



# AWARIE



**"A woman is like  
a Tea Bag: You  
never know her  
strength until  
you drop her in  
hot water."  
- Anonymous**

May, 1998

Spring Issue

## Important

## Women

in

## Canada's

## History!!

Everyday women work and strive to pave the way for women's rights. Here are a few women who made there mark in mostly male dominated areas. See if you can put a name on each famous face. Answers will be on page 4.



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## Multilateral Agreement on Investment

### Basic Facts:

#### What is the MAI?

The MAI is a new international economic agreement being negotiated at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The MAI is designed to make it easier for individual and corporate investors to move assets—whether money or production facilities—across international borders. The MAI would take the investment provisions of the NAFTA, amplify these provisions, and apply them worldwide.

#### What is the status of the MAI?

Confidential negotiations have been underway since May 1995 within the OECD and are now at an advanced stage. When complete, the MAI will be presented to the OECD countries for approval. Developing nations will also be encouraged to join. Despite the importance of the agreement and the advanced state of negotiations, few outside of government and international business circles are aware of the MAI.

#### What would the MAI do?

Countries that sign the MAI would be required to:

1. Open all economic sectors, including real estate, broadcasting, and natural resources to foreign ownership.
2. Treat foreign investors no less—and potentially more—favourably than domestic firms.
3. Remove performance requirements, which are laws that require investors to behave in a certain way in exchange for market access.
4. Remove restrictions on the movement of capital.
5. Compensate investors in full when their assets are expropriated, either through seizure or "unreasonable" regulation.
6. Accept a dispute-resolution process allowing investors to sue governments for damages before international panels when they believe a country's laws are in violation of MAI rules.
7. Ensure that provinces and localities comply with the MAI; and
8. Maintain all provisions of the MAI for the next 20 years.

#### Who Likes it Not?

Some Canadians concerned about MAI:

- New Democratic, Canadian Action and Green Parties of Canada
- Governments of BC, PEI, Saskatchewan and the Yukon
- Canadian Labour Congress
- Council of Canadians
- Oxfam—Canada
- Canadian Conference on the Arts

Source: Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group

For more information visit the CCPA website:

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca>

or write to:

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 251 Laurier Ave. W., Suite 804, Ottawa, ON K1P 5J6

Editorial: new feature,,

Mother

Mother's Day originated as a day for peace. More than a hundred years ago, Julia Ward Howe, after her experience tending the wounded in the American Civil War, started a crusade to institute "A Mother's Day for Peace." This is her statement issued in 1870: Arise all women who have hearts...say firmly—we women of one country will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to injure theirs. In the name of womanhood and hu-

manity, I earnestly ask that a general congress of women, without limit of nationality, promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions, the frat and general interest of peace.

We all agree our world is violent and unjust. Women are raped, children molested. Half the people in the world are starving, violence in war is rampant, violence in the home increasing at an alarming

rate. The supreme threat of "limited nuclear war" is coolly discussed by politicians as a possible event of the future. Being a mother is personal and political. We must question violence in all forms of our daily lives and refuse our vote to politicians who do not take a positive stand on disarmament. Strive to teach our children non violent ways of dealing with conflict. Hope that world leaders may recognize that war is obsolete, that this terrible threat may be lifted from our lives.

—"Concerned Mother" in the nuclear age.



Tish Langlois Publishes Book

Tish Langlois, whom many will remember as an AWA/RC board member in 1992-93, has recently published her first book entitled, *Fault Lines: incest, sexuality, and Catholic family culture*. Published by Second Story, a feminist press in Toronto, the book draws on women's experiences to "break the silence" about incest in Catholic families.

Tish's feminist activism began early. In 1988 she was a founding member of Women for Social Awareness, a feminist support and action group for St.F.X.

women students. She continued to be a vitally active member, instrumental in keeping the group going until her graduation in 1993. She worked on various political actions, organised workshops on self esteem and body image and took a leadership role in supporting other young women. Who could forget her portrayal of Dean of Students Rick Benson at the 1993 International Women's Day cabaret. In 1992-93, Tish joined the

AWA/RC board as the WSA representative. She mentions particularly enjoying working with Lucille Harper that year.

In the fall of '93 Tish went to Memorial University in Newfoundland as one of the two first masters students in the new women's studies program. While there, she gathered material for her thesis.

She interviewed eight Catholic incest survivors and synthesized their stories with feminist analysis, exploring the factors in Catholic family culture which create an atmosphere in which incest thrives.

These include patriarchal structure in the family, women's economic dependence, and silence and shame around sexuality.

In the winter of 1995, Tish travelled to London on a fellowship from MUN to use the National Women's History Library of England at Guild Hall. She finished her thesis there and graduated that fall. Meanwhile editors at Second Story had read the thesis and invited her to base a book on it.

In *Fault Lines*, Tish shows how offi-

cial Catholicism benefits men at the expense of women and children through a gendered division of labour and a rigidly defined sexuality. "Lines of fault" emerge between Catholic ideology and women's experience. As Tish says in her conclusion, it is a book about politicizing the Catholic family, "The task now seems to be to continue resisting, struggling, and grappling with the questions, especially how a "marriage" of feminism and Catholicism's principles of social justice might guide us in our efforts to reconstruct gender and sexual relations within families and society as a whole (Langlois, 188)."

Winner of a prestigious SSHRC grant (Social Studies and Humanities Research Council) Tish is back in her native Ontario, teaching and working on a doctoral thesis (on gender, Catholicism, and Quebec national identity) at the University of Toronto. *Fault Lines* is on sale at Bookends on Main Street, the women's centre, and the St.F.X. bookstore.

— Janette Fecteau

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# News from the Centre

Just when you think it can't get any busier, it does! In the first three months of this year there were a total of 2383 call and visits to the Centre. The issues most frequently handled in all of this activity were health, sexual assault/abuse, law, poverty, and networking among women's centres. These contacts we log each day include both networking and direct services to individual women.

We are building foundations in the areas of health, economics, housing, working with other organizations and interested individuals. Here are some of the newest initiatives we have been involved in: community health planning group

- ▶ affordable housing solutions for the Antigianish area
- ▶ educating young women about body image
- ▶ planning the Topshoe Memorial Conference "People First: Pursuing a Just Economy"
- ▶ development of a cen a tre for youth in Antigianish
- ▶ a resource kit for helping communities work together against violence against women
- ▶ development and presentation of a booklet detailing women's economic reality, vision and priorities.

Along with these community development efforts and our direct service to women who need support, referral, information, etc., we had a steady stream of borrowers through the Sr. Isabel MacDougall Library. Students and local residents alike make use of our fantastic store of paper and video resources. (If you have an overdue book, please bring it back or at least give us a call and confess.) We are fortunate to purchase almost \$1000 worth of books on capacity-building for community groups and community economic development through a Community Animation Program grant, a federal government initiative. A number of excellent books have been donated by students, AWA members and people who support the Centre.



Once again this summer, we are looking forward to having some summer students to cover the bases while the regular staff are laid-off or on holiday. We'll be in full swing come September. Anyone who would like to

help organize the Annual AWA/Coady Women's Picnic and/or Take Back the Night Walk is encouraged to call us at the Centre (863-6221).

A Happy and safe summer to all. Drop by anytime you're downtown if you need a drink of clear, cold water or a good book to take to the beach!

See you there!

- Katherine Reed

## TOOTING OUR OWN HORN!!

The AWA/AWRC has had a very productive 4 months, and I feel that it is time that we **TOOT OUR OWN HORNS**, and let people know what we have accomplished, and assisted in:

- ▶ For the Months of March and April, two AWRC volunteers (Janie Bingley and Tanya Reid) were trained by Carmel Gallagher to prepare income tax forms for low-income women. This free service has become widely known and used, and is very much appreciated by those who use it and people who work with people living on low-incomes. Thanks to these Three Wonderful People!

- ▶ This years JWD will live in the memories of many, and without the dedicated and energetic committee (Judy Kennedy, Tracey Mason, Denise DeCoste, Katherine Reed, Myste Anderson, Sara AvMaat, and Tanya MacPhail) it never would have happened.

This year the AWA/AWRC held a Dance(70 approx. attended) with the band The Three Helens (none of them named Helen). The Three Helens were very happy with the experience and are most willing to come and entertain us again. Also, special thanks goes Jim Mulcahy, Brenda Silver, Julie Stinson, Theresa Ryan and Tara Linn; and several grocers for donating drinks and snack foods.

- ▶ Also during the month of March the AWA/AWRC spearheaded the organization of a public Political Candidates Forum, which took place in a lecture hall at St. Francis Xavier University (420

approx. attended). This event was co-sponsored by a number of different groups, including unions, and certain faculties within the University, and was considered a huge success by all those attending and involved!!

The AWA/AWRC cooperated with Marjorie MacDonald and Barbara MacKinnon of Addiction Services in Sydney in putting on an information for women on the subject of addiction services for women and what services are needed and available for women

Barbara Hayes is facilitating a 6 week workshop on Mid-Life Transition for Women.

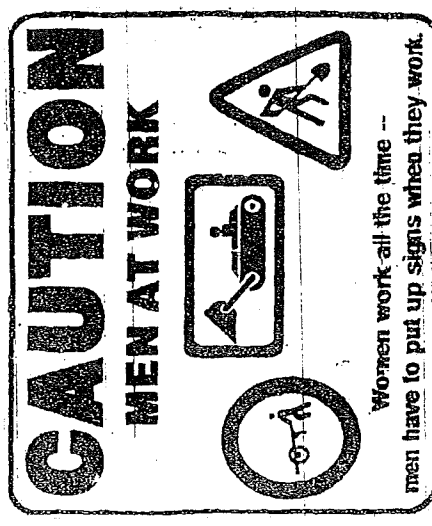
**TEENS TAKE ACTION**, the peer education group, presented dating violence /sexual assault workshops to 4 classes of grade 8 students at St. Andrew Junior School. Also, at the request of the guidance counsellor, they also did their presentation for parents from the Jr. School.

In the fall, there will be a training workshop on the Body Image Workshops. Three young women have been required for this and these workshops will be delivered to students of the Junior School.

So there is a quick overview of some of the events the AWA/AWRC has accomplished in only 4 short months! Just think we have 8 more to go, and I'm sure they will be just as successful if not more than the ones we have already done!!

If you are interested in volunteering your time, creativity and energy, please call the Women's Centre (863-6221), they'd love to hear from you!

- KC



# Politics

## Party Crasher

I have been doing some things to educate myself about the electoral process. I am always educating myself about something, as I believe that it is an ongoing evolution of self.

Part of this educational process required me to put myself forward and attend a meeting that I was not invited to; at the Claymore Inn where Provincial NDP leader Robert Chisholm, was to give a statement on the Sable Gas Project. My purpose was not to “**crash**” the party, but to find out first hand:

**1. How accessible the leader of the NDP would be to a general member of the party.**

**2. I wanted to hear what he had to say about the NDP's stand on the Sable Gas Deal.**

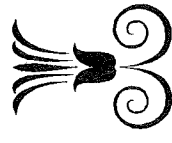
My interest is centered on the fact that I'm originally from the Goldboro area that is going to be the most affected and one would like to think the first to feel the economic benefits of the project.

The meeting that I “**crashed**”, ( I like that word) was intended for all the leaders of the Provincial Parties to make a statement on the Sable Gas deal. The only one to show was the NDP. Robert Chisholm was there and the NDP candidates for the surrounding areas; Moe Smith, Antigoniush; Wendy Panagouplos, Guysborough and the supporting peoples that organized these events

## AWARE

That describes the more or less political personalities that were present, the others were a mixture of the media, radio reporters and a gentleman, who has been following Robert Chisholm through out the election (and in the confusion of the moment, I'm sorry to say that I do not remember his name). The people, who wanted this statement delivered to the press are the Antigoniush Sable Gas Business Coalition. They are a group of business people who are trying to get more local involvement in the project; including local business and ensuring that the local working people can access the jobs, if they are qualified, of course.

The main idea that I came away with was that, if the business community and the general population as a whole doesn't get on the ball they/we are going to lose a great opportunity. This business group took a fact finding trip to the other provinces that already have access to natural gas; Manitoba and Alberta. They found that if the development of the gas wasn't supported by the government; meaning, the disbursement of the gas must be over the entire province, urban, industrial areas and rural areas with a lower economic base or the window of opportunity for development is lost.



- Connie Langille

The examples that they showed were, for instance Manitoba; the gas was just centered in the 10% industrial area, and the fact that the government did not make it available to the huge rural communities, gave them a disadvantage because they didn't have access to a cheap form of energy that would give the impetus to create new business. The other example was Alberta, in this case the government supported the need for the gas to be flowing into every home and business across the province. The end result was the 90% of Alberta has access to the natural gas recourse and the further result is that the energy costs are low therefore making Alberta look more tempting to business.

The idea is, Nova Scotia has the chance. If it is to slow to get in on the deal while it is still open and in the early stages would mean that the “**have not**” will still “**HAVE NOT**”. I'm hoping for the down right doggedness of Maritimers to get in there and get the best of what our own has to offer!

## Important Women in Canada

**1 Jeanne Sauve** - the first female Speaker of the House of Commons in 1980, and the first female governor general of Canada in 1984.

**2 Emily Stowe** - the first Canadian woman to practice medicine in Canada, founder of the Toronto Women's Literary Club, Canada's first suffrage group and she was the principle founder and first president of the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Assn.

**3 Agnes MacPhail** - the only women elected to Canada's Parliament in 1921, the first federal election in which women had the right to vote. She was also the first woman appointed member of a Canadian delegation to the League of Nations.

**4 Lady Aberdeen** -was instrumental in forming the Canadian branch of the National Council of Women, and established the Victorian Order of Nurses.

**5 Pauline McGibbon** - held the first salaried position as Ontario's lieutenant-governor (1974-80), and was the first woman lieutenant-governor in Canada.

**6 Martha Black** - at 70, she campaigned the vast Yukon constituency - often on foot- to become the second woman ever elected to the Canadian Parliament.

**7 Therese Casgrain** - was founder of the League of Human Rights (1960) and in 1970 she was appointed to the Senate.

**8 Nellie McClung** - fought for female suffrage and for prohibition, dower rights for women, factory safety legislation and many other reforms. She gained wide prominence from addresses in Britain at the Methodist Ecumenical Conference, speaking tours through out Canada and the U.S.. She was also a Liberal MLA for Edmonton in 1921-26.

**9 Irene Parlbay**- was the first woman to become a Cabinet minister in Alberta.

**10 Emily Murphy** - the first woman magistrate in the British Empire. She also succeeded in having women declared legal persons and therefore eligible for appointive positions.

**11 Henrietta Edwards** - one of Alberta's “Famous Five” in the Persons Case and a supporter of divorce on equal ground, prison reform and mother's allowances. She also aimed to expand women's rights in political and especially the legal sphere.

**12 Louise McKinney** - Louise was the first woman elected to a Provincial Legislature (Alberta) in the British Empire. She had fought for and passed a new Dower Act. She was a member of the Valiant Five, who in 1929 took their appeal to have women recognized as “persons” to the Canadian Supreme Court and then to the British Privy Council in London. In honour of their success, their names are on a plaque which hangs in the Senate Chamber in Ottawa.

# Women's Health

What every Woman should know about S.T.D.'s!

AWARE

In 1995, an estimated 333 million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases occurred among adults 15 to 49 years of age, worldwide; and this number is increasing. Women are often more easily infected than men and are less likely to show symptoms of infection. This is why it is essential for women who are sexually active to get tested regularly. Here is what you need to know about the most common S.T.D.s.

Check out these Websites for more information on **S.T.D.'s**:

<http://www.yt.sympatico.ca/healthyway/>

<http://www.medicconsult.com/std/>

-KC

Sources: websites: healthyway and medicconsult,

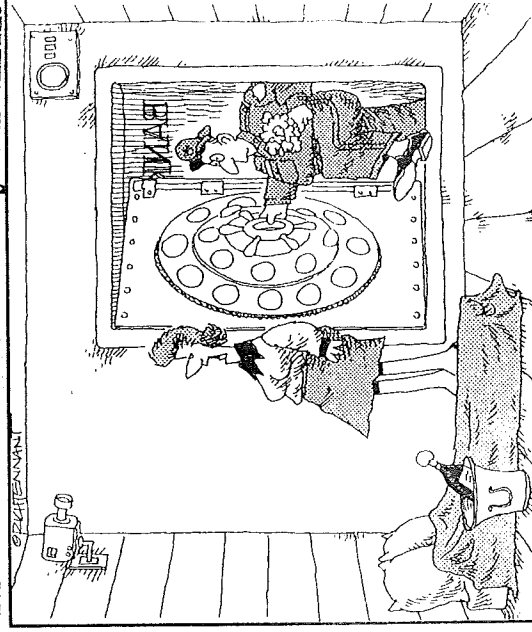


|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Disease</b>           | Chlamydia                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>How common is it?</b> | An estimated 4 million new cases a year                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Symptoms</b>          | About 80% of women and 40% of men have no symptoms. When there are symptoms, they appear within 3 weeks of exposure; burning urination, abnormal discharge. Women may have bleeding, pelvic pain between periods; while men may have testicular swelling and pain.               |
| <b>Diagnosis</b>         | The bacteria can be cultured from a genital swab or detected in a urine sample. It cannot be detected by a pap smear.                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Treatment</b>         | Can be cured with a single dose of antibiotic. Damage already done to fallopian tubes can cause infertility or increased risk of tubal pregnancy. Women can have this infection for years and never know it until they try to become pregnant, while infertility in men is rare. |
| <b>Prevention</b>        | Condoms can block the spread of this infection from the penis to the cervix (which is chlamydia's prime target in women). Also using spermicides in addition to condoms may help kill the bacteria.                                                                              |

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Disease</b>           | Gonorrhea                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>How common is it?</b> | An estimated 80,000 new cases a year                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Symptoms</b>          | Most women and one in 4 men have no symptoms. When they occur there is usually genital discharge, urinary pain/urgency; swelling of testicles; bleeding between period or pelvic pain. These symptoms usually occur within 5 days of exposure for men and 1 month for women.              |
| <b>Diagnosis</b>         | The bacteria can be cultured from a swab from the penis or vagina. It is not always detected by a pap smear.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Treatment</b>         | Can be cured with antibiotics- either with a shot or pills. Doctors may treat for chlamydia also since infections often co-exist. Undetected infection can cause pelvic inflammatory disease in women and lead to infertility and/or tubal pregnancy. It can also cause sterility in men. |
| <b>Prevention</b>        | Condoms can prevent the spread of infection during vaginal intercourse. Using spermicides in addition may also help kill the bacteria. It is also important to note that anal and oral sex can infect the rectum and throat.                                                              |

## The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"Oh, wait a minute Arthur! When I said I'd only have safe sex with you, this isn't what I meant!"

# Women's Health

What every Woman should know about S.T.D.'s ! Continued ...

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Disease           | Herpes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| How common is it? | An estimated 500,000 new cases a year and approximately 40 million already infected.                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Symptoms          | Symptoms are often mild or non-existent. 2/3's of suffers may not know they are infected. Symptoms may occur 1 day to 1 month after exposure; blisters and/or sores; itching or burning genitals, thighs, buttocks, testicles, sometimes flu-like symptoms. Swollen glands. |
| Diagnosis         | There are 2 types of herpes simplex virus: <b>HSVI</b> and <b>HSVII</b> . Both can cause outbreaks on either your mouth or genitals, This virus can be cultured from sores and is not detected by a pap smear.                                                              |
| Treatment         | Once infected, your body will always harbor the virus. It may periodically cause outbreaks, the frequency and severity of which vary from person to person. Anti-viral drugs can stop the viral replication and thus lessen the frequency and severity of the attacks.      |
| Prevention        | Difficult, both because the sores are not always visible or symptomatic and because they often occur in areas a condom and/or spermicides do not cover (ie. Lips, buttocks, upper thighs). This virus is spread by direct skin contact.                                     |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Disease           | Human Paocillomavirus (H.P.V.)/Genital Warts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| How common is it? | An estimated 1 million new cases a year and an estimated 40 million already infected.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Symptoms          | Growths may appear on the penis, scrotum, anus, vulva, inside the vagina and in the cervix within weeks or months of infection. The size and number of sores vary. The sores maybe raised or flat, whitish or skin colored and /or invisible to the naked eye. Burning, itching and pain are rare. |
| Diagnosis         | There are more than 60 different viral strains that can cause H.P.V.. Patients often discover growths; physicians can find less visible growths by examining the area under magnification. Precancerous changes associated with some strains of H.P.V. may cause abnormal pap smears.              |
| Treatment         | This virus cannot be cured. Large, problematic or visible warts can be removed in various ways but they may return. Women with H.P.V. should be sure to get regular pap smears, since some strains area associated with cervical cancer.                                                           |
| Prevention        | Spread by direct skin to skin contact. Condoms can prevent transmission only if they cover the infected area.                                                                                                                                                                                      |

## Infant Feeding as a Feminist Jssue

This article is based on a chapter from *Beyond the Breast-Bottle Controversy* by Penny Van Esterik (1989 Rutgers University Press)

Breast-feeding is certainly acknowledged to be a women's issue and breast milk is certainly a food. But, breast-feeding is seldom recognized as a feminist issue and breast milk is not usually classified as a food, possibly because it is not grown, industrially

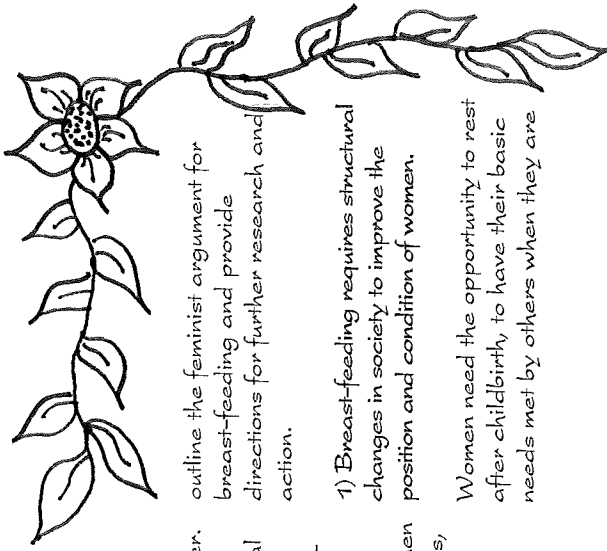
processed or purchased in a container. However, breast-feeding is a feminist issue for both theoretical and practical reasons. Conditions conducive to successful nurturing, including breast-feeding , are conditions which reduce gender subordination generally by contradicting negative images of women as sex objects, consumers, housewives, invalids and welfare recipients.

The following are six reasons which

outline the feminist argument for breast-feeding and provide directions for further research and action.

1) Breast-feeding requires structural changes in society to improve the position and condition of women.

Women need the opportunity to rest after childbirth, to have their basic needs met by others when they are



# Women's Health

## Infant Feeding as a Feminist Issue continued ...

### AWARE

most vulnerable, and to have a supportive person to assist with breastfeeding management and care for the newborn. Since suggested nutrient requirements of lactating women are higher per unit weight than those of adult men, priority must be given to lactating with the distribution of food. In some societies, lactating women may not receive enough food or nutrients to maintain milk production and thus, optional infant growth. Breast feeding focuses attention on the need to redress these inequalities.

Breast-feeding encourages women's self-reliance. Successful breast-feeding requires women have confidence in themselves and enough self-esteem to protect and/or demand their rights to breast-feed. Women with a positive self-image may be less likely to assume that they do not have enough breast milk

HEY, THESE  
THINGS DON'T  
JUST SELL  
CARS! \*



\* An Actual,  
Real, Genuine  
Comment  
Heard in  
Fredericton.

or that their breast milk is of poor quality.

2) Breast-feeding confirms a woman's power to control her own body and challenges medical hegemony.

Successful breast-feeding reduces women's dependency on medical professions and discourages the further medicalization of infant feeding.

When breast-feeding is seen as a feminist issue the social and physical costs of breast-feeding - including time and nutrients - are more carefully calculated. Women's bodies are finite and cannot be overburdened without causing suffering and loss of productive capacity. If women's systems are overburdened, maternal depletion should not be cited as a reason for increasing infant formula sales but increasing supports for breast-feeding mothers in the form of food and health care.

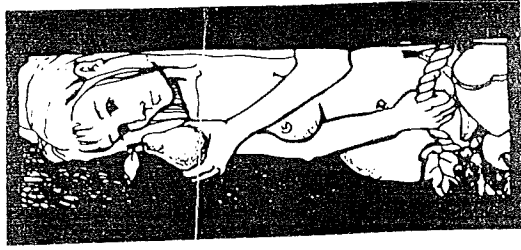
3) Breast-feeding challenges the predominant model of women as consumers.

The decision not to spend cash on breast milk substitutes is a rejection of a consumption pattern forcing women to rely on industrially produced foods. As purchasers of infant formula - an

expensive product beyond the financial means of poorer women - women succumb to the dominant ideology devaluing breast-feeding and breast milk. Women then seek commercial solutions to infant feeding, much as they might replace other homemade foods with factory-made products. The need for constant expansion of commercial markets for these products fuels the advertising campaigns directed to women as consumers.

4) Breast-feeding challenges views of the breast primarily being sex object.

How did breasts become defined as sex objects for male pleasure? How did breast-feeding become interpreted as animal-like behavior and breast milk a valueless and potentially dangerous substance? These interpretations are reflected when bottle-feeding is preferred in public, when women choose bottle-feeding based on the fear that breast-feeding will alter the shape of their breasts or when breast milk is blamed for causing infant sickness. Women's fears about exposing their breasts are more than confirmed when North American women are arrested or asked to leave public places for breast-feeding. Fortunately, such harassment is rarer today although breast exposure for any other reason is still considered indecent.



5) Breast-feeding requires a new definition of women's work.

One that is more realistically integrates women's productive and reproductive activities. In the sexual division of labour, infant care usually falls to women. It is women who have the capacity to provide food for their infants, ensuring women's self-reliance and their infants' survival for the first few months of life. Women's bodies were the first means of production - of both children and food. Women give birth and produce milk, forming not only

units of consumption but also of production. If the work of lactation is valued as productive work not the duty of a housewife then conditions for its successful integration with other activities must be arranged. These include maternity leaves, access to infants during work hours, flexible working hours, safe working conditions and a living wage.

A gender-sensitive definition of labour must take into consideration the importance of nurturance and caring, particularly as they relate to food provision. Successful breast-feeding requires the assistance of women, kin or friends, to provide support in the form of information on lactation management and help with household tasks.

The campaigns against the promotion of infant formulas mobilized women to join consumer groups such as *JNFACT* (*Infant Feeding Action Coalition*) and to rediscover how women in developed and developing countries face similar problems. Increasing rates of breast-feeding and slower population growth in developed industrial countries forced infant formula manufacturers to actively seek new markets in developing countries. There is much evidence that similar conditions exist in native communities in Canada. Coalitions between women in developed and developing countries on issues like the infant formula controversy represent potential opportunities for empowering women and for identifying common constraints that limit women's power to nurture. **Conclusion:** The trajectory goal becomes not to have every woman breast-feed her infant, but to treat conditions in individuals, households, communities and nations so that every woman could. The first step is to create conditions that make breast-feeding possible, successful and valued in a given society.

*Editor's Note:* At the 1<sup>st</sup> World Congress of Child Health, held in Vancouver during February 1992, Mr. James Grant, Executive Director of UNICEF, stated that if women were empowered to exclusively breast-feed for 4-6 months and use proper weaning procedures, the lives of about 1 to 1.5 million children could be saved annually.

For more information contact:  
World Alliance for Breast-feeding Action (WABA)  
Anwar Fazal, WABA Secretariat  
P.O. Box 1200  
10850 Penang  
Malaysia

Infant Feeding Action Coalition (INFAC)  
10 Trinity Square  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5G 1B1

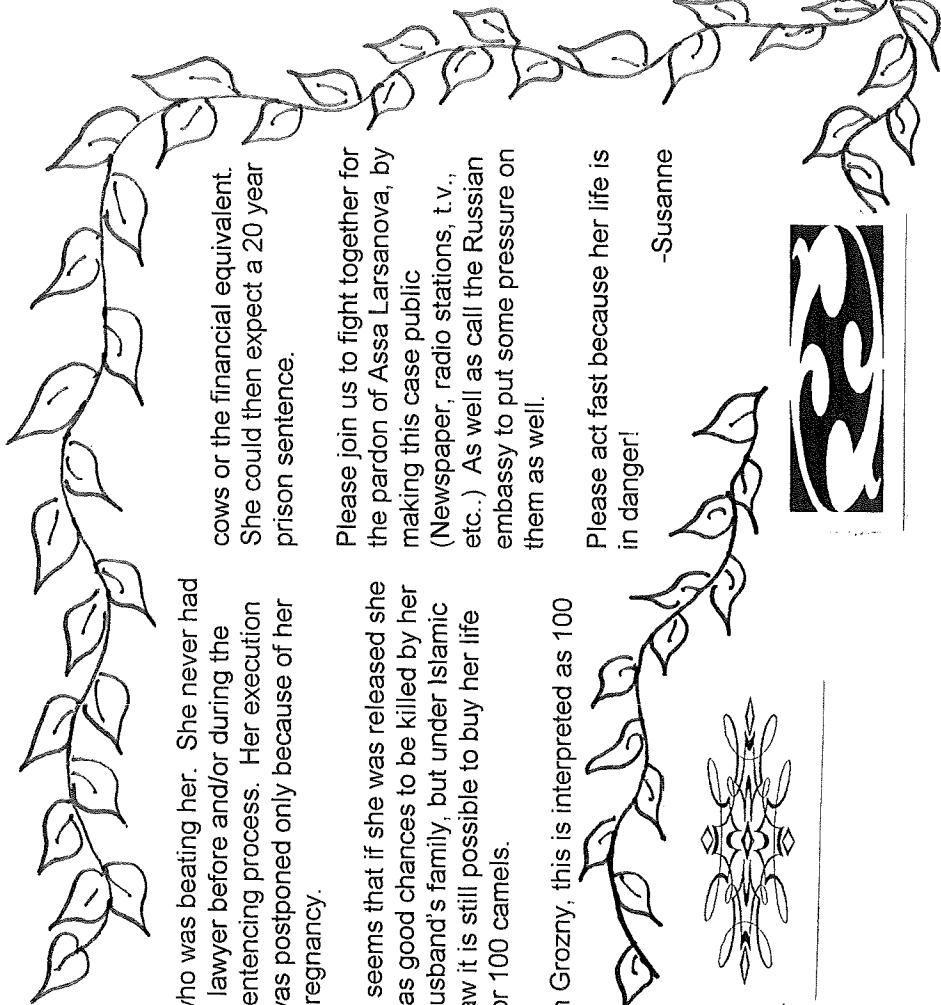
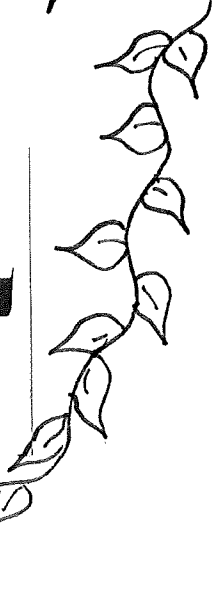


# Social Action

## Action Assa Larsanova

Assa Larsanova, 36, who is seven months pregnant and a mother of 3 was sentenced to death by an Islamic court. She will remain in jail until just after the birth and then executed by firing squad in Grozny, capital of Chechnya.

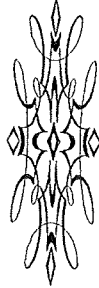
She is accused of killing her husband,



who was beating her. She never had a lawyer before and/or during the sentencing process. Her execution was postponed only because of her pregnancy.

It seems that if she was released she has good chances to be killed by her husband's family, but under Islamic law it is still possible to buy her life for 100 camels.

In Grozny, this is interpreted as 100



cows or the financial equivalent. She could then expect a 20 year prison sentence.

Please join us to fight together for the pardon of Assa Larsanova, by making this case public (Newspaper, radio stations, t.v., etc..) As well as call the Russian embassy to put some pressure on them as well.

Please act fast because her life is in danger!

-Susanne

## Afghan Women Cry Out for Salvation

*It's hot in here. Shrouded in this body bag. I feel claustrophobic. It's smelly too! The cloth in the front of my mouth is damp from my breathing. Dust from the filthy street swirls up under the billowing butqa and sticks to the moisture from my covered mouth. I feel like I'm suffocating in stale air.*

*"It also feels like I'm invisible. No one can see me. No one knows whether I'm smiling or crying. My view isn't much better. This mesh opening in front of my eyes isn't enough to see where I'm going. It's like wearing horse blinders. I can only see straight in front of me. Not above or below or on either side of the path I take. Suddenly the road changes. I step on the front of the hideous bag that covers my body and tumble to the ground. No one helps me. I feel like no one in the world wants to help."*

-Fatana, 28

On Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1998, more than 100 of the world's most distinguished crusaders gathered in Geneva to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Their host was the splendid Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and now chief of the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights. Everyone from Secretary-General- Kofi Annan to author Eli Weisel was attending.

It was hoped that these bearers of the world's conscience would be able to turn a blazing spotlight on the worse-than-medieval darkness that has fallen

on Afghanistan four years ago when the Taliban militia seized power.

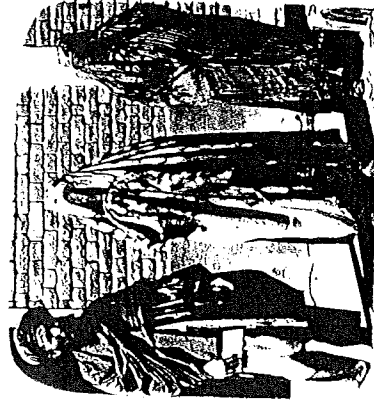
In this short time, an entire population of women has been plunged into slavery. Afghan women now have no rights. They are forbidden to work, attend school, or even leave their houses without an official permit and a male relative as an escort. They are shrouded head to foot in heavy cloth, forced to peer like blinkered animals through a tiny mesh panel over their eyes. Women's faces, say the mullahs, are "indecent" and serve to "corrupt men" - so ground floor windows must be painted over, new houses must be built without second floor windows. Women must not wear high heeled shoes or white socks; and they cannot let their footsteps make noise. Women have been beaten in the marketplace for letting a hand show when paying for food.

All females are caged creatures in Afghanistan. At the state orphanage in Kabul, the girls have not been allowed outside the building since September 1996. (The boys, housed nearby, are free to play outside daily)

The population of Kubal - a ruined capital after years of civil war is 70% female. Widows and orphaned girls, without a male

"shepherd", must beg or starve.

When Sally Armstrong, editor of **Homemakers' Magazine**, visited Afghanistan last year, she interviewed doctors, professors and engineers - muffled in unaccustomed shrouds; under virtual house arrest - who seemed in a state of shock and terminal despair.



Women face death if they are not totally shrouded in public or are accompanied by a man who is not a relative

The Taliban men obsess constantly over new methods of controlling and humiliating women. As **Homemakers'** reported in February, a badly burned woman was recently left to die because women may not be undressed for medical treatment. This cruelty is routine.

# Social Action

In March, the mullahs issued a new command : *all foreign women of Muslim faith who are stationed in Afghanistan (with the International Aid Organizations) are forbidden to leave their homes unless they are escorted by a husband of male relative.*

In a startling cry from the heart, the Afghan Women's Network smuggled out a plea to the world on International Women's Day. *Is obsessive preoccupation with women's veils and men's beards going to remedy the ...ills of our people? The women said. The agonizing women of Afghanistan are pushed ever further into the dark dungeons of degradation, ignorance ... deprivation of all human rights ....*

We luckier ones, north and south celebrating our phenomenal progress, must hear those desperate voices. Besides the duty of conscience, there is a stern lesson to be learned. Now, when women are making greater strides than ever before, the destructive fury of fundamentalism is everywhere on the rise, and , always, its driving motive is to drag women back, to control and subjugate them.

Israel is a prime example. Although ultra-Orthodox fanatics make up only 10% of the population, cynical governments of both the left and right bought their votes by giving them inordinate and damaging power over

the lives of the secular majority. Now there are several public transportation routes in Israel where women passengers are directed by signs to sit at the back of the bus. The fanatical ultra-Orthodox have physically attacked and stoned women on their way to work for wearing "immodest" dress. These crazed devotees of the faith have frequently hurled chairs, sticks and even excrement at women and men who dared to worship together at the Western Wall.

In the United States, fundamentalists (including some openly defiant police officers) violently refuse to concede the legality of abortion. Fully 25% of abortion clinics last year suffered invasions, bombings, chemical attacks, death threats, arson and stalking. This mania aver abortion is historically recent. It was fanned to an out-of-control blaze by President Ronald Reagan in his successful bid to lure the traditionally apolitical fundamentalist movement into the ranks of Republican activists.

The Taliban, too, had their roots in cynical political manipulations. During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the United States eagerly armed and supported the Islamic "freedom fighters", who ultimately did defeat the Russians - and then rolled into power with a crusade against women as vicious as the one they waged against the Soviet Army.

## NAC REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

NAC Women's Groups are all very clear that they want **core funding** not project funding. This has been a debate between the women's movement and SWC for a long time. New groups like NOIVM were given project funding when they were formed and SWC argued to make if fair all groups should get project funding. We of course argued that the new groups should also get core funding.

NAC has decided to reject the criteria

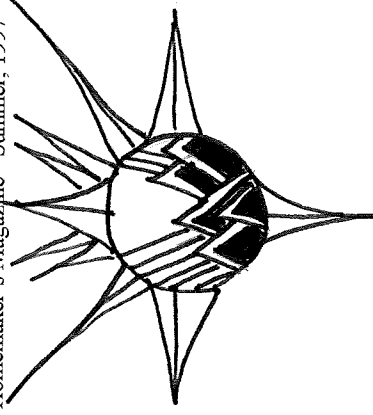
for project funding on principle and continue to apply as it always has for core funding. Therefore, NAC is risking its government funding to make the point that national women's groups should be supported by the government for what they do on a day-to-day level.

NAC has taken a bold stand against the government's attack on funding for women's groups. Please sent a letter if support like the one below as

Now that they've inadvertently unleashed a misogynist terror upon the women of Afghanistan, the western powers seem to be shrugging off the harm they've done. The U.S. is said to be joyfully deluded that the Taliban will help to curb Afghanistan's huge trade in opium. The U.S. is also a strong ally of the three countries that officially recognize and aid the Taliban - Saudia Arabia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. And sickeningly, the Taliban stand to gain \$100 million in profits when a huge U.S. backed oil pipeline is built across their country from Pakistan. U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, flew to Iraq to stop a war, and came home covered with glory. Canada's Lloyd Axworthy, was crowned with world praise for his leadership against land-mines. Now that the whole of Afghanistan is a sinister *Soweto for women*, we need another Mandela to ignite the world's outrage. Dare we hope that leadership will arise!

Source: e-mail received at the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre from Gillian E. Salmond. <SALMONGE@gov.ns.ca>

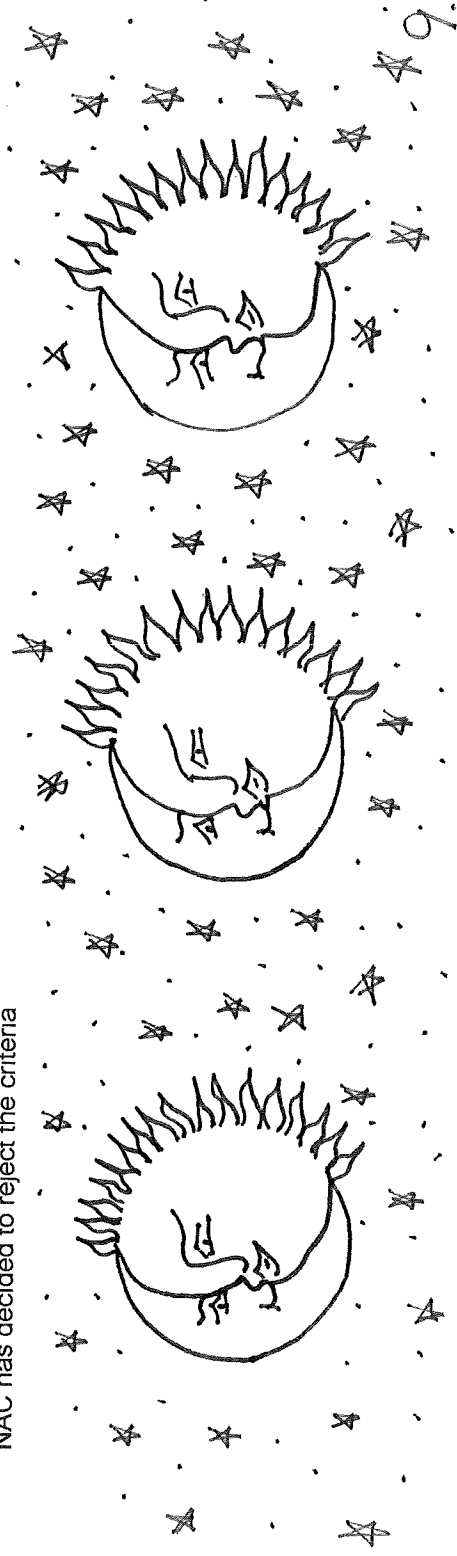
Homemaker's Magazine - Summer, 1997



soon as possible.

The letter shows support for NAC's refusal to accept the government's new funding guidelines for equality-seeking women's groups. Though the guidelines do not use the word "project", the new criteria moves the funding from core-funding to project-based funding.

-Judy Rebeck  
<judy.rebeck@sympatico.ca>



# Social Action

## NAC REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

*continued....*

Hedy Frye, PC, MP  
Secretary of State Responsible for  
Multiculturalism and the Status of Women  
House of Commons  
Room 853  
Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Frye:

We are writing to register our strong support of the actions that the National Action Committee on The Status of Women has had to take in order to secure cor-funding for women's equality-seeking groups. The fact that NAC has had to take this step to outright reject the new funding initiatives, and risk loss of its funding from SWC, is a clear indicator that the right of all women's groups to access state funding is seriously being jeopardized. We believe that, as NAC does that, the Government of Canada, has the responsibility to live up to its many commitments to women as outlined and agreed to in the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women; the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; the Beijing Platform for Action, and the many other international and national agreements seeking to ensure women's equality.

We strongly urge you to meet with NAC, its supporters and allies in order to address the many concerns that NAC and other women's groups have about the new funding "initiatives". As you are aware, without appropriate and accessible state-funded assistance, women's equality-seeking groups will not be able to work within a democratic and autonomous framework, will not be able to function from a place of stability and will cease to be the successful mechanisms that they have been in facilitating women's democratic access to the political, social and economic life of this country.

Minister Frye, as you and the Government of Canada have proclaimed in international and other fora, it is the research, advocacy, lobbying, public education and awareness campaigns and the feminist-based analysis that has come from this area to a place of leadership, and has brought Canada international acclaim.

We strongly urge you to do your part and represent the issues of the women of Canada to Cabinet, by fighting for a stabilized core funding program, increased core funding and the maintenance of the autonomy of the independent's women's movement that NAC is a part of.

It is unconscionable that moving into the next millennium, women in Canada have to work with an equality-seeking budget that amounts to 53 cents per woman and girl child! Less than the cost of a cup of coffee! We support NAC's demands that:

- 1) SWC cease implementation of the new funding initiatives and concretely address the serious concerns of NAC and other like-minded groups
- 2) That SWC join with the independent women's movement and call for not less than \$2.00/woman and girl child to be reflected in the Women's Program Funding (Women's Equality Fund), raising it to at least \$30.00.
- 3) That SWC join with the independent women's movement in pressuring the federal government to act on the long-standing demand of feminist groups to allocate \$50 million to feminist grassroots services to eradicate male violence against women.
- 4) That SWC restore, enhance and increase core funding so that equality-seeking women's groups such as the Disabled Women's Network of Canada (DAWN); the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women (NOIMW); the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Care Centres (CASAC); the Metis Women's Association; the National FarmWomen's Association, etc., can also access funds.

This is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights by Canada. We are strongly urging you to demonstrate within the government and to the women of Canada, your belief that *Women's Rights are Human Rights*. This is a matter of justice and women's human rights.

Sincerely,



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

## It's in My Nature??

When J saw the movie *The Crying Game* many years ago, there was one scene that has always remained with me; it is the scene where Forrest Whitaker tells Stephen Rea a story about a frog and a scorpion. As J thought about this story, J came to realization that it is true, and that no one person can change what is in their nature. What do you think?? Here is a revised version of the story from the movie.

*There once was a Scorpion who wanted to cross a river and because he was such a very poor swimmer he asked a Frog to carry him on her back.*

*"Are you mad?" asked the Frog. "If I let you on my back you will sting me while I am swimming and I will drown."*

*The Scorpion laughed as he replied, "my dear Frog, if I were to sting you we would both drown. Now what would be the point of that? I will not sting you for if I did, it would be my own death."*

*The Frog thought about this and then said, "You are right Mr. Scorpion. Hop on!"*

*The Scorpion climbed on top of the Frog and they started across the river. When they were halfway across, the Scorpion stung the Frog.*

*As the Frog began to sink to the bottom of the river, she asked the Scorpion, "Why did you break your promise?"*

*The drowning Scorpion sadly replied, "I couldn't help it, It's in my Nature!"*

- Sasha

## Meditation

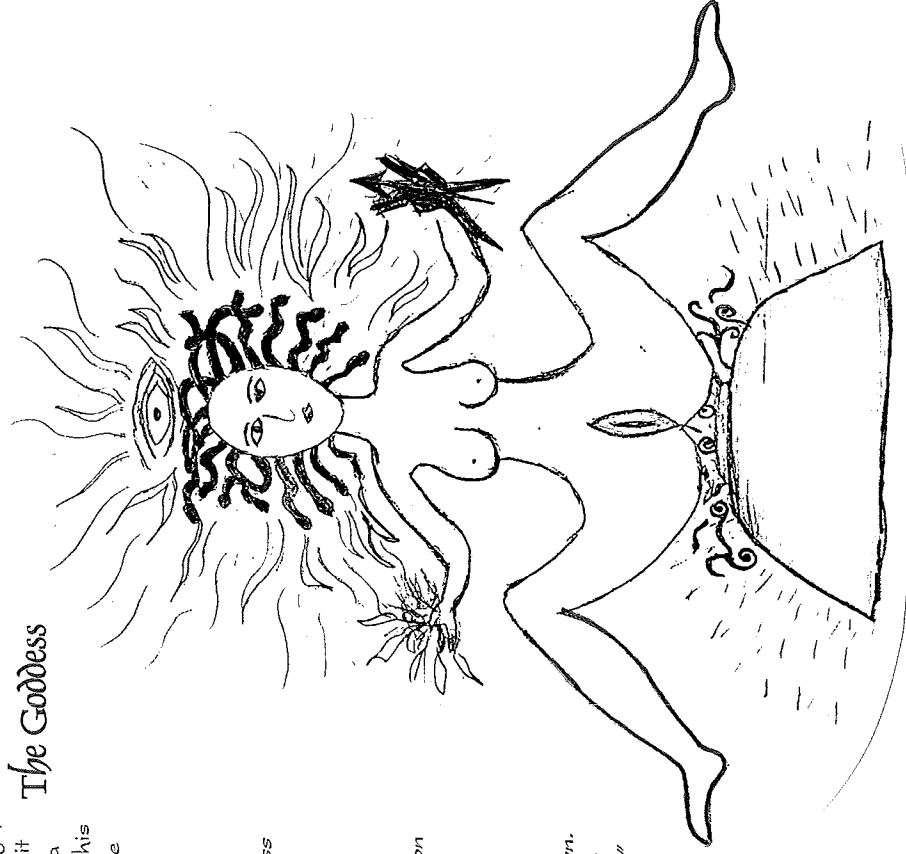
Here are a couple of meditative exercises to try:

*Visualize a silver crescent moon, curving to the right. She is the power of beginning, of growth and generation. She is wild and untamed, like ideas and plans before they are tempered by reality. She is the blank page, the unplowed-field. Feel your own hidden possibilities and latent potentials; your power to begin and grow. See her as a silver-haired girl sunning freely through the forest under the slim moon. She is Virgin, eternally unpenetrated, belonging to no one but herself. Call her name "Nimue!" and feel her power within you ....*

*Visualize a round full moon. She is the Mother, the power of fruition. She nourishes what the New Moon has begun. See her open arms, her full breasts, her womb burgeoning with life. Feel your won power to nurture, to give, to make manifest what is possible. She is the sexual woman; her pleasure in union is the moving force that sustains all life. Feel the power in your own pleasure, in orgasm. Her color is the red blood, which is life. Call her name "Mari!" and feel your own ability to love ...*

- Marcia Baker

## The Goddess



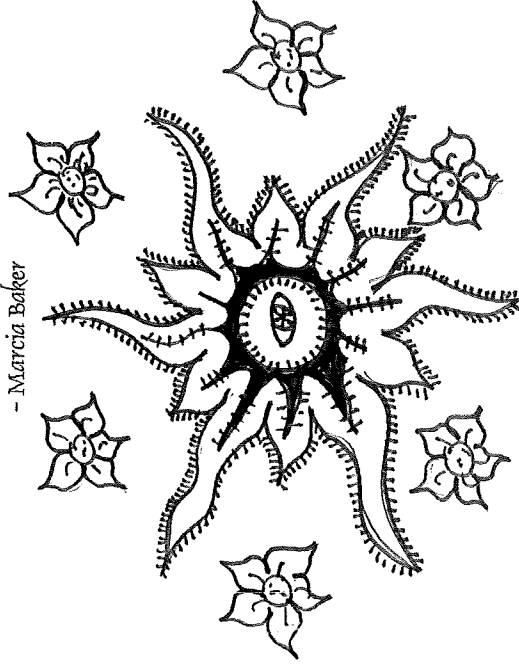
Welcome to the Goddess Section. This is a representation of the Goddess on the ancient Wiltshire mound; thought of as the place of the Goddess and seen as a sacred place among magicians. She is the primordial earth goddess with forces coming forth from her head, hands and genitals. The third eye represents to us her connection with intuition and instinct.

The Goddess is the personification of nature. She is depicted in many ways but with the always present theme of cyclicity and transformation.

In Starhawk's *The Spiritual Dance*, she describes the Goddess in the following:

*The nature of the Goddess is never single. Whenever She appears, she embodies both poles of the duality - life in death and death in life. She has a thousand names, a thousand aspects. She is the milk cow, the weaving spider, the honeybee with its piercing sting. She is the bird of the spirit and the sow that eats its' own young. The snake that sheds its' skin and is renewed; the cat that sees in the dark; the dog that sings to the moon - all are Her. She is the light and the darkness, the patroness of love and death; who makes manifest all possibilities. She brings both comfort and pain ...*

- Marcia Baker



# Post Cards from the Edge

## Mahila Divash!



To: The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and  
The Antigonish Women's Association

March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1998

Greeting from Nepal, and especially from the women here at the Documentation and Resource Centre for Women's Studies (Mandira Tamrakar, Bindu Pokhrel and Laxmi Keshari Manandhar, and me too!)

This year for the first time, we organized an IWD rally and march' and this morning it all happened! About 150 women - students, teachers and several other women's ngo's - gathered together in a wonderful atmosphere of sisterhood and celebration.

With banners and slogans held high, we marched through the early-morning streets of Kathmandu. We had to get permission from the police to close off the streets. Luckily, we have a policewoman in our Women's Studies class this year. Not only did we get the routing ok'd, but we also got a marching band (**all men, what a hoot**), thrown in. This really gave us a lot of attention on the streets. It was a beautiful, sunny morning. We had a woman for Nepal Television too! Apparently we were all on last night's newscast.

There were a number of seminars on women's issues being held today throughout the capital, and also rallies in many rural regions. Here in Nepal, IWD is called **Mahila Divash**.

I was thinking of home, of the Antigonish Women's Association/AWRC's annual concert, open house. What did you do this year? I hope it all went well!

I spent almost a month in January in a very traditional Brahmin village on the Nepal-India border, living with a family and trying to improve my shaky Nepali language skills. It was a wonderful experience. As a foreign woman, I had access to the separate cultures of men and women. I was also able to attend a big annual Hindu festival and a Brahmin wedding as well.

Work at the DRCWS goes well, though I feel that I am still getting my feet wet. The time is passing so quickly, and Anthony and I have so many work-related deadlines that keep looming on the time-horizon. At any rate, we will be returning home this summer as usual, around mid-June.

My love to all of you. You are in my thoughts, especially today.

Love, Martha

If you have any letters, e-mail, etc., that you would like to share, please drop them off to the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, Thanks!

# THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW

## Friendship Centre

Your Open-Door Friendship Centre is open Monday and Friday from 10-2 pm in the back of St. James United Church.

We try to provide a safe and friendly environment to anyone coming in. Our refreshments consist of donuts and muffins provided to us by Tim Horton's, while we provide the tea, coffee and juice.

At lunch time, for everyone's enjoyment, the director tries her hand at making soup. It makes for great conversation when the time seems so long or someone is having a bad day.

Everyone is welcome, so drop in and see the gang!

-Kim Orhling

## Congratulations !!!!

Charlie (Rogers) TenBrinke and her husband Ronnie are the proud parents of a baby girl - Tessa Marie, 8lbs and 3oz.

Sr. Mary MacLeod Bursary

It's that time again, Please tell people about this and encourage applications.

Applications can be obtained at the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre

## The Annual Topshee

Memorial Conference

Celebrating 15 Years!

### People First: Pursuing a Just Economy

Saturday and Sunday

June 13-14, 1998

St. Francis Xavier University  
Antigonish, Nova Scotia

\* Please Pre-Register by June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1998

Extension Department, St. F.X. University

P.O. Box 386

New Glasgow, Nova Scotia

B2H 5E5

Fax: (902) 752-1313

## WORKSHOP

A workshop is planned for Monday, June 15, 1998 (the day after the Topshee Conference), with **Women for a Just and Healthy Planet**. This is the group Angela miles is working with. It is being co-sponsored by St. Francis Xavier University Women's Studies. The main theme is "**Why a Feminist Perspective when doing Community Economic Development?**", and it is about looking at social indicators through a feminist lens.

## ACT FOR CHANGE

Act for Change (Adolescents Coming Together for Change) is a youth organization that is trying to open a youth Centre in Antigonish. ACT is made up of both youth and adults, although the youth are those with the stronger voice with 60% of the board made up of youth members. ACT is working with youth to find ways of addressing gaps in youth service to youth age 13-21 years.

In March of '97, ACT held a youth forum called Street Talk. Youth identified 7 main issues as being pivotal in the lives of teenagers. They are: violence; stress and depression; sex and health issues; drug and alcohol abuse; lack of respect; boredom and discrimination.

When asked "what strategies could be employed that would provide information, programming and support youth?", the response was A Youth Centre. A place where youth could go talk, relax, and feel safe. Beyond offering a place to go a youth centre would provide a place where they could get the information, support, problem solving and referrals they need, participate in skills development workshops; become youth leaders, and develop a sense of themselves as community participants.

A youth centre would also provide an opportunity not only to be guided, but to guide as well. It would promote activities to build character, self-esteem and self-worth in young people. Presently there is no youth initiative, facility, agency or programs solely dedicated to youth in Antigonish. There is the school system and various sport and recreation organizations, but what happens when school is over or if you don't make the team??

We can't deny that they youth in any community are an important and valuable asset. The youth also then deserve to have a strong and powerful voice that is not just calling out, but one that is listened to and respected; for when young people are respected they prosper. Unfortunately, the youth are often left out when it comes to decision making, even when it concerns them and their lives. A Youth Centre will offer youth a place to voice their opinions, take action and work with other youth and the community to make a difference and change negative attitudes to positive ones. By taking part in social and educational activities, youth are more likely to develop a sense of self-worth and less likely to engage in self-harming behaviors.

The programs offered by the youth Centre will be developed by the youth staff and volunteers. They will include educational activities and programs; leadership activities and workshops; support programs and social activities and events. Programs would include: after-school tutoring; job finding skills workshops; computer and internet training workshops; internet access; issues workshops; youth advocacy workshops; peer education workshops; leadership training workshops; problem solving; crisis and suicide information; learn healthy coping skills; coffee houses and art and drama workshops.

Now is the time for community support. We need to have the public behind us in order to be truly successful. The youth Centre is a worthy and needed facility in the community and with the youth themselves the primary developers it is even more important. (Research tells us that youth oriented programs area more successful when they are developed by youth).

ACT is looking for your support! If you are interested or would like more information on Act, please call the 863-6221 and leave a message, one of our board members will be in touch with you as soon as possible.

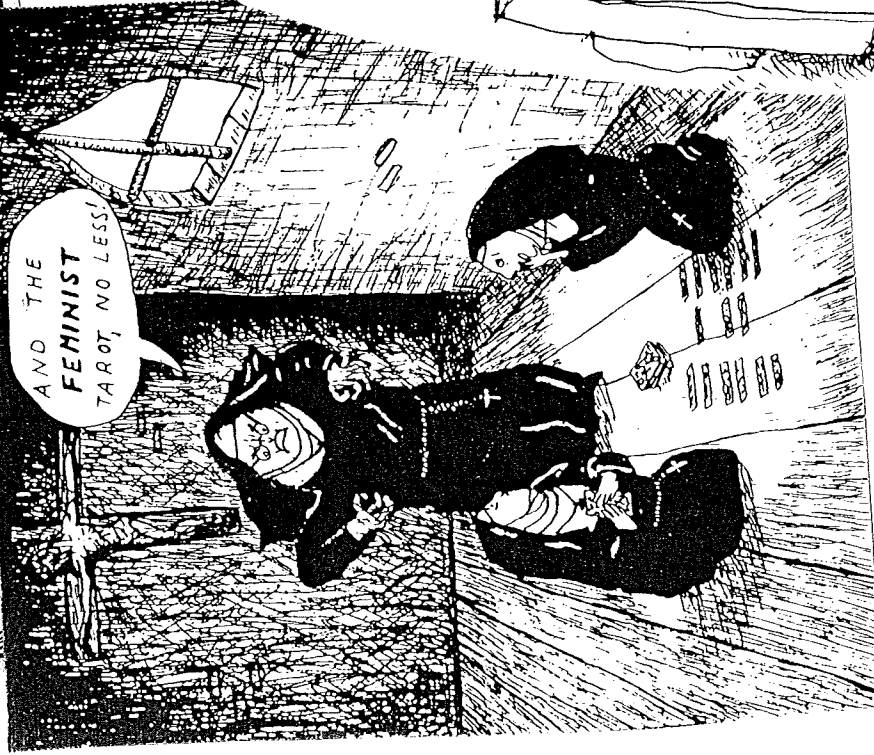
# Laughter is the Best Medicine!

By Rich Tennant

## The 5th Wave

©RICH TENNANT

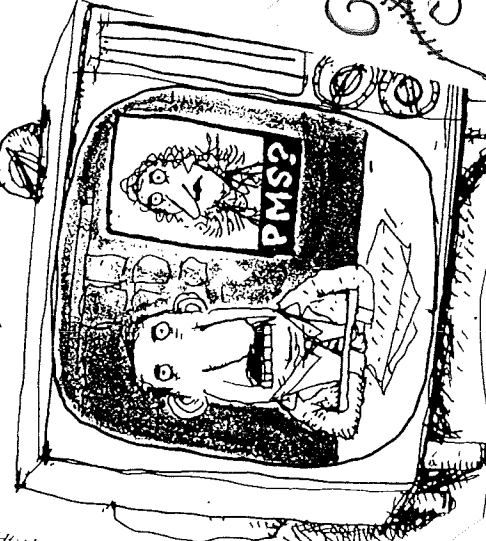
SUDDENLY LINDA FOUND HERSELF MYSTERIOUSLY DRAWN TO THE STRANGER ON HER TRAIN THAT DAY.



AND THE FEMINIST TAROT, NO LESS!

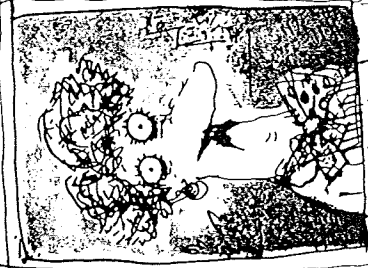
When asked her dress size, the president lost her tender womanly virtues and became stern, even hectoring.

OH, THAT EXPLAINS THE DIFFERENCE IN OUR SALARIES!



## DAILY NEWS

120 lb. Gal in Lovely Frock Elected Prime Minister



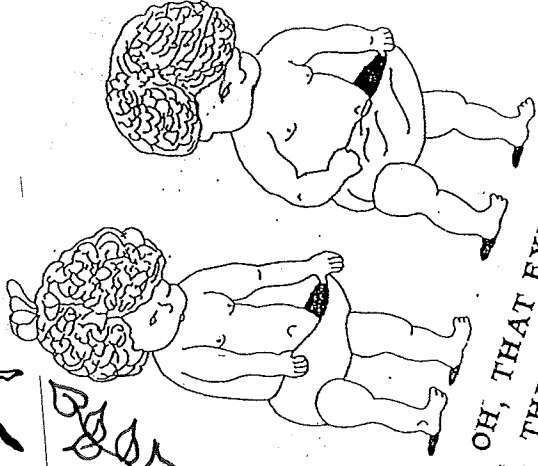
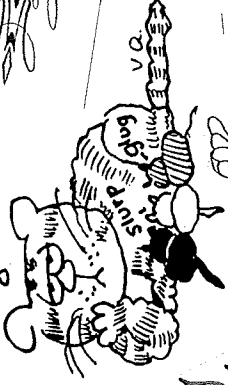
The Lucky Lady

Blue Eyes Woo Electorate

New Chic Hits Capitol

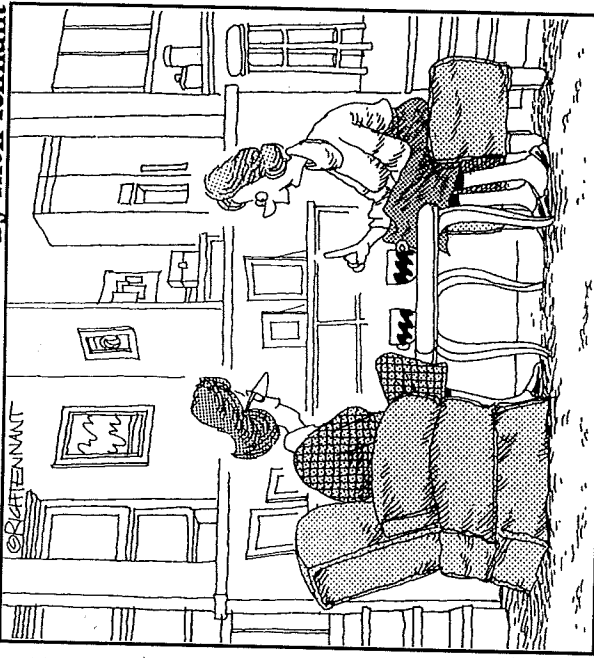
"Downright Kissable" says well-placed source

Sooner or later mother always gets the blame



## The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"It's an agreement Arthur and I made- he agrees to stay home from the gym 2 nights a week, and I guarantee that he'll still burn over 300 calories each night."