

I propose that one of the most positive steps we can take to control this insidious influence is to rid our homes of the most powerful and addictive technology yet invented, the television. I personally think that positive social change is impossible as long as we continue to embrace television in our homes. When I drive home at night and see the "blue light" coming out of peoples windows I am very disturbed to think about the loss of vast tracts of human energy and creativity as so many lives waste away in front of the tube.

To me the negative effects of television viewing far outweigh any suggestion of it's benefits. Television has become a very detrimental to real human progress and I will now briefly outline a few of my main objections.

- 1.T.V. is a huge time sink, it robs us continually, all that time could be put towards fruitful, playful, social or other productive uses. I deem the experience of doing 'nothing' (ie. thinking) to be more productive than T.V. consumption.
- 2.The medium of T.V. is so basically boring that for things to appear interesting every event has to be broken up into hyperactive, bite sized bits to hold our attention. It does this well, I have been seduced myself. This method results in lowered attention spans, especially for our children (teachers have to compensate for this with great difficulty)and it creates increasing dissatisfaction in our every day lives as our own reality could never be as diverse or exciting or titillating.
- 3.As T.V. provides us with so much- all the answers, all the excitement all the resolutions, all the fantasy, all the overload- not much is left to the viewer to do save to turn it on or off, it does not invite participation and leads us into passivity.
4. Passivity is desirable if you are a member of the "power over" elites. T.V.stations are controlled by powerful corporate and politically biased entities.Keeping the masses suppressed maintains the status quo. This is not a haphazard effect of the technology it is a well understood and highly manipulated aspect of an extremely addictive medium. T.V. is perhaps the most serious drug problem in western culture.
- 5.T.V. is a tool of the advertizers and all kinds of suggestive and subliminal techniques are used to influence and alter our behaviour. Consumption is very much a learned behaviour.

I could go on for pages as I have personally witnessed these negative effects but I would like to end by saying that I have not lived with a television in my home for 18 years and my life is incredibly full and vital, there are no shortage of things to do and I would like to emphasize my final point that T.V. has destroyed much of our social interaction without television there is lots more to do with your family, friends and neighbours. If any of you out there would like some help in ridding this menace from your household just give me a call and I'll be over right away with my sledgehammer.

WAR BABIES



—Janet Zandy

Sin M'Le2

A mother refuses her son toy guns

Bam! Got you. You're dead meat."

A 10-year-old suburban tough jumps out of a bush and greets me with his Uzi water pistol. It's another militant imperialist stepping out of his cozy family room and into the sunshine and open street combat. Before long there will be whole armies of them blasting each other around well-tended bushes and manicured lawns.

Springtime, and naked warfare begins.

Well, that's how it looks to me. To others—to most others—it is children at play. Or, to be precise, boy children at play. It's not that I think girls are incapable of picking up a toy grenade and throwing it, or whacking away with a toy machete. But the social conditioning is such that you just don't see it.

Look around; it's mostly boys. Walk down any elementary school corridor and look at children's art. The posters break down by gender: The girls have rainbows; the boys have bombs.

Adults can talk about socialization, but for kids, war is, well, war. They like clearly defined enemies, and they like to kill 'em. My son was no different. I could see his eyes mist over at the sight of K-

Mart's array of boy toys, that is, guns. Everywhere we shopped, guns were there—supermarkets, drug-

stores, at the beach, in the mountains, small town and big city. I would look into his earnest 6-year-old eyes and see him saying, "I know you don't want me to have them. Mom. Just looking."

Mine said back, "I want to please you, I want to make you happy, but no guns, no guns."

Such was the dilemma my son and I faced. He loved guns and his mother would not let him have them.

That was the line I drew, but circumstances, the actual living, often blurred it. The truth is that my son in his younger days was a genius at making a gun out of just about anything. All his artwork and craft projects of tongue depressors, macaroni, and toothpicks became,

alas, guns. I lavished him with Lego sets, hoping my young man would construct some monument to world harmony. Instead, Lego guns, all over the house. When I would point a disapproving finger and ask, "What are they?" he would answer, "Helping rays. You see, Mom, you point them at people and out blast these helping rays."

Even when the "helping rays" were abandoned or discouraged, my son, I knew—and he knew I knew—went out to a neighborhood infected with guns. One kid had every toy gun known to man or Mattel.

Occasionally I would call on my son while he was at play (war) with his neighborhood buddies. His name would be called and my presence announced: "Hey, your mother's here." Then a long pause.

In the distance, I could see my sweet and good-natured son disarm himself for his meeting with Mom. The heavy stuff would come off first, the shoulder machine gun, then the holster and six-shooters, and finally, a light touch, the switch-blade hidden in his sock.

"Hi, Mom. What?" And he was decent again.

He's too old now to play with guns. Actual hunting and the work and mess of killing an animal hold no attraction for him. His fingers do still twitch in the vicinity of a Nintendo button. But that is a violence clearly removed from the thing itself, the gun.

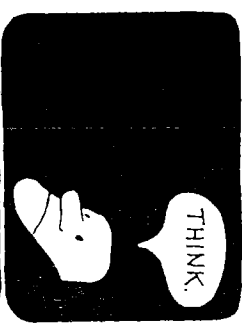
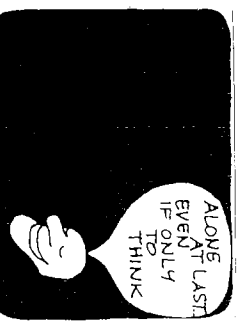
Perhaps he will always love this forbidden fruit. I don't know. I am sorry that he was the only boy on his block whose mother didn't allow him a gun.

The other day I saw a painting of a human hand shaped and aimed like a gun. The tip of the index finger exploded like the barrel of a

45. This is American culture.

I read the newspapers, see the faces of boy-men in Beirut, Gaza, Nicaragua, many places. I hear the real bullets.

And I wouldn't have done it differently.



THE HOT SELL

ADVERTISERS ARE USING MORE SEX TO SELL THEIR WARES DESPITE SOME PUBLIC CRITICISM

They are among the most arresting images on television. In the latest in a series of provocative commercials for Beemans chewing gum, the camera passes slowly over a series of taut female bodies clad variously in clinging blue-and-pink dresses, a blue bikini and form-fitting jeans. The sound track is the song *I'm a Man*. At the end, an announcer says, "Some things in life you just can't forget," and, as a pack of gum appears, he adds, "This is another." Elsewhere, in Pepsi-Cola Canada Ltd.'s advertisements for 7Up, the camera lingers over the lithe buttocks of the young female coach of a children's baseball team, while a voice in the background sings, "Are you up for it?" And now, Labatt Breweries of Canada has unveiled a commercial for its new Dry beer that consists of little more than water being tossed over a series of buxom female torsos in bathing suits. Like many members of women's advocacy groups and a growing number of his colleagues in the advertising industry, Robert Hawton, vice-president and creative director for Toronto-based McKim Advertising Ltd., has criticized sexually aggressive promotions such as the Dry commercial, which he described as nothing more than "a wet T-shirt contest on television."

But while they condemn the gratuitous use of sexual images, advertising industry executives and their critics alike also predict that advertisements aimed at young male consumers—who still dominate the markets for products ranging from beer to auto parts—will continue to become more explicit. For their part, advertisers and agency executives say that they have to use graphic, sexually charged

images to capture the attention of the so-called grazers—people with remote channel-changers who flip to other programs during commercials—and to attract buyers who are bombarded by hundreds of product promotions every day.

JOHN DALY

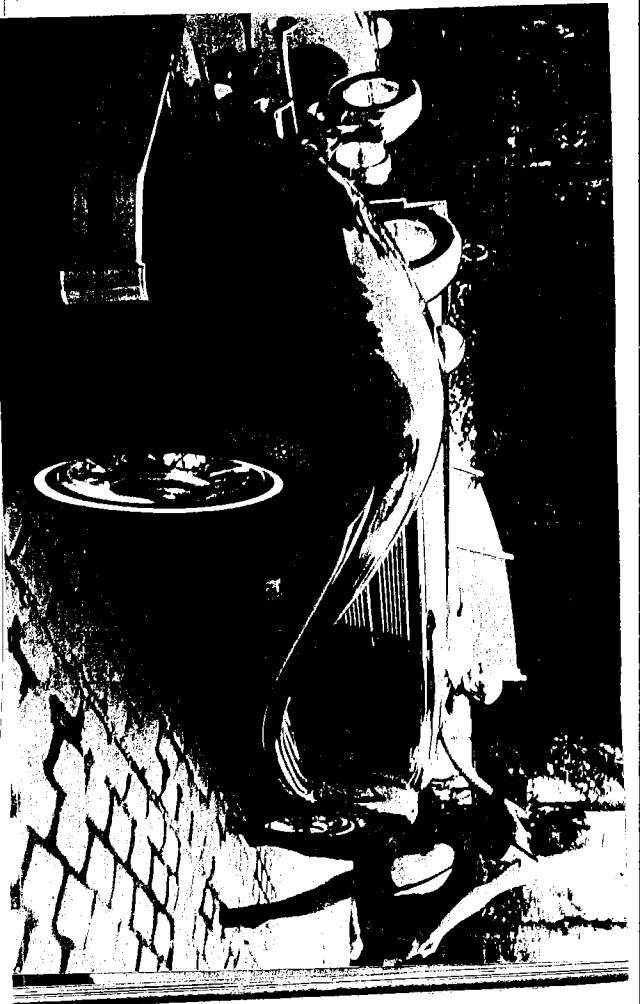


advertisement appearing in *Decor* magazine, submitted by Rachel Dobson, Orono, Maine

THE LINK BETWEEN PORNOGRAPHY AND CRIME

CANADIAN COALITION AGAINST MEDIA PORNOGRAPHY

- In Toronto last April, David Dobson, 18, killed 16 year old Darlene Prioriello. Darlene drowned in her own blood, and was awake through most of the ordeal. Dobson bit her, burned her hair, stuck a safety pin through her breast, jabbed a nail in her side, and finally crushed her head with a 70 pound concrete block. When asked why he did it Dobson said, "I saw it in a magazine once." (Toronto Star, April 1983)
- Theodore Bundy, convicted torture-killer of 20 women (one a 12 year old), admitted that brutal murder was for him the logical conclusion of his taste for violent pornography. He said that the thrill was in watching pain and humiliation of female, "... In his apartment, police found a large quantity of pornographic films. (Windsor Star, 30 April 1984)
- A 12 year old in Providence, Rhode Island, has been charged with sexual assault on a 10 year old girl on a pool table. He spent many afternoons watching the trial of the gang rape at Big Dan's bar in Massachusetts, and authorities believe he was acting out what he saw. (Ottawa Citizen, April 1984)
- Clifford Olson killed and buried nine B.C. children. In his apartment was found a large collection of child and violent pornography.



Women in the media

What are the messages??

Two messages most clear about women in the media are "women are to be objectified as pretty, decorative, sexual commodities for the pleasure of men, women are, and can be controlled by men with ever increasing violence. Recently I picked up a copy of news week magazine in which the key article was "Violence goes Mainstream", pointing out that extremely violent movies and books are being seen and read by a regular mainstream audience. Yes it continued "the stationwagon set bumper to bumper at the local cinema 1-2-3-4-5 being titillated by the largest schlocky horror picture show." The conglomerated, amalgamated media corporations obligingly churn out increasingly vicious movies, books and records "Mayhem goes mainstream" is the quote, and we are told that in all of pop culture (as in most of societies) women are the victims of choice. "Consider this a divorce". Arnold Schwarzenegger bellows just before he blows his wife away in "Total Recall". Audiences love it the article says. She got hers just like Laura Palmer, Twin Peakes home coming queen who was a "slut" got hers. An awful lot of hostility against women is being played out in popular cultures these days and its not pretty the article continues. (And don't we know it). In the United States women groups are boycotting the novel, American Psycho and the movie "Silence of the lambs" saying they are misogynistic and prime examples of media portrayal of women as objects to be murdered and mutilated.

" These messages reinforce the idea of women as victims, that you can treat women abusively, make them suffer and somehow its all right because women don't count as much... says Dr. Jane Gorden, sociologist Mount St. Vincent in an article on research and Violence against women in the Chronicle Herald April 10/91.

" She begged me not to kill her I gave her a rose
Then slit her throat watched her shake till her eyes closed had
sex with the corpse before I left her and drew my name on the
wall like Helter Skelter"

That's from the Geto Boys Recent album mind of a lunatic", a sort of American Psycho with a bass line which sold 5000,000 copies. Of course there are many who would argue that none of this means much but I believe that in this society at this time mass produced and mass consumed books records and TV affect a considerable part of our real lives and contribute greatly to making us behave the way we do. And the women hating theme that runs through a male dominated culture is raised a few notches or the violence is increased mainstreams at the ~~age~~ time war, oppression, domination increase on a horrifying scale world wide .. which would lead me to surmise that like pornography it takes more and more to accomplish less and less (titillation) and it takes more and more mainstream violence to lower our response and out rage at the global violence of our "man made world".

As the violent messages increase the impact of the media becomes a force that is extremely hard to challenge .. How far does this have to go before break down and breakthrough out of a nightmare to a more sane world ... Can we make it and what are our chances???

Barbara Hayes

ON KIDS AND SLASHER MOVIES

Do kids need horror to deal with everyday life?

It's a simple thing, really. I shouldn't take it so seriously. I realize that. For it was only a child, a boy of about 10, buying a toy. For Halloween. This was the toy.

A sinister white mask and a quite convincing little rubber meat cleaver. Packaged together in cellophane. It's the "costume" of a maniac killer from one of the slasher movies. The boy wants to play at being a faceless, unstoppable murderer of innocent people (mostly women). At this moment, in this Woolworth's, that's this boy's idea of fun.

Understand that I didn't stand there and decide intellectually that this simple and small event is, when all is said and done, the worst thing I've seen. My body decided. My intestines, my knees, my chest. It was only later that I tried to think about it.

This boy's eagerness to "play" maniac killer is an event worse than the Bomb, worse even than Auschwitz. Reduced to its simplest terms, the bomb is a fetish, an object of worship—like other objects of worship before it, it is used as an excuse for arranging the world in a certain fashion, allocating resources, assigning powers. It is insane, but in many ways it is an extension of familiar, even honored, insanities. As for the Nazi camps: The people being murdered knew, as they were being murdered, *that* they were being murdered; the murderers knew they were murdering; and, when the world finally knew, the camps became the measure of ultimate human evil. A crime to scar us all, and our descendants, forever.

There is nothing so clear in the Woolworth's scene. The boy is certainly not committing a crime. The toy's merchandisers are within their rights. To legislate against them would be to endanger most of our freedoms. The mother buying the toy is perhaps making a mistake, perhaps not. Without knowing the boy, and knowing him well, who's to be certain that it isn't better for him to engage in, rather than repress, such play? The mother did not put the desire for the toy in him. Three thousand years of Judeo-Christian culture did that. Nor has the mother the power to take that desire from him. Nobody has that power. If he can want the toy at all, then it almost doesn't matter whether the toy exists or not. Doesn't the boy's need for such play exist with or

without the toy?

Nor would I be too quick to blame the boy's desire on television and slasher films. The Nazis who crewed the camps and the scientists who built the bomb did not need television and slasher films to school them in horror. In fact, the worst atrocities from the pharaohs to Vietnam were committed quite ably before the first slasher film was made. Keeping your child away from TV may make *you* feel better, but can any child be protected from the total weight of Western history?

In a world shorn of order, stripped of traditions, molting every decade, every year, a dancing, varicolored snake of a century—pointless violence is evident everywhere, on every level. Professional soldiers are statistically safer than urban women; senseless destruction is visited on trees and on the ozone and on every species of life. No one feels safe anywhere. This has become the very meaning of the 20th century.

So I am in a Woolworth's one day and I feel a sort of final horror as I watch a boy buy a psycho-killer toy so that he can pretend he's an unstoppable maniacal murderer. What is so horrible is that this boy is doing this instinctively, for his very survival. In order to live, in order not to go mad, this boy is acclimating himself to the idea of the killer-maniac, because killer-maniac energy is so present in his world. He's trying to inoculate himself through play, as all children have, everywhere, in every era. He thus lets a little bit of the energy into him—that's how inoculations work. Too little, and he is too afraid of the world—it's too terrifying to feel powerless amid the maniacal that's taken for granted around him; to feel any power at all he needs a bit of it inside him. But if he takes in too much, he could be swamped.

How horrible that he is forced to such a choice. You'd think it would be enough to stop the world in its tracks. And what can we do for him? Struggle for a different world, yes, but that won't change what's already happened to him. What can we do for that boy except be on his side, stand by his choice, and pray for the play of his struggling soul?

—Michael Ventura
L.A. Weekly (Nov. 3, 1989)

33c Classic Suburban Sale

PENN HILLS \$45,000
BEAT YOUR WIFE
to the phone! make an appointment to see this 4 BR 1 1/2 story completely remod with 1 1/2 baths fin. gamrm with bar new w/w carpet covered porch or
Call

REAL ESTATE

real estate advertisement from the Pittsburgh Press, submitted by Lynne Paladino-Graney, Gibsonia, Pa.

The liberation of women does not come through men making concessions to women, but through constant organised struggle by women, through their effective contribution at the political, social and productive levels.

The Organisation of Omani Women

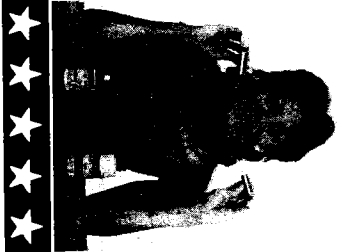


If your wife can't cook

DON'T DIVORCE HER -
KEEP HER FOR A PET AND
EAT AT OUR PLACE

matchbook cover from Wisconsin, submitted anonymously

THIS IS DEBBIE. SHE WANTS YOU TO HAVE THIS PAIR IN YOUR CAR!



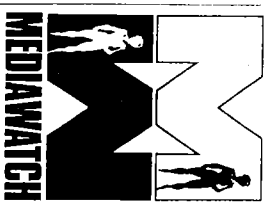
FIVE STAR

THEY'RE OUR MOLYBDENUM AND TEFLON® GREASE GUNS. ADD THEM TO OUR SPRAY RACING OIL AND SPRAY RACING MOTOR CLEANER AND YOU'VE GOT PERFECT PROTECTION FOR THE MAINTENANCE OR TUNING-UP OF ANY R/C VEHICLE.
THE SPRAY OIL FOAMS DIRT AND GRIME OUT OF BEARINGS AND ALL HIDDEN MOVING PARTS. LEAVING THEM PROTECTED AND LUBRICATED. THE MOTOR CLEANER CLEANS THE CARBON/GREASE BUILD UP GIVING YOUR ELECTRICAL COMPONENTS AND MOTOR MORE POWER FOR THAT WINNING EDGE!
WE HAVE BATTERIES, BECKS, BEARINGS AND MANY OTHER R/C ITEMS. ASK FOR THEM AT YOUR R/C DEALER.

(AND YES DEALERS, DEBBIE WORKS FOR US. SO CALL HER AT (313) 477-2813 FOR MORE DETAILS)

Division of ATLANTIC BRASS CO. • P.O. Box 304 • Farmington, MI 48024

STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE: MEDIAWATCH (AND OTHER) COMPLAINT ACTIONS



Tova Wagnan

Tova Wagnan, qui travaille depuis quatre ans dans le département de défense des consommateurs à Évaluation-Médias à Vancouver, croit fermement que les femmes devraient militer contre le sexisme dans les médias. Dans cet article instructif, elle décrit différentes stratégies pour porter des plaintes.

The impact of media imagery and symbolism in our culture is overwhelming. We are constantly being bombarded with media images of women that are sexist, exploitive, and degrading. When we see a program on TV that really offends us, we can sometimes see how subtle sexism can be. For example, MediaWatch had several complaints about coverage of women's events in the Olympic Games. Most of them concerned the announcers' referring to women as "girls" and "young ladies."

This kind of sexism is degrading to women. When we perceive such sexism, we may get angry, sad, and may even tell a friend. Then what? Often that's as far as it goes. The program continues, or the ad gets reprinted. The station is raking in the bucks. People continue to watch, and everyone is happy. Well, not quite. Certainly the station is happy, but what happens to those of us who have to see this every time we turn on the TV or read a magazine?

Many times it seems futile to complain or to take action against sexism in the media. Often when you do call a station, for example, you get transferred from department to department. No one wants to take responsibility. There are, however, ways to complain that often produce positive results. The following includes a list of strategies that suggest how to complain, where, information on MediaWatch and our complaint forms, and a complaint form success story.

Where and How To Complain

1. **Letter writing:** Writing letters as a form of complaint is effective for complaining about things such as store window-displays. Send a letter to the store and to a newspaper editor, American and Canadian media, school boards, etc. Make certain your letter is written in the proper letter format, as this holds more credibility. In your letter say what you're complaining about, why, and what could have been done differently. You may want to include what you're going to do, for example: "I have read *Châtelaine* for twelve years, and if this ad continues to run, I will reconsider renewing my subscription in the fall." Sign it, get a copy, and send the original off. Try to get a few people to complain with you. If you're complaining about print media, get a copy of the ad/article to send with the letter.

2. **Phone Calls:** If it's a local ad/article/program, etc. you are complaining about, you can phone and let them know what you think. Recently a Vancouver printing press stopped the printing of a Red Hot Video catalogue be-

cause several people called and protested. The more people who call, the better. Note the time of the call, the person's name, and what they say to you. This could come in handy later if you want to write a letter or article about the complaint as another strategy.

3. **In Person:** Complaining in person is good because you're right there to speak your mind. If you walk by a store that sells porn, or has an offensive manikin display, you can go right in and ask to speak to the manager. If the manager isn't there, tell the clerk what you found offensive. You may leave a note for the manager to call you or get her/his number.

4. **Demonstrations:** Demonstrations are a good action when you want to complain about something that has been going on for a long time unchanged. Along with others, you can get your point across and make your objection known to the public through media coverage. If you find something offensive in your community, call other community or women's groups you think might be interested in protesting with you. For example, when Doug Collins suggested MediaWatch and its army of snoops be raped by the Russians on CKVU television last summer, we called, among others, the Russian community centre. His comment insinuated that Russians are rapists. When organizing a demonstration:

- Be clear what you're demonstrating against.
- Think about what you want to get across to the public.
- Get together and work with others who've organized demonstrations before.
- Notify the media through press releases or by phone.
- Know in advance who in your group will talk to the media.
- Have identifiable marshalls to keep people together.
- Have petitions or printed materials (song sheets, leaflets, etc.) ready to hand out.
- If you're organizing a march, print up a map of the route to hand out (preferably beforehand).
- Be organized and loud with your protests.

5. **Media Watch Complaint Forms:** MediaWatch complaint forms (available in French and English) can be used to complain about any Canadian media. The complaint has a great impact on advertisers specifically, as one complaint (in their estimation) represents approximately 44 consumers. Therefore, if 10 people complain about the same ad, that's equivalent to 440 people complaining: the ad will most likely be removed. The complaint form forces the broadcasting and print industries to be accountable for their sexism. The complaint is sent to different places depending on the particular medium:

- All ads from all media go directly to the advertisers.
- TV/radio broadcast complaints go to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) in Ottawa.

- CBC radio and TV go to the CBC.
- B.C. and other Canadian press councils sometimes receive print content complaints, as do the newspapers themselves.
- Magazine complaints go directly to the magazine.
- The Canadian Radio Television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) gets copies of almost every complaint sent out except print complaints. This includes pay TV.

Take action while the program or ad is being shown, heard, or published. Keep it current. Make sure your name and address is on each complaint form and is legible. Identify TV and radio sources by their call letters (for example, CBC, not channel 3). Include what you find offensive, and how it could be improved. A general statement, such as "that program was disgusting" will not get much consideration, but "that program was disgusting because the woman was always naked and being watched by a man..." will.

An important thing to remember when registering complaints is that you are not the only person responsible for doing something about the offensive material. The ad agency, the publisher, TV station, etc. all had something to do with distributing the content for public consumption. Somewhere along the line after you complain, someone will have to take responsibility.

For example, when MediaWatch presented briefs to the CRTC on pay TV, warning that undefined and unregulated "adult" programming would open the way to pornography on home television, the CRTC did nothing in the way of restricting the materials on First Choice/Premier Choix pay television. Now the responsibility lies in their hands to do something about movies like *Vice Squad*, *Private Lessons*, and *Playboy Fridays*. They have had to propose new regulations on sexually abusive programming, and are trying to get a new clause into the Broadcasting Act passed by Parliament in order to back up this regulation. We need to pressure governments and agencies to do something about media which offend and exploit women.

You can achieve success in getting media changed or removed through complaint action.

When you are launching a complaint, remember: the more people who complain about the same thing, the better; always make sure you include your name and address and that it's readable; include a copy of the ad, article, picture, etc. with the complaint (unless it's a billboard!); if you see something in the media that deserves praise, praise it.

If you would like information, complaint/comment forms, or want to read a complaint to someone and get feedback, phone MediaWatch at (604) 731-0457 or write to us: MediaWatch, 250-1820 Fir Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3B1. We can also send you the address and phone number of the MediaWatch representative in your area.

Tova Wagnan works in the Consumer Advocacy Department of MediaWatch in Vancouver.

*****Video Rental Policies in Antigonish

Several video rental businesses (Pioneer, Radio Shack, Webb's, Needs, Brendan's Fairway and Sobey's) were contacted about their rental policy. All rented the typical government classifications: General, Adult, and Restricted. There seemed to be some confusion about the age allowance (16-19) to rent movies. For R movies the law says 18 yrs. Some places seemed to allow underage rental with parental consent. Webb's was the only place that rented "x-rated" movies (age 21 or over). This would be the pornographic type material. I was told that these were kept in a binder on the counter.

There was no indication in the government classification information of "x-rated". But when I talked with the Dept. of Consumer Affairs I had the impression that there was a sub-category in R of Exotic (party movies). Is "x-rated" one step beyond that?

Recent new laws say that Exotic movies are supposed to be kept apart and separate (different room, behind counter) or at 6' or above, if this is done the video cassette cases have to be covered with only the titles showing. Needs store should be applauded because they do not sell Playboy or Penthouse! At Sobey's a person needs to be 16 and over with 2 pieces ID to rent anything.

All movies are rated in Halifax. The video distributors (who rent the movies to the outlets) get a copy of the ratings and captions and have the responsibility of applying them to the videos. Dept. of Consumer Affairs says it checks the outlets once or twice a year to make sure the laws are obeyed.

GENERAL: Suitable for all ages - family entertainment.

ADULT: 14 and over, theme or content may be more mature than G.

Violence, Some nudity, or coarse language.

RESTRICTED: 18 and over; more violence, torture, graphic depiction of horror, nudity, sexual activity, & language!



BUT WE DON'T NEED A FOOD BANK HERE IN ANTIGONISH, DO WE ??:

Yes we do.

In this time of recession more and more people are finding it difficult to feed themselves and/or their families. The Women's Centre receives, on the average, at least one request for food per week. Other local organizations as well have been feeling the urgent needs of people on low income budgets.

In February of this year the Women's Centre called a meeting of all those interested in establishing a food bank in Antigonish, and approximately forty people crowded into the St. James United Church parlour. A week after this excellent response, an information session was held at the C.A.C.L. for anyone interested in learning more about how a food bank operates. Mary Deadder, coordinator of the Colchester Food Bank, described her group's origin, philosophy and daily procedures. She stressed that a food bank must always guard the dignity of those whom it serves. Any of us could be in a difficult situation at some point, and the food bank is a place to get a helping hand. It is not so much a "charity" as it is an opportunity for neighbours to help neighbours through rough times.

Since February a committee of volunteers has been meeting and trying to find an operating space for a local food bank. The "Antigonish Town and County Good Neighbour Food Bank" will be ready to start as soon as this location is found. If anyone has any space to offer (even one room with running water would be sufficient) please let us know! You can contact Rosalie at 863-1120 or Diane at 863-1848. Watch this space and other local media for updates.

PROVINCIAL FUNDING FOR WOMEN'S CENTERS

The provincial government has denied funding to Women's Centers. Marie Dechman, Minister of Community Services, claims Women's Centers are a federal responsibility. She said, "The federal government clearly stated it's their mandate...to provide women with access to equality and the means to organize to get there and the provincial government has not taken on that responsibility."

Women's Centers are asking the province for \$40,650 per year to cover the costs of direct service delivery to individual women and community groups. Such services include peer counselling sessions, support groups, advocacy and referral services. All the Women's Centers in Nova Scotia currently operate in rural areas where other services for women are limited.

Women's Centers often work in a preventive manner, helping women with health, employment, financial and legal problems to define their situation, and develop a plan of action and access appropriate agencies. Women's Centers are often the only door open to women in crisis and are a vital component in the social service network. Women are referred to Women's Centers by Community Services, Mental Health-local hospitals, Legal Aid, Ministers, Priests, and service organizations.

Women's Centers serve the women of Nova Scotia. It is the responsibility of the province to promote equality for women in N.S. It is a provincial, as well as, a federal responsibility. It is time for the province to take responsibility for its own part in discriminating against women and to address the students by providing more subsidized childcare, enforcing maintenance payments, taking an active role in preventing violence against women, implementing a non-sexist educational system, ensuring gender parity in all government departments and agencies, and funding Women's Centers.

Both the Liberals and the New Democrats have promised to fund Women's Centers in Nova Scotia should they form the next government. They recognize the services Women's Centers offer to their communities, as well as, the widespread support for Women's Centers among the general public.

Please take a few minutes to express your support for provincial funding of Women's Centers by writing to:

Hon. Marie Dechman
Minister of Community Services
Legislative Assembly
Halifax, NS

Premier Don Cameron
Legislative Assembly
Halifax, NS

Dr. Bill Gillis
7 Sunset Terrace
Antigonish, NS

*Please send copies to Vince
MacLean and Alexa McDonough

Women perform 3/4 of
the world's working
hours yet they receive
only 1/4 of world income
& own less than 1% of
the world's property



We must act now
to end the second
class status of
women, to reverse
male domination, &
to destroy stereo-
typing.



er. new paragraph



The "War is Over" but peace work must continue if we are to stop the build up of arms that is even now accelerating at the close of the Gulf War. The Canadian Voice of Women, and their sister provincial groups like Voice of Women-Nova Scotia, have been offering a different vision of the world since they were first formed 30 years ago. All through the Gulf War women's voices told of their concerns, their horror at the war, their positive alternatives. Canadian women spoke out against violent means of dealing with conflicts and suggested as well as demonstrated non-violent ones.

The work of the Voice of Women has had a tremendous impact during the Gulf War. Demonstrations and marches were organized, letter-writing campaigns initiated, vigils were held, talk-shows were devoted to interviewing women like Betty Peterson (Halifax) who held a daily vigil from December 10 till the close of the war, and Maude Barlow (Ottawa) who met along with other women high-ranking members of the Iraqi parliament just days before the war started. This work doesn't cost much given the fact that most of it is done by volunteers, but like all activist work there are some costs.

The Canadian Voice of Women has recently made a plea for members to help in recruiting new members, or reviving old ones. They need to replenish their coffers. I'd like to ask you to join me as a member of the Canadian Voice of Women. Ever since I began a membership over a year ago I have been rewarded by feelings of complete belonging to a group of women who communicate their vision of a peaceful world with extraordinary clarity and wisdom. While I was doing a vigil in Antigonish the women in Halifax, especially Betty Peterson, gave constant moral support and inspiration. Even now they call to keep me informed of the goings on in the Halifax area "in case I'm in town." More often than not I go to "town" in order to join them in their activities simply because they feed a vast hunger in me for action that will lead to a better world, and companionship with women who understand that hunger.

Please give me a call if you'd like to join up (Registration fee \$25.00, low income \$10.), at home (863-4951) or work (867-3927). Or drop by the centre where I'll leave forms.

In Peace,

Tara Callaghan



Other Peace News:

- ④ A Peace Centre has opened in Halifax - 2164 Göttingen Street, 422-1931 - drop in for a visit next time you're in town.
- ④ There's a new issue of Perspective - the free alternate news paper about the Gulf war - titled New World Order in Perspective. Available at Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, Sunflower, Tara or Halifax Peace Centre.
- ④ The Canadian Red Cross will accept donations specially earmarked for Gulf Relief Aid. Send \$ to Canadian Red Cross Society, P. O. Box 366, Halifax, Nova Scotia. B3J 2P8. Be sure to mark it "for Gulf Relief Aid."



"I merely informed Hilda that feelings just weren't enough of a reason to oppose war."

- ④ There will be another meeting of the Roots to Peace Community Building group. This will be a great opportunity to voice your feelings about the process or the possibility of further meetings next fall. The meeting will be held at the Bopp's house, 29 Greening Drive, Antigonish. Call Michael or Judie at 863-0919 for more information.

AWA HOUSING PROJECT

"This place, it's a place to live. The rent is \$519 a month, utilities included, but I have to get out because it's too cold and the thermostat is locked up somewhere. I'm terrified to complain because he'll put me out. I'm always scared of that. It's not fair, for \$519 a month, you expect a place with heat."

Housing has always been a concern for women. Many women who come to the Women's Center identify housing as a major concern. Quality, affordable housing is difficult to secure in Antigonish town and lack of transportation makes it difficult for many women to live in the country.

The issue of housing cannot be separated from the issue of poverty. Securing quality, affordable housing is particularly difficult for single mothers living on a low income. Women receiving municipal social assistance must often pay higher rent than the shelter allowance they receive. The only place to find the extra money is in their meagre food allowance. They often face empty cupboards before the end of the month.

Quality, affordable housing is an issue for older women living alone on a fixed income. One woman called us for help with housing. She told us she sat in the dark because she couldn't afford her power bill. She said "I don't want a lot. But when you get to be 80 years old, you expect a little more comfort."

Women working part-time or low-wage jobs have difficulty finding affordable housing. Women are, too often, forced to remain in abusive relationships because adequate housing is not available.

This past year, the AWA applied to and received funding from CEIC to research the rental housing situation in Antigonish. Wendy Panagopoulos, Jackie Foley and Cindi Donovan worked on the project.

The project staff identified the 809 rental housing units in Antigonish. On consultation with Winston Jackson, St. F.X. University, they advised a survey questionnaire and method of sampling. Through surveying 187 rental units, project workers were able to identify grouped women vulnerable to housing problems. They documented the housing experiences of several women in Antigonish, including women on welfare, working poor, disabled women, and single mothers.

As a result of this research, we have learned several startling facts about the rental housing situation in Antigonish and Nova Scotia.

- *In Nova Scotia, the Human Rights Act does not protect women from discrimination on the basis of family status. Landlords can refuse to rent to single mothers with children.

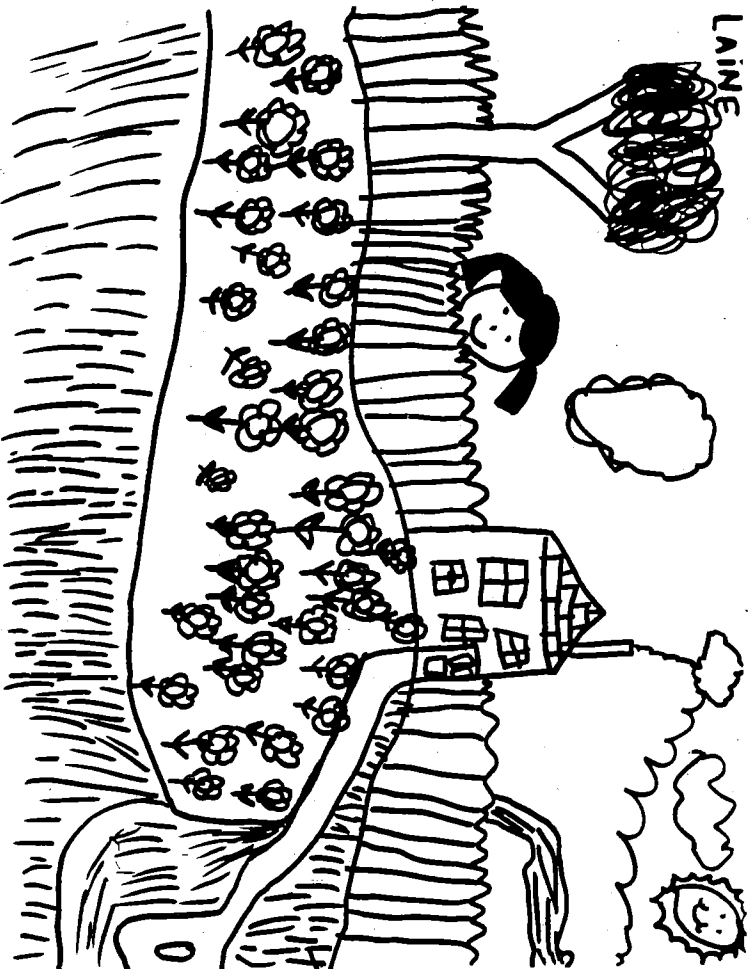
- *The average market rent, including utilities, in the town of Antigonish is \$592.93. A single mother with two children on municipal assistance receives a maximum \$400 for shelter allowance. This allowance includes heat, lights, water, and other shelter costs.

- *On average, in Antigonish, renters spend 37% of their income on rent. Economic stress is created when a person spending more than 30% of their income on rent. Some women are paying as much as 75% of their income on rent.

*12% of women live in extreme poverty in Antigonish.

*23% of respondents living in non-subsidized housing said they do not have enough money to eat proper meals after they pay their rent.

*The completed report on the Housing Project will be available in September.



SINGLE MOTHER'S SUPPORT GROUP

The Single Mothers' Support Group is in it's second year of operation. This group has served it's members' needs for association, education and recreation, and it has brought the women into contact with the resources and staff of the AWRC thereby helping them to solve problems and make concrete positive changes in their lives. Funding, (two grants of \$1400.00 each) comes from PLURA.

The group is open to single moms only and most of them live in poverty at this time. An atmosphere of respect and confidentiality prevails at the Tuesday evening weekly meetings. The women have used this "safe place" to discuss personal problems and to be validated and supported in their struggle.

The group began in March of 1990 and is now into a second phase which differs from the first in that rather than simply meeting for workshops, discussions and fun, the group is now focussing it's energies on producing a newsletter. This newsletter called "Shoestring News" is intended as a vehicle for low-income people to express their concerns and their thoughts to other low-income people, but also to the rest of the community in an attempt to raise awareness and understanding of poverty issues in this area. The first issue will be available by mid-to late May. This is a very exciting time for the group and should the first three, bi-monthly issues be successfully produced and circulated, and develop a large enough group of subscribers, it will continue under other funding initiatives. PLURA has no mandate to fund the same project more than once.