



AWARE



NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 6 RESOURCE CENTRE 863-6221/6222 DECEMBER, 1985



MERRY CHRISTMAS

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER	FILM: "Being Male" - Noon and 7 pm showings - at Centre
27th Wed	FRIDAY LUNCHES: 12 to 2 - Bring your lunch, enjoy conversation and friends - coffee/tea/sweets provided - at Centre
29th Fri	
DECEMBER	FILM: "The Tender Tale of Cinderella Penguin" - (amusing and thought provoking) - Noon and 2 pm showings - at Centre
4th Wed	FRIDAY LUNCHES: 12 to 2 - at Centre
6th Fri	
6,7,8th	CONFERENCE at Tatamagouche on Women's programs - if interested, contact Centre at 863-6222/6221
10th Tues	"SPEAKING OUR PEACE:" Film on peace from Studio D, women's section of NFB and makers of "Not a Love Story"- 8:00 pm at St. James United Church
13th Fri	CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE: at Mall - 10:00 to 4:00 - sponsored by Antigonish Women's Association - please support by bringing baked good (preferably to Centre before 4 Thurs)
13th Fri	FRIDAY LUNCHES: 12 to 2 - at Centre
14th Sat	SOBERING THOUGHTS ON CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANCE: Slide show, pamphlets, and information on social justice - 2:00 to 4:00 at Centre
17th Tue	WINE AND CHEESE PARTY! Celebrating women and Christmas - "End of the Decade" discussion and celebration - come with your ideas, concerns, wine and cheese - 7:00 to 10:00
20th Fri	SPECIAL CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE AND FRIDAY LUNCH at Centre - Come and enjoy the Christmas spirit - 9:00 to 3:00
24th Tue	OXFAM CHRISTMAS CAROLING for South Africa - Mall - 3:00
December 23rd to January 2	the Women's Resource Centre will be closed for the holidays - for information call Star 863-2723 or Vicki 863-6915
UPCOMING in January:	Films, lectures, community advocacy program, and Workshop on Pornography
ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE 315 Main Street 863-6222/6221	

WORKSHOP

On Tuesday, September 4th, the AGIR Branch of the RNANS sponsored a day-long workshop on the Sexual Abuse of Children. The three speakers who addressed this topic were Deborah Chansonneuve, Program Manager of the Naomi Society and former researcher in London, Ontario; Anne Bigelow from the Psychology Department at St. F.X. University; and Beverly D'Entremont, Director of the Child Abuse Registry in Halifax.

incest

The morning session, conducted by Deborah Chansonneuve, focussed on the topic of incest and began with an overview and critique of research to date, including theories in biology, psychology and sociology. She explained how emotional responses to the subject of incest have resulted in defensive reactions, such as denial, distancing or blaming on the part of researchers themselves. She gave examples from various writings, beginning with Freud in 1897 to contemporary works, where these reactions have influenced the analysis of the researcher.

The most famous example of denial of the reality of incest occurred in the work of Freud when he chose not to believe "that perverted acts against children were so general", and instead, placed the reports of sexual abuse, from his women patients, in the realm of fantasy.

In the second part of her session, three case studies of incest victims, she had worked with in Ontario, were presented, as well as current models for therapy. These models included the Family Systems Analysis, the Psychiatric Model; the Community Worker's Model, and the Feminist Model. She also presented a diagnostic and treatment model she had developed in the course of her work, which charted the cycle of response by victims of abuse.

film series

The afternoon session was opened by Anne Bigelow, who introduced a series of films, recently developed by the National Film Board, called "Feeling Yes, Feeling No." This series of films is part of a sexual assault prevention program for young children and has been designed to give children the knowledge they need to protect themselves from abuse by strangers, family members, or other trusted persons.

The first film, for parents and professionals, introduced the topic and explained the purpose of the program. The other three films are designed for use by children and their teachers.

stats

The workshop was concluded by Beverly D'Entremont, from Halifax, who cited statistical information from the Child Abuse Registrar since 1980. According to this information, there has been a 102% increase in the number of reported cases of child abuse in the past year, 177% increase in the past two years, and a 480% increase since 1980. Of the 180 cases of abuse reported, 111 were of child sexual abuse, and of these: 29% were 5 years of age or less; 56% were incest cases; 26% were male children.

The nursing association and the staff of St. Martha's Hospital should be commended for their initiative and awareness regarding the problem of child abuse and its prevention.



Because of the cost of postage, the newsletter will become a quarterly being sent in December, March, June and September, with a Calendar of Events being sent out once a month.



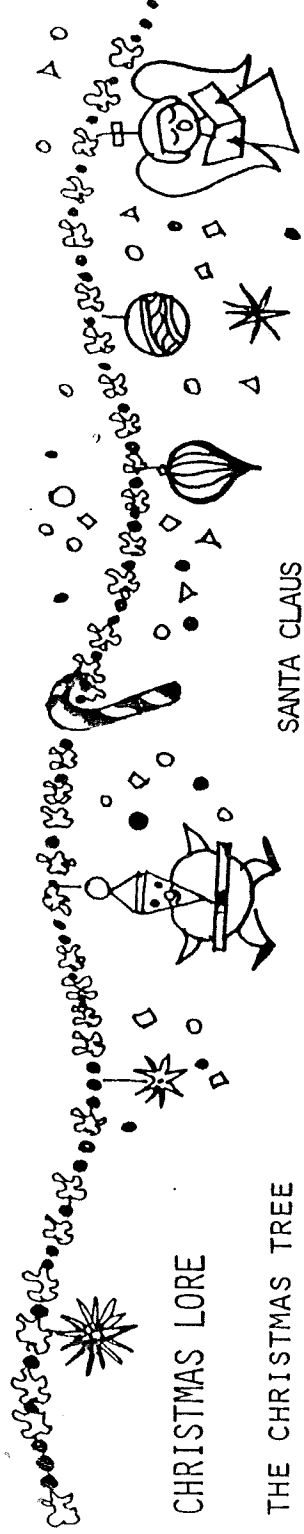
NAOMI SOCIETY - New and used Christmas gifts needed. Also, household items such as furniture, dishes, bed linen, playpen and cribs, for our safe house and needy clients.



Sincere thanks to the members of the AWA and the staff of the Women's Resource Centre, for their generous contributions to our safe house and to women in need.

- The Naomi Society for Battered Women





CHRISTMAS LORE

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

The evergreen tree is an ancient symbol of eternal life, and the practice of bringing a fir tree inside the house in winter dates back to pagan Germany. But the festive Christmas tree originated in medieval European dramas about Adam and Eve, traditionally staged on December 24. To indicate that the play was set in the Garden of Eden, the central prop was a fir tree adorned with apples. In time, the Paradise tree, as it was called, became a household tradition in Germany, where the first decorated Christmas tree on record was noted in 1605.

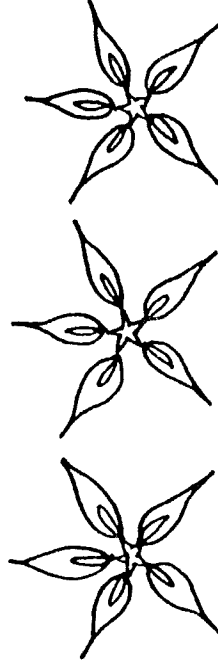
The festive holiday tree was considered just a charming German custom until 1841, when Queen Victoria and her German husband, Prince Albert, set up a Christmas tree for their young children at Windsor Castle. The royal tree proved to be a trendsetter; almost overnight, the German novelty blossomed into a widespread Christmas fashion.

DECORATIONS

The Romans decked their homes with evergreens and flowers during their December holidays, and evergreens also played key roles in the winter pagan ceremonies of northern Europeans. Mistletoe, with its thick evergreen leaves, yellowish flowers and white berries, was sacred to the Druids of ancient Britain and Gaul, who believed the parasitic plant contained magical powers that could cure diseases and bring about peace. So, if two foes met beneath a sprig of mistletoe, they would discard their arms and exchange a kiss of friendship.

As a home decoration, wreaths date back to the early 19th century. But they too, originated in antiquity; pre-Christian Romans, for instance, bestowed wreaths, or crowns, of honor upon their heroes. Whereas Roman wreaths were usually made of laurel, Christmas wreaths commonly feature holly, whose evergreen leaves, according to one legend, made up Christ's crown of thorns.

The poinsetta, the pre-eminent Christmas houseplant, was named after Joel R. Poinsett, United States ambassador to Mexico, who brought back the plant to his home in South Carolina in 1829. In Mexico, the red and green plant is called the Flower of the Holy Night. It is said to have come into being on Christmas Eve, when a poor child who had no gift to place beside the creche in his local church knelt outside and prayed. Suddenly, a plant with red leaves grew where he had knelt, and the child placed the miraculous plant beside the creche.



SANTA CLAUS

Santa Claus' family tree is firmly rooted in 4th century Asia Minor, where an archbishop named Nicholas was credited with restoring life to three small boys. Appropriately, the archbishop became one of the patron saints of children.

In the Netherlands, Sinterklaas, as St. Nicholas was colloquially called, brought children gifts on December 5, the eve of his feast day. Youngsters filled their wooden shoes with straw for the saint's white horse, anticipating toys and candy in return.

Early Dutch settlers brough Sinterklaas to the New World, where his named was altered by the English-speaking inhabitants to Santa Claus. Santa's family tree also includes other settlers' good-natured Christmas figures from Europe, such as Kris Kringle and Father Christmas.

The lovable roly-poly Santa Claus who now reigns supreme as the secular embodiment of the spirit of Christmas emerged in 1822, when Clement Clarke Moore, a New York theologian, wrote a poem for his children called "A Visit From St. Nicholas." The poem, which is now better known as "The Night Before Christmas", established Santa Claus as a gift-giver from the North Pole, who travels the world on Christmas Eve in an airborne sleigh drawn by fabulous reindeer. Santa's memorable appearance was determined in the 1860s by Thomas Nast, the American cartoonist who drew the "jolly old elf" in a fur-trimmed suit and hat - an outfit he's worn ever since.

BOXING DAY

A medieval holiday practice was to distribute money collected in parish alms boxes to the poor on the day after Christmas - hence December 26 came to be known as Boxing Day.

THE CHRISTMAS CARD

In 1843, Sir Henry Cole, who became the first director of London's Victoria and Albert Museum, commissioned John Calcott Horsely to design a card specifically for Christmas. The artist's creation, which historians usually agree is the first of its kind, had three panels: the central illustration portrayed a family toasting the season with glasses of wine (a scene that raised the hackles of the Temperance Movement); each side panel depicted an act of generosity - clothing the poor and feeding the hungry. The inscription became a classic holiday greeting. "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You." The thousand hand-colored cards sold for one shilling each. In Canada alone, an estimated 220 million Christmas cards are sold annually.

- from the December, 1985 issue
of Chatelaine.

BEHIND THE VEIL

BEHIND THE VEIL was shown on September 16th at St. F.X. University. The NFB film has been described variously by the critics, official and unofficial (and by some who never saw the movie), as insightful, informative, full of feminist rhetoric, cluttered, inspiring, anti-church, warm and humorous, subjective -- and so the story goes! That the movie should have inspired such praise and blame simultaneously serves to highlight the deep divisions in the church and in society at large concerning equal rights for women.

That BEHIND THE VEIL should have a definite feminist bent should not surprise any informed woman or man. It was produced by Studio D, the Woman's unit of National Film Board, and, furthermore, the declared goal of the film is to demonstrate that women who once held such powerful influence in the church should once again be restored to their rightful place of equality in that church. A controversial issue, if you will, but the studio which produced movies such as NOT A LOVE STORY, and IF YOU LOVE THIS PLANET, was never daunted by controversy. True to its usual modus operandi, Studio D has invested an enormous amount of research in this film. Margaret Westcott spent four years researching the subject matter, and her quest for the true history of women in religious life took her to a cloistered Benedictine monastery in northern Quebec, a black tenement in Chicago, a Trappist monastery in Rome, a burial ground in Ireland. In her travels, especially through Ireland, she studied tapes, tries, manuscripts, books, paintings, anything and everything that could offer a clue to the history of women in the church in early times. What emerges is a record of women in christianity from early Celtic times down to and including the contemporary American activist Roman Catholic nuns. It goes without saying that so comprehensive a coverage must of necessity be lacking in depth. However, when one takes into consideration that the producer was attempting to fit 7,000 years of history into a two-hour movie, such criticism seems almost churlish.

nuns' history

In this presentation we are treated to the kaleidoscope of nuns' history from the time of the Desert Mothers, through the period of the medieval female martyrs, the period of the learned abbesses such as Brigid, Bishop of Kildare and Hildegard of Bingen, who presided over the so-called double monasteries. Brigid was a Druid who later became a nun.

Irish historical documents record her achievements which show Brigid as the protectress of the rights of women and poor farmers. Her monasteries served as centers of learning for female and male religious, and she was abbess of some 13,000 nuns. Hildegard of Bingen was perhaps the greatest religious woman of all time. The film refers to her as one of history's forgotten geniuses. She was an accomplished mineralogist, botanist, musician, poet, and she has been credited with discovering the basis for the functioning of the human central nervous system. Hildegard has also been called "the greatest influence of all female mystics and philosophers."

There appears to be some evidence that there was even a female pope in the middle of the 9th century -- the notorious Pope Joan, known in history as John VIII, for obvious reasons. We can only hope that the story is apocryphal, for otherwise we are forced to conclude that the only female pope was not very bright. She should have known that while history allows chaps like the Borgias and some other male popes their little indiscretions, a female pope must never deviate from the strictest protocol!

power change

The central theme of this film is the change from a position of respect and power and influence on the part of nuns in the church in early times, through the lessening of that influence, thanks to Aristotelian misogyny as adopted and practised by Aquinas and other so-called Church Fathers. Until in recent times, we find the nuns, although twice as numerous as the churchmen, completely dominated by the males in the church. The ultimate irony which emerges from this survey is that women who once wielded such power in the church came to be so dominated as to have the smallest and most intimate details of their lives in community dictated by male celibates. And no one can dispute that fact. In this area BEHIND THE VEIL gives is a glimpse of authentic history.

As the film explores the goddess religion of ancient Ireland, we are treated to a breathtakingly beautiful panorama of the Irish countryside and seascapes. This exploration is accompanied very fittingly by the recitation of the Irish historian, Sister Margaret McCurtin of Dublin. This section I consider to be the high point of the film. One cannot help but wonder why there is so little Canadian content in a film emanating from the National Film Board. Why did Westcott confine herself to

Behind the Veil (cont'd)

showing only the two opposite poles of the life of religious women today; namely, the traditional cloistered life of the Benedictine nuns in Quebec and Rome, and the activist grass roots American nuns in Chicago. While I find myself in agreement with what the contemporary American sisters have to say, I wonder why contemporary Canadian sisters were not interviewed. While no one can quarrel with these articulate, intelligent and devoted women, I am positive that equally impressive Canadian sisters could have been available for interviews.

I wonder, too, why the camera constantly pans back to the cloistered community in Quebec. To my mind this leaves the viewer with a completely distorted picture of the contemporary religious woman in Canada. It gives the impression that Canadian sisters are still very much in the traditional mode, when nothing could be further from the truth.

Even allowing for these few lapses, BEHIND THE VEIL is an astounding achievement. Although I do not find that it really gets "behind the veil", this film is an infinite improvement over anything yet produced purporting to give an account of religious life. Certainly it gives to viewers a unique perspective of the role and life of religious women in the church across the centuries. And in so doing, it accomplishes what it set out to do; namely, to point up the tremendous influence of religious women in history and in the contemporary church and social scene.

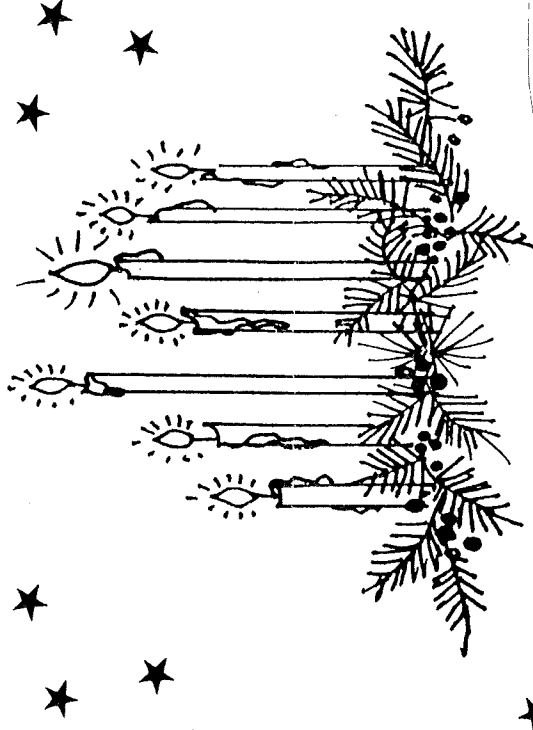


The Antigonish Women's Association is for ALL women of Antigonish Town and County. The Association enables women of all ages, backgrounds, needs and strengths to work with each other on common goals and interests, to share knowledge and experience, to help each other, work for change, celebrate and learn about our lives.

The A.W.A. sponsors the Women's Resource Centre (315 Main Street, above the Celtic Music Store, next to the Post Office). The Centre provides a drop-in centre, meeting space, informal counselling, books, and programs. Call 863-6221/6222.

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS

"Twinkles" Christmas tree ornaments are on sale every Sunday at the Flea Market, until December 22nd. All proceeds go to the Antigonish Women's Association. These ornaments are on display at the Resource Centre.



FRIDAY LUNCHES

Since we began the Friday lunches, numbers have grown and Fridays are becoming busy and exciting at the Centre. Women are enjoying the opportunity to relax with other women and share thoughts, concerns and laughter.

The Friday lunches will be part of an ongoing program at the Centre, and we are hoping that their popularity will spread as more and more women hear about them. Coffee, tea and cookies are supplied by the Centre; so bring your sandwich, salad or soup and come along!



TAPES

A collection of tapes are now available at the Women's Resource Centre. Topics range from stress management, assertiveness training to general topics of interest to women. Tapes may be borrowed for a two-week period.

BOOK SALE

The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre has opened a used Book Shelf. Books will be sold at 50% of the cover price. A wide selection of books are available, many of them are nearly new and could be given as gifts. Anyone wishing to buy or donate books should visit the Centre.

PEACE



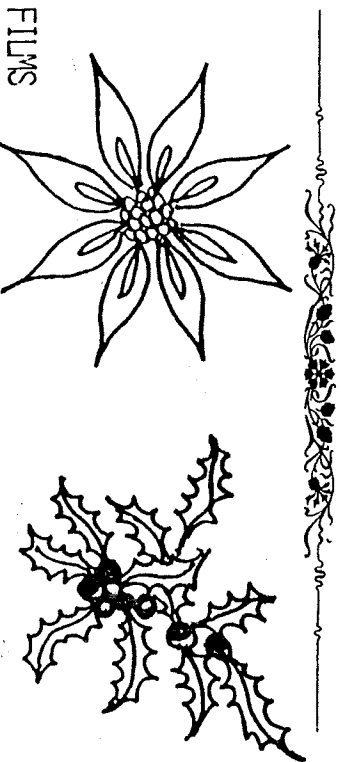
"If peace is subversive, in God's name what is war? Now is the time to speak out in terms of peace." So says Margaret Laurence, acclaimed author in the NFB film "Speaking Our Peace." The film focusses on women, peace and power.

The filmmakers Terri Nash and Bonnie Sherr Klein are well known in international circles for their excellent work. Both Nash and Klein work with Studio D which is part of the National Film Board of Canada. Studio D was founded in 1974 to produce films by and for women. Terri Nash is best known for her direction of the 1983 Academy Award winner "If You Love This Planet." Among Bonnie Sherr Klein's accolades is "Not A Love Story: A Film About Pornography", and "Patricia's Moving Picture", about one woman's mid-life crisis.

"Speaking Our Peace" is based on the conviction that women's skills and experiences as peacemakers, within families and communities, must be applied to the global arena where politics and power daily threaten our existence. The one-hour documentary is filmed in Canada, Britain and the U.S.S.R. Featured in the film are Dr. Rosalie Bertell, Marion Dewar, Muriel Duckworth, Ursula Franklin, Margaret Laurence and other women passionately committed to social justice and world peace.

The film is a beautiful tapestry of women working together in their homes, in their communities and in the world: women working together to create a new social order where peace and harmony will replace war and fear.

"Speaking Our Peace" will be shown on Tuesday, December 10, 1985, at St. James United Church, beginning at 8 p.m. The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre will host the event and everyone is welcome.



FILMS

Films are being offered at the Women's Resource Centre on a bi-weekly basis. The films are chosen to meet the interests of the general public. Topics have included wife battering, aging and family relations. Anyone wishing to suggest a certain film or request a film on a specific topic can do so by calling the Resource Centre at 863-6221.

To ensure the success of the film series, it would be very helpful to the staff at the Resource Centre to receive your input on film selection. Thank you.

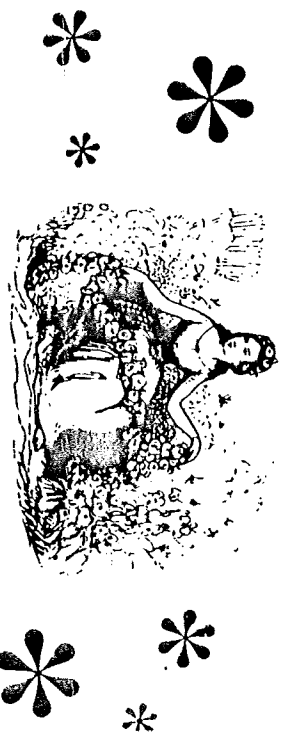


FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY CLINICS OF NOVA SCOTIA

The Federation of Community Clinics of Nova Scotia was formed at a meeting in Havre Boucher on November 2, 1985. A memorandum of association and by-laws were adopted at this meeting. Representatives from community clinics and health associations in Mblgrave, L'Ardoise, Bras D'Or, Havre Boucher, Isaac's Harbour, Halifax and Hants County attended the meeting.

The Federation is set up to promote and support the work of community clinics in Nova Scotia. A community clinic is a non-profit autonomous organization formed to address the health needs of a community. The Federation will encourage a close working relationship among the various clinics in the Province and will support legislative changes and financial programmes to establish new clinics.

At the November 2 meeting, Frances Chisholm of Havre Boucher was elected interim chairperson of the Federation. Further information regarding the Federation of Community Clinics of Nova Scotia can be obtained by writing the Federation at 2165 Göttingen St., Halifax, N.S. B3K 3B5



VAGINAL/CERVICAL WORKSHOP

A very successful workshop was held at the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre on October 26, 1985. Two representatives from the Vancouver Women's Health Collective discussed vaginal/cervical health with women from the area.

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective was formed to enable women to learn and take control of their health and their bodies. During the evening many of the myths surrounding cervical health were discussed openly with the audience. The importance of diet in cervical health was also stressed. It was suggested that with proper diet and exercise, women should not have to resort to medication or surgery to improve their health. They maintained that pap smears and pelvic examinations can be done without a doctor present. By knowing your cervix and recognizing signs of ill health, the necessity for surgery can be reduced when women are fully cognizant with vaginal health.

Samples of the kit, which was distributed during the evening, may be borrowed at the Resource Centre. The kit contains information on yeast infections, various forms of vaginitis, PID and sexually transmitted diseases, as well as information on self-examination.



"While the provisions for equality among women and men entrenched in the Charter of Rights and Freedom may appear revolutionary at first glance, it will be left up to women of this country to really make any significant change."

So said Mary Clancy, Barrister and Lecturer from Halifax, who spoke in October in Antigonish as a guest of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, on the topic "Women and the Charter - Will It Make A Difference?"

The lecture, held at the John Paul Centre on Main Street, attracted a diverse audience of women from many different backgrounds and age groups. Mary Clancy discussed the implications of the Charter, and the practical measures which must be taken before the effect of the Charter on women and other minority groups could really be felt.

"While the Charter is now law," said Ms. Clancy, "no real effect will be felt until the due process of law establishes basic precedents which will ensure that equality becomes an entrenched principle of our judicial system."

charter

The lecture focussed on the impact of the Charter on minority rights, and challenged women to take a positive role in bringing incidents of sexual discrimination to the attention of the courts. "The only way to effect change," said Mary Clancy, "is to ensure that these incidents are treated as matters of law, so that judges can exercise their authority on the merits of each case, rather than simply on existing social customs."

Section 15 and 28 of the Charter became law on April 17, 1985. With the passage of these sections, women and minority groups are now guaranteed equality in all aspects of Canadian society. According to Mary Clancy, "Women today earn less than 68¢ for every \$1.00 that a man earns; in a recessive economy this drops even lower." Discrimination of this magnitude must be addressed by the courts before full equality becomes a reality in Canada. Ms. Clancy stated "that legal costs for such cases are prohibitive often ranging in the \$25,000 bracket." Women and minority groups do not have the financial wherewithall to embark on a long legal battle. A legal education and action fund, L.E.A.F., has been established in Toronto to provide financial assistance to women

in cases of discrimination. Since April 17, 1985, L.E.A.F. has received approximately 50 cases to review.

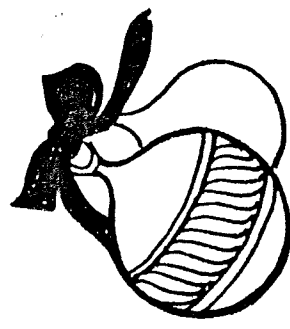
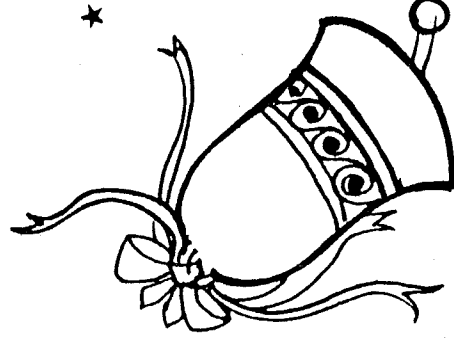
open line

The day following the lecture, Mary Clancy appeared on the CJFX open line program Open Mike, and amplified her position by stating that many of the situations in which women find themselves result from the legal system itself. "The system," she says, "is founded upon precedents and there is very little precedent in Canadian jurisprudence to support the equality of women. Examples of discrimination range from unreasonable divorce settlements and unfair labour practices to such cases of young girls being denied membership on hockey teams and other male dominated organizations.

In addition to taking cases to court, other forms of positive action which can be taken by women, according to Ms. Clancy, include writing to political representatives, appealing to the provincial Human Rights Commission and making use of support groups such as the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre. "It is essential," she said, "to keep active and keep communicating."



VOLLEYBALL: 7 - 9 p.m., Mondays
St. Andrew Junior High
Lochaber Road



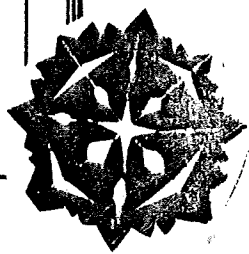
NEEDED: Resource Machine for
Coffeee Machine.



FOR SALE: Electric Wheelchair
in mint A-1 condition.
For more information call:
Lucy, 863-1537



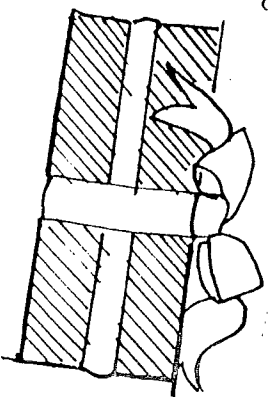
PROFILE ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP



NAME	
ADDRESS	
POSTAL CODE	
PHONE	
INTERESTS:	
ISSUES OR AREAS OF CONCERN:	
SKILLS:	
WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TIME TO THE AWAS?	
IF SO, HOW MUCH?	
AND IN WHAT AREAS?	
WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TIME TO THE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE?	
IF SO, HOW MUCH?	
AND IN WHAT AREAS?	
ANY OTHER COMMENTS	

Volunteers needed as child-care workers at the Rural Women's Conference in January. Volunteers are required for Friday and Saturday evening, and Sunday morning. Experienced men considered. Coffee and cookies available.

If anyone would like hand knitted please articles for Christmas Star at the Women's Resource Centre at 863-6221.



REAL WOMEN

REAL Women continue to threaten the Secretary of State Women's Program. Recently, they increased their lobbying strategies in an attempt to disbanden the Women's Program.

Last Spring, REAL Women applied for Secretary of State funding - however, they were refused funding because their philosophy was not in keeping with the spirit of the Women's Program and the Charter of Rights and Freedom.

The Honourable Brian Mulroney
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister:

I fully support the Women's Program, Secretary of State, and its mandate to promote the increased participation of women in all aspects of Canadian society and increase the capacity and effectiveness of women's organizations and groups working to improve the status of women.

Sincerely,

Member of Parliament
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Member:

I fully support the Women's Program, Secretary of State, and its mandate to promote the increased participation of women in all aspects of Canadian society and increase the capacity and effectiveness of women's organizations and groups working to improve the status of women.

Sincerely,

If you are concerned about the continuous funding of the Women's Program, please sign and mail the above letters and write to the Secretary of State and display your support for the continuation of the Women's Program.

Elaine Power
Box 883
St. F.X. University
Antigonish, N.S.
BOH 1N0