

AWARE



NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 1989

Resource Centre

863-6221

WORKING TOWARD EQUALITY

I have been active in the Women's Movement for many years and consider myself a feminist. While thinking about writing this article I have been sifting through the many changes I have undergone. As everything changes, never remaining static, so too do our perceptions of Feminism and Equality. In the consciousness raising groups of the Sixties we saw many examples of "the Personal is Political". The primary focus of these groups was the telling of and listening to women's stories - speaking the truth of their lives. Consciousness raising was a vehicle for personal liberation. In these groups women realized, became conscious, of how they had been socialized to accept their status as not equal to men.

Women were relegated to the domestic sphere (instinctive mother and homemaker). At the same time this work was devalued. The question "What do women want?" was raised at that time and it is still being heard today. What we wanted was to be equal to our men, our time and work respected. We wanted equal pay and access to jobs traditionally done by men - judges, lawyers, politicians, etc.. We wanted our men - brothers, sons, husbands - to share household work and assume responsibility for childcare. Those of us who worked outside the home assumed a double workload with occasional help with the dishes or childcare. As time went on women spoke

about more than the unequal division of labour. The stories included the horror of rape, battering and incest. The family, once considered a safe haven in a cruel world was for many women and children a place of terror, fear and brutality.

As "Women Libbers" we were frequently asked by friends, male and female alike, "Why would you want to be equal to men?" After all we were different weren't we? This was natural. Men would care for and protect us and we would keep our natural place, in the home. What was happening was a process of change. We wanted to do whatever job challenged us, we wanted to be powerful and strong. However we were still being exploited by men, sexually, politically and economically. As changes occurred in a broader context changes were also occurring in the women's movement. Sisterhood was embraced by women who wanted to examine equality in more detail.

It is the meaning of equality which brings me to the point I have pondered most while writing this article. That point is about how difficult it is to place importance on our relationships with women. Janice Raymond, in her book on female friendship states, "Women's social, political, professional and economic status is defined by the ideology that 'woman is for man'". This defines

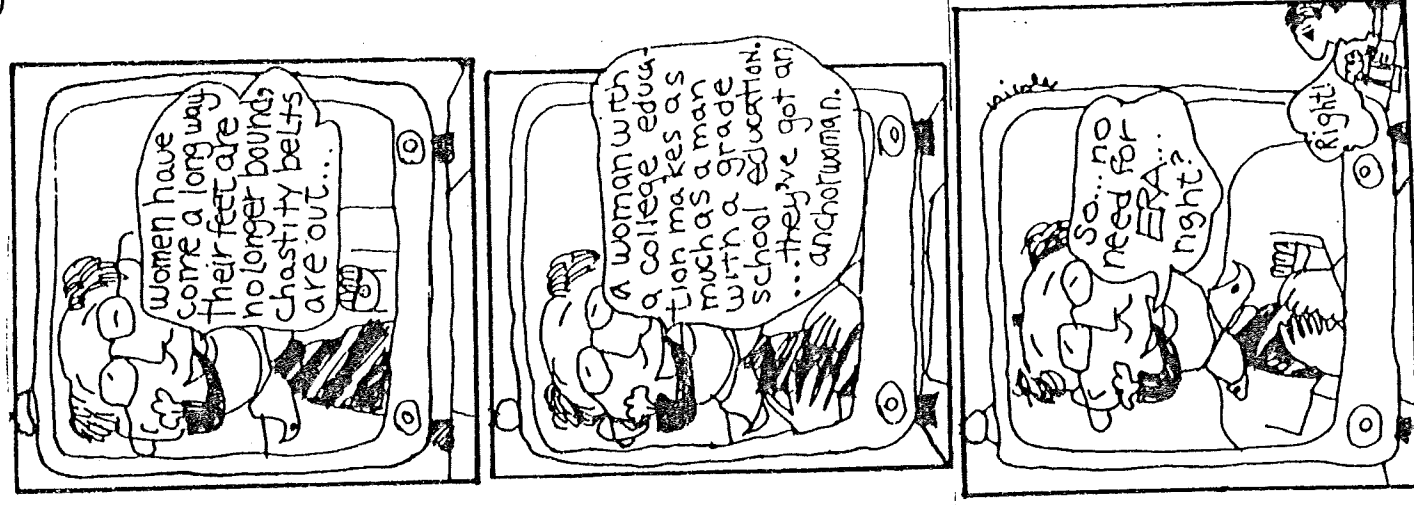
feminism as the equality of women to men rather than "autonomy independence and love of the female self in affinity with herself and her sisters". This definition places feminism at a false starting place, that is women in relation to men rather than women in relation to women. We have been convinced that the only real/ important relationships are with men. When we think of how we work together as women we see how we cling to the male defined rules.

So what's my point? Just this. We have to learn to be women in relation to women to be true to the values of feminism. By valuing each other and recognizing the work we do for what it is and not for the status we receive or the hierarchy of the mainstream which places value on competition and being on top. As Dale Spender states "Patriarchy requires that any conceptualization of the world in which men and their power are a central problem should become invisible and unreal". When we do not create our own way of being and working as sisters in an equal and respectful way we reject or render invisible our work and our way of being. As women we have been colonized. How hard it is to live the value of feminism.

As Janice Raymond puts it "feminism to me has never meant the equality of women with men, it has meant the equality of women with ourselves, being equal to those who have been for women. Those who have lived

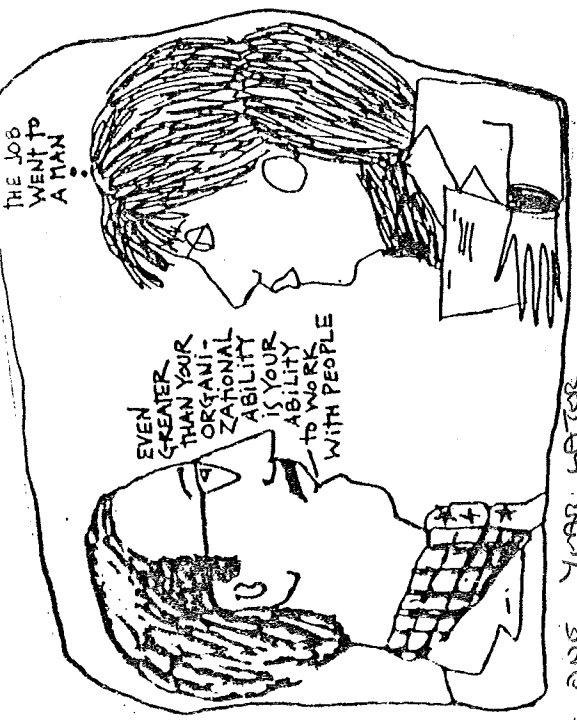
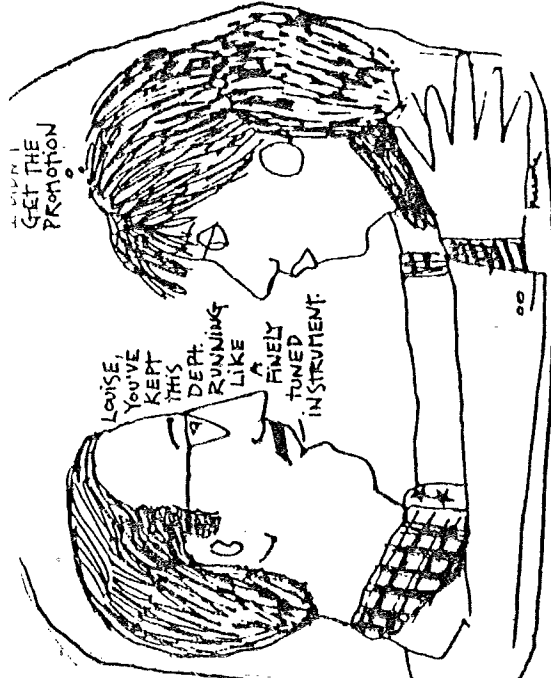
for women's freedom and those who have died for it, those who have fought for women and survived by women's strength and those who have realized that without the consciousness and conviction that women are primary in our lives nothing else is in perspective".

Barbara Hayes



RURAL OUTREACH PROGRAM STARTED

The Second stage of the rural outreach project "Women Together Moving Forward" is now in progress. This project is funded by Secretary State Womens Program. Barbara Hayes was hired to continue the work with four rural womens groups. She will meet three times in each area to do sessions on Self Esteem, self awareness, and group building. The focus is to help women build womens groups in their areas. Then there will be a series of day long workshops (six) to train two or three women from each group in facilitation skills so that they can go back to their groups and facilitate sessions on topics of interest identified by the group. The results of the project, where and how well it worked will be written up in a report for Sec. State and other womens centers in the province.



CIBC STUCK - ONE YEAR LATER

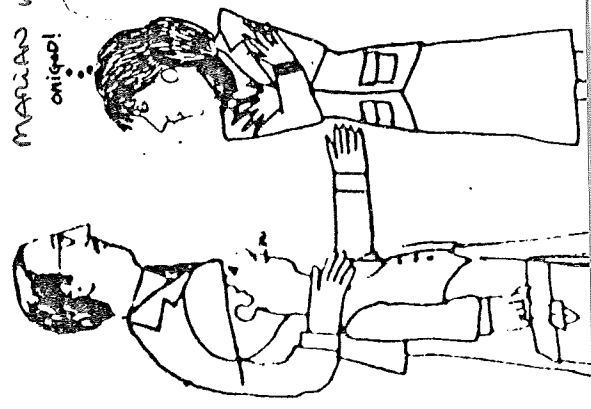
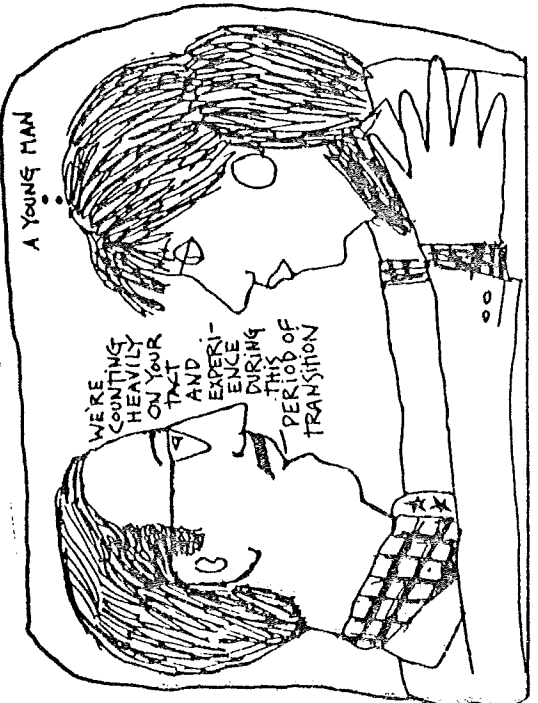
On November 23, 1987 when we went on strike against the Bank of Commerce I think it was the hardest decision all of us had ever made. For fourteen weeks we were the centre of attention in town, and although we felt somewhat like goldfish in a bowl, it was not as difficult as we had first anticipated. Although we had to walk the picket line in freezing temperatures the support from so many people was so overwhelming that it somehow made us forget about our freezing feet.

This support came not only from people in Antigonish, but also from the surrounding communities, in fact we had letters from every province in Canada. They raised money for us, helped us on the picket line, formed a support group, and organized a rally for us, I believe it was because of this show of support that we were able to keep up our morale for so long. As the weeks dragged on we came to realize that these people who only a short time before had been strangers were our friends who we came to rely on more and more.

I believe that the bank felt that eleven women, three of whom were pregnant would not be able to last more than a week. They felt that if they held out long enough they could freeze us in. In order to try and have the bank back to the bargaining table one of our customers gave us her shares to vote proxy at the annual shareholders meeting in Toronto. It was at the meeting that I was able to confront the chairman of the board in front of the shareholders, and ask him to explain how he could justify paying us such low wages and then putting a wage ceiling on each position so that an employee who reached this maximum salary was unable to get so much as a one dollar raise. I also asked him why the bank was refusing to talk to us. The publicity generated from this went a long way towards embarrassing the bank into coming back to the table.

In the end we did settle for an average increase of 7.5 but more important than that, we brought attention to the fact that bank workers are extremely underpaid. During the strike we had received excellent coverage by most of the local T.V. stations as well as the national, and we were given extensive coverage by C.B.C. radio including "morningside". We hoped that this attention would make more women decide to take action against poor wages, bad working conditions and lack of promotions not only in banks but in other areas as well. We also felt that we showed that you can stand up and demand that something be done about these things without the fear of losing your job.

MARILYN MACDONALD
original!



NEWS FROM THE CENTRE

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! and may 1989 begin to herald a new decade in which we use the feminist values of co-operation, caring and sharing to determine the planet's future, our future and our children's future.

As Yael says, "We are suffering matricide (the murder of our mother, Earth) and it is the patriarchy that is doing it." The 80s has been a particularly frightening decade in its turn to ultra-conservative, individualistic and consumer values. The gap between rich and poor has increased dramatically. The debt of the third world has led to mass starvation in some countries, encroaching desert and the virtual decimation of the rain forest (the lungs of the earth) in others, all the while lining the pockets of the first world lending institutions, ie. the banks. We've seen an increase in violence against women and visible minorities. Our children have easier access to pornography than they do to information on birth control and healthy human relationships.

And yet women continue with courage, intelligence, compassion and determination to stop the violence, the pain, the injustice, and to heal the planet. So, to begin this new year, we'd like to thank all of our members for your involvement in the struggle for justice and equality. We recognize and celebrate you.

We've moved to a new space - 204B Kirk Place. Our old centre is being turned into an apartment. January was busy with packing, unpacking, sorting, categorizing, labeling and all the many other tasks involved in a move. We would like to thank all of you who have helped us.

We now have our kitchen set up complete with running water for tea and coffee, new bookshelves (feel free to add your favourite books to our library), windows for natural light.

It looks like we'll be getting a computer (on loan from the Coady) thanks to Rieky. Once Katherine and I learn how to use it, it will lighten our writing load and revolutionize the newsletter. Members will be welcome to book time on it.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

ANN BETTS from the Public Service Alliance will be presenting a workshop on WOMEN IN UNIONS, February 7, 7:30pm, Alumni Lounge, Bloomfield Centre. She will focus on women organizing within unions and across union lines. She will speak directly to the concerns of Antigonish women. Ann comes highly recommended by Janet Tremblay and Carol Kell.

AWA members are welcome to attend board meetings. We usually hold them the first Thursday of the month. However, the next one will be held Feb. 9th, 7pm at the Centre.

In honour of VALENTINE'S DAY we're having a party. The theme is "Love". This will be a night to indulge ourselves by wearing a favourite dress, bringing a delightful edible treat and a treasured love token (flowers, jewellery, teddy bear). We will explore cross-cultural celebrations of love, sing love songs and eat chocolates. Come alone or with a friend to the CAMR, Friday, Feb. 10th, 7:30pm.

HELEN LEVINE, an inspiring, marvellous, feminist crone, living in Ottawa is coming to New Glasgow and Antigonish. She will be doing a day long workshop on ANGER in New Glasgow, Feb. 25, Trinity United Church (corner of Temperance and MacLean), 10am-3pm. The fee for the day is \$10.00 including

lunch. Pre-registration is necessary. If you are interested in attending and need a ride or can give one, please call the Centre.

HELEN will be in Antigonish to do a workshop on AGING, Feb. 26, 1-4pm at the Resource Centre. She will look at women aging from a physical, spiritual, social and political perspective. Helen is wise and wonderful and not to be missed.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY is March 8th. We have a number of events planned. Saturday, March 4th, the Women's Action Coalition Council is meeting in Antigonish. That evening there will be an IWD DANCE, 8pm, at an as yet undecided location. The Resource Centre will remain open this year and sponsor an OPEN HOUSE on the 8th. We are hoping to convince the local restaurants to participate in IWD activities by serving women FREE COFFEE. We assume, as in past years, that women will meet on the 8th for dinner at the Venice. After dinner, 7:30 at the CAMR, the AWA is presenting the play, "THE INDEPENDENT WOMAN (OR A MAN HAS HIS PRIDE)". This is our day to celebrate ourselves. Let's do it in style.

ALEX KEIR will be leading an ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING WORKSHOP Saturday, March 18, 10-3pm at the Resource Centre. Pre-registration for this workshop is encouraged as numbers are limited.

JEANNE FAY from Dalhousie Legal Aid will talk about SOCIAL ASSISTANCE: EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW...Tuesday, March 28, 1-4pm at the Resource Centre. Please pass the word. Jeanne will talk about social assistance problems and solutions and lift the veil on misinformation and the lack of information on social assistance rules and policies.

Throughout February and March, we will be open for Friday Lunches. Every second Friday of the month, we are encouraging mothers to bring their children for a round table discussion of the joys and hazards of parenting. Other specified Fridays we will pose a question for general discussion.

Mary Penny's yoga classes continue in the Combat Room of the Oland Centre. Call us for scheduling and more information.

We are always open to programming ideas and feedback about the functioning of the Centre. Come for tea, bring your lunch and tell us what you think.

REFERENCES FROM THE LAST NEWSLETTER

Women.....A World Survey

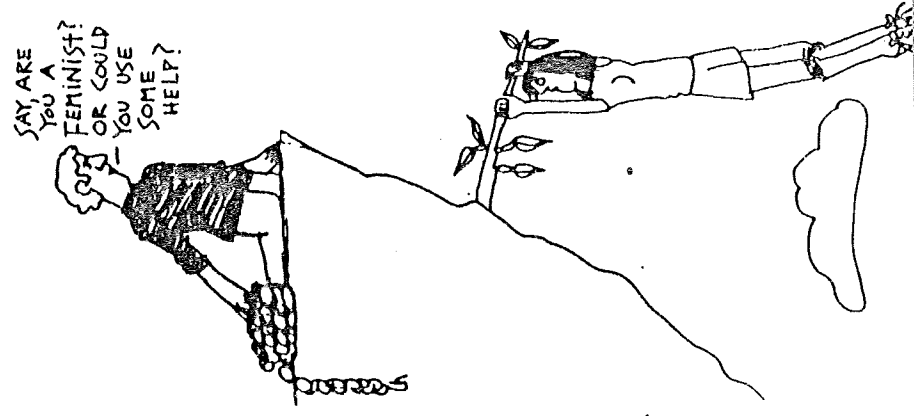
Ruth Leger Swaid
1985 World Priorities
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

World Military and Social Expenditures 1986

Ruth Leger Swaid
1986 World Priorities
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Women of Colour

excerpt from a quarterly journal Women of Power



On December 16, 1988 at the Annual Christmas Celebration members of the Antigoniish Women's Association took part in an interesting, informative and entertaining talk by Muriel Duckworth.

Muriel is one of the founding members of The Voice of Women (VOW), Canada's oldest peace organization. She is also a member of the Order of Canada. The talk began with Muriel briefly describing some of her history. She grew up in rural Quebec surrounded by, as she describes them, independent, strong women. Her grandmothers, her aunts and her mother were all important role models for Muriel. Later her education took her to Montreal and McGill University where she became interested and involved in Human Rights. Later she moved to New York and developed an association with the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a group of pacifists.

With the Fifties came a concern with nuclear weapons and their testing. Strontium 90, a type of radioactive fallout from aboveground nuclear testing, began appearing in breastmilk. People began to protest such testing. This was the beginning of the Anti-Nuclear movement.

The Viet Nam War created another protest movement and Muriel spoke about her involvement in bringing some women from Viet Nam to Canada. The speaking tour

was sponsored by Voice of Women and faced a great deal of opposition.

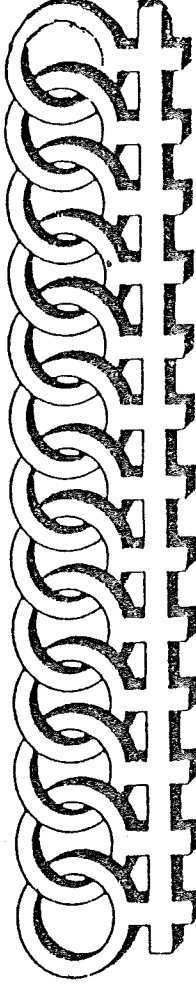
In addition to such stories Muriel spoke of the difficulties such activism creates - the constant requirement to defend one's actions. She noted that this kind of activism is in fact a way of life not just a particular way one does things.

There are four ongoing themes which have emerged from her work. She described them as

- . the role of women in maintaining life and struggling to improve life
- . the recognition of the environment as crucial yet fragile
- . the interconnectedness of the struggle for peace with all other struggles
- . the importance of Human Rights

In the last half of her talk Muriel spoke about ongoing struggles and the kinds of activities women in small communities, such as Antigoniish, can be involved in. The struggle for Native Rights. For example, the Innu of Labrador attempts to stop the existing low level flights and the possibility of expansion of these flights over their hunting territory. The Lubicon Land claim was also mentioned. T.V. violence and the everincreasing numbers of war toys for sale was mentioned. This particular topic lead to a discussion among the women in the group.

Muriel closed her address on a note of optimism saying that it was groups such as the AWA which are crucial in the work to create a more peaceful world to in which to live.

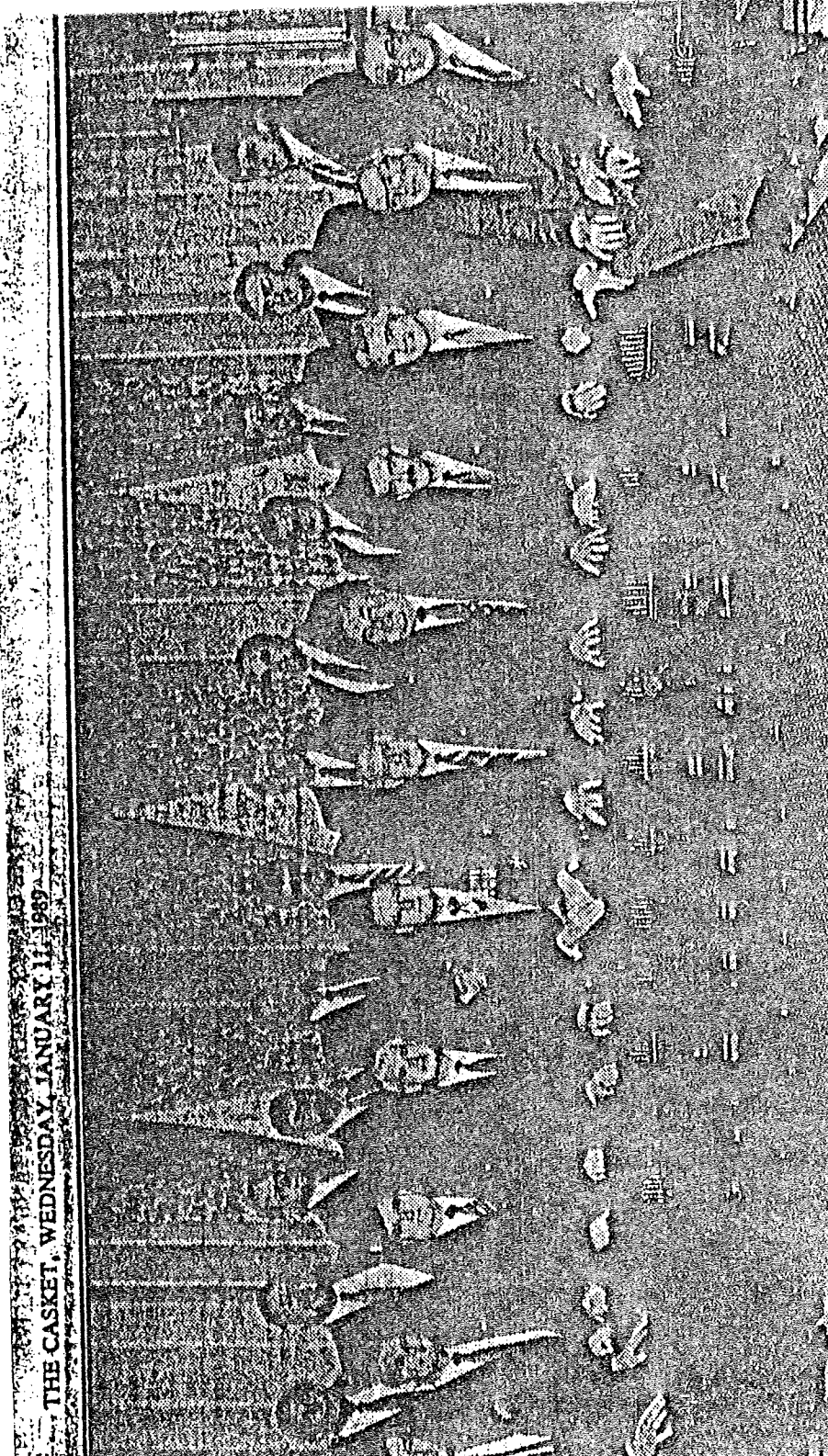


INTERNATIONAL BOYCOTT

An international consumer boycott against the Swiss-based Nestle company and the U.S.-based American Home Products (AHP) was announced in October by Action for Corporate Responsibility (Action). The boycott has been called to protest the companies aggressive promotion of infant formula, their violations of the World Health Organization/UNICEF Code regulating promotion of infant formula and the danger to infant health resulting from their practices.

According to Action, Nestle and American Home Products promote infant formula by dumping supplies of formula on hospitals and maternity wards, a marketing technique which has been condemned by the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and other leading international medical authorities because it can result in infant malnutrition and disease. Action's announcement comes four days to the year after the original Nestle Boycott was ended with an agreement from that company that it would restrict its supply promotion.

Information about which products to boycott can be obtained at the Women's Resource Center.

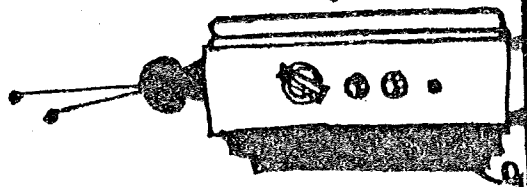


THE NOVA SCOTIA CABINET was sworn in Thursday, January 5, by Lieutenant Governor Alan Abraham. Shown above are Tom McInnis (seated, left); Ken Streatich, Roland Thornhill, Roger Bacon, Lieutenant Governor Abraham, Premier John Buchanan, Jack MacIsaac, Terry

Donahoe, Joel Matheson, Ron Giffin, and George Moody. Standing are Ron Russell (left), Colin Stewart, George Archibald, Chuck MacNeil, Donald McInnes, Guy LeBlanc, Donald Cameron, Greg Kerr, John Leefe, David Nantes, Brian Young and Neil LeBlanc. (N.S. Gov't photo)

What's wrong with this picture?

"Mercy, it's the revolution" and I'm in my bathrobe."



"Over the past ten years,
men have increased their participation
in household tasks... by six minutes."



UPCOMING CONFERENCES

EXPLORATIONS IN FEMINIST THEOLOGY: AN ECUMENICAL READING WEEK
FEB. 19-23, 7pm SUNDAY - 1pm THURSDAY
TATAMAGOUCHE CENTRE
COST \$160

COUNSELLING ADULT SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE:
A WORKSHOP FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARA-PROFESSIONALS
MARCH 9-10, 9am-5pm
HENSON COLLEGE, DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
COST \$175

NEWSLETTERS WILL NO LONGER BE SENT TO NON-MEMBERS! IF YOU
WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE RECEIVING A NEWSLETTER PLEASE RE-NEW
YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 1988-89. THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE
ALREADY DONE SO.

ANTIGONISH MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

FEES:
Regular: \$15.00
Low-income: \$ 7.00
Sustaining: \$25.00



"Thank goodness! I was scared to death he'd stay that dragon and I'd have to marry him."

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, 204B Kirk Place
219 Main Street...Phone: 863-6221

February - March 1989

- | | | | |
|-------|----------|----|--|
| Wed. | February | 1 | WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP - pre-registration necessary - Resource Centre, 7:30 pm |
| Tues. | February | 7 | WOMEN IN UNIONS, Ann Betts, Public Service Alliance, Alumni Lounge, Bloomfield Centre, St. FXU, 7:30pm |
| Fri. | February | 10 | FRIDAY LUNCH - PARENT'S DISCUSSION Resource Centre, 12-2pm |
| Fri. | February | 10 | AWA VALENTINE SOCIAL, CAMR, 7:30pm Bring sweets, friends, love tokens |
| Fri. | February | 17 | FRIDAY LUNCH - CARIBBEAN WOMEN'S GROUP (video), Resource Centre, 12-2pm |
| Sat. | February | 25 | ANGER WORKSHOP, Helen Levine, Trinity United Church, New Glasgow, 10-4pm, pre-register, \$10.00 |
| Sun. | February | 26 | WOMEN AGING, Helen Levine, Resource Centre, 1-4pm |
| Fri. | March | 3 | FRIDAY LUNCH, discussion "Other Women in Our Lives", Resource Centre 12-2pm |
| Sat. | March | 4 | INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY DANCE 8pm (call 863-6221 for location) |
| Wed. | March | 8 | INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, OPEN HOUSE, Resource Centre, 9am-4pm |
| Wed. | March | 8 | IWD PLAY, "THE INDEPENDENT WOMAN (OR A MAN HAS HIS PRIDE)", CAMR 7:30pm |
| Fri. | March | 10 | FRIDAY LUNCH - PARENT'S DISCUSSION, Resource Centre, 12-2pm |
| Fri. | March | 17 | FRIDAY LUNCH - AIDS, Janie Humphreys, Resource Centre, 12-2pm |
| Sat. | March | 18 | ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING WORKSHOP, Alex Keir, Resource Centre, 10-3pm |
| Tues. | March | 28 | EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT SOCIAL ASSISTANCE, Jeanne Fay, Resource Centre, 1-4pm |
| Fri. | March | 31 | FRIDAY LUNCH, discussion, "Our Bodies, Our Friends?", Resource Centre, 12-2pm |