Branching Out

canadian magazine for women

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From Kitchen to Diner: Women and Work • A Hard Look at Legal "Solutions" — Human Rights, Affirmative Action • Sexual Harassment on the Job — The Silent Issue PLUS • Homage to Hens • A Liberated Road Film • On Reading The Hite Report • Fiction • Poetry • Reviews

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letters

Although trendy, "humanistic" androgeny *can* be a bit of a hype, I thought Yvonne Klein's argument in favour of Andrea Dworkin's "politics of the limp penis" was almost regressive (reminiscent of people who keep World War Two alive in the jungles of Micronesia). Her reviews of Dworkin and June Singer have that militant, ringing tone: just the sort of thing that goes over well in ingrown feminist circles (of which there are so many in this city). A bit like the old, cathartic "And now, comrades, a few anti-capitalist slogans before the singing of the Internationale"; and then home to bed.

As usual, the much-praised Dworkin isn't much help when it comes down to concrete strategy. We're told that girls must "boycott the dating system", while men must "not discuss their sexual intimacies with other men". Enforcing this exciting program would entail quite a police force! And even if Dworkin's (asexual) pie-in-the-sky were appetizing, it would hardly be worth the back-breaking effort needed to keep it airborne. When we talk radical feminist "strategy" we always seem to get into the most *ethereal* nihilistic visions ever fantasized anywhere! Whose neurosis does this nonsense feed? Klein appeals to women's "anger", but is implicitly critical of women who don't make anger the whole basis of their woman's consciousness. It seems all too clear that unless women transform their justified anger into some less corrosive emotion, they inevitably become victims of it.

If we wasted less energy condemning male sexuality and wishing it would go away, and devoted more effort to releasing and understanding our own, we might begin both to control rape, and to end the "milennia of savage repression by a dominant male gender class" etc. etc. which Klein says we forget "at our peril". Another thing we do "at our peril" is to deny sexual *polarities* — as if they resulted from a mere accident of history, like the conquest of 1763. If it is now proving so agonizingly difficult to resolve the consequences of only 200 years of colonialism in Quebec, why should we assume that milennia of women's oppression can be eradicated by female separatism and "anger?"

How often in women's groups does this generalized "anger" work to the exclusion of any exploratory energy? We need to develop new forms of consciousness-raising which go beyond showing us what sexism is. We have no choice but to start trying to understand sexual polarities, because these polarities operate at deep levels — in our dreams, for instance — levels which even *feminist* rhetoric can't effectively touch.

Two books which suggest positive approaches to the female subconscious are Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, and Irene Claremont de Castillejo's *Knowing Woman: a Feminine Psychology* (see particularly the chapter "Woman as a Mediator", which deals with the "mediumistic" woman). Maybe the feminist denial of the subconscious is partially responsible for the negative subconscious activity which often makes women's groups so difficult to work in.

These are a few of the unspeakable questions which we should stop being afraid to raise and explore.

Anne McLean, Montreal

I felt very uncomfortable reading Eunice Scarfe's "Open Letter to Niles Newton" (May/June) so I tried to analyze my reaction.

First, I was critical of Ms. Scarfe's references. Some of the quotes seemed out of context and she chose not to quote Dr. Newton as saying, ". . . if present day customs continue, your boy will grow up to have around twice the earning power of your daughter and is much more likely to be chosen to do work requiring heavy responsibility and executive abilities." The key words, of course, are "if present day customs continue." Don't forget the book was written in the 'fifties when the domestic role for women was at its peak.

I was also defensive of *The Family Book of Child Care*, one of the most complete, practical guides on child care. The section Ms. Scarfe attacks is only eight pages out of 450: the book has sections on everything from folding diapers, breastfeeding, choosing nutritious foods to preventing accidents and illnesses.

I felt compelled to defend Niles Newton. Obviously she cannot believe that girls do not have the potential to be successful when she herself is a PhD and a successful author, as well as a parent. I have a feeling that if Dr. Newton were to rewrite this chapter today it would be quite different.

Finally I realized that what really bothered me about Ms. Scarfe's letter was that, although she meant it to be humourous sarcasm, the underlying feeling was one of great bitterness and tension. Children should be brought up in an atmosphere of love and encouragement so that they will have the confidence in themselves to do what they can do and be what they will be. We don't need to arm ourselves with research to prove it can be done nor should we waste our energies criticizing outmoded ideas that have already been proven wrong.

Daryl Kozub, Edmonton

Into the porcelain — fine and fragile web of hard won and still developing sense of oneness women are finding within themselves, and with each other, swings the hammer of advertising that strikes at women's intelligence, femaleness, and freedom. The latest gaffe amongst an infinite number of tasteless, sexist advertisements is an ad promoting a new product called Tramp. Tramp is a fragrance advertised as "Today's kind of fragrance, for today's kind of girl." It goes farther and stipulates that "She's wearing Tramp and everybody loves her."

The girl "everybody loves" is depicted in magazine advertisements swinging on a light post which is peeling and dirty and included just behind her are two red blurs (lights?). To add to the

picture, the clothes worn by the "lady" in question are wrinkled and unkempt, while her hair is bleached, with a goodly showing of black roots. The television ads are almost as blatant and equally tasteless.

Should one look up the noun "tramp" it means "woman of loose morals," and "prostitute." I, for one, am incensed and deeply disgusted to think that someone out there feels the world has reached such a low that people in general and women in particular will accept advertising such as this. Perhaps companies are looking to see how far they dare go before something is done.

I protested to the manufacturer and the Advertising Standards Council but my letters, written in all seriousness, were received with condescension. Do, however, make it your business to contact the Advertising Standards Council and your Member of Parliament, priest, minister, and whoever you feel will take a serious, intelligent look at the type of advertising we are being subjected to.

Juliette J. Trudeau - Belland, Edmonton

I am disappointed in us. Although I wasn't there at the beginning, and my contributions may seem minimal, I am a part of the women's movement because I am a woman, because I am concerned, and because I want a better world. I have been fighting prejudice and ignorance for a very long time in the name of my sisters and felt my triumphs, as little as they were, were triumphs for all women, as were my defeats. And now I feel defeated without being positive what is the cause, the battle or the enemy. I am disappointed, embarassed, and frightened because somehow I feel the poison comes from within, from those people I have shared, angered and celebrated with.

At the end of May I attended a Rape Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. I was there to learn about rape, but what was even more important to me was that I would be able to meet with women from all over the Western United States and Canada. These were women with whom I was prepared to learn, to share sorrows and joys, and somehow touch their lives and have them touch mine. What I was not prepared for was the hate and bitterness. On the third day of the conference a vocal minority presented these specific feelings in a communique — and I was stunned. It is one thing to feel there is something wrong, but to hold the evidence in your hands, and to be expected to support it in the name of sisterhood, is something else. At a presentation by Susan Brownmiller the preceeding evening a woman had stood up in the audience and demanded to know what the men sitting there had done for the women's movement. I did not understand. Wasn't that what we were trying to stop? Were we once again expecting men to fight our battles? My confusion and disgust increased when a man stood up and grovelled before the largely female audience. It was the same mixture of feelings I have had when listening to a woman attempting to make points with a man by disavowing any loyalty to 'women's lib'. Are we so bitter that we must strip men of all self-worth so that we may better punish them?

We want to increase the expectations, capabilities, and opportunities for women — not keep ourselves angry and immobile. Sometimes being angry makes people more aware and more in control of their lives, but that has got to be only one step in a very long chain of events. There are laws to be changed, attitudes to be moulded, and a new society to be built. Suffocating women with the past, with bitterness, and with anger that never ends is not the way to accomplish anything — unfortunately, it only spreads the poison.

Mavis Walmsley, Edmonton

headway

On Reading the Hite Report: Or, How do you feel when you turn out the light?

by Karen Lawrence

In my love relationships, staying clear about my feelings is an important and challenging responsibility. The area of sexual feelings is perhaps one of the most threatening territories for men and women to explore together. For me it is a kind of jungle crowded with fears, expectations, past experiences, and fantasies. It is also deeply connected to my sense of self, my need to love and be loved, my need for personal power and security. As I become more aware of my sexual nature I realize the extent to which my *mind* is engaged, for social conditioning has had a lot to do with how I view sex and its place in my total functioning.

For me, intercourse is not always a necessary 'final component' in our sexual play. This proved to be a loaded issue for discussion with my partner.

When reading Shere Hite's *The Hite Report: A Nationwide Study of Female Sexuality*, I realized with a shock that many women are dealing with the conflicts and feelings I experience, and that my ways of solving/coping with problems is in no way unique. This was a release for me, and I felt impelled to explore some areas of conflict with my partner. Basically my sexual feelings for him are strong, positive, and a source of great happiness; our lovemaking is in the "good" to "ecstatic" range most of the time. But I am aware of a tendency in myself to idealize it, to want it to be perfect, and to overlook little things that trouble me because the overall picture is such that I 'can't complain'. I think this impulse stems from insecurity and from problems I have experienced with sexual adjustments in other relationships. With one long-time partner our needs did not coincide — when I wanted to be with him, he wasn't interested. I closed up so much that later, when he was interested, I no longer desired him as a sexual partner. The whole problem was aggravated by our inability to communicate about it; finally it seemed overwhelming and was one of the reasons we split up. Now I feel a strong need for clear communication and *honesty* about sexual matters, and it seems necessary to take the risk of exposing tender feelings in order to keep a dialogue going.

One of the issues I talked about with my present partner was intercourse, and my feeling that it is not always a necessary 'final component' in our sexual play. This proved to be a loaded issue, one which evoked powerful responses on both sides, and which has been impossible to resolve so far. Hite suggests in her book,

> One is not even allowed to *discuss* feelings about intercourse, or whether one likes it, etc., without arousing a strong emotional reaction in many people who feel you are attacking *'men'*. But this is not true. The fact that it is so perceived is merely another indication of how stereotyped our ideas about physical relations are, and, further, how emotionally and politically sensitive a topic sex is.

It is her contention that patriarchy has led to the institutionalization of intercourse (especially monogomous intercourse). Our laws condemn non-coital forms of sexuality as criminal, and many religions insist that sexual activity must have reproduction as its ultimate aim. Yet the women surveyed experienced their *strongest* sexual feelings at infertile times and many biologists point out that intercourse is but one aspect of a wide range of physical contact for other mammals.

I like having intercourse, but I like doing other things too. My lover is a very cuddly, affectionate man who gives me lots of physical attention. But for him, this kind of activity is 'different' from sex play. When he becomes sexually aroused the focus of his energy is intercourse; he engages in other kinds of sex play for stimulation, and hopes they will culminate in intercourse. He has become angry when I have caressed him and then did not want to 'complete the act'. I experience these feelings of affection-arousal as being on a continuum; sometimes I like them to lead to intercourse, but not always. Hite suggests there is a difference between experiencing pleasure as *desire* or its *satisfaction*. Sometimes the greater pleasure for me is arousal, rather than the fulfillment of desire.

Hite discovered that 95% of women who masturbate can achieve orgasm easily and regularly, and uses this statistic as her basis for speculation about women's potential for sexual response in a relationship rather than a figure based upon ability to achieve orgasm through intercourse, I believe she is making an important distinction here, which has the potential to change a woman's concept of sexual relations in a deep, positive way. My body is my own, to give myself pleasure, and I can share that pleasure with another if I so choose. In a sexual relationship I want to be able to do whatever gives me pleasure; to have or not have an orgasm according to how I feel; to have intercourse if I want to and to kiss and hug if I want to. Hite's book reinforces my belief that it is possible for women to 'rewrite the script' for sexual relations.

Now, to relate all this to another person. My awareness of my body, my needs and fantasies is the centre from which I operate, and one of my strong needs is to relate sexually to another person. Right now that person is a man whom I love very much. Certainly there are many other options for women. There is the option of exploring sex with a number of partners; if you can't satisfy all your needs with one person you turn to another. Celibacy is an option many women choose while they are discovering their own bodies and sorting out their feelings about sex; there was such a period in my life and when it was over I had come to a clearer understanding of what I wanted from and what I could contribute to a sexual relationship. Some women find that female lovers satisfy this sexual and emotional need in a deep, fulfilling way. Compromising one's needs in order to satisfy a partner should no longer be an

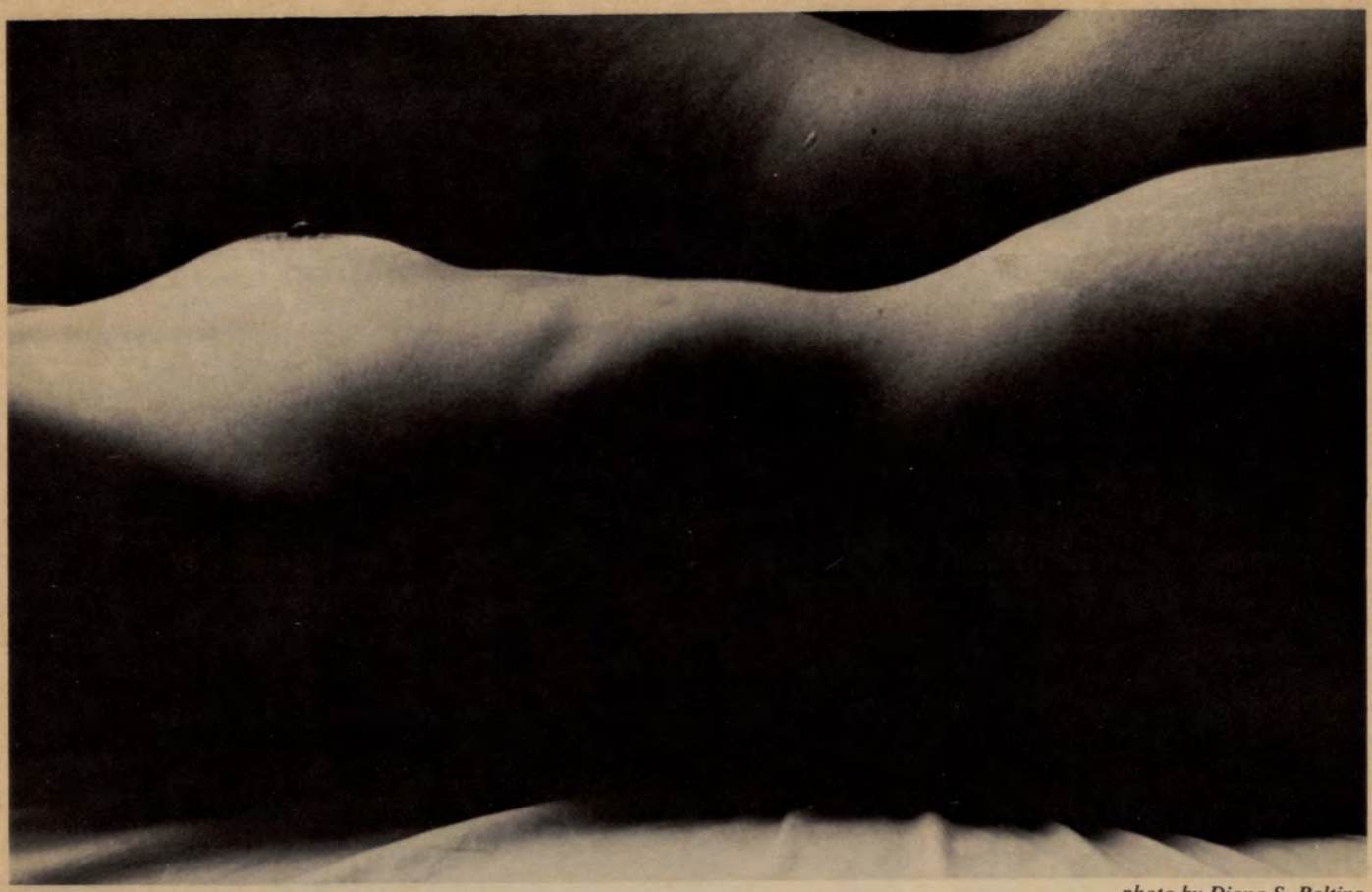

photo by Diana S. Palting

option. Too many women have extinguished themselves in pleasing others in bed. *The Hite Report* asks:

> If we make it easy and pleasurable for men to have an orgasm, and don't have one ourselves, aren't we just "servicing" men? If we know how to have orgasms, but are unable to make this a part of a sexual relationship with another person, then we are not in control of *choosing* whether or not we have an orgasm. We are powerless.

One of the important issues for me right now is discovering my own power, connecting with my energy and ability to love. My committed relationship with this man is proving to be a real clearing house for a lot of feelings I have tied up these areas. The power issue comes up in many ways, and in the sexual sphere it can easily upset the delicate balance of feelings between a man and a woman. Because my lover finds orgasm with intercourse the most satisfying experience, I think he wants it to be that way for me too. Power is important when one partner isn't getting what she/he wants and has to expose these needs to the face of possible rejection; fear of the loss of love and the feeling that one might be asking for too much also come into play. Where he felt at one point

Power is important when one partner isn't getting what she/he wants and has to expose these needs to the face of possible rejection . . . . Sometimes I feel incredibly vulnerable and scared about saying where I'm at.

that I was losing interest in sexual relations with him, he didn't want to talk about it because he felt he was "showing all his cards", or giving up his power. I feel this is a necessary risk. So what happens when we don't want the same thing? What happens when he wants intercourse and I don't, or vice versa? I think these are questions which cannot be resolved in advance by making any kind of policy decisions; we will have to deal with each situation if/when it arises. I think it is most important to confront these situations; to stay in touch with how we feel so that we don't build up hurts and resentments. Yet sometimes I feel incredibly vulnerable and scared about saying where I'm at.

In an ideal sexual relationship both partners are coming from a place of strength and good feelings about themselves. They are not buying cultural myths about 'natural roles' and functions, or about what kinds of sex are permissible, or about someone 'giving you something' in sex, or about satisfying a partner's needs and ignoring their own. In working out these issues with my man, I suspect we are working on *archetypal* issues, in the sense that they transcend our particular circumstances.

The feeling this situation evokes is that it is "bigger than both of us". I project a lot of fantasies onto my partner which in one sense have nothing to do with him. When we are *connecting*, our sexual energy enables us to transcend our bodies and minds, we surrender and let ourselves become utterly vulnerable and open. For me this is the sweetest, highest experience I have with him. Our bodies take us to a place where we are a part of the essence of the universe, of the love energy which nourishes and connects us all. This is what our sex-love energy has the power to put us in touch with, and it's worth all the hassling to get there.

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law

Human Rights: What the Law Can — And Can't — Do

interview with Carole Geller
by Linda Duncan

In March 1977, Louise Dulude of the Federal Advisory Council on the status of women released a report entitled "The Status of Women in Federal Crown Corporations". She begins her report with the following:

> It is a quite well known fact that the Federal Government is the largest employer in Canada. What is not so well known is that almost 40% of its employees (excluding the army) are employed by more than fifty Federal Crown Corporations.
>
> With very few expectations, the most important being the Unemployment Insurance Commission and the National Museums of Canada, these corporations are not subject to the *Public Service Employment Act* provisions that prohibit discrimination in all aspects of employment, including pay, hiring and promotion. Their only obligation in this regard is to obey the Canada Labour Code's inadequate provision regarding equal pay for the same or similar work. Nor are Crown corporations bound by the policy and program guidelines that Treasury Board has issued concerning equal career opportunities for women in the Federal Public Service. The strictest measure imposed on them is a vague Cabinet directive.

Dulude further reports Canadian women to be highly under-represented in the Federal Public Service and Crown Corporations with women almost non-existent in the management level (1.9%).

Dulude's report illustrates the importance of the proposed Federal Human Rights Bill (Bill C-25) presently before Parliament. This law will prohibit discrimination by reason of "race, national or ethnic orgin, colour, religion, age, sex or marital status or conviction of an offence for which a pardon has been granted" and "discriminatory employment practises based on physical handicap".

If passed the legislation will, among other things, prohibit discrimination in all aspects of employment including pay for work of equal value, hiring, promotion, job advertisement and fringe benefits. The law will be enforceable against Federal Government employees, corporations, and agencies under Federal jurisdiction including banks, hotels, railroads, airlines and telecommunications. While all provinces do have existing human rights legislation those laws do not control the activities of employers or landlords under Federal jurisdiction.

Carole Geller *photo by Sandra Semchuk*

While most people have given support in principle, specific provisions of the Human Rights Bill have met substantial criticism by status of women groups. I decided to obtain an interpretation of the Bill from someone who I feel has been dynamic in the human rights field. Carole Geller pioneered as the first investigator with the Manitoba Human Rights Commission and the first Director of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, a position she has held since February of 1973. Here, from our interview this May, are her remarks on Bill C-25.

DUNCAN: Bill C-25 has been lauded as The Solution to the improvement of the status of Canadian women. Would you agree?

GELLER: Well, I don't see it as The Solution but I do see it as an absolute necessity. I think legislation is an absolute necessity as the base, but that's all it is. It's no solution to anything, but it gives a sort of credence to what society says it believes. The fact that there aren't any laws protecting women in the federal sphere makes it that much easier for people in general, and for large employers, to continue just what they've been doing.

You say that Human Rights laws should provide the base. In answer to women's demands that the Bill prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual preference the Honourable Mr. Basford said you can't include protections in the law that people aren't ready for. Do you see this legislation as setting the stage for social change or merely reflecting what already exists?

Well, I think it should be doing both. The problem I see is that at times legislators are prepared to go further than the general public and be in the

forefront, and at times they're not, depending on the issues. Basically, I think it depends on their own fundamental position. When the first human rights laws in Saskatchewan were passed (the *Saskatchewan Bill of Rights* of 1940 and *The Fair Employment Practices Act* of 1952) they didn't include sex but had race, color, religion. Well, I'm sure that most people in Saskatchewan didn't believe that those things should be covered then but, because there weren't that many non-white people in the province, one could be ahead of the people. It's more difficult to get things like sex and marital status added to the laws; not because the public isn't prepared to do it but if one enforced it properly it would mean a fundamental change in society.

A recent information bulletin released from the Office of the Co-ordinator for the Status of Women stated that Justice Department officials believe that about 60 recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women will be implemented or made easier to implement by passage of Bill C-25. Would you support this statement?

Well, I'd like to know which 60 they're talking about. I've seen reports from the action status of women committees which go through each of the recommendations and how many have actually been implemented or partially implemented by the federal government? I don't think one could say that the implementation of those things, of all of them even, would lead to fundamental changes. They would lead to some changes for some people and a climate where changes can take place.

Section 15 of the Bill provides that it is not a discriminatory practise for a person to carry out a special program designed to prevent disadvantages likely to be suffered by a particular group of individuals including groups designated by their sex or marital status. This provision seems to be providing for the affirmative action programs long awaited by status of women action groups.

No, it has a provision allowing, not providing. It has a provision which makes it possible for an employer who wishes to go into affirmative action to do so without breaking the law, which I suppose is the first step along the way to requiring it. I don't believe that these things can be done on the basis of someone's paternal good nature. I believe that an offender should be legally required to make compensation where he is found guilty of discriminating against women or against a minority group in employment.

A number of groups including the Advisory Council on the Status of Women have proposed that the Bill include a section establishing quotas to guarantee that at a set point in time women will make up an equivalent percentage of the work force. Do you support such a concept?

There are a lot of arguments against the quota system as such, on the basis that what would happen is that one would be forced to hire "unqualified" people. I just don't believe that's true. I believe that in this day and age there are an overwhelming number of qualified women for every single job that is available, and it would simply be a matter then of choosing from among the most qualified. So that I don't think that the argument holds water. The only thing that I see wrong with the quota is that companies would end up restricting the number of women that they would hire based on the quota which would mean 50%, if it's a computation on the basis of population, rather than the quota systems used for minority groups which are based on the makeup of the area. Also, companies would have to set quotas on all levels of employment because if they were required at an entry level only, no change would result. A lot of companies would continue to hire mainly women because they constitute most of the clerical help.

This type of protection has been called reverse discrimination on the basis that by affording women these special rights the law is discriminating against men. Do you see any credence to this argument?

"Reverse discrimination" is another nice term that is used by those who are really, as far as I can see, against having women and minority groups treated equally. You get arguments stating that what you're doing is identical to what has been done and I don't think that's true at all. What is proposed is not reverse discrimination, but preferential treatment.

I think that what is needed is the removal of all barriers. This Bill removes only barriers to hiring. There are still all kinds of barriers that have been there for generations — the fact that people have been socialized into not getting an education in some fields is still there. Whether or not the engineering companies agree that half of people they are going to hire out in the field are going to be women, it's going to be impossible for many years for them to do so. And they can then say, well, look, we've opened it up, we've advertised in all the women's magazines, we've done all the correct things but no women applied. So you have barriers in place for women and some minority groups in Canada that are not removed by the removal of the artificial barrier in the employment area and you have to do more.

We've been talking about the rights of individuals as opposed to groups. I notice that this proposed federal law contains a section which would allow groups of people who feel discriminated against to lay complaints on behalf of the total group.

Right, I think that is the way the legislation is tending to go in that it will be possible for people to bring complaints on behalf of a class of people, so that you may get wider changes. I would think that what this allows is for an organization like the Advisory Council on the Status of Women to file a complaint on sex discrimination against a particular company and then the investigation could be company-wide. This has not really been the case before. An organization can file a complaint with the commission in Saskatchewan but it must be on behalf of an individual and they'll have to be able to show that specific individuals have been affected. It looks as if Bill C-25 is going to be slightly wider than that which, if it works, would be really helpful.

I would like to make a further point in this vein. Not only should actions be allowed by a group on behalf of one individual but an order rendered by the federal Commission against a particular office or employer should apply to all offices of the company charged. For example. if an Ottawa branch of a particular bank is ordered to make changes, those changes should occur in every branch of that bank across the country. I think that the narrow application is a major fault in the Bill especially when dealing with the Federal Government.

One of the most significant provisions for women is Section 11 which makes it an offence for an employer to pay less money to a female worker "performing work of equal value" to that of a male worker. However an exception is made to the rule where the difference in wages is "based on a reasonable factor". Although the section states that sex is not a reasonable factor, many persons have opposed this open exception and think it provides too great a loophole. Do you feel there are circumstances where an employer could justifiably pay a man more than a women for the same work?

I can't think of any sexual factor that would allow for a difference in pay. The only factors that I would consider to be reasonable for differences in pay between people are the seniority system where people who have been there more years get more money on an incremental basis or a merit system and, secondly, where people are paid a commission based on the amount of sales, which would have nothing to do with sex. I can't think of any other case which should constitute a difference in pay between people doing the same job. I would say that the term "reasonable factor" should not be in the law. I think that they should quite clearly spell out that a seniority system and the straight commission would be the only exceptions.

So you consider it dangerous to give the Commission the board discretionary power to determine the merits of requiring equal pay in each individual case?

Yes. I can see that the "reasonable factor" would be widely construed depending on the times when these cases are being heard. If it's a time when women's rights groups are very active and vocal and are being positively supported it will be interpreted narrowly, other times it won't be, and I don't think "reasonable factor" is a good thing to put into the law. It's too wide. I don't want those judges, who are mostly male, making those decisions.

The Bill will have little impact unless a provision is included to require employers to hold job training programs to upgrade female employees for instance. The argument is usually that employers don't want to have to put women in just because they're women, and I agree with that. However, there are many underqualified women right now who, with a little assistance, could become qualified.

That's right. That's why reverse discrimination charges keep women out of equality. It perpetuates, as far as I'm concerned, the same kind of barriers that are there and have been there for years. I believe that there's an absolute necessity for preferential treatment for those groups who have been stigmatized by society. Now that means, aside from changing the social attitudes so that more women go into more varied kinds of employment, providing special on the job training, providing day care, abortion, and family planning, or at least a knowledge of those areas. You're not giving women equality unless you provide the services that indeed don't have to be provided for men, which means that you've got to do more for women in some areas than you have to do for men, and I don't consider that to be discrimination against men.

A common complaint with human rights legislation has been that the commissions are given too many discretionary powers – too many "mays" and not enought "shalls".

Well, that's true of human rights legislation across Canada. What the legislation requires of people is simply non-discrimination in employment, or whatever, on the basis of race, color, sex and so on. Then the legislation goes into other kinds of things that people *can* do if they want to go further. The commission of course has an educational mandate and in that role you get your affirmative action and you get contract compliance on a volunteer basis. None of that eventually is good enough. You really need laws with teeth and you need to be able to make people obey the law.

The role of the Human Rights Commission is simply to enforce anti-discrimination laws. People who expect it to change the status of women in society or alter their socio-economic status, make major changes in the welfare situation, or for native people, are insane.

One weakness I see with this method of guaranteeing equal rights is that discrimination continues unless an individual comes to the forefront and makes a complaint. There is a heavy onus of responsibility on those prejudiced to protect themselves even though many undoubtedly lack the courage or confidence to fight for their own rights. Unless they lay the complaint nothing will ever happen to improve their situation.

Yes, that's true, there is a heavy onus on the person suffering the discrimination. But at the same time in this federal Bill, and in some provincial human rights bills, there is an ability for the commission to go in on its own to do routine audits, to file complaints on their own and to carry them through on their own, so it depends on the makeup of the commission. I see that the first thing one could do as the Federal Human Rights Commission is to take a look at what is happening across the country. Banks are an obvious example where women have, in the past been mainly tellers and men have bypassed them and gone on to be bank managers. So that one could immediately file a complaint against every single bank in Canada and send people in to do an investigation. There are only three provinces in Canada which do not have the ability to go in and do a routine audit — Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. When you talk about initiation powers, "the right to initiate", which was the term I was using to begin with, it's like waving a red flag in front of people, but if you say "routine audit" it doesn't sound as if you were as activist, so I'm now using "routine audit".

It sounds like human rights laws are difficult to enforce. As I see it, once an employer has been fined for discriminating you can't be certain he hasn't reverted to his old ways without constant monitoring.

That's right, but they're like other laws. If you break the speed limit they don't monitor you so you don't break it again. You pay your fine and if you feel like breaking the law again you do. The only way people are going to voluntarily obey the law is to have a strong deterrent. I think that if you are fined at the most three times, and have discriminated on a continuing basis, you should lose your license to be in business. A landlord who refuses to rent to blacks and is found guilty and does it again should have his business taken away from him. But that isn't the way the law yet reads.

Could you give me an example of a human rights case where the laws succeeded in alleviating discrimination against women?

Yes. I'll give you the Yorktown equal pay case because that's one that is both a success and a failure and a case I think is interesting.

Some Human Rights Commissions investigate equal pay cases under their human rights laws. Saskatchewan does not. It comes under the Women's Division of the Department of Labour and the complaint came to them that women who are classified as cleaners at the Yorktown Regional High School were doing the same work or similar work as men who were classified as caretakers at the same school, and that they were not getting the same rate of pay. The Women's Division sent in an investigator. At that time I think that there were five women employed as cleaners and one male on this particular shift as a caretaker. The investigator, after doing the investigation, agreed with the women's complaints, that they were doing similar work, requiring similar skill, effort and responsibility.

The Yorktown Regional High School board disagreed with the finding and refused to pay the women the assessment.

At that point, under the legislation, the Department of Labour can require the Human Rights Commission to hold a public hearing and they did. The Commission found that the women cleaners were doing similar work to that of the male caretaker, and issued an order. The order is binding like any other court order. They ordered the Yorktown Regional High School to pay the women back wages from the time that the fellow had been hired as a caretaker which was approximately one year prior in time. The Yorktown Regional High School appealed the decision and lost.

Now that would be a success story if it ended at that point, but it doesn't. After the court ruled that our decision was upheld, the Regional High School Board paid the women the back wages that had been ordered. They then took the one male caretaker and removed him from the position, abolished the position of caretaker, and moved him into a maintainance position. They lowered the women back to the wages that they had had prior to the filing of the complaint, which was minimum wage. Their contention then was that there was no violation of equal pay laws because there was no man.

I consider what they have done to be a violation of the law — and if it isn't it should be, right? It should be impossible, after your have been found to be in violation of the law, and the violation of the law has been upheld in the court, to avoid the law by moving people around in their jobs. It's a totally unacceptable solution to the equal pay problem. You just reinforce for employers the need to keep people in ghettos, to have no comparable jobs at all.

The Department of Labour has prosecuted the Yorktown Regional High School board for violation of the order, but the judge has reserved his decision. If the judge rules that what the Yorktown Regional High School has done is not a violation of the law, the Department of Labour will have to amend the equal pay laws to make it a violation to do that in future.

Isn't that supposed to be one of the roles of a human rights commission, to recommend amendments to the human rights laws when they see room for improvement?

I would think that there are many roles that a human rights commission can perform, and it depends on how they see themselves. I think one of the roles is to make recommendations and changes in human rights laws. Another role which I consider to be as important, if not more important, is to monitor all government legislation because, quite frankly, bills are brought in to the House that are in total violation of human rights without those who draft the Bill ever calling the Human Rights Commission, to say, 'Hey, how does this grab you." I think we have a role to monitor, prior to the Bill actually being passed, and certainly to go through all the Bills that are already in existence and recommend changes. The problem is that you can do that and recommend changes but there is no requirement for the governments to make the changes. I think it should be required by law that the Human Rights legislation take precedence over other laws. The only place in Canada where it does take precedence is Alberta.

I think a commission which makes recommendations as to changes in human rights laws and in laws of its province should report that to the public, if only in their annual report, so that the public is aware that there are problems and if changes aren't being made, the public can request that the legislature do so.

Another important role I see for the Commissions is education. Until we change the way people think about certain minorities the law will have little impact.

What Commissions are not doing is attempting to deal with individual instances of discrimination after the fact. You come in and you say its against the law now, you can't do that anymore, but it's really difficult for people to understand that what they are doing is morally wrong. They understand that the law says that it is wrong and what they do is curse the law. Employers say to you, you know, its my business, I have to hire the best people. You don't run a business so how would you know what my problems are. My answer is, nobody is stopping your from hiring the best people, indeed, what we are doing is opening up opportunities for you to hire the best people. In the past you have been blinded and, in effect, you have omitted people that probably would have helped you in your business. But, simply because of their sex, you haven't been able to see them and we are going to help you see.

Two schools of thought exist on the role for human rights commissions. Some believe human rights should be strictly a legal, punitive process with strict fines and affirmative action programs. Others hold that human rights provides an educational mandate with additional enforcement powers to give the commission some clout. What role the commission assumes depends more on the people who work for it than the laws it.

Do you think that the educational component may have a dual aspect? Not only is it important to educate the employers and the landlords (the people at the top) that women are equal and should be able to assume these

photo by Sandra Semchuk

positions, but the women themselves have to be educated into thinking that they are worthwhile and they do have a place to fill, that they can get to the top.

Oh yes, there's no doubt about that. We have as many problems, when we go into a place where we've had a complaint from a women, with the employees, both male and female, who don't want the boat rocked. Other women are afraid that if the equal pay complaint is satisfactorily resolved, they will be fired because, if the guy has to pay them the same as he pays the men, he may as well hire men, because men are better. We had one case where the woman refused the compensation ordered for her. She felt that, although she had five kids and was the sole support mother, the men needed more money than she did and should get more and were worth more. That is her socialization. She was working side by side with this guy doing the same thing, and still she insisted. She was in tears when we said we would burn the cheque if she didn't take it, that there was no way the cheque was going back to the company.

There are still a lot of women who agree with the myths. But there are an increasing number of women who don't agree with them and they are prepared to fight.

The concept of the male breadwinner needing to make more money doesn't make it anymore. There are too many single parents and too many families where both parents are working and they all need the money.

That's true. I am not so sure that the concept ever should have worked in working class families to begin with but I think it has. Its a middle class concept anyway, but its what you get every day on T.V. and all the media.

Perhaps our schools should be monitored to control what kind of beliefs are being taught. Again how are you going to get people to bring complaints until they realize they are being discriminated against?

They may know that they are being discriminated against but it is such a normal part of everyday life that they don't realize that there is something wrong with that, or that there is anything they can do about it. They may not have the strength to fight it because it does require a great deal of strength. I would agree with you that one has to deal with the education system. What goes on in the schools is crucial simply because that is where you get the largest captive audience.

My view is that if commissions are going to be effective at all in the educational role, it is going to be in the schools. Attitudes of adults are going to be much more difficult to change. With children, there is still a hope. I then come into a contradiction in that the Saskatchewan Commission has made a conscious decision to concentrate its education efforts on the school teacher rather than on the children because I don't know how you can educate the children if the teachers in the classrooms reflect the biases that they have learnt.

How effective has that program with the teachers been?

I don't know. It's too soon to tell because it's really just at its beginnings. I think the inservice training that we are running does deal with the problems of sexism and racism and does get teachers talking about situations in their classrooms — things that they observe, that other teachers are doing or that they themselves have done and have not even realized were sexist, their own expectations of boys compared to their expectation of girls. Some, of course, say that the whole thing is ridiculous and that we are going to destroy the basis of society by destroying the family. You start the process and some kids go home and come back with a note from the parents saying, you leave my little girl alone, I want her to grow up and get married and live happily ever after. I don't want her having these expectations that she can be a welder or an engineer or a doctor. That is not the way our family runs and just leave us. But, so far, the majority of the response has been positive.

Some kids go home and return with a note from the parents saying, you leave my little girl alone, I want her to grow up and get married and live happily ever after. I don't want her having these expectations that she can be a welder or an engineer or a doctor.

Unfortunately we often have to disband our educational programs when we receive a complaint, because of limited resources. It is impossible to tell some woman who comes in to file a complaint that she has to wait a week because you are in the midst of conducting an educational campaign in some school which is going to make a difference twenty years down the road to her children. You've got to stop what you are doing and help her.

Human rights is one of the social services, and those are the kinds of things that get cut in times of restraint. I don't think governments have any real understanding of the number of complaints that are going to be laid or the number of staff necessary when they set up a commission. I don't think they realize how extensive the problem is.

I guess then the best action women and other persons experiencing discrimination can take to strengthen the Commission is to make a point of bringing to it every case of discrimination they are aware of.

Sure. I think that one of the roles that women's organizations and other institutions have is to be both supportive of the Human Rights Commission and very critical — supportive in pushing governments to provide the commission with the kind of staff and money that they need to do a job and very critical of the jobs that they do, whether they've got the staff or money or not. I think that's an absolute necessity in order to get a Commission doing things. There's obviously also going to have to be pressure from outside.

Do you support the present Bill being passed as soon as possible, as is, or do you think the final reading should be delayed until improvements are made to it?

I hear there are reams of material in front of the committee on amendments to the Bill. But I would be pushing for the Bill to go through as a political tactic. I realize that means that it will be two to five years before there are any amendments because bills don't get amended that quickly. Nobody likes to admit that they made mistakes that quickly. So it will be two to five years before one could make the kind of changes that women are now saying are needed. But you are never going to have a perfect Bill. The fact is, in the meantime, the law does not cover sex discrimination in the federal sphere at all and, no matter how badly, it should at least begin to cover it and then we can begin to deal with the problems. Quite clearly, if the law is not very good in the equal pay area and employers are able to get around paying equal pay because of the reasonable factor — which is looked at as being wide enough to include all kinds of nonsense like pregnancy — once it's a law there will be such an upsurge of outrage that the change will be made very quickly. Until the Bill becomes law it's all academic.

Section 14 of the Bill allows an employer, among other things, to refuse to hire or to promote an individual if the

action of the employer is based on a "bona fide occupational requirement." A number of persons have requested that these requirements be delineated in the legislation. Would you agree?

I think that the Human Rights Commissions across Canada should have the authority to issue guidelines which are enforceable regulations and be able to grant exemptions under "bona fide occupational qualification" similar to what exists in the United States. When I started listing bona fide occupational qualifications, I could think of only two examples — sperm donor and wet nurse. I don't know about an attendant in the washroom. Actors and actresses I know about . . . I'd say yes. I don't see any reason why you shouldn't be able to hire by sex in this case. If somebody comes to me and says, "Look I'm representing a dress factory, I need a model for size 12 women's dresses, can I hire a female?" I would say, "Yeah, O.K." Attendant in a washroom? Depending on the morals of the time, if the attendant is in the washroom all day long that, one might have to allow that to be based on sex. But I would hate to have somebody who cleans washrooms restricted as to sex so that in an airport women would be hired only to clean the women's washroom and get less pay than men who are cleaning the men's washroom and also the floors in the main part of the building.

I would like to see legislation written which grants no exemptions in the legislation itself, which says, you can't discriminate in employment based on sex, you can't discriminate in housing based on sex, you can't discriminate in fringe benefits, all the way through, and then at the end a section which says that the Commission will be able to grant an exemption in a particular case based on public input obtained by way of public meetings, briefs, or whatever means. But I would leave it in the hands of the people who are appointed to the Commission to make that decision rather than specifying in the legislation.

Would you give the final decision to the Commission, or would that be appealable to the Courts?

I run into problems because I think that human rights commissions are set up simply because the courts did not work as far as human rights are concerned. The human rights laws were there but nobody was using them because it's expensive, number one and because the courts reflect the general societal attitudes. I think that human rights laws often say what the general society says but not what the general society really believes deep down in its guts. You need people to enforce the law who have that feeling in their guts as well as in what they say.

The women who are complaining to the Human Rights Commission are not members of women's organizations. They are not advocates of women's liberation, not members of status of women groups. They are working women who don't see themselves as feminists.

Can human rights laws really offer any practical solution? I'm thinking of the case where a woman is refused a job because she is a woman, lays a complaint, wins her case and the employer is ordered to hire her. Who would want the job under those circumstances?

I should tell you about one of my success stories because it illustrates a case in point. This was a case where a company advertised for an accountant and a woman with all the qualifications applied was told by the manager that they wanted a man because it was an automotive-type industry. All of the employees were male except for the secretaries. They had never hired a woman for other positions and they weren't interested in hiring a woman now. She filed a complaint and we went to investigate. They had hired a man by that time with fewer qualifications as was quite clear by the application forms. In this particular case as part of the settlement we suggested that the woman be hired for the position. We did not suggest that they fire the man. What they did with him was their choice. Some people would believe that what we did was discriminate against the man who got the job, but it is quite clear that he would never have gotten the job had she been a man because he didn't have the qualifications that she had. The company then had to make a choice because we insisted that they hire the woman for the job. They did hire her for the job and they created two positions. They didn't fire the guy.

She had a great deal of soul-searching to go through as to whether or not she would take that position because not only did everybody at the company know how she got the job but the company was going to lose money by hiring two people. They had to pay her a salary and give her the job and it might very well be uncomfortable but she decided that it was worth it for other women coming along after. A year later she was still there and had received a wage increase and the company was very happy with her. The guy is not there anymore.

If one looks at the women who are complaining to the Human Rights Commission, you will not find members of women's organizations. They are not advocates of women's liberation, not members of status of women groups. They are working women who don't see themselves as feminists. They are complaining about things that control how much money they earn. A lot of complaints we get from women about things that happen on the job such as denial of fringe benefits and lack of promotional opportunities.

Do you believe the law can create equality for women?

The law is necessary but limited. People shouldn't expect it to do all kinds of things that it is not set up to do. The role of Human Rights Commission is simply to enforce anti-discrimination laws. People who expect it to change the status of women in society or alter their socio-economic status, make major changes in the welfare situation or for native people are insane. It isn't intended to nor can it do those things. It can increase an individual's ability to earn money if that individual has been refused a job or improve treatment on the job. It isn't going to make major changes or gains in society for any particular group. Those kinds of changes have to be made by women or the minority groups themselves and it's not necessarily going to be by way of legislation. What is necessary is an overall change in the attitudes of people and that has to be done through education and through women actually doing jobs people though they would never do. The Commission can help somewhat here. But you have to be realistic. Within those limitations if women's groups and others push the Commission it can do a fair amount. If there is no push it will do even less than it can.

Linda Duncan is a lawyer at the Edmonton Social Planning Council and is editor of the law column for Branching Out. *She is also on the executive of the Edmonton-based group, "Options for Women."*

Sandra Semchuk is a Saskatoon photographer and a founding member of the Photographer's Gallery artist co-op. Her work has been featured in earlier issues of Branching Out *and was recently reviewed in* Saturday Night.

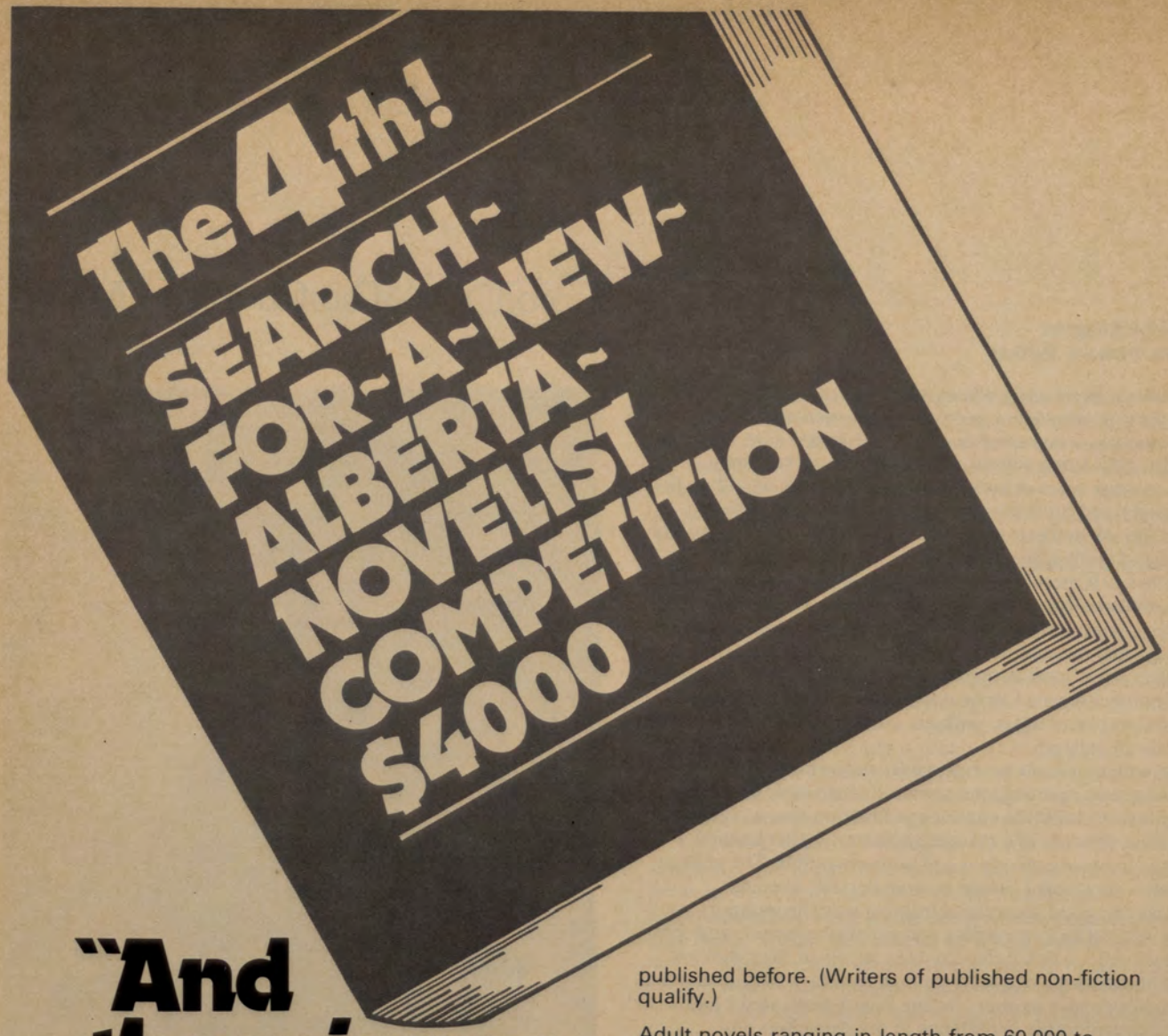
Black Plague

We lived off eighty acres
eighteen miles outside of Moose Jaw.
Then the farm got eaten up
one afternoon in '32. My pa watched
silent at the window, turning
now and then to spit between
the floorboards by his boot.
The rest of us sat quiet at the table,
watching Mother's lips make silent prayers
and listening to the strange, low roar
outside. It could have been a wake:
the lighted candles in the afternoon,
our heads bowed, and the rhythm
of the rosary beads each pausing
in her fingers. When the black cloud
finally crawled away, there wasn't much
remaining but the sun again, unblinking
in the unfamiliar graveyard. Mother's face
went grey, and curses rattled in Pa's throat.

We found the cow was crazy in the barn.
Its eyes were rolled back and white foam
stood out in a line of shuddering drops
around its mouth. Pa had to shoot her,
with the gun held tight against her head.
When Jacob laughed and said it sounded
like a fart, Pa turned the gun on him
and Mother fell upon her knees. Her
calloused hands scratched oddly
at the splattered straw. At least
we saved a little beef. The next day
Pa took out the truck and set us kids
to cleaning off the locusts lying dead
upon the seats. It took a couple hours
to pack, and then we eased our groaning load
onto the blackened lane. The bloated
bodies popped obscenely underneath the tires.

Joyce Nelson

Joyce Nelson was on leave from teaching in the film department in an Ontario university this year. She lives in Toronto.



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Mother to Daughter

"The Choices I Made"

by Anne Le Rougetel
photos by Diana S. Palting

I grew up in a family where it was taken for granted that women were as intelligent and capable as men and where it was assumed as a matter of course that I would earn my own living. So, on leaving school, I took secretarial training. Today, a young woman looking forward to work would go first to university and probably even specialize further before entering the job market; secretarial training would be very low on her list of skills to be acquired, as it would appear to relegate her to a merely supportive role in the workplace. In the late 1940s in England a woman had to be very determined as well as something of a bluestocking to get a place at university, and most of my friends never even considered the possibility; a few took domestic science training and an even smaller number learned to be occupational or physiotherapists, but most of us, without a second thought, went off to secretarial colleges.

The college I went to was residential, which meant that the training was rigorous, the standards high and, as well as learning how to fulfil the supportive function that is, indeed, a large part of the role of a private secretary, I also learned a good deal about organization and administration. The college principal, a successful career woman herself, liked to emphasize the good secretarial training was the passport not just to a job but to a rewarding and satisfying career; and that even those who married the day they received their diploma would find the skills of a well-trained secretary very useful in the role of wife and mother. By the time I graduated I had acquired considerable confidence in my capacities and, looking for my first job, I was sure that I could handle whatever opportunity arose.

At that time oil company typists were being paid six pounds a week; a secretary in a stockbroker's office earned six pounds ten shillings with bonuses at Christmas; but I chose job satisfaction over money and went to work in the House of Commons for four pounds a week. Exploitation, people would say now (and my family said so then). But it was my own choice to work there rather than earn more in "commerce" — a dirty word to my twenty-year-old self. In fact, after eight months I could not afford to stay and took a job at University College London, where my pay jumped by forty percent.

Working in the House of Commons confirmed what I had been brought up to believe: that women are as intelligent as men. I considered many of the MPs rather less capable of logical thought or coherent expression than I. Nevertheless, because they were men (and ambitious, political men) they had been elected members of parliament and I accepted the fact. I felt that a woman would not be prevented from getting to the same position, if that were her aim, but she would have to be singleminded about it, and she would have to be brighter and strive harder than a man to achieve the same end. After all, my own experience had shown me that women could be achievers. The private school and secretarial college I had attended and the agency supplying secretaries to the House of Commons were all owned and operated by women, and at University College London the two Deputy Registrars for

whom I worked were both women.

From University College London I went on to jobs in advertising and public relations and began to work more on the writing and editorial side than on the secretarial. As I moved around, it became increasingly obvious to me that men had no monopoly on ideas or organizing ability, but although I was the one in the inferior position I still never saw myself as part of a vast body of women, oppressed and held down by the fact of their femaleness. I saw only myself, in a particular situation, which it was to me to alter or not as *I* chose.

And then came a point where, as I saw it, I had to make a choice. Either I could be ambitious and carve out a career for myself, or I could marry — and then any work of mine would come second to marriage and my husband's career. The decision was not hard to make: I chose marriage. To achieve success in a career would have required a single-minded direction of effort, precluding the possibility of a warm and loving relationship with a man (in those days, necessarily a husband), for no husband could be expected to put up with having his wife divide her attention between a career and him-

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. . . And Back

"But They Weren't *Real* Choices"

by Katy Le Rougetel

Now a 19-year-old university student, I grew up during the blossoming of the women's liberation movement. Feminist thinking was presented to me early enough in my development to influence my self-image profoundly. Possible its most significant contribution was the realization that it is not within my individual power to successfully solve what I, as a woman, face in society. While my experiences are personal, their cause and resolution can only be found in a more general understanding of the *outside* forces at work, forces which shape the world we confront.

Bearing in mind the fact that my grandmother recently commanded me to "stop being such a wretched little Amazon," (in reply to, "Oh, Granny, men aren't always stronger than women!") I shall, within the framework outlined above, try to respond to all your major points.

You claim that your parents believed women to be as capable and intelligent as men. Why then, did they allow their most articulate and academically able daughter to bury herself in secretarial school? Had your only brother survived the war, they would never have considered sending him there. Obviously, they *did* have a double standard: the jobs that were acceptable for capable women were those in which intelligent support *of a man* was needed. Executive secretary stardom, perhaps? Your mother and father never envisaged you starting as a junior manager or in some other potential leadership post because women were not leaders. While your parents professed belief in equality, they actually pictured it within a strict framework of women's subjugation. I think this is quite an important point because I see this attitude being expressed in some of your life decisions.

Your college principal certainly gave herself away away when she reassured you that secretarial training would stand wives and mothers to good stead. What she meant was that the sceretarial role, like that of wife and mother, is man-defined, which means supportive, requiring the same menial and self-effacing qualities from women. A rewarding and satisfying career as secretary? Only if seen within the general structure of women's roles: being underpaid for running someone wle's business for them must look quite satisfying when compared to washing diapers and making cheese souffle at the age of 20.

You say that you met numerous women who did have satisfying, non-supportive careers. But just take a look at the fields in which they operated: women's education, secretarial/office work areas, petty administration. All of them kept rigidly within the confines of sexual stereotypes. They merely progressed to administering, instead of serving, a system which discriminates against their sex.

The fact that women had to try a lot harder and be a lot brighter than those men striving to be MP's, is not something to pass over lightly. The fact that women MP's had to prove themselves exceptional points to the existence of a practise that normally excluded them from such positions. Their exceptional nature proves the rule of discrimination. Whatever the businesswomen who you met said, their sex was always a factor in their careers. They always succeeded in spite of it.

That you never saw yourself as sharing a common situation, treatment and limitations with millions of other women is hardly surprising. After all, our entire upbringing and social structure combine to prevent any feeling of solidarity between women, keeping us isolated and antagonistic. As we grow up, each family is a closed unit, separating us from others. During adolescence we must compete with each other in looks, clothes, boyfriends, jobs. Finally, we must fight each other for the status symbol of husband, for security through a man who will earn enough to support us and our children. If we survive, we must do it alone, in conflict with other members of our own sex.

If we work outside the home, we are encouraged to see success and failure as personal occurrences. Plainly, this view is ridiculous. We are secretaries because we are women. We bear children, are unpaid in the home, are whistled at in the street because we are women. Our sex is obviously an important factor in society's treatment of us. Literally millions of women have had the same life pattern as mine and yours. Ours varies from theirs only in detail. Because you

(continued on page 17)

ANNE *(continued from page 14)*
self with himself occasionally coming off worst (a situation which wives have put up with since at least the Crusades). I continued to work, as far as possible, at jobs that interested me, but I gave up studying the career opportunities columns. To have a career would mean being committed to it and I had already chosen to be committed to my marriage.

Emigrating to Canada two years after marriage, I was offered a job on a magazine within a year of arriving in Montreal. At the outset it seemed just another interesting position, but soon it became a real career opportunity; a short-term one as it happened, but an excellent opening in the field. My husband was still low on the corporate ladder and as no entertaining out of hours was yet required of us, there was no conflict of duties when I stayed late at the office to put the magazine to bed. For three years I thoroughly enjoyed working as a professional in my field.

Then, another choice. We had been married five years. Should we, or should we not, have children? Never having known any small children or babies and not subscribing to the belief that a women's real purpose in life was to bear children, I had no strong feelings one way or the other and was open to conviction. On the other hand, my husband was absolutely sure that a marriage was not a real relationship without a family. I really had no objection. I retired from my job in the outside world to take up what proved to be as rewarding and as satisfying a job inside the home — bearing and rearing three children. I could see no satisfactory way of combining a career with bringing up a family. Observation of babysitters, mothers' helpers and *au pair* girls with other people's children had convinced me that most of the time, the care of growing individuals was not to be entrusted to this kind of help. Being either too old or too young or too interested in themselves, they seemed to fall short of providing the companionship that ideally should be offered to small, enquiring minds. I wanted my children to acquire a reasoning, and confident attitude to life and there seemed no one better to instill this in them than myself.

So, for seventeen years I stayed at home to bring up my children.

This must sound like a life sentence to a young mother. But I never felt a prisoner. Together with two or three friends who were also having babies we so arranged our time that each of us had at least one whole afternoon a week, and later a whole day, entirely free of children, to go off and be herself, neither mother nor wife. Once a week, one or two small children extra to one's own would be delivered to the door to be cared for, amused, fed and changed, for the hours of their mother's time off. Later, when the older children were aged two and three, we organized a daily, morning play group, each day in a different house. Sometimes, when the weather was bad or tempers were short, these hours seemed interminable. More often than not they were fun. The unexpected added pleasure we all had from these exchanges was in learning to know the other children as well as our own so that, in a way, we formed one large, extended family.

Life was far from boring while the children were growing up. There was for me, in any case, plenty of outside variety and change for in ten years we moved to North America to Europe and back again twice, with a three-year stay in England at the end. No matter which country we were in, it always seemed possible to set up, with friends of different nationalities, some kind of arrangement for child sharing, so that my children knew children of other countries, and learned their language and customs. I found it a fascinating occupation to observe the growth and development of a child's mind and character and I realized then how fortunate I was to be able to be there, just to watch and listen and to answer.

As the children grew older I continued to find it rewarding to be at home, the door always open and the children bringing their friends in and out what ever the time or occasion. This way I had a window into the world of the young generation. I heard their views and learned to know them in a way that would not have been possible if I had been at work all day, arriving back tired and in a hurry to get supper on the table.

Then my youngest child reached twelve and I saw it was not necessary any longer to be a stay-at-home, full-time mother; at least, not during the school term. I knew, however, that for the next two or three years it was absolutely necessary for me to be at home during the holidays. Home for the last child must be what it was for the older ones: a place to bring friends at any time, and a refuge to be sought when the world outside seems bleak. Being committed to finishing the upbringing of my youngest child, I cannot yet commit myself to a career — or even to a full-time job. So I have gone back to where I started, to secretarial work that allows me the time off I need. It is, however, interesting work, where I have learned new skills. I have been encouraged to enrol as a student at the university in a series of courses that will see me tottering to graduation in 1990. As the next couple of years roll by I expect to become more sure about the direction I would like my work to take. But now I am bound to finish the job of child-rearing that I set my hand to twenty years ago.

It is at this point that I find myself standing outside the women's movement looking in, unable to sympathize with everything it seems to demand as a right for all women. I cannot, for instance, accept that it is the right of every mother to have places for her children in subsidized daycare. Such places are a *necessity* for the single parent, trying to earn a living for herself and her children, or for the single parent attending university or taking training courses to ensure that in the future she can adequately support her children. But a woman who chooses to bear a child and later, deciding she prefers to have a job outside the home, demands a (subsidized) daycare place as a right, seems not to have grasped what to me is a very basic truth: childbearing is today a matter of choice and when a choice is made there are consequences to be faced. There are two factors to be considered in "having a child": first the *bearing* of it and second the *rearing* of it.

(continued on page 18)

KATY *(continued from page 15)*
experienced success and failure in certain areas largely by virtue of being a woman, you can learn and profit by working with other women to influence the situation which we all share. Individual solutions only accommodate the problem rather than tackling it.

That's why the women's movement is so important. It voiciferously and effectively stimulates women's active solidarity in combating discrimination and oppression.

You assumed automatically that marriage — ultimately — would mean sacrifice of your career, committment to fulfilling your husband's out-of-hour duties (like the countless dinner parties that I remember with men in business suits and you in make-up, stockings and dress). It would mean placing your personal desires, like where to live, secondary to his needs. You remark rather wryly that this seems a trifle unreasonable. Why, after all, should you have been expected to cosset and make way for your husband? In practical terms, of course, the answer is simple: because you had no choice. Neither he nor you could change the fact that you would never earn as much as he. A woman's wages would probably never have supported a family. He and his career *had* to come first.

The only alternative to a sacrifice through marriage (which brought with it a valuable and enduring emotional relationship with a man) was the prospect of becoming a hard-hitting, very keen career woman. You say you *chose* marriage. I don't think you had a choice. Given that you weren't willing to go through life proving that you were better than most men in order to get paid less than them, you had to opt for marriage.

You may have regarded bearing and raising children as "a job inside the home," but society generally does not accept that view. The law does not recognize it. We all know about Irene Murdoch. In a society which acknowledges worth with money, you are paid no salary for your cleaning, cooking, laundering, nursing, teaching . . . . You are unemployed. You are not treated with recognition for the manyfold tasks you accomplish. Society regards you as boring, rather stupid and a bit of a freeloader.

Bringing up children is, as you say, a demanding 24-hour-a-day task, very difficult to accomplish alone if holding down a job at the same time. Understandably, you felt you had to bring us up by yourself since good daycare facilities were unavailable, and so you gave up your job to do so. You were very lucky. Many women today *cannot* make that decision. Single mothers and low-income families need the woman's wages. She must work outside the home to survive.

For these women, as well as for those who would like to work and have children at the same time, good daycare is the only solution. You actually organized an informal daycare service of your own with your friends. Because you trusted the women supervising us, you were eager to enjoy a few hours freedom and were eager for us to play with other children. You weren't opposed to daycare per se, but you objected to the inefficient, destructive child minding services that were available to you.

Well-run, adequately subsidized government daycare can provide the kind of attention you and your friends gave us. Complemented by parent-involvement and family life, good daycare can broaden children's experiences and allow their relationship with their parents to become less fraught with financial and emotional tensions.

I think it's important to remember, you know, that you were a good mother precisely because you never conformed to the traditional requirements of the role. You allowed us much more freedom than most of my friends were permitted. I had no senseless curfews. You never tried to influence my views, political or otherwise. You were never condescending. You never tried to supervise my schoolwork. When I was living at home, I never had to hide my sexual relationships with men from you. In fact, you treated me much more like an individual, and less like a daughter to be possessed and guided than any of my friends' parents did them.

One of the myths most important to shatter is that a good mother cares for and thinks about her children constantly. It's very useful for society to have us think that because then the government doesn't have to pay for expensive daycare facilities. Motherhood myths guilt-trip us into feeling unworthy and selfish if we don't want to spend all our time with our offspring. Contrary to what you seem to imply yourself, the best way to responsibly rear a child is not necessarily to stay at home with him or her. You were a successful parent because you were *not* supervising round the clock.

You mention the tremendous expense of good daycare. You're right: it is very costly. So costly, in fact, that were you to require women who were not in desperate need (such as the single and low-income women you suggest) to pay an economic rate, very few would be able to afford the service. In fact, there is plenty of money for daycare. Lack of funds is not the real reason for government refusal to finance more centres. Arms spending, nuclear research, oil subsidies, vast increases in the RCMP budget are all given government priority far above daycare. Personally, I would rather we transferred our tax money expenditures away from these multimillion dollar death industries and took care of our children.

The real reasons for government reluctance to become extensively involved in daycare are to be found in the serious implications for women's independence inherent in widely available daycare. Daycare would mean more women in the workforce. It would become less and less feasible to pay us the customary low wages and plunk us into inferior positions. Business profits would dwindle, especially in female job ghettoes such as the garment and service industries. Consumer goods industries like household appliances, clothes, cosmetics would not be able to exploit the isolation and fears of housewives. Women's independence would seriously weaken the kind of family unit now prevailing. We wouldn't be so willing to be unpaid workers in the home if our children were receiving good care during the day while we had jobs. The demand for daycare, as well as all other demands of the women's movement — like free abortion, contraception, equal pay, etc. — seriously threaten the present social and economic structure. Because the government realizes this, it refuses us assistance, using all means from the plea of financial poverty to the citation of the maternal instinct to convince us of the impracticality of our striving for freedom.

I think you accept too easily some of the ill founded assumptions of a mother's "duty."

It's important that you did choose to bear us, incidentally that is a choice many women never get to make, contrary to what you assert. Birth control and information on the subject, are not freely available. No contraception is foolproof. Abortions are often difficult to obtain. To assume every woman knowingly planned her motherhood is unjust.

Your attitude towards work and childcare was strongly influenced by the fact that our family lead a very interesting life. You enjoyed travelling, living in Europe, learning German. We always lived in pleasant houses with enough space and gardens. And while money wasn't always plentiful, we certainly never lacked food, clothing and a good deal more besides. Many women have not been as fortunate as you and I don't think it's possible to assume that most of us, if we were to stay at home to bear and look after children, would have such a positive experience.

Throughout your life you were faced with opportunities: career, single life, marriage, child-bearing . . . . Because society makes our biological functions a reason for

(continued on page 18)

ANNE *(continued from page 16)*
Bearing and rearing are inescapably part of one whole. Bearing a child is a matter of mere nine months; rearing it takes or twelve years at least and cannot be considered separately. If, therefore, after having a child, a woman, without a pressing economic need to do so, wishes to return to work outside the home, she must be prepared to pay the real cost of indulging this desire to have her cake and eat it too. Subsidized daycare places are, in my view, strictly for those in economic need, and there ought to be sufficient places for all those children who require them. Ideally there will also be sufficient places for the children of those mothers who, without economic necessity, prefer to go out to work — but these places must be paid for by the mother at an economic rate. There is no reason why my tax dollar should pay for the rearing of a child someone else has chosen to have.

Throughout my life I have believed that choices have to be made — either this or that but not both. Making each choice has meant accepting one thing and giving up another. Choosing marriage meant choosing to forego a career; choosing to bear and raise children meant choosing to forego a job in the outside world. I wonder whether young women today would think I really had to make a choice? Perhaps it would seem to many of them that all my life I have played too supportive a role. Certainly I have not displayed any great ambition, any desire to rise to the top on my own account, to grasp or to wield power. In fact to my real annoyance, in a group, I still find myself reacting passively, often deferring to men whom I know to be less intelligent than I, waiting to hear their views before putting forward my own, even not putting forward my own but, certain that a male voice carries greater weight, suggesting them to a man who will express them for me. Yet I have worked in a man's world and my experience has shown me over and over again that men and women are equally bright and capable. Young women today, I notice with pleasure, do not shy away from the reins of power; they run for office, supported by men as well as women, and when they achieve it they assume the role with a confidence that is without aggressiveness.

Having been brought up with the idea of equality of intelligence between the sexes it is other assumptions that have made me adopt largely supportive roles. In spite of such attitudes, I wonder whether younger women would agree that women such as I, have something of value to offer the women's movement in terms of challenges met, problems solved and experience gained?

KATY *(continued from page 17)*
discrimination, your opportunities were severely limited. Within the narrow fields open to you, you had to make eliminating choices: *either* children *or* a job, etc. This process is not a naturally inevitable one for all women. Rather, it is the capitalist structure of society which forces these "choices" upon us. Society in its present form profits from our exploitation and it has an interest in maintaining our second class citizenship.

In your closing comments, you seem a bit diffident about your "value" to the women's movement. In fighting discrimination, one of the first things women must tackle is the self-depreciating attitude toward ourselves that destroys our mutual trust and confidence, so necessary to the strength of an effective women's movement. Feminists do not regard older women as "on the shelf," far from it. We recognize the need to share your experiences in growing up without a women's movement of any kind, in marrying and bearing children without daycare and in suddenly finding your roles and actions rejected by many young women. *Of course* the women's movement needs and wants your participation. Every women has a place in this fight for simple justice.

PRAIRIE

the dust is
all around
we are the dust
the wind is never still
we are
blown in the eye of the sun
we are
winnowed by wind
we are the whim
of the land

*

our sun is blown candle
eastern stars are not
eyes or needles but stars
(we do not look
into the west)

*

we saw him
galloping
that way
beautiful and
terrible as fire
his eyes wide
they burned
like needles

Kimberley Jordan

Kimberely Jordan graduated in English literature from the University of Toronto and is now taking journalism at Ryerson. She has had work published in University of Toronto literary magazines and in Canadian Forum.

Give in — He Wins
Refuse — You Lose

sexual harassment in the office

by Patricia Preston
additional research by Helen Corbett

It happens daily.

In fact, it's been occurring for as long as women have been going out to work.

But where once it was recounted only to sympathetic friends or workers in indignant whispers, sexual harassment on the job is now being talked about more openly. And where once she thought she was the only woman who didn't "want to play ball", now she finds she has many sisters who don't like the game either.

When women first attempted to speak out about sexual harassment at work, the problem was pooh-poohed and disregarded. The old "she must have asked for it" response was common.

But the problem was there and has recently been described by the majority of 9,000 women who answered a questionnaire as "serious." That same questionnaire, published by *Redbook*, indicated that nearly nine out of ten women have experienced one or more forms of unwanted attentions on the job. Another survey from the University of Texas at San Antonio indicated that each of the 401 women interviewed had suffered sexual harassment.

Karen DeCrow, president of the National Organization of Women in the U.S., claims that "sexual harassment is one of the few sexist issues which has been totally in the closet. It is an issue which has been shrouded in silence because its occurrence is seen as both humiliating and trivial."

Unwanted attentions — a watered-down way of saying sexual harassment — include anything from sexual remarks, leering, a casual pat on the rear, to rubbing and subtle requests for dates and sexual favors. Each form of harassment carries with it the implied threat that if the woman doesn't comply she may lose her job or, at best, find that working conditions will then go against her.

So the women who have suffered from sexual harassment have kept a long and lonely silence. Most of the them felt lonely when the harassment occurred, because the offender was careful that no one was around to see. They carried that isolation with them from job to job and were afraid to speak up. Some lost jobs. Others forfeited salaries that would help support families or further their education. But their fear kept them locked in silence.

Recently two Calgary women decided they'd had enough. Each had encountered sexual harassment on the job and each decided to present her case to the Alberta Human Rights Commission. Neither was aware of the impact that her decision would have on her and the community.

Both women filed complaints of job discrimination because of sex under section six of the Individual Rights Protection Act. This section of the act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religious beliefs, color, marital status, age, ancestry and sex. Until the women made their complaints, sex was interpreted as gender only. Nowhere in the act is there any inclusion of sexual harassment as discriminatory and an infringement on a person's rights.

Last fall, a Calgary college student answered a newspaper advertisement for a salesperson in a local men's wear store.

"I needed the job to help pay for my education," she told me in an interview. "During the job interview he (the boss who owned the business with his wife) made comments about sex. He asked how I felt about certain things and I wondered if he was trying to corner me, but I thought, maybe he's just trying to see how I'd handle these kinds of questions from customers. I asked him what kind of men came into the store and why he was asking me these things. He just said he was testing my reaction. Then he said he thought some girls really got nervous or scared when men talked to them like this and that he'd hate to hire someone who couldn't handle herself."

Being hired was a relief because she'd just moved from Edmonton and was not only strapped for money but was also having trouble finding an apartment. Two weeks later she was enrolled in school, had an apartment but had lost the job.

"On the day I was fired, the boss had earlier asked me for a morning kiss, which he'd done many times before. I refused, despite his persisting. I thought he was quite aloof that day and wondered if I had done some part of my job wrong. Then his assistant told me I was no longer needed. He told me it was a slow period and that I was unfamiliar with the merchandise. And all the time, the boss watched from the back of the store. He didn't have enough nerve to fire me himself."

In her complaint to the Human Rights Commission, the woman charged she was fired because she would not succumb to the amorous demands of her boss.

"He wanted a kiss or hug in the morning and I'd always refuse. When his wife was around he was prim and proper. The other woman who worked in the store told me to just ignore him, but the longer I was there the more I lost respect for him."

"When I told the other female employee I was going to the Human Rights Commission, she said she'd support me. Then she backed down."

"You know," she continued, "he made a point of telling me in the interview that I'd pick up knowledge of stock as I went along and not to worry. So I can't see that as a reason for being fired. Then, a few days after I was fired I saw another of his newspaper ads for salespersons. If it was a slow time, why would he be hiring another person?"

Judy Lo, the Human Rights Commission's investigative officer on both cases, said this case was closed because of "insufficient evidence to show discrimination occurred."

If discrimination occurred (the boss didn't ask his male employees for hugs and kisses), Ms. Lo was unable to substantiate the complaint.

"When I told the other female employee I was going to the Human Rights Commission, she said she'd support me," said the complainant. "Then she backed down. I called her and asked her why, but she said she needed the job. One male employee was definitely on my side, but he moved to B.C. and I can't locate him. I didn't get the full support I expected. Everyone was afraid of losing their job.

"I was really disappointed in the other woman. She was sick and tired of his suggestions. I asked her, will you back me if I do something and she said she would. I think maybe she feels because I'm young that I take things too seriously. But that's a lot of crap. At 20, I'm not naive."

"Everything is denied," said Ms. Lo. "What can the Commission prove? It was one person's word against another. The boss said she was fired because she did not have enough

"He'd make off-color jokes, sit on my desk and talk for long periods, ask me how I spent my personal time and once suggested I could take the boss out for a Christmas drink."

product knowledge."

"Is selling two leather jackets, each worth about $300, plus other items, lack of product knowledge?" asks the complainant. "That's what I sold the day I was fired."

The second Calgary woman to approach the Commission with a complaint about sexual harassment was fired from her job as receptionist in the executive offices of a major Calgary-based company. Only recently did she realize why she was fired and why, in seven months of job-searching, she hasn't been hired by another company.

"I decided to go to the Human Rights Commission after I realized that I may be getting poor references from my former boss," said this complainant, a divorced mother of two school-age children. "There was nothing I could actually pinpoint. He'd make off-color jokes, sit on my desk and talk for long periods, ask me how I spent my personal time and once suggested I could take the boss out for a Christmas drink." She showed me a photograph in which the boss had his arm around her.

"He was subtle and intelligent and there was no way he'd jeopardize his position. Toward the end he gave me the deep freeze treatment. He ignored me for three months. There was no conversation. His assistant had the lousy job of telling me my services were no longer required. I asked if he was joking and when I realized he was not, asked the reason for my dismissal. He said it was because the position now required someone with shorthand."

During her 15 months with the company, however, she had been told the company was pleased with her work and the way she handled people. She has 23 years of office experience, half of which was with a major airline. She has also worked in hotel administration and has extensive knowledge of office procedures. When she was hired, she was specifically told the job did not require shorthand skills.

"I was floored when I was told I was fired," she added.

Three days after her dismissal, her boss called her at home and asked if there was "anything he could do for me personally."

"He says he was not interested in me sexually. But when I hung up on him after his call to my home, he was angry and he then may have told his assistant not to give me a recommendation."

"This case was investigated informally because it was brought to our attention too late," said Ms. Lo. Complaints must be brought to the Commission within six months of the infringement on the person's rights. "I found the woman lost her job because of a change in requirements for the position.

In an informal inquiry, the person can refuse to see us. These cases are hard to prove. Workers will not side with the complainants. No one want to lose a job," said Ms. Lo.

"I'm going to get a lawyer's opinion now that I know the Human Rights Commission can't do anything," said the complainant. I don't back down from something I believe in. I believe I have been unfairly treated and grossly wronged. I need to work to support my family. I've been looking for work for seven months and every time I leave the resume I never get the job. I suppose I will have to take that business off my resume, but it leaves a gap in my employment record that would be hard to explain.

"I do believe you have to have someone to support you.

"I do believe you have to have someone to support you. There's no way any woman where I worked would put her head on the block to substantiate my story. They fear for their jobs."

There's no way any woman where I worked would have put her head on the chopping block to substantiate my story. They fear for their jobs."

Both women say they hope their actions will encourage others to speak up. They also want to prevent their former bosses and other men from sexually harassing other women. "I don't want to put the store owner out of work," said the first complainant. "I would be more satisified if there were protection for women from sexual harassment in Alberta's human rights legislation."

A recent letter to the editor in the Calgary Herald called human rights legislation a 'farce.' The letter said: "While members of Parliament try to differentiate between sexual harassment and sexual discrimination, thousands of women must accept the position they are in for fear of losing their jobs or being unable to find other work because of a less-than-desirable reference from a previous employer."

The letter also points out the difficulty in documenting information. "When your superior traps you in a secluded hallway and handles you as he or she would a piece of meat, it becomes rather difficult to document this fact. Who is on trial, she adds, and what is appropriate action?

In a recent talk to the Status of Women Action Committee in Calgary, Ms. Lo emphasized the need for women to pressure the government to include sexual harassment in human rights legislation.

"Women should write to the Commission, to its chairman, Dr. Max Wyman, and to MLA's," she said. "Unless there's pressure, the legislation doesn't get changed and until it's changed, protesting on the basis of sexual harassment doesn't amount to much. A recent case in the U.S. Supreme Court was thrown out and this sets a precedent here."

In the Supreme Court action, a female brought suit against her former employer on grounds of alleged sexual harassment by her supervisor as well as retaliation against her when she protested his actions. The court held that sexual harassment did not constitute sex discrimination under the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

"In this instance the supervisor was male and the employee was female," the court held. "But no immutable principle of psychology compels this alignment of parties. The gender lines might as easily have been reversed, or even not crossed at all."

The court did uphold the complainant's charge that the ensuing retaliation was discriminatory. It found that when "a female employee registers a complaint of sexual abuse and the employer chooses to fire her rather than investigate, such response may constitute discrimination based on sex because it reflects a conscious choice to favor the male employee over the female complainant on the ground that a male's services are more valuable than a female's."

The Alberta Human Rights Commission decided to follow this U.S. Supreme Court precedent after formally investigating its first complaint of sexual harassment (the employee at the men's wear store). In a formal investigation, both complainant and respondent are questioned in an objective, impartial manner. If the complaint is justifiable, the matter is turned over to a board of inquiry for another evaluation and appropriate action.

From now on, all complaints of sexual harassment will be examined on an informal basis by the Commission. An investigative officer will act as a mediator to help both parties reach an understanding. An informal investigation lacks the legal clout to provide redress or compensation.

Despite the fact that a legislation change wouldn't help either of the Calgary women's cases, the women both urge other women to press for inclusion of sexual harassment under human rights legislation. Only then will such cases be eligible for formal investigation and provide for a system of remedies.

"Right now we really require signed affidavits to support women who complain about sexual harassment," said Ms. Lo. "We've had many calls at the office since these two cases were publicized and I always ask the callers to come in and discuss it. But they don't show up. They're scared."

Patricia Preston teaches journalism at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Calgary. She has also worked in Vancouver, Edmonton and Ottawa as a public school teacher and a reporter.

Allegiance

when your best friend marries
there is a change
in allegiances. when you meet
you confront an appendage
called husband. this man
is an engineer, he clasps hands
fervently. his immediate concern the welfare
of electricity. so you ask him
about pension plans for wires.
he says they are not needed.
decay, decay.

then you ask
about the electric potential
of the human penis, if it has one.
he replies that when he makes love
the wires in the house fizz
& sputter, listen to the frantic
exchange of electrons.
& he speaks of the language of wires,
how they do not manipulate
or deceive. *decay.*
animal decay.
the simple purity of wires.
you remind him of shock, but he talks
of intensity, *degeneration, decay.*
the corpuscle an inferior electron.

or you talk about animals.
the husband says
he fears worms most of all,
trails of slime blazed thru clay.
decay.
when he makes love w/ the wires
listening, there is a change
in allegiances: now wires declare
solidarity w/ worms, encircle the building,
prepare to beat it once more into clay.

Erin Mouré

Erin Mouré was born in Alberta and now lives and works in Vancouver. She is assembling a collection of poems to be called (she thinks) Mechanism of the Lost Heart.

Homage To Hens

drawings by Rebecca Wong

I was born in Vancouver some 21 years ago, and have lived 15 years in Edmonton. Back in grade 1, in coloring classes, a simple box of crayons and a sheet of clear newsprint were enough to send my imagination away on an adventure. To this day, drawing remains, to me, the most personal and immediate form of expression. I do not feel inhibited when I draw.

While taking my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the University of Alberta, I've had the opportunity to explore and learn about other areas of art and design. Perhaps I have "learned" to draw with more conviction, however the instinct to draw was always there.

These chickens belong to a poultry farm — my Dad's. After taking some photographs, I sensed what I wanted to convey in a series of drawings — the mass of feathers, their fluttering, cackling and constant state of anxiety.

I wanted to examine the "chicken's point of view," right down near the ground where they perceive the world. This feeling grew on me and, to my surprise, led to a number of ideas which soon became drawings.

Tipping: The Waitress Pays

by Ellen Agger
illustration by Barbara Hartmann

The waitress is a woman who is often taken for granted, seen but not heard, noticed only by her absence when she is needed to bring that extra cream. Like the skills in so many female jobs, waitressing is assumed to "come naturally" to women. Our training begins early, when we are sent into the kitchen, only to come out again years later with a plate in our hands when we are someone's wife or mother . . . or a waitress. Waitressing is the same kind of work that we are trained to do as housewives, with the same invisibility, the same isolation from other women, the same lack of status and, of course, poor wages.

Like many women who work in the paid labour force, waitresses do a lot of extra work that is unpaid. Frequently we must work extra hours before and after our regular shift, preparing and cleaning up a section of the restaurant. In many places, we are expected to do janitorial work — cleaning washrooms, table legs, and dishes. We often get no breaks, although they are provided by law, either because we are too busy to take them, or because we can't afford to take time away from the floor and lose tips during peak periods.

As in other industries where appearance is critical, waitresses spend hours every week preparing for work: keeping uniforms clean, hair tidy, make-up attractive. This is all supposed to be on "our" time, but we really have little choice when our jobs depend on a well-groomed appearance.

Many of us go into waitressing because it is the only job we can get. Sometimes, it seems like a better option than being locked in the home twenty-four hours a day — at least you meet other people. Hours are often flexible and many mothers waitress part-time. I became a waitress because I needed a part-time job with wages I could live on. Even though I earned only minimum wage, when my tips were added in, it was better than anything else I could find.

Because women provide a source of cheap labour to industry, waitresses' wages are kept rock-bottom. There is always another woman waiting to fill our uniform because to have a little money is certainly better than to have none at all — our alternative if we work only at home. Most waitresses receive the minimum wage, even after years of working, and those of us who work part-time don't get any fringe benefits. We therefore *depend* on tips to have a hope of bringing home a decent wage.

For women, especially when we are young, the wage structure exerts pressure on us to use our sexuality in exchange for tips and often to land the job in the first place. Sexual advances and flirting with the customer, employer, and even other employees are part of a waitress' daily grind. "Hustling" is the name of the game. Not only must we be sexually attractive, but we must at least *appear* to be heterosexual. Our sexuality, for both heterosexual and lesbian women, becomes defined by having to sell our bodies, looks, and behavior. Older women, if not expected to be sexy, are expected to be motherly. All of us, however, must cater to the customer's needs and whims if we are to collect that extra token for our work.

> "How much a waitress earns in tips depends on her ability to sell herself as a sex object or mother-daughter figure. By comparison, the male waiters concentrate on giving good service — being fast, efficient, and polite. But women must give much more than good service; we must be pleasant-natured, sexy and always smiling." — from "The Minimum Wage and Tip Differential," a brief to the Ontario Government by the Waitresses' Action Committee.

This, too, has been my experience. Many job interviews I've had have consisted of taking off my coat and parading in front of the manager. If he likes what he sees, which includes my response to the situation, I get the job.

> "When I look for a job as a waitress, I sell my ability, knowledge, experience, willingness to work and learn, and not my body as a sex object. To me, the way it is now, waitressing is not a profession or career, it's just a job. I don't want to give special favours to the boss, as happened two days ago when my boss came to my changing room and asked me to give him a kiss. I want to give respect to him and I expect the same in return."

Although many waitresses don't like the system of tipping, we don't want to give up tips until we are *assured* of a decent wage level. Now we are forced to trade-off our sexuality in return for larger tips and we must play it to the best of our advantage. When we no longer provide cheap labour and have the power to command higher wages, *we* will set the conditions for our work, and the first to go will surely be the sexual side of it.

These conditions — low wages to be augmented by

hustling — were the prevailing ones faced by Ontario waitresses when, in October 1976, we heard that the Ontario Government was considering an increase in the gap between the standard minimum wage and that of workers receiving tips — primarily waitresses. This could amount to a loss of 50¢ an hour for us. Pressure for such a move was coming from the tourist industry which was crying poverty as competition with the US forced down profit levels for the preceding year. Waitresses are supposed to make up the loss of wages with the "huge amounts" we receive, in tips according the Honorable Claude Bennett, Minister of Industry and Tourism. As with the federal government's program of cutbacks which started with the freeze in the family allowance and included cuts in

We are forced to trade-off our sexuality in return for larger tips and we must play it to the best of our advantage.

Unemployment Insurance, no welfare increases, and daily rising prices, the government and industry were going after those with the least power to fight back — women. Because we make up the majority of tipped workers (there are five times as many waitresses as waiters), we are expected not to fight back by organizing a struggle in our own defense.

Despite the many difficulties of organizing, waitresses from the Wages for Housework Campaign in Toronto began meeting last winter to figure out how we could protect our wages and fight for more money. We knew how little time women have, how we face another shift of work — housework — when we go home from our jobs, and how isolated we are from other waitresses and other women. Because of our lack of time and resources, we decided to form an action committee rather than mount a membership drive to create a new organization. We began by writing a Brief outlining our position to the Ministry of Labour. The brief was circulated throughout Ontario to reach as many waitresses as possible.

From the beginning we recognized that we could never be effective on our own, that the lack of power that led to this attack on our paycheques was increased by the division that already existed between us and women in similar positions both in and outside the paid labour force. Too often it has looked like there is no connection between the waitress and the housewife, the secretary and the nurse, the mother and the lesbian woman. Only by rallying support from all can we build enough power to have a loud and visible voice. The basis of support we have sought has been practical: today's welfare mother or nurse was yesterday's waitress or may be the waitress of tomorrow. When one group of workers can be used to keep wages down, all of us are affected. As a result of this broad approach, the response to our organizing has been widespread.

Over thirty-five organizations from all over Ontario have endorsed the Brief. Women's centres and groups in several major cities have circulated in widely in their area and sent

letters of support to the Ministers of Labour and Industry and Tourism. Further pressure on the Government has come from many organizations, including the Ontario Status of Women Committee, the Wages for Housework Campaign, the YWCA of Metropolitan Toronto, and the Law Union of Ontario. Many of these groups have written letters to the editor of their local newspapers. We have had good media coverage, including radio and television interviews, articles in the local newspapers, law school newsletters and women's and community newspapers. This coverage has been an important way for us to reach many more women than we have the resources to reach ourselves.

We have had to depend on a variety of channels to

"When I asked the head of my union why I was making less than minimum wage, he replied, 'You should be happy, honey, with all the tips you girls make there'. And he was supposed to be representing me?"

contact each other because of the immediate risks involved in approaching waitresses on the job. As well as contacting women at home we have worked through community and women's groups, legal and health clinics, and laundromats. Response has come both from women who are working in these places and women who use these services.

After meeting many women who wanted to become involved but had little time, we decided to write a petition that could be circulated in many places where our small committee could not go. It is an instrument that can express waitresses' anger and also solicit support from "the public". It requires little time committment from an individual, but can be used by many organizations. The response is just beginning to come in, but has been very supportive so far.

The demands of the petition are, no cuts in the minimum wage for waitresses/waiters and a higher minimum wage for everyone; wages for all the unpaid work involved in waitressing; and the removal of tips from taxable income.

The form of organizing we have chosen has been different from most workplace organizing that we have seen in the past. Many of us had bad experiences with unions and mistrusted them, because they did not speak to our needs *as women* by recognizing our double workload and lack of time or our particular sexual exploitation on the job. Said one waitress, "When I asked the head of my union why I was making less than minimum wage (it turned out to be because of a meal allowance that was calculated into my paycheque), he replied, 'You should be happy, honey, with all the tips you girls make there'. And he was supposed to be representing me?"

We contacted the local unions in the industry for support of our Brief and were told by one that they were not interested in anyone organizing outside of the union movement and that we should join their union if we had grievances. The other one skirted the issue by saying that they could only support us if the Ontario Federation of Labour did so first! We never received a reply from them.

We encountered further contempt when we met with a group of waiters, the Independent Association of Waiters and Waitresses ('waitresses' was added to the name only after women began to make noises about its absence), who have been organizing in Toronto for the abolition of tips and the introduction of a standardized service charge of 15%. Because men get the jobs in the more expensive restaurants where prices are higher, this demand would mean a considerable amount of money for them. For women, who often work in small neighbourhood restaurants, this would mean much less — and result in a further widening of the gap between men's and women's wages. For those of us who work in taverns and bars serving alcohol (and these jobs are reserved for younger, 'sexier' women and are harder and harder to find), a service charge would mean we would lose the *possibility* of hustling harder when we need more money. Because men are in a more powerful position in the industry (albeit they work hard for peanuts, too), the demands that they have formulated are not in *our* interest. Their organization reflects this, as they have few women members. We have had to form and control our own organizations and struggle to prevent men from making demands that don't put us forward, while claiming that they speak for the whole industry.

Traditional forms of organizing have always meant women's needs get lost in the 'general struggle'. The crucial question is, how can we organize to give voice to all the women who are tired of bearing the brunt of everyone else's crises.

We welcome support from groups and individuals across Canada. Though this threat to our wages is under discussion in Ontario now, Quebec waitresses already receive 25¢ an hour less than the regular minimum wage. It can happen to any of us.

You can help the Waitresses' Action Committee by circulating their Breif and petitions in your area, writing letters of support to the Ontario Minister of Labour (400 University Ave., 14th floor, Toronto) and expressing your views in your local newspaper. For copies of the brief and more information, contact: Waitresses' Action Committee, 112 Spruce St., Toronto, Ontario (416 - 921-9091, 466-7457).

Need a Job? Be Your Own Agent

by Elaine Butler

Are you looking for a job? Have been looking or are considering it? Perhaps a few words of encouragement and advice might be in order since this is an issue on work.

Job hunting is one of the greatest challenges to your self-confidence and poise, second only to telling your father that you're living with a man and have no intentions of getting married. It is also frustrating because you can put in a month of hard work and never get past the personnel desk to an interview with the people who are doing the hiring. And if you can't get interviews, then you don't feel as though you're getting anywhere in your search.

If you're diligent about employment prospects, then you'll probably go to the local Canada Manpower center, government personnel offices and employment agencies. But getting information on job openings from them is a matter of chance. They operate on a very passive basis on your behalf waiting until the employer informs them of an opening and then passing that information on to the applicants that appear to be qualified for it.

They're not going to go out and *create* an opening that matches your skills and qualifications. Canada's employment agencies are actually working for the employers since that is who they charge for their services; it is illegal for them to charge the applicants for information on job openings. However, in the United States, the majority of employment agencies charge the applicant, justifying this on the premise that they work for the prospective employee, searching for an opening that fits her/his needs. Having worked in one of these places, I'd like to pass on their methods for you to use on your own behalf. The U.S. agencies charge a hefty fee (up to 10% of your first year's salary) for their services if you are hired through their efforts, but the technique is simple.

They sit down with a phone book and make calls to the owners or personnel managers of companies that they think might hire someone with your qualifications and skills.

The calls are quite short and follow a formula:

"Hello Mr./Ms. Personnel Manager. This is Kathy from the Erstwhile Employment agency, and I have a woman here who has a Ph.D. in English, is currently working as a cataloguing assistant for a small museum and has three years experience waitressing. Would you be interested in talking with her about a position in your firm?"

From this little speech they get four basic responses: 1. Yes, I'm looking for someone like that to do the filing; 2. I don't have any openings now, but I'll be glad to talk to her; 3. No; 4. No, but I am looking for a lady wrestler. Do you have any?

Basically that's all they do. So if your trips to the personnel offices, employment agencies and Manpower office haven't gotten you anywhere yet, you could try making your own calls while you wait to hear from them.

Here's how to do it. Write out your own paragraph of the highlights of your experience and skills (keep it short, the whole speech shouldn't be over 60 words), make up your own list of possible companies and make the calls. If you're looking for something other than general clerical work, don't depend on the head of personnel. Call the man in charge of the department or work area you'd expect that opening to be in.

You'll get the same first three responses that an agency would, and you might also get a fourth one: "No, but I heard that Sam's Sewerpipe factory is looking for someone with your background."

Essentially you're doing the same sort of thing when you send out letters and resumes but a telephone call often gets closer attention than a letter and certainly gives you an immediate response. If you still feel that a letter is more professional, try to follow it up with a phone call. It's better than sitting around for two months waiting and hoping to hear something.

If none of this works you can always get a job driving a taxi. All you need is a chauffer's license and a Ph.D. — in anything.

Elaine Butler is business manager for Branching Out. *Besides working for an employment agency, she has swept up after otters in a Florida swamp and chased Sasquatches in the state of Washington.*

She Emerged Fresh from the Bathroom

fiction by Dona Sturmanis
illustration by Barbara Hartmann

Linden:

She emerged fresh from the bathroom, scented with Diorella, her cheekbones and shoulders gleaming with vaseline. Her hair was wet and her breath was sweet. She wore a gauzy green and lilac striped caftan to accent the coolness of her white skin and white-blonde hair. Her breasts were spaced wide apart so the deep V-neck of the dress made her appear flat-chested.

The Door:

The door was just painted a gleaming white by Gene yesterday. It was actually one of two French doors. The other one was permanently locked, and you could enter through the open one only. Gene had also hung the Swedish materials in the windows of the door at Linden's insistence. The knobs were very old, and very brass. Linden had found them at Dolly's Antique Attic.

Gene had also put a small sign on the door with their names:

gene
and
linden

painted in clean, round letters which Linden had chosen from a catalogue.

The Weather:

Linden always came alive on cool sunny days when the wind was blowing strong and breaking waves on the sea to whitecaps.

Gene actually had a preference for those grey, damp, meditative days so typical of the west coast.

Linden hated them.

Michel:

He may not have been as symmetrically perfect and sweet-faced as Gene, but he wore his blonde hair long, and watched Gene with intelligent cool eyes when he launched into a spirited monologue about politics.

Food:

Linden knew she ate too much, but eagerly weighed herself on the scale each morning to make sure she never gained a pound over 130.

Gene thoroughly enjoyed bread, home-made peanut butter, and ice cream; weighed in at a strapping 170 lbs; and ran seven miles every night.

Michel was every bit as tall as Gene, weighed forty pounds less, and enjoyed listening to jazz records.

Linden's growing anxiety:

Linden had an aching desire to phone up Michel. She wanted to be alone with him and talk about abstract concepts as clean and polished as a sheet of transparent plexiglass. She loved his coolness and bisexuality. His long blonde hair was only a little longer than her own.

A dream:

In a cozy bed, Gene lay on his side, peaceful and asleep. Linden nestled against him with her arms around his waist. Michel fit into her back like the right jigsaw puzzle piece. Their eyes were all closed, and they appeared to be dead.

A real incident:

It had been Gene who made the first move when she had come over to drink beer with them one night!

One evening:

Linden was pleased to see that Michel was wearing the bodyclinging mauve shirt she liked so much. His hair was clean and pale.

Her eyes drank him in, roving from his flat stomach up to his eyes the color of an arctic sky.

As she served the clean meal ("I hope you like salads . . .") and brought out bottles of white wine and crystal glasses, she commanded Gene to put on one of the many records of streamlined female vocalists she liked so much.

She wanted to sit cross-legged and look at Michel straight in the eye. She would then place her hands on her forehead and declare in a breathy voice how intellectually glamorous she wanted to feel—

"I feel . . ."

She wanted to say out loud so that Gene would hear too:

"Michel I find you very attractive and I want to . . ."

She wanted the three of them to float closer together; they would watch each others faces, glow warm in each other's presences . . . until someone would make the first move.

Gene:

He was self-confident and sometimes laughed at Linden and her crazy ideas.

He remembered one night how they both had gone to the

pub after a walk in the park. She had been very quiet for the most part, when suddenly she looked up at him with her pale, pale, blue eyes.

"Gene, did it ever strike you that we live in a world with two planes of existence?"

He regarded her with mild amusement and looked around at other people to indicate his disinterest.

But she was insistent. She tapped him on the shoulder.

"Can I finish what I was going to say?"

He eyed her apologetically.

"I mean the world of touch, instinct and vibes vs. too much talk, tradition, and sexual uptightness."

Gene nodded and looked away . . .

A real incident:

Gene unbuttoned Toni's blouse and started to kiss her neck. Linden watched, transfixed.

Wine:

Linden always thought good wine brought out the truth in people. That's why she poured more in Michel's glass.

"Can I get you some more ice cream? With blueberries?" asked Gene getting up.

Michel looked down at the carpet with a Zen-like expression on his face.

"No, thank you."

"No, thank you," replied Linden.

Oh god he was so graceful she wanted to breathe him: She took another look.

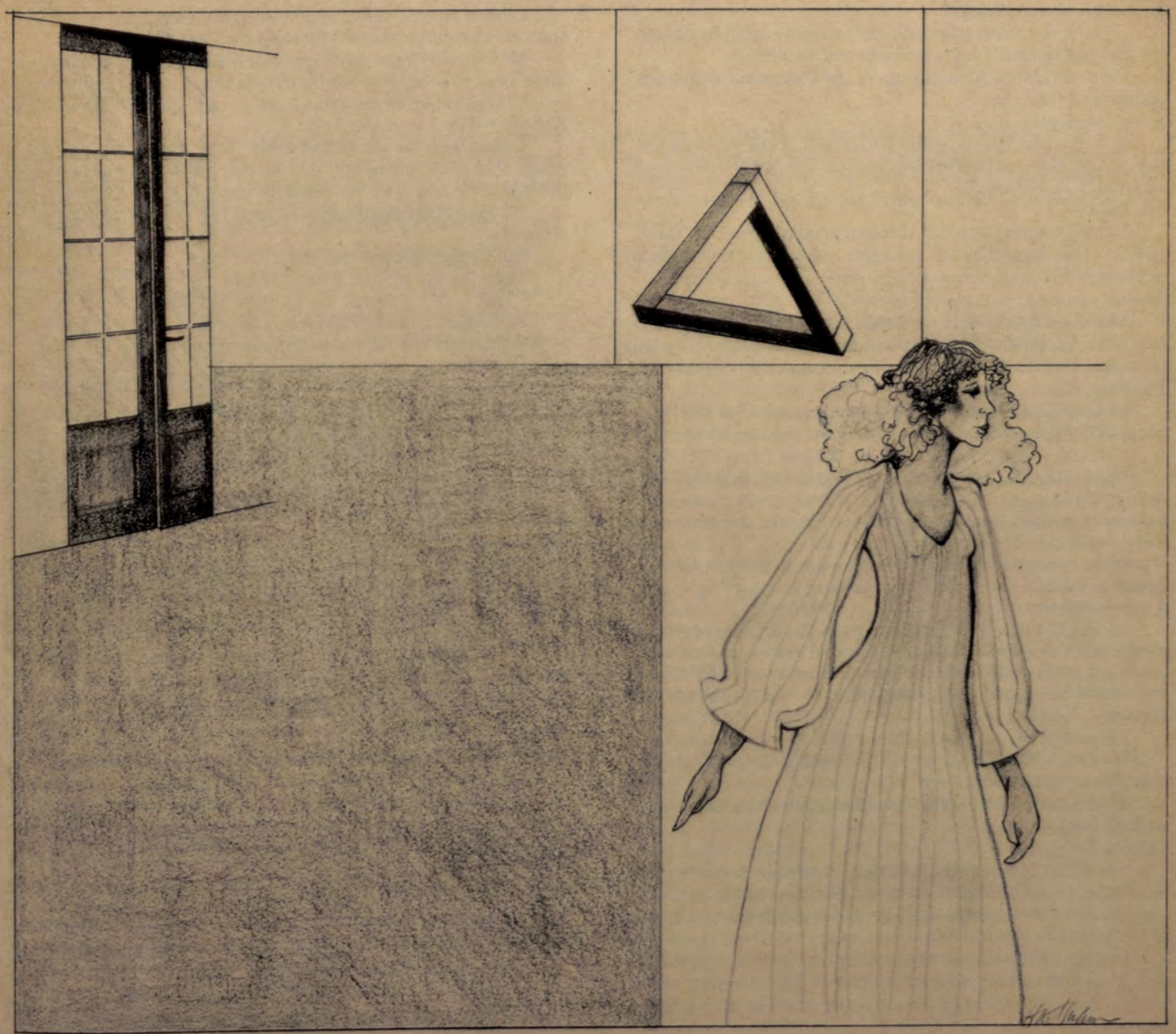
Foot:

Sometimes she noticed things like that. Michel's sneaker -clad foot was nestled against Gene's knee.

Michel was on the other side of the table and she hoped he would look at her. The two men were silent, eyes, closed, listening to the music.

Linden wanted to radiate all the sexual prowess she could — wiggle around in time to the music, keep time on her thighs with her hands.

Michel was exuding sexiness by being very still and aloof, by avoiding her gaze and tapping his foot against Gene's knee.



The Weather:

On those damp, grey, meditative days, Gene left her alone. While he was gone, Linden would put on the hardest — driving, rock and roll she could find on the record player, take off her caftan, and leap chaotically about the living room until she was panting and ecstatic.

The Pub:

How joyful were the evenings when Linden and Gene headed down to the Craig's Head pub. Here were all the down-and-outs of the city — the silent orchestra conductors, the studs from back east, the obese beer-drinking women . . .

They sat at their usual table and waited.

One night, Toni was with them, snapping her fingers in time to the band's music.

"This reminds me of the music they played in the women's bars in Montreal," she said for the fourth time.

Linden looked around for the tell-tale blonde while Gene kept his gaze on Toni. Sure enough, there he was walking through the crowd, flipping his long blonde hair from side to side.

That night, after many beers, Linden told him. She had to lean over and yell because the band was playing too loud and the people were talking.

"I find you attractive both intellectually and physically."

Michel reflected for a moment and looked up.

"Attraction's a funny thing. A girl I went out with once really liked Gene too."

A real incident:

Linden tried not to be too perturbed. As Gene explored Toni's taut body beside her on the bed, Linden tried to think about jazz and Michel.

The Door:

Every morning at 10:25, Linden padded down the stairs and sat cross-legged by the mail-slot, waiting for the postman to come.

Linden's anxiety:

She couldn't stand it any longer. Slipping out of bed, she put on her green and lilac caftan, turned on the light only long enough to find the book containing the short story called:

The Man Who Lived Out Loud.

She put on her sandals and walked quietly into the living-room so Gene could not hear, turning the light on as she left.

"Would you send a cab to 2050 Willow Street?"

She closed the door behind her and stood on the porch waiting for the taxi. It was a warm, still night. There must have been a high cloud cover, because neither stars nor moon were visible.

If the moon had been visible, thought Linden, it was bound to be full.

A real incident:

At five the next morning they at least thought they felt happy and exhausted. While the three of them ate toast and drank tea in the cold morning light, Linden watched Toni's small hard body and made secret plans to lose 20 pounds.

Michel:

He preferred sleeping by himself.

He didn't like people who bothered his sleeping pattern or rolled over on to his hair.

Furthermore, his last girlfriend was very tiny and slim, with no breasts at all.

Linden:

She paid the driver and walked quietly up the sidewalk to the house where Michel lived. She knew he had his own private entrance — what looked like a root cellar door on the side of the house. It was covered with ivy.

His light was still on. She ducked her head as she walked past his window, and stopped in front of the little door. At first she put her ear to the door to see if she could hear anything unusual.

She knocked twice, quietly.

Michel opened the door, and the two palehairs eyed each other over.

A real incident:

Linden and Toni sipped their coffees.

"But I want you Linden. Just you. Gene's a really sweet guy, but I guess I just don't like men."

"I can appreciate that Toni, but you see, that wouldn't be fair to Gene. You have to love both of us, not just one."

Gene:

He woke up suddenly and looked around him. His wife wasn't in bed. So he walked over and looked out the window at the moonless night. Then he went back to bed.

At Michel's place:

He returned with two steaming mugs of herb tea. Without any adieu, he took off his jeans and crawled back into bed.

As Linden watched his gleaming body pass her, she began to feel quite sensuous in this room with the candelight, the steaming tea, and beautiful brother.

He sat up and drank his beverage. The intelligent eyes took her in, but didn't indicate anything except:

"Well?"

Linden started some small talk about Gene, about her insomnia, about the weather forecast the next day.

Michel didn't say anything. But his minute smile was quite kind, and his face was softening into a sexier expression.

"I would like to read this story," said Linden. "It's called *The Man Who Lived Out Loud.*"

It was then, as she talked about Toni, and Gene, and her whole theory of sensuality, that Michel put his cup of tea on the bed table and drew her close to him.

He kissed her deep and long, and her throat fluttered in response.

But Linden drew away and said: "No."

Then she got up and looked at him.

"That's all I wanted. Thank you, Michel."

He looked a little dismayed, a little hurt. He watched her as she thanked him for the tea, thanked him for the kiss and said good-bye.

A real incident:

Gene and Linden made furious love that night, because the whole sensual experience with Toni the night before had been too much for them.

Toni:

Walking home from the coffeeshop, she thought about how much her back had hurt.

The weather:

The sun was just coming up as Linden walked up to the house. She opened the French door, padded up the stairs, and looked in the bedroom.

Gene was asleep.

Then Linden went to the bathroom to take a shower. She was going to sit down in the kitchen and read the Sears catalogue and drink coffee until the mail came.

Dona Sturmanis has had fiction and poetry published in various Canadian little magazines and anthologies. She won the 1974 Miss Chatelaine *Fiction Competition and is now working on a novel and collaborating on a children's book. She plans to enter a M.F.A. program in creative writing in the fall.*

Barbara Hartmann is art editor for Branching Out and works as a community programmer at the Edmonton Public Library.

Affirmative Action

are we fer it or agin it?

by Kris Purdy

We in Canada had better find an answer to that one pretty fast so that if programs are developed in our jobs, in our provinces, in the federal government we can at least try to affect the form and content those programs take. We have been squabbling over this issue for so long, that we don't even really know what our governments are up to. And if we're for affirmative action, then we better make damned sure it works — because we probably won't get another chance. We've used stereotypes to make decisions, for example, that Canadians as a whole are too conservative to accept affirmative action (voluntary or legislative). In my opinion, any group of people who are presented with change are going to be conservative; besides, this country has a history of relatively progressive legislation such as Medicare. No, the conservatism of our population is not an answer to the question of affirmative action. Another stereotype is that legislative affirmative action is an American approach and therefore one we shouldn't even consider. Although there are many reasons for accepting or rejecting affirmative action, that particular response smacks of mindless anti-Americanism and is not, in my view, a basis on which we can make a decision.

In this article, I want to discuss what facts we have about affirmative action at this point and hopefully come to some conclusions. I personally have come to my own conclusions about this question: I favour legislated affirmative action — with all its potential problems. I say that now because I think it's important that you know where I'm coming from. I've tried to present the pros and cons as honestly as possible. And if we agree or disagree, all we can do is discuss it. So, let's begin.

What is it?

Affirmative action is a plan to consciously change the pattern of women's involvement in the work force which has been one of ghettoization in certain jobs (such as retail, service and clerical jobs) at consistently lower pay then men. The important word here, is consciously, that is, this change will not merely depend on the agressiveness of individual women, the liberal attitudes of certain bosses or companies, the "right place at the right time" syndrome. This may still happen, but there will be something bigger: a recognition by employers, employees, government and possibly the society as a whole that women *are* discriminated against. Together we will set out to change that situation. The result should be that women gain access to jobs and pay in proportion to their availability in the work force.

More Specifically

The most common approach to developing an affirmative action plan includes the following four steps:

1) A detailed study of what jobs women now hold in the company, how many women are trained for the 'male' jobs in the general population, and a comparison of these two statistics. For example, if 10% of all engineers are women, then 10% of a company's engineers should be women. If only 1% of its engineers are women, the company has a problem.
2) The next step is to develop a plan of action to get the company's ratio of male to female engineers in line by surveying the people in the company to see if they think there is a problem and what the company should do to solve it, retraining the men and the women in the company to accept "women engineers" (for example), and restructuring training programs and recruitment literature so they encourage women applicants.
3) Put the plan into action, that is do it!
4) And finally, review the whole thing to see if there have been results, that is, whether the percentage of women engineers in the company more closely approximates the percentage in the population.

That, basically, is affirmative action. But now comes the fun part. How does one approach this whole task — Will it be voluntary (them that wants, does)? Will it be legislative (failure to comply means breaking the law)? Will the government, the company, the employees, the women's movement control the plan? Who will it apply to — every company, companies with over 100 employees or what? These are all questions which will come up if we decide affirmative action is necessary. There are some examples of the various routes different groups have chosen, but before we get into that let's discuss if, here in Canada, there is a problem.

Is there a problem?

Guess what? There is!

If we go back to 1962, and see what's happened since then, not only are things not better they're worse!

According to Statistics Canada, in 1962, 30 out of every 100 female workers were in a clerical position. By 1974, 36 out of every 100 female workers were in a clerical position. In 1962, 63% of clerical jobs were held by women; in 1974, 72% were held by women.

When it comes to pay comparisons, things are a *little* better — we have held our own. The average woman *still* gets 45% less in pay than the average man (now there's something to cheer about). To add insult to injury, men in clerical positions (that old female stomping ground) make on the average, 34.2% more than women in those positions.

So, yes, I think we can agree, there is a problem.

But, is affirmative action the answer?

Some say yes, some say maybe, and some say no.

Betty Hewes, an alderman for Edmonton City Council, says yes. For some time now, she has been actively involved in trying to get the City Council to vote in favour of an affirmative action program in City Hall. According to Hewes, what is needed now is a plan of action — not a study — as the ghettoization of women in certain jobs has been proven well enough by study after study. However, Hewes believes that the main problem here is one of changing attitudes: those of women employees as well as male employers. "I see it as an attitude problem that has to be changed by educational techniques, maybe subliminal education techniques, and I also see it as a structural change."

When asked about whether attitudinal and structural change should be enforced by legislation, Hewes replied, "The word enforcement perhaps is a little too strong. If you're going to create change you need to have cooperation and you need to have the kind of climate which it needs to be created. We have to have the cooperation of those who would be most threatened. The human rights legislation, the equal pay for work of equal value legislation, these kinds of things have seemed to me to be the way you start. Whether we need to legislate affirmative action, I haven't seen that as the way at this point in time. If, in fact, the voluntary programs don't work, then I suppose that is what we should look at. However, if you are going to change, you have to have cooperation; if somebody lays it on me and says you are forced to cooperate, I am going to resist. That's a very natural sort of position to take."

Betty Hewes *photo by Cherie Westmoreland*

But some disagree with this position. Hewes supports affirmative action as a means to attitudinal and eventually structural change. Some people believe that, by itself, affirmative action might only *reinforce* the status quo. Laurell Ritchie is one of those. Laurell Ritchie is an organizer with the Canadian Textile and Chemical Union, and a board member on the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. According to Ritchie, writing in *This Magazine*, affirmative action is not only unproductive, it is counterproductive. The main reason is that affirmative action programs were not and are not defined by the women's movement. "In fact, affirmative action has become the brand name for the employer programs geared to coopting upwardly-mobile, career-oriented women into corporate management."

In other words, affirmative action does not involve real change for all women, but only token change for the new, emerging, "corporate woman". That corporate woman, or new boss, as Ritchie sees her, will only resist the demands of women workers, in much the same way as male bosses do now. And with a few women either at the top, or on their way up, it will only look as if we really have come a long way. Consequently, says Ritchie, business and government will wash their hands of the whole affair, having solved, in their minds at least, the 'woman question.' What Ritchie is injecting in a conscious way into the whole discussion of affirmative action is class, and the problems and injustices inherent in a class society. Viewing the problems of women in this light, she concludes that affirmative action is counterproductive because it "presents a non-antagonistic, attitudinal approach rather than structural approach" to deal with discrimination against women. And that discrimination is "deeply rooted in the structure of our economy."

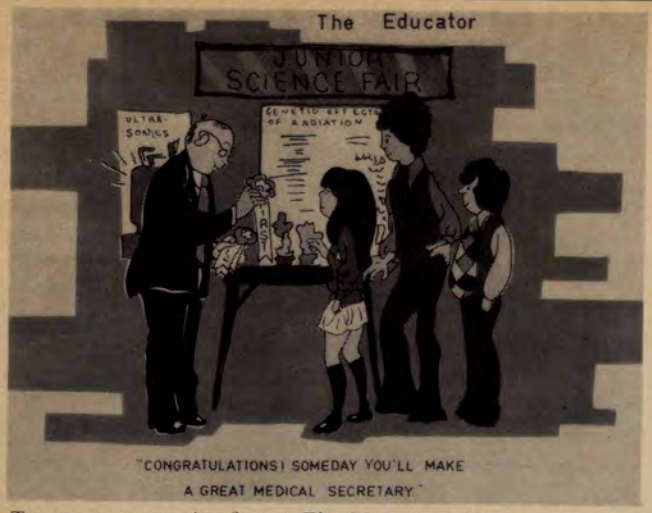
This is contrary to the position presented by Betty Hewes. She is not, as far as I could gather, challenging the very structure of capitalism in Canada. Hewes says that it is a myth to think women who advance will only join the oppressors and resist the demands of women workers. "It can happen with individuals obviously but as a generality, I'd have to say no. It's the same kind of generality you hear about women in public life; women won't support women in public office. I don't believe it. I get a tremendous amount of support from women. Except in isolated cases, I don't think that you get women into advanced positions who then ignore the fact that they are women and have responsibilities to women's requirements."

These are political and strategical differences which depend on how we analyse sexism in our society. And, having figured out our analysis, we must decide if and how we set up a program of affirmative action, how it is to be administered, and what we expect to get from it. We do have some examples in Canada as well as in the United States.

Examples of affirmative action

The Canadian programs, so far, have all been voluntary.

Ontario: In early 1976, the Ontario Women's Bureau set up a consulting and resource service for industry and



Two transparancies from "The Managerial Perspective" *courtesy of the Public Service Commission*

CANADA: All affirmative action programs are voluntary. An example is the federal government's 'Equal Opportunities for Women' program. In conjunction with policy guidelines under EOW a government department can purchase — for $1200. — 'The Managerial Perspective', an assortment of videotapes, slides, questionnaires and reference materials intended to alert personnel to sexist biases. Users are encouraged to hire consultants from the Bureau of Staff Development and Training to take them through the many nuances of using the kit. Once the purchasing department has trained some seminar leaders, it is ready to begin two-day consciousness-raising sessions with its managers.

business in that province. This service was publically supported by Premier Bill Davis at a kick-off conference where he urged business to get going on Affirmative Action plans. The way it operates was described by Bette Pie in *The Business Quarterly*. First, the Bureau approaches the company for initial talks. Then, if the company is agreeable and makes some kind of commitment with regard to affirmative action for their employees, the Bureau continues discussions with the company, helps them with research and the organization of a plan of action. As of a year ago, about 106 companies were working with the Bureau to set up affirmative action plans. What the results have been, I don't know. What happens to companies that don't want to play, or that don't want to follow through, I also don't know. However, as this is a voluntary program, I would assume that nothing happens. One of the advantages of this program, from the company's point of view, is that it costs the company practically nothing. However, it does cost the old taxpayer something in Bureau salaries and expenses. I must make a little note here on the subject of costs to business. Two business consultants in Ottawa, Joy Moore and Frank Laverty of Management Renewal Ltd., suggested in an article in *The Business Quarterly*, that "allowing corporations to deduct affirmative action costs from tax payable would stimulate corporate response."

Ottawa: Another example of an affirmative action in Canada is the one undertaken by the federal government. This program includes the civil service and all crown corporations such as the CBC and CN. This is an entirely voluntary program involving the usual steps of study, plan, action and review. Recently, however, the Federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women released two reports on the progress of this program. The first report, released in January 1977, said that the women within the federal civil service "remained in the lowest paid and lowest status jobs in 1975. This, despite government promises to reverse that trend in recognition of International Women's Year."

In the second report, specifically referring to Crown Corporations, Louise Delude of the Advisory Council reported that "The Federal Cabinet's 1974 directive on the status of women in Crown Corporations has evidently had very little effect. The corporations that were already committed to improving the status of their women employees have kept doing it at their own pace, while the others have continued to do nothing."

With regard to the ones "committed" to improving the status of their women employees — the CBC has been considered one. The CBC completed a mammoth study of women's position within the Corporation, issued a mammoth report based on these findings, and set up an Office of Equal Opportunity. However, according to one civil servant involved in equal opportunities for women, the power of that office is not all that great when it is pitted against the incredible size and complexity of the CBC. And, from an employee's point of view, the advancement of women within the Corporation has hardly been earth shattering. On the contrary, from a microcosmic point of view, it has been unnoticeable. The main problem with all the Crown Corporations and the federal civil service is that there is nothing in the federal government's plan to, shall we say, motivate the slow starters.

Edmonton: Another affirmative action program is the kind occurring in many city administrative offices, like the one just starting in Edmonton which Betty Hewes has been fighting for. At the risk of making sweeping generalizations (which I will now proceed to do) the success of starting these kinds of programs (aside from the tenacity of individual women) usually seems to depend on the political breakdown of the City Council, the size of the city budget cuts, the personality of the personnel manager, and, whether or not this is an election year. It does not, it seems, depend on the validity of the issue in question — equal rights. And so far, the plan has been entirely voluntary.

The United States: The program in the U.S. is designed to improve the job status of, not only women, but also all minority groups, for example, blacks and chicanos. And this program is legislative, for example, those companies which are covered by the program have to comply or they will lose their government contracts. Those covered by the program are, all federal employees; all companies with government contracts of $50,000 or more and with 50 or more employees. These companies must *prepare* affirmative action plans before they receive their contract; all companies with contracts of $1,000,000 or more. These must *comply* with affirmative action

standards before they get their money. All the employers are under a time limitation to comply with affirmative action requirements. The result of this coverage is that 30 million workers (or one third the American work force) are affected by this program.

Now there has been considerable debate and criticism of the American plan. The magnitude of the program is a big stickler. It has caused incredible amounts of red tape, confusion and bureaucratic hassling. For example, some 14 separate federal agencies are involved in enforcement alone. And within each agency, different departments work with their own individual approach and orientation. Another criticism is that companies hire unqualified people just to satisfy government requirements, or even to sabotage the program itself. Others claim that insufficient and sometimes too poorly trained enforcement officers have been hired to make the program work well. There has also been a concerted effort by some politicians and bureaucrats to water down the provisions of the affirmative action program, for example, to make only companies with government contracts worth $100,000 and 100 employees or more responsible for affirmative action plans and to require only companies with $10 million contracts to produce proof of compliance with affirmative action standards before awards. These two changes would cause a dramatic drop in the number of companies covered by the legislation. There has also been a move to eliminate time limitations on compliance with the above — which could make it possible never to comply — and to designate some companies exempt, due to the 'national interest'.

But, let us pause momentarily to look at some of the major decisions made by companies only because of the legislative nature of the American program. These examples are cited by Bennett and Loewe in their book *Women in Business*.

1) Early in 1975, a U.S. District Court ruled that only blacks and women could be hired by the American Brands in its cigarette and pipe tobacco plants.

2) In the spring of 1974, the American Equal Employment Opportunities Commission ruled that the nine major steel producers and the United States Steel Workers in America had to incorporate 50% of women and blacks into their apprenticeship and promotion programs until their representation in the skilled jobs equalled their representation in the surrounding population of the plant.

3) In 1974, the Civil Rights Commission conducted a public inquiry into the sex discrimination practices of insurance companies in the Chicago area. Under the scrutiny of a public forum, the executives of the companies were forced to acknowledge violations of the law and to take effective corrective action. (Immediately before the hearing, evidently, Continental Casualty tried to mend its ways and save its government contract by raising the salaries of 1300 women employees. It cost the company $750,000 annually.)

4) Similar actions took place forcing companies like Corning Glassware, the Bank of America, MacMillan Inc. and (believe it or not), the American Telephone and Telegraph Co. to deal with discrimination against women (and minority groups) in hiring, training, promotion, benefits and salaries.

These success stories have a price in the proliferation of government agencies to enforce the federal regulations, the different ways each agency carried out enforcement, and the financial cost. Also, the legal issue of "reverse discrimination" has been raised in the American Court and has, so far, remained in limbo, hanging over the heads of all protagonists of affirmative action. However, there are two statements which are somewhat interesting in an evaluation. Lockheed Aircraft's director of personnel, Howard C. Lockwood, is quoted by Bennett and Loewe in their book as saying, "Face it. Affirmative action had done its job. Without government surveillance we certainly wouldn't have gone this much out of our way. Today, we meet affirmative action requirements the same way we met speed, lift and cost requirements on any plane we built."

And in the opinion of Louise Delude, author of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women report on Crown Corporations, American Branch plants in Canada have better records for hiring and promoting women in this country than either Canadian firms or the Canadian government, mainly because of their legislative experience in the States. These two statements are certainly supportive of the position that legislated affirmative action can work. They also show that legislated affirmative action can be absorbed by companies and corporations — it won't necessarily bring down our capitalist society. You may consider that desirable or undesirable.

Ad placed in major U.S. magazines by Digital Equipment Corporation, an equal opportunity employer.

UNITED STATES: Under the pressure of legislated affirmative action, major firms advertise for women and minority group applicants.

Which ever way we go, we inevitably run up against more questions. First, do we support affirmative action? If we do, do we support voluntary or legislative programs? If we support legislative programs, are we in Canada ready to deal with the potential backlash to this kind of approach? How can we develop programs which will be effective here, in our less centralized form of government? In what context will affirmative action be more than a 'Canada Manpower' type service for the career woman?

If we don't support affirmative action, the question is, how are we going to begin solving some of the problems women face in this country?

Kris Purdy is a radio announcer in Edmonton and a member of the steering committee for the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee. She used to sing with Walpurgis Night, a women's band that she started in Regina.

Cherie Westmoreland is an information officer at Grant MacEwan Community College in Edmonton.

talk show

Jacqui Vanelli

Cats, Mothers, Nut Tappers

During the Second World War Women entered the paid labour force in unprecedented numbers. Things haven't been quite the same since.

by Katy Le Rougetel

> They have not allowed their utilitarian function, which is absolutely invaluable to the war effort, to interfere with their primary inclination for being coy, charming, very feminine individuals whose chief aim in life (at least one of them) is to make themselves attractive to men."
>
> *Saturday Night*, September, 1942

These comments are a sample of the intense debate on women's roles precipitated by the flow of women into the work-force during the Second World War. Their participation in labor was essential at that time, and it led to many changes in attitude toward women, their roles, and their capabilities. After the war was over, there was pressure to return to "business as usual" — women were urged back into their kitchens. This campaign was not entirely successful, however, and many of the attitudes and patterns of employment that developed during the war years are with us to this day.

Before 1939, women's place had indisputably been considered to be in the home. Of the 1,227, 876 married women between the ages of 15 and 44 years in Canada in 1931, only 3.9% were "gainfully employed": single women made up 80.8% of the female work force. The family unit — and marriage implied the immediate production of children and the creation of a family — required women's full time attention. Those women who did belong to the salaried work force were generally employed as domestics addressing themselves to the usual "women's work".

Came 1940 and the demands of wartime production made it imperative to enlarge the workforce considerably. Directed by the Employment Service of Canada, a voluntary registration of skilled and semiskilled workers willing to serve in wartime industry was initiated. Ten thousand workers were expected to sign up, 250 of whom were to be women. By March 1940, 27,000 people had registered, including 1,200 women: double the proportion projected. This was an indication of the trend to follow.

The ready supply of labour had, however, been exhausted by January 1941. On January 10th, the Interdepartmental Committee on Labour Coordination announced, "It will be necessary to train increasing numbers of men over 40 years of age, women and others." In spite of the unexpectedly high turnout of women and their obvious eagerness to work, they were included in the category of undesirable, second class labour. Yet the government desperately needed people, and in September 1942, all women between the ages of 20 and 24 years were required to register with the National Selective Services board, in order to enable tight government control over employment.

Campaigns were launched in all the media. Smiling women war workers beamed down from billboards at city inhabitants. Newspapers carried advertisements encouraging women into the adventure of donning factory overalls for King and country. No city was without its "Miss War Worker" contest. Bolstering government publicity, women's magazines ran articles urging their readers to join the industrial army. Socialization which prevented women from applying for "man's work" had to be defeated, self-confidence bolstered. Margaret Winspear wrote cosily in the *National Home Monthly*, "The hand that made the petit point will certainly rule the welding torch." When it suited the economy, they could be, nay, had to be, more than wives and mothers. Women served as convenient pawns in the game of industrial necessity.

Nevertheless, they heeded the call and flocked to the factories in thousands. The number of women employed during the war years grew at an uneven pace. By July 1941, for example, of the 2,285,000 "homemakers" listed, only an estimated 54,000 to 68,000 were in the workforce. Yet employment increased dramatically in the next 24 months and by October '43, over a million women were employed or in the armed forces. In addition to these women, roughly 760,000 were at work replacing men on farms.

The war achieved a much lauded breakthrough in the armed forces: women's divisions were established in the army, ariforce and navy, though the latter held out staunchly against women until 1942, when it decreed a "maximum of 20 women would suffice." Eventually, 6,500 joined the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service. By the end of the war, over 45,000 women were in the armed services as non-combatants.

Women's participation in manufacturing, especially heavy manufacturing — previously an exclusively male dominated work area — was allotted much headline coverage. This sector

of industry was vital, producing, as it did, combat equipment such as airplanes and shells. Its importance contributed to the enormous amount of publicity given to women working in munitions and other heavy manufacturing fields. In reality, however, manufacturing was low on the list of industries employing women: in 1944, only 283 out of every 1,000 employees in this area were women. Female participation in this work contributed importantly, though, to an attack on the practise of sexual job classification. Very popular were human interest stories with photograph captions like, "Laura M. Yetman, 16, single, onetime Woolworth's salesgirl, now operates automatic nut tapper in the Bolt Shop." It became apparent that women were not only capable of tackling these tasks, they excelled at them!

Nonetheless, it was the service industries that claimed the greatest number of women: 58 per cent of the workers in this field were women. Communications ran a close second, registering 56 per cent women employees. The vast majority of working women were still performing the traditional tasks alotted to their sex: cooking, cleaning, laundering and picking up after men. Only the setting was changed: many more women were fulfilling these roles outside the home.

Sex stereotyping also prevailed in the much-touted heavy manufacturing industry. Women in this field were invariably given the lowest paying jobs. *Maclean's* pointed out that managers "can't see women in any but those particular women's jobs which start at wages of 30¢ an hour and work up to 41¢." Women's average pay ranged from $19 to $28 per week. Factories, moreover, did not allow women to attain positions of authority. While a few tolerant managers, particularily in new industries like aircraft plants, appointed women foremen, the generally disapproving attitude toward women bosses was expressed succinctly by one manager to a *Maclean's* writer: "They're cats."

Woman were set to tedious detail work. An official from the General Engineering Company of Scarborough, Ontario explained that the delicate handling of fuses "simply wasn't for men's hands." The bomber-wing division at Massey/Harris, as *Saturday Night* reported, employed women "on work for which they were especially suitable: . . . very similar to model airplane building." Instances of this treatment were endless. Women had been trained for centuries to accomplish boring, yet exacting, tasks and this ability had now become useful to industry. Their obvious powers of patient endurance led an engineer to tell *Maclean's*, "Even if there were not a scarcity of men, we'd still use women in our plant, because women aren't so easily exasperated." The assumption made by these men that women were genetically more suited to tedium was obviously false. Rather, the role which society forced on women left them little choice but to learn how to be accurate, painstaking and not "easily exasperated." By channelling women workers into similar activities in industry, their repressive socialization was reinforced. That the scope in which the repression operated was wider, was of limited value to women.

Women's task in the armed forces, too, was supportive. They were to release men for armed duty. Thus their training led them to jobs in "administration, stenography and general office work." Women were to be "cooks, transport and car drivers, equipment assistants, hospital assistants, telephone operators and mess women." The maintenance of feminine charms and girlishness among members of the forces was emphasized. Anecdotes of incidents such as women marching to the strains of "So Long As You're Not In Love With Anyone Else" instead of the more manly "Roll Out The Barrel" were related with relish. It was important, moreover, for uniformed women to remain beautiful. Wrote *Saturday Night* journalist R. Joliffe: "Well-fitting uniforms, snappy appearance and the groomed look are to be cultivated. Lipstick and becoming hair-do's are *au fait*. A CWAF is encouraged to maintain her natural, attractive personality. This, say the authorities, will immensely help morale." Women in the forces, like their counterparts in industry, were to continue functioning as pretty, childlike menials for men, changing only the environment in which to accomplish their task.

Day nurseries received prominent coverage as married women entered the work force. Women working in the war industry were given priority access; but numerically the nurseries were utterly insignificant. Part-time work was a more viable alternative, while laying women open to many kinds of exploitation.

An important wartime development was the entry into the job market of married women. Many of these had children, posing special needs never before encountered by industry or government. Two innovations were introduced as solutions to the predicament: day nurseries and part-time work. The former was government initiated, funded and run. Day nurseries received prominent coverage: in April 1942, the Prime Minister even mentioned them in a speech. The programme was very comprehensive: daycare for two to six year-olds, supervision for schoolchildren outside school hours and fostercare for children under two years were all to be provided. Women working in the war industry were given priority access, underlining that the nurseries' prime purpose was to free more women for the war effort.

Their implications, however, were far reaching. Clearly, healthy, happy, educated children could grow up in a daycare situation. The redundancy of the family unit as a structure in which to raise children was made explicit. Even the staid Margaret Winspear, mainstay of several women's magazines, advocated universal daycare as a desirable alternative to 24-hour mothercare: ". . . wouldn't he (note the child under discussion is a boy!) get better care in the nursery, where the supervisors are specially trained in the finest system devised? Besides, every mother needs time off . . ." Readily available daycare, though, implied the entry of an unprecedented number of women — mothers — into the workforce. Voicing a widely held fear, Dr. F.D. Knellman, Montreal professor in the history of science, said of this phenomenon, "The implications are profound for the whole future of the family."

Numerically, however, day nurseries were utterly insignificant. Only Ontario and Quebec instituted the programme. Together, both provinces provided 26 units servicing slightly over 3,000 children, two thirds of them school children needing only a few hours' care each day. Since roughly 300,000 married women had entered the workforce, these provisions were woefully inadequate. Part-time work was a more viable alternative, while laying women open to many kinds of exploitation.

Most married women with children simply found themselves playing a dual role. Individual solutions to housework and children were found, and women's magazines continually published advice on the juggling of women's many duties. The following comment, in *Saturday Night*, was typical: "Will they ever get me back to the kitchen (after the war)? . . . Why, I never got out of it. When I am through inspecting gun parts here, I go home and do the housework as I always did." This placed a strain on women and their families which contributed significantly to the willingness of many to drop out of the workforce after the war.

Unions began to push for equal pay legislation, realizing the undercutting effect of low women's wages on the male labour force.

The high number of women in employment raised a new set of industrial issues. Part-time workers were always women, and their situation was cause of some concern. Being hired for peak hour activity, they had to work harder than most employees, while lacking any form of job security. Legislation on their behalf was only gradually introduced after the war was over. Safety became a greater concern, too, while more elaborate facilities such as restrooms, mess rooms, housing were required for women. Industrial hygiene also gained increased attention. Because women's skin was more sensitive (or less toughened) than men's, their faces often broke out in sores from factory acid fumes, drawing attention to previously ignored health hazards.

Most importantly, women's right to equal pay for equal work was raised. Even in new industries like aircraft production where women attained some measure of recognition, they still averaged 3¢ less pay an hour than men in 1944. Adding strength to women's fight for parity was their increasing unionization. From 1938 to 1941, women trade union members almost doubled their numbers, during which time men's participation was upped by a mere 10%. Unfortunately, as R. Presgrave pointed out in a lucid *Saturday Night* article, even trade union contracts would legislate inequities such as a 20% wage differential for men and women working side by side on the same jobs. The issue's importance was only recognized after 1945 with the return of the male workforce.

From 1942 onwards, the question haunting everyone was that of working women's fate at the end of the fighting. A voluntary reduction in the number of working women was projected, but government studies forecast the need for much larger number of jobs for women after the war than had been required in the preceding period. Women were not willing to forego the economic independence they had tasted. Problems were anticipated in satisfying women in search of peacetime employment in addition to accommodating returning jobless soldiers. In January 1944, Margaret Winspear wrote, "It would not be surprising if far more thought were being given to the matter of 'disemploying' women when the war is over, then it is to employing them!" She was right; government reports favoured the return of women to the home as the easiest solution to its dilemma. An entire subcommittee of the 1944 Advisory Committee on Reconstruction was devoted to the post-war problems of women. Considerable space in its report was alotted to recommendations on rendering housekeeping, domestic service and farming — traditional women's work — attractive to women who had experienced comparatively high industrial wages and a minimum of domesticity during the war years. The government had no wish for the permanent emancipation of women from the home. It preferred to manipulate them as the economy dictated. This, however, was not feasible.

Winspear voiced a commonly recognized fact when she commented, "They (women) have energy and capabilities to give society and their *right* to work should be recognized." The statement points to a highly significant change in attitude that had taken place during the war. Women had originally been pulled into the war as temporary participants but, becoming firmly entrenched, in however lowly a position, they formed a permanent force in the labour market by 1945.

Once in the labour force, a change in women's self-evaluation occurred. They began to realize the potential of

their position as financially independent, active members of society. The government's Wartime Prices and Trades Board, a vast cross country organization monitoring economic controls, had created a communications system which incorporated a third of all the women in Canada. Sensing the power behind such effective communication, L.D. Millar suggested the structure be maintained by women after the war, independant of the formal governmental link. They were to examine the family and other socio-economic aspects of their evolving society, employing experts such as lawyers, financial experts, doctors, social workers to advise. Although nothing came of this sweeping scheme, it indicates women's awakening to a consciousness of their own solidarity and strength. A fundamental alteration in the structure of society loomed on the horizon.

The post-war decade did not fulfill the promise of the early forties. In 1945, employment reduction figures for men were 5.3%, while women experienced a 13.5% recession. Women's employment sank rapidly from an average of 271 per 1000 employees in nine leading industries in 1944, to 231 in 1947. By the end of September 1946, a mere 1,000 women remained in the armed services. In 1948, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics was still registering a fall-off in the proportion of women employed.

Women were dropping out of the workforce in order to take up their traditional roles of home- and babymakers. The number of married women between the ages of 14 and 35 years rose and the marriage and birth rates were higher than previously — the now legendary baby boom which peaked in 1947. That year, the rate of 28.9 live births per 1,000 of population was one of the highest of the industrialized nations.

An interesting contradiction arose within the workforce: literally thousands of job vacancies for women existed, yet there were insufficient women to fill them. In 1947, a scarcity of women plagued the consumer goods industries such as textile, leather, clothing, electrical goods manufacture. The shortage of stenographers was much lamented. A front page article in the *Financial Post* clamoured, "Jobs Go Begging — Not Enough Girls To Go Round." Only 2,453 women applied for 4,296 available positions. Interestingly, the article also quoted figures of men's employment: a mere 1,703 jobs were available for the 8,846 male applicants. Yet it never occurred to the *Financial Post* — or to the men involved — that they might apply for the positions in which women were lacking. Jobs were strictly divided into male and female categories, the latter comprising exclusively menial tasks such as waitressing, stenography, domestic labour and jobs in the low wage consumer goods industry. Women were not placed in leadership roles even to the minimal extent they had been during the war because, as *MacLean's* testified, employers breathed thankfully, "Now I can get a man."

The importance placed on women employees being attractive was underlined by employers' demonstrable preference for young women. Being a female worker meant functioning as a physical asset to one's employer. Young women were preferentially hired, and only after the labour supply in the under-35 category had run out, did employers turn to older women. The "age issue" received much publicity, providing as it did, a blatant example of discriminatory hiring practices. Criticism was expressed by such people as Ruth A. Hamilton, advisor on women's employment for the Unemployment Insurance Commission: "To insist on youth when hiring women creates shortages and wastes skills . . . For instance it is claimed that there is a shortage of stenographers. This is true up to a point: the real shortage is of young stenographers."

Equal pay for equal work became the major issue in women's employment. Severe inequities existed in all areas of work. Even in such women-oriented occupations as sewing machine operating, men were paid $1.20 an hour, while women completing exactly the same work were receiving $0.78. Unions began to push for equal pay legislation, realizing the undercutting effect of low women's wages on the male labour force. While publicity on this subject was widespread, indicating an understanding on the part of Canadians that equal pay was an important and valid issue, effective action was minimal. By 1953, equal pay legislation was on the books in Saskatchewan and Ontario — yet it remains unenforced to this day.

Trade unions recognized the need for women to attain leadership positions and experience. The *Labour Gazette* announced the appointment of three women presidents of regional Trades and Labour Councils in early 1955 with pride. This awareness was marred, however, by such self-fulfilling statements as, ". . . women . . . toil unceasingly in the home . . . doing the countless chores involved in raising a family and keeping the breadwinner happy and contented . . . their job in industry is not their ultimate vocation," therefore, women's "bargaining position and future stake in industry and commerce is not the same as that of men."

Consciousness of the sexism pervading society was rising, however. A cover story in *Maclean's* demonstrated the preferential hiring of male leaders even in women-dominated professions. In Halifax, for example, four out of every five teachers were women, but men in the profession averaged a salary of $1,865 in comparison to women's $1,064. The subtler forms of discimination were being recognized, too: "In at least three . . . appointments where women had to be used, the executive at the top stipulated, 'a married woman or widow, one used to deferring to a man.' "

In spite of the decrease in women's participation, in spite of the inequitable treatment they received, in 1953 women comprised 21.5% of the Canadian labour force. Women's permanent importance in the labour force was indisputably acknowledged by the formation of a Women's Bureau within the Department of Labour in 1954. Once the slow wheels of government have ground into action, the immutability of a phenomenon is assured! The force was only token: a staff of three pumping out information was severely inadequate to service a group comprising 51% of the population. Nevertheless, it was a beginning.

The fifties were a period of industrial expansion and growing prosperity. Women's most important role within this boom was that of consumer. Within the family, women became the targets of the gigantic cosmetic, clothing, household appliance and luxury industries. This industrial growth meant clerical work soared, creating vast new job markets for women. In addition, automation rendered strength irrelevant in most areas of work, widening greatly the occupation range open to women. The mechanization of society made housework easy and less time-consuming, giving women more leisure. Families, too, became smaller and more mobile, allowing women more time for education and spare-time activities.

By the end of the fifties the discrepancy between the potential society held for women and the reality of their situation became insupportable. Women began articulating their anger at the discrimination from which they suffered. Momentum gathered during the war years increased finally to explode in the women's liberation movement of the sixties. The roots of this political phenomenon, taking hold in the industrial innovation of the forties and fifties, were importantly shaped by women's wartime employment and its contradictions.

Katy Le Rougetel just finished her first year as an Arts student at the University of Alberta. She is now working with a moving company.

books

SO SUGAR AND SPICE IS EVERYTHING NICE

by Jeanette Rothrock

What Are Little Girls Made Of? The Roots of Feminine Stereotyping, by Elena Gianini Belotti. New York: Schocken Books, 1976, $7.95, cloth.

"Sexism," a feminist friend is fond of pointing out, "begins with the pink baby blanket."

Sexism, according to Elena Belotti, begins in the mother's head, put there by the culture she lives in, even before her baby is born. Belotti describes the cultural practices of sex stereotyping in Italy, where the ancient preference for male children has persisted long past its social utility (if it ever had any). Old wives' tales abound suggesting how to conceive a male in the first place and, after conception, foretelling the baby's sex. The positive omens all presage a boy; negative signs, like a difficult pregnancy, severe labor pains, a coin falling through the pregnant woman's dress and landing tails-up, augur the "disappointment" of a girl.

When a baby is born, it doesn't know or care what sex it is, yet its sex determines the way it is treated from the very beginning. Belotti's comparison of the early years of boys and girls in Italy provokes considerable reflection and self-examination about our own treatment of small children and about the early forces that shaped us into the bundles of contradictions we are.

According to Belotti's description, everything which might give pleasure to a baby girl, whether nursing, bathing, or sucking her thumb, are cut short or discouraged, always with plausible reasons which never seem to be there for boys. Toilet training and self-feeding are imposed earlier on girls than on boys, as though to say, "Make yourself useful. Take responsibility for yourself." Italian mothers (and other western mothers, no doubt) would seem to be intent on producing docile, diffident, self-sacrificing little creatures of their female infants, while their little boys, taught to be served rather than to serve, are encouraged to be active and adventurous.

photo by Cherie Westmoreland

If their mothers don't get to these little girls, their peers, their teachers at nursery, primary, and subsequent schools, the manufacturers of toys, and the publishers of children's books will, and Belotti describes all of these influences. (She irresistably characterizes Little Red Riding Hood as "a girl . . . bordering on mental deficiency" and Snow White as "a silly little goose.")

The Italian experience is different from our own, but not very different. The cultural pressures to maintain the willing service of women in the home are much the same all over the western world. Belotti perhaps goes too far in condemning the conditioned tendencies of little girls towards helping others, but she makes it clear that her attitude would be different if males were encouraged to take an equal responsibility, if service were not the expected thing of women from their earliest years.

Throughout, Belotti's sympathies are with the children, the girls and boys whose autonomy, courage, and enterprise she admires so openly. As director of the Montessori Pre-Natal School in Rome and a teacher at the Montessori teacher training school, she has had ample experience with young children. And, from her experience, she has little use for those who claim that sex differences are innate, that little girls are born passive, cautious, and home-bound and little boys are born adventurous and energetic. She knows too well the social forces, the parents, teachers, and institutions, that block, hammer, and humiliate little children to fit the molds adults have made for them.

Belotti's answer to the nursery rhyme question of her title is that little girls in western society are made of repressed energies, frustrations, and internal contradictions, imposed by adult society for its own purposes. And the little girls grow into women doing battle with themselves, for reasons they can no longer remember.

Jeanette Rothrock is director of the publications office at the University of Alberta. She graduated with a degree in history from the University of Saskatchewan.

GETTING WHERE?

by Karen Lawrence

Getting Here, Stories Selected by Rudy Wiebe. NeWest Press, 1977, $2.95 paper.

Well, so where is *here*? I sure don't know what Rudy Wiebe's fantasy was when he chose the title for this anthology of women's short stories. I *am* sure that these seven women are not writing from or about the same place. Anthologies are strange creatures in any case; they tease the reader with snippets and samples and require a lot of gear shifting. When I finished reading *Getting Here,* I felt dissatisfied and disoriented — in some way the book hadn't come across for me. I leafed through it three or four times, looking for something. What I was seeking was its *raison d'etre,* an explanation, some accounting for the stories that were included. Certainly an editor has some responsibility to account for her/his choices. How did this anthology come about? What does it represent? Is it a coincidence that all of the stories were written by women? Or that they were selected by a man?

Both as a reader and an editor I've

Myrna Kostash whose story "Showdown" appears in Getting Here
photo by Samuel Gerszonowicz
courtesy of Hurtig Publishers

always felt more comfortable with a healthy sampling of a writer's work upon which to base my judgements. Sometimes I have come across a poem or a story which is stunning in its impact and which leaves an imprint upon the senses. There are no stunning stories in this collection. But there are hefty chunks of good writing which speak well for the state of the short story in western Canada.

All of the stories save one are written from the viewpoint of a female character. These characters have strikingly different voices and the writers all show a steady hand at drawing characters and manipulating dialogue. There seems to be some loose thematic grouping; the first three stories by van Herk, Kostash and Rosta deal with the female character in a relationship with a man or men — and the relationship is a threatening one. Rosta's story is the most hard-hitting in this group. The suspense builds and builds to an inevitable yet sickening climax. Van Herk deals with conflict in a very deft, understated manner. The tension in her story is the silken cord of her poetic diction held taut by two gloved fists. "Showdown" by Myrna Kostash has a disappointingly predictable ending, but the dialogue is right on and crackles with the electricity she creates between the man and the woman, and the fantasy sequences are luminous. I got a clear message from all three stories — keep your eye on The Man.

Candas Dorsey's story is in its own class. Her style is eclectic, her writing fast-paced, almost dizzying. It is funny in places and is in the sci-fi or fantasy mode. The story is uneven — well done in places and too crowded in others — but it grew on me. The last three stories deal with the murky world of the family. I found Terese Brasen's story too episodic; it didn't really go anywhere. I suspect it is part of a longer story (perhaps unwritten as yet) and could work if it had room to spread out. Caterina Edwards makes full, lively, vivid characters who really carry her story. But as with several of these stories, I found the ending weak, not up to the rest. Elvina Boyko's "The Process" pleased me most. She meshes story-telling and life-living and comes up with an interface that is poignant, powerful and real. In little corners of the story she is self-conscious — the major portion of it flows, resonates, in-forms. Good harmonies here.

All in all, not a bad little book. There's that matter of the non-introduction and — oh yes, to the publishers: the book don't look so hot. Dropped lines, ragged spacing, typos — I think the stories deserve better.

Karen Lawrence is a regular contributor to Branching Out and has recently completed a collection of poems. She lives in Onoway, Alberta.

SOUL PROSE

by Diane Schoemperlen

Middlewatch, by Susan Kerslake, Oberon Press, 1976, $8.95, cloth, $4.50, paper.

Kerslake's first novel, *Middlewatch,* is a short book densely crammed with emotion, atmosphere and a strange tension which is not at all unpleasant. It is the story of Morgan, a young man who comes to teach school in a village on the Atlantic, and of Sibbi, a young girl virtually destroyed by the traumas of her childhood. Through the special and complex relationship which develops between these two characters, Sibbi takes the first steps towards accepting her past and repairing the damage which has been done. Flashbacks and reveries — for which the reader is sometimes unprepared — reveal Sibbi's past.

The length of time which Sibbi's recovery takes is not clearly established in the conventional way; instead, time is presented almost completely in terms of the seasons rather than of months or years:

> The lean lull at the edge of the new year.
> The time of year when the Norseman had rolled the wheel of fire, twined with straw, from hilltop down to the winter sea. A few thin moments, elusive, foam on the black fluke of a whale gone back to sea. The year sounded. It left a slick that shore . . . . He clung to the hinge, the nadir of the season. Consciously re-organizing any cells that might have gone astray.

In this way, Sibbi and Morgan are placed in a time which is more universal than particular, a time told more by sky and trees and earth than by clocks and wristwatches. One puts down the book with a satisfied feeling that something truly important has been accomplished, something which will not again be destroyed no matter how much time passes.

Kerslake's originality of image and metaphor is outstanding. Of autumn, she writes: "Red leaves were drops of blood on the ground. Maple leaves like the devil's fork abandoned before ice." A hurricane hits the village and Kerslake's description is chilling:

> A broken bird swept by, its useless wings wide open, then was gone. The earth was twisted, then everything swung in a circle, a pulsing vortex. Marooned colours appeared in the swells and were consumed by the wind.

Particularly in her attempts to communicate the chaos within Sibbi's ravaged psyche, Kerslake is able to surprise the reader again and again with the clarity of her vision and the intricacies of her imagination. A strong sense of place runs throughout the novel, injected at seemingly random points in the narrative.

Sibbi and Morgan are always presented as real people living in a real world. Kerslake notes many details which evoke an instant recognition in the reader: she observes "Carpenter ants climbing over the wooden stoop"; she sees that "The flowers are beginning to close up, giving back to the earth its own colour." In contrast to such ordinary occurences is Sibbi's mind. She is a real body living in a physical world of which she has apparently no awareness. This interplay between reality and unreality is haunting — and which, after all, is the reality?

The novel is written primarily from the point of view of Morgan. It seems to be a rarity in Canadian literature to find a woman writing from the male viewpoint. It is refreshing and somehow reassuring to discover that Kerslake does so with ease and agility. Morgan is a completely believable character, evoking in the reader admiration rather than impatience or sympathy. A sensitive and truly generous man, he does not push Sibbi in her slow painful journey to the surface. He does not guide her until she seems to ask for guidance; he is

simply there with her, accompanying each step that she takes. Together they find their way to a happy ending.

Diane Schoemperlen is a writer living in Banff.

And more books

The Trouble with Rape, by Carolyn J. Hursch, Nelson-Hall, 1977, $8.95, cloth.

The trouble with this book is that it contains an ultimately reactionary statement about women and rape.

The feminists who first raised the critical questions about rape asked not only who, what and how, but why? They sought to shift the burden of responsibility away from its traditional focus, the rape victim; they demanded social explanations and social solutions for the crime.

Unfortunately, subsequent academic studies have suggested few new answers or directions for change. They have quantified and documented the problem, but have not analyzed why rape occurs, or what we can do to prevent it. Most seriously, they have left responsibility for dealing with rape primarily with its victim.

Carolyn Hursch's book is a study of this type. The author analyzes 1045 sex offenses reported to the Denver police in 1973, and describes the tactics of "rape resisters" who successfully fought off their assailants. This information is undeniably valuable, but the author uses it only to exhort women to greater vigilance in protecting themselves: "What is needed . . . is an enormous program of education for the women who would otherwise become tomorrow's rape victims." Especially vulnerable, says the author, are the "new liberated women" whose behaviour makes rape more likely.

The author's recommendations are at best a partial solution. Feminists have always advocated self-defense training, but they have also demanded social changes which would make such strategies unnecessary. Hursch hints briefly at this question: "Attention must also be directed toward . . . the direct cause of the problem — the man who commits the sex offenses. In time, we must also probe the indirect cause, the society that creates this man." In this book, however, attention remains firmly riveted upon the rape victim, who is once again called upon to shoulder "the responsibilities of self-protection."

—Genevieve Leslie

Genvieve Leslie is an editor with the Women's Press *in Toronto.*

The Managerial Woman, by Margaret Hennig and Anne Jardim, Anchor Press, 1977, $8.95, cloth.

Women are conspicuous in their absence at the top levels of Canadian corporate management, despite their one-third participation in the labor force. During the 1962-72 decade, the proportion of female managers barely changed (from 3.7% to 4.2%) and at this rate of increase, it will be over a century before women's participation in management is equal to men's on a percentage basis.

Hennig & Jardim attribute this plight to the fact that while both men and women enter the business world with similar goals, they bring with them two sets of entirely different assumptions and approaches. They point out that males are groomed from early childhood to expect to pursue a career, while women usually make career decisions in their late 20's or early 30's. Boys learn teamwork — the basics of management training — early, from football and hockey. In contrast girls are gently guided towards individual performance in tennis, swimming, gymnastics — "it's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game." When asked "What is a job?", the male response is that it is a responsibility to be met, a task to be completed before going on to something else; it is a particular part of a career, a segment of a long-range goal. A female will reply that a job is something to be done, a means to earning a living, while a career is somewhere in the future. Women tend to focus on short-term planning with little concern for long-range implications. Thus, in the competition for career advancement in the ranks of today's corporate management, men have a distinct advantage over women. For the most part, these organizations have been built by and for men and are still controlled by men. The norms and ways of communication among executives have grown out of a distinctly male culture.

Hennig & Jardim do not insist that to succeed, women executives should become more like men, but instead they clearly outline the real situation in the corporate world. The patterns of difference between men and women and their resulting implications are detailed and concrete suggestions are made as to how a woman, previously unschooled in this way of thought, can learn to recognize these obstacles. Hennig & Jardim stress that women who want to succeed must learn to assess more accurately what they really want, how to go about getting it, and what the costs and rewards will be. *The Managerial Woman* belongs on the required reading list of every woman involved in the corporate world.

Gail Aller is the Personnel Assistant with a resource-based company in Edmonton.

The Rights of the Pregnant Parent, by Valmai Howe Elkins. Waxwing Productions, 1976, $4.95, paper.

The Rights of the Pregnant Parent is a valuable addition to the wealth of literature available today to the expectant parent. Valmai Elkins describes what she feels to be the ideal hospital situation for a natural childbirth as witnessed by her in Europe and, less frequently, in the United States. She contrasts this with the many needless procedures which are considered routine in most Canadian hospitals.

The purpose of the book is to educate the reader as to those hospital practices which are dysfunctional to the progress of a normal labour and delivery, anaesthesia in labour being one example. A woman can then choose the childbirth she prefers and select the doctor and hospital which will best comply with her wishes.

It is to Elkins' credit that she stresses the dangers inherent in home births in societies where the necessary emergency medical backup is lacking. She also urges the reader to allow the doctor free reign should complications arise at the hospital.

In addition to the excellent information on the actual labour, delivery, and hospital stay, *The Rights of the Pregnant Parent* provides sound advice on prenatal nutrition, breastfeeding, and other related topics. Elkins' background as a physiotherapist and teacher of prepared childbirth classes to thousands of couples adds weight (and many interesting anecdotes) to her writing.

It is Elkins' contention that the needless medical routines which interfere with a normal birth will continue unless we, the consumers, urge our doctors and hospitals to change. *The Rights of the Pregnant Parent* provides an excellent catalyst for this social

revolution.

Mary W. Riskin

Mary Riskin gave birth to her second son in February. She lives in Edmonton.

The Proper Sphere: Women's Place in Canadian Society, ed. Ramsay Cook and Wendy Mitchinson, Oxford University Press, 1976, $6.75.

He-Aren't you afraid, dear, that a vote would make you masculine?
She-It has not seemed to make you so, dearest.

This pungent exchange captions a cartoon on the cover of *The Proper Sphere: Woman's Place in Canadian Society*. For those of us miles from archives and city libraries, or for those who have neither the time nor training for historical research, here is a book which provides instant primary research materials. Editors Cook and Mitchinson have collected sixty-one articles from a variety of Canadian publications, which illustrate how women won recognition as persons. The selections also document the moods of different periods, the often repeated arguments for women's rights, and the maddening put-downs of certain men whose minds seem devoid of any flexibility.

The book begins with a chapter entitled, "Woman's Proper Sphere," moves on through "Legal Rights," "Education," "Work," "Organizations," "Morality," and concludes with a lengthy section on the suffrage issue.

Most delightful are some articles from the pen of Nellie McClung, as humorous and penetrating as ever. If you have high blood pressure, avoid the piece by Andrew Macphail in *University Magazine*. Interestingly, there are eight items from *The Grain Grower's Guide* and they make me wish I had a stack of old copies to read.

Helen Hargrave

Helen Hargrave lives in Creemore, Ontario.

Woman-Work: Women and the Party in Revolutionary China, by Delia Davin. Clarendon Press, 1976, $17.50, cloth.

In a well-researched description mainly of 1950's China, Delia Davin concentrates on outlining the contributions to change in that country that have been made by leadership policy, women's organizations, and the new Marriage Law. By the end of the book, we realize that working wives carry a double burden, as Chinese men still do not uphold an equal share of the housework.

Davin describes generally the two main spheres of labour where women of liberated China have made historic progress: agriculture and industry. Because communist ideology glorifies the worker, women were urged to become employed outside the home (a 1955 attempt to improve the status and self-image of housewives was short-lived). More progress has been made in agriculture than in industry, but in both cases Davin shows how gains made were due to actions of the Party and of Women's Organizations. One policy was to avoid "too sudden and strong a campaign for women's rights" because it "would have alienated many peasants, including even many of the women themselves."

Women were urged to work and produce as much as possible. The Civil and Korean wars took men, leaving work a necessity for women. But, when men returned to work in the 1950's and through the 1960's, women were paid considerably less than men.

Rose Knoepfli teaches in High Level, Alberta and has recently completed a high school social studies unit about women for Alberta Advanced Education.

"Gynecological Examination", from the Illustrated Women's Almanac"

The Illustrated Woman's Almanac: 12 How-To Handbooks in One, compiled and edited by Kathryn Paulsen and Ryan A. Kuhn. J.E. Lippincott Company, 1976, $6.95, paper.

The almanac, that encyclopedia of practical hints and homely wisdom, has just been resuscitated as a much-needed sourcebook for the women who, having decided to take control of their own lives, find they lack the tools to do so.

Written for Americans, this book, unfortunately, contains much that is incorrect in Canada. The business and credit laws, for example, do not pertain, and even the sections on medical practices are unreliable here, particularly as regards insurance and costs. The material is intrinsically interesting, however, and the general message for women venturing into traditionally male preserves is apposite everywhere: BEWARE!

Nationality is unimportant in the sections on health, sex, and motherhood. I found the discussions on hysterectomies (too many done is the consensus), menopause, and drugs to be very informative — these topics are often omitted from health manuals. The charts of common drugs and their possible ill effects when taken with other common substances are quite startling.

The almanac's style is arresting, but it leads to some unfortunate features. The amalgamation of historical anecdotes about women with the text and the accompanying period designs are good fun. The charts and pictures are most welcome. Less happy are the constant shifts in type size, even within articles, which are distracting: also, the smallest type is difficult to read. A less whole-hearted attempt to duplicate the old almanacs would have yielded a more enjoyable book. An index is badly needed.

The *Almanac* is intriguing in its conception, and contains much that we women need to know to cope with our changing world. Although of limited usefulness outside the U.S.A., and in need of more discrimination in the choice of some of the material, it is, overall, a worthy effort.

Mary Durance

Mary Durance is a specialist in English and Canadian literature. She lives in Ottawa.

films

Kings of the Road — A Liberated Road Film.

review by Judith Mirus

Kings of the Road (Im Lauf Der Zeit), Federal Republic of Germany, 1976.

director/producer: Wim Wenders; **Screenplay:** Wenders; **Cinematography:** Robby Mueller; **Cast:** Ruediger Vogler, Hanns Zischler, Lisa Kreuzler.

Kings of the Road premiered in Canada last October at Toronto's Festival of Festivals.

The catchy American title suggests that Wim Wenders' *Kings of the Road* is just another macho film about two guys vagabonding and getting high on each other's company. The plot is the same as fairly typical American male road films like *Little Fass and Big Halsey* or *Scarecrow:* Two men, usually around 30, meet accidentally on the road and continue travelling together and then, when there's not much left of their relationship, split and go separate ways. But *Kings* is consciously non-macho and blatently non-commercial (which doesn't mean it isn't enjoyable). It's a kind of personalized expose of the male psyche that is a far cry from its American prototypes. Certainly it is about, as the director puts it, "the fact that these men like each other and why they get along better together than with a woman." Yet instead of giving us the usual aggressive, violence-ridden story that exploits the myth of invulnerable masculinity or bemoans its demise, Wenders sensitively reinterprets masculine consciousness, often with gentle self-mockery and caricature of the road picture's narrative setup.

That's how the film opens. Bruno, whom Wenders actually dubs "King of the Road," personifies Roger Miller's easy-going loner. He travels around West German border towns in a converted house-truck repairing old projectors in run-down movie theatres. Parked one morning shaving beside the Elbe River, he meets Robert, who drives his VW off the road into the water, climbs out and wades ashore. Bruno nicknames the distressed-looking character Kamikaze and offers him a ride.

From the outset it's clear that they are distinctive and opposite personalities. Bruno is openly amused by Robert's initial self-destructive behaviour and cerebral seriousness. Robert in turn accepts the lift without comment, almost with hostility, and wanders off surreptitiously at every stop, usually to make an unfinished phone call. In the beginning he regards Bruno's vagabond life-style with indifference and some suspicion. Only gradually do they come to enjoy one another; the more they interact, the more the mutual (and mutually hidden) aspects of their personalities come out. Robert's sullenness gives way under the influence of Bruno's easy good humour. He borrows a motor bike and they ride off wearing children's dime store sunglasses in glorious parody of Hopper and Fonda in *Easy Rider*. But the joy ride takes them to Bruno's abandoned childhood home. Now it's he who retreats into himself, into memories of his mother and depressed contemplation of his past.

So their relationship progresses; it becomes more intense — and the film more serious — the more they share, almost inadvertantly, previous and present experiences. Yet it's a sharing based on a tacit understanding of each other's maleness. As they begin letting their feelings show, they recognize, at least implicity, that this isn't enough. For a while, it was sufficient to share as well an existential sense of estrangement from the dazzling materialism of modern Germany. Both were more comfortable escaping in the forgotten environment of the towns along the East German border. But it becomes obvious, especially to Robert, that this too is self-deluding. Symbolically — perhaps too much so — all the roads to the border are dead ends.

In the climactic sequence, they hole up late one night in a deserted G.I. observation hut directly on the border and proceed to get smashed on Jack Daniels. Their relationship is at a turning point; up till then neither had intruded on the other's mental or emotional territory. They're not just horny; both need to express their individual longing for a successful relationship with a woman. To say it openly is, however, to admit the inadequacy of a friendship founded

Ruediger Vogler and Hanns Zischler, stars of Kings of the Road

precariously on the masculine ethos. Their embarrassment and frustration erupts into argument, and a few clumsy punches are thrown. The next morning Robert leaves Bruno sleeping it off, and in road film fashion, they separate as abruptly as they met, with Robert taking off as decisively as he arrived. Yet, despite structural similarity, *Kings* doesn't end like road films. In a kind of postscript, Wenders follows them individually (and briefly) as they go about a tentative reorientation of their lives: Robert trades his old, empty metal suitcase — a kind of token of his alienation — for a schoolboy's pad and pencil; Bruno tears up his repair schedule after listening to a small town theatre manageress condemn the current quality of movies. Both gestures indicate their independent recognition that, in Robert's words, "things have to be different."

Wenders is careful not to make this ending more than ambiguously optimistic, mainly, I suspect, because he wants both characters and story to be credible. Besides that, it's such a personal film, that it can reflect only his own point of view. But this itself is very unlike the usual nihilism not only of road pictures but of contemporary American cinema in general. Just as heartening is Wenders' evident sensitivity to authentic characterization which carries over in his attitude toward women. Ostensibly true to form, there is only one major female role. Her scene takes up only a minuscule portion of overall running time, and she is a little too obliquely drawn to be a satisfying character. (Perhaps Wenders' own position vis-a-vis women is as tenuous as Bruno and Robert's?) Yet women are far from non-entities; their absence is so strongly registered that they become like shadow characters. Instead of objects of open or repressed hostility, they are conspicuously longed-for, not just during the hut episode. The phone call Robert is always trying to make is to his wife. And the friendship dissolves in part because of the insufficiency of exclusively male companionship, or maybe it simply illustrates the vulnerability of any relationship caught in the mythology of sexual role-playing. The characters in model road pictures also separate but never — unless quite unconsciously — for such clearly suggested reasons.

Bruno and Robert's inability to relate to a woman as well as they do to each other is symptomatic of how hard it is for any of us — men and/or women — to find mutual levels of communication, especially when constricted by prescribed sex roles. About midway through the film Robert goes off to visit his father, a man who has spent himself mentally and emotionally publishing a district newspaper. For years, not since his mother's death, Robert hasn't seen or talked with him. Now, with a confused feeling of resentment and affection, he confronts his father with responsibility for her loneliness, for having sacrificed the family to ambition and profession. Part of Robert's anger is simply his own guilt, notably over the recent break-up of his own marriage, but also over his early failure to understand his mother's suffering.

While this is going on, Bruno is killing time at an amusement park where he is picked up by an attractive young women whom he arranges to meet after work. As it happens, she runs the local movie house. though she couldn't know or care less about films. They're openly attracted to each other, but both put up a pretense of casual reticence which makes them more solitary than they'd like to be. Bruno is particularly unable to express his feelings. After he helps her close up for the night, they lie mutely together on a small bed in a storage room. When Bruno gets up to leave, a few tears run remotely down her cheeks; he can only reciprocate by transferring one of them sympathetically to his own eye.

The whole film is constructed from such intimate, isolated encounters. It doesn't have the alienated (and alienating) *Kammerspiel* style of Fassbinder's films. The scenes are interrelated; all describe the evolution of Bruno and Robert's friendship, which, also in contrast to *Kammerspiel*, ends up being a very lyrical event, despite its dissolution. The original German title, *In the Course of Time*, gives some sense of how much this low-keyed lyricism runs through even the most irreverent and comic moments of the film. Likewise, there is a rapport between Wenders and his actors that is seldom evident in recent movies. Vogler and Zischler don't hide their enjoyment of the roles, and their very individuated personalities have clearly been used to define Bruno and Robert. Director and actors together have demonstrated some very funny things about male ego. Bruno's matter-of-fact exhibitionism as he climbs out of his truck in the mornings stark naked and hanging loose exposes a not atypical locker-room attitude toward the body. Robert doesn't declare his masculinity that physically, but he isn't averse to exhibiting his somewhat aggressive and sardonic intelligence verbally.

Yet *Kings* isn't just about male friendship. It's also about Wenders' particular love-hate relationship with America, its music and its cinema, about his admiration for director John Ford and his special feeling for rock-n-roll and country-western music. He thinks music has assumed the role the movies used to play in projecting and interpreting the American ethos. Bruno stands in for Wenders with his incessant listening to old forty-fives on his built-in machine. Throughout the film Wenders makes allusion to bygone movies, especially those coming out of Hollywood from the late silent period to the early fifties. Even the black-and-white cinematography is a deliberate reassertion of old cinematic values. Somehow Wenders has made rural Germany of right now look and feel much like the desolate, tacky landscape of rural America; some of the night travelling scenes have the visual style of oldies like Nicholas Ray's *They Live by Night*.

Wenders isn't merely indulging in nostalgic imitation; by trying to re-create the style of innocence of these early pictures, he is commenting on the glossy artificiality and cynicism of current big-budget, over-technologized Hollywood movies. He's also drawing attention to what he considers the death of meaningful cinema in Germany and America, not in the big cities but in the towns where it used to be the main form of popular culture. The reversion to pre-technicolour cinematography and original rather than post-syncronized sound may seem self-conscious; yet it is no more so, for instance, than Wertmueller's mimicry of Fellini, and it comes across as a sight more deliberated. Besides, the self-consciousness is itself part of the commentary, if only because it does call attention to the radical change that's taken place between movies then and now.

Still, Wenders techniques cause some problems. The "original sound" can irritate. Some conversations are partially unintelligible, though I don't think they were meant to imitate the deliberate mutterings of Robert Altman's characters. (For once, subtitles are an advantage.) The esoteric quality of the sound track is compounded by a few cinematic references meant only for the most knowledgeable moviegoer. But its most considerable imperfection is one unnecessary and embarrassingly melodramatic scene when Robert runs across a man pitying himself over the suicide of his wife. Maybe because this incident seems so isolated from the rest, it doesn't detract much. In fact, there's such a multitude of detail and nuance, and so much integrity in Wenders' treatment, that the film's faults end up distracting very little from the impression of having had an exceptional movie experience.

This past year Judith Mirus was vice-president of National Film Theatre/Edmonton and film review editor of Branching Out. She recently moved to Kenya where she will be living for a year.

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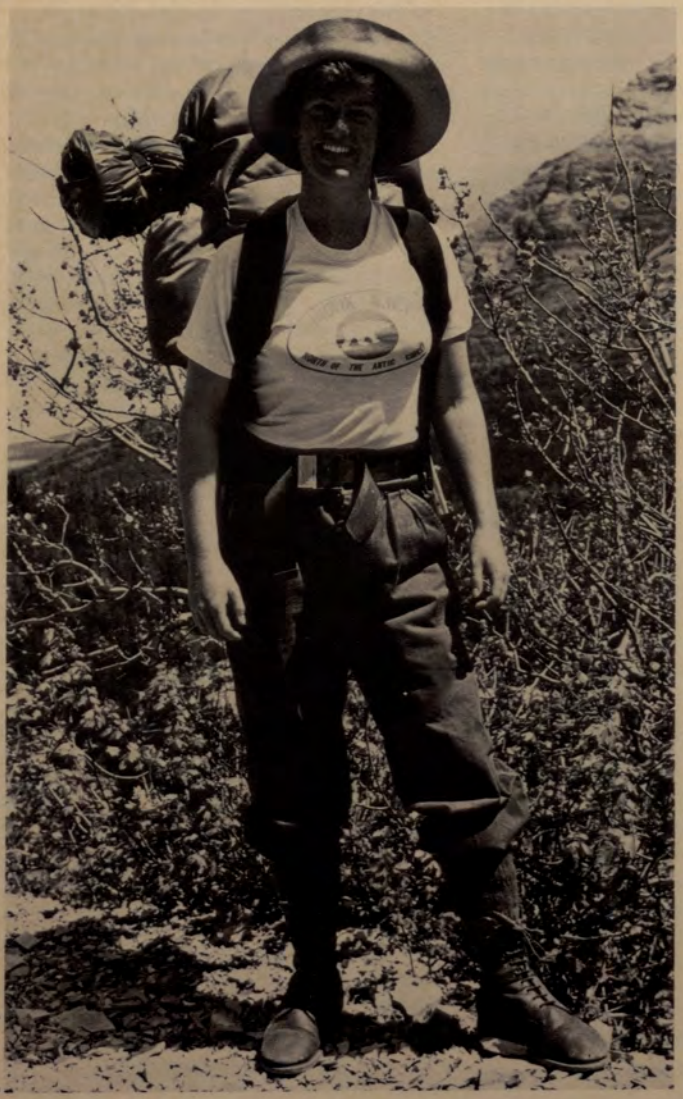

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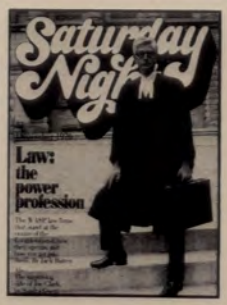

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