

\$1.75

Northern Woman Journal

July 1990 Volume 12 No. 4 Thunder Bay, Ontario



Esprit

Editorial

Canadian women's freedom was short-lived. The dignity afforded women when the Supreme Court of Canada overturned the abortion legislation (January 1988) is again denied with the May 29, 1990 passing of Bill C43, which re-criminalizes abortion. Bill C-43 amends the Criminal Code to permit an abortion only if a doctor determines that continuing the pregnancy would threaten the woman's physical, mental or psychological health. If an abortion is deemed illegal, both the woman and the doctor will face penalties of up to two years' imprisonment. The supporters of Bill C-43 declare this law is an acceptable "compromise".

While Bill C-43 does not become law until passed by the Senate (expected this fall) its impact is already felt.

Four doctors staffing an abortion clinic at a Manitoba hospital have stopped performing abortions, forcing the clinic to cut back services. Doctors at major hospital abortion services in Alberta and Nova Scotia have said they will stop doing abortions when the law is passed. Closer to home we learn that Sault Ste. Marie doctors will no longer perform abortions except under "exceptional and life-threatening situations". In a national survey the Canadian Medical Association found that half the doctors responding would stop performing abortions if the new law came into effect. Doctors appear to be succumbing to threats; by the anti-choice lobby which have announced that they will take every opportunity to lay charges against doctors who perform abortions.

In May a sixteen year old Ontario woman was rushed to hospital following a botched "kitchen-table" abortion.

In June a twenty year old Toronto woman bled to death as a result of a self-induced abortion.

How many Canadian women must die in the name of political compromise?

Women who need an abortion will have an abortion. It is society's responsibility to ensure that women have access to safe, legal abortions.

Should Bill C-43 be passed by the Senate the abortion "issue" will return to many more years of legal battles, court challenges. Its eventual fate will be decided by the Supreme Court.

In the meantime Canadian women live with the knowledge that our government considers women less than fully human; considers women expendable; believes women must be denied the right to self-determination; is willing to risk women's lives.

We must not tolerate such contempt.



\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$NEEDED\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Does the heading look familiar? Indeed, it has appeared over our 16 year herstory. With increased printing cost, federal government intentions to reduce postal subsidies, and the additional threat of the GST, the Northern Woman Journal finds herself in the not unfamiliar situation of imminent poverty.

Our readers have always rallied to our need and we are sure you will again. While cash donations are always welcome, the best help you can provide is encouraging two (or three or four or five) of your friends, neighbours,

colleagues to subscribe to NWJ. If we doubled our subscriptions we'd have no financial woes. If we tripled our subscriptions we could even invest in new technology and supplies that would visually improve our paper. We can provide sample copies of the Journal for you to give as a subscribing incentive (pick these up at the Northern Women's Bookstore or write us at Box 144, P7C 4V5).

We would welcome your suggestions for increasing Journal sales/subscriptions and will be grateful for any help you can give.

\$

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$NEEDED\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$



Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies/ Commission Royale sur les nouvelles techniques de reproduction

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies has been established by the Government of Canada with a mandate to "inquire into and report on current and potential medical and scientific developments related to new reproductive technologies, considering in particular their social, ethical, health, research, legal and economic implications and the public interest, recommending what policies and safeguards should be applied."

Throughout the next year, the Commission will be conducting an extensive public consultation program to hear the views and experiences of Canadians from all walks of life.

- Public hearings will be held across Canada beginning in September 1990. To be invited to appear, a group or individual must submit a short brief or position paper by July 31, 1990.
- Consultative meetings on specific issues are being organized to provide those with a specific interest in one or more areas involving the new reproductive technologies to share their views on the development, impact and implications of new reproductive technologies.
- Individual sessions can be arranged with those wishing to relate a personal experience, relevant to our mandate, in a private setting.

The Commission is particularly interested in hearing a full range of views on the following issues: the implications of new reproductive technologies for women's reproductive health and well-being; the causes, treatment and prevention of male and female infertility; all new reproductive technologies, including reversals of sterilization procedures, artificial insemination, *in vitro* fertilization, embryo transfers, prenatal screening and diagnostic techniques, genetic manipulation and therapeutic interventions to correct genetic anomalies, sex selection techniques, embryo experimentation and fetal tissue transplants; social and legal arrangements, such as surrogate childbearing, judicial interventions during gestation and birth, and ownership of ova, sperm, embryos and fetal tissue; the status and rights of people using or contributing to reproductive services such as access to procedures, rights to parenthood and informed consent; and the economic ramifications of these technologies, such as the commercial marketing of ova, sperm and embryos and the application of patent law and the funding of research and procedures including infertility treatment.

You are encouraged to discuss these issues from a social, ethical, health, research, legal and economic perspective.

Your views and experiences are important!

To find out more about the Royal Commission and how you can participate, call our toll-free information line: 1-800-668-7060, or write:

ROYAL COMMISSION ON NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES
P.O. Box 1566, Station "B"
Ottawa, ON
K1P 5R5

LETTERS

Dear Northern Woman:

I have just read your March issue and wish to commend you for a terrific publication. More importantly, I wish to thank you for the sensitivity with which you dealt with the Montreal massacre, and as painful as it was, for helping me reflect and recollect...

I began my job with ASWAC on December 4, 1989; two days later fourteen women were murdered in Montreal. My daughters, 18 and 20, were frantic that it would happen to me because of my virtually instant feminist visibility in the community. I was frantic because what we as women know, is possible and actually happened, and that none of us are ever really safe. I will never forget those fourteen young women, and I trust and hope that none of us do; just as we cannot forget those of us who die little deaths daily.

In love, sisterhood and woman power.

Noreen Bell
Project Coordinator

1. To help to "demystify" the trades for women...this is where some women are working and this is what they do in their job.

2. To help to dispel the myths surrounding the trades and women...re: physical strength; combining work and family...their own view of themselves.

3. To uncover benefits of a non-traditional skilled trade as a career option for Northern Ontario women...money, mobility, job satisfaction.

This bilingual journal (English/French) will be a very visual rather than print booklet. It is our belief that pictures convey a thousand words, so we hope to receive a wide variety of shots of the women at work, with their families and friends.

The Kenora Office of the Women's Access to Apprenticeship Training will be coordinating all aspects of the project. However, the publication of the journal will be a cooperative effort with the five other Northern Ontario Access Coordinators. There are Coordinators in North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Timmins and Thunder Bay.

Our women's access to Apprenticeship Project's mandate is to provide public information and education about the skilled trades. All coordinators locate and support women involved in a non-traditional occupation and/or trade. Therefore an infrastructure exists throughout the North for the collection and compilation of these photographs of women and the women's accompanying descriptions of their work.

At the back of the journal will be a resource list of where to go for further information on training; job opportunities bridging programs and organizations designed to help women explore career options.

To make this photojournal the best it can possibly be, we need your cooperation and support. We would like to know what training programs or assistance you know of for women interested in a non-traditional job. Please make your comments in point form as space will be at a premium in this journal.

If you know of potential women for our photojournal please contact the Access Coordinator in your area or mail me this woman's name,

address and relevant particulars.

Thank you for your time, cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Marion MacAdam
Coordinator

Women's Apprenticeship Plan
Box 722
Kenora, Ontario
P9N 4B5

Dear Northern Woman Journal:

WOMEN CAN GET AIDS is a new poster produced by the **AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay**. This poster is available **free of charge** to all health care professionals, health organizations and all agencies.

Distribution is already underway, and the **WOMEN CAN GET AIDS** poster has been well received in the community.

To receive the **WOMEN CAN GET AIDS** poster contact **Eileen Parker, Communications Coordinator** at 345-1516.

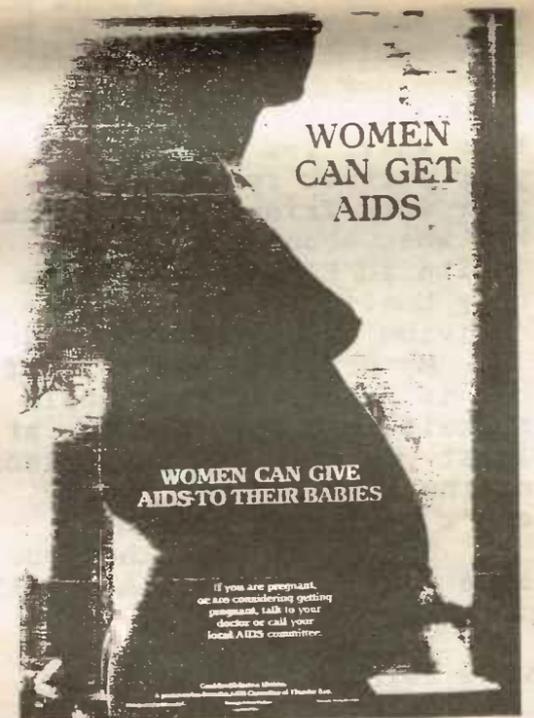


Dear Northern Woman Journal:

We have received confirmation that our funding proposal for a Northern Ontario photojournal for and about women in Non-Traditional Skilled Trades, titled "FREE TO BE ME", has been approved by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. The other funding agency, the Ontario Women's Directorate will be letting us know if they shall be contributing dollars shortly. In the meantime, we wish to let everyone know what we are trying to do and initiate the preliminary work to ensure that although we are starting the project a bit late, we will be able to successfully complete the journal close on schedule.

We wish to photograph Northern Ontario women: English, French, native and non-native currently working in non-traditional trades (all trades except hairdressers). The women can be qualified tradespeople or apprentices or women considered role - models in that they have successfully broken into what was considered traditionally men's work.

The purpose of the photojournal is:



HERSTORY NOTE

"Never retract, never explain, never apologize. Get the thing done and let them howl".

Nellie McLung, 1873-1951, Canadian writer, speaker, teacher, suffragette. Elected to Manitoba legislature 1921.

FEMINISTS IN SPIRITED RESISTANCE ACROSS THE COUNTRY

by Nancy Pollak
Reprinted with permission from
"Kinesis"

The spring of 1990 will be remembered as the season when feminists not only raised a huge public cry against funding cuts to the Secretary of State's Women's Program, but managed to keep alive, at least temporarily, many of the centres and groups most badly stung by the cuts.

The season isn't over.

As Kinesis goes to press*, women's groups across the country are forging a proposal for the Secretary of State Gerry Weiner, a proposal which will formalize demands and conditions for the reinstatement of core funding--and for the preservation of the Women's Program itself.

Weiner is expecting a proposal, although he is not expected to readily embrace the contents. And thereby hangs a tale...

Occupied By Occupations, etc
The \$1.6 million cut to the Women's Program in the February budget was most damaging to Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Yukon and British Columbia, where almost 80 women's centres lost all their operational money. In Quebec, 39 centres lost their federal core grant and were forced to fall back on much smaller provincial grants.

Four national women's organization (including three feminist periodicals) lost 100 percent of their funding, and national advocacy and education groups were dealt 15 or 20 percent cuts.

The fight was on.

Women's groups launched full-scale letter writing campaigns, visited cabinet ministers at their offices, protested at their speaking engagements (notable Mary Collins, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women), held symbolic bake-sales at government offices, and in various other public and not-so-public ways requested that Gerry Weiner meet with the groups whose funding he had cut without warning.

Public support for women's centres was widespread and immediate. Groups received donations and offers of support, and their demonstrations were well-attended--women and men are clearly angry about these cuts. With prompting from feminists, mainstream media had no difficulty presenting a sympathetic portrait of the local women's centre, struggling to survive, Editorial writers grasped that the funding cuts were at least impolite, and probably contrary to the government's

stated support for women's rights.

The Progressive Conservatives in Ottawa had a harder time getting the picture. Despite formal requests from affected groups, Weiner made no move to meet with women.

In the Yukon, the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre formed a coalition with Native political, communication and social organizations also cut by the Secretary of State (SecState). The Yukon Coalition Against the Budget, with major community support, took out full-page ads protesting the cuts on March 8 (IWD) and again on March 23rd.

On March 21 in Montreal, 75 women attempted to enter the SecState offices but were refused entrance to the elevators by security guards. During the noisy, all-afternoon demo, they faxed their demand to Weiner: meet with us. The following day, he invited them to an April 9 meeting in Ottawa.

It took him a little longer to respond elsewhere.

Women in St. John's, Newfoundland were the first to stage a full-fledged occupation of a SecState office. On March 26, 60 women announced "the newest women's centre in Canada," and set about using SecState's telephones and fax machine to get what they came for: a meeting with Weiner to discuss full reinstatement of core funding.

Over 400 women, including elected NDP and Tory politicians, participated in the week-long occupation; a unanimous motion of support passed in the House of Assembly; a local fish and chips joint delivered lunch for 50--and Gerry Weiner sent an official to discuss project funding.

We're Not Just Projecting
Luring women's groups with offers of short-term project funding has been the government's standard strategy since the cuts were announced.

Here's how it goes.

Imagine you are the government.

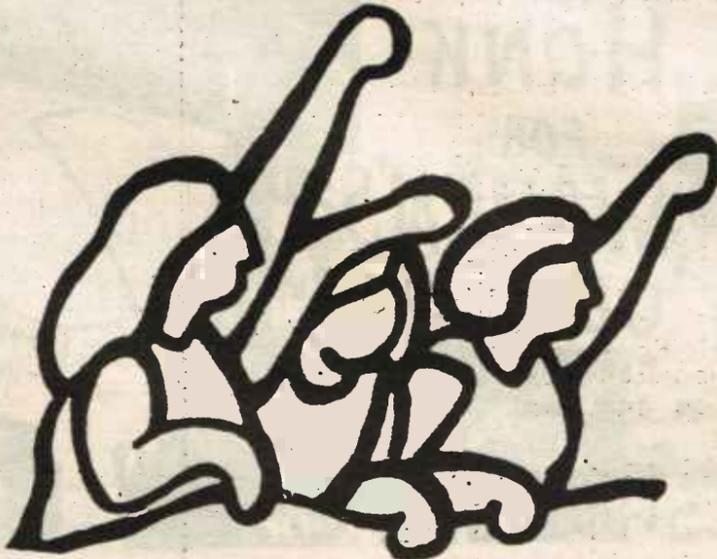
Your first move is to hammer home that core funding is gone for good--blame it on the deficit. Then say women's centres are a provincial responsibility anyway because they're so service-oriented.

Second, emphasize how much project funding is available. In the western region, stress how it's been increased--but don't explain that that's only because so much core funding was cut. Write letters to the editor about all the project money.

Third, phone up women's centres on the brink of closure and say they can have project money in a matter of days--it's called "fast tracking." Mention that the centres can use the money for operational expenses if they like (wink wink, nudge nudge). Add that there is money for winding-down expenses, too: pay off the photocopier lease, settle up with the landlord, sleep tight.

Finally, watch in consternation as groups across the country turn down your proposal because they have more political sense and solidarity with each other than to accept an offer of perpetual instability.

Newfoundland women rejected the project funding offer by Weiner's official in late March, reiterated their demand for full funding and set an inspired example for the rest of the country. The centre in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia took the next step, deferring a project grant for \$46,000. National groups, other Nova Scotia and Quebec



women's centres, and the BC and Yukon Association of Women's Centre followed suit, and a gradual boycott of project funds grew.

Coast to Coast

Despite poor national press coverage of the Newfoundland occupation, women across Canada were aware of the events in St. John's and prepared to show their support. On the first Monday (March 26), women in Toronto attempted to enter SecState offices and were met by closed doors and over twenty police officers. Four women were gently hauled away. In Vancouver, a symbolic sit-in took place in the SecState vestibule. As the week wore on and the Newfoundland occupiers showed no sign of giving up on their major demand, Vancouver women made plans to mirror the Atlantic action with a little of the Pacific kind.

Friday March 30: Within an hour of occupying the 12th floor Vancouver offices of SecState, 20 or so British Columbian women learned the police had arrived in St. John's with a new offer: leave or be charged with mischief. A few hours earlier, women in Halifax had met an instantaneous police response when they had attempted to enter government offices.

The Tories, never enthusiastic about the idea of talking with women, were now drawn to the idea of arresting them.

The women in Halifax and St. John's were "escorted" from the offices by the police and no charges were laid. Back at the women's centre in St. John's, telephone contact was made with the Vancouver occupiers and 40 weary but elated Newfoundlanders sang solidarity songs over the speaker phone to their west coast sisters who, shortly afterwards, noticed the arrival of the police.

The Vancouver occupiers made the same demand as other groups: full reinstatement of funding to the Women's Program and a meeting with Weiner. As they waited for a reply to the faxed demand, the women asked

SecState to call off the police while negotiations were taking place.

The answer came near midnight. Wendy Carter, Regional Director of SecState, reminded women of the easy availability of project funding. There would be no discussion of other matters except during regular office hours and, because there were no negotiations, the police would not be called off. By midnight, under a threat of mischief charge, Vancouver women were escorted from the building by police.

The following Monday, the St. John's office was revisited by protesters, still seeking a meeting with Weiner. Twenty women and two men were arrested and charged with mischief. The scene repeated itself in Vancouver on April 5. With a spirited demonstration taking place below, twelve women attempted to enter the SecState offices to deliver another letter to Weiner. Met by locked glass doors and security guards, the women slipped their letter to director Carter and sat down to await Weiner's reply.

His reply was another letter. Weiner would not reinstate funding, would not meet with women in BC, but would invite a designated representative to meet with him in Ottawa on April 11. Not satisfied, the women refused to leave. By dinner time, they were arrested for the stepped-up offence of "assault by trespass" and carted off in a police wagon.

Charges have not been laid.

Meet Me in Ottawa, Meet Me in Montreal

Across the country, special security guards were posted to protect government offices from rampaging females--the kind who want to talk to ministers of the crown. The federal NDP Women's Critic Dawn Black told parliament she had calculated the government would spend about \$560,000 on security fees over three months--almost a third of the budget cut.

While the public protest were going on national organization such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW), and "Healthsharing" also tried to set up a meeting with Weiner to specifically discuss cuts to their operations.

While women's centres have captured the public and media's attention, the advocacy, research and publication groups hit by the budget hadn't fared as well. Yet the cuts they sustained (between 30 and 100 percent in two years) are considered a strong indication of how far the Tories may go in completely dismantling the Women's Program.

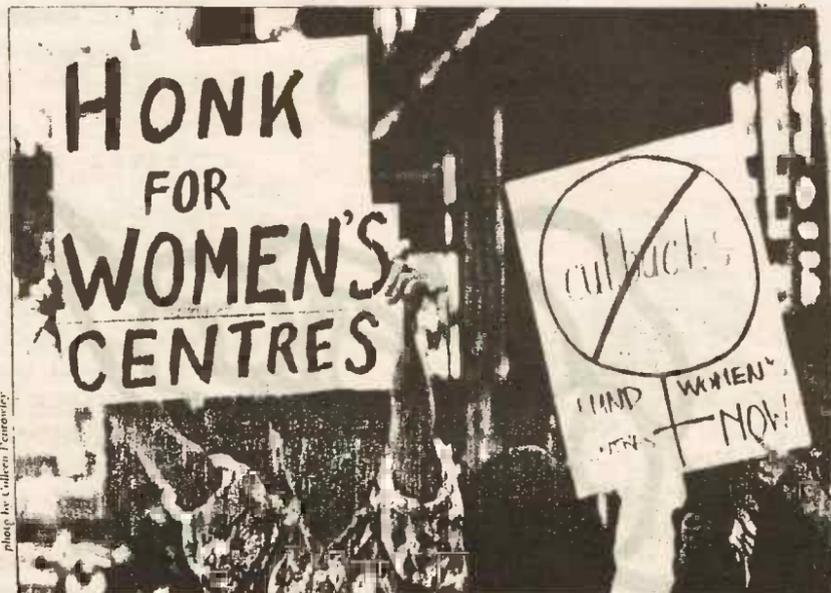
As Kinesis goes to press national organizations are still awaiting confirmation of meeting times with Weiner, who refused a request to meet with them collectively.

But he did meet with the women's centres. Bowing to public pressure, Weiner met on April 9 in Ottawa with Urgent Secretariat d'Etat, the Quebec women's centre ad-hoc coalition, and again on April 11 in Montreal with invited representatives from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, BC and the Yukon. The meetings were as different as cheese and chalk--or were they?

Weiner did most of the talking after receiving the Quebec women's demand for full reinstatement of funding. He turned them down flat, suggesting instead that they look to grants from the SecState programs for "doubly disadvantages women"--the government's term for women of colour, Aboriginal women and women with disabilities. The Quebec women left the meeting disappointed and angry at such an obvious attempt to play women off against each other.

The April 11 meeting unfolded differently. The 7 anglophone representatives had been selected by Judy Wright, director of the Women's Program. The night of the 10th, Wright and Danielle Remillard, Weiner's representative, encouraged the women to consider making the minister a proposal, rather than a direct demand for reinstatement. They also insisted that only women's centre funding could be discussed, saying that separate negotiations were taking place with the national organizations despite the fact that no such meetings had been held.

And the women did come up with a proposal for Weiner fund women's centres at 1988-89 levels for two more years during which time the federal government would negotiate a provincial/territorial take over of women centre funding.



Poetry

OLD HABITS

by Gert Beadle

I can't believe after all this time
I still wake up expecting to hear
someone in the kitchen
lighting the fire
releasing a rolling man fart
as a call for my rising
whether it is my father or
the one who came after
my reflexes are still tuned
to proving my willingness
to take instruction.
Half out of the bed the reality
of my enfranchised position
as a free woman strikes
deep into my consciousness
I turn the pillow over
to the cool side and
go back to sleep.

by arja lane

so we struggle
to get past
the bull-poop
the power-plays
the guilt-trips

to where life is true to the living
where what you want isn't a contest
where being wrong isn't a life-sentence
where love is more than a four letter word based on ifs
where humanity extends past man-made barriers

where we strive

to revive

the basics of living

where giving balances out the taking

so we'll survive
until the last
bull-pooing
power-playing
guilt-tripper
ceases to be



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Les Editions Communiqu'Elles

3585, rue St-Urbain Street
Montréal, Québec, Canada H2X 2N6
Tél: (514) 844-1761; Fax (514) 842-1067

Call for Submissions

Canadian Women and AIDS

Les Éditions Communiqu'Elles, a Montréal-based feminist publishing house, is now seeking submissions for an anthology to be entitled *Canadian Women and AIDS: Beyond the Statistics*. We will consider scholarly articles, research papers, fiction, poetry, personal testimonies and interviews from HIV-positive women and women with AIDS, caregivers, relatives, lovers and relatives of HIV-positive women and women with AIDS, researchers, social scientists, sex workers and activists. The Book will be divided into sections on research, reflection and action.

Topics can include but are not limited to:

- The politics of women and AIDS
- Differences between AIDS in women and in men
- Women, AIDS and IV drug use
- Living with AIDS
- Ethical issues involving AIDS in women
- Poverty: the economic effects of AIDS
- Safe sex for heterosexual and bisexual women and lesbians
- Caregiving
- Feminist issues
- Sex workers and the AIDS epidemic
- The epidemiology of women and AIDS in Canada and elsewhere
- Social and psychological issues
- Sex education
- Violence against women and power dimensions in relationships between the sexes in the battle against AIDS in women
- Young women and AIDS

The deadline for all submissions is September 1, 1990, but potential contributors are strongly advised to send material before that date. Contributions can be in either English or French; articles will be printed in their original language with a summary provided in the other language. Depending on funding, contributors will be paid. A national advisory committee will oversee the selection process.

The intended schedule will see the book launched on December 1, 1990, to coincide with International AIDS Day, which this year will focus on Women and AIDS.

Please forward submissions to Jacquie Manthorne, Editor, Les Éditions Communiqu'Elles, 3585 St-Urbain, Montréal, Québec, H2X 2N6, or fax them to (514) 842-1067. For further information, write to the same address or call (514) 844-1761.

What is lesbian community? How are we building it? Call for submissions to *New Canadian Anthology of Lesbian Short Stories*, to be published in 1991. Interested in a wide range of styles and approaches, powerful stories 1500-6000 words, that describe turning points in the formation of our lesbian identities and the building of our lesbian community. Payment for successful submissions.

Send submissions and queries with SASE (including sufficient Canadian postage or International reply coupon) to:

Lee Fleming, editor
gynergy books
Box 2023
Charlottetown, PEI
C1A 7N7

DEADLINE: September 30, 1990

Lee Fleming has edited "By Word of Mouth: Lesbians write the erotic" (gynergy books, 1989)

SUBMIT



CHALLENGES

In March over 250 women (and a few men) attended "Women of the 90s; Meeting the Challenges".

Cheryl Ball and Mary Cory are to be congratulated for their excellent efforts in organizing this very successful event. Guest speaker was Meg Luxton, Professor of Women's Studies, York University, and author of *More Than a Labour of Love*, and co-author of *Through the Kitchen Window*. The following are excerpts from Meg Luxton's address.

I hope to be provocative because I believe that we, in Canada, face a crisis in the way our society is organized. A crisis - so profound, so deep, that unless we begin to resolve it effectively now, we face a decade of degeneration and potential social chaos.

We need imagination and creativity. We need the courage to look critically at some of our most deeply cherished beliefs about the world. We need a new vision of what we want for our lives, and we need the daring to strive for it.

Canadian society, like all capitalistic societies, needs two basic types of labour to keep it going...the production of goods and services produced for exchange in the market - paid labour, and the production, and caring, of people - domestic labour.

But since the 19th century the way capitalist societies have been organized has been such that these two necessary labours are fundamentally in contradiction with each other. The requirements of paid work are incompatible with household and family life; the demands of the household are at odds with paid work.

In the early part of the 20th century this fundamental incompatibility between the two necessary labours was recognized and the proposed resolution was to insist that society should be organized around a division of labour where men engaged in paid work, women engaged in domestic work. The lynch pin

of this division of labour was marriage and "the family". Thus, at the level of ideals, ideologies - the best way to organize society = heterosexual nuclear family.

This ideology permeates all aspects of society from the way work is organized through income tax laws, building codes, holiday plans, laws re who can live together. The more people live differently, the greater penalties in practice.

Of course, people live in a variety of ways. Some come from different traditions,

some prefer different arrangements, some are unable to live that way. Among those who do conform we find that despite claims that the nuclear family is the best way to live, too often it is the site of violence. (97 women were murdered by their husbands in 1989; in the majority of child sexual assault cases, the children were molested by their fathers, brothers or other near relatives.)

Even for those who find deep happiness, joy and delight in families, what we have seen through the 20th century is that the nuclear family and the sexual division of labour is not successful in resolving, or even managing the tensions between the two spheres of work.

Firstly, many Canadians value different arrangements. Secondly, few families have ever been able to survive economically on the earnings of one man. Even in well-to-do families women are economically vulnerable.

The idea that women are supposed to be wives and mothers supported by their husbands has been used since the 19th century to justify excluding women from many paid jobs, particularly the most skilled and best paid. Young women are discouraged from obtaining the education and training needed to qualify for such jobs on the grounds that their main occupations will be that of wives and mothers. Jobs held primarily by women are systematically paid less than jobs which require the same or even less training but are held predominantly by men. This discrimination has been explained by claiming that women are secondary earners. Because of this discrimination, there is a major economic compulsion for women to get married (especially if they want to have children) so that they can have access to the (usually) better wages of a man.

For men, the fact that they are expected to be earners, providing the economic support for their wives and children means their primary orientation is to paid work. The assumption that men have wives to do domestic labour, especially child care, reinforces employers' assumptions that such workers can work eight hour shifts or longer, can be required to travel, to do overtime, to not need to take time off for the arrival of a new child or to care for sick children. For many men, their responsibility as earners justifies their reluctance to do domestic labour and reinforces their assumption that it is women's work.

As a consequence, for the majority of married people, the rhythms of daily life are profoundly different for women and men. For men, there is a clear hierarchy of determination in their daily life, with the demands of their paid work imposing quite strict limitations on the other activities in which they engage. Married women, whether they are employed or not, are usually at least in part economically dependent on their husbands. As a result, the demands of the husband's wage work often imposes serious constraints on their lives as well. For women, domestic responsibilities, and particularly child care, are at the top of the hierarchy of constraints. Women's capacity to take on paid work depends on their ability to make alternative care arrangements for their children. Furthermore, as women's incomes are often considerably lower than those of their husbands', married women often have to juggle the demands of their husbands paid work in ways that men rarely have to take account of their wives' employment.

In the last twenty years there has been a major shift in the way married women and men organize their family households, and in the way they divide their time and energy between domestic labour and wage labour. Increasingly women are entering paid labour and staying at their paid jobs even when their children are very young. As part of that change, women are challenging existing practices of job and wage discrimination in the paid labour force. At the same time, both the practical demands of their paid jobs and their perceptions of fairness are motivating women to



Over the last hundred years there have been significant changes in people's practices around: childbearing, child rearing, marriage and household formation. People are living longer. People are having fewer children and the number of years they spend in bearing and rearing children has decreased. In the first half of the 20th century most women spent 10-15 years bearing children compared to five years or less today. The number of years women spend actually living with at least one child has decreased from 30 to 20.

Marriage rates have declined. Rates of first marriage are the lowest they have ever been in Canada, they are lowest in Quebec which has one of the lowest rates in the world. However, the majority of people do marry, and while the numbers of women having children without marrying has steadily increased, there is still a very close association between having children and being married.

Divorce rates in Canada were sharply affected by the 1968 law reform making divorce easier. Throughout the 1970s divorce rates increased. They levelled off in the 1980s.

These changing patterns of longevity, marriage and childbearing mean that women spend a much smaller proportion of their total adult lives involved in childbearing and child care. As a result, there is now a greater diversity of practices. Some women complete childbearing in their twenties which means they finish active parenting in their forties; others begin in their late thirties or early forties so they don't finish active parenting until they are in their sixties. Whatever they do, women who have children now spend less than half of their adult lives actively parenting.

These changing patterns of childbearing and marriage are intimately related to the changing patterns of labour force participation for women. In the late 19th and early 20th century, a typical pattern was for young working class women on leaving school to seek paid employment until they were married. Married women worked (unpaid) on their farms, in family businesses, or in their own homes providing services for pay such as laundry, sewing, room and board. At various points throughout the 20th century when there have been labour shortages (such as during the wars) employers and governments have actively encouraged women to take on paid employment. Throughout the century, the constant and increasing need for cash combined with the decline in domestic income generating possibilities, have prompted increasing numbers of women to

move into the paid labour. By the mid 1980s, 56% of all women were employed in paid labour and women comprised 43% of all workers. More significantly, in 1987, 69.6% of women with children under 16, and 63% of women with children under 6 (compared with 49% in 1981) were in the paid labour force.

The economic imperatives for women's participation in the paid labour force are



clear. Even married women whose husbands earn enough to support them and their children are only a death or divorce away from poverty. In 1986 51.5% of married women with children under 6 had husbands earning less than \$30,000 per year. 39.6% of employed women are single, widowed or divorced and must support themselves and their dependents. 40% of female headed families are poor. One in five two-parent families with one income was below the poverty line in 1985. This is three times higher than when there are two wage earners.

As more and more women have entered paid employment, the fundamental incompatibility of domestic and paid labours has emerged as an increasingly intense social crisis.

Let's look at this crisis. The crisis is experienced personally by: the Red Queen syndrome, the constant pull between the two spheres of labour, many people living in ways that are not satisfying to them (i.e. being constantly tired, eating fast foods, missing school concerts, being cross/snappy or ill, having no time/energy to give friends support=guilt, sadness because of lost time with children).

This stress is inevitable when the full responsibility for children rests with one or two people, as children need 24 hour loving attention. Some children are not getting the care we wish for them because their responsible adults are absent, tired, stressed, ill.

The crisis is experienced socially by: women not being available for public life, trade unions, politics, etc., and massive financial and social costs re health and unhappiness.

The crisis is managed personally by: heroic juggling, or part time employment, cooperation of

husband and children, and not having the children you want.

The crisis is managed socially by: ad hoc solution (a good day care centre here, maternity leave in one workplace, parental leave in another). What solutions there are result from women organizing through trade unions, the women's movement, etc. to win: women's equal right to employment; maternity leave; parental leave; day care; etc.

But the crisis has taken on new dimensions in the 1980s, with a dramatic change in the dominant economic philosophy of the ruling parties.

From 1945 - 1980 the three major parties agreed that (1) the severity of depression would not be replicated if there was a minimal safety net, ie no guaranteed employment but U.I.C., hospitalization, education, health care, etc. (2) Keynesian economic theories assumed it is the role of the state to intervene in the economy through fiscal policies especially taxes and interest rates to provide a "healthy investment climate".

What we have in the 1980s (1979 Thatcher, 1980 Reagan, 1984 Mulroney) is "stagflation" ie high unemployment and high interest rates, which is a break with previous policies. Instead this is based on Freedman's theories - a neo-conservative economic philosophy - reduce government intervention, cut government spending, give the private sphere back to capital.

PROBLEM: This philosophy has nothing to say about how the incompatibility between paid work and domestic life might be resolved. It offers no insight and is unable to resolve this problem. In its more benign form it simply ignores the problem; many of its advocates urge a return to what is called "the traditional family" as a solution. But this has already been proved to be completely unsuccessful.

So, we are left with a crisis. The economic philosophy currently in vogue cannot resolve it.

continued pg 15



The Welfare Mother

Fully half of all low-income earners are single mothers or senior citizens

Update

CMHA - SOCIAL ACTION SERIES

Women and Mental Health is the new first publication in this new series published by the Canadian Mental Health Association focusing on social issues from the perspective of health promotion. The cost is \$2.00. A second issue, Immigrants and Mental Health, describes the challenges facing immigrants in Canada.

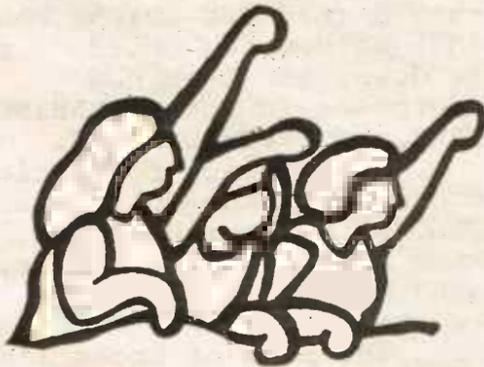
Future topics will include Child Care, Child Sexual Abuse, Family Violence, Housing, Child Rights and Welfare and others.

To order write CMHA, National Office, 2160 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M4S 2Z3, 1(416)484-7750.

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NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE

has announced a new program which benefits NAC - the new Bank of Montreal Mastercard. The Bank of Montreal contributes directly to NAC every time you use this card to make a purchase. This contribution ensures that NAC's independent voice for women grows stronger.



PENSION CHANGES

In June 1989 Parliament passed the Statute Law (Superannuation) Amendment which removed provisions that had suspended surviving spouses' pensions upon remarriage. The pension plans affected cover federal public servants, veterans, and members of the Armed Forces and the RCMP. Applications to reinstatement of benefits (payments are retroactive to June 29, 1989) may be made by contacting:

Public Service Pensions:
1-800-561-7930 toll free
Armed Forces Pensions:
1-800-267-0325 toll free
RCMP Pensions:
1-613-993-3492 Collect calls accepted.



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What we need is a new vision, one which takes seriously the challenge of resolving this contradiction, by reducing the incompatibility between the two essential parts of life.

We need to reverse the priorities so that caring for people, especially children, is primary.

We must establish as a principle that child care is not a personal hobby but a social responsibility.

We need to think critically about our assumptions about what is best, what is possible, and think of what we want, need, dream of... and look to other ways of organizing social life and work.

We must seriously consider advocating for a 6 hour work day.

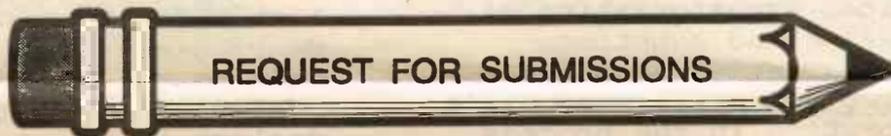
We need extended paid leaves for people who are actively parenting, and for people caring for sick and elderly persons.

We need to link school hours and work place hours.

We need child care centres 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Child care centres that are flexible and supportive to parents needs.

These are not solutions per se. Rather we need energetic public discussion of the issues so that we can develop policies rooted in what is possible, informed by our vision of what could be, and committed to creating a society where life and work are mutually supporting.

This is one of the challenges we face going into the 90s.



SHARING OUR EXPERIENCE

A BOOK OF LETTERS BY WOMEN OF ETHNIC AND RACIAL MINORITIES

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women will be putting together a book in which the voices of under-represented groups of women will be heard. It will be a collection of letters written specifically for this publication. We are looking for the living, personal accounts of women who, because of their ethnicity or racial origin, believe it important to share their thoughts and feelings.

We want to hear your description of the difficulties and pleasures of living and working in Canada. Whether you were born inside or outside Canada, we ask you to share your ideas and experiences with regard to racism, sexism, and discrimination in the paid labour force and in home life.

The deadline for letters will be October 30, 1990. If you are interested, let us know and we will send you more details. Contact:

Yuen-Ting Lai
Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Box 1541, Station B
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5R5
Telephone: (613) 995-2492
Fax: (613) 992-1715

Canadian
Advisory Council
on the Status of Women



Conseil
consultatif canadien
sur la situation de la femme



Summer Reading

by Margaret Phillips

Finally a few warm, sunny days and thoughts turn to summer - relaxing with a stack of good books. As women's writing expands and expands, there is a profusion of wonderful books to choose from.

I'll start by talking about books I've read recently that have delighted me. **SWANN: A MYSTERY** by Carol Shields is an intricate story - stories - of four - five very different

people linked together by their fascination with the obscure, deceased poet Mary Swann. Superbly crafted and plotted **SWANN** is undoubtedly Shields' best work to date, and it is destined to become a classic of Canadian literature.

I've just caught up with Joan Barfoot's **DANCING IN THE DARK** (PUBLISHED 1982) - an intriguing story of one woman's oppression and (unconventional) freedom. Barfoot's **ABRA** is in the top five of my all time favourite novels, and I'm looking forward to her newest book, **FAMILY NEWS**.

THE BOOK OF JESSICA: A Theatrical Transformation is the amazing and sometimes painful narrative of Linda Griffiths and Maria Campbell's collaboration in the process of developing and producing the award winning play **JESSICA**. In the beginning of the book Campbell says, "... I still feel like some Siamese twin with her. I want her to go away, to leave me alone, but we're by the river...and she's dipping her toes in the water and I hear myself saying Let's tell the story of what happened, if we do that then maybe we'll be free of the whole thing, heal everything." As readers we can be grateful that this story has been told.



Some of my friends will be pleasantly amused to learn that I am immersing myself in **STARHAWK'S** writing. Having for years resisted her - being of the mind set that one is either "spiritual" or "political" - it is a true delight to ponder on the possibility of integration of these dimensions which Starhawk advocates. Knowing I was going to meet Starhawk this summer, I decided I should read **THE SPIRAL DANCE** - and, of course, couldn't put it down, and I am now engrossed in both **DREAMING THE DARK** and **TRUTH OR DARE**.

I also want to mention two other wonderful books, **BELOVED** by Toni Morrison, and **MAMA DAY** by Gloria Naylor, both of whom I highly recommend.

The pile of books I'm setting aside for my summer retreat contains **FRIENDS OF MY YOUTH**, Alice Munro's newest collection of short stories. By preference I am a novel rather than short fiction reader, but as Munro's **DANCE OF THE HAPPY SHADES** is, in my view, the best collection of short stories ever published, I am eager to read any of Munro's new work. And I can't wait to get at **A NATURAL CURIOSITY** - some people declare it is even better than **THE RADIANT WAY** which I consider Margaret Drabble's best work.

CROSSING THE RIVER: Essays in Honour of Margaret Laurence is also on my summer reading list. In her introduction to these essays editor Kristjana Gunnars says "Margaret Laurence has been a founding mother of Canadian literature. She has given voice to the Manitoba prairie. She has raised the value of all sectors of society by showing the full humanity of the most neglected and forgotten among us. From her example we have learned the value of Canadian literature and culture; the importance of art history; the truth of fiction and poetry.... Margaret Laurence writes about ... people largely ignored for lack of interest; old women; single women in middle age; people on the fringes of society... She pushes us to see their full value as human beings ... Her most significant gift may be the reminder her work issues in all its force that we are fools to create outcasts. That we are misguided to think ourselves better than anyone else; that ambition, wealth, power, status are things that entirely miss the point. True value is somewhere else, and her journey is a slow discovery of where that 'somewhere else' is".



Graphic: International Women's Tri Centre

The list of wonderful books is endless and I'll just mention some of the newer paperback fiction (as summertime is fiction reading time). **FRAGMENTS I SAVE FROM THE FIRE** by Mary Anne Ashley, **FAMILY NEWS** by Joan Barfoot, **BINGO** by Rita Mae Brown, **WAVERLY PLACE** by Susan Brownmiller, **THE VICTORY OF GERALDINE GULL** by Joan Clark, **A NOISE FROM THE WOODSHED** by Mary Dorcey, **INK AND STRAWBERRIES; An Anthology of Quebec Women's Fiction** edited by Beverly Daurio & Louise v. Flotow, **TRACKS** by Louise Erdrick, **HOME IS THE HEART** by Roberta Gibson, **CLICKING STONES** by Nancy Taylor Glenn, **ZERO AVENUE** by Leona Gom, **STRANGER THAN FISH** by J.E. Hardy, **CHARADES** by Janet Turner Hospital, **VOYAGES OUT 1: Lesbian Short Fiction** by Paula Martinac & Carla Thomas, **AFTER THE FIRE** by Jane Rule, **THE FABLESINGER** by Judith Woolcock Colombo;

and for mystery fans:

'F' IS FOR FUGITIVE by Sue Grafton, **A LITTLE CLASS ON MURDER** by Carolyn G. Hart, **DO COLLAR MURDERS** by Barbara Wilson.

In the next issue we'll focus on new non-fiction work. We'd also like to hear from you about your favourite books. For now, **HAPPY SUMMER** and **HAPPY READING**.

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