

# Branching Out

CANADIAN MAGAZINE FOR WOMEN

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

November/December 1974 \$1







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Branching Out staff

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### Coordinating Editors

Susan McMaster

Sharon Batt

### Fiction

Karen Lawrence – Coordinator

Susan McMaster

Helen Rosta

### Non-fiction

Sharon Batt – Coordinator

Marylu Antonelli

Mary Alyce Heaton

Naomi Loeb

Susan McMaster

Meg Shatilla

### Photography

Alice Baumann-Rondez – Coordinator

### Art

Iona MacAllister – Coordinator

Linda Donnelly

Barbara Hartmann

Audrey Watson

### Layout

Alice Baumann-Rondez – Coordinator

Iona MacAllister

Sharon Batt

Linda Donnelly

Barbara Hartmann

Naomi Loeb

Susan McMaster

Gisela Baumann

### Public Relations

Naomi Loeb

### Business

Mary Alyce Heaton – Coordinator

Cheryl Boon – Distribution

Sharon Vasey

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# letters

I opened (the Preview issue) with curiosity - but I closed it in delight. A literary magazine with sensitivity, as well as information and comment - my compliments to the creators. It's *good* to hear from the women folk of Canada. Just don't stop now because you have become part of my life style and it would be the poorer without you.

Barbara K. Esdale, Edmonton, Alberta

Question: If the non sequiturs, the trendy cliches and the narcissistic pap were extracted from Harry Rensby's article, what would remain?

Answer: A line of periods.

Harry, your punctuation was inspirational.

Warren Thorngate, Edmonton, Alberta

MAN is a generic term for "a human being, a person". It also has a *secondary* meaning, "the male of the human species" and women should feel no more distress at this use than hearing a facial tissue of some other brand being called "Kleenex".

To refer to someone as a chair person is awkward; thousands of women have successfully chaired committees and been addressed as "Madam chairman" without any loss of prestige.

Because no one has coined a word which indicates whether a man is married or unmarried is no reason any a woman should be called Ms which has an ugly, contrived sound. If married women wish to be called Mrs so be it, but why not use Miss throughout life?

I have always considered myself as "equal" and have struggled to help rid society of the inequalities of *treatment* of women and minority groups as inferior beings. The liberation of *people* from any sort of bondage is the important goal and one which I shall continue to work toward in my remaining years.

Ruth M. Morrison, Vancouver, B.C.

I am particularly interested in an action orientation and would like to know what other women are doing to help raise the status of women generally, as well as their own prospects. As a law student who has just finished second year, and who is also over forty, I know there is much to be done where I am, and am interested in encouraging other women to join us in the professional schools, no matter what age group they are in.

Shirley Greenberg, Ottawa, Ontario



With reference to the notice (Sept/Oct. 1974, p. 5) of the coming Canadian hosting of the UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR, 1975, the recent founding convention of the B.C. FEDERATION OF WOMEN, at Vancouver, agreed to support the motion *provided that* the Canadian government also withdrew the Abortion Law from the Criminal Code.

Canadian women attending the 1975 International Seminar should also demand, in my view, that Canada finally, after twenty-five years delay, ratify the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The reason offered for its failure to do so is that all provincial governments must first ratify it. Launching a public campaign to inform the public of this gross neglect would plainly be the first step towards rectifying the omission.

Since all issues are interrelated, one must query how high-minded the Canadian government really is when it continues to ignore the basic needs of health, housing, education, civil liberties, etc. of our own Inuit and Amer-Indian women?

Measures to "inform and educate... end discrimination...remove barriers..." can be useful, conditional upon our scrupulous concern. National and International proposals directed towards improving the lot of women, but which fall far short of recognizing the basic fundamentals, can lead us into blind alleys where we might be tempted to snatch at transient solutions for ourselves only.

However, that would be to ignore the deep rot of a system which will persist until we join with sisters who are already using their tremendous capacities to set in motion a new pattern for living. In many countries, fighting alongside their brothers, they are now jointly reconstructing within the context of a humane set of values, determined by people's needs, by and for the people themselves ... and no others!

Claire Culhane, Burnaby, B.C.

I don't trust Harry Rensby; I hope you don't either. Harry's comments in *Both Sides Now* (September/October, 1974) reveal how little he knows about understanding relationships among people. Let's hope that it was only his super-slick style that seduced your editors.

Why don't I trust Harry? Well, I have grown to suspect anyone, especially a social critic, who begins by telling you that he is a "man who is more open and flexible to change". It reminds me of all too many bigots who begin with "I'm not prejudiced, but..."

Further, he shows no indication of how to trust. Damn it all Harry, how would you have reacted if your "girl's" breasts did not match the monthly playmate? A lot of us have had to worry about those problems and more importantly, have been able to work them out.

Before trust is understanding. Yes, I want to trust and be trusted by people but where I start is with an understanding of who we are. I want women to *know* that even with my well-developed dialectic regarding human freedom, I still cannot quickly purge what society has told me about what "the role of women" is. And, I also want to know those feelings about me and what I am. If we can agree about what we are, we understand; then we can begin to trust.

Ronald Savitt, Edmonton, Alberta P.S. Beyond the philosophical issues, the article lacked continuity, organization and forethought. I agree with his comment, "This explains nothing."

# editorial

ONE YEAR LATER

In the December 1973 issue of *Branching Out* we made the first editorial statement of our philosophy. A year later we feel it is appropriate to review our position to see whether it has developed or changed. We find components of the statement remain entirely true. We still feel *Branching Out* should serve as a forum for the ideas of Canadian women, and as an outlet for their creative work. We still want the content of the magazine to represent the experiences of women diverse in their experiences, years, emotions and wisdom. However we have developed a sober appreciation of how difficult it is to do these things well. In the process of trying, some of our earlier ideas have become clearer. Two in particular stand out: our answer to the charge of elitism; and our decision to have only women contributing to *Branching Out*.

We have been described as a magazine for educated women that ignores the problems that face working women and housewives. It is true we have not covered some of the areas that many readers think vital. We are interested in these topics, but some of them have already been extensively covered by other media (for example, the Morgentaler and Murdoch cases). It would not be useful to simply reiterate the arguments surrounding the most familiar feminist causes in Canada. If we can present them with new insight, we will. If public discussion of these issues seems to be lagging, we will try to revive it.

Yet many of the topics we have seemingly avoided have not been adequately explored by other media, among them, the problems of women in prison, women working in menial jobs, and women living in isolated areas. We are trying to get material on topics like these, but it is difficult to write well about problems one has not experienced. Too often the results are patronizing, pitying and false. However, until we can afford to pay contributors a reasonable rate, it is a regrettable fact that most will be women who can afford to forego payment for their material. Even those women can seldom spend the time necessary to do the in-depth research required for an understanding of a difficult social problem.

Our rather arty appearance has also evoked some criticism. We don't apologize for it. It is a deliberate decision to feature poetry, fiction, photography and artwork in *Branching Out*, and to try to get work of high quality. There are too many soap operas, Harlequin romances and kitschy knick-knacks produced in the name of 'women's taste'. We protest the implication that women are too dumb or too silly to respond to good writing and graphics. On the contrary, our feelings and ideas should be presented with the force and clarity which is the gift of the talented writer or artist.

The second question that has been raised over the past year is whether the magazine should accept material from males. When we began *Branching Out*, we thought that within four or five issues the magazine would have a sufficiently strong identity that it would not be unduly influenced by occasional contributions from men. We have published one article by a man, and several photographs. As a result, we have been approached by more males who are interested in contributing, and who do good work. This has forced us to consider our position more carefully. After considerable discussion, we have decided that *Branching Out* should be a magazine exclusively for women's opinions and work. As long as the senior editorial, production and business personnel of virtually every magazine on the continent are male, it is important that there be a magazine run entirely by women, and devoted exclusively to the work of women, for several reasons.

We don't deny the worth or quality of work by men. Unfortunately it would probably be easier for us to find male experts to write about social and political issues than to find female writers equally knowledgeable. Similarly it would be easier for us to find men who are successfully devoting their lives to artistic pursuits, than women who are doing the same. This is precisely why it is so important for *Branching Out* to publicize the achievements of women, and to encourage women in the early stages of a career by publishing their material. For many of us, reading something by a polished male writer is intimidating. It reinforces all that old training that says, 'Your work may be OK, but there are lots of men who can do better.' To read an equally good (or better!) piece by a woman can be an inspiration. It says, 'If she can do it, maybe I can too.'

As well, our small staff can't even begin to contact all the women we would like to have participate in *Branching Out*. Some of us would like to give space occasionally to men who share our concerns, and who are actively trying to adjust their own thoughts and actions to the upheavals of the women's movement. Yet we simply cannot spare the time to solicit and edit such material.

By publishing *Branching Out*, we feel we are doing something unique. A year of publication is a short history for any magazine. It won't hurt to hang on to our "all female" identity a while longer, and explore its implications more thoroughly. Sure, men have problems, and it's not always easy for them to get started on their careers. But to those who accuse exclusive female projects of reverse discrimination and to those who say 'It's not women's liberation we need, but people's liberation,' we ask, why don't some of these downtrodden, troubled men make the effort to start a publication that will promote a redefinition of the male role? When such a publication does emerge, it will be time for some editorial cross-fertilization.

by Sharon Batt

# here and there

*Cuban Women Now* is one of the most recent publications of the Women's Press. Twenty-five Cuban women describe in their own terms the profound changes in every aspect of their lives since the revolution in January 1959. Cuban women understand the liberation of women as integral to the building of a socialist society. Cultural assumptions that discriminate against women are changing in Cuba precisely because of the recognition of the necessity of equal economic involvement of women. Margaret Randall, author of *Cuban Women Now*, has been a resident of Cuba for five years and has worked for the Cuban Book Institute. For further information, contact Sandra Foster, The Women's Press, 280 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ontario. Tel (416) 962-3904.

A Canadian Housewives Register (CHR) is being formed. It is open to any woman who wants to meet other women for intelligent conversation, informative lectures, and other social and cultural activities. The first CHR began in Montreal in 1967, and now there are over 25 groups in Ontario and Quebec. If you want to join or start a group in your area, write to Rita Eggleton, Publicity Chairman, Canadian Housewives Register, Apt. 219, 60 Southport St., Toronto, Ontario.

Judy Irving is a documentary filmmaker working on two films in Alaska. She would like to establish contact with other female filmmakers in Canada and the U.S. If you are one or if you would like to know more about Ms. Irving's work, write her at 1229 G. St., Anchorage, Alaska, 99501. One of the films she is currently working on is a documentary for the Sierra Club on the wild lands of Alaska.

The Quebec Council on the Status of Women is establishing a research and reference centre and a central list of women's organizations and groups. If you want more information, write the Quebec Council on the Status of Women, 100 Place d'Youville, Suite 610, Quebec, P.Q., G1A 1G4

Last March, a conference sponsored by the Dept. of Justice was held at the University of Windsor Law School. As a result of this meeting it was decided to form a national association of women and the law which would include women working in private firms and in government. Its primary purpose is to establish a communication network to keep in touch with female law students across the country.

According to Shirley Greenberg of Ottawa, one of the organizers, "We hope to collect and collate material, and simplify it so as to benefit the community, and publicize it...A problem for women law students is that law is not taught from the woman's point of view, nor are we taught how to protect the women's interest. This is something I hope our local caucus will fight for - possibly the remedy is in a women and the law course."

For a copy of their newsletter, write Univ. of Ottawa Interim Coordinating Committee, Association of Women and the Law, Faculty of Law, Univ. of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ont.

Another conference on Women and the Law is now being planned to take place at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, on January 30. For further information contact Shawn Greenberg, 405 Bower, Winnipeg, Manitoba or Freda Steele, Faculty of Law, Univ. of Manitoba, Robson Hall, Winnipeg R3T 2N2.

The British Columbia Federation of Women (BCFW) was founded in September, 1974. Its primary purpose is to unite women's groups across the province, provide a resources exchange and internal communications network for its members and to lobby for improvement in the status of women. Rather than duplicate existing groups and services, it is designed to act as an umbrella organization for women's groups and individual women. The group concluded that only through a united organization could a sound and effective lobbying force emerge. Contact Kate Swann, BCFW Coordinator, No. 209, 2005 Pendrell St., Vancouver, B.C., Tel. 687-1374.

The B.C. Police Commission has established a *Task Force on Women and the Police* to study three areas of concern: women as police officers, women as victims of crime, and women as offenders.

In all three areas, the relationship of women to the police may well be different from that of men to the police. The Task Force wants to draw upon the experience of as many women in as many parts of B.C. as possible. They would like to hear the experiences, opinions and ideas of your group and community.

If you have information of ideas, please contact Joanne Prindiville, researcher for the group, at British Columbia Police Commission, 409 Granville St. Vancouver, B.C.



Films by Judy Steed, Joyce Wieland, Bonnie Kreps and Marie Waisberg are among those available from the Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre. Rental rates are reasonable, for example, \$4.00 for a three-minute film, and \$30.00 for a 25-minute film. Many of the filmmakers are available for personal appearances in conjunction with screenings of their films. For more information contact Kathyne Wing, Director of the Films by Women programme, CFDC, 406 Jarvis Street, Toronto, Ontario.

Tanya Rosenberg has just been made director of Powerhouse Gallery, an all-woman's cooperative art gallery that has been in existence for almost two years. If you're in Montreal, drop in to Powerhouse Gallery, 3738 St. Dominique. Past events have included a contemporary quilt show, an exhibition of codpieces, poetry readings and musical performances.

Do you want abortion taken out of the Criminal Code? Those who want to see abortion as a private matter between a woman and her doctor clearly outnumber those who are against abortion. But the minority who oppose abortion are busily making their views known and give the mistaken impression to government and to the Advisory Council on the Status of Women that they represent the majority of Canadians.

A letter supporting removal of abortion from the Criminal Code should be sent to:

The Honourable Otto Lang  
Federal Minister of Justice  
Parliament Buildings  
Ottawa, Ont.

Carbon copies should be sent to:

Katie Cooke  
Chairperson  
Advisory Council on the Status of Women  
63 Sparks St.  
Box 1541, Station B  
Ottawa, Ont.

Little, Brown and Company (Canada) Limited is pleased to announce the revival of the Canadian Children's Book Award for the best Canadian juvenile manuscript. This year's award will be made in June 1975. As well as receiving the \$1,000 prize, the winning manuscript will be published in Canada and the United States during the fall of 1975, and the winner will receive royalties on all copies sold in those countries.

**Rules:**

The Competition is open only to Canadian citizens or residents.

Only legible, typewritten manuscripts of unpublished, original work in the English language will be considered.

The competition will begin Sept. 1974 and will close March 15, 1975.

For further information, write: The Little Brown Canadian Children's Book Award

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# both sides now

For its anniversary issue *Branching Out* requested some comments on its development from its regular readers. The following two responses were so well stated that we felt it would be worthwhile to turn over Both Sides Now to Cam Hubert and Barb Popel.

Our thanks to all the other people who wrote to give us their ideas and opinions. We have found them very interesting and useful.

Results from the September/October survey are still coming in. We will be publishing some statistics in January for your information (no names attached, of course.)

Dear editors,

Here are a few of my comments on the development of *Branching Out*.

I first became aware of *Branching Out* by way of a mention in *Ms.* Magazine. Being a bit of a chauvinist I was quick to send for a subscription to a magazine that seemed directed to two of my main areas of concern; Canadian and Woman. I felt it only right to offer support.

I am very glad I did. *Branching Out* is vastly different to *Ms.*, I'm not sure if it's because it is Canadian or if it is because *Branching Out* seems less interested in the sometimes esoteric "isms" of women reality, certainly it seems less dedicated to the highly educated career woman and less patronizing to the lesser educated or ethnic minority women. And thank God there isn't the heavy handed "political" tone prevailing too often in *Ms.*

I feel *Branching Out* can best make its contribution by continuing to ask for statements, letters, work by ordinary people, rather than depending on the opinions and work of a few prominent professionals. *Branching Out* is still open to sharing the experiences of its readers; other magazines, such as *Ms.* seem to have moved into the slick perfection of an air too rarified for ordinary lungs.

I think there is one lack; *Branching Out* has material for young children, material for women, but my own daughter, who is eleven, has yet to find something for HER, she finds most of it too adult, the rest too "baby". SHE is more militant than I am, she wants some articles on "we can so do it!", and not articles on the first female jockey or the token female garage mechanic; she would like articles on such things as the women's undersea exploration team which established an underwater record yet to be approached by even the men of the Cousteau team. The 11 year old Ms. wants something showing good ideas which were first put forward by women, ignored, then picked up by men and listened to.

I personally would like us to be more aware of our responsibilities to each other. I have yet to see an article for or about the woman convict and the horror of women's jails. It seems to me totally stupid that women convicts cannot wear jeans but have got to wear ugly institutional dresses...and if this is no

longer so I'd like to know that, too! I would like to know what the bisexual and homosexual women in Canada feel, whether they feel Woman is Woman and we can all be friends, or whether they feel the heterosexual woman is either unaware of their problems, disinterested in them, or possibly even a threat...

I do not feel that our biology is our identity, but I do feel that we have an obligation to the children. NOT because woman=childbearer but because as yet men are not awake enough, aware enough, or concerned enough. Possibly only the oppressed can help the oppressed and right now in this country what is happening to children is disgusting. In this town alone in the past month there have been, to my knowledge, 3 cases of child beating, and two deaths because of either beating or neglect. A two year old boy died of cold alone in the bush, a sixteen month old boy was thrown off the ferry into the sea, a twelve year old boy was kicked, beaten, whipped with a belt and assaulted by his six foot, two hundred pound father....

I think it is up to women to demand immediate changes, to demand professional therapy for everyone concerned in such a sad thing as child battering. Men control the government, men control the civil service, neither group is doing much about the battered child or his protection, it is up to us. We seem to be the only ones aware of anything, lately!

How many women have to live on welfare because their ex-spouse in a different province is allowed to ignore maintenance orders? How many women are pushed around, humiliated and above all made to feel unworthy by a welfare system dominated by male thinking?

We are so hungry for a chance to do SOMETHING against the system we support a doctor who performed abortions, overlooking the fact the man did NOT do it because he felt it was a woman's right to decide, he did it for the money these women paid. He made a fortune from our bodies and then we helped form a defense fund for him because we wanted some way to have our chance to say something.

Thank you, *Branching Out*, and Happy Birthday!  
Cam Hubert,



Dear Sisters,

You've asked your readers to give you some feedback on the development of *Branching Out*. Well, here's my two cents.

To begin with, I think I should tell you I feel a little uncomfortable calling you "Sisters". Ideologically we appear to be miles apart; I suspect you'd consider me dangerous, for I do not council accommodation to the system which has screwed us up for so long. Your choice of articles seem (to me) to reflect a politics somewhere to the right of NOW three years ago - "we're nice people, no dykes, no overly aggressive career women, no active abortion repeal campaigners, just nice ladies with a few little requests."

I do like your children's articles and poems. Matter of fact, I send them to a friend of mine who's teaching in Altom, Manitoba. And your profiles of women who have "made it" on their own are generally satisfactory. But things like that snivelling attack on women seeking new life-styles in your last issue, the article by Harry Rensby, are unforgivable! One of your editorial policies should cover the prevention of covert attacks on "women in transit" who, God knows, are going to make mistakes.

And do you think we could have a little less arts and crafts articles and a little more on other professions and talents? The music reviews are pretty good - for a new magazine - but I'm hoping for some improvement and maybe a little more radical approach to music. How about a media column??

I suppose it's a waste of time to ask you to express less bias towards middle class women and their problems, and to do more articles on working class women's struggles. I suspect most of your readership is middle class, but that doesn't mean we should remain in ignorance of the strikes and more brutal sexism our poorer sisters are going through. Enough of the lie that women's liberation is and only can be a middle class phenomena.

Well, what are some other topics I'd like to see you get into? Lesbianism and lesbian mothers; cases like theIreneMurdoch one, where the law displays a definite sexist bias; alternative life styles (my husband and I live in a co-op house and get a little tired of the assumption that everyone lives in a nuclear family);

women's property and family rights; liberation for high school women; action women can take against an insulting media image or a sexist working environment; how to "get into" local and national politics and make policy, not coffee; how to organize a boycott of - say - a bank that doesn't give women loans, etc., except on the basis of her husband's financial status (I'm particularly sensitive to this as I make \$12,000 as a computer programmer-analyst and my husband makes nothing as a student). Speaking of my husband, how about an article on men's liberation and consciousness-raising groups? Or women's CR groups? Women in prisons? In mental hospitals? Women at home? In childbirth? Birth control and the lack of research on male contraceptives? Abortion (now there's an issue you've side-stepped! I don't recall seeing the name "Morgentaler" once in *Branching Out*!) How about an article or two on women and religion? And more on the problems and rewards of being a single parent.

You know what would be neat? Something on all the snappy comebacks and put-downs we think of - 5 minutes too late.

You might have noticed that I haven't mentioned women and economics yet. I'm really not sure you could handle an analysis of women's place in a capitalistic society, or the economic value of women's unpaid work in the home. Could you?

Well, this has been a longer letter than I intended to write. It's nice to be able to feed back to you my reaction to *Branching Out*.

In sisterhood,  
Barb Popel

# Impossible Situations

by Marylu Antonelli

Joan is a welfare mother. She is also the subject of a nine-minute documentary film, one of 12 in the National Film Board's new series on Working Mothers produced and directed by Kathleen Shannon. Joan doesn't work. As she expresses the frustrations of her situation and her modest aspirations, Joan dishes out lunch to a lively sample population of her seven children.

"Would I ever like to work?"

"What kind of work would you do?"

"Waiting on tables."

Food is spreading rapidly from plates to tabletop, faces, hair, clothing. The din of laughter, whining and calls for refills threatens to drown out the interview. The mother's nerves are raw, her resources are drained. The viewer wonders how she'll make it through this meal, let alone serve another at dinner time.

Created for the Challenge for Change program of the Film Board, the series is designed to promote examination of the concerns of working mothers and of those, like Joan, who would like to work but cannot. While each film focuses on a different woman in different circumstances, the set as a whole presents a fairly complete picture of the attitudinal and institutional obstacles in a society which penalizes woman as a class in many subtle, not so subtle and sometimes paradoxical ways.

Joan, for instance, is still serving time for a mistake she made as a restless, unhappy 15-year old. At that time marriage seemed the only way out for her.

"I wanted to run, so I ran and I'm sorry now I did," she tells the interviewer. Left holding the bag by an irresponsible, immature husband, Joan is trapped 24 hours a day caring for the youngest of her offspring who range from babyhood to age 13. She desperately wants to work, perhaps to run, to escape her prison for at least a few hours a day. But, Joan is trapped in the welfare system. The cost of day-care for her remaining pre-school children would decimate the modest salary she could earn as a waitress.

Joan is caught also in a deadlier trap. At the age of 24, after the birth of her fifth child, Joan asked to be sterilized. She was refused. Two pregnancies later, she is still deemed not eligible for

the operation. The reason? She's too young. At 27, her face could easily be that of a 40-year-old woman. Her washed-out blue eyes, as the camera freezes in a close-up, show bewilderment, despair.

"Some of the women who've seen this film think Joan is selfish because she wants to work," producer-director Shannon said. "Joan thinks she'd be a better mother if she could get out of the home some of the time. Her situation is impossible. But, people have said, 'They're her children. They're her responsibility.'"

One of the attitudes, among both men and women, Ms. Shannon hopes to dispel with her films is the assumption that women work for frivolous reasons and that they are being irresponsible to work when they have families. In "Mothers Are People," we meet Joy, a Jamaican-born research biologist, who explains how she had that particular battle half won because her husband encouraged her to fulfill her career goals while their children were still small.

"To have a child is just a biological happening. Why must your life stop? Why must we be punished because we are the sex that bears the children?" Joy asks somewhat rhetorically. Her expressive face radiates the warmth and self-confidence of a woman who, despite personal difficulties, has combined motherhood and career with success on both fronts.

In spite of an empathetic husband, Joy had other obstacles to overcome once outside the home. "To get my job I had to lie, say I'd never let my children come between me and the job," she recalls. What goes on her record as "sick days" or "personal time" are actually days taken off to attend to her children's illnesses or days the day-care center was closed or the babysitter didn't show.

"You have to be well off to have children in Canada," Joy observes. The absence of universal day-care, she feels, is not only a hardship on working mothers but a loss for children as well. "Day-care centers can help children relate to each other, while schools teach you how to compete with each other."

The situations and backgrounds of the 11 women portrayed in the series differ radically. There's Cathy, married mother of three and department head of

a Maritime university, who finds that the unpredictability of day-care arrangements cuts into her creative life and is reflected also in the work of her married female students.

"The idea is still fairly prevalent that the woman's place is in the home... If she has to go out to work, or if she chooses to go out to work, that's alright providing she does both." Because she is not poor, Cathy finds there is little sympathy for her situation.

Rose, a northern Alberta Metis, gives a poignant account of the defeat, the degrading feeling of worthlessness she experienced while trying to support herself and her children in a city environment she was never equipped to handle. "You have to wear a certain kind of clothes, speak a certain way so they'll accept you. I couldn't do it."

After descent into alcoholism, Rose reached a turning point when she decided to do something constructive with her anger. "I started to search for something and I didn't know what it was." She gave up trying to fit like a square peg into a round hole.

"I just didn't feel like competing any more, because I couldn't anyway." Rose left the city behind to rediscover her roots among the woodland Cree. As she tells her story the camera follows her on a leisurely walk over the land on which she and her second husband subsist. "I've left everything...I'm just being myself...Like the trees, we belong here."

On the face of it, the 11 women have little in common. The 12th film serves as an introduction to the series, providing statistical data on working mothers in Canada. Ms. Shannon, who was a working mother herself before her ex-husband took over custody of their son, hopes that audiences will recognize that whatever their differences, these women by their common factor as women and mothers, are struggling to overcome the same attitudes, prejudices and social institutions.

"I identified with every one of the women I interviewed for these films. The problems of working mothers cut across social class and geographical regions. Women are a 'region' of their own."

Ms. Shannon has been touring with her films and conducting workshops in conjunction with them, since the first



Kathleen Shannon, Filmmaker      photo by Zonia Keywan

eight were completed last April. She is reluctant to call them a "series" because the films are intended to be used in groups of two or three as discussion openers in classroom and workshop situations for both men and women.

While the films come off decidedly message-oriented, some more than others, the Montreal-based film maker shows a genuine artistic strength in her concentration on her subjects' faces, the viewer comes away with the feeling that one could easily while away an afternoon over coffee with any of these women. The differences lift away; they are all people one would like to know better.

Working Mothers burgeoned out of an original plan for a single one-hour film on working-class mothers, conceived by one of the producer's male colleagues. Once into the project, Ms. Shannon found that her topic refused to be confined so neatly.

"Fortunately, I broke my leg just about the time the material was ready for editing. When I collected it all around me to work on it at home alone, the hour-length format just wouldn't work. No matter how I put them together, the stories demanded a different treatment. They were too much, too confusing for an audience at a single sitting. You would become intensely involved with one woman and then have to switch over to another, with an equal intensity. So, I decided then to break them up into individual portraits."



Each film raises its own set of questions. For example, "Extensions of the Family" focuses on a communal arrangement among a self-selected "family" of 13 who share responsibilities in a large house in Western Canada. Who benefits from living in a nuclear family? Can government define what is good for our children? Who should decide?

Aliette and Pierre, featured in "They Appreciate You More," are still going through the growing pains of a radical change in their once typical nuclear family, woman-in-the-home life

style. Both have had to make adjustments in their roles with respect to each other and in their own self-concepts as a result of Aliette's going to work.

A touch of strain still lingering on her face, Aliette tells how she tried to juggle her first full-time job with full-time housekeeping, not daring to challenge the standard division of woman's work and man's work in the home. Aliette spent a month in hospital as a result of the double burden she was carrying. Only then did she and Pierre face the need to erase role structures and share household chores.

Obviously a man who has had to come to terms with his original definition of manhood, Pierre admits that in



giving up his privileged position in the home as sole breadwinner and therefore exempt from housework, he has also gained something of greater value - a new appreciation for and pride in his wife as an independent individual.

The adjustment has been difficult for both of them. But, it's working. "Anyone who is human should feel independent," Pierre has come to recognize. Do many women wait until their health breaks before they ask for help?

Ms. Shannon thinks too many of us, herself included, demand too much of ourselves. "I've tried to avoid the 'superwoman' type in this series. So many of us feel like slobs when we hear of a woman who not only works full-time but also keeps perfect house for her husband and kids, cooks gourmet meals nightly, makes her own clothes, etc. I was in that bind when I was a working mother."

Kathleen Shannon went to work when her only child, Chris, was three months old. She had to for economic reasons.

"I wanted very much to stay home and raise Chris myself. I hated leaving him with babysitters. Even when you're lucky enough to find one who really cares for your child, there's the know-

ledge that the bulk of his time is spent with the babysitter. The babysitter takes over the child's values.

"Trying to live up to everyone's expectations then, I suffered such agonizing feelings of guilt and inadequacy, as if I were on the brink of failure all the time. I could have used these films then, before I realized that I was trying to live up to unrealistic standards. It was such a relief when I finally recognized that it was my situation that was ridiculous."

Chris is 14 now, but his mother is still deeply moved by the memory of one painful incident from those early years.

"The babysitter called me at work. Chris wanted to talk to me. I guess he

just wanted to hear my voice. When I arrived home hours later, Chris was huddled by the phone still clutching the receiver. No one had noticed him or tried to interest him in something else."

While women must stop making superhuman demands on themselves, they also need empathetic men in their lives, Ms. Shannon believes. "Day-care is only a partial solution. Boys need to grow up in an environment where humanness isn't traded for power."

The Film Board is planning an intensive promotion of the films to coincide with the start of International Women's Year. An extensive packet of materials has been designed to complement the films as catalysts in workshop situations.

So far, reaction to the series has been mixed, depending largely on the viewers' own experiences. Some of the most negative responses have come, surprisingly enough, from women's lib groups, Ms. Shannon noted.

"They want radical solutions. Many of them just can't empathize with the women in the films, because they haven't had children or husbands. Some of them hoot and snigger at Pierre, for instance, when he talks about 'letting' Aliette work or when he says 'I think a

man likes to feel he's master at home.' They seem almost anti-woman. It's quite sad, really."

Another group that disappointed producer Shannon were high school girls.

"I had thought younger girls were more liberated than I was at that age. But, they seem so conservative, so many of them still aiming for nothing more in life than to get married and have children with no thought to the later years. One major complaint they had...they couldn't relate to the 'old bags' in the films."

Ms. Shannon was particularly disappointed at this reaction because the films and discussions they raise should serve as preventatives for younger women.

Among older groups of middle- and working-class mothers the films have been very effective. One woman said after a program that she "feels stronger now."

"That's why the discussion is so important and why I like to use the films only two or three at a sitting as catalysts," Ms. Shannon emphasized. "It would be such a waste if people just watched the films and went home. If a woman can identify with that aspect of a story which touches her own situation at the moment, perhaps it can make her aware of her own unexpressed feelings. If she is in a group setting with other women, their combined reactions could develop into a starting point for change. People don't know what they think until they say it."

Ms. Shannon's own turning point, or more correctly, the most significant of many in her 39 years, came during a short train ride on business. "I casually picked up a copy of *Voices from Women's Lib* at the station just for something to read along the way. When I got off that train, my whole attitude changed, my perceptions shifted a notch. That book changed my life.

"When I got off the train I was introduced to a man I had to see on business. Although I was introduced as 'Kathleen' he responded with 'Hi, Kathy.' I reminded him my name is 'Kathleen.' Some men feel more comfortable when they use the diminutive. It establishes their superiority."

Ms. Shannon has worked almost continuously since her last year in high school when she catalogued music for a film company. After four years at that job, she started work with the Film Board, and has been there ever since. But, only recently has she enjoyed the degree of autonomy and the salary commensurate with her work.

"For a while I was an editor, but then my work was just an extension of someone else's ego. Even when I got into writing and directing, it was at a lower salary than what men were getting for the same work."

What next? The Film Board is launching a new women's unit in English Production for 1975. At its head will be Executive Producer Kathleen Shannon.



On these two pages, scenes from the Working Mothers series, National Film Board.



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# Who is Erma Stocking?

by Sharon Batt

photos by Alice Baumann-Rondez

*Great Grand Mothers.* That sounds like a good title for a historical film on women. So thought Lorna Rasmussen and Anne Wheeler, and *Great Grand Mothers* is what they've called the film that they're making on the history of Prairie women. It is the first film to be made on the topic, and the research Anne and Lorna have done in the last five months has not only turned up some engrossing material, it has led them to question whether the history of women can be approached in the same way we traditionally have looked at the people and events of the past.

The story of Erma Stocking helps to illustrate why Lorna thinks we may have to adopt a completely new attitude if we are to understand the lives of our female ancestors. "Miss Stocking kept popping up in photographs all over the place," says Lorna. "I'm fascinated by her." Yet diaries, records of meetings, and old books made scant mention of the mysterious lady, who apparently worked with the Women's Grain Growers Association in Saskatchewan.

A Saskatoon archivist who took part in the search for details of Erma Stocking's life and work, had this interpretation. "These women did not conceive of themselves as doing anything of historical importance. They simply went ahead, working for the franchise, or working for the betterment of farm women, but they kept nothing of their personal and business records. A man in a similar situation would have done this automatically because he would have recognised his role in history."

"So there's Miss Stocking..." muses Lorna.

"...completely taking herself for granted," adds Anne.

"She's gone," Lorna concludes. "You would really have to dig to find out anything about her."

Women, unassuming, taking themselves for granted. It all sounds familiar, and the personal consequences of this sort of self-effacement have been recognised by feminists for some time. But have we considered the impact of this kind of thinking on history? Even women we today consider famous present a puzzle to would-be

historians. For example, Irene Parlby, a provincial cabinet minister for fourteen years, member of the Alberta five, and tireless advocate for rural women -- "To get enough information to put together fifteen minutes (of film) on her would take you six months of research," estimates Anne, "and that would really be a search. The only way we've been able to ap-

proach it is through personal documents and the minutes of meetings. And these are the WASP pioneers that we're talking about. Try to find something on, say, a Ukrainian woman who did a lot to help other women of her time! That would really be a challenge, because our archives are heavily WASP oriented."

Not that Lorna and Anne are

Ann Wheeler



wanting in usable material. If anything they've overresearched the area. Those who see *Great Grand Mothers* will see only about one third of what the two women feel they might have included, if they didn't have to worry about things like cost and thematic unity. They have a box that bulges with several hundred archival photographs. They have uncovered diaries, letters and out-of-print books. Perhaps most valuable, they have recorded many old-timers on tape and film, women "from nuns to domestics". What frustrated them were the difficulties of interpretation, the gaps, and the roundabout way they had to go after much of the existing material. For example in each of the several archives they visited they went one by one through all the photographs in every file. Nowhere was there a sys-

tem of cataloguing that was set up with research on women in mind.

The records kept by women themselves were usually disappointing too. While women often seemed to be the ones who took the family pictures and kept the diaries, says Lorna, "their consciousness was such that they didn't record what they themselves did." Instead they kept records about (who else?) their husbands and sons. On top of this there seemed to be few women who were able to take stock of their feelings. Too many diary entries were flat, factual statements, like 'I washed the clothes today' or 'I ironed today'. Exceptions were a few books written by women who travelled across Canada to assess the situation for working women back in England. Lorna believes books like *Wheat and Woman* and *Homemakers*

in Canada should be republished.

The interviews with pioneers are particularly precious, because the time left for such conversations is running out. Every time an early settler dies, another chance to interpret their inadequate written and photographic records is lost. "We've already missed one of the neatest women in Edmonton," says Lorna. Gladys Reeves was a photographer. "She would have been perfect for the film. We talked to her in April before we did the research, and when we got back she was dead. So you're not talking about years to collect this information. For the women who lived at the turn of the century, you're talking about now. Immediately." And none of the people who experienced the pre-1900 period as adults are alive today.

Some of the interviews give startling insights into the hard life of the pioneer woman on the Prairies. Lorna recalls one who told the story of having her first child. "She was from England and living on a ranch in Southern Alberta. The day her child was born, her husband left the house at eight o'clock in the morning and didn't return for another twelve hours. His concept was that cows have calves by themselves, his wife could have a baby alone." Another woman described how her father told her to leave her home in the Ukraine to marry a man in Canada she had never seen. (This type of incident was not uncommon, for the availability of single men was touted in posters as a way of attracting female immigrants.) She went, alone, although she had never before travelled anywhere except by ox cart.

The transition from old country to new seems to have had one of two effects on women. "It either completely destroyed them or they found strengths that they never dreamed they had," says Anne. There were the ones who adapted, "like the frail English women with smelling salts in their little purses. They came out here and all of a sudden they had to do things like stook. They found that they never saw a doctor here, whereas they used to see a doctor every day in England, yet they were healthy, happy women." On the darker side there were the ones who went mad, and unfortunately they apparently were not rare exceptions. Anne postulates a sample history. "They came from tenements in London where there were neighbours on all sides, and then they were dumped into something like a sod house or a log house twenty by thirty feet. The husband would be away a lot, perhaps working for the railway, so these women were left weeks, months, alone with nobody

Lorna Rasmussen



but their children. They just couldn't cope."

Few women they talked to expressed outright bitterness, but Lorna feels there was sometimes an unspoken resentment. "One instance was doctors -- doctors who came drunk, or who tried to seduce them while a child was sick." These stories tend to be second hand. "When you try to get them to say these things on film, they will not admit that they happened. They have this mystique about

Even now, with the climate changing so that people are increasingly conscious of the omission of women from texts and documentary films, Lorna worries that people will not understand what she and Anne are trying to do. "People, both men and women, don't see the validity of making films on women." Even a co-worker who is editing *Great Grand Mothers* questioned the material that they had gathered. "He says none of the films on the history of the West

Anne got into filmmaking "completely by accident." In fact Anne Wheeler's early career history would probably leave any Manpower counselor scratching his/her head. She studied mathematics at university, working as an actress to put herself through. After graduation she was a computer programmer for six months. Travel in Alberta followed, then a return to university to take a teaching degree in music. After teaching high school for a year in Vancouver she

Sod hen house in Lomond area 1910



doctors, and men in general, that they could really do no wrong." In all the archival material, there were only two or three instances in which women talked about being unhappy. Most accepted the hardships of settlement as their lot.

*Great Grand Mothers*, to be completed in January, will combine filmed interviews with still photographs. "It's a really tricky thing to use stills and make them interesting," says Anne. For this reason they've studied a lot of films that use stills. In the interviews they wanted to capture the diversity in the backgrounds of the settlers, so they talked to a Jewish woman, a Ukrainian woman and an English woman. As the filmed portions will show, settlers "definitely brought their own culture over with them. All the cultures seemed to have had their own slant on the role of women."

Lorna believes the final result is more a sociological history than a history of chronological events. It's definitely not intended to be the last word on the history of Western women. Rather, they both hope it will be only the beginning, a stimulant to the search for women's history. Right now there is practically nothing available to Canadian teachers and women's groups that wish to promote an understanding of the role women have played in building this country.

are accurate, none are good historical films, so why not simply make a film on the history of the West, one that shows men and women in their proper historical perspective?" But, continues Lorna, "While I understand why he asked that question I think the slant, and the reasons for making this film are slightly different. For me, the history is a secondary thing. The most important thing is that we show women today that in the past women have done some very strong things. Hopefully this will set up a pattern that shows women as strong, capable human beings."

*Great Grand Mothers* is the second "women's film" that Anne and Lorna have made. Two years ago they worked together on *One Woman*, a twenty minute documentary that depicts two days in the life of a young woman who decides to leave her husband. Financed as an Opportunities for Youth project, it is significant because it was made entirely by women who, aside from Anne, were novices at filmmaking. Despite a lack of experience with the equipment and procedures the group was able to turn out a successful product. *One Woman* has been shown nationally on television and used widely by educators and women's groups across the country. "It's a bit stiff," comments Anne, "but technically it's great, because we took such care in it."



Mrs. A.C. Bowhay, Cochrane area, on saddle horse

Miss Katherine Stinson, air pilot, Calgary 1918

Ready for first air mail service flight in western Canada,



Branching Out



travelled again, this time in Africa where she did some archology, took a lot of photographs and finally, decided to return to Edmonton to "get involved somehow in the arts." On her return she found that some of her friends were starting a film company. "The second day I was back I ended up interviewing for them." She remembers the assignment and laughs. "They were doing some campaign ads for Harry Strom. We didn't have our hearts in it."

But she stuck with filmmaking and became one of six active shareholders in the company, Filmwest. Like everybody else at Filmwest she has remained with filmmaking "longer than I've stayed with anything else. I guess that's just because it's an area of constant change." Filmwest, now three years old, has set a longevity record for film collectives in Canada, and the staff are finally getting to the point where they can pay themselves enough to live on. Pressures to stratify the group are resisted -- everyone receives the same salary, including "the woman who runs the office." Anne, like others in the company, has been able to work in all aspects of filmmaking. "I've edited about three films, and directed three, and shot, and done music production and acting -- I don't think you can do that anywhere else." She also takes freelance acting jobs, and has both a radio program for children and a children's television series.

Lorna, although not a Filmwest shareholder, has been associated with the company for two years. When she first decided she was interested in film, an acquaintance at Filmwest advised her to stop reading the films and to go out and make one. Following his suggestions, she accompanied another woman who was making a five-minute film about an old house. Soon after that she took a trip to South America, but came back to Edmonton specifically planning to get into film. Fortunately, she met Anne who had just received an OFY grant for *One Woman*. Since then she has worked as second camerawoman on another Filmwest project. She also did a six-month stint as an assistant cinematographer at an educational television station before she began the research for *Great Grand Mothers*. In the summer of 1973 she was one of the Edmonton tour coordinators for the Women and Film International Festival.

Another project in which Lorna and Anne have worked together is a series of media workshops for women. The success of *One Woman* increased their shared confidence that women can indeed handle technical equip-

ment. Anne feels that the field of filmmaking has been mystified by people who want to protect the profession and their own positions in it. "The biggest insult we had making *One Woman* was that people (women as well as men) would be so surprised to see women making a 16 mm film. There is no aptitude that men have that women don't that would make men better filmmakers. There's nothing more complicated to running a camera than to running an oven or a zig-zag sewing machine. Certainly it's no more difficult to edit a film than to raise a child. Yet we assume that women are capable of raising a child but for some reason they should be overcome by anything technical. Hopefully the day will come when a woman can say to someone that she builds boats and they'll simply reply, 'That's great, what kind of boats do you make?'"

As for encouraging other women to get into filmmaking per se, Anne's only reservation has to do with the cost involved. She and Lorna have spent a year and a half trying to raise enough money to make *Great Grand Mothers*. By last January they had two thirds of their budget. When that money ran out in July, they spent two months doing little but trying to raise funds. Sixteen grant proposals later the support they needed came through, from the National Film Board. "To get a whole lot of people wanting to make a film and no money to do it would be a bit silly," says Anne. "But I sure try to get women involved in photography, or just media in general be it print, videotape, 8mm, 16mm or whatever. There are only certain times when 16mm is the best medium."

Aside from financial worries, Anne and Lorna must cope with a certain isolation as filmmakers who are both women and Westerners. Says Anne, "I would like to spend more time with other women who are making films, for sure." But she sees women in film as falling into one of two camps. "There are the women who have been in the field for a long time and have had to work really hard to get where they are at. They probably see this new influx of women into the media as having it rather easy, and I think that's hard for them to take lightly. Then there's the kind who are really encouraging, like Kathleen Shannon who has gone all the way from script assistant up to executive producer. That's a pretty long walk, yet she finds it in herself to help people like me." (Now that the NFB funding of *Great Grand Mothers* has been approved, Kathleen Shannon will be the film's executive



Separating milk, Manitoba 1916

producer.)

Anne feels some isolation working in the West, not because there are no other filmmakers here, but because "there aren't many that are committed to the West. There are quite a few people in film here who are making industrial or commercial films; most are simply here because there's a lot of work." Compounding the isolation is the fact that many people in the film industry in Toronto and Montreal are reluctant to acknowledge the worth of Filmwest products. Yet Anne doesn't see herself leaving Alberta -- at least not for good. "Being

Woman washing and listening to radio 1922



in the situation that I'm in, having learned from other people at Filmwest and vice versa, I think I've almost reached a plateau and I would like to have other experiences. I may have to go somewhere else to have those experiences, so I could foresee myself going away for six months or a year. But it would be in preparation for coming back to make better films about the West."

Obviously they feel there is plenty to do here. Because of the financial uncertainties Anne and Lorna are vague about specific projects, but they are bursting with ideas. Both would like to do more films on women. The material they already have is the beginning of at least one other film. Some historical themes they have considered are the Indian woman before the White woman came, the encounter between Indian and White woman, and women during the First World War. Individual pioneers who would make good biographical films include Cora Hind and Emily Murphy. They would like to compile their historical photographs into a book. Another project, already begun, is a collection of filmed interviews with pioneer women. All this is quite apart from the file full of ideas at Filmwest ("everything from a good film on Edmonton to The Cremation of Sam McGee"), and a personal ambition of Anne's to make films for children. But for the next few months, the task is to complete *Great Grand Mothers*.

"At least it will be a useful film," comments Lorna. But this material, in the hands of these two women, is bound to be more than that. And if it is well received, its success could give a needed push to Western filmmakers, to women filmmakers, and to the search for women's history. Someday, someone may even make a film about Erma Stocking.\*\*\*

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stone fences and brick walls  
when you bounce your conversation  
against me  
like handballs

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No roots  
I've never known roots  
sliding inside you  
taught me how to look  
at one place  
one whistlingempty lot  
windswept and dugin  
provincially

I thought it antique  
dangerous in fact  
-to be regional  
we moved East

Even here  
you possess me-  
a sky, big enough for a child's scrawl  
and cineramic sunsets  
moving wheatfields  
liquified by heatwaves rising from the pavement  
a smile behind a ripple  
waving outward

you possess me  
with your lightfoot clacking  
railroadcars  
and overpainted Rockies  
always in the distance

I'm coming back  
(they don't know  
you/need a very white billboard to tell them)  
this  
silence of space

## PRELUDE

Had you asked me if I loved you  
there would have been an answer  
I have my reasons

but you didnt  
you said  
'tell me you love me'

I said  
'I love you'  
noting the lack of imagination  
in the exchange

later,  
while you slept  
I took it back



Heather Pyrcz



iona

## RAINY DAY, BURNABY MOUNTAIN

the fifth day of April  
A. Y. Jackson is quiet  
passing into silent fields  
probably still wearing snowshoes

over a plate of macaroni and butter  
a rainbow stretches  
its arms across the sky

## FOR A WHILE A MOONLIT BIRCH

fitting my heels quietly  
in the groove of someone else  
i backtrack through a frozen clock  
to a time of spy games  
eight years old  
skulking alone to the grocery store  
coded instructions warm and safe  
dark in the pocket of my navy blue jumper  
i dread that i know too well:  
the crazy old man  
will breathe too loud  
lean his great weight  
on the glass wall of candy  
and dragon-like leer  
*now you're sure that they're all for your mummy?*

the spongy field  
too-thawed to hold this final snow  
gives way in small threats

fists tighten  
on cold round metal  
coins in my mitt  
i mumble the times tables  
to dust out the fear  
that dimes can maybe  
gnaw their way  
through the tiny breathing holes  
in my home-knit woolen thumb

clenched fingers only tangle  
the strings around my stomach  
the stare of the guard tower  
plots my stumble  
over the slump of the hill

Heidi Greco

# On a Rainy Day



by Nancy Thayer

Here in Vancouver it rains rather than snows in the winter. I take the day's mail from the mailbox (and give the soggy sky a dirty look) and go back into the house which is quiet now with morning. My husband is at work, my children are at school, the cat's asleep on the windowsill, the dog loves his bone on our best rug. I take my hot cup of tea into the kitchen and sit down at my desk with the mail. The desk is littered; it seems I'm always behind in something. I sort the mail: one ad, two bills, and an air mail letter from Joan. This, Joan's letter, makes me look up and out the window, makes me see not the wet sagging branches of the evergreen tree that is really there, but the blustering snow of the midwest. Snow. Memories. Roses in the children's cheeks, icicles stuck to mittens, small white clumps of snow melting into lakes around red rubber boots, the

teakettle whistling its promise from the stove.

From out of that past, cold and already distant, comes this letter from Joan. I don't want to open it, I don't want to read it, I don't want to be interested. I was happy there, my family was happy there; it's not fair that she should summon me with this thin white envelope back to the one part of life there that was unpleasant.

Still, I can't just throw out the unopened letter. I can't forget her, with a snap of my fingers, just like that. But I don't know why not. What binds me to her?

I lean back in my chair, sip my tea, and think. What does bind people to people, me to the ones I love? For my husband and my children the answer is easy: flesh, the joys of flesh, poetry, the spiraling of promises, the pleasure of sharing life. Because of those, I am bound to my husband even when he grumbles, my son even when he bites,

my daughter even when she slams the bedroom door so that the molding about it quakes.

But to Joan? What binds me to Joan? I stare at her sloppy scrawl on the envelope, and make myself remember her.

Joan. My next-door neighbor way back there. She is thirty-eight, has three children, no stretchmarks, a few gray hairs, a slight problem with her weight, an excellent, rather coarse sense of humor. I can see her there, in my mind's eye, standing at her kitchen window, looking out at the snow: red slacks, a red pullover sweater, bare feet, hanging hair. She had driven her children to school, returning to her empty house, kicked off her boots and socks, made herself a cup of instant coffee, and is now waiting for something, perhaps the mail.

What binds me to her? Not flesh, I have never really touched her; I don't lust after her as I do after my husband

and children. Not poetry, certainly; she's not the poetic type. (One of her typical jokes, told at a party with both men and women listening: how do you know a man is a loser? When he finds a string in his bloody mary. She was of course trying to prove she was happy and brave, but our nervous, slightly obligated laughs showed her she had only been crude.) Not, especially now, promises. Obviously I can live quite well without her; I lived next door to her for three years. Now, after four months away, I do not miss her, have never had once even the slight ache I have when I put my son down to bed at night and know I won't see his sweet face, sweet flesh, till morning.

We moved to Vancouver from the midwest; a better job for my husband, we thought it would be good for us. All that is yet to be seen, and at the moment is quite irrelevant. And back there, Joan and I were neighbors, more than friends. No, I can not say she was ever really my friend. We did not share the same interests. We had nothing in common. She was always so tense, self-involved, rather manic. She borrowed things and did not return them. She asked rude questions. She knew nothing about my life, really, yet she kept forcing herself upon me, calling me to come over for coffee the moment she heard my husband's car go out the drive, acting offended if for some reason (my son sick in bed with a cold) I couldn't come.

I was happy with my life. I did not want to share hers. But so many nights I was trapped, with my husband, into sharing that life, after all. For it wasn't always snowing in the midwest; summer came and some of us--my husband and I, with the children asleep in the house--sat out in our back yards at night, sipping gin and tonic, holding hands, looking at the stars. Feeling content, and full of peace.

Then we would hear the sounds. Joan's husband's voice first, very low: "So you're out here drinking again."

"Your dinner's in the oven."

"Joan, come on. I had to work late."

"Oh, Sam, why try to lie. You're such a rotten liar. You were with *her*, weren't you?"

"Joan. Listen. Come on. Don't cry. Come inside. Please don't cry."

"But you PROMISED ME!"

As soon as we possibly could, we would sneak into the house, not wanting to hear any more, slightly piqued that we could no longer sit happily in our yard in peace. We were glad to move away.

So what is it that binds me to her? Our children were not the same ages;

our husbands did not appreciate each other's company; I was busy with so many things that didn't interest her at all. Still, I did spend time with her. I almost had to: every morning last winter, as soon as my husband was out the drive, the phone would ring. Joan's hopeful voice--"coffee?" Cowardly, more often than not, I'd go. Or, coming home from a walk somewhere, I would see her watching out the window; when she saw me, her face would brighten, she would hurry to her front door, open it, and wave--"coffee?" Then, the boots melting onto newspapers in the hallway, the teakettle whistling on the stove.

Now I sit in Vancouver in blissful silence, alone, drinking tea, looking out my window at an evergreen tree. Each slender twig on the tree holds a waterdrop, clean, trembling, poised like a ripe pear ready to fall into a waiting hand, or a baby hanging upside down waiting to slide into life.

Then, back in the midwest, although we scarcely realized it and were afraid to admit it, something else was balanced precariously, HumptyDumptylike, ready to fall and crack and break: the shell of a family, the marriage.

I would sit in Joan's messy kitchen, drinking tea or coffee, staring at the floor or the ceiling or my hands. Listening, listening, listening. Trying not to care. She was not my sort, she was rough and noisy, I did not invite her confidences, I did not want to know. I wanted to be nice, but I did not want to be involved.

"What am I going to do? What am I going to do? What am I going to do?"

"I don't know." (I really didn't know.)

"He says he doesn't love her; he tells me he does not want a divorce. He says he needs her, just for a while, to help him open new doors into himself. That's what he said, open new doors into himself."

"Oh." (Oh.)

"I said I would find someone to help me open new doors into myself; there's the boy at the gas station, the way he looks at me--sometimes I go out on the highway and drive and drive, just so I can go get some gas. Isn't that funny? I mean now with the crisis and all? Isn't it funny?"

"Funny, yes." (Ho. Ho.)

"He said he'd kill me. He says I'm content, I've got everything I need, children, clothes, my ceramics class. He asked me if I am *fulfilled*. I said yes. He said, 'see?' He's enough for me, but I'm not enough for him. He says men's needs are different. What do you think?"

"I don't know. Really, I don't

know."

"He told me her name. Miranda. Isn't that a beautiful name? I'm thinking of changing mine to Jennifer. Do you think he'd be content with only me if I changed my name to Jennifer? If I lost ten pounds? If I cut my hair? And had it frosted? If I went back to school? (What would I study?) If I learned to play the guitar? If I had another baby? If I won a contest and a free trip to Paris? If I took up religion, stopped biting my nails, got myself glasses, started beating the children?"

"I don't know. I wish I knew, but I don't know."

"Well, *think*. Help me, Your husband seems happy enough with just you. I've seen him bring you flowers. What do you do? What is it you do?"

"I can't explain it; I don't know. I don't *do* anything; it just *is*."

"A new sex technique?"

I never knew what to do. I never knew what to say. I only wanted to escape, to simply get away from her. Our worlds, our selves, were so very different. She did not like to come to my house for coffee; she was afraid the phone might ring, she might miss a phone call from her husband. I came to know her house, her habits: on Friday nights she made homemade pizza; on Mondays, just like the nursery rhymes, she washed. In the middle of our conversation she would prick up her ears like a dog who thinks she hears her master; she would hear the absence of the hum of the washing machine, and so, trailing her words behind her like clothespole line, she would go into the laundry room to move the wet wash from the washer to the dryer.

"Should I give him an ultimatum? Should I tell him it's either her or me? Should I simply not notice, after all, we're living in a modern age. Should I--"

I was, I admit it, glad to move away from her. Still, I always felt guilty somehow, connected somehow, bound. When she started writing letters to me, I answered. Her letters were brave and gay like her jokes, slightly rushed, superficial. Strangely, she did not mention in writing the problems she had so often cried about to my face. She spoke of mutual acquaintances, her children, a funny incident. Sometimes she mentioned little things, details, the weather: "it snowed again today and the shrubs are completely covered over."

Covered over in winter, the shrubs that divided our yards looked to me like snowmen, like identical holding hands dolls cut from white paper, like tiny fat guards, and towards evening, like ghosts.

Oh. Yes. I know now, I see. I finally see how it is that we are bound.

cont. on p. 45





## TWISTER

In Kansas somewhere  
there's a farmer's freezer  
scarred black with the print  
of a college girl's shoe

where I climbed in  
and waited  
one cold hour,  
trying to remember whether  
flatland tornadoes sucked  
from the southwest or the northeast.

I had seen it:  
tentacles wrapped in the spin  
of themselves;  
a Charybdal octopus  
inking the sky  
against this meagre army  
of clapboard houses,  
gnawing  
at the prairie dust  
and wooden barnyard bones.

Yet, even as it hurled  
the horizon toward us,  
my farmer hosts  
quite casually  
judged the distance  
"out of town",  
musing in the memories  
of closer ones  
that once flattened  
their fathers' barns.

Here I excused myself  
to quickly search the cellar  
for that cold, electric womb;  
certain to be as safe  
as the treasured side of beef  
beside me.

Somewhere in Kansas  
a farmer gropes for his  
frozen dinner,  
forgetting the footprints  
of a city girl  
who took  
two semesters  
to thaw.

Kathleen MacLennan ~ Murch





# Prelude to IWY



by Sandra Hillmer

The spirit of International Women's year (1975) made an early debut in Ottawa as women of 30 nations gathered for two weeks in September to discuss concrete measures governments must take to ensure equality between the sexes. On their name cards they displayed the symbol which will become familiar the world around when IWY officially gets underway - the peace dove bearing the mathematical equality sign and the biological symbol for women - representing the three themes of IWY - peace, equality and the development of women.

Intended as a prelude to International Women's Year, the United Nations sponsored seminar was officially titled "Inter-regional Seminar on National Machinery to Accelerate the Integration of Women in Development and to Eliminate Discrimination on the Grounds of Sex."

This was the first seminar of international scope ever to take place on the topic. As one of only seven members of the United Nations which have established national commissions on the status of women, Canada was chosen to host the seminar.

Delegates, selected on a geographic basis so that each continent would be represented, concentrated on means by which women can be integrated into the mainstream of life. Discussion tended to be low key as the conference bypassed specific issues of women's rights in favor of general principles on which countries could develop "national mechanisms" to ensure equality.

Participating countries were selected to include those with existing machinery, those in the process of setting up machinery and those with no machinery at the national level. The roster included representatives from: Argentina, Aus-

tria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Egypt, France, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, USSR, United Kingdom, USA, Yugoslavia and Zambia.

Canada, Japan and Mexico provided resource consultants to introduce each of the three items up for discussion. Notable by their absence were representatives of the world's male population, although, as the delegate from the United States pointed out, a fuller recognition of the rights of women should result in increased opportunities and security for men.

In her opening address, Mrs. Helvi Sipila, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs emphasized the critical importance of mechanisms at the national level to overcome the heavy handicaps with which women enter economic, social, political, and cultural life. Even though many governments accept the principle of equality and have enacted progressive legislation, Mrs. Sipila pointed out grave inequalities still remain.

For example, she called attention to the higher percentages of women over men who are illiterate, underemployed and unemployed; who are overburdened with dual roles as housekeeper and employee; who drop out at the primary and secondary levels; and whose contributions are not taken into account in the gross national product. Since fewer women than men graduate from university, they are underrepresented in the upper end of the occupational spectrum. This absence of women in the planning and decision making echelons makes for unsatisfactory solutions to the problems of maternity, for instance, among working women whose needs aren't taken into account by male management.

"It seems incredible," Mrs. Sipila said, "that one half of the world's population has been ignored for so long not only in terms of contributing to national development but also in terms of the individual's basic right to freedom, responsibility and self-fulfillment."

The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, PC, MP, Secretary of State for External Affairs, in his opening speech, pledged full government support to the activities of International Women's Year and the work of women in general.

He also stated publicly that the government would re-introduce the

Omnibus Bill which had died in Parliament when the federal election was called. "If we are to reach our proper potential as a nation, all citizens must be free to choose what they want to be," Mr. MacEachen stressed, "And they must have the opportunity to realize that choice."

The seminar elected Rita Cadieux, Canada's representative on the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, as chairperson. Martha Hynna served as acting head of the ten-member Canadian delegation. Mrs. Hynna stressed that as soon as women are fully integrated into all aspects of society, the need for special boards, commissions and bureaus dealing with the status of women would disappear. "In the long run all the hassles of women's lib and women's groups will have been well worth the effort if the barriers of human prejudice can be worn away and everyone can share equally in the opportunities and responsibilities of our society," she said.

Each country distributed and presented a paper to the seminar outlining its national machinery and the relationship of this machinery to policy formulation and planning. Simultaneous interpretations were available in the seminar's four official languages: English, French, Spanish and Russian.

Information supplied by the participants showed that the nature, functions, and structure of the existing machinery reflected very closely the specific concerns of individual countries, particularly with respect to national aims of development and to the cultural framework within which the advancement of women was to take place.

In Yugoslavia, for instance, the principle of self-management permeates all aspects of Yugoslavian society and is therefore the basis of the process to eliminate discrimination on grounds of sex. There is no hierarchic relation among its federal, republican, and communal bodies and all achievements are the direct result of an organized action of political forces and the self-managing structure.

In many of the working papers it became increasingly evident that economic and social development does not automatically benefit women and place them in the mainstream of development. This is especially apparent in Kenya where the great majority of women live in rural areas while development is taking place in the urban areas where men predominate.

In the Canadian paper it was noted that high educational attainment is not matched with extended responsibility in society because education, as it stands clearly places women in supportive roles and especially in the home. Until this philosophy is changed there can be little

headway made.

The Swedish representative, May-Britt Carlsson offered a somewhat different perspective on the question of equality by insisting that a more equitable arrangement can only be achieved by "double roles for both men and women." She felt it was wrong to make the masculine role a pattern for women to try to adopt. She also felt that men should be allowed to develop their responsibilities in the home if they choose to.

Besides exposing common world wide problems, the papers brought out at least four different types of national machinery: national commissions or committees on the status of women, special bureaus or units within a government department or ministry, units for women within the trade union structure, units composed of women within or affiliated to the national party structure. Delegates agreed that one model would not suit every country and that some machinery at the national level was necessary to ensure full integration of women in development.

Canada's working paper and the description of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women were well received and set the tone for many of the discussions. Our national machinery reflects the federal structure of the government and, while many of the existing structures appear to perform the same duties, they have in fact a special role to play within their own jurisdiction. Canada's national machinery includes an Advisory Council of the Status of Women, a Minister responsible for the Status of Women and a Co-ordinator, Status of Women, as well as numerous special advisors and programs within ministries on matters of concern to women. Experiencing as they do inequality at the everyday level, pressure groups outside the established structures can also play a significant role.

Having established concrete examples of national machinery the next item the seminar tackled was to assess what function this machinery could be expected to fulfill. The importance of systematic data collection and analysis to formulate policies and programmes aimed at full integration was stressed in the Netherlands paper and discussed at length by the other participants. Several countries, including the Asian and African countries especially noted that data available concerning women is quite scarce and much of what is available is distorted or taken from sample groups containing only men. Objective data is certainly one strong weapon against prejudice. The USA cautioned that this data must not become an end in itself but rather a means to effective future action as it has in the USA.

Subjective data is also very important. Florence Bird, the Status of Women Co-ordinator, recognized the impact of subjective data and organized country-wide talk sessions where women and men could come and present their cases at public hearings during the research for the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Ms. Bird felt that the effect of the hearings alone would have justified the cost of the entire commission. The Philippines representative suggested that maybe the United Nations could establish a data collection center where interested nations could analyse and compare progress made.

The discussion on data collection brought out the need for common terminology and new indicators to assess the status of women and to measure their integration. This is needed especially to include the work of housewives and non-remunerated agricultural workers in the category of the gainfully

maternity reasons. In Austria, as a concession to willing workers, paid maternity can last up to three years if adequate child care cannot be found.

The seminar recommended that every available means of education, information and communication be used to ensure the improvement of women's situation. These measures more than any of the others would tend to break down prejudices, eliminate sex stereotypes, and create a new and better image of women's and men's roles.

The third item discussed at the seminar concerned the various considerations which apply to the establishment and organization of national machinery. Whatever the machinery set up, most participants agreed that it should be mandated by the government at the highest level and that the media should be invited to publicize the founding of the body whatever its composition. Financing of the machinery and of the work of women's groups in general has



The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen and Mrs. Helvi Sipilä.

employed.

If government is the agency to take action toward solving social problems, the national machinery must help to formulate policies, programmes and follow-up action. Some of these measures would include equal pay for equal work, as well as a programme of social services and social measures to protect the welfare of mothers and their children. In the USSR the law provides paid maternity leave for four months regardless of the length of service. Nursing mothers are given paid breaks for feeding their children. No woman can be refused work in the USSR or dismissed for

always been difficult. Allocation of adequate resources is necessary to ensure the successful carrying out of the agency's function. Many of the developing countries such as Kenya and Malaysia felt that these resources should be considered as an integral cost of the development programme for the country.

The representative from Sweden stressed the importance of including both men and women in the national commissions from a wide cross-section of society so that they could all share in a more human and just society. Everyone agreed that certain concessions had to be made to women during the inter-

im period except for the representatives of the USSR, who felt women are already on an equal footing with men because of the history of integration of women into society in that country.

The 33 resolutions that emerged from the seminar were particularly useful to countries without sophisticated national mechanisms. For many of the countries present this seminar was the only access to information on methods utilized by other countries to eliminate

discrimination on the basis of sex. For the countries with sophisticated mechanisms it was an opportunity to reevaluate and reconsider the progress made in light of what was taking place in other countries. International Women's Year should be an historical year in the emancipation struggles of women all over the world. \* \* \*

decorum identified with such international gatherings.

A jaded observer might have detected a *deja vu* quality to the entire proceedings: the faces may change and the topics may differ but fundamentally, an international conference can be a very dull affair. The long-established, universally recognized series of rituals can often strangle out discussion of matters of substance. The correct compliments must be paid to the host country; care must be taken not to openly criticize the position paper or point of view of any other nation; and most importantly, one's own state must be presented in the best light possible.

While these patterns emerged during the sessions, there was a unique aspect to this conference. With the exception of two or three men, all the delegates were women. Since they had come together to discuss how the lot of their female counterparts could be improved through international effort, visions of world-wide sisterhood began to float above the rhetoric in the initial stages of the meetings. These visions were fed by the nature of the discussions. Focusing on the administrative machinery which the participant states had established to promote the equality of women within their own borders, the conference had the ideal subject to make all present feel that they could contribute something of significance. Bureaucracy is a universal constant. Discussions of bureaucratic structures can skirt the question of the types of problems with which national mechanisms are trying to deal, the types of political difficulties encountered in finding attempted solutions, or the success which had been achieved in fulfilling stated aims. Only one delegate made even slight public allusion to the fact that general interest in issues affecting women was not particularly high in her country, and thus political action on these matters tended to be slower than would be desirable.

Nevertheless, even the Lester B. Pearson building with its tranquil view of the Rideau River could not totally block out aspects of the real world beyond the flora and fauna of the river banks. It soon became clear that like many visions, international sisterhood is essentially a delusion. Just as there is no world-wide homogeneity of social and economic development, so too do the problems faced by the female sector of the world population differ. The discussions indicated that the state of social and economic life in a particular country determines, to a significant degree, the types of discrimination against women found in that society.

The problems faced by the majority of women in North America are far removed from those confronted women in Mali, where 85 percent of the popula-

photos of IWY conference  
by Bob Anderson, Ottawa

From left to right, Rita Cadieux (Canada), Svetla Daskalova (Bulgaria), Dr. Fatma Abdel Mahmoud (Sudan), Leticia Shahani (Phillipines), Consuelo Ruiz Scheel (Guatemala).



# Retrospective

by Georgina Wyman

The sleek lines of the new Lester B. Pearson building (the headquarters of the Department of External Affairs) were an appropriately luxurious setting for an opening. Suitable pomp and pageantry radiated from the thick carpets, the shining chrome and sparkling glass; from the bright fuschiatoned overstuffed furniture and large canvases by contemporary Canadian painters, which constituted the decor of the salon where delegates and press assembled. As one

read down the list of delegates, the impression of diplomatic dazzle emanating from the physical setting was confirmed by the human participants. Gathered together to open International Women's Year were high-level representatives of thirty-seven countries. Chairpersons of commissions responsible for the status of women, special advisers holding prestigious positions in their governments, ambassadors, ministers of justice - all met with the appropriate



Audrey Watson '74

# Our First Ring

photos by Alice Baumann-Rondez

by the Staff

*Branching Out* was started in August of 1973 when a group of Edmonton women got together with the same idea: start a magazine for Canadian women that would take their work seriously, be of high quality, be distributed across the country, and be financed by donations, loans and volunteer help. We did not want to start a newsletter, or a quarterly gestetnered publication. No, we wanted a top quality, glossy, printed magazine, of the professional level of *Chatelaine* or *Saturday Night*. If we had only known...

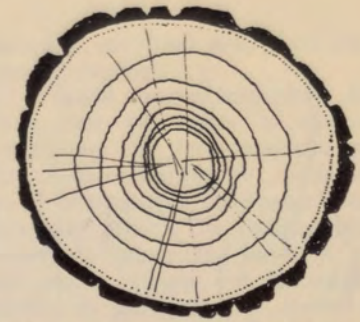
In fact, it was probably partly because none of us had very much (and some of us, no) experience in publishing, printing, advertising and distribution that we made it as far as we have. We blithely disbelieved all those sensible souls who told us that the difficulties of starting such a professional publication were far greater than we realised. We maintained that we would find the

ing!

There were some people who didn't discourage us, but in fact thought we could do it. ('Maybe' was the word in each of their minds, but they had the courtesy not to tell us that.) Among these were some husbands, friends, mothers and fathers.

Anyway, the upshot of it was that we went ahead. First came the momentous task of gathering information about our venture - what were the copyright laws, how much did printing cost, who could we ask for contributions of material, what government grants were available, and on and on... About that point we realised it was impossible to have the first issue out by the end of September.

Next we had to solicit material from writers, photographers and artists, and write articles and do interviews ourselves. Luckily, many different people sent us good material within the ridiculously short time limit we had set (about two weeks); others were very cooperative about granting interviews or



giving as new people arrived and old drifted away. Of some seventy-five women who attended meetings during the first couple of months, only eight are still deeply committed to *Branching Out*. Often a job that someone had taken on would not get done, and someone else had to take it over, wasting precious time. And with every new face we had to reiterate decisions and philosophy.

The next job was to obtain some advertising. Just *you* try to get advertising for a magazine that is being published with no money, hasn't yet produced an issue, is directed to 'those women's libbers' and has a projected circulation of 5000! There were a few local merchants who were willing to help us, but not many. That may have been our lowest point, when we realised that we were not going to be able to cover costs with advertising and had to get the money from somewhere else. Probably we should have given up, but there are some rather stubborn women working on *Branching Out*, so instead



Sharon Batt



Susan McMaster



Naomi Loeb

money somehow, we would figure out how to put the magazine together, we would get advice and help as we needed it. Looking back, our naivete is astounding.

giving us information.

All through the first few months our difficulties were compounded because the group was continuously chan-

ging as new people arrived and old drifted away. Of some seventy-five women who attended meetings during the first couple of months, only eight are still deeply committed to *Branching Out*. Often a job that someone had taken on would not get done, and someone else had to take it over, wasting precious time. And with every new face we had to reiterate decisions and philosophy.



The next headache was typesetting. Unable to afford to get it done professionally, we rented machines at a low rate from the Gateway, the U of A campus newspaper, and set to. Unfortunately, we didn't know how to operate the machines very well, nor were we very good typists. Every galley in that first issue must have been re-typed at least three times, and then corrected over and over again by hand. A friend wrote a poem called 'Open word surgery' about that part of it.

When we finally had the muddy galleys ready, we borrowed the Gateway facilities again - in between newspaper runs which were twice a week - and started on layout. Do you know how hard it is for a normal, untrained person to get a piece of paper not only straight on a page, but lined up with other bits of paper? Or to do letrasetting without cracking every second letter? Or to place a waxed galley correctly when the makeshift light table you're working on has an ordinary light bulb under it two inches from the glass? To sum up, a job we had been told would take a few days, took six of us three weeks of fourteen-hour days to finish.

Then we had to find places to sell *Branching Out*. This was easier than obtaining advertising, since merchants weren't losing anything except a little shelf space by stocking us. Even so, some were quite hostile towards 'you women's libbers', even while stocking *Penthouse*, *Skin Mag*, and so on.

And then, late in November, the big day came. We went to get our very first issue from the printer. Alice, the photo-

grapher (she had done photography for magazines before) were grayed out or black, cracked, or not inked properly. And after we had (foolishly) paid the bill and taken the roughly boxed magazines home, we began to discover other errors. Pages were double printed or blank, put in upside down or left out, over-inked into black smears, or under-inked into gray blurs. Not all of the copies were ruined - only about 20%.

It was at that point that we really understood what 'by women and for women' meant. Someone had to go and fight with the printer and get back cold hard cash as a refund on the sloppy job he had done. It sure would have been nice to send an employed, and probably male, business manager to do that. Instead, it had to be one of us. In the end, the coordinator went and managed to get a refund of \$500 - the minimum acceptable to us. We had managed to deal with our first real business problem; we felt more confident as a result.

However, after that things picked up. Outsiders didn't seem to worry about the errors as much as we did, and were impressed with the quality of content. For a while we were 'news', and were interviewed on radio and television and publicised by the press. Subscriptions and compliments began to roll in. It seemed that women across Canada were looking for what we were offering. It was wonderful to feel their support, and made all the hassles and back-breaking work worthwhile.

Since then, we have found an excellent printer who doesn't assume that doing us in is part of his job, have

afford to get the typesetting done professionally. With every issue, the mechanics become easier.

Unfortunately, we're never satisfied. Not willing to simply survive, we keep trying to make *Branching Out* better, to reach more Canadian women, and to be more responsive to their needs. And while we don't want to become a mammoth organisation, we feel it wouldn't hurt to become more businesslike and capable. That would free us to put more time into improving the content of the magazine, and enable us to pay staff and contributors for their work. We want to keep publishing *Branching Out* as long as, and only as long as, it answers a real need for Canadian women.

by Sue

That first meeting....

I had put up signs saying:

'Canadian women's magazine needs staff and contributors literature, art, business, photos, sports, general everything'

Glorious-pink signs around the university, and downtown, and entered ads in the city newspapers. I was astounded by the results. Within the next few days I must have received a hundred phone calls. Most women were enthusiastic, saying that they had had the same idea for some time, or that we should do it this way or that. The second comment was usually a question - where is the money coming from? Oh, I would reply,



Mary Alyce Heaton



Iona MacAllister



Alice Baumann-Rondez photo by David Brookes

grapher, almost cried when she saw the first copy, but started to swear instead. Her pictures, which she had spent hours making into the best possible prints (she

slowly expanded the number of distribution outlets and advertising accounts, have improved our skills at layout, editing, etcetera, and have been able to

we'll find it somewhere.

One woman said she'd love to come to a meeting about the magazine, and when was it? 'Uh, Tuesday OK?' 'Sure.'

And every Tuesday since that first has been tied up with our general meetings.

To say I was nervous is not correct. I was terrified. I didn't know how many women would arrive, what they would be like, or what on earth had given me the gall to call all these strangers together to listen to a wild idea of mine.

The first to arrive made me feel particularly gawky. She was delicate, pretty, impeccably dressed, claimed to have worked for a year full-time with the women's movement, and had a cool, courteous manner I could never hope to emulate. If only I had known this was Naomi, I wouldn't have been so scared. Next to come was an elegant, dark-haired and vivacious lady, full of enthusiasm - Roberta (now, to our regret, returned to Boston after working terrifically hard for *Branching Out*). Then suddenly everyone was there. The few outlines I had duplicated were being passed from hand to hand, people were talking madly, ringing the doorbell, or pouring themselves coffee. I wasn't nervous any longer: this was a party, to celebrate our excitement over the same delightful, crazy idea.

When I finally sat down at what became my customary position at the side of the dining-living-room table, and said 'Good evening', the bedlam disappeared. Starting at the top, I covered briefly the ideas I had written down about the magazine. There were few questions until about the middle, when someone asked where we were going to get the money. Finding my non-explan-

By the time three hectic hours had passed, we had probably raised every question it is possible to have about magazines and publishing, including what the laws were, where we were going to get material, how much money was needed and where would it come from, what our philosophy should be, what our name should be, what our structure should be, and on, and on, and answered none of them. But we had discovered a shared desire to publish such a magazine, that we did think we could do it, and that we were going to make a damned good try at doing it. Some people agreed to look into specific questions, we set the next meeting for the following Tuesday, and the first general meeting of *Branching Out* magazine was adjourned.

by Naomi

*Broad, Crabapple, Half the Battle, Tit for Tat!* What do these strange titles have in common? Believe it or not, they are a mere sampling of the hair-raising names that were bandied about before we finally ended up with *Branching Out*.

The search for a name was one of the more humorous aspects of our inauspicious beginning. *Branching Out* actually surfaced quite early in our name-hunting sessions. We were all rather pleased with it, since it captured the idea of growth and movement into hitherto unexplored areas, while at the same time keeping a hold on our roots

Our satisfaction was, alas, short-lived, when we learned to our horror that a government publication on computers was named *Branching Out*. Imagine using our lyrical name to describe wires, terminals and index cards! We then set about discovering whether the title had been copyrighted, or, in any case, if we were still free to use it. We made inquiries with what seemed to be every government office remotely connected with the subject; predictably, no immediate replies were given. In spite of vague assurances that there would "probably be no problem", we decided to play it safe, and supply ourselves with a few acceptable alternatives.

It was then that our heady brainstorming sessions began. The one that sticks most vividly in my memory lasted six hours, and by the end of it, we had totally lost our perspective. We must have, or how else can I now explain names like *Parboiled, Female Monthly, and The Old Grey Mare?* It seemed that the harder we tried, the more far-fetched each name sounded. And they came fast and furious - *Pandora, Elbow Room, Dawning, Promises to Keep.* Not content with those, we moved on to more dizzying heights - *The Plain Janes, Foot and Mouth, and A Gaggle of Geese.* We had a lot of fun, and by the end of the day, most of us ached from laughing.

But we still hadn't solved our problem. We all favored *Branching Out* to the exclusion of everything else. *Branching* was our unenthusiastic second



Meg Shatilla



Helen Rosta



Marylu Antonelli

ations unsatisfactory, she appealed to the rest of the group. From that point on it was impossible to keep the excitement down.

and the past. The tree symbolism is obvious, but we felt it to be an accurate and sensitive expression of our philosophy.

choice. *Elbow Room* was third.

Obviously, we ended up foiling the government and its computers - we got the name we wanted. And so ended one

of the more lively periods in our development.

by Mary Alyce

Many people think that *Branching Out* is published by a corporation with a lot of money behind it. This is simply not true. The magazine must support itself through selling advertising and copies. As our circulation is still below 5,000 copies per issue, our advertising rates are not high, and although the magazine retails at \$1.00 our production costs take more than half of that, and distribution expenses another quarter. We are left with less than 20 cents per copy sold to pay for things like stationery, mailing costs, the small amount we pay contributors, and so on. We pay for professional typesetting, but other than that we have *no* paid staff, secretarial or otherwise. We do not have an office or a phone; expense accounts are unheard of. A grant from the Women's programme of the Department of Secretary of State in the spring of 1974 enabled us to continue publication, but we still have debts and we still have no money.

This does not mean that we are in imminent danger of folding. It does mean that we operate on a very tight budget, and must continue to do so for some time to come.

#### REORGANISATION

Periodically there is the need to

At first we had the very idealistic notion that the magazine could be run as a pure democracy - one woman, one vote and somehow (we never stopped to figure out how), the work would get done. After the publication of the first issue there was a big slump. We had all worked together to get the damn thing out, it was out, and suddenly the momentum dissipated. We had produced a magazine and we were very proud of ourselves, but suddenly there loomed the idea that we had committed ourselves to continuing. We had people depending on us to continue, but more than that we felt that we had not come so far and overcome so many obstacles just to let the magazine go. More than anything else, we wanted to prove that we weren't just a flash in the pan. Emotionally and financially we had invested too much.

For about six weeks after the preview issue came out we just sat there. It became apparent that we had to have someone in charge of pulling the thing together or it would never be done. There was no shortage of potential leaders in the group, but in the end, expedience was the deciding factor, and she who had the most time was, by common consent, made the top coordinator. So we tried that for a while, one person trying to coordinate the actions and responsibilities of about ten other people doing their varied jobs. Tasks were not assigned, whoever felt she could handle a job took it on. And with this system, if it can be called that,

and the fact that people were doing whatever they liked drove these women nutty. The other major result of this laissez-faire policy was that often major jobs did not get done because no one wanted to do them.

Clearly another reorganization was necessary. So those who were really interested in keeping the magazine going got together and held an all-day meeting. It was exhausting. People made their complaints known, compliments were exchanged; we spent a lot of time talking about the future. The meeting had no specific purpose - sure we had some proposals and ideas to kick around but mostly it had been called because we realized that we had to determine where we stood as a group before we could decide where the magazine could go. It was clear that unless some problems were straightened out, some interpersonal hassles solved and some clearly defined goals laid down, we would collapse.

We could outline some of the concrete things that occurred at that meeting. We did some organizational work, we adopted some administrative techniques, got a few things of the who-does-what type clarified.

But more important than that, we sat down and really talked to each other about why we were with *Branching Out*, and what we each wanted *Branching Out* to be. Since none of us were (or are) in it for the money, there had to be other reasons. Each one of us wanted the magazine to do something, but we



Karen Lawrence



Cheryl Boon



Linda Donnelly

reorganize the magazine. Two things make this necessary: people entering or leaving the group, and the periodic changes in our goals.

we published the second issue of *Branching Out*.

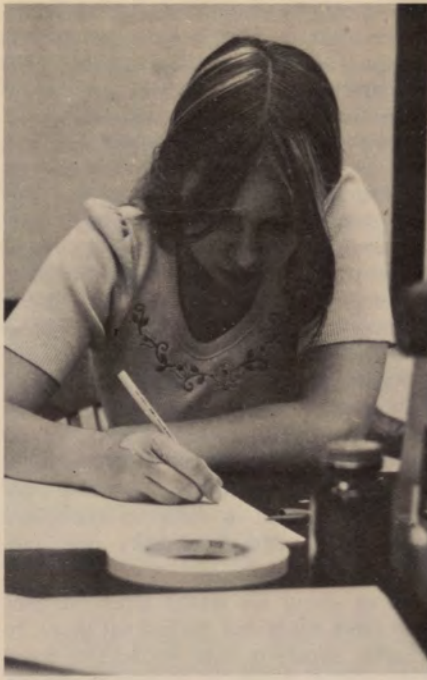
Then everything fell apart again. Some of us are very organized people,

had never really talked about what. In fact most of these things should have been said months earlier. But always there was no time. Two people could

Sharon Vasey



Gisela Baumann



Barbara Hartmann



and did get together and talk, but there never seemed to be time for everyone to get together and exchange ideas.

In a group where people depend so heavily on others to get things done, there must be a commonality of feeling that the thing is necessary. The problem was that to a large extent people were doing things that were unrelated to the whole, or they were doing things that could have waited while urgent matters were not dealt with. What we had to do

was to solve a more complex and persistent problem than for one. And that was one of the first times we had seen, in a group, that the doomsayers were not crying wolf, but that there really were problems.

We solve problems as they come up. We've come to know each other well enough to be able to demand, criticize or praise when necessary. Now, much more than before, annoyances are brought up and dealt with before they have the chance to become major prob-

lems through a long period of learning together, learning how to publish a magazine and learning how to work together. We now have the luxury of enough people to divide the work according to interests and skills, and still get everything done. At first there were so few people and so many jobs that each of us had to do things we didn't enjoy.

On a more concrete note, there are many things we would like to do. We want to expand the magazine, and we're

Eunice Willard



Roberta Kalechofsky



Vivian Frankel



was to develop an overview, some sort of common perspective on *Branching Out*.

It ended happily, I guess. People saw that others felt as they did, and it's always easier for two to tackle a persis-

lems. *Branching Out* is stronger because this attitude exists.

Now we can look back at our beginnings and laugh. But it wasn't so funny at the time. We have been

doing it - but slowly. It will be a long time till we're McLean Hunter Inc!



# Visiting Rights

by Peggy Fletcher

"Do you see the faces in that cloud?"

Maria turns to me, her face golden as an upturned sunflower. She is my child, my past...something to hold on to.

"No...show them to me," I beg, and she leans against me, the weight of her slim body strangely unfamiliar.

"Daddy says if you look at something long enough, it becomes almost real. He says imagination can fool you sometimes."

"Is that so." I am sharper than I intend, wondering if Howard is explaining me to the child in this manner...Mommy's sick, dear...sometimes she imagines things.

"Are you angry?"

Maria is leaning away from me now, and I am sorry I have let her see this side of me. I am so transparent.

"No...of course not."

I hug her close, try to smile encouragement. "Tell me about school. Do you still have the same teacher?"

"Mommy...you know I do. I just told you last month."

Now it is her turn to be perturbed, but she handles it much better than I.

"Never mind," she says, patting me on the hand. "Elsa says you forget easily, and so do I sometimes." We laugh, our voices blending together, springlike and bubbly.

"Do you want to go for a walk along the beach?"

She wriggles off the rock she is sitting on and looks at me with a certain expectation. The old lethargy covers me like a cloak. I must shake it off.

"All right...why not."

I climb down beside her, and am surprised to see how tall she's grown.

"Tell me about your job, Mommy." Her sandalled feet push away sand like twin plows.

"Oh, it's just a job...nine to five...typing all day."

"But you meet people?"

"Some."

"I wish I lived in the city." Her face grows wistful, as if a memory is trying to break through.

"Now what would you want to give up all this lovely sand and ocean for...just to live in a dirty old city." I sweep my hand across the panoramic scene like a fairy godmother waving her wand...then suddenly I let it drop, remembering that everything I put my hand to somehow goes sour.

"Why do you look so unhappy sometimes?"

"Do I?" This child of mine is so perceptive. I cannot fool her.

"Elsa says it's because you still love Daddy. Do you?" The bluntness of her question, and the fact that Elsa is discussing me in such frank terms, disturbs me. How to answer an accusation like that? And it is an accusation. Elsa is skillful in the way she imprints ideas into other minds. What a perfect choice Howard made for his second wife. Elsa is strong, where I was weak. Elsa is rational and uses psychology to explain situations and people like me.

"No...I don't love your Daddy, Maria." I try to say it gently. "We were no good for each other. Can you understand that?"

"Elsa gave away Buttons because she says I'm allergic to rabbits. Was it something like that?"

"Something."

"But I loved Buttons, and I miss him."

"And so did I once...I mean, love your Daddy. Things change. People change."

"I don't like Elsa. She treats me like a child."

I stifle the urge to laugh. "But you are a child."

"You don't talk to me like that. You talk to me like a person."

I reach awkwardly for the right words. I am in the impossible position of having to defend Elsa.

"I'm sure she thinks of you that way too. After all, she's had so much experience with children."

"She doesn't have any of her own."

This small barb of Maria's does not go unnoticed by me. I feel a tinge of triumph.

"Whether she has or not," I say sensibly. "She's cared for loads of them at the clinic. Your Daddy thinks she's first-rate."

"He thinks everything Elsa does is all right." Her voice is scornful, a little mean. I wonder for a moment if it's a personality conflict, or merely jealousy seeping through that eight year old veneer.

"You are happy with Daddy, aren't you. I mean everything's okay, isn't it?" I look away, not wanting to hear anything but the right answer; one that won't alter and upset things.

"I guess so," she says slowly. "But sometimes I miss you. Sometimes I wish you could live here too."

"Now you know I can't. How would I get to work in the morning. Buy a pair of wings?" I try to joke about it but feel I am trying too hard. Everything I do with my child is an effort. It does not come smoothly and easily like it does with most mothers. It never did.

I remember the first time that smug obstetrician told me I was pregnant, and that my sudden weight gain might cause problems. I thought it was the Pill. I thought it was impossible to get pregnant on the Pill.

"You probably forgot to take it, Karen." He dismisses my denial as if all women were dolts and couldn't remember anything.

No...I storm inside. I don't want this baby. I never wanted a baby.

"What I am concerned about," he continues, "is this kidney problem." His words come to me as if through a haze. I listen to him explain my condition as if I were a third person.

"Is it dangerous?" Strange how detached I feel about that question. Will she live...or will she die? Women have died at childbirth before. Even young women.

"Of course not. It just requires careful watching...no salt, extra thyroid...a rigid routine right to the end."

Howard is sympathetic when I tell him. He worries about my emotional reaction.

"Don't be afraid, honey. Nothing's going to happen to you or the baby."

"I told you...I don't want this baby."

"You'll feel different once you're over this first hurdle. You'll see."

"Just because you're a doctor doesn't mean you know everything. You said it didn't matter before. You

cont. on p. 38



Hartmann<sup>24</sup>

said we were perfect the way we were."

"We were both a little immature then. We didn't want to be tied down."

"Not true. Don't you ever listen?"

"Of course I listen."

"Then why don't you ever hear what I'm saying?"

"Let me get a pillow for your back. You'll feel better."

"Oh, what's the use?" I twist a way from him, hating my bloated state, hating him for putting me there. I don't care if he doesn't listen anymore. I don't care if he thinks me inhuman and cruel. It isn't until the sixth month of my pregnancy I think about the child.

"I think it should be a girl," I decide in one of my rare, lighter moods. "What do you think of the name Maria? Do you think she'll be beautiful?"

Howard must be confused about this sudden transition of mood. He buries his face in my throat.

"I think she'll be the most beautiful girl in the whole world," he says huskily...and he was right. Maria was an exquisite infant...but not at first... not in those first horrible moments that followed the birth. Then she was ugly...evil. She was everything that caused me pain and misery during the past hours...the past hopeless months. I tell them to take her away. I close my eyes and go to sleep.

"Karen...wake up. Its all over." Howard's voice comes to me as if through a long tunnel. How long have I slept? What is he talking about?

"Please darling, its all right. You have a beautiful little girl."

"I hate her." The words are there, but I don't know whether I say them out loud or not. I open my eyes long enough to see Howard's face brushing mine, and beyond him, the cool white starched uniform of the nurse who has come to save me from further discussion of the merits of my newborn child.

"Excuse me...I have to give her a sedative..."

"Of course...I should be going anyway...let her sleep." And then blissfully he is gone.

Over the next few months, Maria did develop into a lovely child. People would stop and look at her whenever I had her in the carriage. She was a fretful child though. It was as if she sensed I was not a comfortable mother.

"You take her," I say as soon as Howard comes through the door. "I don't know what's wrong with her today."

"Maybe it's her formula. Maybe she's teething."

"It's not her formula and it's not her teeth. She doesn't like me."

"Nonsense Karen."

"It's true. Babies can sense these things sometimes."

"What things?"

"You know very well what things. I never wanted her. She knows I'm not a natural mother."

"Maybe then you ought to talk to someone...a psychiatrist."

"Does not wanting a child make me mad?" I am angry he has come to this conclusion.

"No, Honey...but sometimes after a difficult birth..."

"It's been months, Howard. I feel no different."

"Give it more time. Don't be impatient." His voice trails away and I know it's useless to talk to him anymore. He'll never understand.

I try to approach my mother, but that's even worse. She is horrified, her blue eyes full of shame. She cannot imagine any woman not wanting to be a mother.

In spite of my awkward ways, I somehow muddle through those first couple of years. I even grew fond of Maria. She's an inquisitive little creature, always darting here and there, her bright smile, a contrast to my pale manner. She is not the most affectionate child in the world...at least not with me, but the moment Howard comes through the door, she is transformed.

Howard is a good father. He cannot be faulted in any way. He does everything he can to make it easier for me. He takes Maria for long romps in the park. He encourages me to take up my art studies again. But its useless. I seem to have lost my ability to concentrate. It's as if the biological act of producing a child has somehow dulled my mind.

"Maybe its the Pill," worries Howard. "Let me set up an appointment to have you fitted for an IUD." I ponder this a moment. He could be right. I have a great deal of water retention every month. It makes me sluggish.

The other doctor agrees with Howard. "Not every woman can take the Pill, Karen. You'll feel better with the Loop."

"What if I get pregnant again." My voice reaches a hysterical note. He looks at me sharply.

"It's reliable, Karen. No one's going to force you to have another child."

I sink back on the table with relief. This is the first time anyone comes close to acknowledging the truth. I wonder if he thinks me pecu-

liar.

It is five years later when I become pregnant for the second time. Howard has long since grown impatient with me. He isn't about to coddle my fears this time. The only way he assists is by taking Maria off my hands, and this he does because he feels she is being harmed by my indifference. But it's not a true indifference. Deep down there is a terrible longing love for the child that won't come out.

I don't know how long it took me to make the decision. Late one night, about the middle of my pregnancy, in one devastating moment when I thought I would drown in my own insanity...I sought sleep.

They tell me the baby would have died anyway. I forget the condition that was mentioned. It's not important anyway. You would think I'd feel all kinds of guilt about killing my own unborn child...I didn't. They kept telling me I did...but I didn't. Howard brought in a psychiatrist, and when that didn't work, he bought this lovely lonely place by the sea. He hoped a change of locale would make me forget. In reality though, he was imprisoning me with the one person I could never be responsible for again...Maria. A few weeks later I fled.

My first few months away from them were hard ones. The city was cold and indifferent. It was ages before I found a job. Then, the only ones available were those of clerk typist. But in a way, this turned out to be a blessing. After all, if your mind is filled for eight or nine hours a day with dull business details, you can't possibly go astray. Maybe that was the key to Elsa's success.

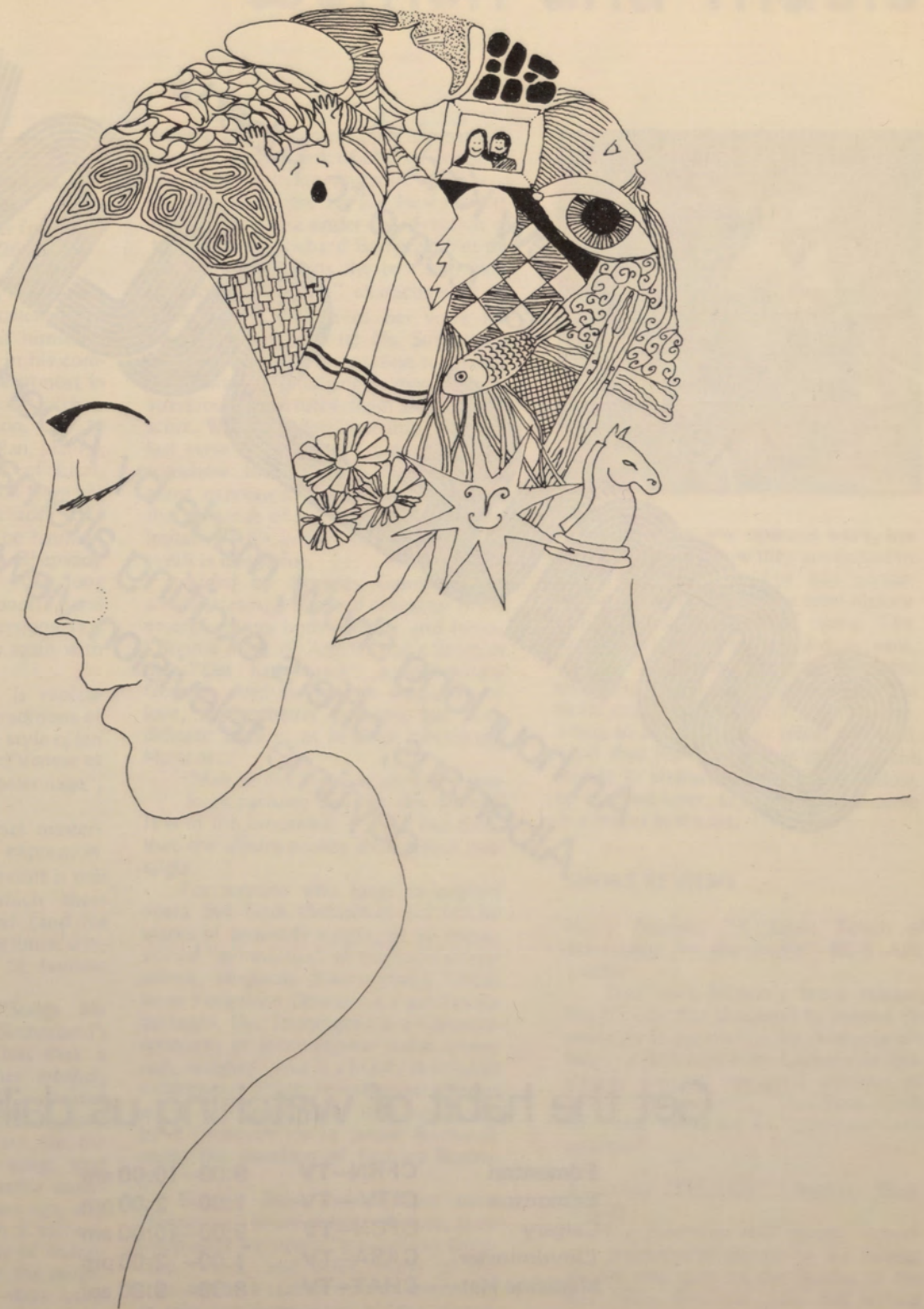
I recall the day Howard told me he was marrying her, I was out visiting Maria, walking along this very beach. He almost apologised about the news. I knew they worked closely at the clinic, and I knew he thought she had a way with children.

"She'll make a wonderful mother for Maria," he is saying, but all the time my mind is wandering to the breakers, to the magnificent forces which crash against the shores.

She was...is a good mother. She knows all the right things to do. Each month, Maria tells me about the activities she's planned...wonderful normal plans like pyjama parties, Sunday School picnics, a mother and daughter banquet...all of the beautiful hopeful rites which will make Maria a more stable person than her mother. How could any child not love a devoted mother like this?

"You're not listening to me?" Maria's eyes are gazing up to mine. cont. on p. 44





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# women and music

by Beverley Ross

France Clidat: "...plays Liszt" Select: CC-11-22

Joan Sutherland: "Songs My Mother Taught Me" London: OS26367

Huguette Tourangeau: "Arias from Forgotten Operas" London: OS26199

The pianoforte works of Franz Liszt are among the most challenging of all. The fact that Liszt was himself a brilliant pianist is reflected in his compositions, which demand the utmost in technical ability and are almost orchestral in their range of expression.

France Clidat, a Canadian pianist, has recorded three volumes of Liszt. This newest release, a selection from her previous performances, includes two works which will probably be familiar, and two less so. "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2" and "Liebestraum" have long been standard "pops" concert and Muzak fare in orchestrated versions. It is refreshing to confront them again with their virginity restored.

"Rhapsodie espagnole" is replete with echoes of the musical traditions of Spain uttered in the bravura style often associated with the composer. "Venese et Napoli" is from "Annees de pelerinage", a collection of tone pictures.

Ms. Clidat performs Liszt masterfully, with an emphasis on expression rather than execution. The result is that any technical excesses which these works might have inherited (and for which their creator is sometimes criticized) are not permitted to become overwhelming.

Appropriately titled "Songs My Mother Taught Me", Joan Sutherland's newest recording is really just that: a collection of songs that her mother, Muriel Sutherland (herself a trained mezzo-soprano) was fond of and passed on to her daughter. They are, for the most part, art songs and songs that might have been popular parlor entertainment thirty or forty years ago, and the album is pervaded with a half-humorous, half-melancholy air of nostalgia. You can easily imagine the neighbourhood soloist of those days launching into any one of the songs, one hand at her throat, the other poised on the piano, stretching for the top note, while her harried accompanist frantically tries to imitate the liberties she has taken with the meter; and the audience chuckles in spite of itself behind Sunday afternoon hankies - all

for the sake of genteel entertainment.

Ms. Sutherland, of course, is one of the greatest living sopranos and she is accompanied here by the New Philharmonia Orchestra under the direction of her husband, Richard Bonyngé. Yet the performance retains the best and most personable "parlour" characteristics. In spite of the stature of her voice (or perhaps *because* of it) Ms. Sutherland usually denies the temptation to display her ability by indulging in more vocally strenuous departures from the original score. When she does succumb, as in the last verse of "Homing", the outcome is somehow too dramatic for the sentiment expressed. But where she meets the demands of the text itself as in the imitative trills in the "Nightingale", the result is delightful.

Aided by Douglas Gamley's rich arrangements, a national character often emerges from both melody and lyrics. "Bonnie Mary of Argyll" has a Scottish lilt; "Der Kuk Kuck" is rollickingly German. And the French songs sing of love, sentimentally perhaps, but with delicate beauty, as in these lines from Massenet:

"Mais si des fleurs avaient une ame  
leurs parfums seraient des baisers"  
It is in the innocence of lines like these that the album evokes the keenest nostalgia.

For anyone who longs to explore opera but finds themselves put off by works of unwieldy length, or by impassioned "gymnastics" in the vocal stratosphere, Huguette Tourangeau's "Arias from Forgotten Operas" is a good place to begin. Ms. Tourangeau is a Canadian contralto of international status whose rich, weighty voice is a highly developed instrument, which nevertheless remains warm and human. She is accompanied by L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under the direction of Richard Bonyngé.

Though these operas have been "forgotten" or are at least obscure, their composers are opera "greats" like Donizetti, Verdi, and Bizet. Many of the arias are of a standard form, lamenting or rejoicing expressions of love. Some, however, like that from Bizet's orientally flavoured "Djamileh" or the "essay" in praise of nationalism from Donizetti's "L'asseido do Calais" are strikingly unusual either in musical quality or subject.

The key to enjoying these arias, or



Beverley Ross photo by Ted Smith

for that matter any operatic work, lies in understanding how they are linked to the dramatic action. For this performance, Bonyngé provides a brief history and story line for each opera. The translated libretto is included as well. Once we understand the story and the song, the rest is up to the composer's music and the singer-actor's ability. Listening to the changes in voice, tone and style that Ms. Tourangeau makes as she moves in character from young widow, to scorned lover, to boasting bride-to-be is a lesson in the art.

## SHORT REVIEWS

Harry Nilsson: "A Little Touch of Schmilsson in the Night" RCA APL 1-0097

This isn't Nilsson's latest release, but it's one that shouldn't be missed. Its nostalgia is parallel to Ms. Sutherland's but in a different vein. Lavishly orchestrated, lovingly rendered versions of "Makin' Whoopee", "As Time Goes By", and "What'll I Do"...it's the cat's pyjamas!

America: "Holiday" Warner Bros. W2808

The American rock group "America", produced in Britain by the George Martin who gave us the Beatles of the mid '60's. Not the same but similar sounding, rounded off by Martin's superb arrangements, and the group's well-balanced material. Listen for touches a la Joni Mitchell in the group harmony. One of the cleanest and tastiest of new rock offerings.

\*\*\*

# book ends

## Book Review by Helen Hargrave

Zaremba, Evc. *Privilege of Sex: A Century of Canadian Women*. Toronto: Anansi, 1974.

Eager to read any book on the topic of women in Canada, I bought *Privilege of Sex* without much skimming through the pages. The title alone was enough to sell it to me. Later at home, when I examined it more closely, I was disappointed. Here were excerpts from various books, several of which I had already read. What I was hoping for was an up-to-date commentary and analysis from cover to cover.

I have now read the book and wish to assure the reader that my initial reaction was premature and false. It is true that the book is a collection of writing but there is more to it than that. Eve Zaremba, who compiled and edited *Privilege of Sex* has chosen the excerpts with care. The book is organized into three sections each of which enlarges on this theme, that woman, given privileges because of her sex, is in as a deplorable condition as one who is treated as subservient. Ms. Zaremba begins with a general introduction and she later comments on each section with considerable thought and perception. Most important, the excerpts captivate the reader into continuing to the end of each section only to find that the eye cannot avoid the enticing phrases on the next page.

Although the editor claims that she selected "without any preconceived theme" the quotation at the front of the book is well clarified throughout.

This theme, from which the title is chosen, is written by Anna Brownell Jameson who visited Canada in the 1830's, observed, generalized, and wrote. She says, "Where she is idle and useless by privilege of sex, a divinity and an idol, a victim or a toy, is not her position quite as lamentable, as false, as injurious to herself and all social progress, as where she is the drudge, slave and possession of man?"

Section I contains items by Anne Langton, Frances Stewart, and Anna Brownell Jameson, contemporaries in pioneer Ontario. Langton and Stewart give accounts of the endless household chores with which women had to cope in the primitive conditions, while Jameson provides comment on such women.

Having read two of these writers previously, it wasn't until the second section that my interest picked up and it was here that I became most enthusiastic about the book. The two tales included in it, unpublished since the 19th century, are incredible. Gowanlock's account tells of her capture by a group of Indians in the Riel Rebellion of 1885 and Davenport gives her account of a pleasure trip-turned-nightmare in the Quebec bush. These two stories alone are worth the price of the book.

The third section continues with several selections from early 20th century writings. The first is a wonderful introduction to Nellie McClung if one has not previously met her. Two by Cran and Macmurchy indicate the changing attitudes towards women's ability to manage, and to the economic importance of women in the home. The last one by Agnes McPhail is splendidly

observant and succinct on the institutions of marriage and divorce, and one ends the book with a great deal of admiration for our first female Member of Parliament.

Perhaps the greater value of *Privilege of Sex* lies not in what is there but in what is not there. Within the 173 pages are just enough selections to tantalize one into wanting more. How tempting it is to pick up McClung's *Clearing in the West* to read it in its entirety, or to search out more of Agnes McPhail's pithy remarks in other issues of *Hansard*. The articles by Gowanlock and Davenport make one wonder how many more such treasures lie waiting for the inquisitive reader.

Eve Zaremba should be credited for provoking the reader into considerable thought. I wonder, for example, what the writing of Ontario women in the 1870's reflects, a period when pioneer conditions were less rigorous. I would give to Langton as much credit for surviving in pioneer conditions after a genteel upbringing as to Davenport for surviving on her trip through the bush. In addition I think she was very foolish to set off with boots that were sturdy enough to last only a few days. After having read the most of McClung's books I disagree with Ms. Zaremba's comment that McClung "had lost much of her youthful belief in the essential goodness of men and in the inevitable triumph of a just cause." In most places I agreed with the author and many times I was pleasantly surprised with her insights on matters I had not considered.

*Privilege of Sex* is an excellent addition to the growing collection of Canadian feminist writing and one can only hope that it will provoke more of its kind. \* \* \*

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## COMMENTARY

Helen J. Rosta

One of our editorial staff attended the recent talk by Dr. Morgentaler in Edmonton. Here are some of her comments on the event.

Dr. Morgentaler who is awaiting the court's decision on charges of performing abortions was recently in Edmonton on a speaking engagement. The same day, anti-abortionists marched on the grounds of the Legislative Buildings in protest. The anti-abortionists are well-organized and well-funded. They can afford to put up large posters of happy babies to sway public opinion, ignoring the fact that every baby is not a happy one - that children are neglected, battered, despised and humiliated - ignoring the fact that just "being born" is not enough.

The anti-abortionists claim of "right to life" does not include the right to life of a woman. We know that women will continue to seek abortions, and if abortion is not legal, women will continue to face suffering, mutilation and death.

Politicians sway and are swayed by public opinion. Apparently one member of parliament is actively attempting to sway public opinion by going up and down the country saying that while a woman may not want to have a child there are loving arms waiting - just waiting to take that "unwanted" child. Unfortunately he has never had to do a stint as a Social Worker in a Childrens Aid Society where he could see the misery of children who continue to be unwanted. And of course he does not consider that a woman may not want to be society's human incubator.

The verdict in Dr. Morgentaler's case will be of vital importance to Canadian women. Much social reform is made through court decisions and legislation. However, those people who are in favour of woman's right to abortion are not organized, are not funded by any rich institution, and are not vocal.

Legislators, therefore, may be unaware of this segment of public opinion. They are aware, however, of the opposition, with their expensive billboards, their marches, their lobbying, and their access to publicity.

If you feel strongly about a woman's right to choose whether or not she will bear a child, telegraph, write, or telephone your member of parliament.

Let Prime Minister Trudeau know your opinion too.

You need not write a long letter. Sending the following statement will help a great deal.

I am in favour of a woman's right to choose whether or not she will bear a child. I am for legally and medically safe abortion.

Signature.

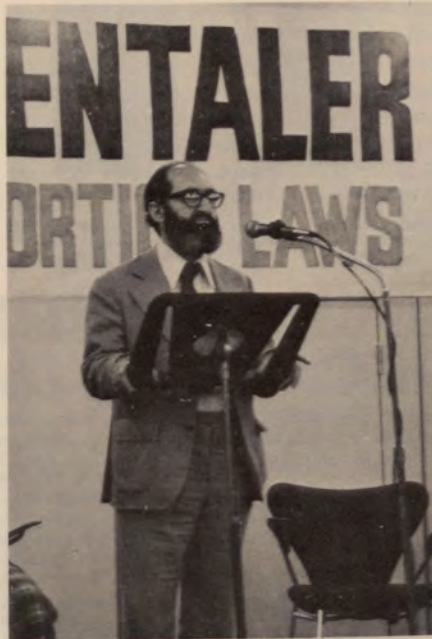


photo by Dave Pohlko

cont. from p. 38

They are sombre, brooding. She'll be a real beauty some day, and already her mind is precocious. Even Elsa with her striving towards conformity won't mar that.

"I'm sorry...what were you saying?"

"I asked if you'd bring me another puzzle?"

"Did I bring you one before?"

"Yes, Silly...last Christmas."

"Did you like it?" I am touched she would remember a present for so long. "I'll send you one up tomorrow, as soon as I get back to the city."

"Can I come and stay with you sometime?"

I hedge. You can't joke about a question like that. It might get you in trouble.

"Some day maybe. Some day when I have a few days off."

"I think we'd better go back now." Maria looks anxiously at the darkening sky. "Supper will be ready, and Elsa doesn't like me to be late. Besides, Daddy's home."

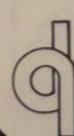
There are faces in the clouds... darker and angrier than any I have seen before. I think they spit lightning from charged lips. I think they are talking about me. I grab Maria's hand and race towards the cliffs. I want to be away from here. \* \* \*

## CANADIAN ART

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Simple, really: we are women. That is what it is, as tenuous yet real as the slice of paper connecting the paper dolls, hand to hand. We are women. We are bound. She is my ghost, I am hers. Like the shrubs between our yards, we resemble, continue, support each other. It's true, I did not want to be involved, but I was—I am. I remember how it was now, painfully: I could not watch her husband coming, late at night, up the walk, dreaming of his clandestine love, and still turn, fresh and free and completely happy, to my own husband, waiting with a smile for only me. I do laundry, too, boil water in a kettle for tea, wonder if I should change my hair, daydream sometimes about the boy at the gas station. But I am happy, I have what I love. I am lucky. In spite of everything, Joan is not really so different from me; but her luck has not been as good.

So I open her letter at last:

"Dear Kate,

I called you long distance the other night but you were out and I've managed to get over the big crisis now; cried most of my tears, I think, well maybe not all of them. What I called about, I wanted someone's shoulder to lean on, I guess: Sam's finally left me, for Miranda. He's filed for divorce. How's that for news? I suppose you suspected it all along; but you were always so kind, never critical. I wonder what in the world I'm going to do now. Of course I'm very busy, we have to sell the house, tell the children, discuss finances, and at least I'm losing weight. I'm very busy. But inside, I feel as empty as can be. I feel absolutely lost. I don't know what to do, where to go. I don't know who I am and frankly, I don't much care. Mostly, I feel tired. I sometimes wish I could just go ahead and die."

Here in Vancouver, outside my window from a twig of an evergreen tree, one raindrop shivers, then falls. It takes exactly forty-three seconds for another drop of water to curl down the green twig and bud at the twig's end. Human tears fall much faster.

I get out pen and paper, and begin, "Dear Joan." Then I sit, staring through tears at the rain. I remember what my mother used to say, that friendship doubles joy and lessens grief. So I will be a friend to this woman. I am bound to be her friend. I will think of something I can write to her, something I can say or do, that will help her appreciate herself, that will help her stand alone. I will sit here till I think of a way to help, if it takes me all morning, if it takes me all this rainy day. \* \* \*

tion still lives in rural areas with virtually universal illiteracy. Government mechanisms to ensure that such women get equal pay for equal work, or obtain adequate child-care facilities, are almost irrelevant at this time in the latter context, where problems such as infant mortality, and famine predominate. Solutions to problems can also differ, being determined not only by the economic and political structure of the country, but also by cultural patterns. In some of the African nations the status of women was improved by new laws regarding marriage which attempted to modify the practice by men of polygamy. While Canadian marriage and family laws may need revision, polygamy will not be the key emphasis of reform, since, except for perhaps some minority groups, there is general cultural and legal acceptance that a marriage is made up of only two parties at one time.

Additionally the meetings also indicated that international action to promote the status of women would be difficult since the role of females is often directly related to an individual country's national aspirations, and priority to improvement of the lot of the former is often subsumed in the latter. The abolishment of legal abortion in Roumania because of the country's low birth rate can be seen as one example of this phenomenon. Another was evident in the talks of the representative of Peru who repeatedly stated that the true liberation of women in his country would be attained in the process of the creation of the new man and the new

woman that would come with the achievement of the revolutionary aims of his government. International relations also came into the picture as the delegate from Russia declared that women would obtain true equality only with the coming of world peace - an end for which, unlike other unspecified countries, the Soviet Union was working.

The tendency whereby different, often irreconcilable points of view dominate international discussion to the point of reducing such talk to propaganda, has been cited in the past as a cause of United Nations' ineffectiveness in the face of real international crises. After this most recent United Nations conference, one wondered whether the process was not repeating itself - there had been much sound and spent money, but what did it signify? When the possibility of incorporating special programmes for promoting the status of women into United Nations' development programmes was raised by the representative from the Phillipines, the delegates were informed that one of the principal guidelines for the conference was that no resolutions involving the expenditure of United Nations funds were to come from it. With this separation of resolve from the purse, can the former have any use? One can only hope that the talk was not all fruitless: perhaps with information derived from the United Nations Conference to open international women's year, individual nations will see ways to promote the status of women within their borders. \* \* \*

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Paintings



# your turn

Dear Readers: In the September/October 1974 issue of *Branching Out* we printed a questionnaire. Our advertisers, who provide a major portion of our income, require a detailed profile of our readership. As well, we want to know what you think of the things *Branching Out* has been doing so far. A number of readers have already responded with very interesting ideas and comments. We are therefore printing the questionnaire again in order that those who have not yet responded may have a chance to do so. Although we intend to let you know what some of the statistics about our readers are, we will of course keep all information anonymous, and we will only print your comments with your permission. Thanks very much for your cooperation. The editors.

1. What is your age?
  - under 18
  - 18-24
  - 25-30
  - 30-40
  - 40-50
  - over 50
2. Where did you buy this copy of *Branching Out*?
  - subscription
  - newsstand
  - bookstore
  - other (please specify)
3. How did you first become aware of the existence of *Branching Out*?
  - through friends
  - television
  - newspaper
  - other (please specify)
4. Which province or territory do you live in?
  - If outside Canada, please specify.
5. Do you live in a
  - city
  - town
  - rural area
  - Please specify
6. What is your occupation?
7. If employed, what is your income level?
  - under \$3000
  - \$3000-5000
  - \$5000-8000
  - \$8000-11000
  - \$11,000-15,000
  - \$15,000-20,000
  - \$20,000-26,000
  - \$26,000 and over
8. Are you
  - single
  - married
  - widowed
  - divorced
  - separated
  - co-habiting?
9. Do you have children?
  - yes
  - no
10. If yes to the above,
  - how many?
  
  - what ages?
11. Indicate the combined income of your household.
  - under \$5000
  - \$5000-8000
  - \$8000-11,000
  - \$11,000-15,000
  - \$15,000-20,000
  - \$20,000-26,000
  - \$26,000-30,000
  - \$30,000-40,000
  - \$40,000 and over
12. Do you own your own home?
13. Indicate your educational level. Check twice if still attending.
  - high school
  - community college
  - technological institute
  - university
  - graduate school
14. What is your field of study?
15. How many people besides yourself read this copy of *Branching Out*?
16. Which article in this issue did you like most?
17. Which article did you like least?
18. What would you like to see in future issues of *Branching Out*?
19. Why do you read *Branching Out*?
20. Any other comments?

Please send all completed questionnaires to "Questionnaire", Box 4098, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4T1.



*Branching Out* is an excellent Christmas present for the intelligent, interesting women and men you know. We will be pleased to send cards to your friends, with your name and comments on them, in time for Christmas.

If a friend or relative does not presently have a complete set of *Branching Out*, you may include whichever back issues you select as part of the subscription. If you are renewing a subscription for yourself or for someone else, please check the appropriate space.

Subscriptions must be received by us before December 10, 1974, if they are to reach recipients by Christmas.

Thank you for your support, and "Merry Christmas" from us all.

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# people in this issue

## NANCY THAYER

Nancy Thayer was born in Kansas, got her B.A. and M.A. at the University of Missouri at Kansas City, and taught English literature there and at a community college in Iowa. She has lived in the States, Paris and Amsterdam and is now a permanent resident of Canada. She lives in West Vancouver with her husband and small son. Her short stories have been published in *Nimrod* and *Kansas Quarterly* in the U.S., *Cuadernos* in Spain, and *The Capilano Review* in Canada.

## HEATHER PYRCZ

Heather Pyrcz has lived in Alberta for most of the last five years. She graduated from the University of Alberta in 1972, was married the same year. She teaches at Argyll Elementary School.

## SHARON BATT

Sharon Batt has lived in Edmonton for three years. She became interested in films by Canadian women after seeing *La Vie Revee* at the Women and Film International Festival. A native of Ottawa, she studied Psychology at Carleton and at the University of British Columbia.

## HELEN HARGRAVE

Helen Hargrave lives with her two sons in a picturesque part of the country near Creemore, Ontario. She is a teacher, and for several years has written for *The Courier*, an Ontario teachers' magazine. Her biggest problem is finding enough hours in the day for history, archeology, photography, gardening and sports. Two years ago she spent a year at university completing her B.A. and she found it to be one of the best years of her life.

## LINDA DONNELLY

Linda Donnelly is a freelance artist and illustrator living in Edmonton. She illustrated *Fresh Fish ... and Chips* which is one of the books on our Books for Children list

## AUDREY WATSON

Originally a native of England, Audrey Watson has lived in Canada for 17 years. Her work as a freelance artist includes watercolour, line drawings and batik. Several years ago she and a friend opened a multi-media coffee house in Edmonton, the Albany Three, which featured poetry, music, paintings and crafts. Although the Albany has now temporarily suspended operations, Audrey is confident they will find a suitable location and the money they need to reopen. "But I'm not an entrepreneur," she stresses, "there has to be experimentation."

## IONA MACALLISTER

Iona MacAllister is taking a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Alberta concentrating in English and Philosophy. Besides being an artist, Iona writes poetry (most recently for *Blew Ointment* press) and is interested in music and dance.

## ALICE BAUMANN-RONDEZ

Alice Baumann-Rondez graduated from the Kunstgewerbeschule Zurich Switzerland, (School of Art) and subsequently worked for fashion and advertising studios in Zurich. Since immigrating to Canada 14 years ago, she has worked as a freelance photographer in Edmonton.

## MARYLU ANTONELLI

Marylou Antonelli has a B.A. and M.S. in journalism from Syracuse University. She taught journalism at the University of Tennessee and has worked in public relations, freelance writing and editing.

## BARBARA HARTMANN

Barbara Hartmann grew up in Pennsylvania. Three years ago she moved to Edmonton where she studied art at the U of Alberta. She is spending part of her time working in a day care center and part sketching, printing and free-lancing.

## NAOMI LOEB

Naomi Loeb is a television production assistant in Edmonton. She has a Master's degree in French Literature from Columbia University.

## SANDRA HILLMER

Since university, Sandra Hillmer has written a few children's stories, and she is now contributing to a community newspaper in Ottawa. She has two children.

## GEORGINA WYMAN

Georgina Wyman lives in Ottawa, where she is actively involved in community projects like setting up a day care centre and writing for the community newspaper *Glebe Report*.

At press time, there was no biographical information available on Peggy Fletcher, Heidi Greco and Kathleen MacLennan-March.

---

In the last issue a typographical error appeared in the interview with Dr. Pauline Jewett. Her reply to the question, 'Do you think that the cut-back in government spending in the universities will affect the status of women in these institutions?' should have read as follows: Equality in salaries already exists in some places and so does equality for similar talents, but it still has a long way to go. But I think there should be active groups on every campus who are pushing all the time for this. It doesn't do any good for me, as the president, to be pressing if the deans and chairmen are not constantly made aware of this.

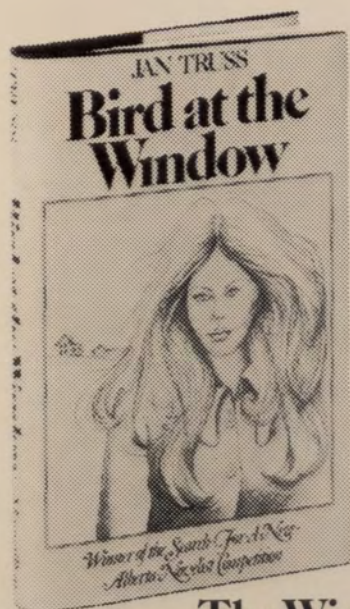
You will notice that the position of 'Coordinating Editor' is now shared by both Susan McMaster and Sharon Batt. This is because Sharon has been able to commit herself full-time to *Branching Out* this year, and Sue is editing another magazine part-time.

# Alberta's Prize-Winning Novels

In 1971, the Alberta Government, through the Literary Arts Branch of the Cultural Development Division of the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, announced a SEARCH-FOR-A-NEW-ALBERTA-NOVELIST competition offering a prize of One Thousand Dollars to the author of the winning manuscript.

It was stipulated that the manuscript should contain 60,000 to 100,000 words; that entrants must have a minimum of twenty-four months' residence within the preceding three years in Alberta; and that the author should never previously have had a novel published.

The Macmillan Company of Canada is happy to be associated with the Government of Alberta in this literary competition and is proudly publishing all three novels on October 4, 1974.



## The Winner

For her novel, BIRD AT THE WINDOW.

Angela is finishing high school in a small community in the foothills of the Rockies when she discovers she is pregnant. She can't possibly tell her father, a taciturn Irish farmer, or her mother, a self-contained Englishwoman. Outwardly serene, Angela goes ahead with plans to spend a year in Europe. As the months creep by, longing for warmth and understanding but wanting to stand alone, she manages to keep the possibilities of her life open; she is no longer "a bird at the window" trying to get in. Told with grace and artistry, Jan Truss's prizewinning novel is far more than the story of a young girl running away from her pregnancy. It is a moving testament to youth's resilience and joy in life.



"This novel," said one of the judges, "is an excellent work by an author of real promise showing a fearsome knowledge of a young girl's mind."

**JAN TRUSS**  
of Water Valley **\$7.95**



## Finalist

For her novel, BREAKAWAY.

This is the story of a family homesteading in northern Alberta in the thirties. What makes it especially remarkable is that the family's life is seen through the eyes of a young child. The sounds and smells and tastes and emotions experienced by a child are surrounded by adult activity which she does not always understand.



In his report on this manuscript, one of the judges said, "It is a work of real merit; the totally sensuous, sensitive recall of a young girl's growing up in Alberta. It has the dimensions of a classic."

**CECELIA FREY**  
of Calgary

## The Judges

A distinguished Board of Judges was appointed, consisting of Dr. Walter Johns, the retired President of the University of Alberta, Dr. W. G. Hardy, who until his retirement was Head of the Classics Department at the University of Alberta, himself an author of international repute, and Dr. H. Lovat Dickson, the eminent London publisher and author.



## Finalist

For his novel, LONESOME HERO.

Tyrone, the "hero" of this novel, born into a farming community in southern Alberta, where the focus is still on pioneering strength, has disappointed his parents by his cowardice, physical and emotional. He just wants to be left alone.

This is a fine, funny novel that deals perceptively with the problem facing young people reluctant to take the plunge into life.



One of the judges reporting on this manuscript said, "He has a real comic talent, and Tyrone Lock is an original creation. The mother and father are beautifully and wittily drawn. I believe this author to be a real discovery."

**FRED STENSON**  
of Twin Butte



Walter Johns



W. G. Hardy



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