



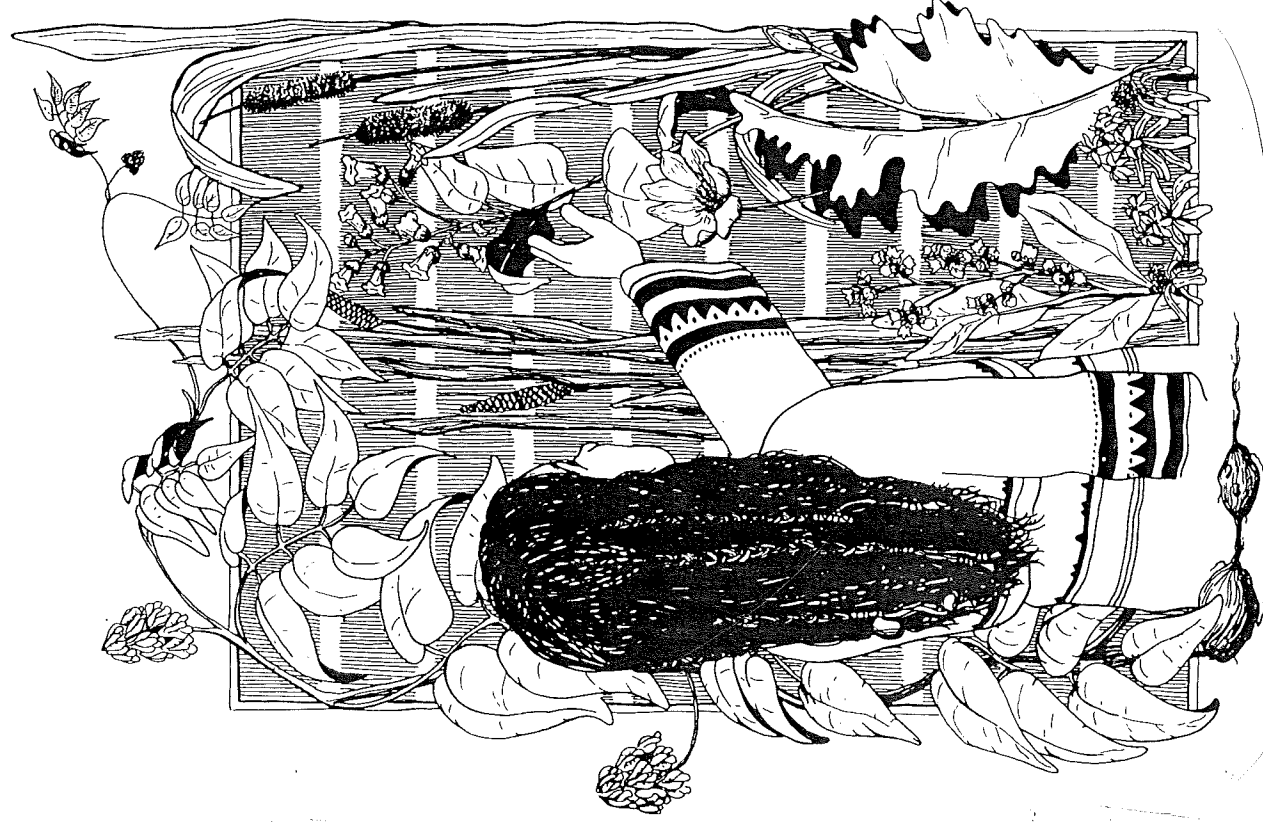
AWARE



NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY ANTI-INDIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

204B KIRK PLACE, 219 MAIN STREET, PHONE 863-6221 FALL 1990

NKWE * J I * J



SISTERS

In this issue, we are including articles which explore the theme of native women. Watching the events unfold at Oka, Kahnasatake, and Kanewake this summer was a disturbing reminder of the struggles faced by all native peoples for aboriginal rights. There was a noticeable strong presence of women in some of the scenes shown on television. We know that the media did not tell us the whole story and now, more than ever, we are more aware of the need for us as non-native women to be informed about native culture and the issues of importance to native women.

On a local level, those of us attending our last Annual General Meeting were moved by the presentations of our guest speakers, four Micmac women who gave heartfelt expressions to the spiritual strength that they find in their traditions and to their concerns for native sovereignty.

We do not pretend to speak for native women. It is only our hope that in the process of educating ourselves we can begin to change the injustice and discrimination inherent in white imperialist attitudes and government policies.

Grandmothers, Mothers, and Daughters

BY SHIRLEY O'CONNOR, PATRICIA MONTURE AND NORISSA O'CONNOR

As the leaders and future leaders of the Ontario Native Women's Association, we often question and discuss what the role of the association is and what the future for First Nation's women in Ontario is. As traditional women, we understand the role of the association to be the same as our roles as women, mothers and grandmothers. This is what we strive to have the association reflect. Women are warm, loving, and caring. We are the first teachers.

I have had the unique opportunity to speak to two women, Shirley, who is a mother and a grandmother, and one of her daughters, Norissa. As I spoke to them both, I realized they both repeated many times "as I have come to understand this." I also realized that many of the Elders and traditional people I have heard speak, speak in this way. There is no force or persuasion involved. I think this is very important to understand if you want to understand what traditional people are all about.

It is also important for you to know that I have put the spoken words of both Shirley and Norissa into my own in the process of writing this down. Any inaccuracy or vagueness must become my responsibility as the one who has woven this article together. The other explanatory note I wish to add is that the use of the term 'First Nations' is my own personal choice. It is a political choice which reminds the people who came to this country and their descendants of a truth in history that is often forgotten. *This is our home and we are the original people of this land.* Many times when Norissa and Shirley spoke they used the word 'Indian.' I have changed their language into a consistent form. For me, when I was growing up 'Indian' is the word I learned to describe who I was. Since then I have come to understand that it is a word which has a strict legal meaning. I have, therefore, decided to try to use 'Indian' only in that legal way. This is much easier to accomplish

in my writing than it is in my speaking. My use of First Nations includes all of the original people of this land. This includes the Metis people. As I have come to understand it, the Metis are the descendants of the people who made a stand in the Riel Rebellion in Manitoba. I do not believe a useful definition of Metis is anyone who is a 'half-breed.' All First Nation's people of mixed blood come from specific nations, even though sometimes through adoption and assimilation they have lost this knowledge. I believe that all individuals who have become lost to their First Nations, still maintain a rightful place in that nation.

SHIRLEY: In order to ensure the survival of First Nation's women, and all people for that matter, we must ensure that we are helping Mother Earth heal. There are two ways we can accomplish this. We can work to ensure that First Nation's voices will be included in the decision-making processes in this province and this country. We also believe that we can only ensure our futures by understanding our own history.

Life today is so confusing. Many of us feel overwhelming helplessness. This is reflected in high suicide rates, alcohol and drug abuse, and over-incarceration. When an individual is able to understand from where we came, from proud and strong people, it is not so bad anymore. When we look at our present through our history, then we can see a future that is good.

There are many points to be made. It is like looking at a puzzle and we as First Nations must begin to understand how the puzzle goes together. There are issues of justice, health, land, and pollution. All the things in the air that are effecting all living things. Slowly our bodies, our minds and our spirits are being poisoned. We cannot sit back and wait for the government to wake up. Everywhere we look there is depletion and crisis. A good ex-

ample is all the fish that used to live in the waters around Kenora. The sturgeon are now gone. White people panic in the face of crisis. They worry. But Indian people are strong. We have faced so much oppression and so many efforts to assimilate us.

As 'Indians' we must learn to respect ourselves and each other. We have a very important job to do and that is to teach. We can teach how all nations must begin to work together. This is where the future of the Ontario Native Women's Association rests.

NORISSA: We must go back to the grassroots. This is where you get strength and knowledge. There is such an emptiness inside when you are without your traditions. How can you help someone else when you are not yourself whole? Traditions and wholeness just have to be done.



Women are the strong ones. We are strong because we are the givers of life. You learn from your Elders—your aunts and uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers. That is where to go looking for your answers. That is where our youth will again find their answers and their strength.

SHIRLEY: Being a grandmother now means that I have a second chance to teach. As a child I was brought up in a good way. If we think about our children, we know that they test us. They do not always listen to us. And that is the way they are meant to be. We tell a toddler whose job is to explore, "don't touch!" But, they touch anyway. We tell our teenage women, "don't go out with that boy!" But they go anyway. We always challenge life no matter how old we get. It is only when you have your own children that it begins to make sense. We then do what our mothers and grandmothers taught us to do. Life repeats itself.

The hardest thing to do in life is to let go of your own children. When you become a grandmother, you then understand you have a second chance. This is why grandmothers are always accused of spoiling. Grandmothers have learned a kind way because they have learned to let go. They are no longer responsible for the disciplining of those children in the same way as a mother is.

Even as grandmothers, we never stop learning. We go to our Elders and to our daughters and to our grandchildren. We see that there is continuous teaching all around us. We know that you can learn important lessons from the smallest living thing to the most vicious human being or animal.

The means to survival is to find the positive pieces of the puzzle and improve. Without that insight you become bitter. We must always be reminded to look for the beauty in yourself. If you cannot see that, then you will not be able to see the beauty around you.

It is necessary to share your experience to be able to find the beauty in yourself and in others. This is where we come back to the Ontario Native Women's Association. The association is one way we are able to share with each other. ONWA is like family to me. Each child in a family is different. We each have different gifts. Every woman who is involved with ONWA, I can learn from.

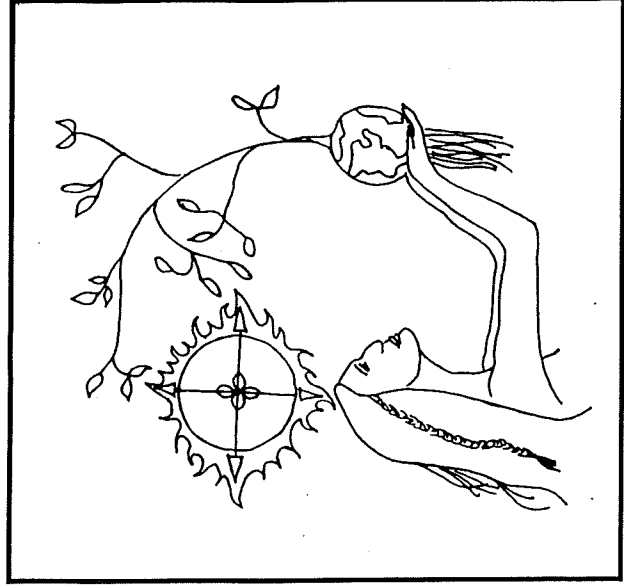
The Ontario Native Women's Association is kept together by sharing a common vision. As President, the women around are my children. When they do not behave it is my responsibility to pull us all back together again. And my strength to do this comes from knowing my traditions and going to the Elders for help.

Sometimes we are told we are a political organization. I have wondered what politics are. As I have come to understand it, politics come naturally from within. In the traditional way of life, politics, education, spirituality, family, do not come apart. We cannot separate them. Politics is like a beautiful flower. When we cut it off from the rest of the plant by picking it, it will eventually die. That is what 'government politics' reminds me of sometimes, the control and the removal of beauty. That kind of politics is just like a picked flower. It will lose its beauty and die. If you do not pick that flower, but water it and nurture it instead, it will grow. That is the beauty that the First Nation's way teaches.

What should be is a strong woman who sees the beauty within. And politics should be the woman who sees true justice.

The original instructions of the Creator are universal and valid for all time. The essence of these instructions is compassion for all life and love for all creation. We must realize that we do not live in a world of dead matter, but in a universe of living spirit. Let us open our eyes to the sacredness of Mother Earth, or our eyes will be opened for us.¹

Grandfather David Monongye



Mikmaq Women

Their Special Dialogue

BY DR. MARIE ANNE BATTISTE

There is a fragility in making broad generalizations about Mikmaq women's roles in society. Over the generations, they have done everything. In grasping their total experience, both in our language, legends and in small talk, it must be noted that there is no concern with gender. Gender being a foreign concept, brought to our land by the wood walls of Europe, is a strained thought to the Mikmaq worldview. Mikmaq concepts do not divide man from woman; the concepts only honour their ordinary efforts as mothers, grandmothers, godmothers, teachers, healers and the like. European thought calls them 'roles.' Mikmaq thought labels them extraordinary honours.

The predetermined natural fact of being created by the Holy Spirit as either a woman or man is of minor importance in the Mikmaq worldview. More important to the Mikmaq is the fate of being born into a tribal community which contributes to a shared mental experience: the sense of having a view of the world and of the good in which others participate. Over the last three generations, the Mikmaq worldview has been denied by political policies and law. These gross injustices fragmented our traditional worldview and its intense moral communion.

In the traditional Mikmaq worldview, Mikmaq "woman" and "man" are the fulfillment of each other. Most of women's undivided obligations are held in common with their male partners. But Mikmaq thought teaches of special obligations which "women" have to the Holy Spirit. Mikmaq "women" are the keepers of the unknown. They have the ability to see the ordinary with amazement and to create the future. Each Mikmaq woman is the primal path that forces man beyond knowing to the unknowable

future. In women, man finds what is beyond the daily struggle.

Mikmaq women are the keepers of change. They are the confirmation of the small and great rhythms of each generation to whom all return for comfort and release. They are the visible manifestation of continuity in change. Both continuity and change occur within a community in dialogue; thus the daily dialogues which occur in every facet of Mikmaq life essentially hold all visions of the future and the beauty of the past. Mikmaq women provide a special dialogue which is at the centre of the worldview. Knowing that all of nature is continually changing, the special dialogue of Mikmaq women conditions change so it may be received within the worldview.

Mikmaq women begin the dialogue with the future. They are the first teachers who transmit knowledge of the past and present to the future. They create an extensive, coherent, concrete tribal bond with the future through an easy silence and caring. The tribal bond arises from the rhythm of the daily event. Togetherness comes quietly in the shared trust inherent in family life. Later, they continue the teaching of the tribal bond: the beauty and force of the Mikmaq language; a code of cultural respect; the joy in fulfillment of family obligations.

While Mikmaq women are fulfilling their special obligations, they have also fulfilled the common obligations with the men. Each struggle over time mandates adaptations to survive to give the future a better chance. When European racism attempted to enslave Mikmaq males, the Mikmaq family became the last resort of pride and respect. When European authorities sought to force "individualism" on tribal society through formal education, the



Mother Annie Battiste with granddaughter Anne Wintersong

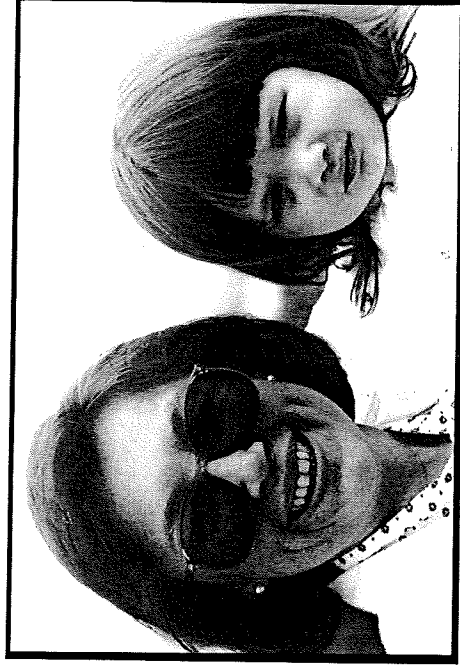
Mikmaq families moderated the continuity. When Mikmaqs accepted European values and vices as superior to tribal values, the Mikmaq families had to face the terror of alcoholism and substance abuse, the fact of broken families, and the confusions of values. In each of these struggles, the women resiliently weathered the times and mastered them.

There is a family story that illustrates some of these points. When my mother was a young woman, she played

a game with her girlfriends which prophesied her life in an extraordinary way. It was said that a dream could predict one's partner and the life you would have, so she and her friends gave it a try. After a friend's wedding, she and her girlfriends ate salt fish and then before bedtime put the wedding cake they had gotten at the wedding under their pillows. It was said that in the dream when thirst took hold, the man who gave you a drink would become your husband. More importantly, would be the kind of container from which she would drink as it would indicate the kind of life she would lead. If the container was a fine bone china or fine glass, she would lead a life of prosperity. If received in a broken cup, she could expect a life of turmoil and hardships.

In my mother's dream, a young man (her brother's best friend, a man much younger than she) gave her a drink from a birchbark cup. After the dream my mother laughed with her girlfriends at the prospect of marriage to her brother's friend. Many years later this man

would eventually take her hand in marriage and together they would lead along traditional Mikmaq life together. The birchbark cup was significant, as my mother's life was one not of leisure and prosperity, not fraught with turmoil and hardships, but one typical of the traditional women on the reserve today. It has been a traditional life of hard work with Mikmaq dignity, a trying life with many rewards of children, grandchildren,

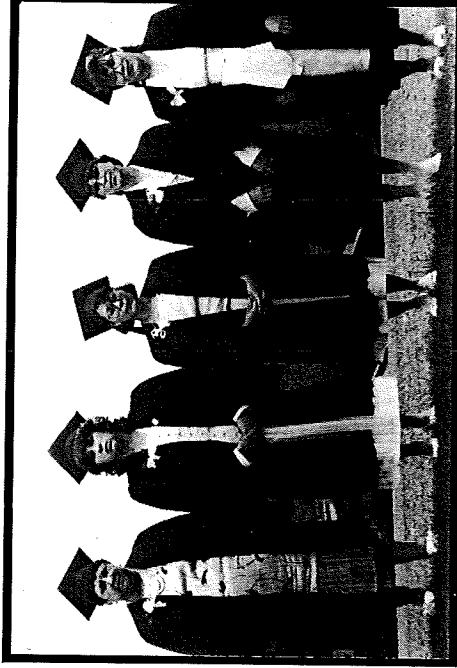


hands that help, share, and guide so that all children can survive within the family. As their reward, the nation is assured continuity in their language and worldview, and thus stability within unsettled times. The fact that the Mikmaq did not succumb totally, as some disappeared tribes had done is a tribute to the strength of the Mikmaq family and a tribute to Mikmaq women and men who foresaw the necessity of Mikmaq thought.

and a life among Mikmaqs.

Mikmaq women represent a resiliency, so ill-defined by modern thought, but so well known in the hearts of Mikmaqs. Throughout tribal and modern changes, from reserve life to modern life, and back to reserve life, Mikmaq grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and aunts typify a spirit of commitment, dedication, and physical and mental hardness that allow the people as a whole to withstand economic hardships and social changes. Perhaps it is for this reason that Mikmaq people have weathered the contact with Europeans for so long. Over 350 years of contact have passed to which Mikmaqs have had to adapt and accommodate, yielding to the changing world in their own way to suit their own needs within their own worldview.

Many people in the history of the world have lost their culture under such oppression. Some families have fallen under the bondage of alcohol and drug abuse, but within the extended family network are



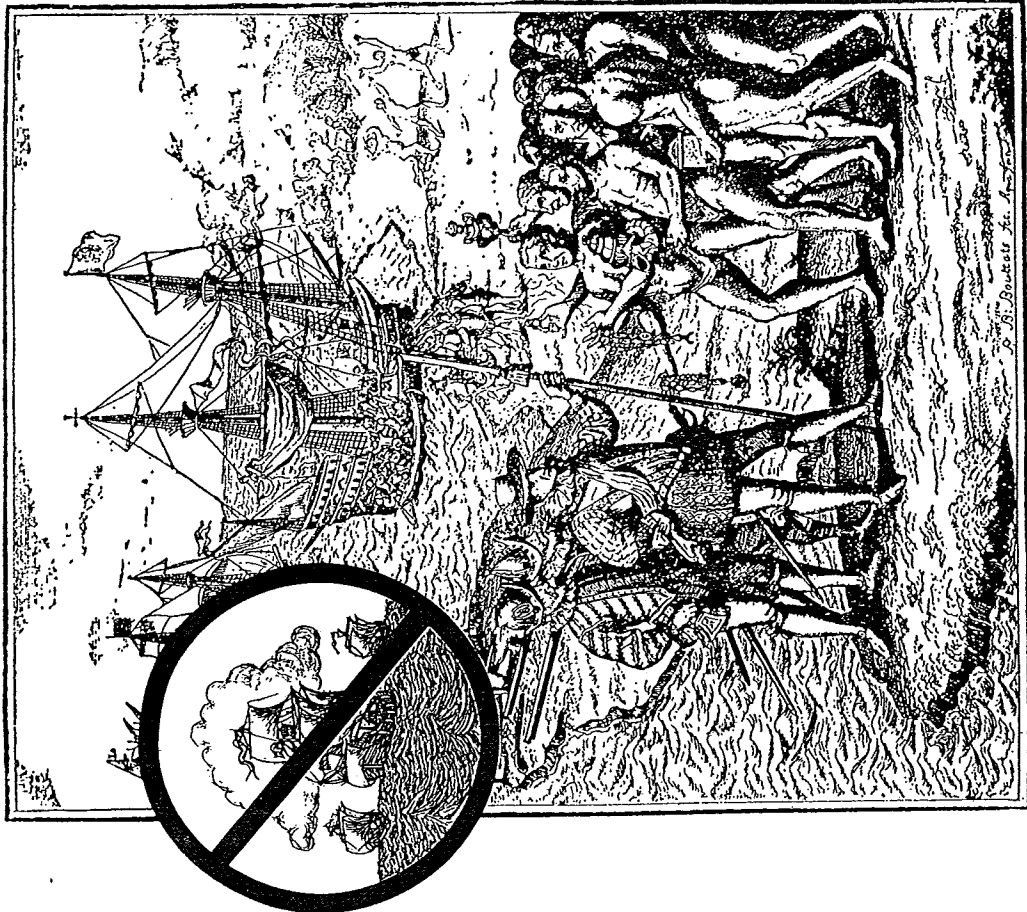
(top) Marie Battiste with daughter Anne Wintersong
(bottom) 1989 graduates of McGill University Teacher Education Program at Wagmatcook

It was the Mikmaq family who believed in their ancestors and their culture. While Mikmaq women could take the credit for the Nation's cultural integrity, such credit is buttressed by tribal values which foster family coherence over individual effort.

There would be no "Indian movement" in Canada or in the United Nations, if the aboriginal families did not teach the ancient lessons of life and love. In the Mikmaq struggle for human dignity and self determination, there was no one dominant leader. Instead there were many men and women standing up for their received tribal values as was needed. Ideal overpowered personality. This is very different from the European and Canadian tradition of the leader. This is an extraordinary difference. It is another tribute to Mikmaq knowledge and the value of family life. Indirectly, it's a monument for the continued role of the Mikmaq "women" as the keepers of the changing future.

In the restoration of this shared worldview in the hearts of all the Mikmaq people for the future generation, gender will not be as important as it is in Canadian society. In the restless individualist society of Canada, the equalization of gender is a necessary task in creating a better society. In the restoration of Mikmaq thought, an unreflective notion of gender could be merely another means of dividing our tribal society. The task of removing prejudices and obstacles which prevent the coherent sharing of our common beliefs or ideas with modern ideas is the task of every Mikmaq family. This crucial task cannot be accomplished by individualized Mikmaq nor by reliance on European assumptions or knowledge.

Ending the trivial artificial divisions created by European ideas and languages among Mikmaq people is a difficult task. Yet, the problems which European ideas have created between woman and man in the modern age demonstrate the validity of Mikmaq thought and language. Ending our unreflective use of gender classification and sexism acquired from Europeans is as important as ridding ourselves of European stereotypes of Mikmaq society, and of its men and women. It is only through empowering Mikmaq knowledge through its genderless language that the transformation of Mikmaq society can occur. It is only through understanding Mikmaq wisdom that family unity can continue to be an empowering experience.



DISCOVERING THE TRUTH ABOUT COLUMBUS

500th anniversary celebrations stir grass-roots groups to tell the other side of the story

Remember the U.S. bicentennial, when it seemed like all the oil companies simultaneously tried to change their names to "America" or "Spirit of '76"? Well, if you thought that was bad, get ready for the 500th anniversary of Columbus' so-called discovery of America.

According to Dan Nicolai, writing in the Twin Cities monthly *Artpaper* (Nov. 1989), NASA plans to celebrate by sending three solar-powered "space caravels"—named the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria—to Mars with \$25 million of our money! Malcolm Forbes has already spent \$500,000 on a commemorative tour of Spain, and the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities are together planning \$10 million worth of exhibits and research for 1992, says Peter Montgomery in *Common Cause Magazine* (Nov./Dec. 1989). Every Latin American nation but Paraguay will stage some type of celebration. The 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona will be used to launch replicas of Columbus' ships, and, reports *Religious News Service* (Nov. 10, 1989), the U.S. Catholic bishops, in spite of warnings from minority Catholics, are planning something called "Sounding the Jubilee Horn: Celebrating 500 Years of the Good News of Jesus in the New World." The official U.S. Christopher Columbus Quincentenary Jubilee Commission is pushing forward with a Cuban emigre turned Florida real-estate developer as its head.

And what are they in such a hurry to commemorate? Howard Zinn opens his book *People's History of the United States* (Perennial Li-

brary, 1980) by quoting Columbus' log entry on his first encounter with the Arawak people of the Caribbean. Columbus observed that "they would make fine servants," and that "With 50 men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want." He and his successors went at the "Indians" with genocidal ferocity; probably three million died from war, slavery, and labor in the mines on the island of Hispaniola (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic) in the first 15 years after 1492. The entire population of nine million was virtually wiped out within 40 years. (Relevant portions of Zinn's account were reprinted in the Fall 1988 *Clin-ton Street Quarterly*.)

Contrary to grade-school mythology, Columbus did not undertake his voyages out of curiosity or to prove the world was round; rather, he had promised his investors huge returns on their capital, and had to find gold, spices, or slaves to make good. On Hispaniola, each Indian over 14 was obliged to bring in a certain quota of gold every three months. Indians failing to meet their quotas were punished by having both hands cut off, and usually then bled to death. Since there was very little gold on the island, most either fled or were killed. When the spices looked unpromising and the gold didn't materialize, fast enough, Columbus shipped the Ara-waks themselves to Spain to be sold in the slave markets of Seville, thus inaugurating an Atlantic slave trade that became one of the worst crimes in human history. The greed of Columbus and his followers seems to have been matched by a gratuitous

cruelty; accounts by Bartolome de las Casas, a Dominican friar who tried to stop the genocide, are filled with passages like this:

They made bets as to who would slit a man in two, or cut off his head at one blow; or they opened up his bowels. They tore the babes from their mothers' breasts by the feet, and dashed their heads against the rocks.... They made a gallows just high enough for the feet to nearly touch the ground, and by 13s, in honour and reverence of our Redeemer and the Twelve Apostles, they put wood underneath and, with fire, they burned the Indians alive.

Columbus himself returned to Europe in disgrace, and appears to have died without understanding that he had not landed in the Orient. But his methods were later used in Mexico, in Peru, in the Black Hills, and at Wounded Knee. They are still being used in Guatemala and El Salvador, and on most Indian reserves from Amazonia to Pine Ridge. The winners get to write the histories, and a gala Columbus anniversary extravaganza represents a serious perversion of what really happened.

There is much more at stake than the interpretation of some long-gone historical events, and this was put eloquently in a declaration issued last October by a gathering of indigenous groups from Andean countries, who met in Bogotá to plan their own approach to the Columbus anniversary:

Thus it is that the brutality of the conquest is not something of the past. Sadly, it remains a present reality.

The sacking of our natural resources, the destruction of our habitat, the assault on our cultures,... the strangling of our economies with the payment of an immoral and unpayable foreign debt,... the militarization of our rural areas,... have been perpetuated and reproduced right up to our days by those who draw advantage from this hateful and unjust social order.

It is precisely those sectors that are now attempting to "celebrate," with total jubilation, the fifth centenary of the "discovery" as a renewed attempt to cover up the colonization of arms, so that they can continue justifying the political domination of our peoples and nations.

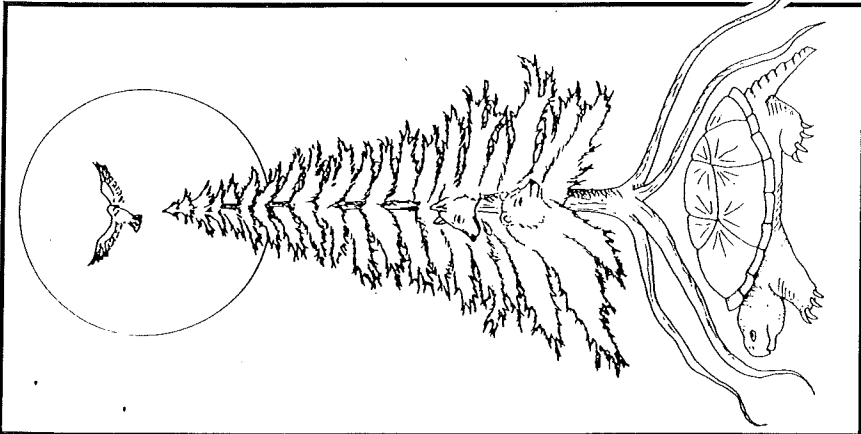
This puts the political issues involved in the celebration clearly; the declaration goes on to outline alternative ways of remembering 1492.

What seems encouraging from a survey of alternative publications is that there appears to be a lot of energy for telling the other side of the story about Columbus' "discovery" of America coming from grass-roots cultural organizations. The 1987 bicentennial of British settlement in Australia, which might have been a one-sided triumph of imperialism, turned instead into a reappraisal of colonialism and a celebration of aboriginal culture. There seems a real possibility that alternative groups can hijack the Columbus anniversary away from the conquistadors and real-estate developers.

It seems obvious that a successful alternative to the 1992 follies will have to find and amplify the voices of those who were silenced by 1492 and its aftermath.

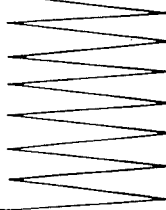
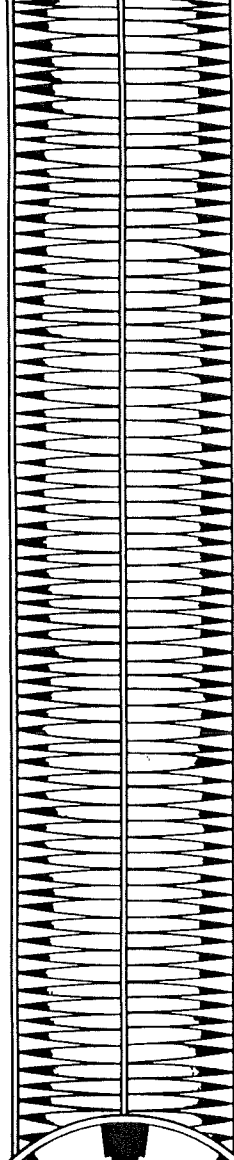
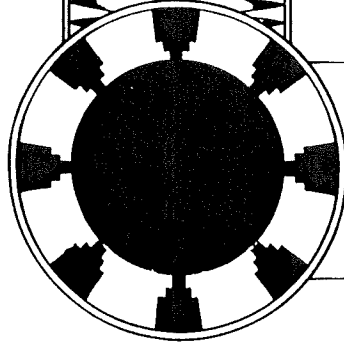
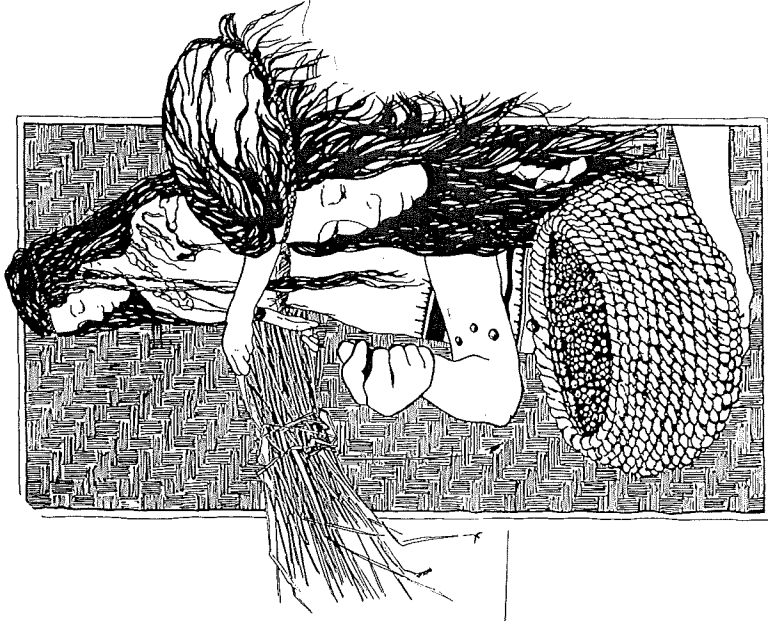
—Charlie Sugnet & Joanna O'Connell

Utne Reader



I have killed the deer.
I have crushed the grasshopper
And the plants he feeds upon.
I have cut through the heart
Of trees growing old and straight.
I have taken fish from water
And birds from the sky.
In my life I have needed death
So that my life can be.
When I die I must give life
To what has nourished me.
The earth receives my body
And gives it to the plants

And to the caterpillars
To the birds
And to the coyotes
Each in its turn so that
The circle of life is never broken.



**"Without struggle
there is no progress"**

WARRIOR SOCIETY

The American Indian Movement sees itself as a Warrior Society for Indian people. There are various concepts of a warrior society. To White people, the warrior is the armed forces. It's the guy who goes out there and fights and kills for his people; paid soldiers. But Indian people have never had hired killers.

Warrior Society to them means the men and women of the nation who have dedicated themselves to give everything that they have to the people. A warrior should be the first one to go hungry and the last one to eat. He should be the first one to give away his moccasins and the last one to get new ones. That type of feeling among Indian people is what a Warrior Society is all about. He is ready to defend his family in time of war -- to hold off any enemy -- and be perfectly willing to sacrifice himself to the good of his nation and his people, and that's not we see ourselves as, what we idealistically try to be. That's not saying that we are all completely selfless or any kind of saints, but we try, with the spiritual direction of our holy men, to get ourselves to the point where we don't have the avarice and greed that is so much a part of white society in this land.

We believe that the power of this universe is held within our peace pipe. It is a pipe of peace, a pipe that at all costs tries to guide us in avoiding any deaths by our own hands, or any violence on the part of the American Indian Movement, and if anyone will check back into the history of the American Indian Movement, though we take a very strong stand for our people, we've never killed anyone. We have never had violence unless violence was perpetrated against us. The real violence in America is committed by the government against our people. The real violence is the fact that on a reservation our women are taken and raped in the back seat of cars.

Our job is to regain our humanity and our spirituality as it once was. Our job is to fight for freedom against oppression. Our job is to fight for land to stand on; land, a part of our Mother Earth which will be our physical and spiritual power base.

We are freedom fighters.

BY ART SOLOMON, ELDER AND WARRIOR
MEMBER OF THE LEONARD PELTIER DEFENSE COMMITTEE

VIOLENCE against women

EXCERPTS FROM
DAWN BLACK'S
WOMEN'S REPORT
DAWN BLACK IS
N.A.A. STATUS OF
WOMEN CRATIC

A judge in Ottawa, in a wife battering case, said he was not going to worry about the woman being beaten. The same judge last year acquitted a man who threatened to rape three women because, according to the judge, these threats did not harm the women.

In British Columbia a judge said a three-year-old girl was sexually aggressive, thus provoking her own abuse by an adult male.

In Manitoba a judge said that it is sometimes okay for men to slap women around and he was told by a reviewer that there was nothing improper in his remarks.

In Nova Scotia a judge was removed from the bench for telling women to return to and to obey their abusive husbands. Also in Nova Scotia, a judge was given an absolute discharge for assaulting his own wife.

In Ottawa last spring a man was given an intermittent 90-day jail term for beating his wife's head in with a baseball bat. She spent a month in a coma.

Day of mourning

NDP status of women critic Dawn Black has put forward a Private Member's Bill in the House of Commons calling for December 6th to be declared a national day of mourning and action on violence against women, in commemoration of the 14 women killed in the massacre at the University of Montreal.

Since the printing of the **Women's Report**, on September 26, 1990, the Solicitor General announced that within 4 years, the Kingston Prison for Women would close. The government promised to heed the recommendation of Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women to replace the prison with five regional facilities, including a healing lodge for aboriginal women to be located in a prairie province.

Wage gap increases

New Democrat M.P. Steve Langdon (Essex-Windsor) spoke up in the House of Commons against the policies that have led to an increase in the wage gap between women and men. It used to be that women earned 66% of men's wages for full-year, full-time work. That figure is now 65%.

Employment equity report

Last year's report under the Employment Equity Act bore such poor results that even the government was forced to admit not as much progress was made as expected.

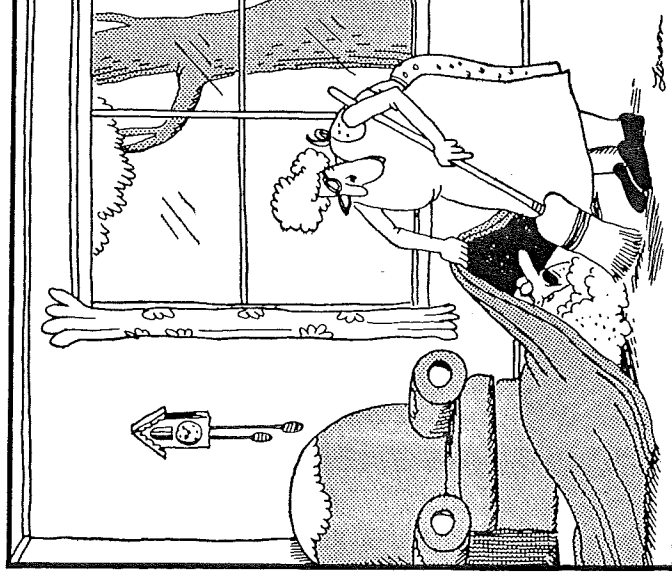
Among the highlights under "Positive Changes" was that "Aboriginal peoples increased their representation from .66% to .73%." This is a change of 0.07%. At this rate, under the current legislation with no teeth, perhaps women, visible minorities, aboriginal peoples and the physically challenged will all reach their targets by the year 2082? Perhaps later? The legislation is scheduled for review in 1991.

Gun control

A gun control bill has been introduced in the House of Commons. Bill C-80 would ban the importation of semi-automatic rifles that were originally manufactured as automatics. This covers Uzis and AK-47's. The proposed legislation will not affect semi-automatics already in Canada. The law apparently does not affect the type of gun used by Marc Lepine to kill 14 women in Montreal. The bill does seek to limit the size of the clip on a semi-automatic rifle to 5 bullets. Lepine used a 30-round clip to murder the women.

The legislation also strengthens regulations concerning the purchase of a Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC). The proposed law would require the submission of two references and a photo, and would establish a waiting period of 28 days before the issuance of a certificate. The cost of the certificate would be increased for \$10 to \$50. A mandatory testing program for certificate applicants would also be put into effect.

The proposed legislation has already provoked controversy, and a strong showing from the gun lobby, which believes that these restrictions are unfair to law-abiding gun owners, including hunters, collectors, and sports-shooters. The government was under pressure to strengthen gun control laws after the Montreal massacre.



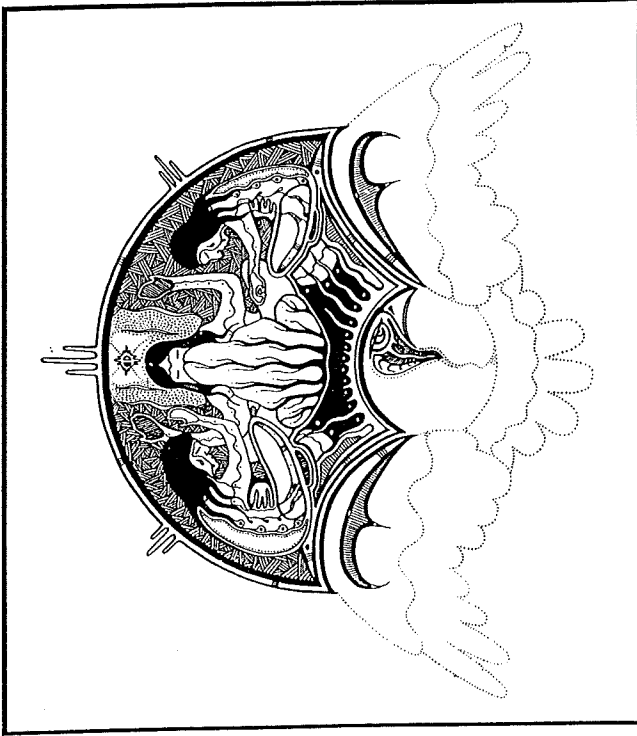
"Go ahead, Vera ... treat me like dirt."

AWA 1990 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1990 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Antigonish Women's Association was held on Monday evening September 10 in the Coady Institute Tin Room. The first part of the well-attended session was devoted to a business meeting at which we heard reports from the Board, Treasurer, Fundraising Committee, and the Women's Resource Centre Director. We also nominated, elected, and welcomed the following new members to the AWA Board: Sue Adams, May Bancroft, Tara Callaghan, Susan Jewkes, Oona Landry, Shelagh McCulloch-Taylor, Elaine Roblee, and Maureen Toner. Thanks were also given for the work of the outgoing Board Members - Eileen Carey-MacIntosh, Yael Gluck and Jessie Kennedy.

BANNER PROJECT

One of the highlights of the evening came when a large handpainted banner which symbolically depicted women's strengths and struggles was introduced by some of the women who created it: Barb Hays, Lucille Harper, Sian MacLean, and Dorothy Thompson. They explained the various symbols and ideas in the banner and the enjoyable process of planning and painting it. The banner was part of the Banner Project, in which women's organizations throughout Canada created banners to protest funding cuts to the Sec/State Women's Programs. The banners were tied together and unfurled at a demonstration during an Ottawa meeting of Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Women's Programs.



GUEST SPEAKERS

Our guest speakers for the evening were Dolly and Doreen Prosper, Judy Peters, and Becky Sark, all local Micmac women. They began their presentation with a showing of a videotape about a native women artist which

demonstrated how native spirituality and traditions were an integral part of how she created her art. The rest of the presentation took the form of responses to questions from AWA members. A broad range of topics were discussed, including traditions within Micmac culture, the role of women in Micmac society, positions on native land claims and education issues, and responses to the Oka crisis. AWA members left feeling not only better informed but inspired by the eloquent, personal statements of our Micmac sisters.

AWA COMMITTEES - WE NEED YOU !!

The Board report given at the AGM included an appeal to members to become involved in one of the AWA committees. Most AWA activities are planned and organized through committees, which meet on an informal basis and which, in the past, have often depended heavily on the work of a few individuals. The Board feels that the AWA could be a lot more effective (and not overburden a few women) if we had a more organized committee structure this year. We hope to have many members each making a small contribution of time and effort, based on their interests and talents, working on the AWA functions throughout the year.

There are 4 active committees which we strongly urge you to join:

External Programming

(acts as a programming support group for the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC); evaluates the AWA's and AWRC's public programs; offers suggestions for grant proposals; and promotes the public image of the AWA and AWRC.)

Internal Activities

(organizes activities of AWA members for education, mutual support, and fun; works with other women's groups and with political initiatives in line with AWA objectives.)

Newsletter

(produces four educational and informative newsletters per year which are in keeping with the philosophy and objectives of the AWA.)

Fundraising

(recommends and carries out strategies and activities for fundraising, such as benefit concerts, dances, the Annual Hockey Pool, and the Christmas Stocking.)

Board and other members are already on these committees and initial meetings are underway. Please call the Resource Centre to add your name and contribution.

(Judith MacLean)

Here we go again with our little um, social column. Now doing this column is a little dangerous because you never know if a good-natured chuckle might be misunderstood you see. Oh well, I'll continue with it as long as y'all promise not to take things too seriously. I don't know if the AWA is insured for libel.

Past Chairperson, Eileen Carey-MacIntosh has recently put down her saw and picked up a pen. You know what they say about the pen being mightier than the saw... Eileen is studying social work at Dal and I'm sure that with her clear feminist consciousness and some new academic credentials she'll be able to do some good equality work that hits the nail right on the head. (You might be right sore from groaning by the time I'm through here.) Speaking of women in carpentry, Catherine Mae MacDonald is just finishing a major project. She has been helping with the construction of a new home for her family. She had lots of help from some real nice guys who descended upon the place and did phenomenal amounts of work in very short periods of time. If you have ever participated in such a project, you can easily understand when Catherine Mae says, in her own sweet and demure little way how "_____ glad" she is that it will soon be finished.

Linda Steeghs is in the aesthetics business and is enjoying being her own boss.

Yael Gluck entered into the bonds of holy matrimony on Oct. 18 and is expecting to complete the family with a baby in March. Didn't I tell you that her thoughts had taken on a new flavour, eh?

Our youngest AWA member, Reilly MacDonalintosh has been very busy doing some PR work for the Association. She has appeared at important local functions and has graced the pages of the Casket just recently. She obviously understands how important public education is to the struggle.

Denise Boudreau is busy doing the Business Education course through CEIC and she is diligently practising her typing. She'll graduate in June '91. Does anybody need office personnel?

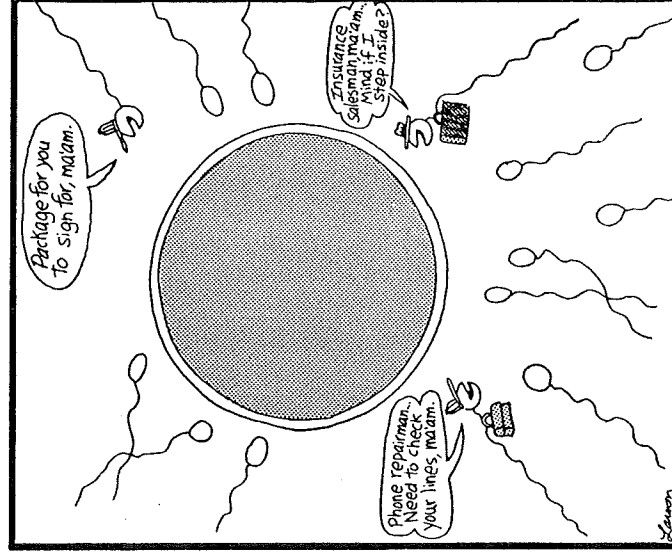
Angela Miles is coming to touch bases with the AWA between Nov. 20 & 23. There will be a social. See elsewhere in this edition of AWAre for details. We are hoping she enjoys this visit much more than the last one.

Josie Bijl and spouse are off to Calgary. They will be living close to their son and their daughter, former AWA member, Clementine. She seems excited about living there.

Are there any AWA members living far AWAY from Antigonish who would like to stay in touch through this column? Please mail your input to the Centre. Liz? Pat? Angie?

Input for this column is always welcome. Please. C'mon you gyny! I know your'e busy, but it only takes a minute. Phone it in! 'Till then.....

Katherine Reed



How the human egg is often deceived.

P.S. We have copies of Groups Dynamic, a herstory of Nova Scotia women's groups available at the Centre for \$3 a copy.

We have free copies of Pandora's Centre, Come in, Pick up a copy.

NEWS FROM THE CENTRE

Fall is upon us and we're into our 7th year at the Resource Centre. We have a dynamic new board of directors and we are anticipating an exciting and challenging year.

During a discussion with Pat McInnis, field officer for Secretary of State Women's Program, about our work in Antigonish the word "feminist" and the prefix "woman" as in Woman-centred came up. This discussion feels like a merry-go-round ride - you can stay on it as long as you want without ever getting anywhere. So... these words make some people feel uncomfortable, perhaps defensive or alienated, faced with their own fear of ... what? Fear of change in the status quo? I think the uneasiness people feel when a woman identifies herself as feminist or her perspective as woman-centered is their gut-level understanding that our social norm, the oppression and exploitation of women, is being challenged and named. Women who speak their truth, name their oppression, risk ridicule, censorship, dismissal, physical beating, job loss, isolation. But can we afford to protect the status quo by softening our truths, our voices, and our rights. When we name our truths, our experience as women in the world, we give others permission to name theirs. We begin to not collude in the oppression of women through our silence and our refusal to recognize the violence perpetrated against us.

Towards the end of our eating disorders awareness workshop, one woman had the courage to make herself vulnerable and state her eating disorder. There was silence. She was alone. And then another woman told us her story. She had never said it to anyone before. The group decided to form a support group and a number of women are keen to participate - to have a place where they can dare to speak their lives. Unless that one woman had had the courage to speak out, we would all have left the workshop with more knowledge about eating disorders but in silence about our lives.

Reclaiming our world means reclaiming ourselves - speaking from the wholeness of our bodies, minds and hearts - taking courage from each other.

Mary Ann Fraser, through a Canada Employment Job Training grant kept the Centre open over the summer. Mary Ann continued Jeanette Fecteau's work in cataloguing, systematizing and organizing our library. In our neverending quest to make information accessible, the next job will be cross-referencing materials. Perhaps we can do that next summer.

We have the pleasure and good fortune to have Hoyan Ndure volunteering with us for the months of October and November. Hoyan comes from the Gambia and is here with Crossroads International. We will miss her when she goes.

The focus of our Secretary of State grant this year is "Women and Work". We will be organizing several programs and information sessions around this topic, including, changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act, the politics of housework, women in unions, employee rights and employer responsibilities, and pay equity.

Continued ...



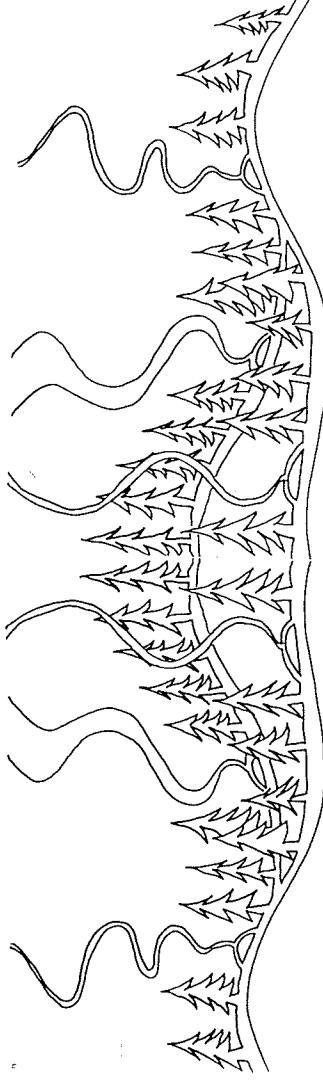
We are once again offering the S.T.E.P. program for parents of children up to age twelve. This program is designed to empower parents to exercise their parenting techniques and practice new ways of dealing with family problems. It also encourages parents to give children the responsibility to make and learn from their own decisions. If enough parents are interested, we will offer the STEP/TEEN program after Christmas.

Our Secretary of State funding for 1990-91 is still uncertain. Representatives from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, British Columbia and the Yukon met with Gerry Weiner, Secretary of State, in early October. We were surprised to be called to Ottawa for a meeting with no set agenda. During our "informal" discussion with Mr. Weiner, he led us to believe that another year of "interim" funding was probable. He felt his colleagues would not cut monies to women's centres again this year and foresaw the government "loosening it's purse strings" in the second half of its term in office. It was difficult to get straight answers to our questions about the government's commitment to operational funding. Mr. Weiner did say that the government's policy as outlined in it's "Fairness in Funding" document stood unchanged. It is difficult for women's centres to make long term plans in this state of limbo. I guess we have to assume the best and prepare for the worst. Thanks to everyone who helped win the re-instatement of our funding last year.

Katherine and I look forward to seeing you at the Centre. If you have any requests, comments, feedback about programming, please visit, call or write us. We're always looking for ways to make our work more effective. Drop by for tea and let us know your thoughts.

P.S. We are looking for new additions to our library. If've you've read a good book recently and would like to pass it along, we'd love to have it. And as the nights grow longer, the weather colder and you need a good book to curl up with, come and peruse our shelves.

Lucille



MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE IN SEPTEMBER

If you have forgotten to pay your membership, we would appreciate you remembering us now. Your support will help ensure the continuation of our women's centre.

	FEES:
NAME _____	
ADDRESS _____	LOW-INCOME: \$ 7.00
_____	REGULAR: \$15.00
_____	SUSTAINING: \$25.00
PHONE _____ (H) _____ (W)	

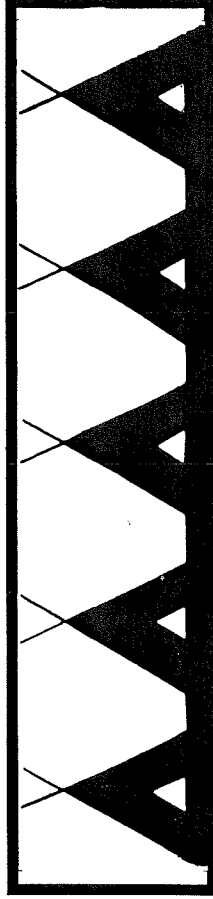
If you can afford to pay a little extra towards membership, please do. We will appreciate it. If you would like to become a member and can't afford \$7.00 please feel welcome to pay what you can afford.

CONNECT!

Connect!, the Association of Nova Scotia Women's Centres, has been actively addressing the funding situation of women's centres in Nova Scotia. Phyllis Price was employed last spring to develop a lobbying strategy to secure provincial funding. To this end, Connect! met with Guy LeBlanc, Minister of Community Services, and Don McInnes, Minister Responsible for the Status of women, over the summer to discuss with them our funding needs and our proposed funding solution for federal-provincial cost -sharing.

We propose that the province fund the service delivery work we do with individual women while the federal government continue in its commitment to fund our equality-based, educational activities.

Nova Scotia women's centres have received wide support from the province's M.L.A.s for the work we do. However the province fears total financial responsibility for women's centres and is hesitant to enter in to an agreement without commitment from the federal government. This leaves us caught between a rock and a hard place. More lobbying is needed to underline the importance and necessity of the Secretary of State Women's Program to women's struggle for a just and equitable society. Negotiations and discussions will continue with both levels of government and Connect! We may need to call upon letters from our members for support.



HOUSING SURVEY PROJECT

Lack of affordable housing is a concern of many low-income individuals and families in Antigonish. Many women, often single parents, come to the Resource Centre desperate for affordable housing.

The AWA has received a 20 week CEIC grant to conduct a rental housing survey in Antigonish. We will collect data on rental costs, condition of unit, vacancy rate, room size, usual tenants (students or non-students), etc. to document an accurate picture of housing in Antigonish. We will also collect personal stories from women who have experienced housing shortage problems.

Research into solutions to the housing shortage will seek out available programs, subsidies, grants, etc. available to individuals and communities. We will look at the experiences and solutions of other communities in addressing their housing problems.

Hopefully, the outcome of this project will result in the construction of more low-income rental housing units in Antigonish.



Illustrator Elizabeth Coward

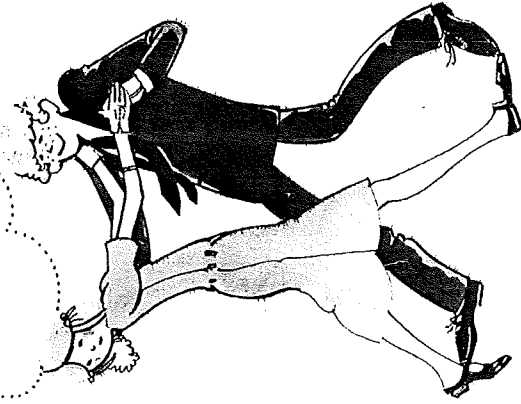
WOMEN'S POT LUCK SOCIALS

We've been looking for a way for AWA members and friends to gather on a regular basis to EAT, LAUGH AND TALK TOGETHER that does not add another "stressor" or "must" to our lives. The Internal Activities Committee (sounds like Scotland Yard) is introducing the Monthly Pot Luck, Social, Non-meeting, Exchange - an opportunity to meet new members, see old friends, say outrageous things, fantasize, extrapolate, and eat.

The first Pot Luck happens Friday, November 16, 6:30pm, Coady Institute, 2nd Floor Lounge. Discussion for the evening (consenting persons only) will centre around housework. Hope to see you there.

It occurred to me when I was 13 and wearing white gloves and Mary Janes and going to dancing school that no one should have to dance backwards all their lives.

JILL RUCKELSHAUS
Discussing discrimination,
1973



BENEFIT CONCERT

Hurrah! Mark * Thursday, Nov.9th * on your calendar. Joanne Drodge, marvellous woman that she is, will perform. We will have a cash bar and a dance afterwards with lots of great music. So come to the Abbey X at 8 PM and bring friends, intimates, associates, and dance the night away.

SOBEY'S TAPES

Thank you to everyone who is saving Sobeys's tapes for us. Please continue to do so. Last year we collected enough for approximately \$160.00. It all helps.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Oct.16 - Nov.19 | <u>Thresholds: Linda Johns,</u>
<u>St.Francis University Art Gallery</u> |
| Nov.3 | <u>A Gathering, Focus on Womens Spirituality</u>
<u>The Church, corner of North & Fuller</u>
<u>Terrace, Halifax 9 AM - 4 PM</u> |
| Nov. 4 - 9 | <u>Education & Program Design,</u>
<u>Tatamagouche Centre</u> |
| Nov 5 | <u>CRIAW & NSWAN, Rethinking Subjectivity,</u>
<u>Public Archives, Halifax 7:30 PM</u> |
| Nov.11 - 13 | <u>The Systematic Process of Building a Team,</u>
<u>Tatamagouche Centre</u> |
| Nov.16 - 18 | <u>CRIAW - The More We Get Together,</u>
<u>CP Prince Edward Hotel, Charlottetown, PEI</u> |
| Nov.17 | <u>Health Action Coalition, Membership Meeting,</u>
<u>Glengary Inn, Truro 10 AM - 3PM</u> |
| Nov.22 | <u>Ethics & The Human Services Professional,</u>
<u>- Dr. Edward Kyserlingk, the Lord Nelson</u>
<u>Hotel, Halifax 8:30 AM - 3 PM</u> |
| Nov. 23 - 26 | <u>Voice of Women, Biennial General Meeting,</u>
<u>Ottawa</u> |



Martine Thériault

SINGLE MOMS SUPPORT GROUP

The Single Moms' Support Group will be starting up with the first meeting scheduled for Nov.6th. Some new members will be joining the group, and an Assertiveness Training Workshop is planned, and some fun things like "Movie Nights". Whatever other workshop topics grow out of the group will be tackled as we go along. If you are a single mom, or if you know one in need of some sharing, learning, and just fun, please get in touch with Katherine at the Center.

GROCERY DONATIONS

We often have women come to the Centre needing groceries for themselves and their children to help them until their next cheque comes. Although we are not a food bank, we understand that women often find themselves in difficult circumstances and have few places to turn for help. We try to keep some dry goods on hand at the Centre for such times. If you have extra canned or dry goods in your cupboard and would like to donate them to the Centre for this purpose, they will be appreciated.

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE, 204B Kirk Place
Telephone: 863-6221

November - December 1990

Mon. October 29 EATING DISORDER SUPPORT GROUP MEETING,
Alumni Lounge, Bloomfield Centre,
St. F.X.U., 7pm

Thurs. November 1 IS IT HOT IN HERE?, a menopause work-
shop facilitated by Anne Perry, Dept.
of Nursing, St. F.X.U., 7:00pm,
Women's Centre, please pre-register.

Tues. November 6 SINGLE MOM'S SUPPORT GROUP, 7:30pm,
Women's Centre

Wed. November 7 AWA BOARD MEETING, 6:30pm, Women's
Centre

Mon. November 12 WILLS FOR PARENTS, a workshop to answer
parent's question about how and what
to include in wills, presented by
Public Legal Education, 7:30pm, Women's
Centre, please pre-register.

Wed. November 14 NFB FILM, BURNING TIMES, the 2nd film
in the women's spirituality series,
7:30pm, Women's Centre.

Fri. November 16 WOMEN'S POT LUCK SOCIAL, a chance to
meet new and old AWA members and
friends and to engage in an evening
of lively discussion and laughter,
6:30pm, Coady, 2nd Floor Lounge.

Wed. November 21 EVENING WITH ANGELA MILES, Angela will
be in town for the week and would like
to spend an evening with old friends
and AWA members. Please come and bring
finger foods. 7-10pm, Women's Centre.

Wed. November 28 HOUSEWORK! WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT
ANYWAY?, a panel discussion on the
division of labour in the home. 7:30pm
Room B21 Nicholson, St. F.X.U.

Thurs. November 29 AWA BENEFIT CONCERT AND DANCE, perfor-
mance by Joann Drodge, lots of good
dance music, cash bar, admission \$5/
adults - \$3/students, 8-12pm, Abbey X.

Mon. December 3 AWA BOARD MEETING, 6:30 pm, Women's
Centre. (all members welcome)

Thurs. December 20 CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE, please drop off
dry goods for needy families, 1-4pm,
Women's Centre