327-9401

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

"Sexual Harassment: No more excuses...to do it, to tolerate it, not to react." **Nov 10-13** in Ottawa, Ontario. A conference sponsored by the Canadian Association Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education. For more info call Mariette Blanchette (613)237-6885 or Solange Cantin (514)343-7020.

EMPOWERING FARM WOMEN

"Beyond the Barriers: Empowering farm women to step beyond the barriers to meet the challenges of the 21 century." The 6th National Farm Women's Conference is being held at the Delta Pacific Hotel in Richmond from **Nov 11-13**. The goal is to provide an opportunity for farm women to speak with an integrated voice on social, legal and economic issues and to promote a recognition for the valuable role farm women play in the economy of Canada. For more info call Linde Cherry at 856-6363.

CRIAW CONFERENCE

"Expanding the Healing Circle", Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women annual conference is being held on **Nov 12-14** in St. John's, Newfoundland. The organizers believe that healing strategies need to be developed and shared on the problems of violence against women in single industry towns, addictions, institutional violence, shelter issues and legal policy issues. Keynote speaker Maggie Hodgson, of the Nechi Institute for Drug & Alcohol Education. For more info call the CRIAW coordinator at (709)753-7270 or fax (709)753-2606.

BLACK WOMEN'S CONGRESS

The 11th Biennial National Congress of Black Women conference is occuring on **Nov 12-14** in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Their focus will be on women's' health issues. For more info call Norma Walker at (204)775-4378.

POVERTY/FEMINIST VIEWS

The Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations will host their 2nd annual conference on **Nov 18-20**, co-sponsored with UBC School of Social Work. This year's theme is Poverty: Feminist Perspectives. It hopes to bring together anti-poverty and community groups with interested researchers to investigate what feminist perspectives mean for understanding poverty. For more info call UBC at 822-9173.

EVENTS

INFO POLICY CONFERENCE

BC Information Policy Conference "Partners for Public Access". We are constantly being told that we are in the information age but it is the large corporations and institutions that controls most of the information flow. Many community and public organizations are concerned that the current government policies on information access will reduce our access to information. This conference is designed to give a general examination of government policies and to explore the role of Freenet, a non-profit community computing utility. **Nov 19-21** at SFU at the Harbour Centre. Fee $40/$20 for Students/low income. For more info call BC Library Association at 430-9630.

MULTICULTURALISM

"Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism, A Vision for the Future: Equality, Equity and Empowerment" is a conference sponsored by the Canadian Council for Multicultual and Intercultural Education, provincial affiliates and federal government to be held in Vancouver from **Nov 25-27**. The local contact is Sam Fillipof 731-8121 or fax Inez Williston in Ottawa at (613)233-4499.

ABORIGINAL WOMEN/SOCIETY

"Aboriginal Women in Contemporary Society" is the 3rd annual cross-cultural program presented by the Whistler Centre for Business and the Arts on **Dec 1** at Whistler. The program, in recognition of the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples, will present aboriginal perspectives on the interrelatedness of women & men, family, work, politics, treaty negotiations, education, community, health, and justice. For info call the Centre 932-8310 or 682-5248 (toll free from Vancouver) or fax 932-4461.

ELLEN BASS

Ellen Bass is the author of *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse*. This intensive one day training will provide a basic, nonclinical overview of issues related to working with adult survivors. Ellen explores creativity in the healing process, working with diverse populations, dealing with intense feelings, safe touch, the importance of language, and writing as a healing tool. **Jan 26**, Vancouver, 1-800-561-5789.

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sunday dec 12 noon - 6pm you decorate

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GROUPS

VLC

VLC hours are **Tues/Thurs** 12-6:45 pm. **Sat** 12-5 pm. Ongoing groups: **Sun**-Lesbian Youth Group; **Mon**-Survivers of Incest Anonymous; **Wed**-ACOA; **Thurs**-Healing Circle for First Nations and mixed Native heritage lesbians;**1 st & 3rd Fri**-Over 30's Social Group; **2nd & 4th Fri**-Women of Colour Support Group. All groups start at 7 pm. **1st & 3rd Sat**-Writing Group. VLC needs your help. We are more than a centre. We have a number of committees that are looking for volunteers. If you are interested in becoming a vital part of the VLC, consider joining any one of the following committees: Political Action, Fundraising, Library, Education & Outreach, Lesbian Health Issues, or International Networking. Please phone for more information at 254-8458 or drop by in to 876 Commercial Dr. Join us at the centre for a craft fair and coffee house on **Nov 21**,1-7 pm.

INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN WEEK

Plans for International Lesbian Week '94 are coming together fast and furious. Some events planned are: Sexpertease at Graceland; an evening of performance and displays by First Nations women; Lesbians in recovery AA and Alnon; Lesbians of colour video and lecture series; a craft/trade fair to buy/sell/trade. There is still time to get involved including helping to organize the Dyke Visibility March. Join us at our next meetings **Sun, Nov 7** or **21** at 7 pm in the common room at 1656 Adanac. For more info call Mary 684-5307.

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CLASSIFIEDS

WALLACE AWARD

Bronwen Wallace Award of $1000 will be given for the first time to honour the poetry or short fiction of as yet unpublished young writer. Submission requirements that the writer must be a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant, under the age of 35 as of **Jan 15,** unpublished in book form, but whose work *must have appeared in at least one independently* edited magazine or anthology. Applicants should submit 5-10 pages of previously unpublished poetry in English (or, in alternate years, no more that 2500 works of an unpublished English language prose fiction sample, double spaced). The writer's name, address, and phone number are to appear only on the cover sheet accompanying the manuscript. All pages should be consecutively numbered. Entries will not be returned. The deadline for submissions is **Jan 15,** and all submissions must be sent to The Bronwen Wallace Award, c/o The Writer's Development Trust, 24 Ryerson Avenue, Suite 201, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2P3. The final Judges will be three established writers. The decision of the judges will be final.

LESBIAN EROTICA

Sister Vision Press is calling for new works of short stories and poetry "Celebrating Lesbian Erotica". Deadline for contributions is **Dec 30**. Send your work with SASE to Sister Vision Press, PO Box 217, Station E, Toronto, Ontario, M6H 4E2.

WOMEN OF COLOUR

Sister Vision Press is calling for short stories and poetry for a new collection of writings by women of colour. The deadline for contributions is **Dec30**. Please send your work along with a SASE to Sister Vision Press, PO Box 217, Station E, Toronto, Ontario, M6H 4E2.

ASSIMILATION IN CANADA

A call for submissions for "But Where Are You Really From? An Anthology on Identity and Assimilation in Canada". Essays, personal narratives, articles, commentaries and poetry are wanted for this anthology which will examine issues around identity and assimilation in Canadian society. In particular, this anthology will focus on the experiences of non-white women, born or brought up in Canada, in search of cultural identity but caught between two sets of values, traditions and lifestyles-those which derive from Canadian society; and those influenced by cultural heritage. All submissions should be typed, double spaced (diskette copy if possible) and include a bio with full address and telephone number. Do not send originals. Deadline is **Jan 15**. Submit in duplicate with a SASE to Identity, Sister Vision Press, c/o Hazelle Palmer, 19-1666 Queen St East, Toronto, Ontario, M4L 1G3.

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photo courtesy the NFB

The NFB and the Chinese Cultural Centre present two free screenings of short films by Chinese Canadian women directors—*Return Home* by Michelle Wong (above) and *Me, Mom and Mona* by Mina Shum—playing Sun, Nov 7, 2 pm, Unit 860-4400 Hazelbridge Way, Richmond and Wed, Nov 10, 7:30 pm, 50 E Pender, Vancouver. For info and tickets call the CCC offices at 278-0873/687-0729 or the NFB at 666-3838.

CLASSIFIEDS

LESBIAN ARTIST/CRAFTSWOMEN

VLC is holding a craft fair on **Nov 21** and is looking for lesbian artists and crafstwomen, etc. Any interested womyn please call 254-8458 for more info or to register for a free table.

THERAPEUTIC ALLIANCE

Counselling and therapy using an integrative and eclectic approach in order to explore the individual's conflict and distress within the social context in which this occurs, such as adoption and fostering; racism and anti-semitism; heterosexism, etc. For an appoint, please call Sangam Grant at 253-5007.

DECEMBER 6TH ROSE BUTTONS

Dec 6 is Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action to End Violence Against Women. To honour this day, and as part of the 16 Days of Global Activism Against Gender Violence (**Nov 25-Dec 10**), the YWCA of/du Canada is again producing the Rose Buttons with an accompanying bookmark. The December 6th button, which bears a large red rose, reads: "In Commemoration of the 14 women killed in Montreal, December 6, 1989, and all women who have suffered from violence." Groups working to end violence against women can sell the buttons for fund-raising and public education. Available in bags of 100 for $50. English or French text. To place your order contact: YWCA of/du Canada, 80 Gerrard St East, Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1G6, Attention: Rose Button. Tel: (416) 593-9886. Fax: (416) 971-8084.

HOUSEMATE(S) WANTED

At Sky Ranch women's land, near Burns Lake. Very Remote. Very beautiful. Room available in old farmhouse, short-term or long-term. Rent 10-15% of income. Contact Judith at 694-3738. C4, site 20, RR2, Burns Lake, BC. Pets, children welcome. Work exchange negotiable. Seeking new members.

VILLA DE HERMANAS

Beautiful, spacious LF owned guesthouse on long secluded beach in the Dominican Republic. Tropical gardens, pool, large private guestrooms, sumptuous meals, massages. Room rates: $330 single; $440 double per week. Call our Toronto friend Susan, at (416)463-6138 between 9am & 10pm.

A WOMAN'S PLACE

Emotional Fitness Centre Counselling, education and consulting service of the North Shore. Offers feminist and lesbian affirmative counselling, workshops, support groups. Areas of specialization: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, communication, relationship difficulties, emotional, physical, sexual abuse recovery, coming out. Call Lou Moreau at 924-2424 RCC.

CLASSIFIEDS

WOMAN-TO-WOMAN

A feminist counselling service for all women who are wanting to make positive changes in their lives. For relationships, coming out, substance abuse, sexual abuse and other forms of violence, I offer a safe, supportive, professional environment in which to explore your options. Frances Friesen BSc, BA, MA (candidate), 5-6975 Kingsway, Burnaby, 540-0634, Sliding scale, free initial consultaion.

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Joan Robillard, MD, General Practitioner for all kinds of families. Located at 308-2902 West Broadway, Vancouver, V6K 2G8. Telephone 736-3582.

GODDESS INSTITUTE

University instructor of Goddess Mysteries seeks feminist partners with financial means to create an institute for spiritual transformation based on divine feminine. Please pass the word around! Love to hear from you! Dr. Nadia Torrens, 70051 Londonderry PO Edmonton, Alberta, T5C 3C6.

LOG CABIN

Lesbian wishes to share log cabin on women's farm in Coombs on Vancouver Island. Must be smoke tolerant. $235 month, everything included. Available **Dec 1**. Iris 248-4942.

WOMAN SINGER

Woman singer, guitarist, songwriter, spiritually inclined is looking for similar features to specialize in vocal harmonies. 436-5739.

RIDE WANTED

From Vancouver to Kimberley/Cranbrook area and back, ideally leaving Vancouver before Christmas and returning after New Year's. Will share gas and driving—experienced winter driver. Please leave a message for Sally at 251-4231. I will get back to you after mid-Nov.

WHERE ARE YOU?

Ann Rainboth, Rachel Godhu—where are you? Lizanne wants to re-connect with you. Please call me at 921-9726 (home) or 985-1888 (work!). Candice would like to see you too, Angela (the Red from Saltspring).

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