

AWAKE

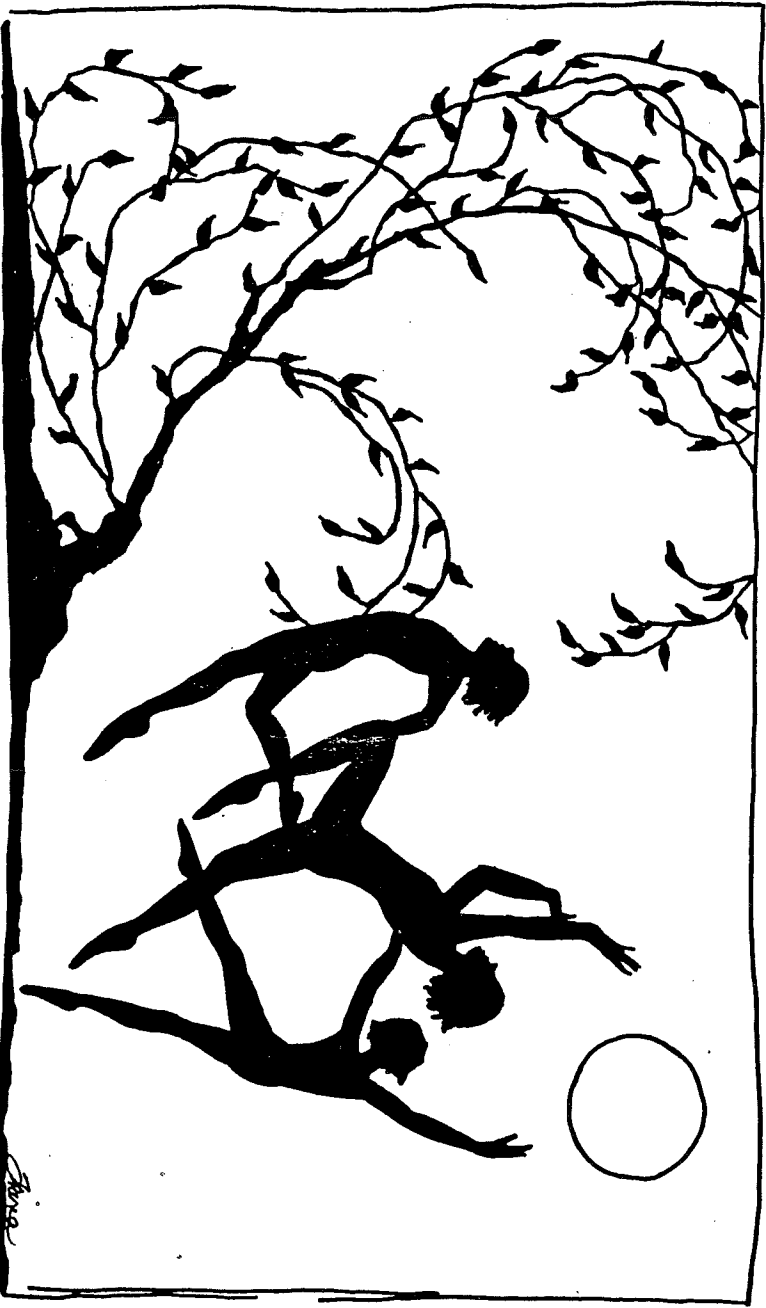


NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

RESOURCE CENTER 863-6221

FALL 1991

WOMEN AND PLAY !



Dear readers,

Imagine if you will the newsletter committee assembled at the center to fire themselves up for another issue. Yes myself, May Bancroft, Sian McLean, Lucille, in a lunch hour meeting...what theme could we focus this issue on?... You can blame it all on me. My thinking was...we always do such serious topics...why not have some fun and choose a light topic like "Women and Play"? How do we play? When and where? How much play, fun and laughter is there in our lives? Do we take time? Do we have playful natures? Who do we know that takes time for play?

What ensued was a very serious discussion. I mean dead serious. We actually sat around looking confused and at a loss as to who has fun. Starting with ourselves was disheartening when we all admitted we were not taking enough time out for fun in our lives. Then the discussion was why don't women have fun? Was it economics, is it cultural, are people in some cultures more playful than others even when faced with poverty and deprivation such as in the Caribbean, Latin America and Africa? Is it also in a sense spiritual? When we are content and at peace with who we are can we be joyful and light and playful?...

We pondered these and other reflections on the subject until we got bogged down in our pondering and said let's hear from other women...

We present you with perspectives on the subject from different women along with our usual newsletter fare. Read on sweet readers... don't be deterred in pursuit of the light and livelies, the whimsical, in joyful abandon, hey nonney nonney no, hey ho, exeunt, what madness is in the air...

B. Shogers

LAUGHTER

DID YOU KNOW THAT LAUGHTER -----

- RELEASES ENDORPHINS WHICH ARE NATURAL PAINKILLERS
- PROVIDES AN INTERNAL WORKOUT BY EXERCISING INTERNAL ORGANS
- RELAXES THE MUSCLES IN YOUR FACE WHICH CAN TENSE UP CAUSING TENSION HEADACHES
- STIMULATES THE THYMUS GLAND THUS HELPING OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM FIGHT OFF DISEASE
- TEARS SHED WHEN LAUGHING CONTAIN DIFFERENT CHEMICALS THAN THOSE SHED THROUGH GRIEF
- INCREASES OUR CREATIVITY ----- HAVE I GOT YOUR ATTENTION YET!
THE LIST COULD GO ON AND ON!

MYTHS ABOUT LAUGHTER ----- GREAT MATERIAL FOR DISCUSSION!

- WE LAUGH BECAUSE WE ARE HAPPY
- LAUGHTER AND HUMOUR ARE THE SAME
- WE MUST HAVE A REASON TO LAUGH
- WE LAUGH BECAUSE SOMETHING IS FUNNY

LAUGHING WITH VS. LAUGHING AT

Humour can be used in constructive and destructive ways. Looking at the following associations can help us distinguish the difference. I'm sure you can add your own perceptions of "laughing with" and "laughing at".

LAUGHING WITH

LAUGHING AT

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. CARING | 1. CONTEMPT |
| 2. PUT UP | 2. PUT DOWN |
| 3. BRINGS PEOPLE CLOSER | 3. DIVIDES PEOPLE |
| 4. EMPATHY | 4. LACK OF SENSITIVITY |
| 5. BUILDS CONFIDENCE | 5. DESTROYS SELF ESTEEM |
| 6. MAKING THE CHOICE TO BE THE "BUTT" | 6. HAVING NO CHOICE |
| 7. INVITES PEOPLE | 7. OFFENDS PEOPLE |
| 8. CAN INVOLVE LAUGHING AT YOURSELF | 8. LAUGHS AT OTHERS |
| 9. SUPPORTIVE | 9. SARCASTIC |

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRIMING THE LAUGHTER PUMP

Get a carrot, alligator or other funny pen to write with---
Rent old funny movies and watch them with friends.

Take a 10 minute laughter meditation break. During this meditation shut out your "present reality" and read a funny part of a novel, jokebook or listen to your favourite comedian on tape.

Take 10 minutes and become the camera on a Candid Camera show. Pan your camera and see all the ridiculous activities going on (also known as truly human activities) around you. Soon everything does not seem as serious or tense. This is especially fun to do at work or during a particularly tense moment during a meeting.

Make a pact with yourself to spend some time each week with a person who always makes you laugh.

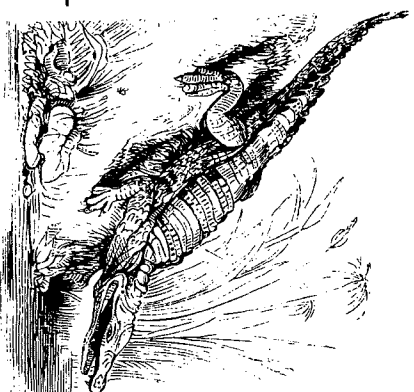
This is a great one for the workplace! Ask everyone to bring in baby pictures and post them on the bulletin board. Everyone will have lots of laughs figuring out who's who! Beyond the laughter is a realization that "everyone really is someone's baby."

Remember, laughter is the shortest distance between two people!
Sometimes your HA HA'S can become your AHA'S.



Contributors to this wonderfully
alive and fabulous newsletter
were May Bancroft, Bar bara
Hayes, Sian Mclean, Betty-Anne
Fraser, Myrna Skakun, Diane
Walsh, Katherine Reed, Lucille
Harper, Susan Jewkes and
Rieky Stuart.

Any quips, queries, quotes,
quibbles or questions may
be addressed to the Women's
Centre. In plain language -
we invite your response.



playful place. Difficult in these stress-filled times to sustain, perhaps, but worth the effort considering how much of our lives are devoted to, and consumed by, work.

By concentrating on ways to make our given or chosen life more playful we find a release from hardship. We need to give ourselves permission to enjoy all the simple and mundane tasks of the day. We can sing while driving, wax witty while doing the dishes, put a spring in our steps and a twinkle in our eyes, and a smile goes a long way towards turning our lives around. Work and play can be two aspects of the same thing rather than the polar opposites our society has made them.

On my good days, I find my own flavor of "bucking the system" to be a very creative and playful act. My family, my home, my vocation, my place in community are all extensions of my childhood work. I know that this moment is all I have, a challenge set before me.

Can you come out to play?



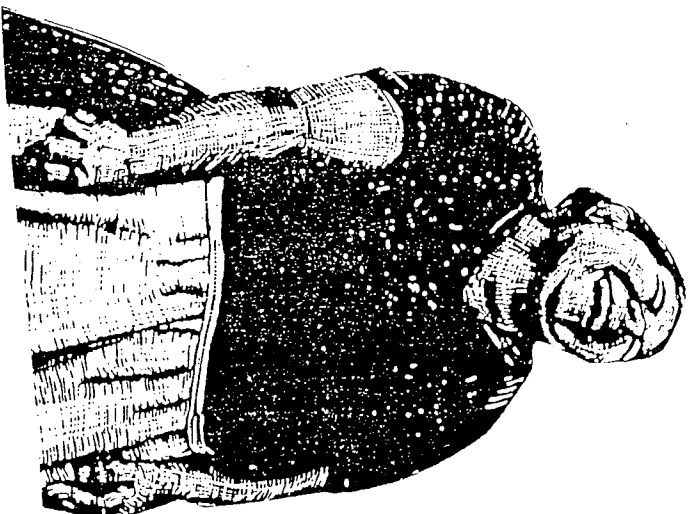
Shirley Burkett

For many of us our days seem far too short to accomplish the "essentials". Play often becomes one of those activities we put off until the weekend or our yearly holiday. But often at these appointed times, the ease and light-heartedness we associate with play doesn't flow naturally. Perhaps we have internalized so many messages that dictate what we "should" be doing (usually something productive) that to partake in non-productive activities makes us feel uneasy. To work may feel virtuous, while playing does not. Playing may feel entirely too selfish or indulgent.

Pretend that you have been told you are dying. The doctor has revealed to you that your illness will be terminal in two years. How would that news rearrange your sense of priorities about life? Would you attempt to reorder your life at once to include more time for those things you really want? Dying is a certainly - the only unknown is when.

Although we may feel a commitment to rearrange our priorities, for many of us it is not a simple process to determine what we truly want to do, how we want to play, what we want to play, do we want to play alone or with other, expending a little or a lot of energy? Because women are socialized to focus on the needs of others to the exclusion of their own, what we want for ourselves sometimes feels like an unknown, as though we don't have access to that information about ourselves. We may have to spend sometime trying to reconnect with our own desires and preferences, perhaps experimenting, before we can say: I want to do this, this way, etc.

Children are our best teachers of course when it comes to play. They know what they want to pay, how and with whom. They have not made the distinction between productive and non-productive activities - it is all play, all learning, all doing, and all being, and very much centered in the present. Delayed gratification is hardly an attractive concept to them. If we followed their example and stopped putting aside what we really want until "later" would we find ourselves more in touch with what we really want and enjoy, more comfortable with non-productive leisure, making fewer distinctions between our work and our play, and living more in the present?



Can You Come Out To Play?

Sian McLean 27/10/91

Where, how, and when do we play? I asked several women friends this question and a common theme emerged. Within a busy rural family life there is little room for conscious play; however, upon reflection all realized that many of the day to day things they did could be playful and that play was a vitally important yet underutilized aspect of their lives.

So how do some of us play? Doing something creative was highest on the list. Things like dancing, arts and crafts, music and yes, gardening, were mentioned. So was playing with children; playing ball, swimming, hiking, skiing, etc. Others mentioned socializing as playful and most would agree that sex can be playful.

However, no-one mentioned work as a playful activity, and I wonder if we are missing the boat. Do we have the power to redefine our work? It is often accepted that the work of childhood is play. Children sort out their life experiences through complex series of imaginative play experiences. I wonder if we can re-interpret our adult work in a way that makes more of our lives playful. Are not the passages of life an extension of the childhood work? Can we imagine our lives in this way? Is self-determination a prerequisite?

These are contentious questions, and we all come at them from different angles. We are all suffering on some level, but do we not have a collective responsibility to enjoy the sacred gift of life?

The child is within us all. As one friend said, "Play takes us outside the thinking self". If we can view our work as meditation or dance or a game (not in the cynical sense), we may be able to transcend the toil and trouble to reach that

TAKING PLAY SERIOUSLY

Whenever I pose the question, "What do you do to play, have fun and laugh?" I usually get one of the following answers.

Play! Are you kidding I can hardly find time for sleep! No time! No money! Grownups don't play! My work spills over into my play time.

Sound familiar! They certainly are familiar to me because I've used them myself at one time or another. Then when a crisis like cancer came into my life and made me realize that my life was what I was living today, I made a lot of changes. One of those was to allow myself to have more play, more fun, and more laughter. In a culture which emphasizes the value of logical rational thought, we sometimes travel so hard to get where we ought to be, that we miss the journey.

Well, where do we start. When we take the time to watch a preschool child we can easily see that they don't have a problem with laughter and play. Life seems like one marvellous adventure after another. Deep down inside every one of us is that little playful child waiting to be re-discovered. We can think of our playful self as if it were a well that hasn't been used in awhile. There's still lots of wonderful life giving water there! First, we may have to prime the pump and your more playful self will appear.

Find a 3-5 year old child and just hang out with them for at least two hours of uninterrupted time. Just allow yourself to BE with them. Choose a safe place and let them guide you along their path not yours. Perhaps you could go outside in the yard, or to a meadow or a beach and just notice what they do as you follow along. "That ant is making its way up that stick getting breakfast for her babies!" was pointed out to me on such an excursion with JD, a wonderful 3 year old.

Every once in awhile, when my life gets cluttered up with so many "important things", I take that walk again. Sometimes in my imagination, and when I feel the need I phone JD for an appointment. I really felt that I was making progress the day that he had his mother phone me!

Our perspective is an important part of being more playful in our everyday lives. It's all in how you look at it! Being more playful in our everyday lives is connected with setting time aside just to play.

Here's some ideas to help us begin to put more play in our lives.

REMOVING BARRIERS TO PLAYFULNESS

WHAT BOXES YOU IN

- fear of foolishness
- childhood memories
- Be the best!
- Do It Right!
- guilt
- shame
- a terminal case of "shoulds"
- "Stop playing around and get to work."
- cultural attitudes
- what if...if only
- too little time
- not enough money
- stress



PLAYFULNESS TRAINING

Becoming more playful takes time, energy, and a commitment to change those attitudes which act as barriers. Answering the following questions (either by yourself or by sharing your memories with friends) is one way to begin.

1. What is your very first childhood memory?
2. What is your earliest memory of playing?
3. What is your earliest pleasant memory of playing?
4. How did your family play? Who? What? When? How often? How often did you laugh?
5. What adults played with you?
6. At school and in your neighborhood, who did you play with? What memories do you have of your playmates?
7. What happened--in your family, at school, with friends--when you made a mistake?
8. At what age were you taught games that involve winning and losing?
9. When did you stop playing make-believe?
10. When did you start feeling anxious about your singing...your drawing?
11. If you were teased, or bullied, or excluded, who was there to protect you?
12. What do you feel hindered your childhood play?
13. What helped?
14. Check off those phrases which sound familiar to you. Add phrases you remember.

Wipe that smile off your face.
Quit acting silly.

Stop fooling around.

Do we gotta have him/her on our team?

Trees aren't purple, stupid!

You're weird.

You're making a fool of yourself.

Stop bothering me; can't you see I'm working?

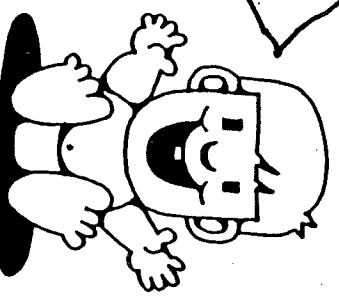
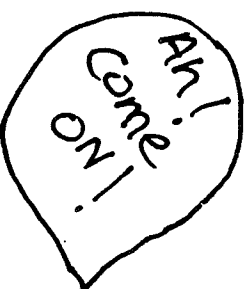
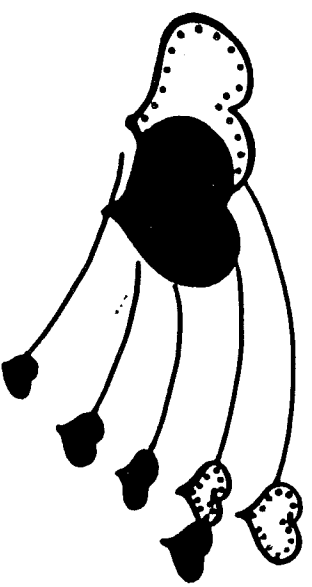
Can't you take a joke?

Quit playing around and get your homework done.

-
15. List three positive memories you have of your childhood play:
-

HAVE YOU HUGGED YOUR CHILD TODAY?

The child within me is playful, beautiful and expressive. There is a child within me that needs love and attention. My child self is an important part of who I am...It is this precious child that knows how to play and accept love. It is this precious child that I am discovering...Throughout the day I will let the memories of my childhood flow. Whether they are painful or pleasant, I know that these memories will help me discover an important part of myself that I have ignored...I will nurture the child within me with tenderness and warmth. As I love and accept the child within me I feel the wonderfully playful part of me emerge.



PLAY

I guess I don't play any more in the childhood sense. It's now called leisure. We don't play as when we were children. If I do it seems "silly". But that doesn't stop me from occasionally blowing bubbles or getting or giving a ride in the wheelbarrow or garden-way cart (my childhood dream vehicle)! Do parents tend to play more because of their children?

I did make a conscious decision last year to forget about getting any jobs done when family visits. That has made visits much less frustrating and more enjoyable. Family is more important. These visits are in a way a leisure activity for me even if it can at times be fairly hectic.

It has struck me as well how much of our leisure activities depend on cars, money and accessories like boats etc. We have taken more time to go canoeing this year, so that requires certain needed equipment, but at least it need not be overly expensive. It seems that so many material things are being pushed as something you need to have fun. Simple pleasures are buried. I enjoy making walking trails through our woods, or walking down our long driveway looking at the trees we've planted and the birds that dart around, what could be more simple? I find that many things I do at home, ie: gardening and building (in small doses) blur between pleasure and work. I

happened to enjoy (didn't see it as a "job") finishing the interior of the house. It was probably due to a fairly slow pace, I didn't have to have it done in two weeks.

I find that taking leisure time has come down to priorities. I'm still finishing the house after fourteen years, but we still took our vacation time away. I'm sure if we took all our vacation time and worked on the house it would have been finished a long time ago. My partner would have preferred a finished house long ago, but I managed to stretch it! Of course we had a plywood floor for eleven years, could have put flooring on sooner, but no one has ever died from living on a plywood floor! So it was a case of priorities for me.

For a few years while my partner lived in Halifax, I could do all the maintenance work at home during the week so we could have our weekends free to go sailing. I suspect that some people thought that Bob came home to all kinds of work on the weekends!

I know that after our committee's discussion about fun, I made more of an effort to make time for it! It is so easy to get into a daily grind!

May Goring Bancroft





RAPE SHEILD LAW STRUCK DOWN

Women who are sexually assaulted will now be even more reluctant to bring their assailants to court. The provision of the Criminal Code of Canada which prevented defence lawyers from questioning sexual assault complainants about their past sexual activity has been replaced with directives which give judges authority to decide whether this type of evidence is "relevant" in each separate circumstance.

According to Daphne Dumont of LEAF, one of the reasons the new measures are unacceptable is that they are based on the presumption that many of the cases coming into court will be brought by women who are lying. The kinds of comments people have made in support of striking the rape shield provisions illustrate this. The man interviewed once on The National (who's name escapes me) from the Civil Liberties Association made much of a hypothetical situation where a woman could use a sexual assault charge as a lever for extortion or blackmail. Ms. Dumont recalls hearing concerns about the possibility of women charging men with sexual assault because of an unwanted pregnancy and an unwillingness to lay a paternity suit against the father of her child.

I'm having some difficulty with these hypothetical situations. Do women do these things? Am I missing something in my perception of what women are like? Has anyone ever documented the frequency of such cases and their outcomes? Couldn't there be some kind of provision made where if this type of situation were suspected, some kind of gender-sensitized sub-jury outside of the regular courtroom could rule on the need to use this evidence? The whole problem as I see it is that it will be left up to judges to decide on the "relevance" of this type of evidence and after what I've seen and heard from several Canadian judges in the past few years, this idea scares the hell out of me.

Ms. Dumont explains that other areas of criminal law are not based on this presumption of the alleged victim's dishonesty. She also feels that we cannot rely upon judges to have non-sexist attitudes and that sexual history evidence will once again be used to destroy the complainant's credibility by pandering to misogynist attitudes and biases.

It is very discouraging to see another example of this kind of reactionary measure taken against a group of people who are very likely to be sexually abused, sexually assaulted, sexually harassed, discriminated against, battered, poor, etc., etc. It seems to me that if a woman manages to make it into her thirties without suffering some major spirit-scarring trauma, she is an oddity. Maybe it is time for women to decide on a totally different way of handling offenders - one that is defined, controlled and evaluated by women...anybody got any ideas?

If you would like to take some action against this situation, a letter to our member of parliament and to the Justice Minister, Kim Campbell could be helpful. They can be reached at House of Commons, Ottawa, Ont., K1A 0A6. No postage is necessary.

Katherine Reed



Canadians are currently debating the new gun control legislation proposed under Bill C-17. This bill is of particular interest and concern to women because: (1) guns are part of the culture that allows violence to persist in our society; (2) women are disproportionately affected by violence in the home; and (3) guns are the most frequently used weapons in domestic violence.

Documentation of gun-related deaths in Canada shows that 1,400 Canadians are killed with guns annually. In 1989 46% of women murdered by their husbands were shot. Guns account for 35% of family-related murders. On average a woman is shot to death every five days in Canada. Guns are used in 30% of suicides in Canada. Often the accidental as well as the intended victims of gunshots are children.

As Glenda Simms, president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, points out, "Gun control is an essential component of any preventative action concerning male violence against women." She makes the case that the use of guns and violence in the media has contributed to perceptions that guns are used by heroes to resolve conflicts. Guns are seen as a method of expressing masculinity. Most women murdered by their husbands/lovers are murdered in their homes. Access to guns in the home means access to a fast, quick, deadly weapon. When we link violence against women which is perpetrated largely by men with the way male society sees their "right" to hold firearms we understand the gun as an extension of a masculine assumption of right to control.

Current legislation allows a 16 year old without a criminal record for an indictable offence involving violence to purchase a firearm. Bill C-17 would require parental permission for a 16 or 17 year old to obtain a certificate allowing them to purchase as many weapons as desired.

Currently there is no registry for all firearms and Bill C-17 does not propose to change this. However an applicant will be required to obtain a Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC). A FAC is not required to purchase ammunition and there are no proposed limits on the amount one can buy.

Currently only fully automatic weapons are prohibited in Canada, handguns are restricted, and rifles,

shotguns, many military and para-military guns are unrestricted.

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women makes the following recommendations for firearms legislation:

A stricter licensing system, which would include a more effective screening process for applicants. As it now stands, virtually everyone who applies for a firearms acquisition certificate gets one. The burden of proof should be on the applicant to prove why they should have access to a firearm. Community checks, not just criminal record checks, should be made prior to issuing a FAC because most incidences of violence against women are not brought to police attention.

Gun control legislation should include a ban on all automatic and para-military semi-automatic firearms and should provide for control of ammunition sales.

The legislation must include a ban on firearms possession for all violent offenders because current screening mechanisms do not provide adequate protection for women, particularly those in violent relationships.

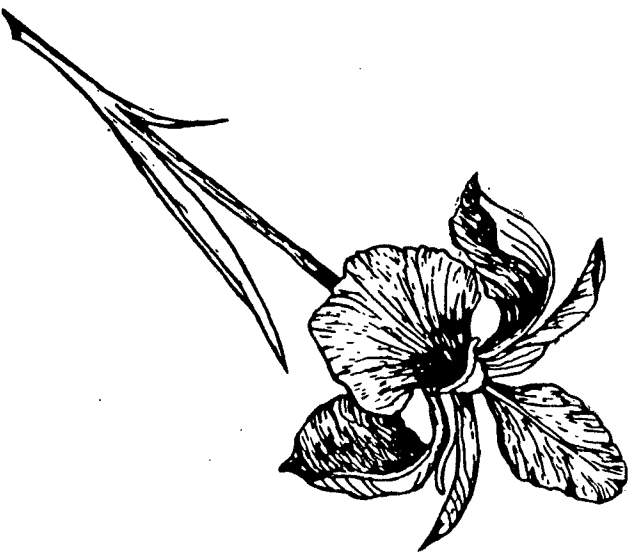
New gun control legislation should also establish a national firearms registry because effective gun control requires information about the number, type of guns and owners of firearms in Canada.

Francis LeBlanc, M.P. for Highlands-Canso, is interested in hearing from you. The Liberal Party and the N.D.P. support passage of Bill C-17 although Francis has proposed two small changes: that anyone convicted of common assault be prohibited from receiving a FAC; that provision be made to reimburse gun owners for

forfeited weapons. Francis sent copies of the minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of Legislative Committee H on Bill C-17 to the Centre. They are very interesting reading. If you want to borrow them you may pick them up at the Centre.

Please express your concerns by writing Francis Leblanc, M.P., and Justice Minister Kim Campbell at the House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6. No postage is necessary.

Lucille Harper



THE 52% SOLUTION

NAC is back from summer vacation. The year ahead poses tremendous challenges for women across the country - the struggle against the continuing erosion of social programs through cuts in federal transfer payments; an increasing wage gap between women and men; a constitutional debate in which women have not yet won a voice; a pending free trade agreement with Mexico that could have an even worse impact on job loss than the one with the U.S.; growing public awareness but still little action in the fight to end violence against women; a rise in racism and right wing forces.

NAC recognizes that women are hardest hit by the conservative agenda. That is why we have decided to launch a wide-ranging campaign to develop a feminist alternative. NAC will publish a draft discussion paper and kit that will outline our proposals for alternative economic, social and constitutional proposals based on adopted NAC policy. This kit will be available by the end of September to NAC member groups and other women's organizations as a basis for discussion and elaboration.

We suggest that women in different communities form discussion circles to review the ideas in the discussion paper and contribute to its further elaboration. By January we hope to have a final draft based on input from women across the country. Details on how to get a copy of the draft 52% Solution kit will be available in the next issue of Action Now. Campaign committees for the 52% Solution will be set up across the country. Contact your NAC regional representative or the NAC office.

Taken from ACTION NOW a monthly newsletter from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. Contact person is Marion Matheson 562-5233.



*"Too much of a
good thing can be
wonderful."*

Mae West
Film Actress

WORKSHOP "UNLEARNING RACISM" PLANNED

A workshop on racism will be co-ordinated by the Centre. It will be made up of a series of practical exercises designed to teach participants how to recognize racism in persons, the community, the workplace, etc. It is designed to be a comfortable process where noone will be forced to share their thoughts unless they wish. Participants will look at their own identities, and how they are composed of race, ethnicity, class, gender, ability, religion and so on. Testimonies from people who experience racism and those who have tried to eliminate it will also be a part of the workshop. Hopefully our local Affirmative Action group will co-sponsor the event. Registration will be limited, so call early if you want to register. The workshop will take place on January 24 & 25/92.



AWA GENERAL MEETING CALLED (BY-LAWS CAN BE EXCITING)

There will be a meeting for all AWA members Thursday, December 5, 7:30pm, in the Riley Lounge of the Coady Institute to update our by-laws.

The proposed changes to the by-laws reflect the changes in the way we have been working for the past couple of years. Members are invited to drop into the Centre anytime to read the proposed by-laws and to review our existing ones.

We are also creating a separate set of by-laws for the Women's Centre so that we will be eligible for a charitable tax number. The Women's Centre will become an educational and service delivery organization only and will not be involved in lobbying. The AWA will continue to make political statements and lobby on behalf of our membership.

By-laws are fun but they aren't everything. So we hope to dispense with the by-laws business part of the meeting in relatively short time and get on to the more serious business of socializing. So please plan to stay and bring some finger foods, something you'd fancy drinking and we'll settle into a good time.



THE TIME IS RIGHT CONFERENCE

Forty social activists from throughout Nova Scotia met in September to discuss the possibility of forming a provincial social solidarity network. Conference participants agreed that it is indeed time to work together on common goals and to share information and resources. Representatives from the women's movement, daycares, churches, anti-poverty and environmental groups and community and labour groups met throughout one weekend to begin the process of defining a common agenda and to look at how such a diverse group could work together.

Participants will meet again to discuss the mandate, purpose, resources and operating principles of the proposed network. This meeting is scheduled for November 29, 30 and December 1 at the Maritime School of Social Work. If you are interested in attending you may obtain more information by calling the Women's Centre - 863-6221.



VOLUNTEER'S COMMENTS

12



For five five weeks this fall Genevieve Ouellet and Bushra Farooqui volunteered in the centre. They were participating in Canada World Youth and the centre was one of their work projects in the community of Antigonish. Genevieve is from Quebec and Bushra is from Pakistan, the following are some of their impressions from the time spent here.

From Genevieve: "I had a real cultural shock, especially about the roles of men and women in the families. I found the distribution of the home chores very different to my culture in Quebec. I was also surprised to observe the big influence of the Catholic religion in Antigonish. A lot of situations remind me of my grandparent's generation, that was forty years ago in Quebec. And many problems faced by the women's centre, like the high rate of single mothers and the incredible number of battered women and violence against women in town, makes one reflect."

From Bushra: "The most interesting thing was the day to day discussion that I would hear on women's problems. It was a big cultural shock for me knowing how many problems women have to go through. Everyday I heard something new and exciting. I also went through a lot of books and magazines which really opened my eyes and broadened my views. Being at the centre I realized that everyone is not living a wonderful life and there are lots who need support of others.

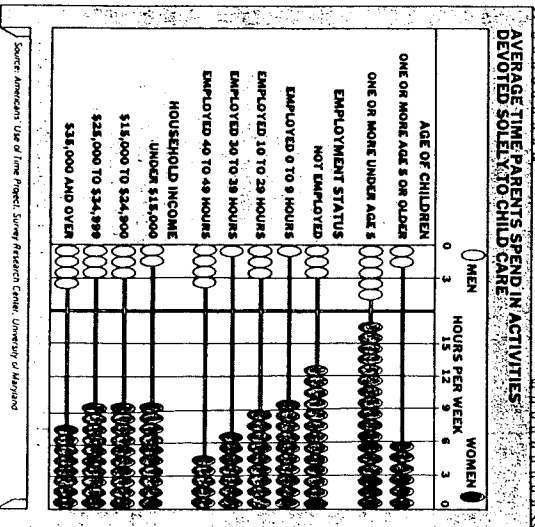
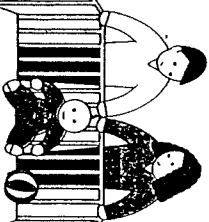
Cultural shocks pounded at me now and then, specially when I went excitedly with my supervisors and other members to a local music store to protest against a certain pornographic poster put up there. Throughout I could not help laughing, on thinking that "What am I doing here?" But I didn't want to miss the action.

Its different for me how people are so open about every issue 'cause in Pakistan lots of things are hushed up, there are lots of people who cannot fight for their rights, due to lack of education. It was great when I joined in the walk for Take Back The Night where I didn't believe myself shouting out "Women unite, Take back the night!"

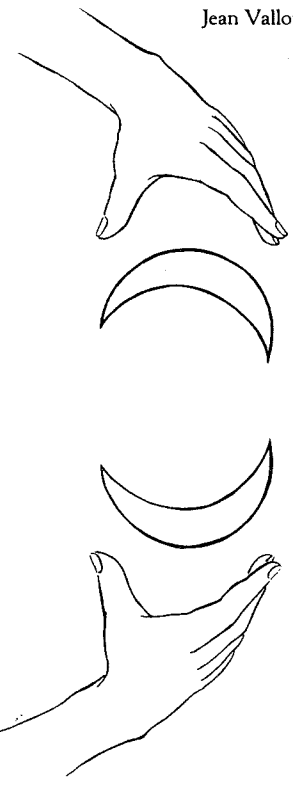
Lastly Wanda Kontak worked at the centre for the summer months and her comments were; "I met so many amazing people over the course of the summer; women who had overcome such tremendous obstacles in their lives. They proved to be very inspiring; I learned so much about the role of women in society, and the problems they face. I became consumed in finding out about everything from sexual assault to wife abuse to welfare rights to single mothers. I became even more sensitive to women's issues than I had already been and I think I drove my family and friends crazy in the evenings and on the weekends as my favorite topic of conversation became women's rights. Towards the end of my job I told people that I had learned more in the past eight weeks than I had in the past three years at University and that is no lie!"

Bringing Up Baby

TAKING CARE OF KIDS



Jean Vallon



"MAKE LIKE THE MOON"

An easy way to recall the moon's phases:
your right hand echoes the form of a waxing crescent;
your left hand, a waning crescent.

Do you have any used, good quality toys in your storage cupboard? Eunice Ama Osei from Ghana is looking for toys, puzzles, books, legos, etc. to take back to rural daycares in her country. Eunice has been instrumental in training women in rural villages in the arts of tie-dying, block printing and garment making. The daycares free the women to go to work. However, the daycares have very little in the way of toys for the children .

If you have any toys you would like to donate to Eunice please bring them to the Centre before the end of November. Children often enjoy choosing toys they no longer use to send to children in other lands. (Very large or heavy items may be too difficult to pack.) If you don't have any toys perhaps you have a friend or neighbour who does.



SISTER MARY MACLEOD FEMINIST CHRISTMAS STOCKING BURSARY

Last year through the sale of tickets on our Feminist Christmas Stocking we were able to raise enough money to offer a Sister Mary Macleod Bursary to two women returning to school. The bursaries are small, \$250, but still a big help in buying books, etc. If you would like to help with this years stocking please call the Centre and we'll put your name on the list. Your help would be appreciated.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| November 4 | <u>CCLOW - Community Concerned About Government Changes In funding & Training For Re-entry And Entry Programs - Main Branch - Halifax - Regional Library -(Grafton St. Entrance)</u> |
| November 5 | <u>Family Decision Making: A Model of Intervention For Victims of Child-Abuse and Neglect.</u>
<u>-Laurie Gabites - The Halifax Hilton</u> |
| November 12-29 | <u>Vistas: Anne Simpson Bloomfield Centre</u> |
| November 12 | <u>Special Needs Information Project: Kirk Place</u>
<u>219 Main Street - Adele Mc Sorley</u> |
| November 15-17 | <u>From Patriarchy To Partnering: Tatamagouche Centre</u> |
| November 20 | <u>Play Therapy With Maltreated Children: Dr. Pearce</u>
<u>Lord Nelson Hotel</u> |
| January 24-26 | <u>Woman Spirit: At Tatamagouche Centre</u> |
| February 7-9 | <u>Making Sense of Conflict: Tatamagouche Centre</u> |
| February 28
to March 1 | <u>An Event for Non-Offending Parents:</u>
<u>Tatamagouche Centre</u> |



SOBEY'S TAPES

We are still collecting Sobeys's cash register tapes. This is a small, but very effective fund-raising program. Volunteers talley up the tapes and take them in for the refund, so it costs us absolutely nothing to access this money. Please bring in all your tapes and if you have a friend, (particularly one with a big family, or a couple of adolescents) perhaps they would be willing to send the tapes our way. Thank you all.

AWRC FUNDING SHORTFALL

Secretary of State funding for the Women's Centre is frozen at pre-1988 levels. We will experience a shortfall this year of approximately \$5,000. We need to raise this money in order to continue to exist. We cannot do it without your help.

We know that some people do not feel comfortable selling tickets and we respect this. We do not want to embarrass or inhibit you by putting you on the spot. So if you absolutely cannot sell tickets please let us know and we will not ask you to do it.

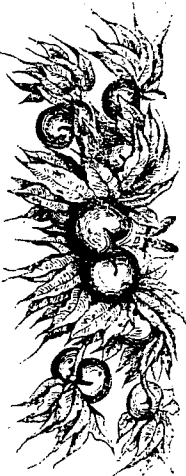
However, if you know of any wonderful fundraising schemes and would be interested in helping with them tell us. If we can spread fundraising around it's not as burdensome as when it lands on the shoulders of a few.

Thanks to everyone who sold tickets for the Club 200 draw!!!



THE ALL-NEW SUPERFUN MEMBERSHIP DRIVE!!!

Not only are memberships now due, but there is a special raffle going on for members who bring new members into the AWA. For each new person brought into the organization by a current member, a ticket credited to that current member will go into a raffle on a fabulous AWA t-shirt! Entries are only limited by the number of new people a member brings in. It's time to shuffle through the address book folks! For more info, call us at the Centre at 863-6221.



MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE IN SEPTEMBER

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

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

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

WOMEN AND PLAY

Writing about women and play sounded interesting and fun, so I said sure, I'd write "something" for the newsletter. But when you get into it, play is a pretty complex subject - to say nothing of women. After thinking about it for a while, I looked in the Oxford dictionary, which, apart from a large number of unuseful concepts ("playing" a fish on the line, "playing" the market), defines play as:

"moving about in a capricious manner"
"having free movement"
"pretending for fun"

When I asked a friend, how she would define play, she said play was something she didn't have to do either because it was work, or because she felt women are too busy being responsible - for their children, their spouses, their extended families, their work, their community - to have much time left over for play. Women, in other words, don't have or make time for fun.

Then how does play fit in with work, I asked. Because I associate play with having fun and you can have fun when you are working - making jokes, imagining silly scenarios, even singing songs. And for children, what we call play is often quite hard work - learning new skills, practising to be adults, learning how to behave socially with others. We can have time for play - for being ourselves, for laughing, for enjoying, for being free - incorporated in our daily lives.

Maria Mies, writing about work notes, "I remember the times of haymaking or harvesting on our small subsistence farm in my childhood as times of extreme labour intensity for everybody - mother, children, father - and as times of the greatest excitement, enjoyment, social interaction. I found the same phenomenon among poor peasant and agricultural labourer women in India during the season of rice transplantation....During the collective work processes in the fields, they sang an endless number of ballads....and in the evening they danced and sang together until late."

When I thought of times when I had fun what came to mind were planning sessions when we laughed until we cried about silly possibilities for workshop exercises.

What came to mind was sing-songs around the piano or guitar when we vied to find the funniest - or most sexist, or most schmaltsy - song we could remember. Inventing new lyrics when the old ones couldn't make it past the tips of our tongues. Attempts at harmonizing that we thought were brilliant, even though the non-singers grouched.

What came to mind was running gags - puns, making faces, jokes - with the kids about our family, about housework, about school. Often these took place on Saturdays, around household chores, or when planning who was doing what when.

So for me, playing is not necessarily separate from working, but is integral to having a sense of perspective about work. Work need not be grim and play need not be without social purpose. But for women, play is not competitive, hierarchical, or an opportunity for put-downs. Play expands the soul of all those involved, without sarcasm, without ego.

What is hard for women these days, as my friend noted, is making the time to keep our perspectives - to build play into our lives, our work. Playing is essential to a feminist vision of life. While it can be part of work, it is not solitary and requires others. Make a resolution the next time you are working with others and something tickles your funnybone - play a little, take a risk and let play enrich your work, your life, and that of others.

Ridley Stuart

NEWS FROM THE CENTRE

The Centre was not as busy (in terms of traffic), in September as it usually is. This situation did not prevail in October. During the month of September we had a total of 273 contacts, and as of the 30th of October, that figure has soared to 411. These numbers do not include people who have attended group activities.

Our annual "Take Back The Night" walk which was co-sponsored by the Women For Social Awareness group on campus was held in September. We walked in the rain, singing and chanting, and then met for refreshments at the United Church. Some women spoke eloquently about violence against women. We sang a song called "Drops of Water" together. The song compared people working for social change with water eroding a rock over time. It seemed that a sad, but hopeful (or perhaps determined) mood prevailed.

The main focus of activity during the end of September and the beginning of October was the municipal and school board elections. We organized public forums for town, county and school board candidates. Many important issues were raised and discussed as a result of this work. There had been no opportunity for the municipal candidates to speak together publicly, so we were excited about being part of taking the election "out of the closet" in that way. The event was co-sponsored by St. F. X. Extension Dept.

The Centre also co-ordinated a panel discussion on openness in adoption. A panel consisting of an adoptee, an adoptive parent, a birth parent, and Sr. Judith Breen from The Home of the Guardian Angel in Halifax lent insight and creative thinking to issues of adoption.

We are delighted to have a new staff member! Myrna Skakun joined us in mid-October. She has a background in office work and working with women in crisis, as well as experience with fundraising and just a whole lot of positive energy. Welcome aboard Myrna!

Lucille and I are now proud to be Word Perfect literate. We took a computer course during September and October and we can happily declare that the computer is now saving us time much more than it has us sitting and scratching our heads. (Those of you who are familiar with word processing will recognize this as a quantum leap.)

If you have any time you could donate to the Centre to do a variety of tasks, please give us a call. Being in the office is a stimulating and rewarding experience, so don't miss out! We appreciate any help you can offer.

Katherine Reed

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Pikly Stuart