



MATINALE – Women's Media Alliance film by Janis Lundman.

SEE STORY PAGE 10.

INSIDE BROADSIDE

FEATURES

MILLETT & SEXUAL

CONTEXT: *Broadside's* Susan G. Cole interviews Kate Millett, who was in Toronto for a conference on female sexuality. Much of Millett's art these days deals with erotica and images of women's sexuality. "When you talk about women and sex," says Millett, "you're talking about other things; it's all in a social context." Page 8.

THE GODDESS IS COMING!

In the fourth of a 5-part cartoon strip by artist Beth Walden, the Goddess continues her return journey to a war-stricken, patriarchal Earth. Page 7.

MOVEMENT MATTERS:

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NEWS

PENSIONED OFF: The current debate around pension reform for women centres around "widow's pensions" and direct pensions to homemakers. Some feminists think all such pensions encourage women to stay in the home, but Louise Dulude, who reports on the issue for *Broadside*, disagrees. Page 4.

SEX ED. AT U of T: Since 1976, the Sex Education Centre at U of T has been unable to counsel women on birth control or abortion, the result of a struggle between the Students' Administrative Council and St. Michael's, the Roman Catholic college on campus. Luanne Karn and Mary-Louise Noble report. Page 5.

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Don't miss this month's calendar of Toronto women's events, for May 1984. Page 15.

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COMMENT

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DILEMMA OF REVENGE: A Toronto theatre collective presents *This is for you, Anna*, a performance work about a woman who kills the murderer of her five-year-old daughter Anna, and about the ethics of response to violence against women. Page 11.

THEATRE ON THE

COMMON: Banuta Rubess describes a recent theatre tour to England, in particular to Greenham Common, the recently closed-down women's peace camp in Berkshire. Life was hard at the camp, says Rubess, and some of the plays, though acceptable to an urban theatre audience, were not appropriate at Greenham. Page 12.

THE IVORY SWING: The image of Krishna and Radha on a perpetual swing forms the underlying symbol for the lives of the women in Janette Turner Hospital's novel *The Ivory Swing*, a story of women caught between two cultures in India. Reviewed by Carroll Klein. Page 13.

LEARNING OUR WAY: A collection of essays edited by Charlotte Bunch and Sandra Pollack, originally called *Not By Degrees*, explores feminist education in degree-granting institutions, and alternative forms such as Calafia and Sagaris. Reviewed by Nancy Adamson. Page 14

LETTERS

Womenfilm/Womenart

Broadside:

Womenfilm/Womenart wishes to clarify the serious misrepresentations regarding our involvement in the Eros Festival (originally called Women's Festival '84, then Feminist Eros, and most recently Alter Eros. We wish to bring to the readers' attention the statement that Womenfilm/Womenart sent to the artists of the Eros Festival regarding our withdrawal. As well, we wish to respond to Phyllis Waugh and the Festival Coalition's allegations (*Broadside*, April 1984) which raise serious questions in the feminist community.

Womenfilm/Womenart did not, as Waugh states, regard the whole festival as "our" project. What was "ours," if anyone deserves credit for ideas, was the concept of feminist eros, which became the context of our film about feminist art. We wanted to make the concept more accessible to the community and thus last summer proposed to A Space an exhibition project that would be realized in conjunction with our film. The film was our primary project for which we wanted to coordinate selected art events that would be meaningful as events in our film, as well as meaningful as a series of exhibitions on their own.

There was a general feeling in the communi-

ty that perhaps another women's art festival should take place in Toronto in the spring of 1984. A Space gallery, Womenfilm/Womenart and other organizations were contacted by members of Women's Perspective Collective to participate in this yet undefined festival. Within the first month of the planning stages the theme and name of Feminist Eros was chosen for the festival and A Space declared its autonomy within this festival context, and took under its umbrella the A Space visual arts show, the Desire Show, and the Gallery 940 show. Womenfilm/Womenart also stated its autonomy which for Womenfilm/Womenart and A Space was defined as independent curating and independent fundraising for their events. Womenfilm/Womenart then encouraged A Space to make use of our Eros grant proposals and extensive research for A Space fundraising.

Waugh incorrectly states that we did not contact the artists we named in the grant application, and a sensitive issue arose out of this misinformation. All women were contacted either by letter or phone call prior, or immediately following the drafting of the proposal, and were invited to discuss this project. We named artists that were being "considered," but also the proposal involved an "open call for work," and thus welcomed the involvement of unknown artists. (At the time of the proposal writing we could not be sure which artists would be exploring imagery of women's sexuality and empowerment six months into the future.) The Canada Council assured us that the term "considered" meant simply that, and was in no way binding. The naming of artists "being considered" was understood as indicating an intention, as was the "open call," but this intention was not the reason Womenfilm/Womenart was awarded a grant. Rather many factors came into play, and as A Space attests, naming artists "as considered" is "standard procedure."

As we understood it, an Explorations Grant implied precisely that - an exploration, not a repetition of previous work. For this reason Womenfilm/Womenart made an effort to design our project differently from the past works of the Women's Cultural Building and Women's Perspective. The primary difference, other than our definitive Eros theme, was that our objective was the filming of the eros imagery, and was not limited to exhibitions or festival events per se. The two filmmakers wanted to work creatively with artists in an exploration of the imagery dealing with women's sexuality and empowerment, and begin to address some of the earlier questions raised by the film *Not a Love Story*.

Regarding the allegations that we let go two of our staff members - yes, we did. The reason for their dismissal without notice was that a complex situation developed which

made it impossible for them to remain. One woman found it difficult to "approve" of the workings of any organization other than Women's Perspective with which she was aligned. She then sabotaged our work during her employment with Womenfilm/Womenart and influenced a co-worker, forcing us to act in the extreme manner we did. We do want to make it clear that it was not the criticism of our organization that prompted the release of our staff at that time: it was the mishandling of sensitive information and the misrepresentation of our intentions by those former co-workers.

The festival process then introduced us to unbelievable resistance to our work - which included months of abuse, double standards, threats of boycott, mob tactics, labelling, and further misrepresentations: treatment which not only was uncerot, but made it impossible for us to remain involved.

Furthermore, we have found it incredible that on numerous occasions - as in Waugh's statement, we have been isolated as "the two women," and thus the "other." Is there something inherently wrong with two women working together? Womenfilm/Womenart never was designed as a collective and never intended to make a film as a collective. The accusation of "incorrectness" because we don't operate organizationally as a collective is dumbfounding!

When we made it known that we wanted to make a film on *Feminist Eros*, we encountered resistance from Women's Perspective that was so incredible it needs to be made public. We were accused that we "wanted to steal imagery of feminist artists," we were asked "Who asked you to make this film. The feminist community certainly didn't!", and because of the fact that after two years of unpaid labour and finally some grants for our project, we were accused of being "business-women," "entrepreneurs," and "ripping off the community" - presumably to run away with our feminist film to make millions. Of course our reactions to these accusations were strong - but we feel we need to ask the community to consider this kind of thinking? Where does it originate!

The patriarchy has been very successful in erasing our imagery from history. Today, at least 90% of the films that reach any substantial audience are either made by men or support the status quo. Some of the attitudes we have encountered within our own feminist community are not only staggering, but prophesy self-destruction. Do we just want to talk to each other and preach to the converted, or do we want to reach other women through the powerful medium of film?

How ironic that *Born in Flames*, an American film, is lauded here while the two women who are the momentum behind the

current Eros festival receive little support as filmmakers in their own community.

We feel that Womenfilm/Womenart experience in the festival process was severe and reflects badly on the functioning of the feminist community. And for this reason, we feel an obligation to share our experience as it relates to the concept of "politically correct" behaviour. Does "correctness" involve totalitarian methods of working which include censure of other feminists? - as occurred in our case, where the self-selected Festival Coalition drafted a petition to a government source calling for the review of Womenfilm/Womenart's Exploration grant!!

This action was done without an effort to obtain first hand knowledge of the situation and presumably in an effort to appropriate the grant awarded to Womenfilm/Womenart. Women, who at that time had no working relationship with Womenfilm/Womenart, were swayed to endorse a petition containing misrepresentation of facts that could only constitute a character assassination. A Space, when approached to sign the petition, refused to do so as it never was a member of the Festival Coalition and would not endorse such a dangerous precedent in the arts community. The petition, nonetheless, was sent to Ottawa.

We strongly feel that feminist disputes should be worked out in the community and should not go to the government for arbitration. The sending of the petition, as an action, reflects badly on the feminist art community and will inevitably jeopardize funding for future feminist projects. Through this action, Waugh and the "Festival Coalition" have accomplished one thing: they have helped the "chronically unemployed feminists" remain just that.

Is this the feminist way?

Kalli Paakspuu
Daria Stermac
Womenfilm/Womenart
Toronto

Broadside:

I reply to the Festival Coalition statement (April 1984) on the Alter Eros Festival as a supporter, rather than a representative, of the much maligned Womenfilm/Womenart organization. The statement was judgmental and ill-informed. As a recipient of the WF/WA mailout, I sensed no malice in their withdrawal from the festival plans which diverged radically from their original plans. They have received little credit for all the work which they initiated several years ago and have been forced by circumstances to postpone their film project.

Broadside

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EDITORIAL

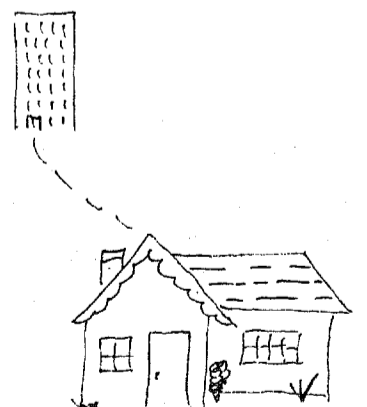
Building Bridges

Broadside readers may recall an exchange that took place in this newspaper in the wake of the first annual Women and Words conference held in Vancouver last summer. Eve Zaremba reported on the events of the conference in an article and Makeda Silvera responded with a letter to *Broadside* taking Zaremba to task for her apparent racist description of the events. Shortly after, Annette Clough reviewed the *Fireweed* issue devoted to women of colour and *Broadside* received more criticism from Cy-Thea Sand in Vancouver who argued that the review did not do justice to the efforts of the women involved.

These two incidents, some of us felt, were symptomatic of a deeper problem that we believed had to be addressed. The "we" in this case, were members of the publishing

community who were conscious of a lack of communication between the editorial collectives of various feminist publications. More important, it seemed that *Broadside's* readership could be wider. *Broadside* collective members met with the *Fireweed* collective and representatives of *FUSE* and *This Magazine* to begin to discuss the ways that all of the members of the feminist press could reach out to subscribers and increase the range of contributors to the magazines.

The process of discussing race and class does not begin and end in one meeting. Indeed, after an exhausting afternoon of coping with the problems of communication, outreach, style and content, many of the participants felt we had barely had the chance to clear our throats, let alone grapple with the real substance of the challenge we've set ourselves. Some participants have decided to continue to meet monthly, understanding that the process can be painful, but that the rewards are worth struggling for.



Moving?

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advance notice.

I first heard of this project in January, 1983 when it had already been underway for two years by these filmmaking partners. I am appalled to learn through the feminist media and through WF/WA's absence at the festival that other organizations had attempted to strip WF/WA of its assets, force a merger of this autonomous organization, and eventually succeeded in usurping control of the Feminist Eros project. I am bewildered by the Festival Coalition's expectation that WF/WA would relinquish its funding (beyond the artist's fees it had agreed to pay) and exasperated that these women could be so dependent as to take no initiative in finding their own sources of funding. I agree that women should not continually sponsor such events by relying heavily on volunteer effort, but different levels of government and the private sector should be approached to support women's creativity with tax dollars and investment. WF/WA's budget could never have been expected to cover these city-wide costs over and above its budget for four salaries, office space, and the costs of filming the festival.

It is a great pity that, as a result of these altercations, the festival has not been filmed and will therefore not reach the national and international audience for whom this discussion of feminist eros had been ambitiously intended. The feminist movement can usually pride itself on bringing out profound social change without violence; however, violence has been done to WF/WA's reputation and little has changed since there are still women's voices being excluded.

Sylvia Brown
Toronto

Broadside:

Without getting too deeply embroiled in what appears to be yet another internecine battle among feminists, I would nevertheless like to comment on the "Statement on Alter Eros Festival" (*Broadside*, April 1984). Phyllis Waugh is concerned that her collective's action of sending a letter to the Canada Council requesting a review of the situation could be interpreted as a violation of the principle of "arms-length funding." While that principle should indeed be upheld, it seems to me that another, more crucial principle has been ignored: that of feminists settling their own conflicts rather than turning to the State for mediation; that is "directly contrary to the nature of feminism."

Perhaps it is in the very nature of eros and desire that it blinds us to the true nature of sisterhood.

Frieda Forman
Toronto

Lesbian Comment

Broadside:

For the April 1984 issue of *Broadside*, I had been asked to write "something on eroticism." So I mused a bit, chatted with one or two women for a few minutes at the *Broadside* office, and then put my humble thoughts down on paper.

My impression was that there were going to be several pieces forming one super-feature, and that other lesbians would be writing pieces, as well as myself. So I didn't feel obliged to write The Lesbian Piece, or to sing the glories of lesbian sex while pitying our poor unenlightened straight sisters. In fact, I felt more inclined to reflect upon the distortions and suppressions of our desire than to write hymns to the goddess of sex. So I wrote a modest little column, musing about why our capacity for hedonism is so limited. It wasn't a specifically lesbian piece, because the problems I discussed affect us as women. But I thought other women would pay due homage to lesbian eroticism.

Imagine my surprise (as Holly Near would say) when I opened the *Broadside* in question and saw my article languishing on the far right column of the centrespread and continuing on page 14, while four-fifths of the double page were devoted to a lyrical homage of women loving men. I certainly have no objections to

heterosexual women telling us about the joys and sorrows of their sex life; I think we all need to hear more of that. The problem was that my piece was not about the same things, it didn't use the same style, and indeed it clashed with the approach of the preceding articles. Readers got the impression that the *Broadside* feature on eroticism, which was constructed as three articles under a single headline, consisted of two joyful and sensual heterosexual pieces, and one lame-duck piece what was anything but an ode to lesbian sexuality.

If one is planning a feature made up of different articles, then there has to be some kind of coordination to make sure the feature works as a whole. And if there is no such coordination, then it would be better to run the pieces as separate articles with their own headlines, instead of forcing them into a mould which the authors had no say in designing.

This may seem like nitpicking on the part of a writer who has second thoughts about an article. But I am not discussing the articles themselves: I am discussing the *context* that was prepared for them and the *relation* that was created between them. A lot of messages can be transmitted through the design of a publication (as we all realize when we see a feminist article about sexual harassment buried in a mass of ads about make-up and diets). In the case at hand, the message that seemed to be relayed by the design was that heterosexual women are re-learning to enjoy both sex and talking about sex, while lesbians are at their desks pondering philosophical questions about infantile sexuality, Freud, and hunger. An unfair message.

Let me stress that I very much enjoyed and appreciated the articles by Joanne Kates and Dorothy Hénaud. I would like to see a lot more of that kind of writing. I just don't want to be seen as providing The Lesbian Comment, or to be put in a situation where it seems as though we are competing to see which kind of sex is best. There are as many different attitudes to sex among lesbians as among heterosexuals (and I myself have been known to go through several contradictory ones in one day).

Next time I write something on eroticism, I want to know what the context is going to be, so I can plan my remarks accordingly. Heterosexual women and lesbians do need to begin a dialogue about our experiences, hopes and fantasies: but we need to be actually talking with each other, and preferably to be discussing the same thing. Women who are writing in public about their sexual and emotional lives are taking a rather big risk, in this fishbowl community we live in. Those who are in a position to structure the discussion and to provide the framework need to give some thought about how to best promote such discussions without repeating the mistrusts and resentments of our collective past.

Mariana Valverde
Toronto

Praise and Proposals

Broadside:

For a long time now I have been meaning to write a letter of praise to *Broadside*. The political analyses presented by Eve Zaremba are thought provoking, and the excellent arguments on pornography and feminist cultural issues in the articles by Susan G. Cole and Anne Cameron are inspiring. These writers, and *Broadside* in general, have helped me to be coherent about things which have angered me.

Looking over back issues, however, I find I do have some suggestions, or criticisms. First, the *Broadside* "Sampler" (May 1982) was a good idea. I am a pack rat, and a neat one, but overuse has made my back issues rather tattered - favourite articles are more accessible in the "Sampler." Second, "Movement Matters" is great, but can there be some follow-up? I want to know what happened in the legal trials of Donna Smyth (see October '83) and Paula Sypnowich (see July '83), and I want to know if they still need money. I want to know if Mount Saint Vincent University's call for funds was successful.

Finally, book reviews. Do we need to see reviews of big name writers, such as Margaret Atwood, who gets plenty of press coverage without your help? I'd like to see the space devoted to her work (a full page in May '83, and a photo of the cover of *Bluebeard's Egg* in "2nd Annual Idiosyncratic Booklist" in December '83), and the work of other best-sellers, given over to lesser known writers, or younger writers who do not get press hype.

Once again, my compliments.

Debra Martens
Outremont, PQ

Feminists in Mississauga?

Broadside:

Recently a friend announced to me that I am a bourgeois feminist. Sigh. I'm white, middle class, a mother, a wife, I drive a station wagon with fake wood on the sides and I live in the suburbs. Call me bourgeois, middle class, semi-traditional, whatever. I'm here and I'm a sister and I want to find other feminists.

Here, for me, is Mississauga. Having recently moved here from Winnipeg, I am not only suffering from mover's isolation syndrome, I can't find another feminist in Mississauga!!!

"Whatever are you doing way out in Mississauga?" asked the receptionist at a women's health clinic when I called to inquire

if there are any feminist family practitioners out my way. (There aren't.)

Recently, at the Anne Wilson Schaefer (author of *Women's Reality*) lecture I put up a sign which read, "Are there any feminists in Mississauga?" with my name and phone number on the sign. According to the response I got, my conclusion is that no, there are no other feminists in Mississauga.

At the *Broadside* fundraising dinner in February I did a very small and highly imperfect survey and found that indeed no one at my table was from Mississauga (and I didn't hear anyone else talking about Mississauga at the other tables either).

Not to be discouraged, I made a few more inquiries (bourgeois feminists can be very persistent). I called the Women's Counselling Referral and Education Centre (WCREC) and asked if there were any feminist therapists here in Mississauga. (Yes, perhaps I could use one, but in fact I am one - in temporary retirement.) To say that WCREC was *eager* to hear that perhaps there was a feminist counsellor in Mississauga (I am debating coming out of retirement) who could double the number in their records of feminist counsellors here, would not be grossly overstating the reaction. But as far as finding other feminists via this route, it was a loss.

And so the search goes on. I'm not giving up. And as I search, I learn. I'm learning about Mississauga, about feminism and feminists, about labels, about the uneven distribution of feminist activity in this area, and I'm learning about what it is like to be a bourgeois feminist. Though I'd prefer to be called a distant sister.

Nikki Gerrard
Mississauga

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Pensions: Homemakers' Estimable Value

by Louise Dulude

An interesting thing happened at a meeting I attended last year. Having decided to join a workshop on "the financial independence of homemakers," I listened to an economist who confirmed that most housewives are just one man away from welfare, followed by a professional animator who listed a series of measures aimed at improving their earning prospects.

The workshop participants - mainly housewives of all ages - were then expected to provide lively comments, but instead they sat there looking slightly bored and ill-at-ease. The reason only became clear when one woman finally said that she, for one, liked being a housewife and had come to find out how she could become more financially secure within this role, and not, as the workshop leaders had assumed, because she wanted to discuss ways of leaving home and joining the labour force. This provoked a torrent of similar testimonials to the joys of homemaking and volunteer activities, and the focus of the workshop took a sharp turn.

The lesson I drew from that episode was not that all housewives are having a wonderful time. On the contrary, I knew that these women were from an above-average-income group. What I found striking was the arrogance of the workshop leaders in believing that they could develop sound and appropriate policies for homemakers without consulting them first.

The experience was not altogether new for me. I had noticed that feminist career women tend to forget that in spite of our enormous gains in the labour market in the past 20 years, the largest group among women aged 20 to 64 (45%) is still made up of those who are completely removed from the paid labour force. Another twelve percent hold part-time jobs, and only 43% are employed on a full-time basis (Statistics Canada figures for 1983).

It has also struck me that on many issues that have been of particular importance to housewives in the last few years, most feminists accepted homemakers' decisions as to what they wanted, but there was in each instance a small minority of career women who disagreed and tried to tell homemakers what to do. The two areas in which this was most noticeable are the part-time employment and the inclusion of homemakers in the Canada (or Québec) Pension Plan.

Most of the feminist controversy over part-time work took place in the rarefied circles of the women's committees of a few Québec labour unions. Because of these committees' influence, the result was that the Québec Status of Women Council, in its presentation to the Wallace Commission of Inquiry into Part-Time Work, denounced the very existence of part-time employment because "it exploits women and encourages them to devote too much energy to their homes." Instead of expanding part-time opportunities, as most Québec women favoured, the Council said we should adopt "legal measures to restrict part-time work to cases of strict necessity."

Few Québec women's groups were amused, and some pointed out that instead of having the effect of urging women to take full-time positions, such policies might well "confine women in the ghetto of their homes." This episode was cited as one of the reasons why, in a recent well-publicized confrontation over the appointment of the new head of the Québec Council, the minister in charge accused the Council of being elitist and out of touch with "ordinary" women.

One of the most significant aspects of the issue of pensions for housewives is that the

APPENDIX 1
Regular Canada/Québec Pension Plan Benefits Paid to People Aged 65 and Over, June 1979

Type of Benefit	Men		Women	
	Age 65 +	Age 65 to 69	Age 65+	Age 65 to 69
Retirement pensions				
• % of population receiving one	70.5%	85.2%	20.9%	32.1%
• average benefit per recipient	\$122	\$160	\$ 87	\$108
Surviving spouse's pensions				
• % of population receiving one		0.2%	6.7%	9.3%
• average benefit per recipient			\$ 93	\$ 87
ATT				
• % of recipients			0.7%	
• average benefit per recipient			\$153	
* Only compared				
SOURCES: Canada Pension Plan des régimes de retraite, no. 2, juin 1979; and provided by the Policy, Planning and Health and Welfare Branch, National				

idea of giving homemakers direct coverage under the Canada/Québec Pension Plan (C/QPP) enjoys massive popular support. A national poll from the fall of 1982 showed that 80% of women and 74% of men are in favour of such a move. Most women's groups have also given it their strong support.

But homemakers' pensions also have powerful enemies. The main one is the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), whose influence was crucial in bringing about the opposition of the New Democratic Party (though it is interesting to note that 79% of union families support covering homemakers under the C/QPP). Other opponents include a handful of professional women and women's groups, some of whom have close links with the CLC or the NDP and some of whom have negative views about the homemaking role.

To clarify matters, let it be understood that the CLC/NDP would not leave housewives with no C/QPP benefits whatsoever. Assuming that a marriage lasted until death and the husband died first, the CLC/NDP position would provide for the equal sharing of the spouses' pension credits at age 65 as well as a generous surviving dependent's pension when the husband died. But if the marriage ended in divorce, the wife's only C/QPP credits would be the proceeds from the equal sharing of their joint entitlements for the years they were together.

Groups such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) reject this formula, preferring instead a combination of equal sharing between the spouses plus direct coverage of homemakers based on the value of their own work in the home. Having thus been recognized as workers in their own right, housewives would no longer need dependency benefits so that surviving spouses' pensions could be phased out.

As this indicates, the present political choice is not between pensions for home-

makers and nothing for homemakers, but rather between direct coverage of homemakers as workers and generous widows' or widowers' pensions for surviving spouses. NAC's main reasons for preferring the first are:

- **Who benefits?:** Widows' pensions are only paid to those whose marriages last until death, meaning an increasingly small group now that our divorce rate has reached 40% and is still climbing. For their part, direct homemaker pensions are not linked to marital status but to having family responsibilities, so that not only wives but also single parents and other people who keep house for relatives would be included.
- **How much is the pension?:** Widows' pensions are calculated as a percentage of the husband's entitlement, so that the housewives who are married to the highest-income men get the biggest benefits while women married to low-income men get considerably less. Under a system of direct pensions for housewives, the amount of the benefit is calculated on the basis of a hypothetical income equal to half the average industrial wage (about \$10,000 now, which roughly corresponds to the cost of hiring a paid homemaker), which produces the same C/QPP pension for all homemakers.
- **Who pays the cost?:** Widows' and widowers' pensions are fully subsidized by all C/QPP participants, including all earners who are single, divorced or from poor two-earner families. On the other hand, direct coverage of homemakers would almost all be paid by the husbands whose wives are at home, with only low-income one-earner couples and single parents being subsidized.

If direct coverage of homemakers is so much the more logical, fairer and more progressive approach, as this shows, how do the CLC/NDP and other supporters of the dependency option justify their views? Their main argument is that "homemaker pensions would be unfair to women who work full-time for more than half the average wage because many of them also do housework when they get-home and this work would not be recognized." In other words, a professional homemaker who earns \$10,000 a year at her full-time job takes care of her family at night and on week-ends would feel unjustly treated because her C/QPP benefits might be the same as those of another woman who had never worked outside her home.

The main problem with that kind of comparison is that it sets up an unreal competition between women at home and the others. One could just as well say that "subsidized child care for employed mothers is unfair to home-

makers because it only recognizes the value of child care when the mother has a paid job and not when she does it herself in her home." But there would be no point to saying such a thing unless one were trying to foment trouble in the women's movement and to keep feminists busy tearing each other apart. Besides, the CLC/NDP's own proposals on widows' pensions would fare even worse in this kind of comparison since their benefits would bear no relation at all to the women's own work but would simply be based on the level of their husbands' incomes.

The other major flaw in the homemaker/earner rivalry argument is that female earners would in fact be among the main beneficiaries of direct C/QPP coverage for homemakers. This is because the phasing out of surviving spouses' benefits would lead to a substantial reduction in their C/QPP costs because they would no longer have to subsidize the widows' pensions of women who stay home to keep house for their middle and upper-income husbands (henceforth, the husbands would pay).

The second line of defence of feminist opponents of homemaker pensions is that such benefits would be "reactionary" and "bad for women in the long run because they would discourage them from taking jobs outside their homes." This denotes a very low estimate of the intelligence of housewives; one would have to be very stupid indeed to pass up an immediate salary and pension coverage because of the prospect of an equivalent or smaller pension at the age of 65.

Secondly and more important, there are other ways of making homemakers more financially secure than to starve them out of their homes. One considerably more humane method consists of maximizing women's choice of working inside or outside by increasing their access to the labour market while gradually extending to homemakers protective measures similar to those enjoyed by salaried workers, such as pension coverage, immediate control over part of the family's finances, etc. In this regard, it is particularly bizarre that a group such as the Vancouver Status of Women, which has worked very hard to defend the right of prostitutes to earn their living as they choose, opposes the inclusion of housewives in the Canada Pension Plan because it thinks that providing services to one's spouse or children is too degrading to be recognized as a legitimate occupation.

Politically, the cause of direct pension coverage for homemakers got a tremendous boost when the report of the Parliamentary Task Force on Pension Reform (chaired by MP Doug Frith) was released in December 1983. After a year of cross-country deliberations, eight of the nine Task Force members strongly came out in support of pensions for homemakers very similar to those proposed by NAC and other groups. Unfortunately, the Task Force did not endorse women's other main proposal to the effect of doubling all C/QPP benefits, so the homemakers' pension that would result from its resolutions would be very small.

When the federal government's response to the Task Force's proposals was issued with the February 1984 budget, it also rejected a general expansion of C/QPP benefits, but said that it was "particularly interested in pursuing discussions about the Task Force's proposal for a homemaker's pension." This was progress, since the government had rejected homemaker pensions in its Green Paper of the year before. In March, PC leader Brian Mulroney went one further than the Liberals, stating that pensions for homemakers were the "honourable thing" to do.

What does all this prove? That housewives are not paranoid when they say that some feminists are putting them down. A small proportion of feminist lawyers, economists, etc. have been opposing every measure that would improve the financial situation of homemakers because they truly and sincerely believe that all women should take a paid job, any paid job rather than stay in their homes. If these career women's life choice had been between full-time homemaking and working as a waitress in a greasy spoon or as a human robot on a fast assembly line, it would be fascinating to know what they would have done.

Louise Dulude is an Ottawa lawyer, researcher and teacher, author of "Pension Reform with Women in Mind" (report of CACSW), and currently Vice-President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

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Sex, SAC and St. Mike's

by Luanne Karn and Mary-Louise Noble

While women and men have been working towards the establishment of free-standing abortion clinics, many are not aware of the restrictions that have been placed on women at the University of Toronto. As unbelievable as it may seem, for the past seven years peer counsellors at the U of T Sexual Education Centre (SEC) have been prohibited from giving women information on legal therapeutic abortions (information which is available at many other university Sex Education Centres, eg. McMaster and Waterloo). Those of us involved with the pro-choice movement realize how inaccessible the option of abortion is to many women. The case at U of T, where students are denied information necessary in order to make an informed choice about a legal option available to them, further contributes to the inaccessibility of abortion.

In 1976, a group of interested students established the U of T Sex Education Centre with funding from the Student Administrative Council (SAC). As the funding body, SAC approved the Centre's mandate "to operate an un-biased, non-judgemental counselling and referral service on all aspects of human sexuality, including those issues related to pregnancy, birth control, venereal disease, and homosexuality, . . . and to present as many alternative views as reflects our present level of awareness."

Presenting women with information on all three options of parenting, adoption and abortion is in keeping with SEC's policy of providing non-judgemental information. However, by allowing the dissemination of information only on the first two options, SAC has not permitted the Sex-Ed Centre to fulfill its mandate with regard to the issue of pregnancy, and by censoring information on abortion, SAC has, in effect, supported the anti-choice movement at this university.

The abortion debate that would include the Student Administrative Council, the Sex-Ed Centre and St. Michael's College, began in March 1977 when the SEC first advertised abortion counselling and referrals as one of its services. St. Michael's (SMC), the Roman Catholic college at the university, opposed the dissemination of this information on the grounds that their student fees were indirectly funding a student centre which condoned abortion. SAC responded to St. Mike's opposition by informally demanding that the Sex-Ed Centre discontinue abortion referrals.

In September 1979, SAC placed a further restriction on SEC, namely that SEC not discuss abortion whatsoever. By February 1980, dissatisfaction with this moratorium resulted in a petition campaign in support of the Sex-Ed Centre. Simultaneously, Kim Shannon (SEC director 1979-80) and Debbie Mills (also a former SEC director) approached Victoria College for their endorsement of full pregnancy counselling, including abortion. Despite the unanimous support of Victoria College, the moratorium on abortion counselling was not lifted.

Instead, in March 1980, SAC chose to begin formal negotiations between the Sex-Ed Centre and St. Michael's College. A pamphlet was to be formulated by SEC and SMC that would contain medical and legal information about abortion and that would be agreeable to both groups. In retrospect, it seems both biased and irresponsible for SAC to allow only one college (SMC) input into the negotiations, even though Victoria College had also expressed their concerns regarding abortion counselling at SEC. By only allowing St. Michael's College this right, SAC had in effect supported the anti-choice movement on campus, once again.

The next attack on the Sex-Ed. Centre occurred in March, 1982, after St. Michael's College received an abortion pamphlet produced independently by the SEC directors Rena Clamen and Becca Broder. At this point, St. Mike's formally threatened to withdraw their funds from SAC, unless negotiations regarding the pamphlet met with their satisfaction. It is important to note that as one of three federated colleges at the U of T, St. Michael's has the option of transferring its student fees to SAC, and they also have the power to withhold them. For fear of losing an entire college's fees, SAC buckled down to the blackmail techniques of St. Michael's and prohibited the SEC from distributing their pamphlet, as well as demanding that SEC continue to negotiate with St. Mike's.

In the following September, SAC amended their original proposal for the formulation of an abortion pamphlet to include two extra sections, one on parenting, the other on adoption. This appeared to be an attempt on SAC's part to offer a compromise to both the Sex-Ed. Centre and St. Michael's College. But there were two problems. First, the ideologically opposed views of SMC and SEC could not be reconciled in the writing of the abortion section of this three-part pamphlet. Secondly, the work of writing the other two sections had been split up between representatives from SAC, SEC and SMC; but both SAC and SMC never completed their portion of the writing. It seems obvious that this so-called compromise was nothing more than a stall tactic on SAC's part in order to avoid having to take a stance against St. Michael's College and in support of abortion.

Until March 1983, no one women's group had committed itself specifically to eliminating this restriction on abortion counselling at SEC. Susan Prentice was a SEC counsellor and a member of the pamphlet negotiating committee, as well as a member of the U of T Women's Coalition at this time. In this capacity, she served as a necessary link between the two groups. Realizing that the negotiations were going nowhere, and in response to a strong anti-choice presence on campus, the Coalition for Responsible Choice (CRC) was formed from some members of the U of T Women's Coalition at Susan Prentice's initiative. The newly formed CRC sent an open letter to the University of Toronto community, demanding that SEC immediately implement full pregnancy counselling on all three options.

Many of the events which occurred after this decision (between April 1983 and February 1984) directly echoed previously described moments in the history of this debate. At the end of April 1983, the president of SAC, Mark Hammond, presented an ultimatum to SEC which was reminiscent of earlier informal restrictions on SEC. If SEC continued to offer abortion counselling, its budget would be eliminated. Negotiations in the writing of the pamphlet were reopened, but by October these negotiations had disintegrated. Three of the four SAC members working on the pamphlet had resigned and the SEC members were working to save their budget which had been drastically cut by SAC.

Moreover, St. Michael's students circulated a petition which once again urged their college to withdraw its funds from SAC "if the Sex-Ed. Centre performed abortion counselling or referrals . . . or if SEC distributed a pamphlet containing abortion information, abortion referrals or abortion counselling in any way." This pressure placed the Sex-Ed. Centre in a position whereby they had no choice but to compromise or lose their well-fought-after budget. Rather than accept St. Michael's "pro-life" demands and present abortion in this biased manner, the SEC was forced to agree to refer women to agencies off campus. As well, the SEC counsellors were prohibited from discussing the issue of abortion with their clients in any way.

The Coalition for Responsible Choice, provoked by this stalemate, decided to take action in support of the Sex-Ed. Centre by circulating petitions calling for SAC to allow abortion counselling on campus. Also, as in the past, Victoria College gave its full support. Allison Jones and Peggy Hornell's indirect involvement with the CRC spurred them on to begin a petition campaign at their own college (Victoria). The petition demanded that as a federated college, Victoria withdraw its funds from SAC unless full pregnancy counselling was implemented at SEC.

In response to these petitions (over 1500 in total), the Student Administrative Council recommended that a referendum be held asking students whether they supported abortion counselling at the Sex-Ed. Centre. But this recommendation was turned down because SAC feared that the students would vote "yes," and that this outcome would alienate St. Michael's College, thus provoking them to carry out their threat of withdrawing their student fees from SAC. In order to appease the growing pro-choice lobby at the U of T, SAC formed a new negotiating team consisting of four "pro-life" representatives, four pro-choice representatives and three SAC members.

In January 1984, these new negotiations

began, but for the first time the issue of alternative funding for the Sex-Ed. Centre (which had already been recommended in 1979-80) was considered seriously. Various student societies, including Gays and Lesbians at U of T, the Graduate Students' Union, Victoria, New, Innis and University colleges, were approached and agreed to fund the Sex-Ed. Centre in the upcoming academic year. Independent of SAC and St. Michael's College, the Sexual Education Centre will be free, as of May 1, 1984, to offer counselling on parenting, adoption and abortion in an unbiased, non-judgemental manner.

Independence from SAC and St. Michael's College has been the Sex-Ed. Centre's resolution to the problem of being restricted from providing information on abortion. Unfortunately, for other campus groups, these restrictions remain. SAC has not changed its anti-choice position, thus other groups which are funded by SAC and St. Mike's, such as the Women's Commission, are still not free to advocate a pro-choice position.

Why did the pregnancy counselling debate last for so long? What was different about this year that allowed a resolution to be reached? and why is the documentation of this struggle important? The answers to these questions are an integral part of understanding this history.

One of the reasons the debate lasted so long is the fact that it is very difficult for a service-oriented group such as a peer counselling centre to become active in political lobbying: first, because of the time restrictions on individual volunteer counsellors; and second, since the Sex-Ed. Centre was not established as a political organization, it has taken many years for SEC to combine a political awareness with its mandate to provide unbiased, non-judgemental information. Moreover, SEC remained isolated and powerless in its attempts to resolve the issue of pregnancy counselling, because they were in continual fear of losing their budget, and until 1983, the Centre was not supported by a powerful pro-choice lobby.

This year, a resolution was reached for a number of different reasons. Until the formation of the Coalition for Responsible Choice, there was no special interest group supporting the Sex-Ed. Centre. The strength of the CRC rested in its grass roots organizational quality. Its support base included individuals from different colleges, faculties and disciplines, as well as the pro-choice movement off campus. The networking of these individuals made the petition campaign possible and created a powerful pro-choice lobby on campus.

This is not to say that the efforts of former SEC directors, Debbie Mills, Kim Shannon, Becca Broder and Sue Buck, were not as important. On the contrary, it is as a result of

their work in building and maintaining awareness of the issue for the whole campus, that the SEC was able to achieve a resolution this year. Kim Shannon's connections with SEC and Victoria College, as Vic's SAC representative, were not unlike the CRC's connection with Victoria College. Networking of this kind in previous years was instrumental in attaining Victoria's support this year.

After seven years of discourse, both SEC and St. Michael's College realized that a compromise on such a contentious issue was impossible. The "alternative funding" idea was agreeable to both sides but most of all to SAC, as it allowed them to wash their hands of the problem without compromising their anti-choice position on abortion.

The documentation of the history of this debate is necessary as it clearly epitomizes how women's concerns have been a low priority in student politics at the U of T. The SEC debate is not an isolated issue. As an extension of SAC, the Women's Commission is accountable to SAC, and thus, it too is restricted from fulfilling its mandate to "disseminate information on issues that concern women at the university." The fact that the Women's Commission's budget was cut by an unprecedented sixty percent this year, thus making it more difficult to meet the needs of women on campus, as well as the fact that the University of Toronto is the only university in Ontario besides Trent in Peterborough that does not have a Women's Centre, clearly illustrates the low priority that is accorded to women's issues at U of T.

Historically, SAC has paid lip service to women with regard to its position on abortion, rape, sexual harassment, daycare, a women's centre and job security. It is as a result of such lip service that independent women's groups (those not connected to, or funded by SAC) have established themselves to meet the needs of women at this university, needs that were not being met by SAC. And so it was that the U of T Women's Coalition emerged in 1981 as an alternative to the SAC Women's Commission. The CRC grew out of a need for a pro-choice voice on campus and most recently a Coalition for a Women's Centre has been established in response to SAC's lack of concern regarding these issues.

The grass roots organization and networking of women has been one of the major strengths of the women's movement. At the University of Toronto, we have felt the effectiveness of this kind of political activity. There are still many struggles to be fought and there is no doubt that similar efforts will help to bring women's demands and concerns as a force within the political process.

Luanne Karn and Mary-Louise Noble are students at the U of T.



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—Lyn Van Matre, *Chicago Tribune*

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MOVEMENT MATTERS

Motherhood by Choice

TORONTO - Wondering what to do on Mother's Day? Can't afford a card? Allergic to flowers or patriarchal ideology? Bring your mother/child/lover/friends to the OCAC/CARAL Motherhood by Choice picnic and rally.

The Right to Life have traditionally used this day to preach compulsory pregnancy and subservient motherhood. OCAC beat them to their usual meeting place of Queen's Park this year and it would appear that they have now cancelled any plans for activity on Mother's Day.

On this day the Right to Life glorify fetal rights while denying the reality of women's oppression. The federal government has taken up this argument in its prosecution of the Morgentaler case. We believe that it is women's rights that are the issue - women's right to abortion as essential to reproductive self-determination. OCAC believes that the way to ensure this right immediately is to legalize free-standing abortion clinics and get

abortion out of the criminal code.

Let's also seize the day from the right by defining an alternative feminist vision of motherhood by choice - a vision in which women control our fertility and sexuality, in which we control our fate.

For the choice to raise a child to be a real one there must be free universal day care, lesbian custody rights, equal pay and jobs, adequate housing and social support, birthing options including midwifery, parental work leave and freedom from male violence. And there must also be reproductive freedom for women - this means safe birth control, and free and equal access to abortion as a fundamental right.

So, come out for motherhood by choice. Bring your friends, kids and a picnic lunch to enjoy a spring Sunday in Queen's Park - May 13, noon until three. There will be music, theatre, food, clowns, a children's area and other forms of gaiety.

VSW Cutback

VANCOUVER - The Vancouver Status of Women was informed by the provincial government on April 16 that its funding would be cut as of May 31, 1984.

The VSW is the oldest status of women organization in the country and has been funded provincially since 1972. VSW, which receives at least 175 calls from women and community groups a week, has a staff of 5 and publishes a feminist newspaper, *Kinesis*. It estimates that it needs a budget of \$92,800 to continue operation (based on 1982 figures). Although the organization receives some funding from other sources, like the City of Vancouver, its core funding has always come from the provincial government.

It is clear that, in light of other cutbacks announced recently, the funding cut of VSW is not a matter of financial restraint, but a political decision. Other groups cut include Post-Partum Counselling, Child Abuse Teams, Legal Assistance, Transition House for Battered Women, Family Support Workers, and Women in Focus.

These cuts are consistent with other

political decisions of the BC Government: a new Residential Tenancy Act which does away with the "Rentalsman" and has no rent controls; and a new Human Rights Bill which does not cover marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation or sexual harassment.

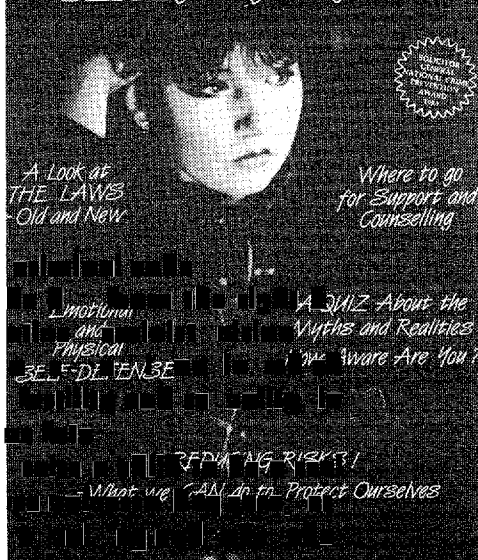
At this point the future of VSW is unclear beyond May 31. Alternate funding is being sought to maintain a skeleton staff and to continue publishing *Kinesis*. For information or to offer support, contact VSW, 400A West 5th Ave., Vancouver, BC, V5Y 1J8.

Working Group

TORONTO - The March 8 Coalition Follow-up Committee (now called the Women's Liberation Working Group) is circulating a proposal regarding a coalition for women in Toronto.

The proposal has been sent out to a number of women's groups, but if your group has not

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT



Sexual Assault Booklet

VICTORIA - The Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre has recently published a booklet called *Let's Talk About Sexual Assault*.

The 24-page booklet includes information on where to go for support and counselling (across Canada); a look at the laws, old and new; a section on emotional and physical self defence; a quiz about myths and realities; and suggestions for reducing risk.

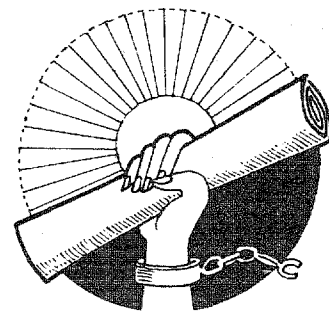
Copies of the booklet are available for \$1 from: Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre, 1045 Linden Ave., Victoria, BC, V8V 4H3; telephone (604) 383-5545. Bulk rates are also available.

Budget U.

VANCOUVER - The first semester term at Budget U. has officially started. The university, opened by Women Against the Budget, is intended to give information about the current political situation in BC.

Course offerings cover a wide variety of topics, including series on "Grimm Fairy Tales: the Mythology of the Right," "Newspeak is Alive and Well and Living in British Columbia," "Cut Along the Bias: What's Happening to BC's Educational System," "How the Right Got it Together and Why the Left Had Better," and "Everything is For the Best In This Best of All Possible Worlds." Featured speakers come from diverse backgrounds to cover many different perspectives on the problem. Courses are designed to promote student participation. Budget U. creators hope that the university will promote new ideas and new political strategies to deal with government social and economic policies.

Unlike other universities in BC, registration is not required, and courses are free and open to everybody.



If you want more information about the courses, which run into May, contact the Lower Mainland Solidarity Coalition at (604) 879-6884; or 255-7820; or 251-1402. Or write to Women Against the Budget, Box 65366, Station F, Vancouver, V5N 5P3. Donations are welcome, please make cheques out to Women Against the Budget, and mark them for Budget U.

Graduation night is Saturday, May 12 at the Ukrainian Hall, 805 E. Pender, Vancouver and diplomas will be awarded.

- *Kinesis*

MOVEMENT COMMENT

Faces of Feminism

by Eve Zaremba

How do women learn what feminism is all about? How accessible is it? Need one be an able-bodied urban activist to come across and grasp feminist ideas? Is there a learning process involved? For all women or only for some? Can some just pick it up out of the air as it were? And are native women in BC somehow different in this respect from disabled women in Nova Scotia or white, urban academics?

Very often much heat and self-righteousness is exchanged in discussing this issue. In my opinion, the crux of the matter in these debates is simply missed. First of all, usually nobody is 'wrong' - and therefore evil and non-feminist, as tends to be suggested at times - and nobody is 'right' - and therefore a good and proper feminist. Rather, people are using different, very situation-based concepts of feminism and thus lack a common object for discussion.

All of which leads me to clarify my views about what 'feminist' can be taken to represent. Here I am not referring to the actual content of any particular feminist position, but rather to the nature of the phenomenon summed up by the word.

One way of looking at it is to identify feminism with the current Women's Liberation Movement. In that case the term is used, and must be so understood, to connote a social movement of the latter part of the 20th century, with concrete history, processes, antecedents, proponents and opponents, theory, controversies, practice, vocabulary, writers, heroes, activists, presses and papers. As an

example, *Broadside* and *Women's Press*, are both feminist in the sense of being the result and the expression of the Women's Liberation Movement in Canada at this time. Such publications and publishers did not and could not exist before there was a movement.

This sort of feminism, understood as a movement of women towards liberation in the context of a specific historical reality, is based on a body of knowledge of what women in this movement have done, are doing and thinking. This is collective knowledge of collective thought and action, past, present and future. It must be learned somehow, somewhere, from someone. No one is born with this knowledge; it must be learned.

Most of us writing and reading *Broadside* first encountered the authentic movement of women via the printed word, because it is the only medium in which we can have direct contact with each other unmediated by non-feminist perspectives and authority. Maybe a friend gave us a book and said, "Here, read this." It could have been anyone, anywhere, not necessarily an activist or academic, and not necessarily in a big city. Books do travel.

However it happened, the experience was a revelation. What we read by other women about other women, turned out to be also about us and it hit a nerve. For most of us the effect was dramatic. We have not been the same since. As we went on reading, talking with our friends and thinking, each of us in her own way set out to add to the collective effort of building the movement.

That's what being a feminist means to me - adding to the collective effort. In this sense, a feminist is a woman who is conscious of being

part of the movement, who adds to this collective by way of her life. Any woman can do it; no one has a monopoly on it. You do not have to go to downtown meetings or demonstrations or be part of a group all the time. But you must feel some connection with those who are doing these things, you must feel connected with the movement as a collectivity. Any woman can do this. East or west, rural or urban, whatever your background or origin, whatever your situation, any woman can be part of the movement.

There is another meaning to the term feminist. That is the individualistic one. Being strong, assertive, demanding equal pay or job, better childcare, etc. Due to the influence of the women's movement, this type of woman is much more prevalent now than in the past, but there have always been women like that. Many such women, who are uppity in any way, or who aspire to more than the traditional female role, are called or accused of being feminists and many do call themselves that. Others belong to the "I am not a feminist, but..." category.

There is, of course, no hard and fast line separating these two general definitions of feminism. The first is more specific in its meaning, narrower and perhaps deeper: the crucial factor is to understand that a collective effort, not individual achievement is the essence of feminism. The second is so very general, whether used as an accolade or a put down, that it covers a multitude of women, maybe most women at some time in their lives. Most of us have passed, or will pass, from being one type of feminist to another, maybe more than once. It's never too late. ●

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The police must present a packet of information to a judge in order to secure a warrant authorizing a search of a house. It is standard procedure to release this information to the defence. Indeed, it is usually a public document accessible to anyone. The defence has still not seen this information more than ten months after the event. Nor have the Crown or Police given any reasons for withholding this legal document in spite of repeated requests to obtain it.

The implications of this situation are clear. Crosbie cannot mount an adequate defence of her charges without seeing what motivated the police to suspect her of any act of illegal abortion. Without seeing the information, Crosbie's defence is unable to exercise her constitutional right to challenge the charges on the grounds of unreasonable search and seizure. She is being denied one of the fundamental aspects of due process.

On a more general level, the withholding of the information is a dangerous precedent. The police are claiming the right to conduct searches without being held accountable for their motives before a Court. If this is allowed to go by, any magazine, union, peace group, political group or any other individual or organization who might have incurred the disfavor of the government or the police could be subject to a similar exploratory raid.

Crosbie's charges have been stayed until the issue of the Crown's refusal to disclose the information can be settled in a higher court. The case is going before the Ontario Court of Appeals in late April. It is quite likely that it will end up in the Supreme Court. We, the Colleen Crosbie Defence Committee, do not intend to take no for an answer and the Crown is unlikely to release the information without appealing to another court. We have no choice but to continue this legal fight. But we cannot carry the legal costs by ourselves. Although we are the ones on the firing line we will not be the only ones who will be vulnerable if we lose. As the old saying goes, we only have those civil rights that we are willing to fight for.

For more information, write to the Colleen Crosbie Defence Committee, PO Box 5052, Stn. A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P7. Donations can be made directly to the Right To Know Fund, account no. 733, Bread and Roses Credit Union, 736 Bathurst St., Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2R4.

strategy has proven effective in counteracting the sexist message of a mainstream film. The leaflet is available from the Incest Healing Centre for Women, PO Box 4841, Station E, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5J1

Our Time is Now

WINNIPEG - The Canadian Women's Music and Cultural Festival will be held in Kildonan Park in Winnipeg, September 1 and 2, 1984.

An event expected to draw more than 20 acts from across the country, the festival will feature women performers from diverse regional and cultural backgrounds whose musical styles range from folk, rock, blues, and jazz to traditional. Art displays and children's entertainment also will be featured.

Main stage performances will be held in Rainbow Stage, a sheltered area with a seating capacity of about 2,400.

The theme of the festival - Our Time Is Now - refers to the great wealth of artistic and cultural expression emerging as women's voices start to be heard. Because it often deals with themes of particular concern to women, 'Women's Music' has begun to develop a distinct identity of its own, similar to the way that cultural groups have established their own musical traditions.

The event is sponsored by SDB Manitoba, a non-profit organization that promotes feminist cultural events.

For information contact: Our Time is Now, 745 Westminster Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G 1A5; telephone (204) 786-1921.

DES Complaint

TORONTO - Members of the Ryerson Women's Centre are learning to pronounce diethylstilbestrol (DES) without stumbling. We're also learning how to use "guerilla tactics." That's what the Ryerson administration calls our efforts to stop a campus doctor from prescribing DES as a morning-after pill.

DES is the drug that was widely used between 1941 and 1971 to prevent miscarriages. But DES caused serious medical problems for some of the children whose mother took the

drug. Use of the drug during pregnancy was banned in 1971.

Most (if not all) of the birth control clinics in the city do not use DES because of its severe side effects. The federal government's health protection branch has repeatedly warned physicians against prescribing the drug as a morning-after pill.

The Women's Centre has registered a complaint with the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons, has started circulating petitions and has met with the Ryerson ad-

ministration about DES. And we have won a small victory. The doctor in question, David Barr, will not prescribe any morning-after pills until he conducts a review of the medical research. Ryerson women will now be referred to birth control clinics in the city. We are continuing our efforts to change this situation. If you want more information or if you want to express your support, call the Ryerson Women's Centre: (416) 598-9838.

- Kellee Dunlop

WOMENFILM WOMENART

A Statement

Broadside originally intended to publish the statement from Womenfilm/Womenart along with the statement from the Alter Eros Festival Coalition (April 1984) but was unable to obtain a copy before going to press. The following statement was completed in March:

Womenfilm/Womenart formed in 1983 as a non profit organization designed for the purposes of producing films, art events, and other cultural-activities from a feminist perspective.

The primary objective of Womenfilm/Womenart for 1983/84 was the research and production of a 16mm film which would explore positive alternatives to pornography. This became *Feminist Eros - a celebration of women's sexuality and empowerment* - a series of events Womenfilm/Womenart was to produce as the subject of the film. For the production of these *Feminist Eros* events Womenfilm/Womenart was awarded a Canada Council Explorations grant.

Womenfilm/Womenart put out a general "call for art" on the feminist eros theme to encourage artists to create a new imagery of women's sexuality for the film. Womenfilm/Womenart felt that it would be in the public interest to experience the art works and so an effort was made to make the works

available to an audience.

In September, Womenfilm/Womenart was approached by representatives of feminist organizations from various sectors of the community for the purposes of organizing its events within a much larger women's art festival. Womenfilm/Womenart consented to participating in this larger event providing that it preserved an autonomy over its events.

However, it was discovered that the larger festival event brought into existence many opinions on how the festival was to be realized. Womenfilm/Womenart then found itself in a position where a demand was made on it to relinquish control of its project and funding to a diversity of interests, or withdraw and preserve the original intent of the *Feminist Eros* events. Womenfilm/Womenart's commitment to its primary objective made it impossible to remain in a situation where its project could not be maintained.

Womenfilm/Womenart understands that other projects were initiated as a result of its efforts and will be realized independently of Womenfilm/Womenart. Womenfilm/Womenart encourages all work on the feminist eros theme. However, Womenfilm/Womenart will produce its *Feminist Eros* events at another time in a new context.

Board of Directors,
Womenfilm/Womenart

Blame it on Rio

OTTAWA - A group of Ottawa feminists recently organized an innovative protest against the box-office hit, *Blame it on Rio*. Charging that the film's plot promotes father-daughter incest and exploitive relationships between older men and young girls, the group produced a leaflet entitled, "A Viewer's Guide to Blame it on Rio" which they distributed to film-goers at several locations in town.

One of the organizers of the action explained that the group singled out *Blame it on Rio* because of "its subtle pro-incest message and its wide audience appeal." Women's groups have usually focussed their protests on films that endorse explicit violence against women or degrading depictions of sexuality. The group wanted to point out that so-called "romantic comedies" and "sex farces" can convey messages that are just as destructive.

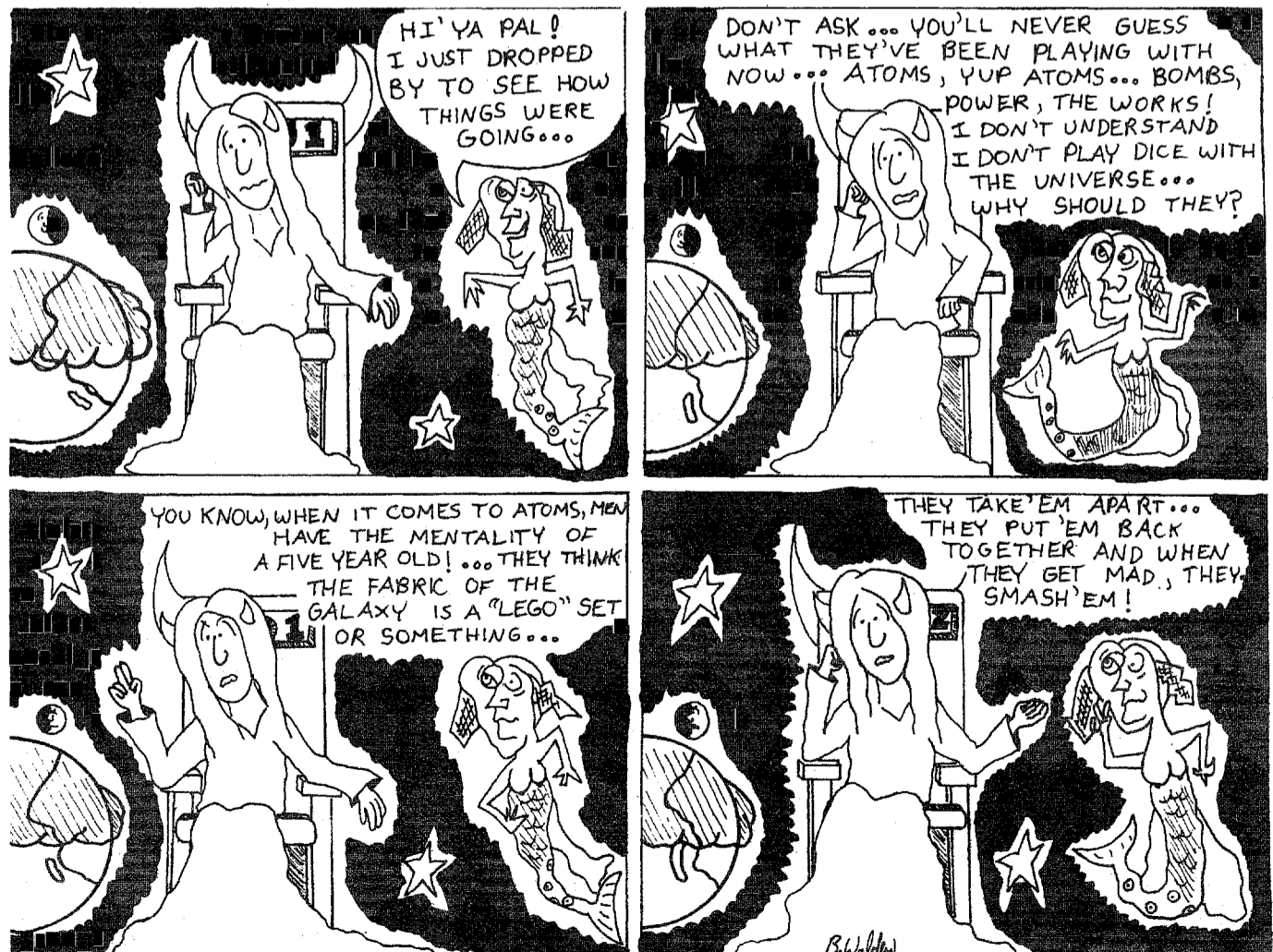
In the film, young Jennifer, who is just out of braces and cuddles a teddy bear at night, is the conscious seductress, continually making advances to her "Uncle" Matthew. "Uncle" Matthew (played by Michael Caine who lends legitimacy to the film) is portrayed as the innocent victim, who, "in a moment of craziness" succumbs to Jennifer's physical charms. The film clearly absolves him from all responsibility by blaming it on Rio... and on Jennifer.

Lines spoken by "Uncle" Matthew, like "It was just a bad dream" (after he and Jennifer first had sex) and "It'll be our secret" are just two of the obvious and cruel parallels to the real-life relationship between incest victim and attacker. In the guise of a "thoroughly American comedy" the film gives credibility to the most common and dangerous myths about incest and OKs the fucking of girl children by adult men.

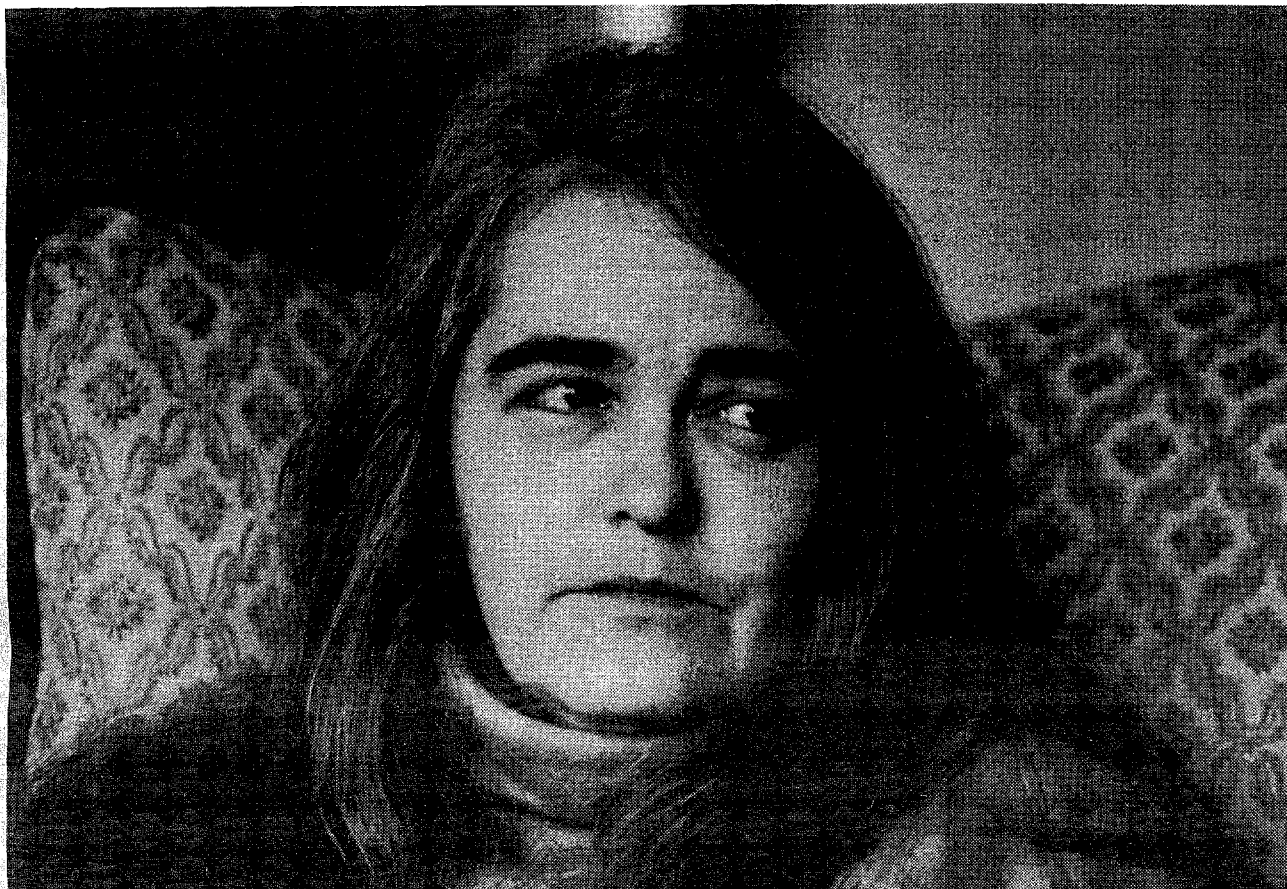
The "Viewer's Guide" to the movie counters the propaganda by helping the audience to decipher the film's more subtle messages and by encouraging people to think and talk about what they have seen. This

JUDGEMENT DAY

Beth Walden © 1984



CONTINUED NEXT MONTH



CHERYL DANIELS

In late February, the Health Sciences Division of Humber College in Toronto sponsored a conference on female sexuality. The keynote speaker was Kate Millett. Millett has about as much authority to speak on the topic as one could ask of any feminist. She is the one who coined the phrase "sexual politics"; she has written openly and honestly about her own sexual experience,

particularly in *Flying*, and at a time when the disclosures were very risky. She has been closely associated with the activities of gay liberation and has recently devoted the greater part of her own art to an exploration of erotica. Broadside spoke to Millett the day before she gave her keynote address.

Interview by Susan G. Cole

Susan G. Cole: *It's always seemed to me that everybody else has defined female sexuality for us, whether it's Freud or the left or the pornographer. Have we ever had a crack at it?*

Kate Millett: I think one of the real purposes of the feminist movement in the last century, and in this one too, has been to bring about an emancipation of female sexuality, as well as property, the right to vote, custody of children, entrance into the professions and education. But always in addressing that subject we were up against the fact that the heart of patriarchy's control over us was through our sexuality, more through shame by making sex itself a crime or a sin, than by shifting that whole burden of sex onto us. One has so much negativity, so much repression, so much constraint to get off, to get free, that instead of saying, "Oh, let's define our sexuality, it's this, it's that," we've had to say, "We demand the right to contraception, we demand the right to abortion, we demand rights for lesbians." This goes against the whole structure of oppression; when a building is falling on you, you demand a prop and a bulwark. But you're not dancing into the road describing arcs and shapes of your own.

Also, all the time that our foremothers argued and worked for sexual freedom, they had to go up against enormous taboos. Cady Stanton used to write books like *The Woman's Bible* which contradicted every patriarchal thing in the King James version. She was the kind of speaker they wanted to keep off the platforms when suffrage got to be a really big issue because she was a great theorist and a bit too much for the ordinary ladies to follow. They thought they might lose some support. And Victoria Woodhull. She was a feminist of the first generation who was always on the bandwagon for sexual freedom. No one was as much misunderstood or considered so dangerous as she was. She went all the way to the top with it, she ran for president and all kinds of things.

S.C.: *I'm trying to make the distinction between the act of wanting sexual freedom and the act of really understanding our own sexuality. I think pornography is the articulation of a male sexuality, but what about our own? Here you are coming to talk to us about something we've never really talked about at all. What or who do you look to as a means to help you figure out what to say?*

K.M.: You see, the trouble with it is that we never really talk about sex. We're always talking about something else, too. With pornography you're talking about power and hostility, but whenever you're talking about female sexuality the only context is that of a patriarchal society

of one stripe or another. It's always within a social context. It's always in a context of money, for example. Female sexuality under patriarchy is how a female earns a living, as a wife, mother, whore, madonna. Her role in life, her economic modus vivendi, her reason to be fed is that she will give birth, or will be a wife and therefore a servant or mistress, or some sort of convenience to whomever is feeding her. The notion of our having economic independence radically changes our sexuality, and its expression. You don't have any public expression of lesbianism until there is some viable economic autonomy for women. Women can't live together or can't be a social fact, a couple, unless they can earn a living. And that completely changes the structure of ordinary patriarchal life.

Then there's also religion, there's law, there's society, culture, tradition, all those factors.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

S.C.: *In the course of my own work, people always ask me if I think there's a difference between male and female sexuality.*

K.M.: Let me ask you what you mean by sexuality?

S.C.: *That's cheating! I'll gloss over it by rephrasing it 'sexual response,' the way we live our sexuality and find pleasure, communication and intimacy in it.*

K.M.: And experience?

S.C.: *Yes. Well, it depends what you mean by experience.*

K.M.: Wouldn't males' experience always be different from ours?

S.C.: *Yes, but the question has always been presented to me as "How is it different? Describe this difference." What people really want to hear is that men like to have quick sex while women like this integrated, emotional kind of thing. I tend to disbelieve that it has to be that way. So do you think it is true that women have a so-called integrated sexuality, that we need emotional contact in order to 'do it'?*

K.M.: (laughing) I think it's probably true. Whether or not men really like quickies, it's all social context. That's how they were trained. Wonderful as our sensibilities may be, they may also be the result of our conditioning, which isn't always wonderful. We may be uptight, frigid; we may be more romantic or give more to, oh, commitment, fidelity, whatever; we are at the same time more dependent, emotionally, all as a result of our conditioning. What would happen if we didn't have this conditioning? Would we be liberated into quickies?

S.C.: *Would that be liberation?*

Millett on Sex

K.M.: What we're talking about is masculine and feminine traits. It's really part of a political game. The subservient traits all go to us and the bossy ones go to them. Lots of nasty and social traits go to the guys and lots of really very wonderful traits, the human ones, go to us. Maybe too big a bag of them, we don't have too much time to kick up our heels and live because we're so busy nurturing the world, and getting the dishes done perfectly. There's such immoderation and such polarization in the ways in which the sexes are conditioned.

S.C.: *A lot of people say that gay male sexuality and lesbian sexuality as it's acted out now is the perfect paradigm for male and female sexuality in a sexist society, the way that happens when you have men together is that they have bathroom sex and that lesbians land on the other side of the spectrum, and are passionately and emotionally committed. So if you want to know about male sexuality look at what gay guys do. Do you think that's true?*

K.M.: I don't know. Gay men live in a very different world than we do. These are two groups with radically different opinions on sexuality - lesbians and homosexuals. Gay men say to me: "You stick-in-the-muds. We go to the baths and we have a whale of a time," and I say: "I don't think this would do much for me." And they say: "What if they had some baths for ladies down in the village?"

Eventually I began to see that their point of view really had something to it. They thought that all those serious, emotional and committed things we bring to sexuality were a bit overdone. And I thought that their "scoring," as they call it, every ten seconds and sometimes with men they didn't even know, was a bit grotesque. But I had to wonder whether perhaps there wasn't some sort of difference between.

Sometimes I've thought gay guys are what straight guys would be like if they could. That is, to be casual and promiscuous, scoring in the park, fifteen ladies behind the bushes whose names they don't know and who they will never see again. But they can't do that. The rules haven't permitted it in patriarchy's vast repressiveness (or would almost say, in its wisdom). Men, having a defence against each other, can't say "I won't," or "You don't know my name." So perhaps they just visit upon each other a sort of crazed hunting ethic that they've been brought up on. Having spent lots of time at the zoo, I don't think that kind of behaviour is really "natural" animal behaviour, human or otherwise.

DIFFUSED SEXUALITY

S.C.: *You and I were talking about women having more integrated sexuality, not as able to have so-called alienated sex, or casual sex. The analog to the "integrated" female sexuality is the idea of the more "diffused" sexuality, one that is not quite so genitally centred, maybe a little more touch-centred. What I've noticed in pornography is that the genital centredness is the main feature and that, at least where sex is "entertainment," there doesn't seem to be any consciousness of the fact that the top of your head can be sexual, and that there are parts of the body other than the genitals.*

K.M.: I suppose it's where the emphasis is placed. If the sex act is defined as playing with each other's toes, as it is in one of Kurt Vonnegut's books, that's probably what it is. But as it is, in a patriarchal culture, it's purely genital and phallographic, especially in pornography where there's always someone impaling somebody. The subject isn't sex, it's power. Lots more time is spent tying people up and knocking women around than fucking. Genital penetration is only proof that what happened is sexual intercourse, almost legal proof that it happened. There isn't time for conversation and foreplay, 19 cigarettes and conversation afterwards. Nothing. Because it isn't about a real meeting of two human beings. That's a kind of fantasy that's representational and not very real.

Reality: Describing Arcs of Our Own

...er all, pornography is propagandistic as well as fan-
...rally - a fantasy of male supremacy that really can't
...nitate in reality. So it has to dream. I know this makes it
...rfind nicer than it actually is.

...: Yes, really it's not that nice. But, to go back to an earlier
...tion, what do you think women should be doing to
...stand ourselves a little better? The context for that ques-
...begins with my own feeling that we've never had a chance,
...that it's hard to find a way to do it. According to all the
...ges, women equal sex in this society. It's really hard to
...ow when your own experience is your own, and when it's
...colonized or appropriated by all the expectations society
...s. How do we find out about us, and keep everything else
...of the way?

...M.: My own experiences weren't correct, proper, respec-
...le. As lesbians we live in such a no-man's land (I don't
...an to pun). Who's going to define this experience? Where
...you going to find echoes? We run and find eight little
...ements of Sappho and try to work that out. They're very
...poems, very charming, all about "pass the cup and let's
...xure a party." But they will not quite see you through.

...C.: I know some women who went to see the film Per-
...al Best eight times. But, even though lesbianism is
...ly uncharted territory, it may be that we have it a little
...er than heterosexual women who are on the front
...es of another battle. How do we all uncondition
...selves?

...M.: There are millions of ways. I think reading is a
...y important one, talking to each other, getting up a
...d of talk, a discourse, consciousness raising (a grand
...rd, how would we ever have begun without it?). Sex-
...ity is so bound up with the whole context of our lives,
...h money, with society, with religion, with the apart-
...nt house, the job, the family, all we ever experience,
...I think it's very important to create a different place
...nhabit. This is much harder for women who are living
...h men and in the mainstream, because lesbians have
...de a little alternate culture all their own, which is a
...ret little world. It isn't a hidden one, which no one

"Sometimes when I draw things I am sexually aroused, and part of that arousal goes into what I'm doing and is available when you see the picture. There's an element of arousal and appetite, which is what I think erotic art is about - it celebrates appetite. But my drawings are not all that suggestive. . . . They are, finally, about a relationship."

...ows about anymore, it is a real form of rapport, where
...a have a real alternate life, connections, a network.
...possible to live almost entirely in that world without
...ing to surface, and it is very safe. For other women,
...network that can protect and ensconce them hasn't
...en as well put together. I don't like the fact that we
...m safer than they are; I don't think that's fair, it's not
...ing them the help and support that they need.
...Of course there's nothing this society would like better
...an to divorce us from them. But we refused to be
...mies and long ago stopped worrying about it. All the
...ing in the bathroom, and wondering if I am or if I'll
...tomorrow, that's all in the past. But there's still a need
...be closer to each other, to share the advantages of
...ch. "Don't surface," or "I don't have to surface,"
...unrealistic. La di da. Welcome to Atlantis.
...Whatever our whole track has to offer us it should of-
...all women.

ART AND EROTICA

S.C.: *Do you, as an artist who has tried to express the erotic, have any thoughts as to why it's taken us so long to talk about sex?*

K.M.: I can tell you why it was so hard to write *Flying*. You should have heard my family. My mother was going to sue me and use my sister as a lawyer. We all made peace. We're Irish.

S.C.: *But you scared people to death with that stuff. Nobody else was doing that.*

K.M.: It's always been very dangerous for women to get on their high horse. When we get on high horses together, we are a menace and a movement. And if we become "unnatural" it's so frightening, because it means we are not only a unified people, but we can turn to each other. That's extremely dangerous because then we don't need men for sex.

There's a part of me that wants to say to a man, "Come on now, don't worry. You're still charming company." However to the real patriarchal power grab, lesbianism is a very terrible threat. It's a woman's refusal to be a wife or mother, or to raise children, or to wait on men or to have any part of the whole patriarchal scheme. For that reason, they call it unnatural; it's hideously sinful and theologically inconceivable - women are then autonomous. I think that's why lesbianism has always been such a threat, not just now. There were lesbians in the first women's movement in the twenties. You had lesbian acts in the harem, for example, or between Italian ladies of the upper bourgeoisie who were cousins or near-by neighbours - this has been going on since the beginning of the world.

S.C.: *I still think it's going on like that in the suburbs.*

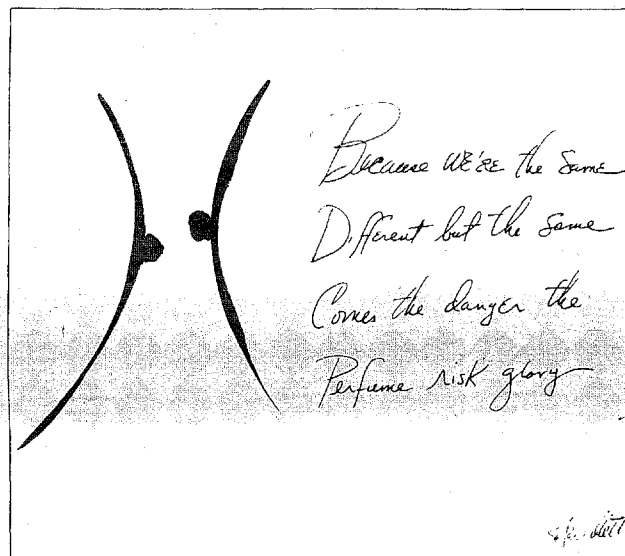
K.M.: It's not, though, in the same sense a social act or a definition of a different lifestyle. And it does not present anything like the same challenge. So that it may be a lesbian sexual act but it is not lesbianism as a social phenomenon.

S.C.: *I want to talk about images. How probable is it that women will be able to use so-called erotica as part of the exploration of our sexuality. And how possible is it to come up with images when they (pornographers) own them.*

K.M.: First of all they are our own bods. It's important for me to take back the nude on my own terms, with what I love in it and what I want to see in it - round shapes and humour and sinuousness and sensuality. But also cunt. I absolutely insist that that's us; we own it. We will tell you what it looks like. Not dictatorially (laughs) but to be fascinated. This is the one facet of the nude that is never represented in traditional art. It is supposed to be the nexus of our shame, a zero, a target for sexuality itself. We have to make a desperate and very serious attempt to redefine and to take back, to possess in the authentic way, what it is we are.

Sometimes when I draw things I am sexually aroused,

and part of that arousal goes into doing what I'm doing. Maybe, then, it is available when you see the picture. Sometimes I write screes on my drawings too, which aren't really poems because that's pompous. Some of them are about sex; lots of them are, in millions of different ways, subtle forthright ways. There is an element of arousal and appetite, which I think is what erotic art is about. It celebrates appetite. The things I draw or the things I say in my drawings are not all that suggestive. They might be about loneliness, or about death, or about the evening coming down, or about what to have for dinner, or about how terribly pissed off you are at the person you're drawing and talking to, how utterly infuriating and funny they are. They really are finally about a relationship, too.



The Lesbian Body: a drawing by Kate Millett

I've done a series that is just about a certain relationship. The show I'm doing now is called "Rosy Dakota" and it's all about a friend of mine whose code name is Rosy Dakota (because she's from South Dakota and her middle name is Rose). She's sort of like some character out of the Deadwood Cafe in Dakota. She's extremely funny and a very fine photographer. And also a brat; and delightful, very beautiful, very annoying, very spoiled, very smart and very childish. All kinds of things at once. I have lots and lots of drawings which I did four or five years ago. And I also photographed her all the time. She's a person who couldn't care less whether she has her clothes on or off, so I have marvelous nudes, as well as the drawings. There's a combination of the real person in the photograph and the not-so-real person in the drawings, with screes. It's a jumble but it's all about one person and one personality, which is a friendship, and an erotic relationship, amorous, buddy buddy, and enough fights to last forever, all kinds of things at once.

S.C.: *You are one of many women who has said to me she thought that the relationship per se is an important component of eroticism. I experience it that way too. A lot of women I talk to find it hard to react to a two dimensional picture and wonder how the magazine trade survives. If there was a prose account, or even a soundtrack, an area in which pornographers have missed the boat. . . . Of course now there's the phone sex trade, where women talk to male clients while the men masturbate. . . .*

K.M.: Ah yes, well, the telephone. I called one of those numbers up once.

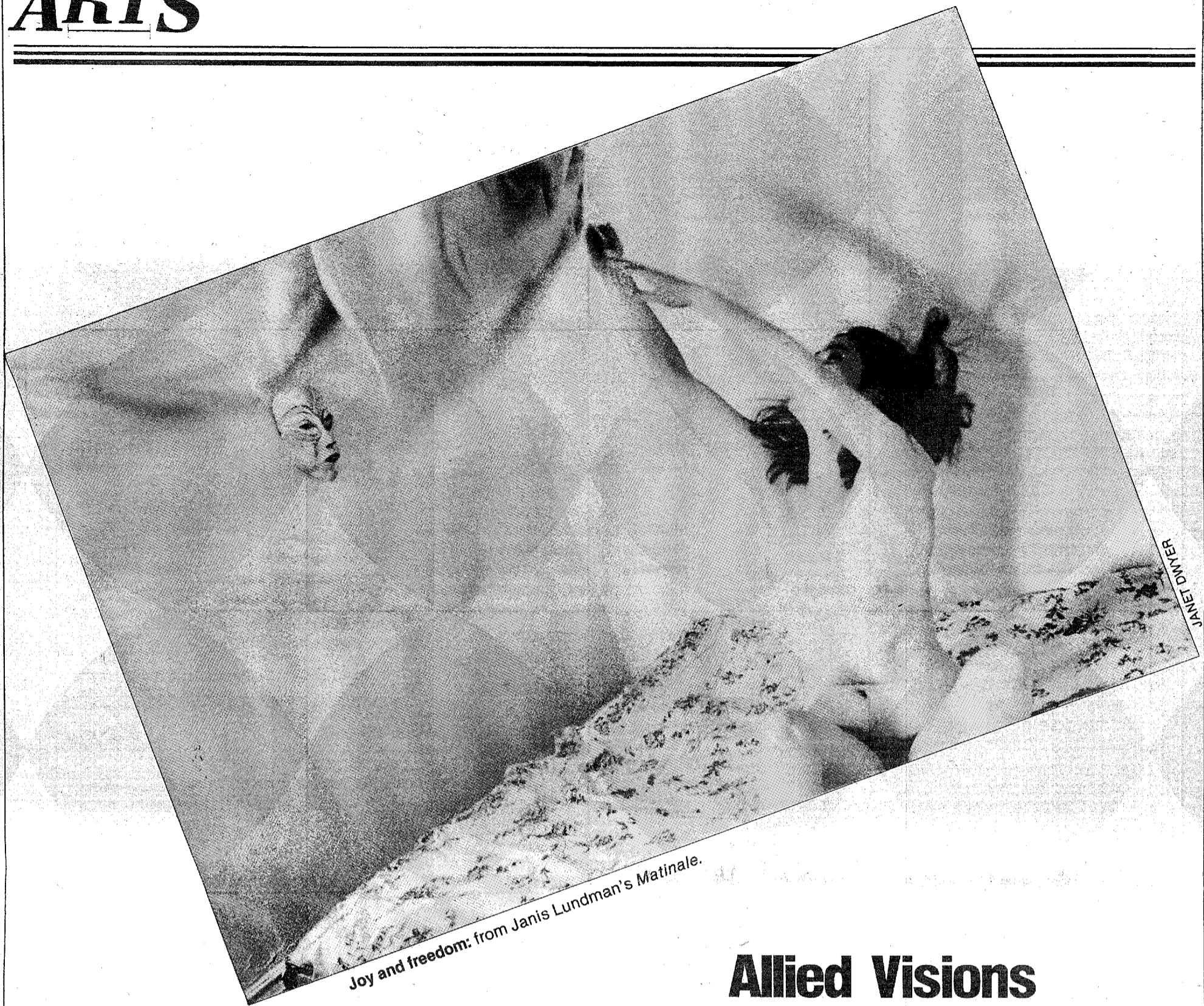
S.C.: *Were they surprised to hear a female voice?*

K.M.: Well, you don't say anything anyway.

S.C.: *You have to give them a credit card number, don't you?*

K.M.: We never got as far as the credit card number. It was just a joke. Anyway, she promised that she would blow me on the next call if I hung up now. ●

ARTS



Joy and freedom: from Janis Lundman's *Matinale*.

JANET OWEN

by Donna Gollan

The Women's Media Alliance (WMA) is a Toronto-based group of feminist women working in film, video, performance, writing, multi-media and visual art. In 1981, the newly formed WMA sent a Toronto representative to the Amsterdam Feminist Film and Video Festival. Since then, they have met regularly in order to share their experiences and further their own education through workshops and discussions of each other's work. In addition, it is the WMA's declared purpose to provide public forums for the discussion of feminist cultural work. In this they have succeeded admirably with various guest speakers, open houses, and such screenings as the 1982 Women Speak Out event, or the more recent WMA Benefit Screening in January, 1984.

Individually, the women involved with the WMA are poets, graphic artists, academics, arts organizers and sculptors. Some of their more recent activity, however, has revolved around the production of feminist film and video. As one member, Nancy Nichol, is quick to point out, it is the main energies of the membership that, in general, direct the organization's activities. Another member, Phyllis Waugh, explains that it is not surprising to find WMA members producing films and tapes: "By its nature, video appeals to just about every kind of artist." Having developed a certain degree of trust amongst themselves, the women frequently work on each other's projects, trading technical roles. They have also collectively produced a tape entitled: *Our Choice: A Tape About Teenage Mothers*.

Our Choice, completed in 1983 at Jessie's Centre for Teenagers in Toronto, began as an idea to involve different women's groups in the process of media production. It is an extremely interesting political exercise for groups that formerly had no choice but to see their images created by the mainstream media with very little power themselves to manipulate that image. When they take this process

into their own hands, says Nancy Nichol, it is a culturally demystifying process. Using videotape to record that image provides them with an instant replay option so that they can see what has just happened and how it looks and decide if that's exactly what they want to get across to an audience. If not, it can be remade.

Jessie's responded immediately to the WMA's search for an interested women's group. Having recently acquired some video equipment of their own, they were anxious for the learning experience. As it turned out, the staff at Jessie's already had plenty to do and despite their best intentions, nobody had the time to oversee such a major project. As a result, the WMA, or more specifically, Madeleine Duff, Nancy Nichol, Marusia Bociurkiw, Phyllis Waugh, and Jane Wright, found themselves collectively making a tape about the teenage mothers. The mothers themselves were strangely reluctant to participate in the physical work of making the tape, though one or two were persuaded to handle the camera. They certainly showed no reluctance to tell their stories, however, and do so with a real mixture of youthful innocence and carefully acquired bravado.

Ninety per cent of teens today decide to keep their babies, the tape informs us, while ten years ago ninety per cent gave them up for adoption. When you listen to the individual stories of the girls, you get a strong sense of a situation that crosses class boundaries. These young mothers express a common dissatisfaction with the boredom of school. Also frequently expressed is the feeling that with the child came a purpose for living, a sense of identity. Sad though this may sound, it is a real situation with which our social services have had a very difficult time keeping up. You have only to listen to the mothers explain what a problem it is to get into subsidized housing - they cannot even apply until they reach 18 - or talk about cutting back to afford the rent of the places they must live, to realize that the system is failing them. When one interviewer asks a young mother how she could cut back she replies, wide-eyed, that she

supposes she would have to eat less, since she hardly liked to cut back on the baby's food. When the slightly shocked voice of the interviewer responds that this seems like a pretty unrealistic area for cutting back, the young mother is surprised and shrugs it off. It is the contrast between the interviewer's horrified tones and the young mothers' fatalistic dealings with a difficult reality that sends the clearest message in this tape. What use is it to say that it is impossible to cope with such a situation? These young women are, first and foremost mothers, and they have no choice

but to cope. It is obvious that they are glad to have a place like Jessie's to depend on, and to meet other mothers like themselves.

In the discussion after the benefit screening of *Our Choice* in January, a member of the audience posed the question of the WMA's choice of location, as if in actually taping the sessions at Jessie's, they were excluding the possibility of anything but a positive response to the social services available to the mothers. How can they complain in front of their workers? Would there not be repercussions? One of the filmmakers responded that the



Our Choice: Women's Media Alliance members taping at Jessie's Centre for Teenagers.

PHYLLIS WAUGH

mothers sound cheerful because they have come to respond that way at all times, for fear of having their babies snatched from them. She agreed that they were not likely to complain openly but that they were no more likely to do so elsewhere, as they have spent some time trying to convince the outside world that they are responsible adults. The WMA is hoping to get *Our Choice* into the schools, to be used as an educational tool for young teenagers. It was a definite choice to make a tape which would speak to teenagers on their own terms rather than a critical piece about the social system that they are all caught up in. Hopefully there are teens who can be convinced that there are easier ways to deal with the boredom of school and less romantic results of having a baby than their conditioning and yearnings have led them to believe.

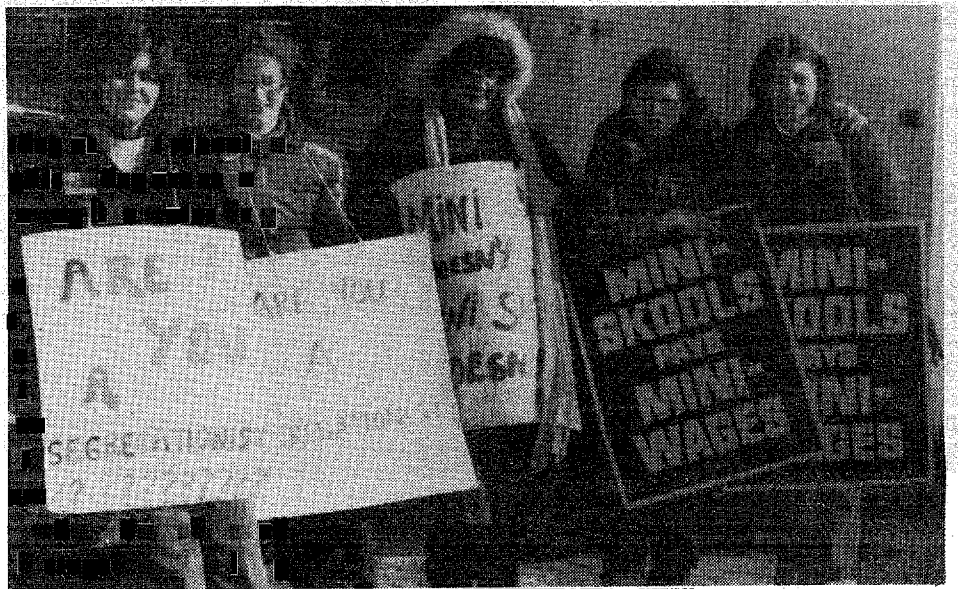
Also at the benefit screening were several films made by individual members of the Alliance. *Mini Skools Pays Mini Wages*, a tape by Nancy Nichol, is another social documentary, this time documenting an eight month strike of daycare workers against Mini Skools of Toronto. The tape deals with some fairly sticky questions. Whose side were the parents on? At first 60% of them were happy to put their children in the alternate daycare setting which the striking workers staffed. Later, when Mini Skools offered a half price sale, a lot of new parents got involved who had little sympathy for workers they did not know. Women who work in the caring profes-

sions learn quickly that they are not meant to stand up for their own rights. They are seen as "militant" which works away like water dripping on stone at their image of "caring."

The tape also documents some examples of police harassment. For running a red light two of the women were taken in, stripped and searched, kept overnight, and later released from their jobs. In the end, fourteen of the twenty-two strikers lost their jobs with their union's handshake agreement. It was a bitter end for these women who showed such strength and courage and stayed out so long despite police and parental harassment.

Another of the evening's films, Marusia Bociurkiw's *75 Terrific Looks at Advertising*, is by far the most light-hearted and entertaining film I have yet seen on the subject of the politics of fashion and advertising. Bociurkiw was able to keep us all laughing with such statements as: "Nancy Reagan is not... messy... confused... oppressed... funny. She is everything that I am not!" The accompanying images placed the whole industry in historical perspective while drawing parallels and the reigning politics of the day.

Finally, my favourite film of the evening was Janis Lundman's *Matinale*. Despite some problematic switching of themes and a distinct lack of narrative development which would have successfully made the link between the main character's cheerful demeanor at the start of the film and her total

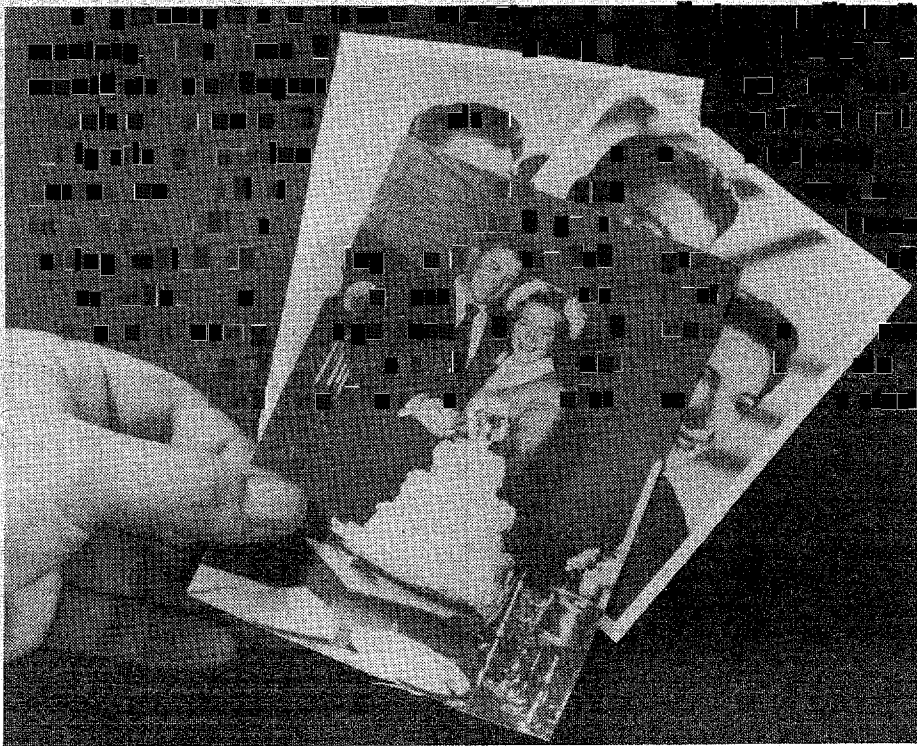


Demonstrators in Nancy Nichol's *Mini Skools Pay Mini Wages*.

state of anxiety at the end, there are yet images from this film which remain with absolute clarity in my mind's eye. Lundman takes images from an everyday morning routine: waking, making the bed, eating breakfast and so on, and remakes them, much to this viewer's delight, into flowing, sensuous art with a texture and a mysticism all their own. Everyday objects are explored in black and white and then colour, as if coming to life without moving. The camera moves from close up to a short distance, in and out, illustrating a beauty which we don't bother to notice in our everyday routines. Ordinary motion switches to stop motion as layers and layers are added; bedsheets suspended in the air are transformed into an image as beautiful as a painting, which no painting can accomplish. I have honestly never seen a more "cinematic" film.

The Women's Media Alliance works successfully together, as well as individually. Each woman has a different approach to her art and its ability to create feminist cultural work. Together, they can only benefit from mutual support and a critical exchange of ideas, approaches, methods, and motives. This screening was a good example of how widespread these approaches can be in film and video: adapting one woman's reality so that no occurrence is too insignificant to be carefully documented, as part of life, in a way that transcends the trivial and creates art; or dealing with women's issues in a straightforward documentary way, exposing injustices and helping silenced groups to find their voice; humour and its gentle poking at our common lot is yet another method. Naturally there are many more... for the future.

The Women's Media Alliance is currently looking to the future with video workshops planned for the summer and a possible future project in the works with the Immigrant Women's Centre. If you wish to get involved the person to contact is Nancy Nichol at (416) 531-1614. The next WMA meeting will be held May 1, at 7:30 pm, Gallery 940, 940 Queen St. East, and new members are welcome.



MARUSIA BOCIURKIW

Fashion Changes: from Marusia Bociurkiw's *75 Terrific Looks*.

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A Spectacle of Revenge

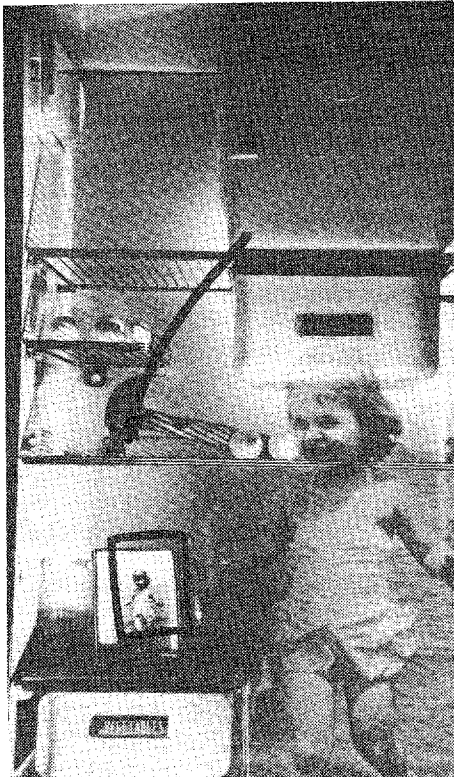
by Barb Taylor and Tori Smith

In 1980, Marianne Bachmeier walked into a packed German courtroom and shot the murderer of her seven year old daughter, saying, "I did it for you, Anna." Suddenly, a victim had taken action, and the press and public were mesmerized.

For feminists, the issues raised are complex and disturbing. While the act is difficult to condone, it evokes emotional extremes. The depth of controversy surrounding the case brought it to the attention of a group of feminist performers who created *This is for you, Anna* for the Women's Perspective festival last spring. The performance was recently part of the Factory Theatre Lab's Brave New Works.

With the Bachmeier story as the starting point, the Anna Collective, (Maureen White, Barb Taylor, Tori Smith, Banuta Rubess, Patricia Nichols, Ann Marie MacDonald, and Suzanne Odette Khuri), has broadened the production to include legend, myth and personal experience.

This is for you, Anna is a spectacle of revenge. The tension mounts as five women elegantly unravel their stories. The wild-eyed heroine of nineteenth-century melodrama runs past Marianne Bachmeier as she lights her cigarette. A battered woman eyes her husband. The violence they face ranges from the spectacular to the mundane, and leads to a spectrum of vengeance; the sudden explosion of a pistol, a razor slices through a snapshot, a lifetime of icy silence. And when all else fails,



the women smile and provide stinging instructions on "How to be a (perfect) victim."

The stories are of women everywhere. The goal of the project is to interact with audiences across Ontario in a variety of non-

traditional settings. The first of such performances will be on May 12, 1984 at *Toward Community Solutions to Sexual Violence*, a Toronto conference sponsored by the Quaker Committee on Jails and Justice.

Both the performance and the conference address similar questions. How should we respond to violence? Can the victim fight back? Is peaceful action effective?

A number of current productions, such as the film *Born in Flames*, examine a range of political responses, and following in that vein, *This is for you, Anna* examines the possibility of personal action - revenge.

Non-violent images of revenge become a means for the performers to explore anger and relieve feelings of helplessness. Created collectively, the images are evocative rather than literal.

Women's communities are looking forward to the possibility of participating in this discussion and performance when *This is for you, Anna* tours Ontario through May and June. London, Hamilton, St. Catharines and Chatham are some of the cities that will be visited. The performance will also play once more in Toronto at Theatre Passe Muraille, May 15 to 27.

As a theatrical spectacle, *This is for you, Anna* provides an emotional focus for women to explore the extremes of response to violence; as a feminist project, it aims to further the dialogue on violence throughout the province. ●

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Carry Greenham Home

by Baquta Rubess

England: Toronto imports and consumes its culture in the form of music, TV series and fashion trends. But lately a different England has splashed on to the front page of the newspapers, an England made of angry faces – a striking coal miner, or a woman dragged off by police at Greenham Common.

I recognize the faces and the sentiments, after many years of living in England, and especially after a recent tour in Britain with The 1982 Theatre Company. Our performances of Dario Fo's *Mistero Buffo* took us to a variety of audiences, from the well-heeled theatre crowd to a shivering group of women outdoors at Greenham. The return to Toronto from London is always a shock, due to Toronto's relative opulence, the relative ease provided by a moderate political climate. In England, the struggles are more severe.

Greenham Common is a meeting point for many of these struggles. Recently the camp has been evicted for what seems to be the last time. With this eviction, not only has a major peace effort been attacked, but also a unique community and forum.

It is hard to get an accurate impression of the peace camp without a personal visit. The English liberal press is in awe of these women and turns them into martyrs and saints, the Florence Nightingales for the world. The 'normal' housewife or the seventy-year-old peacenik are inevitably the highlighted members of the camp. The right-wing press, on the other hand, characterizes the community as loathsome extremists, lesbians and punks. They are on the lookout for anything sensational to undermine or degrade the movement (tactics employed against the peace movement here as well).

Recently, a film called *Carry Greenham Home* has swept through the community and arts centres of Britain. Made by two film students, Beeban Kidron and Amanda Richardson, it is a series of scenes from the history of the Greenham encampment. It shows the protest "actions," the mud, the keening, the evictions, the discussions about collective process. I left the film with the never-ending songs ringing in my ears, and with mixed emotions of inspiration and hopelessness. I wondered whether these women were truly representative of Greenham, of the peace movement.

I had not yet been to Greenham, and one of the major impressions was that all the women depicted in the film seemed to belong to the alternative community: with close cropped green, blue, pink hair, and, under the parkas and the toques, brightly coloured, offbeat clothing.

Extravagant dress is not exactly unusual in England. In a predominantly working-class audience in Basildon, for example, three fourteen-year-old girls sported gold studs in their nostrils, (although otherwise dressed in nice pink sweaters and corduroys). My suspicions increased when in one theatre audience, I met a woman who sarcastically dismissed visits to the camp as something just too too trendy.

Other factors contributed to the camp's offbeat attractions, to expectations of a second Woodstock, albeit much more serious. You could live there without any money. There was always a glut of donated food and clothing. The Greenham cause attracted celebrities. At Christmas, a van arrived from the exclusive London food store, Fortnum and Mason's, loaded with cream of water-cress soup, caviar, pickled quail, Chivas Regal, and other expensive goodies. All for the women. The card enclosed simply read, "Love, Linda." That's Linda McCartney, Paul's wife. And Joan Baez visited the camp the day before my fringe theatre company played there.

Celebrities and fashion. Yet these trappings are, all in all, misleading. The trends may arrive *en masse* for the major demonstrations. They have a right to be there. But the Common, especially for those who stay, is no fun. It is *not* a second Woodstock. First of all, the physical discomfort is enormous. Your first task, on arrival, is to construct a "bender": a kind of tent made from plastic sheeting, bricks and branches, all wrapped up with rope into a structure that looks more like a lumpy parcel than a teepee. It is always cold, and in February, the rain is made of ice. You go for a pee in the bushes and a USAF plane flies close above you, or the watchtowers train their lights on you. With some exceptions, the nearby townspeople resent the camp and occasionally arrive to trash the benders and harass the women. (After all, their tax money pays the now astronomical bills of the local police.) You are never safe, never unobserved.

Apart from the physical discomfort, there

is the boredom. There is nothing to do except chat, sit in the cold around a fire that warms nothing except your boots, and watch the coal black tea kettle. Carve a goldfish out of a carrot and watch it swim in the rain puddles in your plastic canopy. After the novelty wears off, the tedium wears the nerves. While the enemy – the soldiers on the other side of the barbed wire fence – is warm, busy, entertained. If you are lucky, all the soldiers do is stand a few yards away from you and stare. However, at many of the gates (each gate at the base has its own female encampment), soldiers are belligerent and shout verbal abuse at the women, or sabotage their water supply. They are especially abusive if your haircut tags you as a 'butch dyke'. But even insults can become routine, as the weeks pass, it is the banality of the everyday struggle that causes surprise in the Greenham women when they see themselves idealized in the press.

However! The 'chitchat' must not be underestimated: it is often an ongoing political discussion, an exchange of information. The decision to live at Greenham for a longer period usually means the disruption of a life – disruption of a job or a family. (Although one baby was born at Greenham and still lives there, it is a difficult environ-

ment for children.) The first sight of Greenham Common is a shock akin to seeing the Berlin Wall: driving through the moist green hills of merrie Englande you suddenly come upon this grim monstrosity, tucked away in its barbed wire like some horrible family secret. And the arrival at Greenham is only the beginning of a radicalizing process. As Annie, one of our theatre company, put it: "Everything is so clear here. On the one side, there is peace, on the other side, war. On the one side, there is death – on the other, life. One the one side, there are men, soldiers, guns, curses – on the other – women, songs, laughter, hugs, warmth."

Men of every political stripe have found it difficult to accept the all-female nature of the camp. Liberal men are especially pained to find themselves excluded. And yet the women have repeatedly explained their position: the presence of men would induce more violence on the part of the soldiers, and the campers' 'actions' are determinedly non-violent. The angry cries of the men make one wonder where it hurts: whether they are actually furious at the women being able to take so much power, so much publicity, show so much strength and creativity *all by themselves*. For some sections of the camp, the all-female stipulation goes further than non-violent principles. Instead, they are striving to create a new community, and no men, not even visitors, are tolerated past the sign designating the area as FOR WOMEN ONLY. Thus Greenham Common becomes, for some women, an often unexpected experiment in other living structures, in radical sisterhood. It is within this supportive community, that a 'normal' nurse from Ireland will suddenly crop her hair and dye it green.

The 1982 Theatre Company contains an equal number of men and women. The men are of both sexual preferences, and are in total support of feminist principles. However, when we perform at Greenham, they are struck by a laming awkwardness. The performance conditions are rotten: it is pouring freezing rain, most of us have the flu or bronchitis. We collect our audience in our unheated van from the various gates, also from

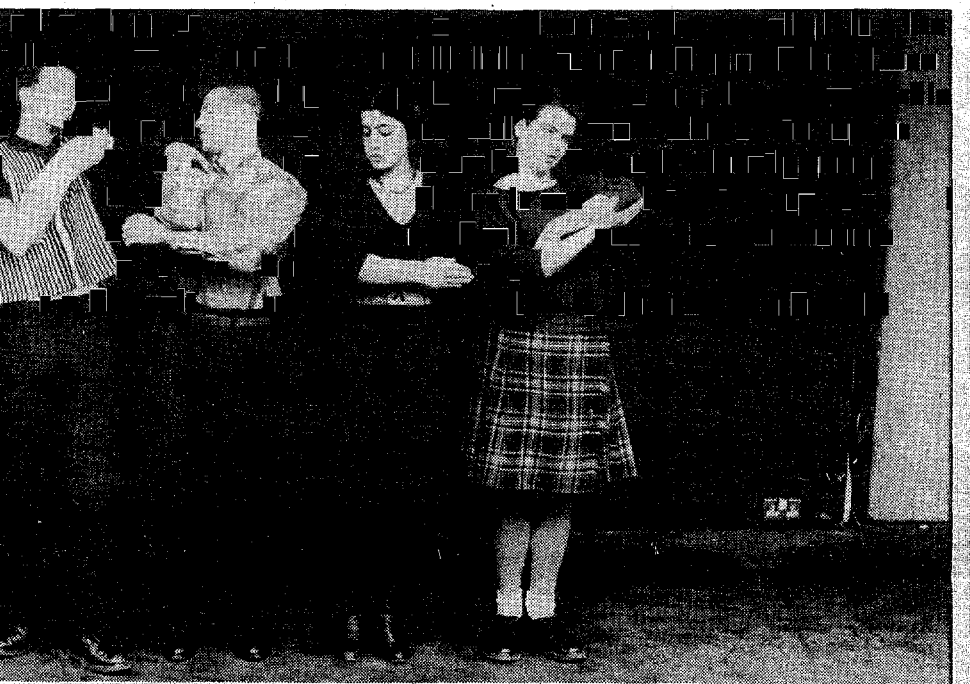
the separatist camps. Some 40 women huddle close under a plastic awning and spectators wipe tears away as the smoke from the fire bites their eyes. We use bushes and trees for our offstage, and shout our lines against the wind. But we are made suddenly nervous by the consciousness that half of our audience has not looked at a man for weeks – unless it was a soldier. The instant self-criticism makes us nervous.

And yet separatism is not a side issue in England. Whereas in Canada, the question might be, "Why are you a separatist (feminist)?" in England, it reads "Why are you *not* a separatist?" Any self-respecting feminist has to have a satisfactory answer, or live with guilt. Not surprisingly, the play *Masterpieces* by Sarah Daniels is acclaimed by the progressive media, apparently due to its implicit separatist message. Ostensibly it is about snuff movies, but actually it is a litany of villainies perpetrated by cardboard men on good women from every class (from working-class welfare mum-whore, to upper-class housewife). The predominantly young female audience is manipulated to gasp at carefully crafted misogynous jokes. The men are all sitting ducks.

Separatism is, in other words, widely ac-

cepted and no wonder our male actors feel queasy (though no one says anything to make them uncomfortable). But gender is not the only cause of hesitancy. We all became suddenly critical of our material, and, indeed, the experience refreshed a whole set of questions about the function of political theatre.

Mistero Buffo is a collection of medieval Italian mysteries, mostly very funny and very grotesque. We welcomed the idea of performing at Greenham with great enthusiasm, since one of our skits, "The Slaughter of the Innocents," is an anti-war piece. But when we perform this skit at Greenham, we wonder at its appropriateness. Our grotesque baby-killing jokes are very funny in the most macabre way, and have the audience rolling in the aisles in Basildon, Edinburgh, London – where the bloodthirsty soldiers seem fantastical. Here, no one laughs. War is the nightmare these women fight every day. Should we, then, present them with scenes from this nightmare, however grotesque? But why not? Shouldn't political theatre present its converted audience with a mirror of their struggle? And for the Lebanese actor Suzanne, who gets to defend her children from imaginary soldiers, the experience is tremendously moving. "Get out!" she shrieks at the invisible attackers, knowing the real soldiers were standing behind barbed wire only a few yards away.



Slaughter of the Innocents: The 1982 Theatre Company in Dario Fo's *Mistero Buffo*.

Our questions remain unanswered, debated. And as we leave – rushing off for our evening performance – we remain unsure whether we have inspired, annoyed or depressed our audience.

The Greenham women are themselves extremely creative, a creativity which expresses itself best in their "actions" of defiance. The barbed wire fence is decorated with webs of coloured yarn. It has been draped with quilts, hung with personal photos, baby's clothes. The women have cut through the wire and danced on the silos. Last Easter, they broke through the fence for a picnic, and the film *Carry Greenham Home* shows them being led off by soldiers – still hopping and leaping in their Easter bunny suits. And when courting arrest, lying in the mud to prevent traffic to

surprise, when we appeared on stage, we were surrounded by some 250 spectators. On a Monday! We later discovered that Monday nights were general "theatre nights," that the music audience of the weekend was being lured to the theatre nights due to the excellent standards in music. Ticket prices could be kept extremely low since the income from the dances could cover other expenses. And Tuesday night was *women's* theatre night – and *sometimes* men were admitted in the audience on Tuesdays.

Despite all these cultural offerings – the theatre, the magazine *Spare Rib*, the constant availability of at least some "women's films" (*Born in Flames*, von Trotta, Kurys) in London – a feminist in England might also find herself very isolated. Each group functions on its own, and it is not always easy to gain entrance. In contrast, the cross-fertilizing community network of women which is developing in Toronto at the moment, is something which is perhaps unattainable in a city as large as London. Festivals such as Alter Eros, Women's Perspective, and Women Building Culture are concentrated, and therefore generate great local energy. On the other hand, for example, the British Women Alive festival, which highlights women in entertainment, is nation-wide and therefore necessarily dispersed and much less personal.

If you do visit London this summer, go to Upper Street in Islington and shop at the Women's Bookstore, or have lunch there. The hours are odd, and when closed, the bookstore is covered by a forbidding wire gate – for protection. But inside, at least for a while, they were collecting donations for a certain bookstore demolished by arson in Toronto last year. And if the women are still at Greenham Common, send them flowers or Arctic sleeping bags, whichever seem necessary at the time. (All you do is address it to Greenham Peace Camp, Greenham Common. It will get there.)

Baquta Rubess works in feminist theatre in Toronto, she has worked and studied in England, and recently returned from a tour there.

Perpetual Emotion



The Ivory Swing. Janette Turner Hospital. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982. Pp. 252. \$16.95

Reviewed by Carroll Klein

I recently read a speech given by Philip Larkin, the greatest of England's living poets, in which he discussed his criteria for selecting the 1977 Booker Prize for fiction. (On the short-list that year were Barbara Pym and Caroline Blackwood, but the prize went to Paul Scott for his wonderful novel *Staying On*.) While the intricacies of selection are interesting to me, and the literary gossip irresistible, it was Larkin's lucid discussion of what makes a book great that struck me most profoundly. Cutting through the critical tendency to obfuscate, to make literature the preserve of an educated elite, he suggested first that a reader ask four questions about a book in order to determine its worth:

Could I read it?

If I could read it, did I believe it?

If I believed it, did I care about it?

If I cared about it, what was the quality of my caring, and would it last?

Within the guidelines of contemporary lit-crit, this may seem simplistic; I can almost hear the dismissive sniffs of those who make their livings pronouncing on weighty subjects like textual matrix and asignifying language. Yet it seems to me that Larkin has offered a very human approach to reading and judging novels with his questions. He never suggests that this is less than a rigorous set of criteria; indeed, while many books are readable, few make it past the question of aesthetic credibility. It is the task of a good novelist to supply circumstantial evidence for the behaviour of characters, to evaluate human situations in the terms of writer and reader, and to strengthen the credibility of a story by putting it into the perspective of a larger world.

All of which brings me to Janette Turner Hospital's Seal Award-winning novel *The Ivory Swing*. When I first read it, I was impressed. It is an engrossing tale, well told, perceptive, intelligent. Its structural and literary competence reminded me of Carol Shields's novels, as did its inhabitants, thoughtful, middle-class people with measured degrees of angst. I moved on to Hospital's second novel, *The Tiger in the Tiger Pit*, and was reassured that her talent was not a single-book phenomenon. But it was *The Ivory Swing* that returned again and again to mind. Reading Larkin's dicta finally convinced me that this was a book to write about. It was believable; I did care about it; and I wanted to work out formally just what it was about the novel that impressed me so much.

Hospital's fictional character, Juliet, is an academic wife whose own scholarly career and expectations have been interrupted by marriage and motherhood. It is not a fate from which she derives much comfort. Juliet yearns for freedom, for the anonymous grime of large cities, for a life not circumscribed by the modest satisfactions of watching her children grow and her husband's career prosper. She feels, like one of Larkin's women in his poem "Afternoons," pushed to the side of her own life. She fantasizes about Jeremy, her former lover, who belonged to a time when her life was her own, and she maintains a rather unsatisfactory, defensive friendship with him. Jeremy, not really a very nice man,

is arch and critical: "The illusion of risk", he said. "That's all you want, the *illusion* of risk". And Jeremy is right.

Juliet loves her husband David, who is portrayed as a bit of a scholarly wimp, with large, mournful eyes and a head full of pedantic, if entrancing, information. But David has a darker side, as well, for it is his career that has fettered Juliet in a small university town, and though he is insistent about his concern for her happiness, he is firmly entrenched in the importance of his own scholarly pursuits and makes few real attempts to change his life for her sake. Juliet's sister Annie comes close to the truth when she tires of Juliet's moaning about her misery: "So either he's a tyrant who doesn't care how you feel, or he simply doesn't believe you." David often does seem to be a benevolent tyrant, but Juliet has given him much reason to believe that she isn't serious about escaping the comforts of a provincial Ontario town.

When David's sabbatical takes him to the south of India, Juliet follows, with trepidation, a typewriter, and their two children, Jonathan and Miranda. Overwhelmed by the heat and her democratically insistent rejection of servants, Juliet spends her days marketing and cooking; she celebrates incessantly as she squats in the kitchen grinding curry pastes. A woman who prides herself on her cool rationality, she rails silently against Shivaraman Nair, her landlord, who embodies the caste-ridden patriarchy that treats women viciously and with indifference. He is the visible enemy, a man who "greeted everything she said with laughter as if she were an amusing child or a clever toy."

Hospital's portrait of Shivaraman Nair is wonderful and infuriating. Pompous, narrow, obsequious, utterly dismissive of all women and of men below his caste, it cheered me up to read of Juliet's constant attempts to subvert his dignity. But her victories are hollow, and she knows it, for the man's power is almost palpable. Nair is symbolic of the aspects of India that Juliet finds repugnant and ultimately, cruelly, he will have things his way.

It is against this sombre backdrop of paralyzing heat and stultifying tradition that Juliet's story unfolds. Nair, aghast at and contemptuous of Juliet's refusal to keep servants, assigns a child, Prabhakaran, to be her sweeper. Prabhakaran knows the rules, but Juliet is baffled by the servant-mistress relationship. At first alarmed by her inclination to mother, the boy slides into an uneasy acceptance of the strangers who do not treat him as a servant, who read him bedtime stories and teach him English. The relationship between Prabhakaran and Juliet and her children is touching, but so fraught with cultural misinterpretation that whispers of disaster filter through almost from the moment they meet.

Prabhakaran becomes the link to Yashoda, the exquisite young widow who lives, virtually captive, on the Nair estates. Yashoda, a victim of her womanhood and of a culture that blames a husband's death on the bad karma of his wife, is "too beautiful for her own safety." She is young, educated in the western tradition, and desperate to escape her fate. She turns to Juliet, whom she sees as her liberator; Juliet, "freighted with the knowledge of loss and the awareness of evil and the possibility of her harm" despairs, for she sees Yashoda as her alter ego:

Yashoda and I, she thought, we want everything. We swing between worlds, always in conflict, always looking for impossible resolutions, destined to uncertainty and dissatisfaction... (She imagined) herself and Yashoda side by side on the ivory swing, their vacillations preserved as art. There would be a kind of immortality to it - the immortality of the bronze dancer in the museum case. As long as one did not mind an eternity of going nowhere.

The ivory swing, with Krishna and Radha suspended, swaying "forever between poles, unable to stop, unable to get off" becomes a touchstone of Juliet's and Yashoda's dilemma. Krishna, being male, is lost to the literary image; Radha, intimate by virtue of her womanhood, is the symbol of their lives, women bound to men, loving and resisting, fascinated and repelled, unable to regain the lost powers of the female.

Juliet, her reality slipping away in the heat and rampant fecundity of India, tries to grapple with the problem of Yashoda, who holds men in thrall, including Juliet's husband and Shivaraman Nair. Yashoda is an innocent, but men see her as a *yakshi*, a demonic spirit that lures men to damnation. Protestations are useless, and Yashoda's own ambivalence and cultural guilt make matters worse.

Other characters move through the landscape, entering the slow drama and leaving their marks. Prem, a Marxist student outraged by caste and complicity, an enemy of the established order, is a one-man chorus directing the reader to the rather meagrely described political situation. Annie, Juliet's younger, free-spirited sister, blunders into an alien world with the best of intentions, unable to recognize the profound cultural gulf between her world and that of Yashoda, whom she befriends, and Prem, whom she beds. The tense, envy-ridden history of Juliet and Annie surfaces as Juliet tries to make her sister acknowledge that the differences between east and west cannot be bridged by reason. Annie is a tourist; chastened by her experiences in India, she leaves, a little wiser, perhaps, but unscathed, unlike the others whose lives are changed forever. Mr. Matthew Thomas, an Indian Christian and therefore a man between cultures, figures largely in the tragedy that ultimately results from misunderstanding and bad judgement.

Hospital skillfully balances the secondary characters and their private struggles, counterpointing them to the struggles of Juliet and Yashoda, who share a dilemma but could never share the means of escape. Juliet's

despair at losing herself in the children, her dreams of big cities and lost lovers, her desire to regain her fast-track independence - all understandable emotions and needs in themselves - seem irritating and self-indulgent compared to the no-win situation of the ir-resolute, culture-bound Yashoda. Juliet is left with the possibility of escape; for Yashoda there is no escape.

Juliet's confrontation with her personal politics and her attempts to create a new order in her own life and to ameliorate the situation for Yashoda either fail or remain unresolved. Hospital allows no easy solutions, no facile answers for the dilemmas that buffet Juliet. She cannot deny the history that has gone before and she must face, with all its implications of pain and possibility, "an aching sense of the terrible limits of knowledge and understanding" that lies before her.

If, then, a novel should illuminate the human condition, if it should create a credible framework from which we can extrapolate universal truths and understandings, *The Ivory Swing* is a success. Hospital has written a novel that will issue a shock of recognition in many readers, whether or not they are familiar with the personal or geographical territory.

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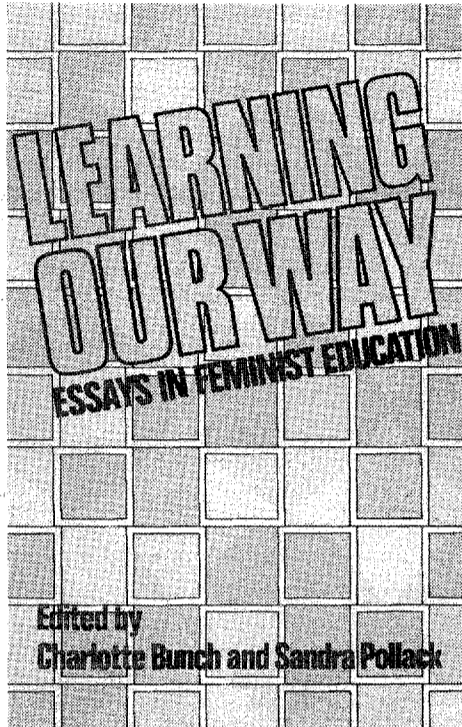
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Learning Our Way:

Matter of Fact Education

Learning Our Way: Essays in Feminist Education. edited by Charlotte Bunch and Sandra Pollock, The Crossing Press: 1983, 334 pp., \$13.50

Reviewed by Nancy Adamson



In 1975, when I was a fairly new feminist and a very new teacher, I saw an announcement in *Quest* that Charlotte Bunch's collection of essays, *Not By Degrees: Essays on Feminist Education*, would be published soon by Daughters Press. I kept looking for the book over the next few years as the complex issues involved in teaching, especially feminist teaching, became clearer to me, but the book never came out; unfortunately, Daughters Press stopped publishing just before Bunch's book went into production. Several years later Nancy Bereano, editor of the Feminist Series at the Crossing Press, heard about the manuscript and encouraged Bunch to update it. The result is *Learning Our Way: Essays in Feminist Education* (co-edited by Sandra Pollock), a collection of 27 essays loosely categorized into three sections: feminist education within existing institutions, alternative structures for feminist education, and approaches to feminist education.

The changed title, from *Not By Degrees* to *Learning Our Way*, is a significant one and reflects the fact that most recognized feminist education does take place within universities and colleges, degree-granting institutions. The first and last sections of the book for the most part assume an audience that has some experience in formal teaching or expects to be involved in it. That is unfortunate since it will likely deter many women from reading a book that in fact has much to offer all feminists. As feminists, most of us are involved in educating others as part of our everyday lives. We individually figure out how to deal with sexist, racist, and/or homophobic remarks at work, home, or school. We figure out how to raise issues important to us with friends and family, and in our various political groups spend a lot of time thinking about how to best raise issues 'out there in the real world'. All of that is about educating others - communicating our ideas and insights. We are all teachers, though few of us name ourselves that, and fewer still

get paid for that work. However, all of us can benefit from a discussion of how to raise feminist issues in a productive way. Feminist educators are dealing explicitly with a lot of issues teaching, educating and learning raise. Many of these issues are addressed in this book, though unfortunately few of the articles generalize their experience outside of the world of the classroom.

The first section, "Feminist Education Within Existing Institutions," is about the teaching of women's studies in universities and colleges. The articles provide a good sense of the struggles of feminists within universities; some of these specific struggles were for all-women classes, courses with lesbian content, unlearning racism, right-wing attacks on women's studies for not presenting a 'balanced' view of women, etc. There are valuable stories of women's struggle to change the educational system.

There are two very interesting articles in this section. The first is by Andrea Loewenstein, "Teaching Writing in Prison." Without romanticizing what she is doing, Loewenstein movingly describes the process of giving women a voice as women by teaching them to write. The other especially interesting article is by Terry Haywoode, "College for Neighborhood Women: Innovation and Growth." It describes the story of groups of poor and working-class women who worked through the National Congress of Neighborhood Women (USA) to develop college programs for themselves. Haywoode's article makes concrete what it means to make educational opportunities available to poor and working-class women.

By far the most interesting section of this book is the middle one, entitled "Alternative Structures for Feminist Education." This describes how we educate ourselves outside of formal structures - it's about women's institutes, workshops, CR and study groups, art shows and home movies. Much of what is described here happens in California (where else?), but with a little imagination and daring we might be able to translate some of what is described here to staid old Toronto.



Charlotte Bunch and Sandra Pollock

Three of the articles in this section describe and analyze the experience of Sagaris: A Feminist Institute. In the summer of 1975, Sagaris, an independent feminist institute, opened for two five-week sessions. The collective of women who planned and taught at Sagaris included Charlotte Bunch, Rita Mae Brown, Mary Daly, Emily Medvec and Bertha Harris. Charlotte Bunch describes some of the problems faced by the Sagaris collective: "From the moment that the first announcement was sent out, Sagaris was surrounded by controversy. How much should a feminist school cost? How should the school be governed? Who should teach and how much should be paid?" These are the same questions that have faced women's studies programs and feminist community schools, but "the Sagaris collective faced these questions more critically because they saw themselves as a model" (p. 114). Sagaris did not survive the controversy of its first two ses-

sions, but the idea of feminist education outside of existing institutions was firmly established in women's minds, and, benefiting from the Sagaris experience, they returned to their own communities determined to create new forms of feminist education.

One of the long-lasting results of the Sagaris experiment is the Califia Community in California. Califia Community sessions, of one-week and long-weekend duration, are held on rented California forest land. The goal of these sessions is to provide "an opportunity for women to participate in a dynamic process of creating and living feminist theory. At each session, the collective highlights three issues - sexual preference, white racism, and class - though many other workshops and issues are raised during the course. The three articles on Califia Community describe the overall process, art education and the Women of Colour Califia committee. I was both excited and scared by what I read. The issues of sexual preference, white racism and class are difficult ones for us to deal with, especially those of us from the dominant class, race or sexual preference, but they are crucial issues for all feminists and the methods of raising these issues developed by the Califia women sound both sensitive and positive. I'm ready to hop on a plane and go spend a week in the California woods looking at my own racism and classism (thank god I'm a lesbian, at least that lets me out of one heavy!). For those of you who have the opportunity to go to Califia during the summer, you can write to the Califia Community at PO Box 1034, Studio City, California 91604.

The most moving article in this collection for me is Terry Wolverton's "Unlearning Complicity, Remembering Resistance: White Women's Anti-Racism Education." This article describes a group of women who came together "out of a desire to examine and rid ourselves of the racist misinformation we have been taught, and to learn how better to work against racism in the women's community and the world" (p. 188). This group works on the premise that guilt about racism does no one any good. They believe that everyone born into a racist society learns this misinformation. As children we resist learning racism, but in the end we do in fact learn this lie. These women feel that it is important for white women to remember their resistance to learning racism both to avoid just feeling guilty and to begin to see how the system of racism operates in our society.

Wolverton describes how this group of white women moved from a CR group in which they explored their feelings, stereotypes and fears, to a study group in which they "did their homework" - learned the history of people of colour, examined theoretical writings, etc. - to begin to work with women of colour in various projects and organizations and study groups. The initial impetus

for forming this group came when these women, lesbian feminists working on the Great American Lesbian Art Show, were criticized for being racist. They were an all-white group, not, they felt, because they excluded women of colour, but just because it happened that way. The criticism that they were racist encouraged them to look at their organization and most other organizations in the women's movement and to realize that they were largely white. Since they knew that they and other feminists were committed to being non-racist and they that were not doing anything explicitly to exclude women of colour from their organizations, they organized this group to begin to understand their unconscious assumptions and to begin to educate themselves, not to wait any longer for women of colour to tell them how they should be and what they should do.

I think many of us in the Toronto women's community can learn much from this article, and others in this book, which explore how to unlearn complicity, remember resistance and actively promote anti-racist work in our community. For me the most exciting part of these articles is that they suggest a way forward: they are moving beyond white guilt and the immobilization that results.

The third section, "Approaches to Feminist Education," is the theoretical section of the book. Charlotte Bunch's article, "Not By Degrees: Feminist Theory and Education," is an excellent explanation of how to approach theory and how to teach it to students. As someone who has tended to steer clear of theory because so much of it is inaccessible to beginning students, this article has inspired me to try again using Bunch's sensible and clear framework for studying theory. This final section pulls together much of the specific information found in the other two sections. As a whole it is not really new or earth-shattering, but it is interesting reading and does tie the book together.

Learning Our Way is well worth the \$13.50 if you can't borrow it from a friend or find it in the library. It is full of nuggets of information and concrete suggestions, though these are often hidden in articles that assume an academic orientation. The book's matter-of-fact inclusion of the concerns of lesbians, women of colour, and poor and working-class women is a welcome relief from the tokenistic inclusion we often feel. Bunch and Pollock have put together a varied and interesting collection of articles on all different kinds of feminist education. Have a good read and start to think of yourself as a teacher or educator!

Nancy Adamson lives in Toronto, teaches women's studies at the University of Toronto where she also attends nursing school and is active in the International Women's Day Committee.

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Week of May 1

● **Tuesday, May 1:** Scarborough Women's Centre health workshop on Pre-Menstrual Syndrome (PMS). Malvern Library, 30 Sewells Road, Scarborough. 7:30-9:30 pm. Info: 431-1138.

● **Tuesday, May 1:** Lesbian Phone Line, open tonight for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. Info 960-3249. Also Tuesdays, May 8, 15, 22 and 29.

● **Wednesday, May 2:** Lesbian Phone Line general meeting. Interested women, prospective volunteers welcome. 7:30 pm. 348 College St., 3rd floor. Info: 960-3249.

● **Thursday, May 3:** Techknowledge Video Workshops presents Vera Frenkel, Toronto video artist, who will show her tapes and discuss her work. Location TBA. \$3. Info: 593-7165.

● **Thursday, May 3:** Singer/songwriter Anna Gutmanis performs at Earth Tones. 357 Queen St. West. 8 pm. No cover.

● **Thursday, May 3:** Poetry in Motion featuring Ayana Black, Vancy Casper, Roberta Morris, Pamela Cooper and Marlene Phillip. A WIC production. Trojan Horse Café, 179 Danforth Ave. \$5 (\$4 advance). 8 pm. Info: 461-83678.

● **Thursday, May 3:** Married lesbians support and discussion group sponsored by Spouses of Gays. 206 St. Clair Ave. W. 1:30 pm. Info: 967-0597.

● **Friday, May 4:** Toronto Women's Bookstore Grand Reopening and Tenth Anniversary Celebration! Storytelling, prose and poetry readings, live music and refreshments. 10:30 am to 6 pm. At the new location: 73 Harbord St. Info: 922-8744. Also Saturday, May 5.

● **Friday, May 4:** Lizzie's Annual Cabaret, a fundraiser sponsored by the Elizabeth Fry Society. \$20. Light supper provided. Cash bar. Palais Royale Ballroom, 1601 Lakeshore Blvd. 7 pm. Info: 924-3708.

● **Friday, May 4:** Join the fun of Las Vegas in Toronto - black jack, wheel of fortune, door prizes! Pauline McGibbon Cultural Centre, 86 Lombard. \$5. Info: 947-0321.

● **Friday, May 4:** Annual Mother's Day Pottery Sale held by the Woodlawn Pottery Studio, a women's co-operative. Metro Toronto Library (Bloor and Yonge), Room A. 11 am-9 pm. Info: 964-0758. Also Saturday, May 5, 9 am-5 pm.

● **Friday, May 4:** Trojan Horse First Anniversary celebration with Red Berets, Grupo Taller, Men Without Jobs, Marie-Lynn Hammond, Arlene Mantle, Faith Nolan and others. New Trojan Horse Cafe, 179 Danforth Ave. 8 pm. \$4. Info: 461-8367. Also Saturday, May 5.

● **Saturday, May 5:** 10th Annual Meeting of Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL). Registration available at the door: \$25 (limited income: \$5 minimum). 9 am-4:30 pm. Room 72, Learning Resources Centre, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. Wheelchair accessible.

● **Saturday, May 5:** Womyn Out Of Doors (WOODS) sponsors a bicycle repair workshop designed to get your bike ready for spring. Bring a rag, an old toothbrush, an old margarine container and \$2 for supplies. 519 Church St. Room 3. 1-5 pm. RSVP to Alex by May 2 at 924-6474.

Week of May 6

● **Sunday, May 6:** Margie Adam In Concert, sponsored by Womynly Way. 8 pm. Trinity/St. Paul's, 427 Bloor St. W. \$8.50. Free childcare. Wheelchair accessible. Info: 925-6568.

● **Sunday, May 6:** Women's Perspective meeting/brunch (a feminist cultural group). Everyone welcome. 872 Palmerston Ave. (near Dupont).

● **Sunday, May 6:** Lesbian Mothers' Pot Luck Brunch. Food and friendship. 1-4 pm. Info: 465-6822.

● **Monday, May 7:** Techknowledge Video Workshop on Documentation of Live Performance. Instructor: Chris Clifford. Fee \$45 (TSV members \$40). Trinity Square Video, 299 Queen St. West, Suite 500. 7:30-10:30 pm. Info: 593-7165. To Wednesday, May 9.

OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

TORONTO WOMEN'S EVENTS CALENDAR MAY 1984

Compiled by Catherine Maunsell

● **Monday, May 7:** Toronto Poetry Workshop with instructor Libby Scheier, author of *The Larger Life*. 796 Crawford St. 6:30 pm. Info: 534-7635. Also Mondays, May 14 and 28.

● **Tuesday, May 8:** Scarborough Women's Centre health workshop on Phobias. Malvern Library, 30 Sewells Road, Scarborough. 7:30-9:30 pm. Info: 431-1138.

● **Tuesday, May 8:** DES Action and DEC Films present *DES: The Time Bomb Drug* plus a discussion to follow, with Dr. Paula Roth and Jan Roberts (Queen's University). Women's College Hospital, 76 Grenville St. 7:30 pm. Free. Info: 968-2844.

● **Wednesday, May 9:** Womyn Out Of Doors (WOODS) sponsors a workshop on Commuting and Night Riding. Learn how to ride your bike everywhere safely and wisely. 519 Church St., Room 34. 7-9 pm. RSVP to Alex by May 6 at 924-6474.



● **Wednesday, May 9:** Witchealing Lives seminar. Introducing conscious breathing technique or rebirthing with feminist perspective. For women. Morel D'Amour, Lesbian, Feminist, Witch. Location TBA. 7:30 pm. Info: 626-5465.

● **Thursday, May 10:** Scarborough Women's Centre screens *Madame, vous avez rien!* - a French film dealing with the issue of inequality, with discussion to follow. Cedarbrook Community Centre, 91 Eastpark Blvd., Scarborough. 7:30 pm. Free. Info: 431-1138.

● **Thursday, May 10:** "Let's Dance" - a Spring Spree with Cheetah Dancers, Paradise Women's Band, a DJ, Celebrity Guest, buffet and door prizes. Cameo Club, 95 Trinity St. 8 pm. \$7 door (\$5 advance). Cash bar.

● **Friday, May 11:** Toward Community Solutions to Sexual Violence, a conference sponsored by the Quaker Committee on Jails and Justice, with the participation of the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, Elizabeth Fry Society and Education: Wife Assault. St. Luke's United Church (Carlton and Sherbourne). 8 pm. Full conference fee: institutions \$25, individuals \$18, seniors, students and underemployed \$14. Saturday lunch \$5. Info: 922-9861. To Sunday, May 13.

● **Friday, May 11:** "Workers in their Community," a 3 day conference on coping with hard times in the work place, the family and the schools. Workshops include: Doing Feminist Research, Women's Wage and Non-Wage Work, Women's Labour History, Migrant Workers, Ethnicity and Gender, Organizing Women and Gender Politics. Childcare available. \$10 (\$2 unemployed). OISE, 252 Bloor St. West. Info: 923-6641, ext. 391. To Sunday, May 13.

● **Friday, May 11:** Faith Nolan performs at the New Trojan Horse Cafe. 179 Danforth Ave. 9 pm. \$4. Info: 461-8367.

● **Saturday, May 12:** Toronto Rape Crisis Centre presents "Spring Heat," a benefit dance, with DJ Debbie Parent. All women welcome. Wheelchair accessible (washrooms not accessible). Childcare available (call 964-7477 in advance). 9 pm. Ukrainian Labour Temple, 300 Bathurst St. Tickets \$5 advance, \$6 door (sliding scale) at Toronto Women's Bookstore, SCM and TRCC.

Week of May 13

● **Sunday, May 13:** OCAC/CARAL "Motherhood by Choice" picnic and rally. Featuring the Red Berets, Faith Nolan and other musicians, theatre, clowns, food, children's area and displays. Info: OCAC, 532-8193.

● **Monday, May 14:** Techknowledge Video Workshop on Introduction to Editing. Instructor: Ed Mowbray. Fee \$45 (TSV members \$40). Trinity Square Video, 299 Queen St. West, Suite 500. 7:30-10:30 pm. Info: 593-7165. To Wednesday, May 16.

● **Tuesday, May 15:** Scarborough Women's Centre health workshop on Menopause - Myth and Reality. Malvern Library, 30 Sewells Road, Scarborough. 7:30-9:30 pm. Info: 431-1138.

● **Tuesday, May 15:** Lesbian and Gay Pride Day organizing meeting. Volunteers needed for outreach, food, entertainment and marshalling committees. 519 Church St. 8-9:30 pm. Info: 960-9402 (5-10 pm).

● **Tuesday, May 15:** Theatre Passe Muraille presents *This is for you, Anna*, a performance about violence against women. Theatre Passe Muraille, 16 Ryerson Ave. Tuesday to Saturday 8 pm, Sunday 2:30 pm. \$5, \$6. Info: 363-2416.

● **Thursday, May 17:** Scarborough Women's Centre screens *Workplace Hustle*, an overview of sexual harassment in the workplace, with a discussion to follow. Cedarbrook Community Centre, 91 Eastpark Blvd., Scarborough. 7:30 pm. Free. Info: 431-1138.

● **Thursday, May 17:** Womyn Out Of Doors (WOODS) sponsors "Are You for the Birds?" an introduction to birdwatching. 7:30 pm. RSVP by May 14 to Yvonne at 463-0924, or Jane at 924-1307.

● **Friday, May 18:** Tish McSorley performs at the New Trojan Horse Cafe. 179 Danforth Ave. 9 pm. \$4. Info: 461-8367.

● **Saturday, May 19:** Singer/songwriter Anna Gutmanis performs at The Jailhouse, 97 Main St. 9:30 pm. \$1.50.

Week of May 20

● **Sunday, May 20:** Womyn Out Of Doors (WOODS) sponsors an outing to Long Point, a day of walking and birdwatching. Bring field guide to birds, binoculars if possible and a lunch. For details contact Jane at 924-1307 or Yvonne at 463-0924.

● **Sunday, May 20:** Top Girls, a play by Caryl Churchill (Cloud 9) previews at the Tarragon Theatre, 30 Bridgeman Ave. Info: 531-1827. Regular run opens Wednesday, May 29.

● **Tuesday, May 22:** Scarborough Women's Centre health workshop on Hysterectomies. Malvern Library, 30 Sewells Road, Scarborough. 7:30-9:30 pm. Info: 431-1138.

● **Friday, May 25:** NFB's *Not a Love Story* will be shown with a panel discussion to follow. Admission - 18 years and over. Free. Harbourfront Studio Theatre, 235 Queen's Quay West. Info: 364-5665, 369-4094. Also Saturday, May 26 and Sunday, May 27.

● **Friday, May 25:** Womyn Out Of Doors (WOODS) Pot Luck. Bring a dish and ideas for July/August. Non-members welcome. RSVP to Cathy by May 22 at 699-9424.

Week of May 27

● **Monday, May 28:** The Third Annual Meeting of the Gay Counselling Centre of Toronto will be held to elect new Board directors. 519 Church St. 7:30 pm. Info: 977-2153.

● **Tuesday, May 29:** Scarborough Women's Centre health workshop on Depression. Malvern Library, 30 Sewells Road, Scarborough. 7:30-9:30 pm. Info: 431-1138.

● **Tuesday, May 29:** Womyn Out Of Doors (WOODS) planning meeting. Bring ideas for July and August. New and prospective members welcome. 519 Church St. 7:30 pm.

● **Wednesday, May 30:** Danceworks salutes the sesquicentennial with a line-up of all Toronto performers including Leena Raudvee, Pam Patterson, Tama Soble, Lori Eisler and Margaret Dragu. Winchester Street Theatre, 80 Winchester Street. 8 pm. Info and reservations: 533-1487. Continues to Saturday, June 2.

● **Thursday, May 31:** Alive! In Concert, sponsored by Womynly Way. 8 pm. Danforth Music Hall, 147 Danforth Ave. Free Childcare. \$9.50 advance, \$10.50 door. Info: 925-6568.



June

● **Sunday, June 3:** Out From Under: Sober Dykes and Our Friends. Editor Jean Swallow and publisher Sherry Thomas will read from this anthology on recovery from substance abuse in lesbian communities. Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord St. 2 pm. Free.

● **Sunday, June 3:** Womyn Out Of Doors (WOODS) 2nd Annual Island Day. Bring lunch, baseball glove, bat and ball. Meet at Centre Island ferry dock (island side) at 11 am. Look for WOODS banner. RSVP by May 28 to Jane at 532-5035.

● **Friday, June 8:** Branching Out: Lesbian Culture Resource Centre presents a Lesbian Sexuality Conference. Keynote speaker: Susan G. Cole, "Love, Lust and Lesbian Politics." To Sunday, June 10. (Registration includes conference pass and dance. Early registration available until May 25. Contact: Branching Out Conference, P.O. Box 141, 2 Bloor St. W. Suite 100-99, Toronto M4W 3E2. To register in person come to 519 Church St., East Room on Sunday, May 6 between 1:30 and 4 pm). Info: 964-1575.



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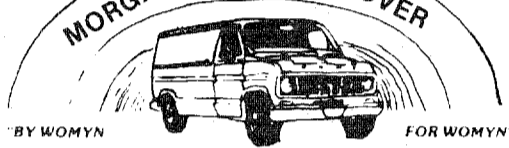
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