

AWARE



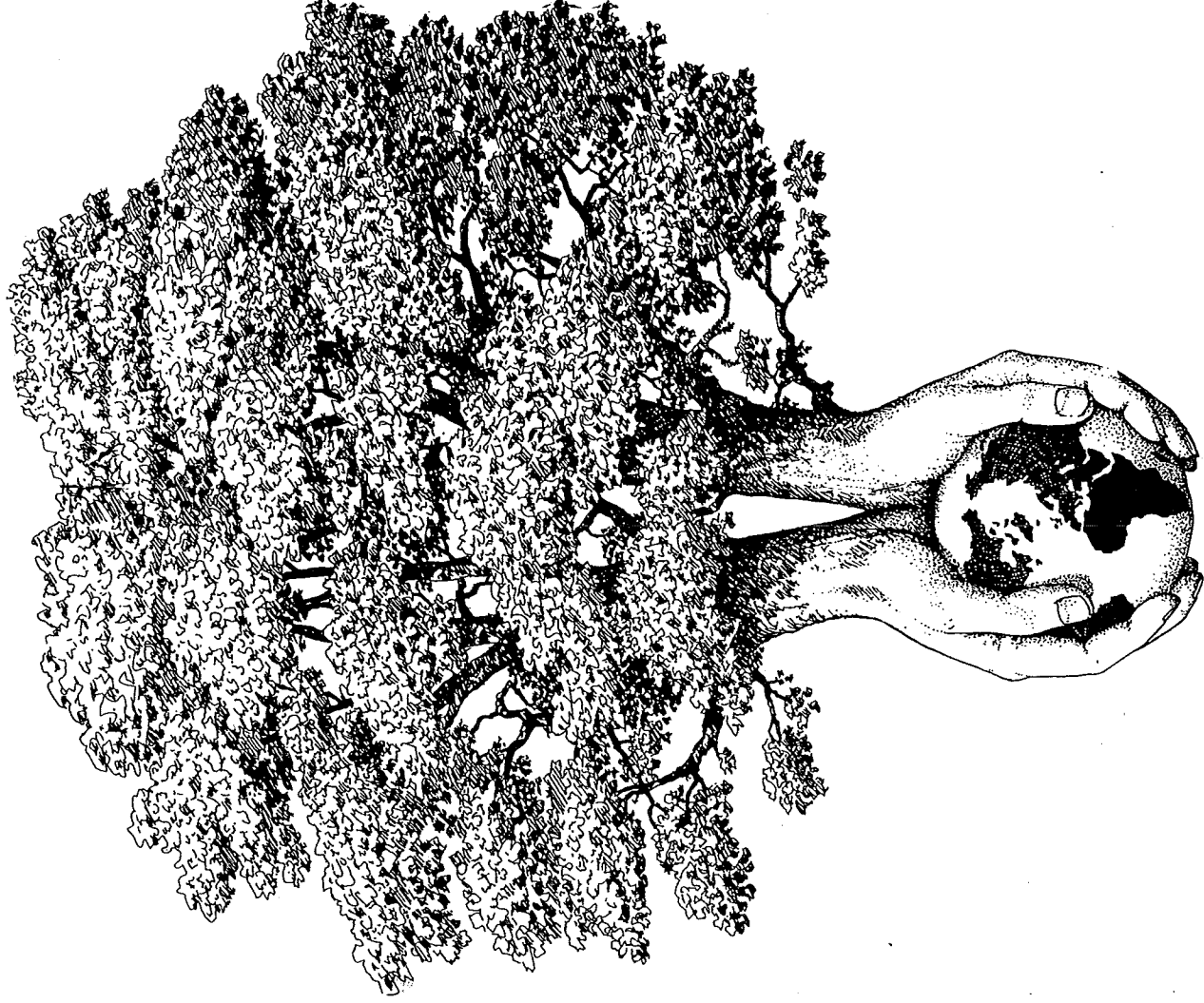
NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY ANTI-GONISH WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

RESOURCE CENTER

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SUMMER 1990

WOMEN UNDER SIEGE?



If you had a splendid fruit tree growing in your garden that gave you sweet-smelling blossoms in the Spring, beautiful green leaves in the Summer, and juicy fruit in the Fall, would you take a chance and transplant it in another part of the garden because you needed its original place for something you suddenly decided was more important?...Know that the gardener probably wouldn't, as her investment is far too big. And so is ours.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND TRADITION

Sexual harassment, as defined by the Saskatchewan Alliance Against Sexual Harassment is:

"...any unwanted sexually based or sexually oriented practice which creates discomfort and/or threatens a woman's personal well-being or functioning (mental, physical or emotional). Sexual harassment includes verbal abuse, jokes, leering, touching or any unnecessary contact, the display of pornographic material, the invasion of personal space, sexual assault and rape, or any threat of retaliation or actual retaliation for any of the above."

Sexual harassment can occur anywhere - on the job, on campus, in medical institutions or on the streets. Sexual harassment is a means through which those in power control those who are not. In our patriarchal society where sexuality is defined in male terms the most common form of sexual harassment comes from men and is directed at women. Although it is possible for a woman to harass a man sexually, this situation is rare. Women have been trained to be passive and sexually submissive whereas men have been trained to be the sexual aggressors. Women who are sexually aggressive "step out of line" and are viewed as promiscuous. This double standard alone makes it difficult for a woman to sexually harass a man.

As women we have been traditionally trained to view a sexual comment either as a joke or a compliment. We have been taught to ignore obscene gestures and to remain silent when our sexual privacy has been invaded. We have often felt guilty and deserving - that somehow we have done something to warrant this unwanted sexual attention from men. Despite the fact that sexual harassment is now considered an 'issue' many of us still hold on to traditional beliefs alleviating the blame from men and putting it on ourselves.

Although sexual harassment is an age old problem it is only since the mid-seventies that unwanted sexual attention has been labelled 'sexual harassment'. Identifying sexual harassment allowed many people to regard it as a social problem rather than an individual problem. Until this time victims of sexual harassment had no recourse through which they could complain. They simply had to deal with it on their own. Although labelling sexual harassment has allowed many women to 'come out' and report sexual harassment it has not however eliminated many of the problems which are deeply rooted in our patriarchal society.

The problems relating to sexual harassment simply do not disappear once women recognize that they have been harassed. Traditional beliefs often prevent women from reporting sexual harassment. Many women still feel compelled to give into sexual advances and others quit jobs they need to avoid sexual harassment. Some fail courses or receive lower grades while others are demoted, not promoted, transferred or fired. Violence is also a serious consequence of sexual harassment. Many women feel demoralized and helpless, often reacting to the situation with fear, anger and frustration. Some sexual harassment victims report a sense of guilt, feelings of shame and powerlessness similar to that of rape victims and battered wives.

It is estimated that 8 out of 10 women will experience sexual harassment at some point in their lives. The majority of women who do experience sexual harassment do not report it. For the women who do report sexual harassment they continue to confront obstacles along the way. Women often encounter: BLAME - 'What did she do to deserve it?', DISBELIEF - (Some people try to justify sexual harassment in mathematical terms. If one woman says she was sexually harassed by a particular man and 100 women say they were not harassed by that same man then perhaps she could be 'exaggerating' the event.) or TRIVIALIZING the act - 'She has no sense of humour.' When women report sexual harassment to The Human Rights Commission they are encouraged to settle. (Settling often means that the perpetrator pays the victim so she cannot say that he is guilty.) All of these obstacles act to silence women and keep us oppressed.

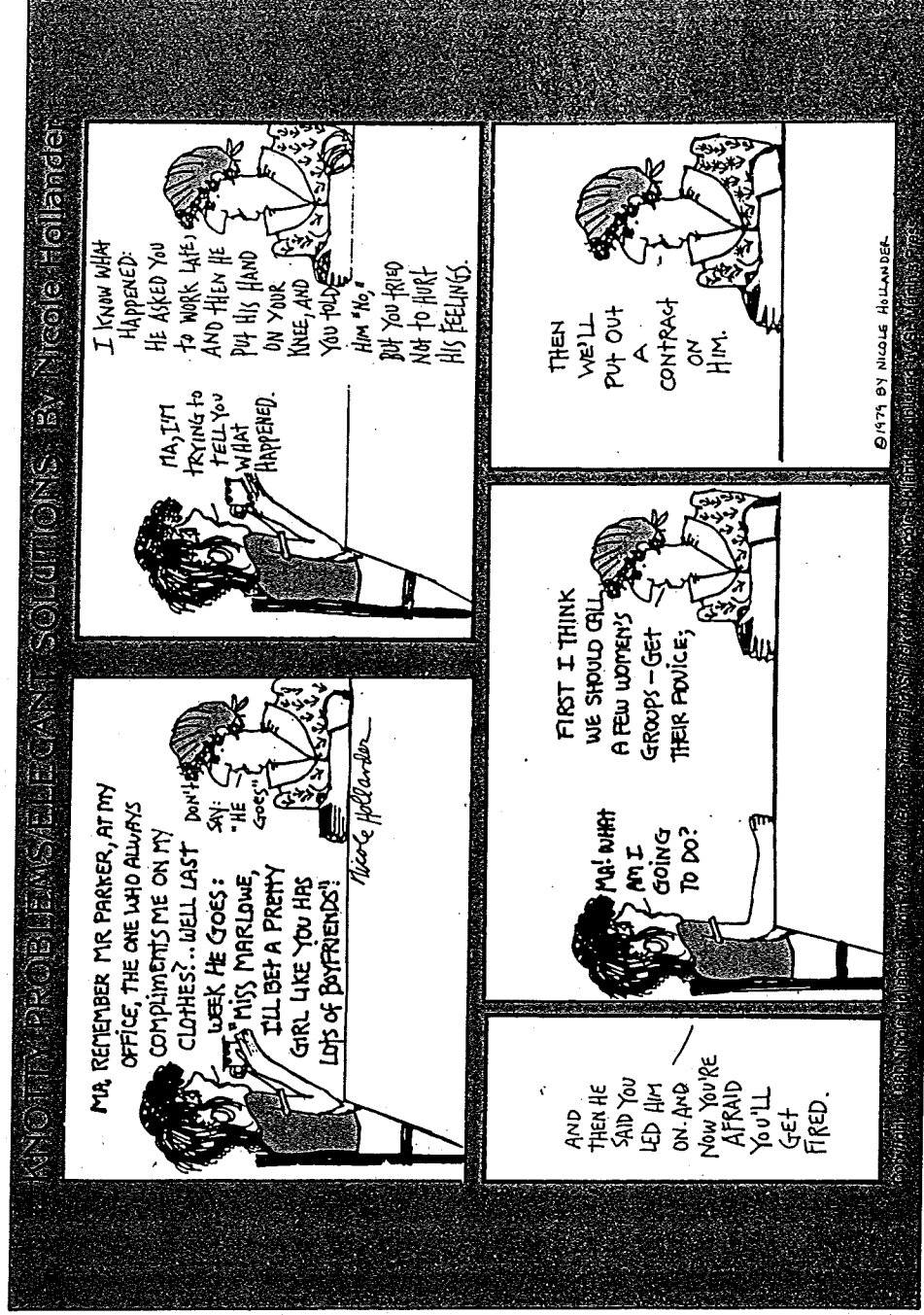
The barriers, such as sexual harassment, that women often encounter stem from deeply held traditional beliefs. Beliefs that hold women inferior to men. Survival in our patriarchal society for many people, men and women, means clinging to male values, defending and supporting actions that keep us oppressed while survival for others means fighting back. Fighting for 'the right to work, study and walk the street without fear of sexual intimidation'.

FACT SHEET

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- * Recent surveys have indicated that 80 - 90% of women in the labour force have experienced sexual harassment at some time in their working lives.
- * Neither the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act nor the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code specify that sexual harassment is illegal.
- * Sexual harassment is not only a problem for women in the paid labour force, but also for students, for clients of professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, and for women on the street and in public places.
- * Contrary to the views of some, women do not invite harassment or "ask for it".
- * Between 1984 and 1987 the Canadian Human Rights Commission investigated 107 complaints of sexual harassment.
- * During the past eight years, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission has investigated 94 complaints of sexual harassment.
- * In 1981, the Canadian Human Rights Commission determined that over one and a half million Canadians have been sexually harassed. Of these, fewer than 2% have made a formal complaint to an outside agency.
- * A recent U.S. survey determined that 2/3 of sexual harassment complaints are made against immediate supervisors and upper management and that most cases of sexual harassment are found to be valid.

Prepared by: Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, November 1988.



SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORK

(IT CAN HAPPEN HERE)

In the past several years there has been growing recognition that sexual harassment in the workplace is not only a serious social problem many women face but also a form of illegal discrimination. Federal and provincial human rights legislation and labour codes have been amended to include provisions against sexual harassment. Many unions and large employers have issued policy statements and established procedures and committees to deal with this issue.

In Antigonish town and county, where most employers are not covered by the federal legislation or union contracts, the primary recourse for women who feel they have been sexually harassed is to file a complaint with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.

THE NOVA SCOTIA HUMAN RIGHTS

COMMISSION - WHAT DOES IT DO ?

The NSHRC enforces and administers the Human Rights Act which prohibits discrimination because of race, religion, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, age, or disability in such areas as employment, housing, and membership in professional, employee, or volunteer organizations.

HOW DOES THE NSHRC DEFINE SEXUAL HARASSMENT ?

The Commission's policy guidelines on sexual harassment state that "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature" by an employer, supervisor, or co-worker are a form of employment discrimination based on sex when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a condition of employment, or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions, or
- such conduct has the intention or effect of unreasonably interfering with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE A COMPLAINT IS FILED ?

The complaint is assigned to an officer who then conducts an investigation, during which s/he will discuss the complaint with the persons involved. At the end of the investigation, the officer will attempt to conciliate the dispute and arrive at an acceptable settlement. A large portion of all human rights cases are resolved in this way. If the complaint is dismissed at any time during this process, there is the right to appeal this decision.

THE NEXT STEP - A BOARD OF INQUIRY

If a settlement is not reached, the Commission reports to the Minister in charge of the Act (currently Tom McInnis), who then may appoint a Board of Inquiry. The Board conducts a public hearing, at which all parties can present evidence. If the Board finds that the complaint is substantiated, it issues an order to remedy the discrimination, which can include compensation for lost wages (with interest), damages for pain and suffering, and affirmative actions to be taken by the employer to correct the situation.

The Board decision can be appealed to the courts by either party on a point of law.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING HARASSED AT WORK ?

You should immediately let your harasser know that you are made uncomfortable by and disapprove of such behaviour. If the harasser persists, you should see a supervisor or union representative, provide details of the incident(s), and ask for corrective action. It is important, especially if a formal complaint is filed with the NSHRC, that a written record be made of the incident(s), noting the time and place, who was involved, and what exactly occurred. Whenever possible, witnesses should be named, since they are often necessary to establish a strong case. If others at the workplace are also being harassed, it is possible that a group action could be filed.

CONCLUSION

While the NSHRA does provide basic protection from sexual harassment at work, there are major limitations of the law. While the threat of a public inquiry may compel an employer to agree to a settlement, the legal costs and time involved may force a woman to accept a settlement which is less than she deserves and which does not adequately acknowledge the wrongdoing of the harasser. Even though awards have been increasing, they rarely compensate for all the financial losses and psychological injuries suffered. (See commentary on a recent Board decision on page 5.) The case law is still evolving in this area; women who pursue their harassment complaints through the NSHRC process should be supported for their perseverance in legally challenging behaviour that not only affronts their personal dignity but also impedes their opportunity for equal employment. Through their efforts, we all benefit. (Judith MacLean)

Token award in Nova Scotia reflects board's belief that sexual harassment isn't a rights violation

A Truro woman who was sexually harassed by her employer over a six month period to the point where she was forced to quit her job has been denied any damages by a Nova Scotia Board of Inquiry.

Lost wages were limited to eight weeks pay — \$1020, though the woman was unemployed for six months before finding another job and had asked for \$8,000 compensation for lost salary.

Cindy MacKay filed a human rights complaint alleging that about a week after she started working as a data processor administrator for Dr Navin Mehta, he subjected her to sexual harassment, which included making suggestive remarks, comments about her legs, requests to dress more seductively, lifting the flap of her skirt, kissing her, patting her on the rear and pinching her breasts.

One person Board of Inquiry W. Blair MacKinnon ruled that Mehta's conduct transcended mere accidental touching and that he touched MacKay's legs, buttock and breast in such a fashion that it could be and was interpreted by her to be of a sexual and harassing nature to such an extent that she did not want it to continue and told him that she did not want it to continue.

Mehta's conduct created a "negative physiological (sic) and emotional environment" for MacKay, said MacKinnon in his July 14 Decision.

MacKay was hired in July 1982 as a data process administrator by Dr Navin Mehta, a medical doctor who was also involved in the development of computer software systems.

Mehta applied for and received financial assistance from a Canada Manpower Industrial Training Program to pay a portion of MacKay's wages.

Subsequently, MacKay complained to the Canada Manpower official, Wayne Talbot, that she was not being properly trained as a data program assistant but was rather being used extensively as a medical secretary-receptionist.

In November 1982 MacKay asked for a private meeting with Talbot and advised him that she did not feel comfortable with Mehta because he was making sexual advances towards her.

Talbot testified that she complained of Mehta placing "his hand on her breast, her rear and her legs at different times."

Talbot advised her to file a complaint with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, which she did.

MacKay filed a complaint alleging that about a week after she started working, Mehta subjected her to sexual harassment, including suggestive sexual remarks and physical harassment.

MacKay stated that she repeatedly told Mehta not to do so, but he simply ignored her requests. MacKay said that

"She was unable to bear these incidents any longer and was compelled to quit on December 23, 1982.

Another woman, Shelley Ferguson, who had worked for Mehta under the same Canada Manpower program for six months, testified that she was also sexually harassed by Mehta. Ferguson said that Mehta would often put his hand on her leg and grabbed her breast.

Mehta's office was in a mall and had a glass front. The manager of another store opposite and his wife stated that they observed Mehta slap MacKay on the behind and put his arm around her.

Mehta denied that he sexually harassed MacKay and called the complaint "ridiculous". Mehta said that he told MacKay she should control herself and not show so much of her legs. Mehta said he took the flap of her skirt and showed her how to cover her legs so as to be less inviting.

Mehta said that MacKay professed love and a great need for him.

MacKinnon ruled that Mehta did sexually harass MacKay. He said that despite his own views he was bound by the decision of the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal that sexual harassment is a violation of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

"What is the appropriate measure of damages?" asked MacKinnon.

Without giving any reasons, MacKinnon said, "There will be no award for general damages but a wage loss for eight weeks."

MacKinnon ordered Mehta to pay MacKay eight weeks' pay at \$127.50 a week, plus eight percent interest, not compounded, from the date of her termination for a total of \$1,382.

Comment

The evidence put forward in seven days of Hearings before the Board of Inquiry showed that MacKay was subjected to sexual remarks and physical harassment during the six months she worked for Mehta.

During this period Mehta was receiving funding from the federal government to pay part of MacKay's wages.

The sexual harassment was so severe that she was forced to quit her job.

It was six months before MacKay succeeded in finding another job.

Because of numerous appeals in the courts by Mehta to stop the case from being heard, Mehta had to wait four and a half years before getting a Decision on her complaint.

Boards of Inquiry have established the standard that if an employee is forced to quit a job because of sexual harassment, this constitutes dismissal.

If MacKay had been dismissed for cause, let's say she was a bad employee, she would be entitled to compensation of a certain number of weeks' wages in lieu of notice.

But MacKay lost her job, not because of any valid reason, but because of the illegal conduct of her employer.

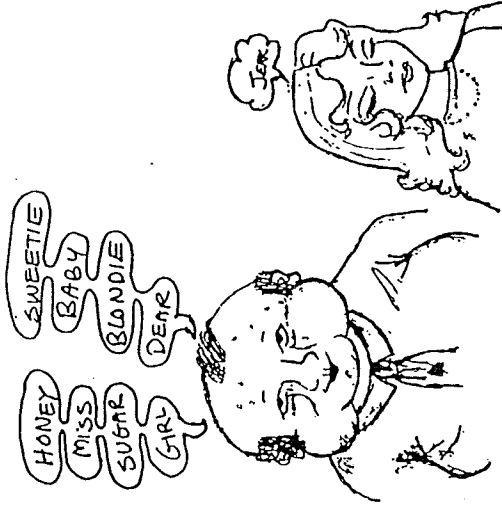
Clearly, having been forced to quit her job because of the severe sexual harassment made it more difficult for MacKay to find another job. How could she give her previous employer as a reference? What reason could she give for having quit her previous job?

In addition to the humiliation and stress of putting up with continual sexual harassment on the job for six months, MacKay suffered many financial penalties because of her employer's illegal conduct towards her. After waiting four and a half years, MacKay had to attend seven days of Hearings.

The Board of Inquiry Decision, however, treats the illegal sexual harassment as being of no particular significance. The Board refused to make any award for damage to self respect and suffering and gives no reason for the refusal. MacKinnon makes it clear that in his personal view sexual harassment is not a human rights issue and his decision, if he were free, would be to dismiss the complaint.

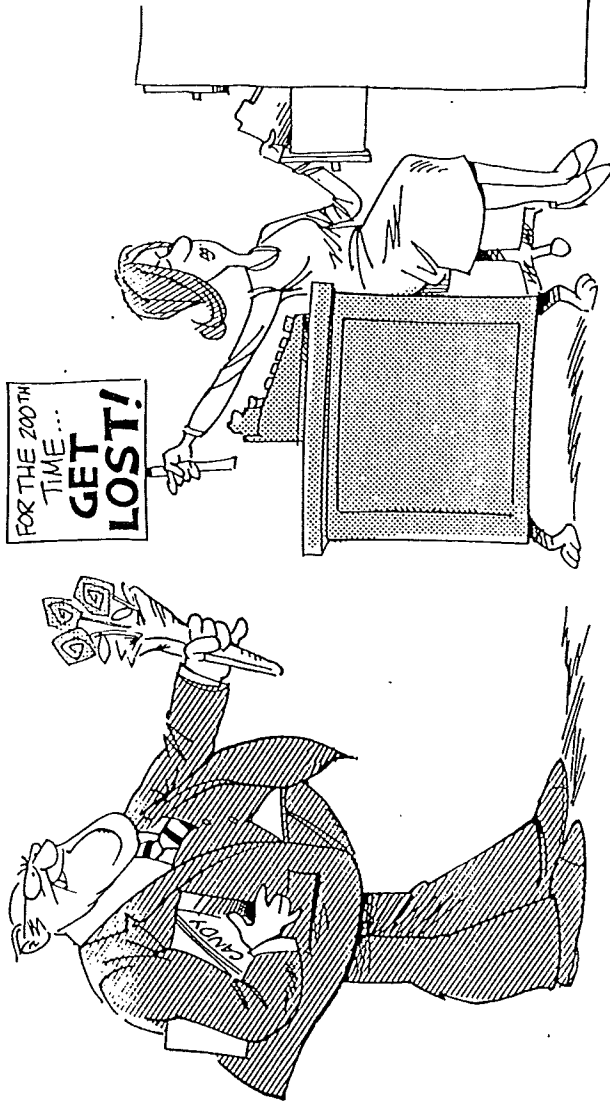
The token damages that MacKinnon ordered give a clear message to the people of Nova Scotia as to the lack of seriousness with which their human rights law is to be taken.

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE



SEXUAL HARASSMENT HEARING IN ANTIGONISH

Three former waitresses at the Venice Restaurant in Antigonish, Joan MacLellan, Jacqueline Stephenson and Tracy Keizer, have charged their former employer, Mike Rabah, with sexual harassment. A Human Rights public hearing was held at the Claymore Motel during the week March 26 - March 30. This hearing will continue on July 3 with the possibility of lasting two weeks. The hearing will be open to the public.



An open letter to the three men in a small red car who were at the corner of Brock and Aylmer at approximately 10:20 p.m. on March 9.

I crossed the street in front of you. I was wearing a red jacket and jeans. As I passed, you hit the horn several times, loudly and violently, and I believe I jumped at the noise. You drove on your way, shouting, "Wanna _____? Ha-ha-ha! Wanna GOOD _____?!" and laughing (I don't think you were really laughing - laughter is meant to express joy).

I felt angry, I felt intruded upon, open to further attack, defenceless, so I ran up the hill to send all the bad feelings away. What is it about my being female that gives you the right to hurl obscenities in my direction? What is it about being female that makes women the ultimate victim of insolence, disrespect, violence, job discrimination and everything else we suffer? Is it programmed into you to act superior, to treat me, simply because I was born a woman, as though I was worth nothing?

Before I reached that corner I was happy, enjoying my walk and the relative peace and quiet (and anonymity) of the night-what or who gave you the right to intrude on my privacy, piece of mind and happiness, and take it all away with your rude and totally unnecessary remarks? (Arthur, 1985 p.5)

Je me souviens:

A RESPONSE TO THE MONTREAL KILLINGS

by Marusia Bociurkiw

Police have no motive for [the gunman's] hatred of women.

The Toronto Star, Dec. 7, 1989

It's late afternoon at the end of term. You're 23 years old, a woman, an engineering student at the top of your class. A man in hunting gear enters the classroom. Some stupid engineering prank no doubt, but you're too tired to laugh, you just want to get home, have a shower, go out with your friends. "You're all a bunch of fucking feminists!" he screams. Why is he screaming? Why are all the men leaving the room, why don't they stop him, he's firing shots into the air, and you're shouting, "No, you're wrong, we're not feminists, stop shooting..."

You're 30, you're 43, you're 50, you're reading the paper, or someone calls you, you can't believe it, you're numb, or you feel angry. You're a feminist. You've spent five, or 10, or 15 years going to meetings, organizing demos, publishing/writing/fundraising/speaking/marching. Suddenly, you're tired, or you're burnt out, or demoralized, and you cry for the deaths of 14 young women you've never met. You grieve also for the literal expression of a hatred for feminism that you know to be embedded in your culture. You feel targeted. Your heart feels cold.

It's an isolated incident, the act of a deranged person...

Monique Gagnon-Tremblay,
Quebec Minister of Immigration

On December 6, 1989, a 25-year-old man named Marc Lepine entered a classroom at the University of Montreal, asked the men to leave, and shot the six remaining women. He then wandered the building, killing eight more women, and injuring 13 others. Finally, he shot himself. A three-page note found on his body described the mass murder as a political act, and blamed feminism for ruining his life. It included a "hit list" of 15 prominent Quebecois women Lepine would have also liked to kill, including a founder of the now-defunct feminist magazine, *La Vie En Rose*, as well as Monique Gagnon-Tremblay.

For about five days after the shooting, feminism was named, discussed, and (to some extent) made visible in the dominant news media in an unprecedented manner. Articles with headlines like: "Misogyny Gone Crazy," "Culture Condones Violence Against Women, Children," and "Anti-feminism Part of Conservative Revival"

adorned the newspapers like so many memorial wreaths. For anyone who had ever spent five months organizing a feminist event only to see it hidden in the back pages of the newspapers, the irony was almost too much to take. By December 12, there was no more mention of the murders or of feminism, but an illusion of progressive democracy (within which, supposedly, feminism flourishes) was maintained.

Not at all surprisingly, the news reports either individualized Lepine's violence (he was introverted, had a violent father and watched war videos), or named violence towards women as the symptom and media imagery (porn, sexist cartoons, etc.) as the cause. Representatives from liberal or radical feminist groups like Metro Toronto Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children and the Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography (CCAMP) were asked to comment on the killings. "Lepine is just at one end of the spectrum of violence. Pornography in a way is a form of violence against women,

and it goes from there right up the continuum," said Rose Porvin of the CCAMP (*The Toronto Star*, Dec. 8, 1989). With the zeal of the newly-converted, spokesmen for the hastily-formed Toronto Men's Forum spoke to reporters about violence towards women, as though they had just discovered it. That same week, the NDP took on gun control, and the Conservatives took on pornography. Like flies hovering over dead corpses, politicians of every stripe exploited the murders. The aftermath was almost as depressing as the event itself.

I and my colleagues will draw the appropriate lessons from the senseless deaths of these promising young women... Pornography does need to be controlled, and we plan to ask Parliament, again, to act on this issue...

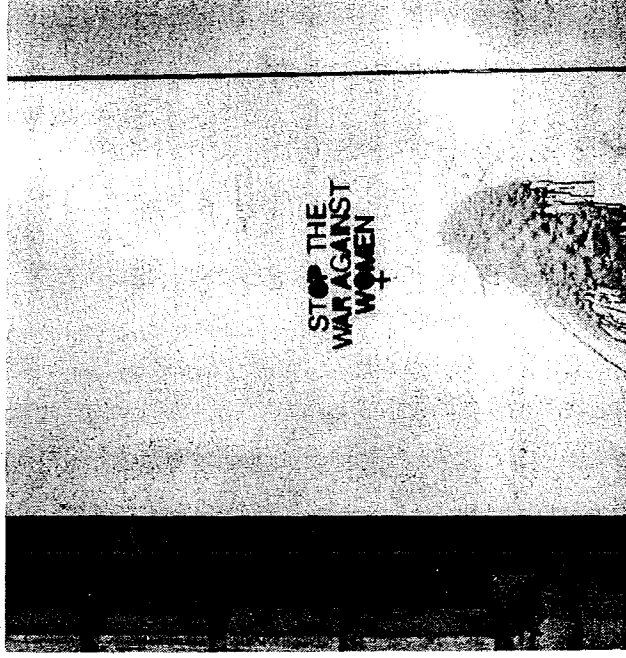
Barbara McDougall, Minister responsible for the Status of Women

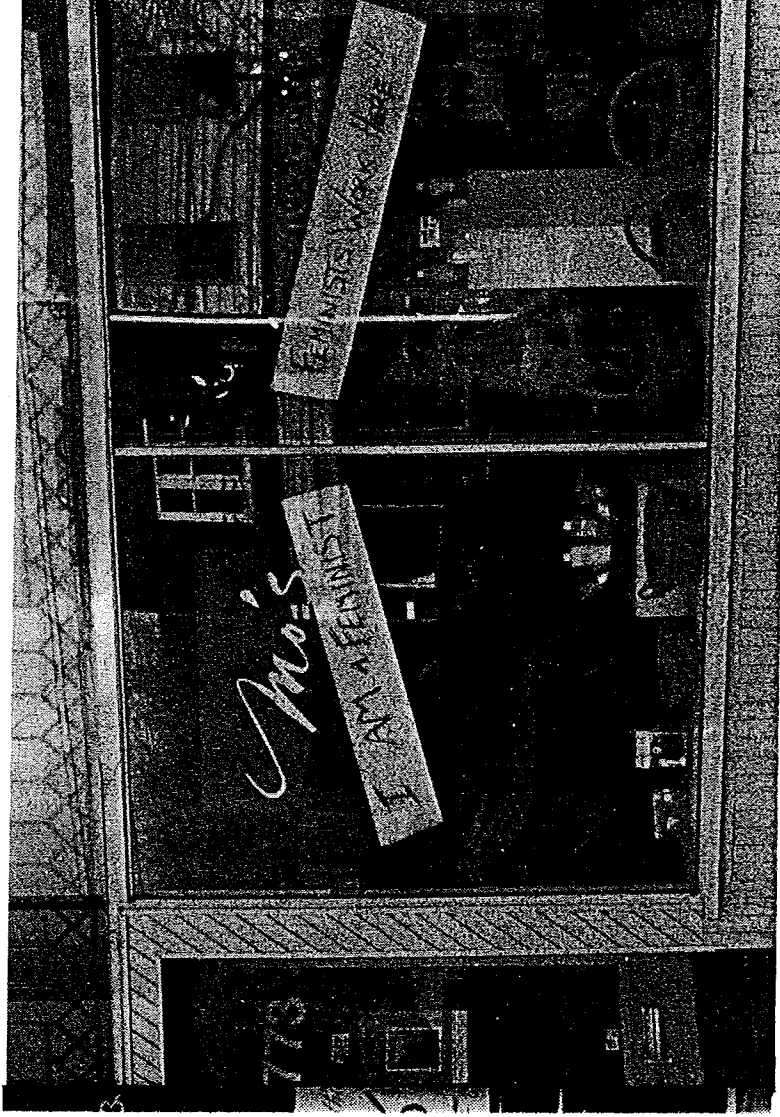
At a time when gay-bashing and police violence towards the Black community is on the rise, talk of video or gun control is strategically inadequate. It is strategic because it diverts attention from what is really an organized move by the Right (and its liberal collaborators) to push back the gains made by feminist, anti-racist, and gay liberation movements. It is inadequate because it doesn't deal with what is necessary: grassroots feminist education and fund-

ing for (as opposed to cutting backs to) organizations that have been doing this work for years (feminist periodicals, rape crisis centres, women's centres). What we need to be talking about is coalition politics, and how to work together to fight state (or state-sanctioned) violence, *not* how to license videos or guns. At a Toronto rally in support of Sophia Cooke (a young Black woman shot by a policeman), activist Himani Bannerji drew connections between the two events. "Marc Lepine was dressed in uniform too," she said. "The similarities are not accidental. The police are racist and anti-feminist in the same way that Marc Lepine hated women. He drew his gun in the same way that the police draw their guns against us."

Marc Lepine may have been a lone fanatic, but he could easily have been a hired killer. He could have been a member of the Conservative Party, or a neo-Nazi white supremacist. Worst of all, he could have been a normal guy.

What a killing like this can also do is to distract attention from on-going genocide. Much was made of the fact that the 14 women killed had everything going for them: that they had "broken through a barrier" (*CBC radio*, Dec. 10, 1989); that "everything





seemed to assure them of a brilliant future" (*The Toronto Sun*, Dec. 12, 1989); that they were young, healthy, and successful. Without diminishing the horror and waste of these women's deaths, and the unimaginable grief inflicted upon their families, friends, and lovers, it is important to examine the dynamics of the response. The deaths of 14 white, relatively privileged young women was recognized as a national tragedy, while recent police shootings of Black people have been dismissed either as an accident or a necessary evil. Meanwhile poverty, that insidious hired gunman of the state, stalks women daily.

Jean Swanson, a B.C. poverty rights activist, describes the ways in which poor women are on the front lines of right-wing attack; an attack whose consequences are, without exaggeration, disease and early death: "We are the people who work at necessary jobs, cleaning, serving, and caring.

Yet we continue to live in poverty because our wages are so low, because Big Business groups are using us as soldiers to battle inflation. Our babies and our children... pay with an infant mortality rate that is twice as high as it is for other Canadians. Adults pay. We pay with a shorter life expectancy. We pay with our suffering. The poorest 20 per cent of Canadians have more of nearly every disease than other Canadians." (*Kinesis*, May 1989)

It is more important than ever that we know who is targeting whom. Canadian neo-Conservative groups have become vocal, explicit, and highly-organized in their condemnation of abortion rights, gays, lesbians, and immigrants. They see the connections many don't. Ted Byfield, an Alberta white supremacist writes: "Our birthrate plunges and we must import more people to populate the country... on a scale so massive that preserving any of the country's cultural traditions



Despite their vehement opposition, accused witches are dragged across a bridge in Brussels, Belgium, in 1642.

The mood is austere. For the first time since those kick-ass days in the '70s, we're seeing where the lines are drawn.

These lines are uncomfortably visible in communities of women, as well. The voices of anti-porn feminists drown out those of us who have been targeted by the anti-porn agenda. Lesbianism makes a come-back as an epithet. At a vigil in Toronto, a heterosexual woman describes an incident of harassment (sic). "They called me a feminist dyke," she complains.

A fierce essentialism emerges. Racism isn't mentioned. Crucial connections aren't made. And yet we find ourselves wanting to draw together, make the circle again, and hold one another as we mourn. The fear is that we

Two store owners respond to the massacre.

will be impossible." He asks that "governments stop feeding us with feminism," and decries the public school system as a "vehicle for the unimpeded dissemination of feminist propaganda." (*West-ern Report*). The guy may have a few facts wrong, but his views are not at all at odds with either Lepine's or Mulroney's agenda.

If I speak to you in anger, at least I have spoken to you: I have not put a gun to your head and shot you down on the street. I have not looked at your bleeding sister's body and asked, "What did she do to deserve this?"

Audre Lorde, Sister/Outsider

For days after the shooting, many of us are unable to sleep as sadness, anger, and grief overcomes us. A friend finds herself wondering about the men who left the classroom just before the shooting, and about how Lepine was able to roam the building, virtually unchallenged. We talk about men leaving; leaving the house in the morning; leaving behind responsibility for child-rearing, for women's economic inequality, for feminist activism, and for women's lives. We rarely see the men we know at pro-choice rallies, at feminist fundraisers, at actions against rape or police violence. We never see them organizing support for feminist issues. Instead, we find that most men continue to participate in a myriad of subtle and not-so-subtle actions that conspire to keep many of us excluded, voiceless, or poor.

won't move on into activism, and that, claiming unity, we ignore difference. The hope is that we will rebuild feminist community in a way that can include supportive strategies so necessary in these hard political times. There have already been so many casualties; too many feminist peritodicals and collectives have collapsed, winded by a combination of under-funding, infighting, and exhaustion. Our anger at the massacre can begin to fuel our awareness, and our desire for social change. In her article "Uses of Anger," Audre Lorde describes anger as being full of "information and energy," which moves us into speech. She makes distinctions between hatred and anger: "Hatred is the fury of those who do not share our goals, and its object is death and destruction. Anger is a grief of distortions between peers, and its object is change."

Marc Lepine said, "You're all a bunch of fucking feminists." The only way to avenge his hateful, terrorist act is to prove him right. And to organize, along feminist and anti-racist lines, in every corner of our communities. ■

Marusia Bociurkiw is a feminist artist, writer & activist living in Toronto.

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FUNDING CUTS TO WOMEN

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS PROMISED:

- * The Canadian Government signed the U.N. Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1981. It also signed the Forward Looking Strategies document which came out of the Nairobi conference in 1985. Both documents refer to the necessity of involving non-governmental women's groups in achieving real change. In 1987, the Conservative Government promised that the funding level of the Women's Program would be maintained and indexed to the cost of living, and it considered increasing funding to meet the needs of new groups and emerging priorities.

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE:

May 1989

- * Micheal Wilson cuts approximately \$2 million from the Secretary of State Women's Programs. This means a 15% cut for operationally funded Women's Centres (the AWRC) and national groups. National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) receives a 50% cut over three years.

February 1990

- * Micheal Wilson cuts approximately \$1.6 million from the Secretary of State Women's Program. Funding for the 74 operationally funded Women's centres is completely eliminated as is funding for three National Women's publications (RFR, Healthsharing and Canadian Women Studies) National Women's Organizations CRIAW, CCLOW, Vancouvers' Women's Research Centre and Nouveau Depart are cut 20% while CAAWS' funding is eliminated. The cuts are an attack to the heart to the Women's Movement.

Secretary of State, Gerry Weiner, links the cuts to the need to reduce the federal deficit. Women's centres are told to apply for "project" money for research and education in spite of the fact that it is 'core' funding which provides the day to day operating expenses for groups enabling us to hire staff, sign leases, and make long-term plans to carry out our goals and obligations.

March 1990

- * Women organize protests across Canada. Women in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia occupy regional Secretaries of State offices demanding a meeting with Gerry Weiner. The police arrest women in Newfoundland and British Columbia and criminalize mothers of our Nation's children. Secretary of State locks their offices to the general public. Security costs runs over \$600,000. 11,000 people write the government protesting the funding cuts. Secretary of State phone lines are jammed with protest calls. Protests continue daily in towns and cities across Canada. Weiner roasts proliferate. Gerry Weiner doesn't answer his calls.

April 1990

- * Gerry Weiner meets with representatives of Women's Centres from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and British Columbia and the Yukon. He recognizes the mistake of cutting funding for the Women's Centres and agrees to negotiate a solution, one in which the government doesn't lose face. We ask:

1. That the Women's Program be continued as a body which provides operational funding to national and regional Women's organizations to assist them in carrying out their ongoing activities;
2. That the government restore all funding cut from the Women's Program in 1989-90 and 1990-91 and restore this to its original recipients;
3. That the government commit itself to pursuing permanent, cost-shared funding arrangements with the provinces and territories for Women's Centres, and that funding be continued in the event that these negotiations are unsuccessful;

April 1990 con't

4. That funding to Women's groups be increased, particularly to groups representing multi-disadvantaged women;
5. That restoration of funds not come at the expense of other equality seeking groups, such as native and visible minority groups, and that the government enter into discussions with those groups that have been affected by the cuts;

6. Finally, that all charges pending against protestors be dropped as a demonstration of good will.

May 1990

* Mary Collins, Minister Representative for Status of Women and Gerry Weiner, Secretary of State, announce a one year extension of funding for Women's Centres funded under the Women's Program. A further one year extension will be made available to centres in provinces which agree to cost share on a dollar to dollar basis.

Women's Centres ask to meet with Gerry Weiner to clarify the terms of the government offer. concern is felt over the tenuous nature of the cost-sharing arrangement. The government does not commit itself to making negotiations with the provinces, nor to ensuring funding to Women's Centres in provinces where shared funding is not available.

The government does not agree to stand by its commitments made in 1987 in response to the Parliamentary Studing Committee Report, Fairness in Funding, the basis of its commitment to the Women's Program.

Gerry Weiner does not respond to calls and letters from women asking for a meeting and therefore is not seen to be negotiating in good faith.

Women once again organize a national letter writing campaign asking Mr. Weiner to respond to our concerns by June 8th.

And this is where we go to press.

Think wrongly, if you please, but in all cases think for yourself.
- Doris Lessing, b. 1919

The AWA has a ten month funding reprieve. What the situation will be in ten months is anybody's guess. Connect!, the Nova Scotia Association of Women's Centres, is working on making decisions with the province around operational funding. Letters in support of provincial funding for Women's Centres are crucial at this time.

Please write:

Hon. Gerry Le Blanc
Minister of Community Services
Box 696
Halifax, NS
B3J 2T7

Hon. John Buchanan
Premier
Province House
Box 726
Halifax, NS
B3J 2T3

AND PLEASE WRITE AGAIN BRIAN
MULRONEY AND GERRY WEINER once
again asking for :

1. re-instatement of on-going operational funding to Women's Centres, retreat groups and publications;
2. a commitment to the equality of women in Canada reflected through increased budget for the Women's program. The Women's Programs budget amounts to only 75¢ for every Canadian female.

OUR LETTERS COUNT!



IMPACT OF FEBRUARY 1990 FEDERAL BUDGET

CUTS

- * Secretary of State budget cut \$23 million (\$1.6 million to Women's Programs; \$10 million to Native Programs).
- * Provincial/territorial transfer payments cut \$870 million (will affect health and education).
- * Multiculturalism funds cut \$23 million annually from planned levels in 1990-91 and 1991-92.
- * Social Housing funds cut \$16 in 1990-91 and \$35 million in 1991-92 from planned levels (this represents a 15% cut).
- * Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) funds limited to a 5% growth limit for the next two years (will affect social assistance programs).
- * Established Programs Funding (EPF) frozen for two years (will affect health care and post-secondary education).

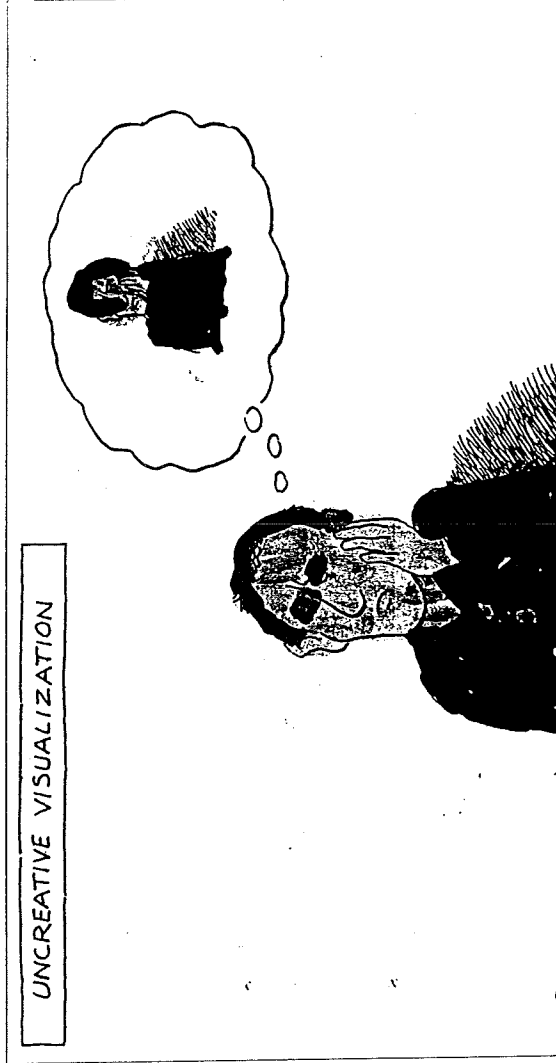
NEW ALLOCATIONS OR BUDGET INCREASES:

- * Goods and Services Tax (GST): \$260 million allocated to administrator GST (1990-91); \$11 million allocated to 'sell' GST
- * Halifax office for visiting Cabinet ministers to be established at cost of \$1.6 million (lease only-does not include staff etc).

CUTS TO NATIVE PROGRAMS/ORGANIZATION

- * Assembly of First Nations (AFN) funding cut 100%.
- * 28 Native people's organizations had their funding cut by 100%; funding for 11 other groups cut between 7.5% and 15%. Organizations run by Native women are being hit harder by the cuts than those run by men.

CANADIAN ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN





MONEY! MONEY! MONEY!

We put in a hugh fundraising effort this spring and would like to extend a thousand thank yous to all our members and friends who helped. Special thanks goes to Janie for organizing the Mermaid Theatre Production, Puss and Boots. This raised \$180 and the children had a wonderful time.

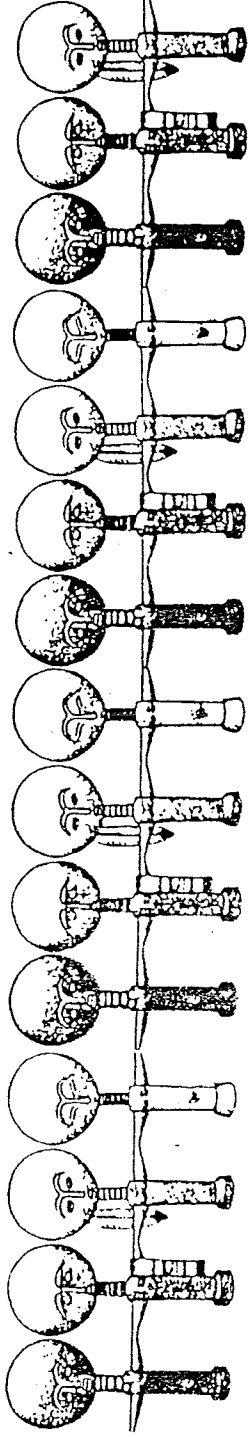
Thanks especially to Mary Ann, Denise, May and Helen for sending out the fundraising letters to members and businesses. We received \$1,343 donations from our members (applause for our members) and 4240 from local businesses.

Thanks to Betty Ann for organizing our AWA Hockey Pool, to Gord for his computer work and to everyone who sold tickets. We cleared \$850 and we're keen to do it again next year (especially now that we all know the rules).

The County Council has granted us \$1500. The Town Council decided not to help us (no explanation).

Our Sobey's slips have netted us \$63. Please keep saving them for us.

Our grand fundraising total is \$4176. Three cheers for all of us.



NEEDS IN ANTIGONISH - NO PORN POLICY

Needs Convenience store in Antigonish has established an in store "no pornography" policy. According to David Barkhouse, store manager, his store is allied with Quick Pik Stores and this is also the policy of their stores.

Although, like all convenience stores, Needs, Antigonish is on a magazine, computer send out; it doesn't sell pornographic magazines. All Penthouse, Playboy etc are returned to their distributor, H.H. Marshall in New Brunswick, with a request not to send these magazines in the future. Mr. Barkhouse says H.H. Marshall is beginning to send fewer magazines.

The Needs videos come from Down East Video in Pictou Co. Mr. Barkhouse returns any that are "too racy" as indicated by the video cover. Although, there are a few restricted and adult videos on the shelves, they are regularly censored by Mr. Barkhouse and his staff for pornography and language. They are "traded back" if they are unacceptable. The store does not carry any under-the-counter videos.

Needs deserves our support. We cannot only spend our consumer dollar there, we can let other convenience stores know why we choose to shop at a pornography-free store.



On the Question of Prejudice

Not so long ago a friend of mine and I were talking about the problems women face in academia. We had both experienced comments from students that, more or less, said the same thing: "I have problems knowing how to deal with you because from the neck down you are a woman but from the neck up you're a man". Another student of mine thought she had found a solution to my male/female hermaphroditic being by placing me in the category of 'spinster': Yeah", she said, "I'd like to be a teacher too but not in academia. It takes too much time." Then, looking at me she added: "But I guess you don't mind since you don't have any husband or children".

This attitude towards academic women is thankfully on the decline but none the less, when we see it expressed we have to ask why it is still so difficult to see female teachers the way male teachers are seen. After four years at St. F. X. one reason that begins to suggest itself to me is that the lower the ratio of female to male teachers the stronger the prejudice is going to be towards women. As long as men are seen as the standard vis a vis which female teacher and students are measured, gender and not human specificity is going to be that which people look to when they make judgments.

You may object that in this day and age there is no prejudice against women. Well, yes there is, only prejudice may not be what you think it is. Prejudice is not only shown through negative opinions about women but also through the way women is judged because she is a woman.

I know I am not alone in the having had the experience of having whatever I do accommodated to being a woman. If my teaching methods differ (and they do) the explanation offered is my anatomy. If the topics I raise in the class room differ (and they do) I am seen to have an interest in them because I am a woman.

The difficult thing with prejudice is that it is not easily cured. Prejudice is ingrained in the structure of our society, built into asymmetrical gender arrangements and perpetuated by unequal re-presentations of women in public life. This is why it is significant that there should be more women, in this case, at St. F. X.

Imagine what it would be like for students not to feel that if I raised questions about patriarchy or used the female pronoun (and encouraged the students to use it) for doctors lawyers and engineers, they wouldn't feel compelled to roll their eyes (as they now do) and mutter under their breath "What does she think she is doing??".

My friends Marian MacDonald and Margi Glenn, who work at the CIBC, and I have been comparing notes about our respective working conditions for a long time. No matter how discrepant our jobs - not to mention our salaries - commonalities persist. Our talks have made us realize that no matter where women work we all face similar problems.

What then are these problems? In my mind, the biggest problem is how to make ourselves heard. To give you a couple of examples. When I talk in the company of male colleagues they smile and nod their heads and if I make a suggestion or offer an opinion they continue to smile and nod their heads. Then what usually happens is that one of them offer the same opinion or the same suggestion I have just voiced and then debate ensues, enthusiastic exclamations are heard, the importance of the suggestion or the opinion is pointed out and so on and so on.

It is not that no one listened to what I said: it is just that they didn't hear the importance of what was said until it was said with a male voice.

The story has endless variations and unaccountable appearances. This kind of story and many like it is what I always hear from other women no matter where they work. The story is not about prejudice the way we usually think of prejudice but about the pre-judgement of our voices and our concerns should we venture to raise them.

What we need to do so that we can teach others how to do it is learn to listen to the female voices and concerns and respect these voices and concerns: to insist that the issues we raise are not female exclusive but human and should on that basis be judged. If, that is, we are still interested in judging.

Gael Flick

THE SEXUAL POLITICS OF HOUSEWORK

Who does what in your home?

COOPERATION

Rediscovering a partnership society

Like most people, I used to think of housework as trivial—something unimportant that women did. If someone had told me then that the issue of who does the housework is political, I would have laughed. Today I understand that the politics of housework is of major importance, that we are only beginning to understand how it forms the political underpinnings of many of our key social values and personal, economic, and political relations.

In my work over the past decade I have examined society from a perspective that takes into account the whole sweep of human history, and have identified patterns and relationships between different parts of the social system that couldn't be seen by looking at only part of the picture. One of the things that made this research possible was what British archaeologist James Mellaart calls "a veritable archaeological revolution": data showing that civilization is not only much older than we previously thought, but, more important, that for thousands of years it was organized very differently from what we have been taught.

This leads directly to the question of what we call "housework": the caring work that supports life but which we have been taught to devalue as "just women's work." Earlier societies placed much more importance on this type of work. UCLA archaeologist Marija Gimbutas describes how in neolithic temples and shrines the baking of bread, the weaving of cloth, and other work associated with women were sacred acts, and that priestesses at that time made offerings to the Great Mother (as they still did in biblical times, as told, for example, in the Old Testament book of Jeremiah, in which the prophet railed against women for baking cakes for the Queen of Heaven). Why were these acts considered sacred? Because these societies recognized that caring and nurturing and maintaining life are central.

What's interesting is the amazing uproar caused in the 19th century by the discovery of these earlier societies. Because neolithic people worshipped the Great Goddess as the creator of life (a natural development since, after all, life does emerge from the body of women), many of the scholars of the day decided that these societies were matriarchal—that instead of men dominating women, women dominated men. However, the evidence does not support the view that men were oppressed in these societies, but instead suggests that these were partnership societies where neither men nor women dominated.

Much of what is happening politically today—the international women's movement, the peace movement, the ecology movement, social and economic justice movements as well as the women's spirituality movement—is part of a larger effort by women to once again create a partnership rather than a dominator society. This is where the issue of the politics of housework becomes so important. For it is a question not only of creating a more equitable and just society for women (a fundamental change in a world where, according to United Nations statistics, women perform two thirds of the world's work but own only one-percent of the world's wealth), but of creating a more just, peaceful, and balanced society for everyone.

Riane Eisler is the author of The Chalice and the Blade (Harper & Row, 1987) and co-founder of the Center for Partnership Studies in Malibu, California.

If we look at our environmental crises—which to a large extent are products of policies that do not take into account the importance of environmental "housekeeping"—we can see how critical this debate is to the other social issues. I often say that if women had been in power, they never would have created nuclear waste without any idea of what they were going to do with it.

In terms of economics, we must make life-enhancing work more highly valued, rather than giving greater compensation to those who create technologies to dominate and destroy. When little boys as well as little girls are brought up to truly value life-sustaining and life-maintaining work, from cooking and cleaning to caring for the sick, old, and young, they are not going to be so easily convinced that killing other people is "heroic" and "manly."

A young woman in the Soviet Union told me a story. Every night when she and her husband came home from work, he would sit in front of the television set, obviously expecting her to prepare their dinner. But she would plop down on the chair next to him and, even though she didn't particularly like the sports programs he was watching, just sit there. After a while her husband would say, "Gee, I'm hungry," and she would say, "Yeah." After a little longer he would say, "Don't you think we should have dinner?" and she would say, "Oh, yeah." And finally, since she was still not getting up to do anything, he would go look in the refrigerator. What she managed to do, finally, because she did not accept her stereotypical role, was to get her husband's cooperation in creating a partnership relationship.

Judging from my own experiences, the result was probably not only a better life for her,

but a better relationship, a better partnership. I do not believe modern trends toward an increasing sense of partnership both in families and world affairs are accidental. I believe they are essential if we are to make a better world in a time when it is

very clear that the old ways are bringing great risks of environmental catastrophe or nuclear apocalypse. What this young Soviet woman, with the eventual cooperation of her husband, was able to create was a healthier, more balanced model of human relations. It is an excellent illustration of how in a very immediate sense the personal is political. ■

—Riane Eisler
Special to Utne Reader



NEWS FROM THE CENTRE

The sun is back!!! Thank the Goddess.

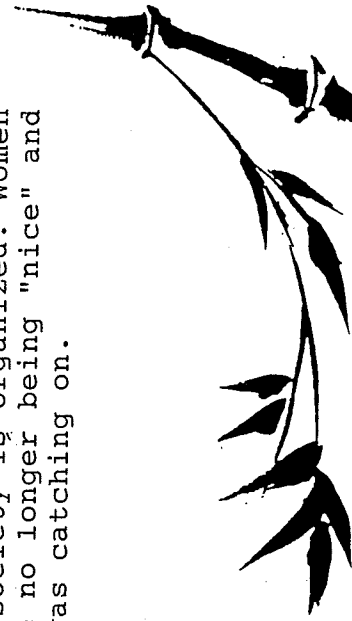
Needless to say these past three months have been intense for all of us. Since March we have been almost entirely focused on fighting the funding cuts. In the process, I have learned a lot about how our "democratic" government works.

Although the government has paid lip service to women's equality through the Secretary of State Women's Program since 1974, a closer examination of the program in recent years tells another story.

The government originally funded the women's program to make monies available to equality seeking groups. NAC, CCLOW, CRIAW and numerous women's centres sought and received operational funding allowing us to establish ourselves as organized, regional and national voices for women. Our social analysis is not always in harmony with government action however. In recent years the government has become increasingly suspect of and insensitive to our critique of their policies (ie. Free Trade, the GST, pay equity, de-indexing family allowance, childcare, etc.)

In 1987, with the intention of cutting back or phasing out the Women's Program, the Federal Tories sent a Parliamentary Review Committee around the country to take a closer look at the program. What they found were well organized, hard working, dedicated women's groups working on social justice/social change issues. In the resulting Fairness in Funding Report, the Committee not only applauded the Women's Program as one of the best in the country, it recognized that through the superior efforts of the women involved, it received better value for the dollar than any other government program and recommended that funding levels be at least maintained and increased to rural and multi-disadvantaged women.

So! What happened? As I see it, women spoke the truth about our lives, our communities, our government and called for profound and far-reaching change to the way society is organized. Women were no longer being "nice" and it was catching on.



When our funding was cut women across the country organized a determined protest. Our communities supported us. And this is where the government made a very clever move. It reinstated our funding for one year telling us women's centres should be funded provincially. It did not recommit itself to supporting the principle of equality of women by reaffirming its commitment to the Women's Program. Yet it has been perceived to respond to public pressure and the media claims a "victory" for women. The general public believes the issue is resolved.

The issue is not resolved. Women's centres may be in a worse position in ten months. We are in danger of losing our national voice as the national groups are strangled and the publications ignored. Our energy for continued protest is diffused. The government feels no pressure to discuss our concerns further.

We need one more effort on all our parts to make our voices heard. PLEASE WRITE BRIAN MULRONEY AND GERRY WEINER asking for ongoing operational funding for women's centres, initiation of federal/provincial cost-sharing talks, a commitment to the Women's Program.

We were fortunate to have Mary Ann Fraser with us this month on a job placement. Without her help I don't think we could have put out the lobbying effort we did.

Summer is drawing near. The Women's Centre closes for July and August, re-opening in September. We are looking for new board members. If you are interested or can recommend someone please call us.

Hope to see you at the Coady Picnic in July. If you can help organize it we'd appreciate it. Have a wonderful, relaxed, vitalizing summer and we'll see you at the beach.

Lucille Harper



SINGLE MOTHERS MEET

The Single Mother's Support Group has been meeting weekly since mid-March. There are six women involved, most of whom are under 30 and have one or two children.

At the first meeting we focused on the pros and cons of single parenting. The usual complaints such as "no money; very poor housing, training and recreation options; loneliness, and stigmatization" were cited. On the brighter side, the women felt that their freedom, autonomy, and establishing a solid "self" were the greater benefits, as well as having more time to spend alone with their children.

One session involved an open discussion about emotions with Chris Tragakis. The emotional "heaviness" of this meeting was lamented by all, but the women were glad to begin to deal with these feelings in a new way.

St. James United Church offered the group free tickets to their variety concert which took place at the church on May 17. A few of the moms attended and brought various members of their families with them.

Upcoming is a session with Maureen Coady on the uniqueness of women's learning and barriers to education faced by women. Also, Nancy Wright has agreed to do a workshop which will enable the participants to brainstorm about how the world would look if it were run by them. I feel that it is important to actively create a vision.

The group is funded by PLURA, an inter-church body which funds projects that address current social problems. Of course, it is difficult, as always, to get people out to meetings, but once the group members have pushed beyond that familiar feeling of inertia, and acquaint themselves with the benefits of sharing their experience, they are usually quite pleased with the end product. Transportation and childcare are paid for by the grant, so there are no financial demands placed on the participants.

It has got to be decided whether or not the meetings will continue through the summer months, and if they do, what the content will be.

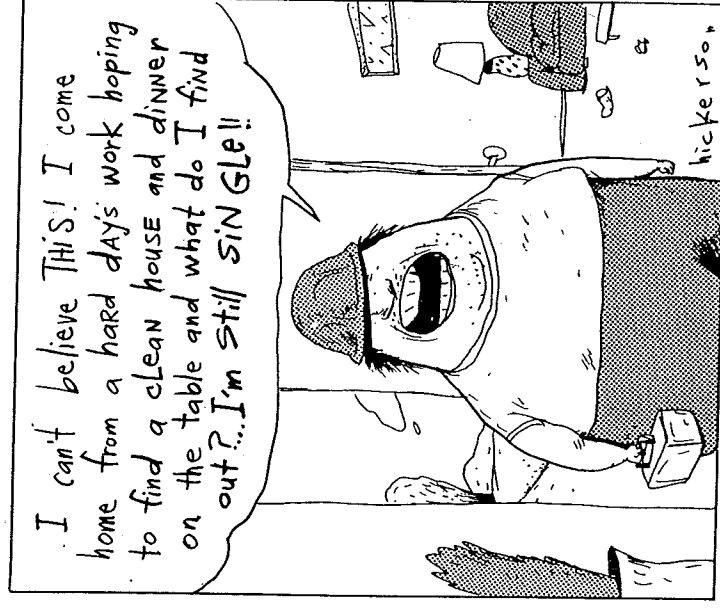
Katherine Reed

The Woman Who Knew Too Much



ALFRED'S SILENCE COULD BE EXPERTLY DECODED: "I LOVE YOU, DARLING, MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF" WAS WHAT IT MEANT.

CARTOON BY SHARON EINHORN



hickerson

"A GRAIN OF SALT - A KERNEL OF TRUTH"

by columnist, Katherine Reed

Since AWA members don't have many opportunities to touch bases with each other, some of us thought we might try to address this problem with a "social" column in AWARE. Now make no mistake about it - this is not a gossip column - there is a difference y'know. Only polite chit-chat will grace these pages. Promise. On we go then:

Nasha, Lucille, Cecilia and Yael recently journeyed to Mass. to visit with Barbara and had a frightful border crossing. Barb has had a taxing year and plans to return in mid June, a qualified massage therapist.

The end of June will see a happy addition to the MacDonald/MacIntosh home. Donna is radiant and having a little trouble picking things up these days.

Speaking of domestic concerns, Yael will soon be moving to Montréal and her thoughts seem to have taken on a new flavour...

Mary Ann Fraser (formerly Bingly) has been helping out at the Centre this past month as part of her training program's on-the-job experience. I'm sure it has been quite an experience. She recently re-married.

Dorothy is off to Australia very soon where the Gilsons will spend Clive's sabbatical year. She plans to find some sort of employment there. Can you picture Dorothy unemployed?

Shirley Burkett will be off to Acadia University some time in June where she will be working on her MA in counselling.

Speaking of MAS, Anne Camozzi has just finished her MA. Congrats! Betty-Anne Fraser is back to work as a Community Health Nurse.

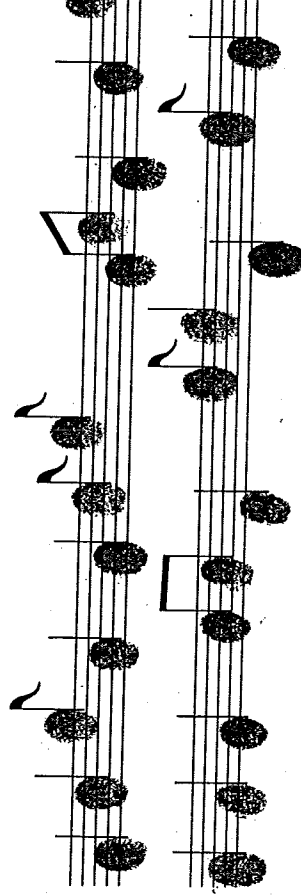
Katherine Winlo will be working as a tour guide in Algonquin Park in Ontario, and plans to return in the fall to continue along with her degree at St. F. X.

May Bancroft has just returned from a cross-Canada jaunt. She visited her brother and her sister in B. C. and Ont., respectively. Maureen Toner will be working in the lab at St. F. X. this summer and will no doubt resume her studies in September.

Singer-songwriter-actress-adult educator-mother and Féministe Extraordinaire, Debbie Dort has just completed teaching a life skills course with Barb Moreton. She plans to spend the summer at home with the kids.

Speaking of enjoying the summer at home, Liz Hagell will spend her summer camping, relaxing and working on her new Alberta garden and yard.

Second year Sociology student, Valarie Laurie will be working with the RCMP as a Crime Prevention Program staff person. There. I've told you everything I know, (and some stuff I just guessed at). If you, or anyone you know has information to contribute to the next "A GRAIN OF SALT - A KERNEL OF TRUTH" please make your submissions in writing or call them in to Katherine at the Centre. We are sorry, but we cannot accept any information, true or otherwise about any part-time Resource Centre staff. Have a lovely summer.



YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL MEETING
OF

THE NAOMI SOCIETY FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

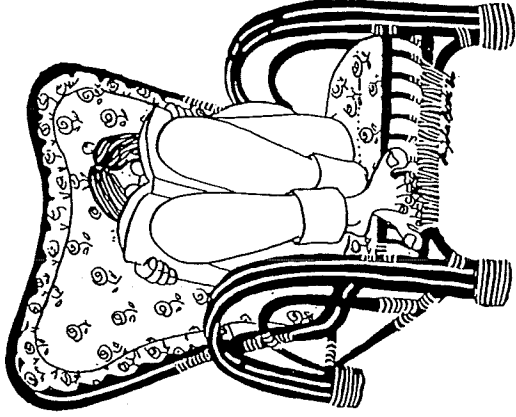
SUN. JUNE 24 90 AT 4PM

MOUNT ST. BERNARD COLLEGE

2

2

Women are repeatedly
accused of taking
things personally.
I cannot see any
other honest way
of taking them.
- Mary Mannes
born 1904



Man forgives woman
anything save the
wit to outwit him.
-Minna Antrim,
19th century
Irish writer

NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR LIBRARY

Revelations: Diaries of Women; Mary Jane Moffat and Charlotte Painter, editors.

Strong Minded Women: By Janet Murray - a stunning, collective portrait of Women in 19th century England.

No Is Not Enough: Helping Teenagers Avoid Sexual Assault.

The Mermaid and The Minotaur: By Dorothy Dinnerstein "These elements of mind and heart combined have created a stirring view of the common psychic life of men and women and its relation to the whole of organized human history.

In A Different Voice; By Carol Gilligan - Carol Gilligan believes that psychology has persistently and systematically misunderstood women - their motives, their moral commitments, the course of their psychological growth, and their special view of what is important in life.

Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality - edited by Ann Snitow, Christine Stensill and Sharon thompson. Through history, sociology, journalism, fiction, and poetry, the collection addresses itself to our sexual futures: how can we build an erotic world that feminists will desire?

Passionate Politics by Charlotte Bunch; Bunch through her collection of essays traces the contemporary history of women's struggles.

Pornography And The Sex Crisis by Susan G. Cole - "The lies of pornography are becoming the truth about life".

The Coming Out Stories

The Moons Of Jupiter By Alice Munro

STONEWALL RIOTS

BY ANDREA NATALIE

