



Convention Women

At the convention: From left, MP Céline Hervieux-Payette, Cabinet Minister Monique Bégin, and Lauris Talmey, president of the National Liberal Women's Commission.

SEE STORY PAGE 3

FEATURE

PEACE & LOVE: Are women naturally nurturant and peace-loving, while men are naturally aggressive and war-mongering? Is it women's responsibility to keep the planet alive? The Radical Feminist Organizing Committee questions this attachment to oppressive gender roles and criticizes the perhaps unconscious anti-feminist politics of some women in the peace movement. Page 6.

SEIZE AND DESIST: Toronto alternative art gallery, A Space, was raided at the end of May during a British-Canadian exchange video exhibition. A Space was deemed guilty of a mere technical violation, but the art work seized dealt with, you guessed it, sexuality. Page 10.

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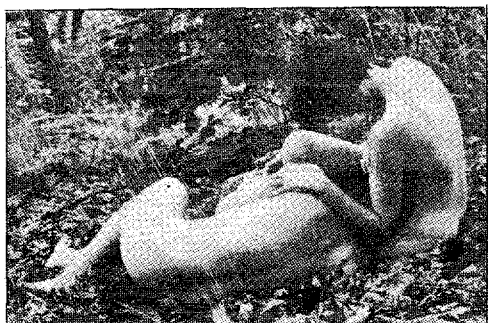
OUTSIDE BROADSIDE: Don't miss our monthly calendar of Toronto women's events, for July 1984. Page 11.

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INSIDE BROADSIDE

NEWS

POWER IN NUMBERS: At the recent Liberal Leadership Convention, 40% of the delegates were women, and the candidates paid more attention to women's concerns than ever before. Attempts were made to have the women vote as a bloc, but in the end the Gender Gap did not prevail, and women voted as their consciences saw fit. Gabriella Goliger reports. Page 3.



SEX AND FUN: The recent lesbian sexuality conference in Toronto was not about

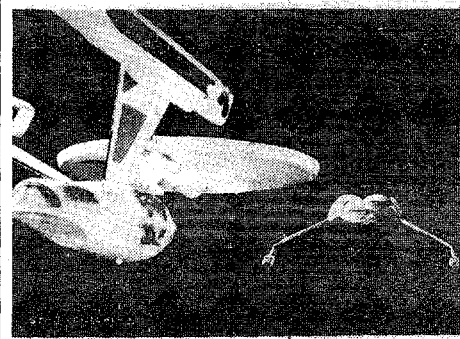
lesbianism, but about lesbian sex. Though conference workshops ranged from 'Coming on' and 'What turns you on' to 'Lesbians and class' and 'Growing up with sexual assault,' the conference organizers and participants did their best to put the fun back into sexual politics. Mariana Valverde reports. Page 5.

COMMENT

GRANGE INDICTMENT: Though the grange inquiry into baby deaths at the Hospital for Sick Children is only a preliminary hearing and not a trial, nurses Susan Nelles and Phyllis Traynor have been tried and convicted by the media. But no one has considered that the doctors, or the administrators, or the system itself, could be to blame. Lisa Freedman and Susan Ursel comment. Page 4.

ARTS

MORE BOOKS! *Broadside* provides readers with its Top 40 books for summer reading. From Atwood and Auerback to Walker and Wandor, the list covers fiction, non-fiction, poetry and plays. Idiosyncratically compiled by Carroll Klein and Gail van Varseveld. Page 8.



RAIDERS OF THE LOST SPOCK: *Star Trek III* is really just another episode of the TV show, but true Trekkies don't complain, says reviewer Donna Gollan. Meanwhile, Steven Spielberg's *Temple of Doom* is a regressive step for women: the "central" female character is really tertiary, if that, says reviewer Judith Posner. Page 9.

LETTERS

Broadside:

The following is a copy of a letter sent to the *Branching Out Collective*:

We commend the energy of your group in presenting the first lesbian sexuality conference. While we recognize that a great deal of work was involved in organizing the event, we, as working class lesbians, are angry at the disturbing lack of class analysis.

The workshop most relevant to our concerns was entitled "Class Issues - a Call to Action," and was facilitated by a middle class woman. The facilitator's greatest error was in assuming that both working class and middle class women would benefit from her workshop. In fact, working class women went to this workshop for support, and middle class women went there for information. The expectations of neither group were fulfilled. Some middle class women were disappointed by the lack of opportunity to discuss their concerns. Working class women were hurt and frustrated by the ignorance of some middle class women.

We resented the expectation that we would educate the middle class women and confront them on their classist behaviour. This is parallel to expecting lesbians to educate heterosexual women on homophobia.

This fiasco would not have even taken place, however, had working class women been allowed to organize independently.

We were told by you, the conference organizers, to discuss the issues with the facilitator of the class workshop. We pointed out to you that we would then be forced to ask permission from a middle class woman in order to meet in solidarity with other working class women. You told us you did not want to hurt the feelings of the original workshop leader. Instead, our feelings were hurt.

When we discussed the issue with the facilitator of the workshop, she told us that it was fine to have a working class solidarity group as long as we came to her workshop first! She wanted the working class women to confront the middle class women. We felt that we had no choice. In order to get what we wanted, we had to go along.

This whole episode should never have taken place. The right of working class lesbians to organize independently should have been recognized at the start. We should never have had to ask permission from anyone.

In addition, we were disturbed that some women were obliged to do a work exchange. This makes individual women responsible for their own poverty. We are penalized by the patriarchy, and penalized once again by our "sisters"!

In future we recommend that: (a) the price range of the sliding scale be increased so that middle and upper class women would pay more and working class women would be able to pay whatever they could afford; and (b) any conference organizing committee attempt to solicit input from *all* sectors of the lesbian community. This would mean including women from various backgrounds and interests; and (c) representatives of various subgroups be asked to lead workshops related to their specific area of oppression - this means that working class women would lead workshops for others of the same class background. If a middle class woman wants to educate others of her own class, a workshop of that nature would be welcomed.

This letter is written in anger and deep disappointment. We know that members of the collective have worked long and hard. We do appreciate your attempts to make this conference more accessible. Had there not been a sliding scale, we would have been unable to attend.

As lesbians, it is in our own interests to build a strong unified movement. This can only be accomplished by an ongoing dialogue and a commitment to both personal and political change. This includes a recognition and acceptance of all the varied experiences within the lesbian community.

Hoping to hear from you.

Beth Blackmore, Montreal
Lilith Finkler, Toronto
Janet Rowe, Toronto
Anna Willats, Toronto

The Lesbian Sexuality Conference coordinators reply:

We do not agree that the organizing of the Lesbian Sexuality Conference showed a lack of class analysis, and we are angered by the way you have presented your objections.

As far as we can see, you raise three separate issues in your letter: (1) concerning the workshop "Lesbians and Class: A Call to Action"; (2) concerning the conference fees and work exchange; and (3) concerning the class awareness of the conference organizers.

(1) There appears to be some confusion regarding the class workshop. The description made it clear that it was intended to be a mixed-class discussion of class issues and lesbian sexuality, not a working class support group. The facilitator stated to us that she had no intention of speaking for working class lesbians. She wanted to talk about and with both working and middle class lesbians - an ambitious undertaking. Perhaps it is no wonder that tensions and anger arose.

It is unfortunate that this is not what you wanted the workshop to be. But we do not accept your criticism that a workshop on class should not be facilitated by a middle class lesbian. Middle class lesbians can and must facilitate such workshops - otherwise it will always be left to working class lesbians to educate everyone. Of course, a workshop on class led by a middle class lesbian would be a different workshop from one led by a working class lesbian. That does not make it invalid.

Working class lesbians were "allowed" to organize independently - a room was made available on Sunday for a separate working

class support group. A lot of confusion around getting the space for this support group could have been avoided. One of you interrupted both of us several times on Saturday morning during the most busy registration period, while we were obviously talking to other lesbians and trying to do many things at once. You asked to book a follow-up to the class workshop without making it clear to either of us why you wanted to book a follow-up before the workshop had even occurred. Naturally, we were puzzled. We suggested you talk to the facilitator to avoid duplicating her workshop. At that point we thought you wanted another workshop because of personal conflicts with the facilitator; you did not make your concerns clear to either of us then. Later in the day when one of us (Natalie) approached you to talk about the issue further, you refused to discuss it with her. This "fiasco" was due to a lack of communication, not to a lack of class analysis.

(2) We disagree with your comments about the price range and the sliding scale. Our prices were more than reasonable, especially considering that they included admission to the dance Saturday night. If we had not had a grant from the Gay Community Appeal, Branching Out would have lost its shirt on this conference.

What you may not be aware of is that *not one woman was turned away because of money*. Free and subsidized passes were made available. And work exchange was certainly not intended to make individual lesbians responsible for their own poverty. Some of us who are working class would prefer to do work exchange rather than having to ask or negotiate for a pass. In fact, most of the lesbians who did work exchange did so because they registered late and this was the only way they could get into the conference.

Furthermore, we do not agree with your recommendation that the sliding scale be based on class. Our sliding scale was based on income. We realize that more low-income lesbians are working class, but there are also poor middle class lesbians (for example, many single mothers) and relatively well-off working class lesbians. Looking at poverty only in terms of class is a narrow focus.

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EDITORIALS

Peace and Purity

For the past five years, *Broadside's* pages have carried the news of a growing chorus of women's voices for peace. Reports have come from all parts of the globe: from the Pentagon, as women spun a web around the world's most influential war machine; from the streets of the Netherlands as women marched against the war the establishment was planning for the future; from the streets of Cyprus where old wars persist; and from Greenham Common where stubborn women tried to stop the cruise. All of this is news of a women's movement for peace. In Canada, the Voice of Women has been one of the strongest organizations against military initiatives.

This month, *Broadside* is publishing an article from the Radical Feminist Organizing

Committee (RFOC) that is a critique of the assumptions of some of these women activists for peace. The article questions a determinist analysis in which women are inherently unwarlike and where we have the potential, which amounts to an obligation on account of our nurturing natures, to bring peace to the world. The authors complain that the attitude that peace-loving women are "different" from war-waging men locks men and women into gender roles seemingly worthy of our approval. It is the entire system that should be challenged argues RFOC. Instead women peace activists are embracing the system, asking us to act on the basis of gender roles we must reject.

The new peace politics, and coalitions

forming around these politics, are just now being defined. There has never been a single focus or approach within the new peace movement. The authors of the article (see page 6) are not trying to say there is, nor are they trying to paint everyone one way. The publication of the article is meant to begin the process of separating the many strains of the peace movement, to identify one of them, and to analyze it. We expect the article to be provocative and that *Broadside* readers will respond to this attempt to bring some clarity to the issue.

Our Mistake

The cost of the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre booklet "Let's Talk About Sexual Assault" is \$1.50 plus postage and handling (not \$1, as reported in the May issue of *Broadside*). Copies can be obtained from: Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre, 1045 Linden Ave., Victoria, BC, V8V 4H3.

A small copy editing error in Heather Menzies' article "Chip on Her Shoulder" (June 1984) changed the meaning of a paragraph, and caused the irony of the situation to be lost. After discussing the plight of women workers in microchip factories in various SE Asian countries, Menzies continues (and the paragraph in *Broadside* should have read): "In another country the women found out about a company's closing through the rumour mill. . . . The company organized a farewell luncheon, and as a final token of its appreciation for all the work these ladies had done, it gave them each a rose. A plastic rose. A 15-cent plastic rose. This happened in Ste. Agathe, Québec. . . . The company involved was Bell Canada."

A Minor Opportunity

So, the line-up is Turner versus Mulroney. No surprises there. Now it's on to a General Election before the end of 1984. Visits from the Pope and the Queen notwithstanding, Turner cannot afford to wait until 1985.

It is clear that women are going to be wooed as never before in the coming campaign. What should we be going after and expect to get, realistically? First of all, it would be naive to count on any change in the abortion law. Both Turner and Mulroney are Roman Catholics, and neither wants abortion as an issue in the election. Probably our best chance is for some gains in pensions, some potentially useful lip-service on equal pay and some minimal progress in affirmative action at the federal level. Certainly, we will see more high profile women in appointed positions: such window dressing is good PR, and cheap besides. Still, all in all a general election is our best bet for

making some economic headway.

What would be the best likely election result? Realistically, a minority Liberal government might be marginally preferable to a minority PC government. A large majority for either party could not help but stimulate every reactionary impulse in this country. As the NDP has little chance to form a government, it will be lucky to hold onto its present representation, and will need all the help it can get.

In the long term, a better geographic distribution of seats between the two major parties would be desirable. Thus a minority Liberal government, vulnerable to parliamentary defeat and which had lost its secure base in Québec but gained some representation west of Winnipeg, is the best we can hope for. A "new" New Democratic Party would not be a bad idea either. ●

Building Blocs?

Women at the Liberal Leadership Convention

by Gabriella Goliger

The recent Liberal leadership convention was an unprecedented opportunity for women to influence political trends in Canada. Never before in the history of any Canadian political party leadership race have women accounted for such a large percentage of the vote. Roughly 40% of delegates were women, about three times as many as attended the last Liberal leadership convention in 1968. For the record, Liberal women activists say that these numbers have made a difference and caused all the candidates to sit up and take notice of issues that particularly concern women. The general course of the convention itself, however, calls into question these much-vaunted gains.

The convention began with a show of feminine forces, a gala dinner to raise funds for women running in the federal election with noted American activist, Bella Abzug, as keynote speaker. Abzug spoke at length about the so-called gender gap, a theory that women, as a group, vote differently from men and are more likely to support progressive social change. The 850 assembled guests warmly applauded her remarks, particularly whenever she acknowledged gains made by women under the Liberal regime or drew parallels between Canada's Liberal Party and the US Democratic Party.

Hopes were high among some Liberal women that a gender gap would also be at work during the leadership race. Early in the campaign an attempt was made to organize women into an effective voting bloc that would lobby candidates for commitments on issues such as affirmative action, daycare and pensions. Lauris Talmey, President of the National Liberal Women's Commission, urged women delegates to go to the convention uncommitted, to listen to candidates' views and to throw their support behind the one most likely to translate words into action.

"It's important not to give our votes on a platter," said Kilbey Gibson, a delegate from British Columbia who, at the opening of the convention sported a white jumpsuit with the word "uncommitted" on the back.

Gibson was one of the few, however, who took Lauris Talmey's proposal seriously. Of approximately 1500 women delegates, only a small number, possibly 200-300, had not yet joined one campaign or another at the start of the convention. Many of the "uncommitted" were from the same province, British Columbia. The three women ministers - Monique Bégin, Judy Erola and Céline Hervieux-Payette - were all in the Turner camp early in the campaign and even Liberal Women's Commission officers had drifted to various camps before the convention began.

Renate Bublick, an organizer of the uncommitted bloc, admitted that, "Women as a group are as heterogeneous as men, and if we're ever capable of voting for one individual, that would be an extremely rare accomplishment." Lack of funds had also prevented the organization of an effective lobby group remaining outside the campaigns, she said.

Some delegates resented what they saw as an attempt to herd women into a special interest group. "I never heard of anything so stupid in all my life," said Lynn Callahan of Brampton, Ontario. "I'll vote the way my conscience tells me. . . Women's Movement! Bah! Humbug!"

"We have work to do to communicate with other women," said Vancouver delegate Wendy Holm, one of those in the "uncommitted" camp.

Others argued that those delegates working on campaigns were doing their part to lobby their candidates on women's issues - that remaining uncommitted was not the only way to show the feminist flag at this convention.

Indeed, much ink was spent on candidates' promises to women. The Turner campaign published a glossy brochure on the subject, while the other candidates wooed the women's vote with policy statements on matters such as affirmative action, equal pay, pension reform and child care.

The candidates appeared before two women's caucus meetings during which women had a chance to question the leadership hopefuls on the substance of their promises. But attendance at both these events was poor.

A last-minute meet-the-candidates session organized by the uncommitted bloc drew only a handful of delegates. A second women's caucus meeting revealed that at this stage in the campaign much of the discussion of issues was for show alone. There were relatively few people in the room, while back-of-the-pack candidates Eugene Whelan, Mark McGuigan, John Roberts and John Munro were at the podium. The front runners marched in with noisy bands of supporters in tow, swelling attendance considerably. The Turner crowd was particularly vocal, cheering almost every sentence he uttered, while identical promises made by other candidates elicited only scattered applause.

Nevertheless, some of the questions put to candidates during these meetings were hard-hitting ones, a sign that at least some women were serious about putting candidates to the test. John Turner was asked whether he would continue appearing at the Toronto Club considering that this organization had no women, Black or Jewish members. (Turner did not answer this question directly but stated that he was not a member of the club.) Candidates were pressed on their commitments to peace, affirmative action, native women, daycare services, pension reform, accessibility to abortions (right-to-lifers were as vocal as pro-choice supporters during this session) as well as on other issues.

Among delegates who had remained uncommitted until the bitter end, there was no consensus on who had best acquitted himself during these question periods or who was most worthy of women's support. Irma Melville, an officer of the National Liberal Women's Commission, felt that Don Johnston appeared most committed to affirmative action within the Liberal Party. Lois Boyce, a peace activist, decided to support Jean Chrétien because she saw John Turner as "comfortable in the boardrooms of this nation and as an environmentalist, as a peacemaker, as someone concerned about the multinational control of this country, I don't want to see that enhanced any further."

Lauris Talmey, perceived as somewhat of a militant feminist within the Liberal Party, declared herself a John Turner convert shortly after the final question period, even though Turner was generally considered to be a right-leaning candidate.

"He's committed to the process of change for women. . . He's probably the one that can do it," said Talmey. "It's significant that the three female ministers were on his team." Earlier during the convention, however, Talmey had expressed disappointment that the three women ministers had jumped on the Turner bandwagon so quickly.

CONTINUED PAGE 10

LETTERS, from previous page

(3) We are most angered by your assumption that, because you disagree with parts of the conference organization, we must be not only middle class but also lacking in class analysis. One of the coordinators (Karen) is middle class, and the other (Natalie) is a working class immigrant. Most of the Branching Out collective members are working class. Many of the conference facilitators are working class. We did, in fact, solicit input from both working and middle class lesbians. The fact that you disagree with some things about the conference does not demonstrate that we don't have any class analysis or awareness ourselves. This is insulting. We had better learn to make room in the lesbian movement

for differing strategies and approaches.

We are also angry that you did not contact us personally, but instead chose to send a copy of the letter to *Broadside* for publication, and that we found out only from *Broadside*, and not from you, that you had submitted the copy to them. Your letter does not, in fact, attempt to open dialogue and help create a strong unified movement. Your letter is a public lecture that only polarizes us. Clearly, the challenge before us as a lesbian feminist community is to develop new ways of resolving disagreements so we can in fact create that strong, unified movement.

Karen Wendling
Natalie Zlodre
Lesbian Sexuality Conference Coordinators
Toronto

Team Spirit

It was my first leadership convention. I was strongly reminded of the "colour wars" organized at the summer camp I attended as a child. During the last days of summer, the entire camp would be divided into teams, each with its own name, team colours and other distinguishing symbols. Our every waking moment from then on was saturated with competition and many of the points that we vied for were based on "team spirit." This meant that we shrieked ourselves hoarse for three days, chanting and singing and doing our best to drown out the other team in a torrent of "spirit."

The scene in Ottawa's Civic Centre on June 15, the night the leadership candidates were to make their final appeal to the Liberal party, was to me "colour wars" magnified and played by adults. The arena was a mass of humanity, mostly divided into Turner and Chrétien camps, wielding signs, bedecked with campaign insignia, vying to see who could make the most noise, all in the name of democracy and what Jean Chrétien calls one of the greatest democratic institutions in the Western world, the Liberal Party of Canada.

As each of the seven candidates approached the stage, he was preceded by triumphant processions and fanfare, the extravagance of which depended upon the respective campaign budgets.

"Trained seals" was one observer's term for the cheering sections that traipsed after candidates. Someone

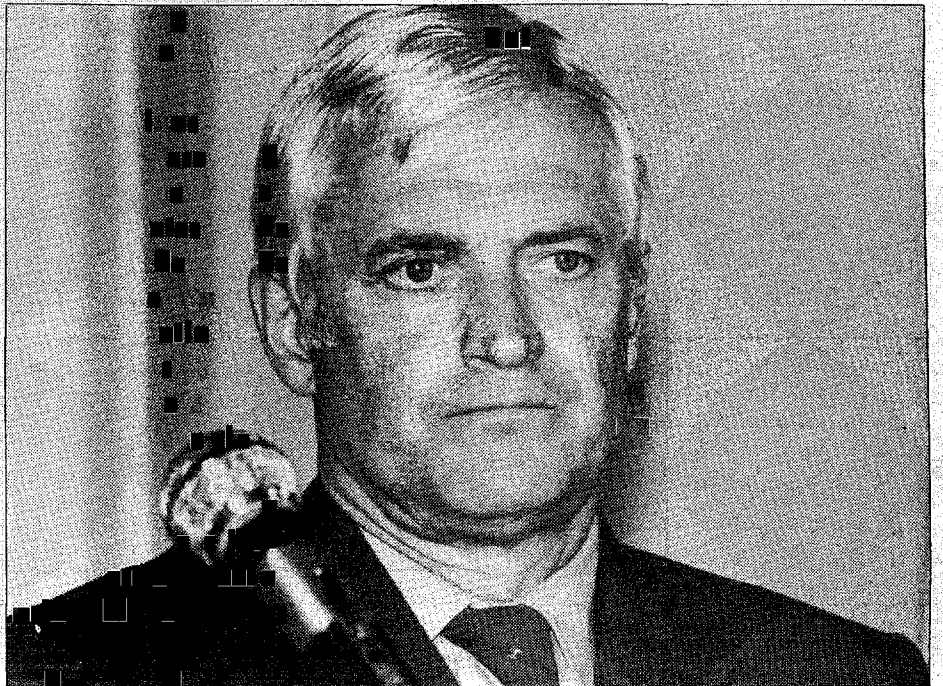
else summed up the entire campaign as "survival of the richest." It was an opportunity for cynics to wax eloquent.

The preceding night, June 14, had been devoted to warmed-over Trudeaumania, a sentimental tribute to the man who supposedly placed reason before passion. Liberals were willing to be lavish in their accolades now that they were, at long last, saying goodbye to the man that had led them for 16 years. The Trudeau tribute included emotional speeches, sentimental songs by pop-stars such as Paul Anka and René Simard, lots of Vegas-style showbiz flash and dazzle and filmclips giving a selective view of the Trudeau era. It was the sort of homage more commonly paid to political leaders well after they are dead.

Trudeau nostalgia was also for sale at the convention. There were books and a record of the song "Thank You Mr. Trudeau" composed by 17-year-old Quebec songster, Myriam, who was one of the big hits during the tribute. (Her newest record, ironically enough is called "Je m'ennui de toi, papa.")

In all fairness to the Liberals, it must be said that Tory conventions are no more tasteful and the Grit show was probably quite civilized compared to the election hype that occurs south of the border. It will be a fine day, however, when electioneering in this country focuses more on bread and less on circuses.

- G.G.



John Turner: First in the voting



Jean Chrétien: "First in our hearts"

The Grange Inquiry

by Lisa Freedman and Susan Ursel

In 1980 nurse Susan Nelles was charged with the murder of four babies at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. Before her preliminary hearing had even been convened, the media had painted her as an ambitious, grasping woman who challenged the authority of her superiors on a regular basis. She was apparently so pathological that she would even resort to killing babies with digoxin overdoses in order to advance her position. The charges against her were dropped at the preliminary stage because of insufficient evidence but the media had already charged, indicted and convicted her. The Grange Inquiry into the mysterious baby deaths at the hospital was subsequently convened to investigate the issue further.

In 1984, Phyllis Traynor took the stand at the Grange Inquiry and the media, who had been at a loss since Nelles' apparent exoneration, had suddenly found a new witch to hunt. Newspaper reports suggest she is unintelligent, unlikeable and untrustworthy. Phyllis Traynor, like Susan Nelles before her, is being indicted by the media on the basis of her personality. Any evidence that the Grange Commission has established to make a case against her is purely circumstantial.

The 36 suspicious baby deaths at Sick Kids were tragic and if they were the result of murder (a fact that has not been established through either police investigation or the Grange Inquiry), were truly horrifying. But the media and judicial focus on the nurses as the only possible suspects has taken on all the aspects of a witch hunt.

Generally the public has been led to believe that the reason the nurses are being so thoroughly questioned is because there is already some kind of direct link between the nursing staff and the unexplained deaths. Does anyone know what this link is? Or why the doctors and hospital administrators are not subject to the same intense scrutiny? Has anyone thought to ask what other support staff, technicians, and paramedical staff had

access to the ward? If anyone has, the media has not thrown the same blinding light on their testimony (or lack of it) as they have on the nurses'. Why not?

Part of the problem is inherent in the way the Grange Inquiry was organized in the first place. Based on computerized information which cross-referenced work schedules, personnel and the time of the baby deaths, the Inquiry's list of witnesses contained those names "most likely" to have been involved. But as Roberta Coutts, the Director of Nursing at Ottawa General Hospital, pointed out in a recent editorial, the data base for the computerized list was deficient in several very important respects. Since other professional and support staff working in the hospital were not scheduled for specific work on the wards, they were not included in the original information fed into the computer. But doctors, pharmacists, technicians and others all had as much freedom of access to the ward as the nursing staff. Theoretically they should be as suspect as the nurses. But they are not. Their possible complicity in the unexplained deaths has been more or less ruled out, without so much as a whimper from the mainstream media.

The fact that the focus is almost entirely on the nurses doesn't really come as much of a surprise. Nurses, despite their training, their long hours and their dedication, are low down on the totem pole of professional prestige. Doctors and administrators rank much higher, because, as the rationale goes, they are the ones ultimately responsible for patient care. Ultimately responsible that is, until the problem becomes too big and too complex. Then, responsibility somehow is transferred back down the pole, to the nursing staff in this case, who are left to take the publicity, the infamy and ultimately it seems, the blame.

Why aren't the administrators of this world-famous hospital up there on the stand day after day, explaining their lack of attention to one of the most important details of a hospital's function - the survival rate of the patients entrusted to its care? Why aren't the administrators being grilled on the stand about

Nursing Suspicion

the system they have created for health care. This system taught one intern, who witnessed four of the deaths, that it is better to defer to his seniors than to voice an understandable and, retrospectively, crucial concern with the frequency and manner of patient deaths. Why don't we see pictures in the papers of these administrators drawn and haggard with the strain of an endless stream of questions and imputations about their personal and professional capacities? The administrators and the doctors caring for the babies at Sick Kids may not have been in a position to actually administer the digoxin. But they were in a position to ask questions, critical questions, about procedures and practices, to ask why so many babies were dying.

The Grange Inquiry has focussed (some might think rightly so) on finding a suspect, someone the baby deaths can be attributed to. But the recent court decision denying Justice Samuel Grange the opportunity to name names in his final report undermines the usefulness of such a focus. What is left is a report about procedures, without the background testimony by administrators and doctors that would make such a report useful. Without a doubt, finding out the cause of 36 children's deaths is essential. If one person directly cause them, we must try to discover who, but an actual trial is the more appropriate forum in which to determine criminal guilt or innocence. The Grange Inquiry with all its limitations and powers could be most useful in making procedural recommendations to prevent another such episode.

We all hope there will never be a next time, but what if there is? What if the next time there are no staff on the ward to shoulder the blame, only a defective medical procedure which should have been rectified? Do the actions of the hospital administrators and doctors reassure us that they would catch the problem? Why hasn't Justice Grange's inquiry bothered to focus on improvements in this respect? Why has it instead become a mock trial of one nurse without offering her any of the most basic procedural safeguards

we give anyone brought before our criminal justice system? Can we really continue to call this an "inquiry" when it has taken on the significance of a criminal trial?

But the inquiry into procedure shouldn't stop with the hospital. The Grange Inquiry is to proceed in an investigation of the police and their methods of handling the Sick Kids case. This is known as Phase II. Like Phase I however, Phase II was dogged by a court holding that the final report could neither name names nor assess criminal or civil liability. Justice Grange planned to cancel Phase II, viewing it as useless under the circumstance. However, a recent order by the provincial cabinet "clarified" his mandate by requesting him to make a "full comment" on the police investigation. Justice Grange apparently considered this sufficient, and the Phase II inquiry into the police is on again. However, the court ruling still stands - no names and no assessment of liability. How this new clarification differs from the court ruling is difficult to see.

Can anything positive come out of the Grange Inquiry? The final report cannot name names, nor can it assess guilt. Many feel these functions should be left to the courts anyway, given the gravity of the situation. If there is a single murderer he or she should be brought to justice, but the Grange Inquiry is not empowered to take the actions necessary to do so.

But the Grange could still perform a valuable function by assessing and critiquing all those procedures that should have safeguarded the young patients at Sick Kids. The fact that it has instead focussed on finding a scapegoat is not encouraging. The Grange Inquiry would better serve the public interest by restoring our confidence in two institutions to which we all, to some extent, must entrust our well-being - our hospitals and the police.

Lisa Freedman is an activist, recently called to the bar. Susan Ursel is a recent law graduate.



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MOVEMENT MATTERS

Lesbian Sexuality Conference: Coming On Strong

by Mariana Valverde

It was 7:30 pm on Friday June 8, and I was locking my bicycle outside the grey concrete institutional building on Bloor Street in Toronto. Out of the corner of my eye I could see twenty or thirty dykes sitting or standing on the walkway into the auditorium, hands firmly in pockets, legs apart. A warm feeling came over me. I walked through the group and watched the fading sun bring a soft light to the faces and the bodies of the women. I was struck by a thought: it had been ages since I had seen a group of lesbians I didn't know, *in the daytime*.

The warm feeling soon turned to awkwardness, however. As I entered the building and took my place in the line of women waiting to pick up their conference folders, I realized that I knew practically nobody. Of course it was nice to see so many new dyke faces... but one doesn't like to feel that one's buddies have gone off into the sunset of political retirement, or disappeared into domesticity, to be replaced by a brand new crop of activists. At the lesbian sexuality conference I suddenly felt that I was part of the older generation of lesbian activists; and, although many of my friends did eventually show up for the conference, many others did not. I felt vaguely nostalgic for the days of the Lesbian Organization of Toronto and of Lesbians Against the Right.

The conference was, for some of us Toronto activists, a chance to re-evaluate our community and our specific place in it. There had not been any lesbian events, other than dances, for at least a year, and it was clear from the moment I locked up my bike that this event was going to be different from any other. A year or two can bring tremendous changes to our community. All weekend, I kept alternating between feeling that I'd come home, and feeling that I was visiting a foreign country.

But, dear reader, I know you want to find out about the conference, so I won't bore you with self-indulgent sentimentality. To the facts!

The conference opened with a lively speech by Susan Cole, who, if she ever decides to leave journalism, could make a good living doing stand-up political comedy. Through a combination of humorous anecdotes and thoughtful remarks, she managed to raise some serious questions about the role of sexual pleasure in our lives as lesbians, without over-theorizing our lust for women. Talking about male domination as glorified in pornography, she outlined how our very desires are distorted by our internalized images, and how the expression of our desires is hampered by the reality of life in a sexist society. She set the tone for the conference by telling some funny sexual anecdotes - in the context of outdoor sex, she said, "Why can't they make insect repellent that tastes of strawberries?" But she also cautioned us against seeing the liberation of our lust as disconnected from our social and material needs: "We can be bought off by orgasms," she warned.

Unfortunately it was not possible to do more than mention some of the trends and debates in our community - and I detected a certain hesitation on her part to take sides on such old questions as the ethics of non-monogamy. The only issue on which she expressed a clear opinion was s/m (she's against it, although she will tolerate it as a private vice similar to her own addiction to major league baseball).

For me, the most interesting part of her remarks concerned her attempt to have us learn positive lessons from our collective revulsion against pornography and against male power-tripping in general. Pointing to the fact that domination over others has managed to become 'sexy,' she raised the challenging question: "How do we eroticize equality?" A good question indeed; but she did not offer any solutions.

The speech was, both in tone and in content, a good introduction to the conference, although I felt we could have used something more in the plenary session - a panel discussion, a film, some music. I also missed getting a historical perspective on some of the debates that Susan Cole mentioned. It would have been appropriate, especially for the newer women

there, to outline some of the changes we have undergone as a community, and to give credit to those women and organizations that have tried in the past to organize lesbians and to make our community more visible. All too often lesbian events appear as if out of nowhere and vanish without a trace.

Sex and Support

Most of the workshops held during Saturday and Sunday fell into one of two categories: the sex workshops and the mutual support groups. The latter were designed to meet the needs of specific groups of lesbians, and to discuss sexuality in the context of a particular oppression. There were Jewish lesbians, fat lesbians, old and young lesbians, lesbians of colour, and lesbian mothers. I didn't attend any of these sessions, since I am white and thin and able-bodied and not especially old or young; but all the reports indicated that these were among the most successful workshops. One fat lesbian said of her workshop: "It was great. We ate doughnuts, we did exercises, and we *almost* talked about sex."

There was also an s/m workshop, but only for those women who are interested in doing it. That is, it was a support group, not a discussion. Apparently, the women who attended it felt very good about being provided with a non-judgemental space in which to talk with each other.

Many of these support workshops developed into ongoing groups, which one hopes will be open to women who did not attend the conference. These include groups of Jewish lesbians, older lesbians, s/m lesbians, and a group of single lesbians with the acronym SLUTS, which is to meet every Thursday evening at the Surfboard on Toronto's Jarvis Street for fun and cruising.

The sex workshops were all quite different, depending on the facilitators. One very popular session was entitled "Coming On," and the description stated that "the heavy political analysis in this workshop will be limited to a discussion of the relationship between flirting and coming on." Women who attended had the chance to share fears about expressing sexual interest in someone, to discuss various winning strategies, and also to do some role-playing enacting typical situations. Volunteers were given scripts such as: "you come on to her at a dance; she says no; how does she reject your advances gracefully; and how do you react?" The resulting mini-plays made the whole room roar with laughter. We also discussed what one could call ethical questions, such as, "Is it OK to come on to a woman who you know is in a relationship?" (For the record, the consensus was 'yes').

And we shared stories about successful or unsuccessful adventures.

A workshop on 'Power, Passion and Politics' also drew a lot of women, and was offered twice. The facilitators tried to shed light on the connection between politics and sexual practice by reference to their own histories - e.g. how becoming a feminist affected butch and femme practices. This was a promising beginning, but the rest of the workshop failed to live up to its title; we participants were merely invited to recount 'our hottest sexual experiences'. It was interesting to see women be quite explicit about what turns them on - even when the turn-on in question is some-

what unusual or not orthodox feminist practice. But the stories remained just that,

CONTINUED PAGE 10

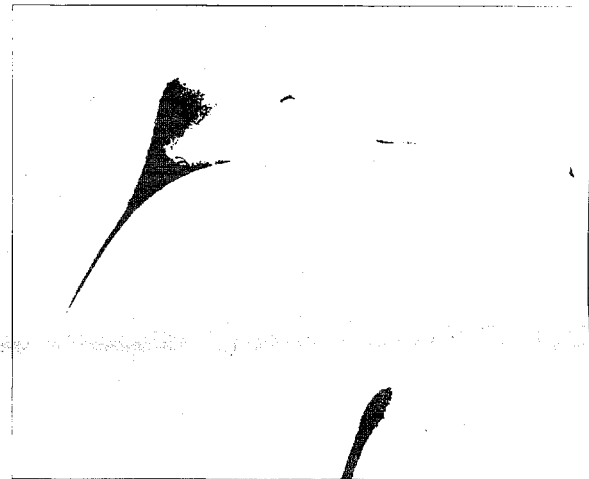
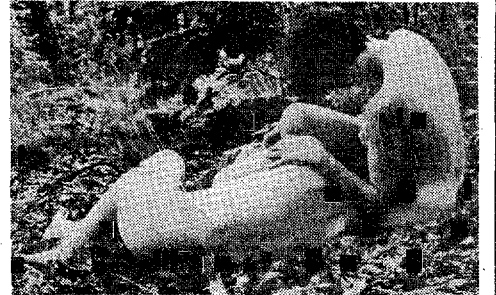


photo by: R. Tucker

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Electromagnetics

Excerpted from Susan Cole's keynote address to the Lesbian Sexuality Conference, Toronto, June 8, 1984:

... Remember when we went into those biology classes when we were in high school and we thought we were going to talk about sexuality and all we got was sperms and eggs? That's all right for the guys, whose role in the reproductive process is somehow linked to *their* sexual pleasure, but it leaves women out in the cold, and it leaves lesbians nowhere, we who automatically delink sex and reproduction. It makes it really hard for us to find territory that's been charted at all...

... We live in a culture where if you don't have images of the sexuality, you don't have the sexuality. And we're at the point where the actual watching of the sex is a sexual act. It's interesting to me that there are many women interested in seeing those images, and not as many women interested in talking about, say, fantasy, about what's going on in our own heads. It's hard to do that

without a language and without rules. In the end, we'd rather look than talk...

... I was thinking that lesbians don't have anywhere to go to be together and I was reminded of another stark truth: while it's true that lesbians don't have anywhere to go to be together comfortably, it's also true that *women* don't have anywhere to go to be safe, physically...

... I realized that a lot of the women (in a lesbian bar) were not there to get lesbian sex at all. They just wanted to be in a place where they could feel comfortable about being lesbians without being harassed...

... Pornography scares us away from sex; women are blamed for sex; women are punished for sex; the culture kicks the sex right out of us. It's hard to open your mouth in those paeans of ecstasy to "wild abandon," it's hard to open your heart, it's hard to open your legs, when you don't feel safe. Before we can have all this sex we're talking about, we have to

change some of the stuff that's going on *out there*...

... We all deal with aggression and violence and hierarchy in our sexual lives; we have to; it's the only sex they'll let us have; it's the only sex that's culturally available to us. You can't wish it away; sex and danger go together. To say so, however, is not the same as *celebrating* the fact that sex and danger go together. You know what I think? I think that the notion that sex and danger have to go together is the product of the male nuclear imagination, and that they'll blow us up and come at the same time...

... I believe that there *is* such a thing as a world-changing erotic life worth struggling for. I think there is a place where we could bask for one exquisite moment in freedom; where we could act on desire and not be afraid; where we could create with another woman that electro-magnetic field, that real sexual energy, palpable sexual energy, that would shock, literally shock, the rest of the patriarchal world to a standstill...

Pure but Powerless: The

by Terry Mehlman, Debbie Swanner and Midge Quandt

From Greenham Common, Seneca, NY, Cold Lake, Alberta, and from many other places and perspectives, large numbers of women are massing together to oppose the weaponry and ideology of a system which many claim is based on the masculine values of violence and aggression. The threat of nuclear annihilation is, according to them, as much a feminist issue as rape or abortion. Some groups even contend that the peace movement should take top priority in women's organizing.

Two points are at issue here for radical feminists. First, the women's peace movement claims that women have a special interest as *women* in preserving the life of the earth and in ensuring the future for the benefit of their children. Secondly, it claims that women are specially suited for this task by virtue of their nurturing and sensitive awareness of life. We are supposedly more peace-loving by nature than men are.

We believe that a substantive critique of these two points is important, since they relate directly to the notion of biological determinism, which states that women's nature is defined by innate biological features. We also intend to address the strategies for change employed by the women's peace movement, their effectiveness, and their implications.

In Whose Interest?

How can women have a "special" interest in nuclear war? A nuclear disaster would be the most equal event in the history of the world. Bombs don't discriminate. (An exception would be the neutron bomb which will leave buildings intact.) Women would be neither more nor less affected than any other group. The real point of this argument is the premise that women are somehow responsible for life on earth: since women possess the capacity to bear children, the continued existence of the world and the fate of its inhabitants are of a greater concern to these producers of life, these women, than to men. Whether this argument is used to glorify women's power to affect world events or to pin the responsibility

Women as human beings share an interest with other human beings (men) in the preservation of life on earth. Setting women and men in opposition over an issue of human concern only reinforces the artificial constructs of gender which form the basis of women's oppression.

for world events upon us, the basic idea is the same. Simply stated, women's fate and women's interest is defined by the capacity and duty to bear children.

As radical feminists, we reject the notion that women are defined by their reproductive capacity, a notion that was one of the basic tenets of the early women's liberation movement. As Ti-Grace Atkinson has pointed out, the ability to bear children is a capacity which individual women may or *may not* choose to exercise. Radical feminists should object to the equating of motherhood with womanhood. Women as human beings share an interest with other human beings (men) in the preservation of life on earth. Setting women and men in opposition over an issue of human concern only reinforces the artificial constructs of gender which form the basis of women's oppression. Simone de Beauvoir spoke to these issues when she answered a question about women in West Germany calling for peace in the name of feminism. She replied, "That's absurd. Absurd - because women should desire peace as human beings, not as women! That whole line is completely irrational. . . . And if they're being encouraged to be pacifists in the name of motherhood, that's just a ruse by men who are trying to lead women back to the womb. Besides, it's quite obvious that once they're in power, women are exactly like men."¹

Are Women Better than Men?

A prevalent defence of the women's peace movement lies in the appeal to the superior quality of women's "nature." An understanding of the reliance on and celebration of women's "special qualities" is important to any critique of the women's peace movement, since so much of its theory and strategy rests on this way of thinking. Qualities such as nurturing, sensitivity and peacefulness are said to belong, either inherently or as a result of social conditioning, primarily to women - if only men would give up their aggressive, violent, "masculine" values, injustice would disappear and peace would reign.

The notion that "women's qualities" are somehow better than "men's qualities" is in basic opposition to the theory of feminism. Feminist theory states that the potential for all qualities - from aggressiveness to nurturing - exists within each person. But under a system of male supremacy, certain traits are deemed "masculine" and others "feminine." Since gender is not innate but is socially constructed, the goal of feminism is to eradicate the categories of "masculine" and "feminine." An appeal to women's distinctive characteristics only reinforces these categories. Moreover, this position does nothing to change the essential conditions between women and men; it merely seeks to reverse the qualities that dominate. The inability to effect basic change which characterizes the ideology of the women's peace movement stems in part from an excessive preoccupation with psychological factors. Focussing as it does on men's and women's character traits, the movement ignores the structural aspects of male supremacy.²

There is another reason for feminists to reject the celebration of women's personality characteristics. Historically, the notion of women's difference has been one source of our oppression and, in the current context, extolling it traps us once again in the male supremacist system. As Ellen Willis so succinctly put it in *The Village Voice*, "The claim that women are superior is nothing new; when men make it, it's called 'putting women on a pedestal.' Men will gladly concede our superiority so long as they get to keep their power."³

It should be noted that Seneca, which was the site of a

women's peace march last summer, is close to Seneca Falls, where the first wave of US feminism originated. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton fought against equating womanhood with a special women's perspective. How ironic that today the town is used to undercut their vision of feminism.

Women and Imperialism

The women in the peace movement claim a special affinity with other oppressed people. It is their view that, as victims of everyday male violence, they have special insight into its manifestations all over the world. As they put it, "We came to this action as women and as feminists, connecting crimes against us in our daily lives with the world-wide violence of the military machine."⁴ But violence against women is not the same as imperialism, and direct, constant, everyday oppression is not the same as the fear of possible nuclear disaster. One of the strongest statements of the supposed link between feminism and imperialism comes from a group called the Continental Front of Women. The group calls itself "a common front of women from all over the Americas against intervention in Central America. It is based on the idea that women, more than anyone, know the value of peace and the need for peace."⁵

Imperialism is the policy, practice or advocacy of extending the power and dominion of a nation. For example, any Nicaraguan woman could tell you that Americans are citizens of an imperialistic power and are a direct threat to her safety as a human being. She would not and should not exempt from responsibility those women who spend a hard day weaving webs at the Pentagon - every citizen of the United States benefits materially from the imperialistic and exploitive power of the government of the United States. It is therefore an inescapable, if unpleasant, fact that every citizen of the United States, male or female, bears a share in the responsibility for the actions of the government. If the women's peace movement were seriously concerned with the imperialism of the government, it would be working to change or overthrow that government. Instead it chooses to identify itself with the victims of imperialism and thus escape its inherent responsibility for it.

If the women's peace movement is to overthrow that government, the victims of imperialism must assume responsibility for it.

The Tactics of Persuasion

The women's peace movement often presents the view that men are inherently, some say biologically, motivated towards violence. "We do not want that dominance which is exploitive and murderous in international relations and dangerous to women and children at home - we do not want that sickness transferred by the violent society through the fathers to the sons."⁶ However, after espousing the view that men are inherently violent and evil, it bases its entire campaign for peace on a heavily symbolic appeal to men's "better nature." Surely, if men are as base as all that they can hardly be expected to change their violent ways by being exposed to a group of women protesting in loving harmony. Making such an appeal to the oppressor is a move rooted in hopelessness and despair. It says, in effect, that men hold complete power, that men will always hold complete power, so that the best women can do is ask for concessions. But we refuse to accept this assessment of the situation. The dominance of men over women is not absolute or inevitable; it derives not from biology but from a system of male supremacy. Furthermore, it is our conviction that men are neither innately evil or incorrigible. As radical feminists, we believe that men can change.

If the tactics of persuasion are rooted in pessimism, what were the women doing at the Seneca peace camp, and at other similar camps? The answer is linked to the unique quality of women's oppression. The most striking and difficult aspect of that oppression is the ordinariness of it all. It has to do with our everyday relations with men. It has to do with who does the dishes and who takes care of the kids. It has to do with everyday violence. (If we did a survey and asked women from all walks of life what hampered their day-to-day activities more, the threat of nuclear war or the fear of being attacked or raped by a man, the latter response would undoubtedly prevail. But the violence and exploitation which make up the fabric of our oppression are rarely dramatic or overt. Women's oppression is everywhere we turn, and yet it rarely appears in a form which we can grasp and confront dramatically or immediately.

In contrast to women in ordinary life situations with men, the women at peace camps are able to confront the military dramatically and concretely. And there is a heroic aspect to the activities of these women. They courageously leap the chain link fences into the very arms (literally) of the enemy. They weave webs in front of the entrances to their targeted installations. It seems obvious to us and must be to them that these activities have never had one concrete result, have never disarmed even one bomb. But that is not the point. It is more

Women's Peace Movement

arding, perhaps, to deal with an issue like nuclear war rather than to confront the difficult and elusive issues of everyday life in male-dominated society. Nuclear disarmament has a further appeal. It is monolithic enough that immediate change is difficult to achieve and yet simple enough to fire the imagination. Furthermore, participation in the peace movement is socially acceptable and never requires you to step out of your role as a woman. Finally, it is a cause that no sane person would oppose. Even Ronald Reagan claims to support it.

What is the Greater Danger?

One of the most common arguments associated with the women's peace movement deals with the pressing and immediate nature of the threat. This line of reasoning is that every group of people on earth is threatened in a tangible and immediate way by nuclear power, and that

Are we seriously concerned with nuclear war if it would be working to end it? Or does it choose to identify with the cause to escape its inherent danger?

Before we should all set aside our petty concerns and try to end this world-wide threat. This argument is, of course, almost a tradition in the history of women's liberation. In the 19th century, American suffragists were urged to step aside for the black man. Women who have participated in various socialist revolutions around the world have received promises of liberation which were never kept. But the nuclear argument does seem to carry more weight at first glance, since no one could argue that if the planet were destroyed, women's liberation would be a pressing concern. So, the argument goes, women should put the preservation of the planet first.

Now, all of us agree that nuclear destruction is a life and death issue, but then so is women's liberation. It is clear to us that the chances of a woman being hurt or killed in some random act of violence tomorrow are many times greater than her chances of being killed in a nuclear explosion. It amazes us that a woman should be urged to set aside the question of her right to control her own life in favour of a campaign to preserve the human race. While we live in a world that denies us the opportunity to achieve our full potential as human beings, how can anyone expect us to sacrifice what we have for the sake of mankind?

Feminism Does Not Equal Pacifism

In contrast to the women's peace movement, we would argue that pacifism is not integral to feminism. One can be a feminist without being a pacifist. One's opposition to war should be based on political and personal reasons which have nothing to do with being a woman.

Women keep the issue of violence in perspective. Women have had no choice but to be non-violent. And men have counted on the fact that women don't fight back with physical force. Although violence is used by men to exert power over women, violence is not inherently male. It is a tool that can also be used by women against men, women against men, and men against each other. However, women have sometimes been actively involved in warfare. A current example is the women of Nicaragua. (Interestingly, these women do not have the right to vote. Some feminists have excused the Sandinista government for this, since they have more urgent matters to deal with.) To label women's relative lack of participation in recent wars as the result of an essentially peace-loving nature makes about as much sense as attributing men's relative lack of participation in the work force of the 1950s to an essentially home-loving nature. Women are willingly in the armed forces of many nations. We do not believe that feminism equals pacifism or

that war is the bedrock of male supremacy. Male supremacy is about the relationship of power between men and women. We could have complete peace and men would still oppress women in countless ways.

How Men Benefit: A Feminist Analysis of the Military

The women's peace movement has an analysis of militarism which we do not think of as a valid one. It says nothing about the sexism of a social institution which benefits men in several important ways. Without denying that men suffer and die in the armed services, a sound feminist analysis of the military should look at what men gain from participating in it.

Military service brings several advantages to men. They learn how to use aggression in a systematic way. They also experience an intensified form of male bonding. And basic training, according to spokesmen for the military, teaches you to be a MAN. Being a man includes dominating women and other men. (Meanwhile, on the home-front, women enable men to go to war by giving them emotional support and by working in the factory and the home.)

All of us agree that nuclear destruction is a life and death issue, but then so is women's liberation. . . . The chances of a woman being hurt or killed in some random act of violence tomorrow are many times greater than her chances of being killed in a nuclear explosion. A woman should not be asked to put aside the question of her rights in favour of a campaign to preserve the human race.

Then there are the tangible gains that come to veterans. Since the end of World War II, billions of dollars have been spent on North America's war veterans. Among the benefits are unemployment compensation; veteran training and education; hiring preferences for government jobs; housing and low-interest mortgages; and health care.

Not only do women in the peace movement ignore these benefits, they also misdirect their energy by organizing women against the military. Since it is men who participate in it and suffer because of it (despite the benefits), they are the logical ones to organize against it. This would also give men a vantage point for criticizing male supremacy.

How the Women's Peace Movement Hurts Feminism

It is hard to blame new women coming into the movement for joining the women's peace movement. They are eager to do something, there are not many groups which are vigorously working for women's liberation on a broad front. The women's peace movement fills a vacuum; the peace marches and encampments give women a group to identify with and a place to belong.

Although it would be nice to say that the women in the peace movement should go ahead and do their own thing while we do ours, feminists do not have that luxury. Every year, the basic tenets of women's liberation become more and more diluted. We have been asked to subordinate our struggle to more "pressing" concerns, such as fighting imperialism. This has diverted our energies and hurt us as a movement. There has also grown up within the women's movement the notion that there is a women's perspective on everything. According to this view, feminists should work on a wide range of

issues in order to humanize society; they should bring women's values to bear on a variety of social problems at home and abroad. This approach to feminism has diverted us from the goal of women's liberation - the ending of male supremacy. Not only that, it has also diluted the meaning of feminism. If everything is feminist, as the women's peace movement and other elements in the women's movement would have us believe, then nothing is feminist.

Feminism cannot be expected to have the answer to every injustice in the world. No one ever put that burden on the black liberation movement. (And you certainly don't see exclusively black groups fighting nuclear power from their special perspective.) Feminism is not a total world-view. It is about the oppression of women. To try to turn it into a world-view is theoretically unwise and ultimately self-defeating. (It is ironic that just as some socialists are denying that marxism, or any other "ism," can be a total theory, some feminists are arguing that feminism is just such a theory.)

Feminists have to recognize that there will always be, as there have been in the past, other important and competing struggles. And these struggles will be considered by many to be more important than women's liberation. In the light of this, it is unfortunate that large numbers of women, large numbers of feminists, do not take themselves seriously enough to fight for their own interests first. It is also expected that women unselfishly put others first, whether it be the children, the disadvantaged, or the fate of the earth. Lest we seem to be blaming women for this situation, we should note that, historically, men have had more influence on social norms and roles than have women; that men have defined us as unselfish and morally superior from the late 18th century on. And this legacy is still with us.

The legacy of altruism and moral superiority hurts us as women and as a movement. One of the ways it harms us is in our relationship to men as a group. What do men feel when they see hundreds of women marching for peace as mothers, lesbians, or feminists? They don't seem to feel threatened: we have not noticed any liberal men complaining about these all-women gatherings. In fact, men would prefer us to focus on the military rather than on their behaviour. Certainly men would rather see women climbing fences than disturbing male privilege.

As radical feminists, we question both the assumptions and the consequences of the women's peace movement. It has encouraged women to celebrate the very features that mark our oppression. Exalting the qualities which men have assigned to us and which keep us in our place in no way weakens male supremacy or brings our own liberation closer. Let us return to the principles of women's liberation as they apply to women in the 1980s. It is time we put ourselves first. No one else will.

We are indebted to the work of Brooke and Ellen Willis in connection with this article. We also want to thank Nina Kamberos for her ideas.

Terry Mehlman, Debbie Swanner and Midge Quandt are members of the Radical Feminist Organizing Committee, a group with both Canadian and American members. For information, contact: RFOC, 109 Ellerbee St., Durham, NC, 27704, USA.

Footnotes

1. Interview with Simone de Beauvoir, *Ms.*, August, 1983.
2. In a recent essay, Alice Echols discusses this theoretical weakness with regard to cultural feminism, whose most prominent proponents are Mary Daly, Andrea Dworkin, Robin Morgan, and Adrienne Rich. She also analyzes cultural feminists' belief in the essentially different natures of men and women. As opposed to radical feminists, cultural feminists think that the liberation of women, as well as the solution to many of the world's problems, will come through the growth and spread of female values. Alice Echols, "The New Feminism of Yin and Yang," in Ann Snitow, Christine Stanselle, and Sharon Thompson, eds., *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (New York, 1983) pp. 439-59.
3. Ellen Willis, *The Village Voice*, June 23, 1980, 28.
4. "WAP C-D Statement," *Off Our Backs*, 12/81, p. 5.
5. Interview with Margaret Randall, *Kinesis*, November, 1983.
6. "WPA Statement of Unity," 11/81.

ARTS

A Midsummer Night's Read

by Carroll Klein and Gail van Varseveld

The long, hot summer is upon us and with it the inclination to lie back and enjoy a good read. Herewith a few titles, some to amuse, some to edify.

Alégria, Claribel. *Flowers from the Volcano*. Pittsburg: U of Pittsburg Press 1982. Poetry.

Alégria was in town recently, reading with her better-known comrade, Carolyn Forché. Alégria is a poet of great power and immense political commitment.

Anderson, Jessica. *Tirra Lirra by the River*. Harmondsworth: Penguin 1984. Fiction. At 70, Nora Porteous comes home to the small Australian town she fled years before, to try to come to terms with a life that took her to Sydney and London and back. Wonderful writing.

Arnow, Harriette. *The Dollmaker*. New York: Avon 1972. Fiction. This 600 page account of Gertie Nevel's struggles to protect her uprooted Kentucky family in war-time Detroit was originally published in 1954. Jane Fonda's recent film is far more optimistic than the novel.

Atwood, Margaret. *Interlunar*. Toronto: U of T Press 1984. Poetry. Atwood's tenth collection of poetry. It will not disappoint.

Auel, Jean M. *The Valley of Horses*. New York: Bantam 1983. Fiction. The sequel to *The Clan of the Cave Bear* follows Ayla on her search for people like herself.

Auerbach, Nina. *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1982. Non-fiction. A tantalizing title for an interesting scholarly study of myths and generalizations that have developed around women.

Baraka, Amiri and Amina Baraka. *Confirmation: An Anthology of African American Women*. New York: Quill 1983. A remarkable anthology of prose, poetry and fiction by such well-known writers as Toni Cade Bambara, Gwendolyn Brooks and Alice Walker as well as a host of others who may be less familiar to those of us who are only beginning our exploration of black women writers.

Barbour, Douglas and Marni L. Stanley. *Writing Right: Poetry by Canadian Women*. Edmonton: Longspoon Press 1982. Poetry. An interesting if somewhat eccentric collection of contemporary women poets. Includes work by Erin Mouré, Leona Gom and Sharon Thesen.

Bell, Anne Olivier, ed. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf: Volume 4, 1931-1935*. London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1983. Non-fiction. The fourth volume of the incomparable Woolf diaries covers the years in which she wrote *The Waves* and buried two of her closest friends, Lytton Strachey and Roger Fry.

Brandreth, Gyles. *The Joy of Lex*. New York: Quill (Wm Morrow) 1983 paper. Non-fiction. New to us, but a book that's been around long enough to give a lot of pleasure to a lot of people. Strictly for word buffs, this book will keep you amused on a cross-Canada motor trip. Brandreth has recently brought out the sequel - (you guessed it) *More Joy of Lex*.

Brown, Rita Mae. *Sudden Death*. New York: Bantam 1984. Fiction. A novel of ambition and passion on the women's tennis circuit, by the author of *Rubyfruit Jungle*.

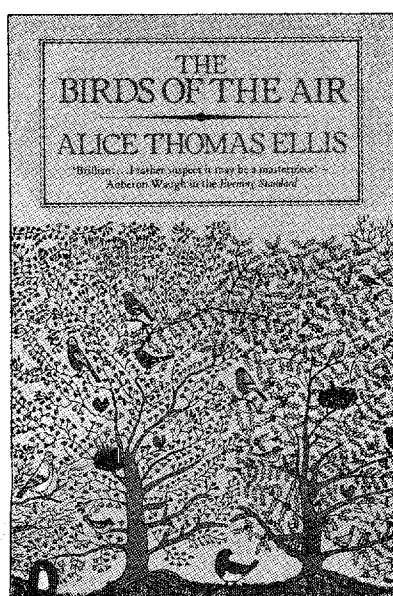
Brownmiller, Susan. *Femininity*. New York: Linden Press (Simon & Schuster) 1984. Non-fiction. Brownmiller, author of *Against Our Will*, analyzes the social constraints, aesthetic ideals and assigned "characteristics" that govern our lives and are called femininity.

Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*. New York: Bantam Books 1981. Fiction. First published in 1899, Chopin's novel of awakened desire created a furor that eventually caused her to stop writing. The resurgent interest in early feminist writing has, happily, allowed her to be read once more.

Crowley, John. *Little, Big*. New York: Bantam 1983. Fiction. A splendid, sprawling fantasy about the fate of fairies and the future of mankind.

Delany, Sheila. *Writing Woman*. New York: Schocken Books 1983. Non-fiction. Delany, a mediaevalist at Simon Fraser University in BC, looks at woman as creation in literature.

Ellis, Alice Thomas. *The Birds of the Air*. Harmondsworth. Penguin Books 1983. Fiction. A grimly funny look at an English family that tries to maintain a facade of civilized unity as their lives crumble around them.



Ephron, Nora. *Heartburn*. New York: Pocket Books 1983. Fiction. A wickedly funny *roman à clef* about the breakup of Ephron's marriage to Carl Bernstein.

Fisher, M.F.K. *Sister Age*. New York: Vintage Books 1984. Fiction. Fifteen wonderful short stories about aging, told with passion and insight, by a woman better known for her seminal book on food, *The Art of Eating*.

Gardam, Jane. *The Pangs of Love*. London: Abacus 1984. Fiction. Another delicious collection of short stories by one of the best of the English practitioners of the genre.

Greer, Germaine. *Sex and Destiny: The Politics of Human Fertility*. London: Secker & Warburg 1984. Non-fiction. Wait for the soft cover if you can, line up at the library, buy a copy collectively - but read it.

Helwig, D. and S. Martin, eds. *Coming Attractions: Stories by Sharon Butala, Bonnie Burnard and Sharon Sparling*. Ottawa: Oberon Press 1983. Fiction. Another collection by promising young Canadian writers.

Huggan, Isabel. *The Elizabeth Stories*. Ottawa: Oberon Press 1984. Fiction. Short stories by a young Canadian woman whose work is worth watching.

Jhabvala, Ruth Praver. *A New Dominion*. London: Granada 1983. Fiction. A reprint of a 1972 novel by the Booker Prize winner. Jhabvala once again skillfully dismantles a cast of earnest, self-indulgent characters who understand little of the great civilization in which they find themselves.

Jolley, Elizabeth. *Woman in a Lampshade*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1983. Fiction. Short stories from an Australian master of the genre. Jolley is a real find.

LaDuke, J. and S. Luxton. *Full Moon: An Anthology of Canadian Women Poets*. Dunvegan, Ont: Quadrant Editions 1983. Poetry. Quadrant is an interesting little publisher that always manages to find worthwhile things to publish. This is no exception.

Lawrence, Frieda. *'Not I, But the Wind...'*. London: Granada 1983. Non-fiction. Originally published in 1934, this short but fascinating book composed of poems, letters and reminiscences was Lawrence's account of her life with D.H.L..

Levin, Jenifer. *Water Dancer*. New York: Pocket Books 1983. Fiction. A first novel about a woman swimmer.

Marchessault, Jovette. *Saga of the Wet Hens*. Translated by Linda Gaboriau. Vancouver: Talonbooks 1983. Play. The magical meeting of the four great Québécoise writers, Laure Conan, Germaine Guèvremont, Gabrielle Roy and Anne Hébert, is now available in English with excerpts from the author's correspondence with Gloria Orenstein.

Marshall, Paule. *Praisesong for the Widow*. New York: Obelisk (Dutton) 1984. Fiction. A new novel by the author of *Brown Girl, Brownstones* and *Soul Clap Hands and Sing*. Marshall explores the spiritual reawakening of Avey Johnson, a middle-age black widow whose life is shaken by an unlikely decision.

Martin, Wendy. *An American Triptych*. Chapel Hill: U of NC Press 1984. Non-fiction. A study of the work of Anne Bradstreet, Emily Dickinson and Adrienne Rich, their forms, content and aesthetic traditions.

Morante, Elsa. *History: A Novel*. New York: Vintage Books 1984. Originally published in 1974, Morante's book skillfully conjures up the horrors of WW2.

Paley, Grace. *The Little Disturbances of Man*. New York: Plume (New American Library) 1973. Fiction. Paley's stories often show up in *The New Yorker*, a testament to their urbane wittiness and insight.



Piercy, Marge. *Living in the Open*. New York: Knopf 1978. *To Be of Use*. New York: Doubleday 1973. Poetry. Piercy's poetry is generally far superior to her prose. This is high praise, particularly in the minds of those who are fans of her novels.

Plante, David. *Difficult Women: A Memoir of Three*. New York: E.P. Dutton 1983. Non-fiction. Plante capitalized on his relationships with Jean Rhys, Sonia Orwell and Germaine Greer and produced this often infuriating, often irresistible book.

Reese, Lynn et al, eds. *I'm On My Way Running: Women Speak on Coming of Age*. New York: Avon Books 1983. A lively, cross-cultural collection of stories,

articles and poetry about girls becoming women. Includes work by Toni Morrison, Anne Frank, Maxine Hong Kingston, Anais Nin and others.

Richardson, Henry Handel (Ethel Florence Lindesay Richardson). *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1982.

A classic of Australian literature, generally considered to be one of the top ten books ever written in that country, Richardson published this book in 1930. 840 absorbing pages that tell of Mahony's marriage, alienation, and changes against Australian and European backdrops.

Room of One's Own. Vol 9, No 1. Literary Quarterly. This Vancouver feminist literary quarterly is not only long-lived, it is consistently excellent. The latest issue offers prose and poetry by Audrey Thomas, Margaret Hollingsworth, Carolyn Smart and M. Travis Lane, reviews of Suniti Namjoshi's poems and other worthy delights.

Rose, Phyllis. *Parallel Lives: Five Victorian Marriages*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1983. Non-fiction.

A study of five of the most interesting 19th century English marriages: Jane Welsh and Thomas Carlyle, Effie Gray and John Ruskin, Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mills, Catherine Hogarth and Charles Dickens, and George Eliot and George Henry Lewes.

Salmonson, Jessica Amanda. *Thousand Shrine Warrior*. New York: Ace 1984. Fiction. In the third Tomoe Gozen novel, the female samurai in the alternate Japan takes on the priest from hell, Kura the Darkness.

Schwarzer, Alice. *Simone de Beauvoir Today: Conversations 1972-82*. London: Chatto and Windus 1984. Non-fiction. A remarkable series of six interviews with de Beauvoir on her feminism, socialism, views on marriage and work.

See, Carolyn. *Rhine Maidens*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1983. Fiction. From the Penguin Contemporary American Fiction Series, a novel of the relationship between an iconoclastic mother and her middle-class daughter.

Spender, Dale, ed. *Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Key Women Thinkers*. New York: Pantheon Books 1983. Non-fiction. An ambitious anthology of articles about such diverse feminist thinkers as Aphra Behn, Mary Wollstonecraft, Emma Goldman, Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir.



Shange, Ntozake. *Sassafras, Cypress & Indigo*. New York: St. Martin's Press 1982. Fiction.

A first novel by the author of *for colored girls who have considered suicide/ when the rainbow is enuf*. Shange once again weaves her magic with a story of three sisters who learn to reconcile their heritage with their chosen lives.

CONTINUED PAGE 10

Keep on Trekkin'

Star Trek III: The Search for Spock: Dir.: Leonard Nimoy. Written and Prod.: Harve Bennett. Exec. Consultant: Gene Roddenberry. Exec. Prod.: Gary Nardino. Music: James Horner. Cast: William Shatner, DeForest Kelley, James Doohan, George Takei, Walter Koenig, Michelle Nichols, Merrit Butrick, Dame Judith Anderson, Robin Curtis, Mark Lenard, Christopher Lloyd. Paramount Prod.

by Donna Gollan

Although I was not one of the members of the audience wearing a "Beam me up Scotty" T-shirt, I am admittedly an avid Trekkie. I know, for example, that Captain Kirk will either cry or fall in love in any given episode, and that Nurse harbours a secret desire for Spock. I am well aware that Scotty will effect impossible repairs and divert just enough energy to the warp drive to make a quick getaway in the nick of time, or that landing party members without familiar faces and names are doomed from the moment they beam down to the surface. And Bones, Spock, Scotty and Kirk have each had their turn at dying, but always on a planet on which death does not really exist or can be easily reversed.

It came as no surprise to me, then, that the *Search for Spock* would find him alive. What did surprise me was *Star Trek III's* blunt admission that we had all aged, from "Admiral" Kirk to his faithful audience, our concerns had changed. I found this second sequel at once delightfully progressive and humorously nostalgic.

For the success of the nostalgia, we have Leonard Nimoy to thank. Following the excellent example of Goldie Hawn and Barbra Streisand, he too found that there was more to Hollywood movies than being a star and competently directs his own search. Consequently there are lots of humorous references made to all those facts of life that we Trekkies hold dear. Scotty actually multiplies his repair time by a factor of four in order to maintain his reputation as a miracle worker. Bones, believing himself to be Spock, raises one eyebrow and grips enemy shoulders to no avail. Kirk, to tease him with his newfound split personality, holds up four fingers parted in the Vulcan V. When the situation is made clear to Dr. McCoy that he is the keeper of all Spock's knowledge, forced into his mind just moments before Spock's "death" in *Star Trek II*, his response is typical: "That green-blooded son of a bitch... that's revenge for all the arguments he lost."

Now that we have ascertained that Spock's brain is alive and well, it is discovered that his body must be retrieved if he is ever to rest in peace. What follows is an adventure story with strong *Antigone* overtones. What interests me, however, is not the adventure itself but the tone of the whole trip. Never before have the villains of the piece been so blatantly anti-nuclear-family. When the Clingons discover that the Federation has learned how to create live planets from dead ones, their reaction is a sneering one. What will they do with such knowledge? Build cities, towns, families, your wife at your side, and overhead: the Federation flag!



Marcus and Saavik on Genesis

All this must be stopped. Unfortunately the Clingons set out to do so with brute, macho force which proves considerably more nauseating than the idea of the status quo multiplied tenfold. To attain the information needed about the Genesis Planet - the first experiment of a dead planet brought to life - they use a seductive woman spy. Powerful though she may be, she is physically represented as sexy and strong, her breasts all but exposed. Naturally she dies to ensure the secrecy of the mission. I wonder how bad guys ever train new, seductive, female spies? Perhaps it is something they learn from their male counterparts?

Interestingly enough, the forces of the Federation also try to keep Kirk from reaching Spock's body on the Genesis Planet, and they too are macho in style. First they refuse to let him have his ship back, appealing to his reputation for "rationality." Then they try to chase his getaway with the *Excelsior*, a ship meant to put the *Enterprise* in her place with all the wonders of a fully automated trans warp drive. The *Excelsior's* captain purrs like a playboy with his super sports car until Scotty puts him firmly in his place by throwing a fully automated wrench into the system. It is a fine moment, and one of the few in recent Hollywood movies that gives credit to age and experience over youth and technology.

Another of my favourite moments in this getaway is Communications Officer Uhura's part in their escape. Naturally someone has to beam them off safely and she finds herself on duty with a young man who longs for some excitement in his life. He makes the fatal mistake of assuring Uhura that she is past the age of needing the kind of stimulus he needs, since her career is winding down. She puts him in the closet at gunpoint. Never tell a strong, powerful, older woman that she is winding down.

While Kirk and the old gaug speed on their way to the Genesis Planet and Spock's body, there are a couple of scientists already there. One of them, David, is Kirk's son. His partner, Savek, is a Vulcan woman. Together they are meant to have created this planet and head off to explore the results of their efforts. What they find is a Vulcan child who is Spock rejuvenated by the Genesis effect. Presto, a nuclear family.

So, you say, this film is just like *The Temple of Doom* after all. It will have an adventurous and invincible father-figure, a helpless but pretty mum and an impish son who tries to follow in his father's footsteps. In fact, we have something far more progressive. Mum is an unemotional, clever, logical Vulcan who wouldn't dream of screaming at the sight of a monster. The child grows rapidly and goes through some amazingly female changes of life. While the Spock child must suffer "pon fire" in some agony, he turns to Savek for explanations and relief. Indeed, it would be tough to follow dad's brave example, as David



Scotty, Kirk and Bones: successful nostalgia

is killed by the Clingons pretty early on. This little nuclear family self-destructs, breaking apart from within like the surrounding planet that artificially created it in the first place.

Kirk arrives too late to keep the family unit intact, not to mention his own since not only his son, but his long-time wife, The *Enterprise*, has been destroyed. We wait a moment for his anguish to subside, then whisk Spock back to his own planet. Here an ancient, powerful priestess succeeds in rendering his soul back into his body, much to the ultimate relief of Bones and the rest of us Trekkies.

I have heard the non-believers (ie, those a few years older than Trekkies) claim that *Star Trek III* is no better than a single episode of the old series. Well, what greater compliment can there be? To have recaptured the collective spirit of the old gang in which any of the lead characters can advise and admonish their leader with impunity and in which they all immediately pull together when threatened is a feat which is singularly challenging to the supremacy of the nuclear family. Have you ever seen one of these fascinating characters retire

to hearth and home at the end of a long, hard day? To those of us who spent our childhoods attempting to lure a sign of emotion from strong, invulnerable fathers, was not Spock the real hero of the show? How could he just die and leave us without showing us his love, his human side? (Exit, with raised eyebrow.)



Uhura: career on the wane?

Doomed to Disappointment

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom: Dir.: Steven Spielberg. Prod.: Robert Watts. Written: George Lucas. Screenplay: Willard Huyck & Gloria Katz. Assoc. Prod.: Kathleen Kennedy. Music: John Williams. Exec. Prod.: George Lucas & Frank Marshall. Cast: Harrison Ford, Kate Capshaw, Ke Huy Quan, Amrish Puri, Roshan Seth, Philip Stone. A Paramount Prod.

by Judith Posner

I am a Steven Spielberg fan. I love his fantastic imagination, which he dovetails with some very humorous naturalistic depictions of social relationships. I adored *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. It was one of those old-time, good clean fun, entertainment films that could be appreciated by a varied audience because it kept you sitting on the edge of your seat. Even the violence had redeeming social value - ie, it was incredibly funny. So it is with great chagrin that I find myself so utterly disappointed with the recent Indiana Jones sequel *Temple of Doom*. The film is a failure on several counts, but one of the major disappointments in the film is the central female character.

"Central" is really a misnomer for Willie (an oddly masculine or at least androgynous name for a woman that is strictly femme fatale). Willie is the archtypical traditional female, a narcissistic seductress who is more concerned with her clothes than her survival. Unlike *Raiders* in which Marion was a strong secondary character to Indiana, in *Doom* the female is strictly a tertiary character. The more intimate relationship is between Indiana and a young boy named Shorty. Sometimes Indiana fights the bad guys singlehandedly while Shorty and the infantilized Willie watch. At other times Shorty assists, but Willie is seldom involved in any brutality. While watching the film, one imagines that Willie's character will develop in time and that Spielberg is just

waiting for the right moment to spring her assertiveness on us.

It is a long wait. Only in the last 15 or 20 minutes of the film does she summon up the strength and imagination to punch out one of the villains, and the audience cheers wildly - they too have been waiting a long time. But it is too late, and it is not enough. Willie is undoubtedly a wimp; her morals are nothing to brag about either. From beginning to end her interests are diamonds - reminiscent of another period song sequel to *Anything Goes*. Indiana on the other hand, motivated by fortune and glory, foregoes the former in order to rehabilitate a poor Indian village.

The final scenes clearly reflect the nature of Indiana's relationships with his two co-stars. After the most dramatic scene, in which Indiana saves all their lives, he has a long intimate embrace with Shorty. But during the post climactic scene he begins to show more interest in Willie again, thus culminating in the most telling scene of all:



Indiana's sidekicks, Willie and Shorty

when Willie starts to walk away, saying she has had enough, Indiana cracks his bull-whip around her waist and draws her to him. Oh, Harlequin Romance.

Spielberg is no dummy, and he surely knows what he is doing, but I have to wonder why he is doing this. Does he think that we have had entirely too many strong female characters and that we are bored with them? That's a laugh. Does he think it dangerous to repeat a character from his last film - well, then, why is everything else a repeat, from opening fiascos to creepy-crawlies in caves reminiscent of the great snake scene in *Raiders*. My sense is that Marion in *Raiders* was an immensely successful character whom everyone enjoyed, so I can't stop asking myself why Spielberg would venture away from such a classic contemporary depiction.

Quite frankly, if the rest of the film were better I might even be inclined to interpret his use of the dumb blonde as a glorious send up - but since the entire film is so overdone, so blatant, and so immensely unsatisfying, I am destined to believe that he just couldn't bother to think of something better. So, even if Spielberg were to adjust his female characterization, the film would still fail because it is just too much - too much horror, too much violence, too much noise, and not enough humour.

Doom is both exhausting to sit through, because of the constancy of the terror and the noise, and boring, because of the lack of variety. In fact, it illustrates rather nicely what the pornography research on sex and violence has been saying about satiation effect. After a while you become immune to the atrocities, and the adrenalin rush ceases. Even for those who like sex objects and a good scare, *Temple of Doom* is a giant overdose.

Judith Posner is a professor of sociology at York University.

A Space Raid

TORONTO - A Space, a Toronto art gallery, was the subject of a raid on May 31 by investigators from the Ontario Theatres Branch. A videotape projector and two tapes, which formed part of a British-Canadian cultural exchange, were seized. This raid, coupled with the latest amendments to the Ontario Theatres Act (which are aimed at allowing the Censor Board to censor videotapes sold for use in the home) has once again opened up the controversy surrounding the dangers of excessive government censorship. While Consumer Relations Minister Robert Elgie defended the amendments as necessary to stem the flow of pornography in this province, this raid had nothing to do with the issue of pornography.

Since 1975 the censor has had the power to preview all video material shown at public exhibitions in Ontario. A Space, according to the Censor, was guilty of a technical violation by refusing to file a document swearing that the materials conformed to community standards. This form of prior censorship, which still allows the censor to demand a cut or ban

public exhibitions, is unacceptable to A Space. A Space has repeatedly pointed out that poets, writers, painters, photographers and even broadcasters do not have to get permission from the government before their work is made available to the public. Why are video artists being singled out?

This latest action by the censors may have some positive results. Dr. Elgie announced on June 13 that the Ontario government is seeking ways to resolve this dispute and that he is considering options to deal with complaints from artists and civil rights supporters about censorship of art works.

While the intention of the Theatres Act is not to control and censor artists or art galleries, it is ironic that this unprecedented move netted videos that dealt with sexuality, stereotyping and self image. It is even more ironic as A Space points out that A Space which has a strong standing in the women's community has been the victim of a government bureaucracy that professes to be protecting the women of this province.

- Lisa Freedman

LESBIAN CONFERENCE

from page 5

stories, and we never went back to discussing either power or politics. We also didn't discuss some interesting questions raised at the beginning, such as: 'How do you keep a long-term relationship sexually exciting?'

My favourite workshop had the somewhat misleading title of "Political Tongues: Does it Matter What Turns You On?" There was in fact very little politics in the workshop, which was just as well. The 100 or so women were divided up into smaller groups, and the groups were encouraged to create part of an erotic fantasy. The bits of fantasies were then re-told and altered as they went along so that they more or less fit together. The result was absolutely hilarious and wonderful. Women showed a lot of creativity in mixing clichés from soft-core porn (sexy nurses wearing red silk underwear, for instance), with specifically lesbian feminist experiences (e.g. having your

foreplay interrupted by a phone call from your collective). The resulting stories did not in fact feature any actual sex - everyone concentrated on setting the scene and introducing a mysterious strange woman of amazing erotic power. But the emphasis on waterfalls and veils and palm trees created quite a high level of lust in the room, and in a way I think we didn't really want to have it all end with an orgasm. Rather, the relief was provided at intervals by ad-libbed one-liners which caused a general uproar of laughter and a new twist in the purple prose. Who ever said that lesbian feminist sex had to be serious?

Some of the less successful workshops were those which were neither about sex nor designed for a specific group. The health workshop dealt too much, in my opinion, with the dangers of catching herpes, and not enough with erotic health. And the therapy workshop was, according to one participant, basically a lecture by an 'expert'. A workshop which was

TOP 40 BOOKS

from page 8

Stead, Christina. *The Man Who Loved Children*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston 1980. Fiction.

Another Australian novel that has survived the test of time, Stead first published this book in 1940. A bleak vision of family life, a stunning piece of writing.

Toronto Arts Group for Human Rights. *The Writer and Human Rights*. Lester & Orpen Dennys 1983. Non-fiction.

A sobering collection gathered from the 1981 congress held in Toronto. Riveting papers and discussions by Atwood, Forché, Gordimer, Sontag and others.

Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983 hardcover. Non-fiction. A repeat from our Solstice list, but well worth remembering... or re-reading.

Wandor, Michelene. *On Gender and Writing*. London: Pandora Press 1983. Non-fiction.

An extraordinary collection of essays by such luminaries as Fay Weldon, Eva Figes, and Margaret Drabble on the influence of families, upbringing, expectation, and feminism in their writing.

Carroll Klein is a Broadside collective member. Gail van Varsveld is a feminist and co-op activist.

very well received, by contrast, dealt with the practical and emotional issues involved in getting pregnant and having children. Given the high level of interest in this topic nowadays, one hopes that the facilitators will repeat the workshop at some point.

There was also a film session during which we probably watched every lesbian-made sex film ever made in North America. At first I was thrilled to watch explicit filming of sex between women; but soon enough it all became rather tedious, especially since almost all the films featured pre-articulate, blonde, long-haired teenagers who could have been Penthouse models but for the hair on their legs. It occurred to me, however, that it would be difficult to make an explicitly sexual film featuring older or overweight women, even when the women in question are sexy as hell in real life. I and many other women were yawning at the sight of pre-pubescent blonde women tripping through back-lit forests with no shirts on. But we haven't managed to eroticize other kinds of bodies in art, even bodies that we find very arousing in the flesh.

Toward the end of the conference there was also an interesting and well-researched slide presentation about 'lesbian images,' including male-made images both from high art and from porn as well as woman-made images. Still thinking about the lesbian erotic films, I watched the woman-made slides (portraits, mostly) or strong independent women to see if I could find the secret of lesbian erotic representation. But I'm sorry to report that the pictures shown that were made by women artists and photographers tended to portray women as tough, interesting, original, and everything else, but not as especially erotic.

Fun and Sexual Politics

As a whole, the conference was certainly a success. The tickets were all gone long before

the event, and women came from all sectors of the lesbian community in Toronto as well as from Ottawa, Guelph, Kingston, and Montréal. Co-ordinator Natalie Zlodre said that "we had calls from women in Labrador." She felt that the conference fulfilled its purpose of collectively discussing sexual issues. Another purpose of the conference, Natalie stated, was to raise some money toward the building that Branching Out (the organizing group) hopes to buy next summer, to provide Toronto with a lesbian house.

Of course, not everything was perfect. Many women felt frustrated at having attendance at workshops limited. It made sense to have a workshop for lesbians of colour only, but it made no sense to try to limit attendance at one of the popular sex workshops to 25, when 300 women were registered at the conference. Questions have also been raised about the accountability of the organizing group, Branching Out, to the community at large - as far as I know they have been and still are a closed group. And finally, some women wondered if it was appropriate to talk exclusively about sexual issues in the only lesbian conference we've had in years.

The conference made it clear that we have many needs as a community that are not being met. But the event was an important milestone, and an enjoyable one as well. It put the fun back into sexual politics, and that is no mean achievement. We should all be proud of ourselves.

Thanks to all the women who volunteered information and opinions, and especially to Susan Cole, Lina Chartrand, and Natalie Zlodre.

Mariana Valverde is a Toronto lesbian feminist.

CONVENTION WOMEN

from page 3

Cheryl Caffrey, a delegate from a riding near Ottawa, found that all the candidates were "giving us the same story... It's Tweedledum and Tweedledee. There's no difference between any of them on women's issues."

Turner loyalists argue that the new leader has come a long way since he left the elite male enclave of Toronto's Bay Street and threw himself into the campaign surrounded by high-profile Liberal women. In his speeches and campaign literature he has made strong appeals to women voters. His key campaign speech during the convention devoted several paragraphs to women, considerably more than Jean Chrétien said on the subject. But he used the sexist term "businessman" in his victory speech, a speech he had reportedly crafted with great care. His new style still needs polishing and the question is whether there is substance behind it.

At least one of Turner's campaign promises

is likely to be shelved very soon. Like other candidates, he said he was committed to ensuring that more women run under the Liberal banner in the upcoming federal election. National Liberal Women's Commission members talked about getting 50 to 60 women candidates into the race (only 23 Liberal women ran in 1980). This is unlikely to happen if Turner calls an early election, because there would be little time to recruit women candidates or to create the support organizations necessary to give them a chance of victory.

Although there was much talk of women and women's concerns during the June Liberal leadership convention, it does not appear that a gender gap was at work in the polling booths. Instead it seems that Liberal women voted very much as the men did, lining up behind the man they felt could lead them to an election victory. Canadian politicians have not yet received a clear, unequivocal message about women's intentions to use their voting power.

Gabriella Goliger is a writer living in Ottawa.

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For more information call or write: Marlene Philip, 173 Robina Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6C 3Y8; Phone: (416) 651-3090

● **Sunday, July 1:** Celebrate Lesbian and Gay Pride Day. This year's theme is *We Are Everywhere*. Street festival, information, displays, entertainment and childcare indoors at 519 Church St. Cawthra Square Park (behind 519 Church). 1-8 pm. Info: 929-0689.

● **Tuesday, July 3:** Altered Situations/Changing Strategies. The Canadian Worker in the Art of the 80's. Curated by Harriet Sonne with work by Carol Conde, Karl Beveridge, Michael Constable, Chris Reed, Lisa Steele and FUSE. A Space, 204 Spadina Ave. Info: 364-3227. To Saturday, July 21.

● **Wednesday, July 4:** Lesbian Phone Line general meeting. Interested women, prospective volunteers welcome. 7:30 pm. 348 College St., 3rd floor. Info: 960-3249.

● **Wednesday, July 4:** Toronto Workshop Theatre presents *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*. 12 Alexander St. (Yonge & College). Tickets \$6 to \$10. Info: 925-8640. To Sunday, August 26.

● **Wednesday, July 4:** Ielean McGann. 8 pm. Yofi's Backyard, 19 Baldwin St. No cover. Info: 977-1145. Also Thursday, July 5.



● **Thursday, July 5:** The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) sponsors a picket, press conference and open house to mark the first anniversary of the raid. Visit the clinic, get a trial up-date and meet Dr. Henry Morgentaler. Refreshments. 85 Harbord. 5-7 pm. Info: 532-8193.

● **Thursday, July 5:** Married lesbians group, a support and discussion group sponsored by Spouses of Gays. 206 St. Clair Ave. West. 1:30 pm. Info: 967-0597.

● **Thursday, July 5:** Nightwood Theatre presents *Love and Work Enough: A Celebration of Ontario's Pioneer Women*, directed by Mary Vingoe. The Poor Alex, 269 Brunswick Ave. 7 pm. Matinees Saturday and Sunday, 2:30 pm. \$3 (\$2 seniors, \$1 children). Info: Shawna Dempsey 363-3700. To Sunday, July 8.

● **Friday, July 6:** Sears and Switzer. Comedy on humanist, political and feminist themes. New Trojan Horse Cafe. 179 Danforth Ave. \$4 cover. Doors open 9 pm. Info: 461-8367.

OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

TORONTO WOMEN'S EVENTS CALENDAR

JULY 1984

Compiled by Catherine Maunsell

● **Saturday, July 7:** The Sisters of Mercy, a group of women interested in the concept of power and passion, will hold its first monthly meeting at 3 pm. 519 Church St.

● **Sunday, July 8:** Lesbian Mothers' Pot Luck Brunch. Food and friendship. 1-4 pm. Info: 465-6822.

● **Monday, July 9:** The Women's Group, a support group for lesbians. 8 pm. 519 Church St. Info: Raechel, 926-0527.

Week of July 9

● **Monday, July 9:** Body Image group co-led by Wendy Wildfong and Arlene Anisman meets Mondays for 10 weeks. Davenport - Christie area. 5:30-7:30 pm. \$250. Info: Wendy Wildfong 535-4709 or Arlene Anisman 469-2725. To Monday, September 24.

● **Tuesday, July 10:** Lesbian Phone Line open tonight for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. 960-3249.

● **Wednesday, July 11:** "Taking Charge of Your Life." First day of a four week course at the Scarborough Women's Centre. Pre-registration required. Childcare available, \$1 per child, per session. Info: 431-1138.

● **Thursday, July 12:** Married lesbians group, a support and discussion group sponsored by Spouses of Gays. 206 St. Clair Ave. West. 1:30 pm. Info: 967-0597. Also Thursdays, July 19 and 26.

● **Friday, July 13:** Sheila Gostick, a hilarious stand-up comedian. The New Trojan Horse Cafe. 179 Danforth Ave. \$4 cover. Doors open at 9 pm. Info: 461-8367.

● **Friday, July 13:** 24th Mariposa Folk Festival, at Molson Park in Barrie, Ontario. Program includes workshops, family activities, theatre, camp fire sing-alongs. Advance tickets from BASS (698-2277); \$17.50 weekend, \$8 one day, \$5.50 one evening, camping \$7.50 weekend. (Mariposa members 20% discount.) Info: 363-4009. To Sunday, July 15.



Mariposa Folk Festival

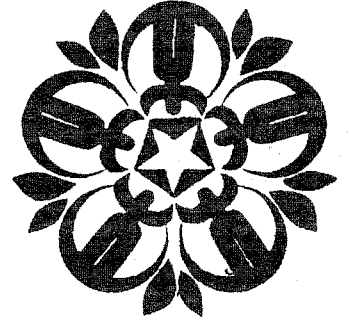
● **Saturday, July 14:** A book launching by the League of Canadian Poets/Alternate Members - Anthology entitled: "Other Channels." At the New Trojan Horse Cafe, 179 Danforth Ave. Info: 461-8367.

● **Saturday, July 14:** Do your worst at "Summer Sleaze," a dance brought to you by the Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund. Buffet. \$5 advance from Glad Day Books and Toronto Women's Bookstore. \$6 at door (sliding scale for women on FBA, students, unemployed). Help for babysitting expenses. All women welcome. 519 Church St. 9 pm - 1 am.

Week of July 16

● **Monday, July 16:** The Women's Group, a support group for lesbians. 8 pm. 519 Church St. Info: Raechel, 926-0527. Also Mondays, July 23 & 30.

● **Tuesday, July 17:** Lesbian Phone Line open tonight for calls from women. 7:30 to 10:30 pm. 960-3249. Also Tuesdays, July 24 & 31.



● **Thursday, July 19:** Assertiveness Training Course. Runs for six weeks at the Scarborough Women's Centre. Pre-registration required. Childcare available at \$1 per child, per session. Info: 431-1138.

● **Friday, July 20:** Benefit for Gallery 940. Featuring The Heretics and Bratty. At 519 Church St. 8 pm. Info: 466-8840.

● **Friday, July 20:** Women's Independent Thoughtz (WITZ). A seminar/discussion group for the exchange of ideas and creative endeavours in art, literature, philosophy and political thought. Topic: Mental Retardation: the politics of victimization. 7 pm. Info: 533-2738 (Lilith) or 536-3162.

● **Friday, July 20:** Marie-Lynn Hammond. 9 pm to midnight. Yofi's Backyard, 19 Baldwin St. \$2 cover. Info: 977-1145. Also Saturday, July 21.

Week of July 23

● **Friday, July 27:** *Love and Work Enough: A Celebration of Ontario Pioneer Women*. A play by Nightwood Theatre. At the New Trojan Horse Cafe, 179 Danforth Ave. \$4 cover. Doors open at 9 pm. Info: 461-8367.

● **Saturday, July 28:** Transcript. A performance by Judith Doyal. At the New Trojan Horse Cafe, 179 Danforth Ave. \$4 cover. Doors open at 9 pm. Info: 461-8367.

'Outside Broadside' is a monthly feature of the paper. To help make it as comprehensive as possible, let us know when you are planning an event.

In explaining your event (see coupon), keep it short — max. 25 words. Copy that is too long, or with incomplete information will not be printed.

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THE DEC BOOKROOM has a full-time job opening beginning late September. Previous bookstore experience and a good knowledge of alternative literature a must. Job primarily involves staffing the bookroom but includes some evening and weekend work. Full-time salary \$16,000 plus benefits. Detailed job description available at DEC. Send resumes by: August 20, to DEC, 427 Bloor St. West, Toronto, M5S 1X7.

KINGSTON AREA LESBIANS over 30 interested in strengthening the support system. Call Ann (613) 273-2998.

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THE WRITER AS PERFORMER committee of A-Space is interested in producing an on-going series of events which explore the connections between language, text and performance. We are presently seeking proposals for the 1984-85 season and encourage artists and cultural producers from many different communities whose work may have received little general exposure to apply. Deadline: July 27, 1984, A-Space, 204 Spadina Ave., Toronto, Ont. Call (416) 364-3227 for more details.

FREE SERVICE! Weekly calendar of events in Toronto's gay community: dial 923-GAYS.

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