

HOW YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM FIGHTS INVADERS

# BROADSHEET

NEW ZEALAND'S FEMINIST MAGAZINE      SEVENTEENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION      JULY/AUGUST 1989      ISSUE 170      \$4

★  
**17<sup>TH</sup>**  
**BIRTHDAY**  
ISSUE

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PICTURES • THEATRE



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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**



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**LAURIS EDMOND'S**  
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DISPLAY **FILM FESTIVAL**



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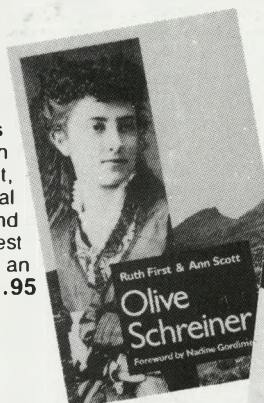
**LOOKING BOTH WAYS**  
**BISEXUALITY EXPLORED**

# BROADSHEET

## 17th Birthday Congratulations

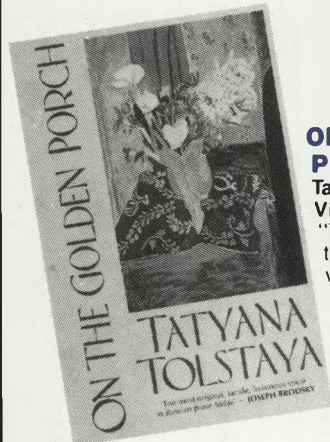
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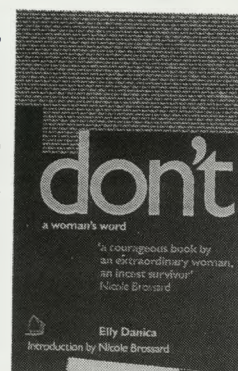


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WORKSHOP Saturday 29 July 10-4pm \$20 (registration fee)  
**Feminism and Art, issues for Today** by Pamela Gerrish Nunn

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Thursday 29 June 6pm  
8.15pm

Sigmund Freud's Dora: A case of mistaken identity.  
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**India Song**  
Director: Marguerite Duras 1975 (120 mins) colour

Thursday 6 July 6pm

**Riddle of the Sphinx**  
Directors: Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen 1977 (90 mins) colour

Thursday 13 July 6pm

**Je, Tu, Il, Elle**  
Director: Chantal Ackerman 1974 (85 mins) black and white

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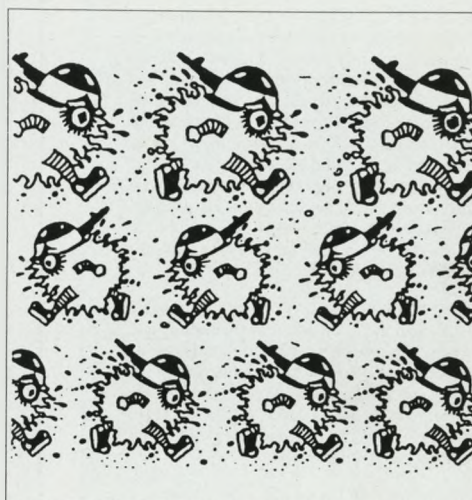
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# BROADSHEET

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**LETTERS POLICY:** The Broadsheet Collective may not agree with or endorse views expressed in letters. Nearly all the letters we are sent get published. Those that are not published in full are edited in consultation with the writer. We do not publish personal attacks. Letters from men are published only when they correct matters of fact or at the discretion of the Editors. We particularly welcome letters about the content of the magazine. Letters that are addressed to the collective or to the editor are assumed to be intended for publication. Please indicate clearly if they are not.

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## HERSPECTIVE

**B**irthdays. Yay. Parties, lots of food, fun, laughter, music, cuddles, friends and family. This issue marks Broadsheet's 17th birthday. That's right, she's 17 years old, almost out of her teens, and not growing up too badly.

In a way every issue is a celebration for Broadsheet, her readers and contributors because it means we have survived, hand to mouth at times, but we're still here. And survival is not easy for any group of people who don't fit in with what society prescribes for them. So three cheers for all the women who have helped bring Broadsheet up over the years, and those who continue to read, criticise, and give feedback.

It pays to remember that feminism is an annoyance to people, companies, institutions and governments, not because it has had its day, or is over the top, but because it is still challenging the way things are and seeking change. It's that simple. And because feminism is an annoyance, feminist women and their work are often the target for abuse and attempts to discredit. So the next time someone sneers at you and accuses you of being "just a feminist", you know you've struck a nerve. They're the kind of people who think that you should be grateful because you're not tied to the kitchen anymore.

There are those who will even tell you that we are living in "post-feminist" days, which apparently means that everything is right and equal for women in the world. That's a bad joke. You just have to read the newspaper to realise how bad, which is what I did yesterday.

The front page of the *Herald* was dominated by a photo of Bob Jones and Peter Cross of MacDow Property developers. What a merry picture they made! Bob Jones was posed trying to cut Peter's tie (very symbolic don't you think) because of some little difference between them about their taste in ties. What a couple of cards. I guess we're supposed to think that all is nice and rosey when two men as wealthy and powerful as they, can take time to fool around and be ordinary kiwi jokers. Very newsworthy. In fact it was purely and simply a publicity stunt to advertise the fact that MacDow is constructing the 41 level Robert Jones tower on Albert St in Auckland.

Meanwhile buried on the inside pages was the news that the search for Karla Cardno was shifted to the Pencarrow coastline after the police spoke to the man they believe was the last to see Karla alive. A 19 year old man was convicted of raping an 87 year old woman, a 34 year old man who sexually violated his eight year old step-daughter and tried to rape the other aged 10, was sentenced to three years in prison. A 49 year old man who had been sexually as-

saulting his niece since she was six, and raped her when she was 13, was sentenced to four years. Who reads about that?

These reports are reserved for page 10 or thereabouts day after day, week after week. Yet the phenomenon of this "sex crimes" page which sometimes spills over into two pages, goes virtually unnoticed by media critics. If "sex crimes" do become front page news they are inevitably sensationalised. No one questions why so many acts of violence against women occur. Television reporters instead build programmes around the so called male "victims" of allegations of sexual abuse.

On principle I don't think it is right that a case is taken when evidence is flimsy or the question of who the perpetrator is has not been clearly answered. But nor is it right that on the rare occasions these cases are taken they are deemed more "newsworthy" than all the proven cases of rape and sexual abuse put together. A male "victim" it seems, is more sensational than a female one.

Further ironies do not make headlines either. For instance in Hamilton at the moment, women involved in running a refuge for battered women are being faced with its closure after an expensive two year legal battle over Town Planning regulations. (See the letters page for a rundown of the predicament they are in.) Two refuges have already closed down in Hamilton and the Hamilton East refuge is being bombarded with women seeking help. Yet this is happening at a time when there are numerous advertisements on television encouraging women in violent situations to "reach out", and other ads informing us that police are getting back into the community. Well, the police in Hamilton have not supported these women in their struggle, not even a message of endorsement.

The point of all this is to remind you (new and converted readers alike) that (drum roll...) feminism is still relevant. Of course there have been wonderful steps forward, and it's important to remind ourselves of that too. Broadsheet gets criticism from some women that it is too heavy, and from others that it is too light. Both are valid, we have to try to reach a balance between the two in order to survive, and here I'm talking about us all not just Broadsheet. But I believe, and you must too, that being feminist is one strategy for survival. More than survival, it also gives us hope and optimism.

So Happy Birthday to you all out there, and let's make a wish for 17 more together.

# LETTERS

## CURSES!

Dear Broadsheet,  
Ladies! Consider when you next drop a spanner on your toe while fixing the car, bang your head on a beam inspecting the wiring or end up hanging ape-like from the roof guttering after the ladder has slipped. How many of you have given way to your emotions and uttered some expletive or other?

What are the first words to spring to your lips? Oh Lord! Good God! Jesus Christ! By All the Saints in Christendom?

Think, next time you utter them, that these are all patriarchal expressions. What we need are some decent (or preferably indecent) feminist swear words, some full-bodied Amazon Oaths.

With this idea in mind, at last year's Nelson Women's Studies Conference, a group of women got together in an unofficial workshop to discuss swearing. We came to the conclusion that most swear words are male-orientated. There are certainly some acceptable expressions, as one woman pointed out; "bloody" is a good feminist oath – after all, only women bleed.

We came up with the following alternative expressions: Holy Hecate! Sacred Isis! By St Paul's Balls! Pope Off! A Pox on your Prostrates! (For certain members of the medical fraternity.)

Perhaps *Broadsheet* readers would like to send further ideas on this subject, or further oaths – in any language, preferably bad language.

May all the Amazons rise up and defeat the Christians!

SYLVIA  
Auckland

## TALKING BACK

Dear Broadsheet,  
My article in the November issue of *Broadsheet* analysing the links between current economic fashions and other current group phenomena and philosophies ("Brave New Age – Right?"), may have been misconstrued as respondents have largely failed to address the issues I raised.

I'm especially concerned that Cushla Dodson (as implied in her article "Another New Age", *Broadsheet*, May) perceived me as not gathering information and/or rejecting all new practises. I acknowledged new practises particularly in the health area (many of which are subsumed under a

New Age title in journals etc.) and perceive these as adding to women's possible choices in the control of their own bodies.

Along with other feminists I've researched and experimented with a variety of new/complimentary health methods. They are definitely valuable options of health care for myself. My article was carefully researched (the Bibliography unfortunately omitted by *Broadsheet*) and written after several years of thinking round the issues. My purpose was to put forward debatable ideas and questions not decisions. It disturbs me when critical analyses of issues repeatedly receive knee-jerk reactions from other feminists. The conclusion that "challenging analyses" must by definition be negative and block "potential for growth and learning" is in my view untrue. I don't believe passive, unquestioning consumerism helps growth or survival.

SUE FITCHETT

Waiheke

## MUDDY AFFAIRS

Dear Broadsheet,  
What is happening in the Ministry of Women's Affairs? As an "open-minded" feminist who was more than willing to give Judith Aitken a chance, despite the uproar at her appointment – it appears I was duped.

Ms Aitken's statements in your June issue [*Broadsheet* 169] and the views of women from Te Ohu Whakatupu have in my opinion proved Ms Aitken to be what some women were saying in the first place – no friend of women, femi-

nists and nor, it seems now, Maori women.

May I wish the brave women from Te Ohu Whakatupu well and the Ministry of Women's Affairs – well?

RAE SOWDEN

Paraparaumu

Dear Broadsheet,  
What excellent articles in your June edition. Particularly Judith Aitken's revealing statements in "Approaches to Efficiency and Effectiveness in Government Departments".

However I do not agree with your comments that the Ministry of Women's Affairs is like every other government department in the way they operate. Some other government departments are making more of an effort to be anti-racist and non-sexist than the Ministry of Women's Affairs is.

VAL SCOTT

Otago

Dear Broadsheet,  
It was interesting to read the articles in your June magazine.

I was left feeling sad and disillusioned at what has happened to the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Women have been saying for many years – give us the power and we will do it ourselves. It seems that when women have the power they use it in the same way as men have, on groups more vulnerable than themselves, ie Maori women.

What is the Minister of Women's Affairs – Margaret Shields – doing about this? I can only conclude she supports what is happening in the Ministry of

Women's Affairs. If the Labour Government is wanting to capture women's votes in the next election she and her department must do better than this.

Jim Anderton and the New Labour Party look attractive at this stage. Let's face it, they couldn't do much worse.

ANN WYNNE

Lower Hutt

Dear Broadsheet,

Thanks for letting us know what is happening in the post Mary O'Regan Ministry of Women's Affairs.

Reading how Maori women and their whanau were treated by an organisation that purports to work for the equality of women made me feel ashamed to call myself a feminist. I wonder how Judith Aitken gets away with it! Other managers in the Ministry of Women's Affairs like Penny Fenwick, who with Mary O'Regan was part of a team of women working for change – why are they silent? Also Sandi Beattie who has a long herstory of working for women.

What has happened to them – one can only conclude their principles have been sold for high salaries and places in the SES (Senior Executive Service).

Who needs women in top positions if they forget who they are there for!

SANDRA DUNCAN

Ellerslie

## SCAPEGOATS?

Dear Broadsheet,  
I have read the short rundown of the "white Judicial system" concerning its effects on the Harawiras and cohorts, jailed for violence. [See *Broadsheet* 169, June '89.]

My first reaction is disbelief – did these people do nothing wrong? I couldn't believe that acts of brutality toward the psychiatric patients were being condoned as "fair enough" – like it's not a patch on what the patients have done to their care givers.

I understand that the public (reaction) has generally neglected to consider the brutality, violence and misunderstanding that occurs so readily in the psychiatric health system, and in this light the activities of the Whare Paia and its workers to seem do be being used as a scapegoat for criticisms and the Auckland Hospital board.



Who's minding the kids?

COURTNEY © 1989

It is, of course wrong that a scapegoat seems necessary, but this wrongness does not make the activities of Titewhai Harawira and company right or condonable. These people were jailed for acts of violence and brutality, and yes, while this action may satisfy some that the "baddies" are being pulled from the system, it should not be forgotten that this area of health care is riddled with "baddies" and that fact does not make the Whare Paia's guilt disappear.

We should be lobbying for the re-structuring of the psychiatric health care system, careful training of health workers (nurses, aides) and a break away from fearful attitudes. And not for the release of Titewhai Harawira and company.

I am all for Maori self-determination and agree that the "Maori-ness" of the issue has affected the outcome for the Harawira family -- but I think that any self appointed, untrained, unqualified psychiatric "innovator" is prone to being torn down publicly when things get messy, for whatever reasons.

LEE ANN MITCHELL

#### SUPPORT BLOCKED

Dear Broadsheet,  
The Battered Women's Support Line was set up to provide support and shelter for the victims of domestic violence and that need has been proven by the increase in the number of refuges being established in New Zealand. Hamilton Refuge has an average of 13 new families admitted per month. Police statistics show two-thirds of all homicides are domestic related.

Battered Women's Support Line used a four bedroom house for the first four years of operation but, this house became manifestly inadequate so the Housing Corporation purchased a seven bedroom house which comfortably housed the number of women seeking refuge. However, after complaints from the neighbours the Council demanded that we make a notified application to operate, under the provisions of the Town Planning Act. At that hearing we were granted a provisional permission if we kept our numbers down to 12 people, or four women and eight children. It was impossible for us to operate on that level as two other Refuges in Hamilton had recently closed down and there was nowhere to place the women seeking help.

We applied to the Planning Tribunal to have the conditions varied and after a protracted and

## ANOTHER GREAT YEAR!

The Rodney and Waitemata Times Ltd - the printer of Broadsheet magazine - is proud to have been involved with another successful year of publication.

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extremely expensive legal proceeding, we are now in the situation of not only still being restricted to 12 people, but they have laid on us an extra provision that we have a supervisor living in the Refuge who must be available 24 hours a day. We have no money to pay this person even if we could find someone to fulfil this extremely stress laden position. We also do not feel that women who have been living in their own homes, in an ordinary neighbourhood, who through no fault of their own, but through the violence of their partners have been forced to leave that home and seek shelter in a Women's Refuge, need supervision. They are not handicapped or delinquent and are living in a whanau situation.

We feel we are being discriminated against because we are a refuge. If a normal family with six or eight adolescent children were occupying the house we feel the noise levels, and traffic movements would be even greater than they are at the moment, because all the complaints from the neighbours centred around the noise of children playing.

Our main concern in the whole matter is what is going to happen to the women if we are forced to turn them away? Will the City Council or Government, or the Planning Tribunal care for them? Do we send them back to their homes to be further abused? We

are not responsible for the violence occurring in our society and we are extremely upset by the neighbours' evidence that they were emotionally stressed by the sight of visibly battered women and we suggest they should direct some of their anger against perpetrators of the offences rather than the victim.

The Tribunal decision is discounting the reality of the levels of domestic violence in our society and once again women are having to justify their right to a peaceful existence.

The Social Welfare Department is concerned about the fate of the children in these situations if we are forced to close. We think their anxiety is well founded as sometimes the refuge is the only place in their lives where these children can observe non-violent relationships and we have a chance to break the vicious cycle of violent behaviour.

It would be comforting to believe that the refuge need only accommodate four women and eight children at any one time, but the sad fact is this is not the reality. Our query is, where do we go now?

R. B. EDWARDS

Co-ordinator, Battered Women's Support Line  
Hamilton East

[Ed Note: the women at the refuge would welcome any letters of support or donations. Address letters to PO Box 4226, Hamilton East. Or perhaps you could send a letter to the Minister of Women's Affairs, Margaret Shields, asking for her intervention]

#### SOCIAL WORKER STORY

Dear Broadsheet,  
I wish to comment on the short story "The Social Worker", published in issue 169, June 1989 of *Broadsheet*.

I realise the story is written from the point of view of the "client" of the social worker, but I feel the story gives a totally wrong impression of social workers. Social workers are not, and do not see themselves as "Ms Do-gooder", "Ms Wonderful", "A little miracle worker," as mentioned in the story. The social worker is judgemental and critical of the woman she is visiting. Not all female social workers are like this.

I work with committed feminist social workers who empower women to make decisions about their lives for their good and the good of their children.

SOCIAL WORKER  
Hamilton

# FRONTING UP

#### DEADLINES

For the September issue 26 July, for October 26 August.

#### GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Every month we get letters from a few women who want to renew but just can't afford to. If you are financially secure at present please consider making a gift subscription that we can pass on.

#### BE A BROADSHEET SPY

Please, readers, let us know what shops in your area are stocking *Broadsheet*. We are also seeking suggestions for new retail outlets all over New Zealand, particularly places where feminist women shop - health food stores, women's co-op shops and so on. They can make a profit selling the magazine and we can reach more women. If you know of any such places, please send us the information and we will contact them.

#### PRICE INCREASE

You'll notice our cover price has gone up to \$4.00. We've had to do this in order to absorb the rise in GST to 12.5 percent. We hope you still feel *Broadsheet* is value for money.

## NOT VERY FEMINIST MAN

Dear Broadsheet,  
Thankyou for the additional, unsolicited copy of *Broadsheet*. I was aware of the expiry of my subscription and had intended to let it lapse.

You wisely include an opportunity to expand on the reasons for not renewing and so I'll take that opportunity. An opportunity to write that I am otherwise denied because of my gender.

And possibly that is part of the reason. I had read and eventually subscribed to *Broadsheet* in the hope of finding some guidance and illumination on the progress of feminism, a term I understand to be a celebration of the wonder of being female, not a continuous debasement of the horror it is to be male.

You may scoff, but feminist men do exist, in a very fringe position. Traditional women don't like us, feminist women don't trust us, traditional men despise us, and we don't find too many of each other. I thought *Broadsheet* would satisfy some of my desire for shared experiences, however I find (because of my gender) that *Broadsheet* offers me nothing except abuse.

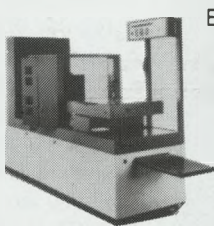
Sadly it seems that your magazine is able only to glorify women by favourable comparison with men, ignoring the fact that the differences between men and women in Western society are declining (many examples to the contrary exist, yes, but overall).

Women are becoming more men-like and men more women-like, a nicer way to express it would be to suggest we are all becoming a bit more human. I don't think though that *Broadsheet* is assisting this convergence, it seeks sometimes to perpetuate the dichotomy and conflict to ensure its niche as the defender of the victim-woman. Pat McKay's *Herspective* could be re-cast very easily into a male perspective, such as BO and deodorants, but *Broadsheet* instead implies that the only victims of advertising messages are women.

You are really facing the problem most explicitly with the likes of Margaret Thatcher and nearer home, much nearer, Judith Aitken, perhaps she is as one of your correspondents put it a "male system woman".

And even that contradiction doesn't shake the certainty that the conflict is men against

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women. I suppose I wanted a magazine that was for people, and I mean pro people, and *Broadsheet* acknowledges no change, no improvement for women, it seeks out more obscure forms of

oppression to justify its existence and totally marginalises any sign or trend of improvement in relations between people of difference, ie men and women, Pakeha and Maori, old and young, heterosexual and homosexual. Look at the bind you find yourselves in with Maori chauvinism, where women are sometimes prevented from speaking on the marae.

Briefly *Broadsheet* is sexist, in that it regards all men as bad, and some women ("male-system women"). And that it seeks out the worst, and finds it, and presents no good news.

Sexism, in either direction, is repugnant in its denial of individuality and the focus on the negative is not only productive of the negative, but damaging to those who desire and work in their own way for change that never seems to come because *Broadsheet* will always take the darkest view.

Some positive change comes from highlighting the bad, most comes from encouraging the good, and that, you don't do.

**HAMISH MACEWAN**

Christchurch

Dear Broadsheet

The review of the book "Women and Education in Aotearoa" (June issue) by Claire-Louise McCurdy contains an error on P.37. The 'Girls and Science' chapter was authored by me and my name is Beverley, not Barbara.

Regards.

**BEVERLEY BELL**  
Hamilton

## OPEN LETTER TO OUR READERS

Have you considered taking out a subscription to *Broadsheet*?

We are pleased to be able to produce a good looking magazine full of articles, news briefs, reviews, music, and fiction of interest to women.

In order to continue our service to you, we need more subscriptions. So if you are one of a group who shares a copy of *Broadsheet*, give yourself and us a treat, take out a subscription.

## Biorhythm

Think I'll forget and ignore my body  
Think I'll kick up my heels, this way and that  
Think I'll run wild, push myself that little bit harder  
again, laughing full of electric energy:  
wind down; crank up; stamp my feet, race round,  
make a list, dance  
til I'm full,  
til I'm good and ready  
to get all still and be vacant again,  
til it comes the time  
to turn the engine over again  
dark, inner, waiting engine - over  
til it cranks out a spurt  
of rusty blood,  
chokes, falters  
and repeats

Repeats, repeats  
until this pristine white serviette  
is sodden, laden with the products  
of steady, continuous easy  
pumping  
and I become appendage  
to my own process: some kind  
of passenger  
I get carried over the napkin  
bridge  
on a sanitary pad:  
touch down slowly, then take  
off again  
on the other side.

**Laurel Stowell**



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## COMMISSIONING HEALTH COMPLAINTS?

Someone to complain to when health services go wrong that isn't run by doctors? Sounds good, but it's still only a working party report. Pat Rosier writes.

Phillida Bunkle was the consumer representative on the working party, chaired by Karen Poutasi of the Health Department, that produced this hard-to-get report. It's a good one from the consumer's viewpoint, but I doubt if it's what the doctors ordered.

A full-time Health Commissioner's job is recommended, with the suggestion that more than one person may fill the role, at least one being Maori. The first responsibility of a Health Commissioner will be "the development of a patient code of rights which should include the right to good medical care and the right to give 'informed consent.' The code should make specific references to the partnership responsibilities of the Treaty of Waitangi". Wide public consultation, followed by a draft code for comment and the introduction of regulations to give the code legal status are recommended. Nine months is the time frame suggested (but no starting date is given) for regulations to be established, then the complaints function could begin.

Appointment of a health commissioner and patient advocates is not seen as diminishing the "basic responsibility of area health boards in the area of the protection of patient welfare and rights." The working party wants a system that operates with a mediation approach and states "a serious attempt should be made to deal with complaints at a local level."

Patient advocates are seen as "so important that it should be specified as a requirement in all charters/contracts/agreements of the Ministry of Health with area health boards". Advocates' primary function will be to protect the rights of individual patients, making sure they get full information and give informed consent to



Helen Clark.

PHOTO: GIL HANLY

**This ball would seem to be in Helen Clark's court now — it would be great to see her pick it up and run with it...**

procedures. Other aspects of their work include getting consumer input into educational material, taking part in ethics committees, keeping boards informed of patients' rights issues and liaising with the health commissioner. Accountability would be to the patient. "Iwi should be given the dominant say in the nomination and selection of Maori patient advocates."

Area health boards would administer the appointment of advocates but they would be appointed by the health commissioners. Area health boards would provide administrative support systems and space, advocates would be paid a salary, on either a full or part time basis and be appointed for a specific time. Initial and ongoing training would be required, and it is sug-

gested that the Human Rights Commission could be involved here, as well as regular opportunities to meet with other advocates.

The emphasis is on accessibility. My only criticism is that it is not recommended, or even suggested that health commissioners and advocates would, most suitably be women.

The working party report was completed in March. I got a copy in time to write about it for this issue of *Broadsheet* only by going through the Ombudsman's office. So again we have a report, good recommendations and no idea when the whole thing will happen. I share Sandra Coney's (see her article in this issue) cynicism and despair at anything ever actually happening. This ball would seem to be in Health Minister Helen Clark's court now - it would be great to see her pick it up and run with it, but she has had it since June.

## BREASTS IN BACKGROUND



Naomi O'Connor exposes a move to ban public breastfeeding in Nelson.

**The people at the heart of a protest which has swept Nelson mothers on to the streets are completely oblivious to the trouble they are causing. They are**

babies. Babies which need to be fed every four hours or so, even if their mothers are still in town shopping.

A recent complaint by a Nelson woman about the treatment she received in a coffee-house gallery in the city has sparked off an intense debate about the appropriateness of breastfeeding in public.

Veronique van der Werf is one of several mothers told by the cafe owners they would prefer not to have breastfeeding in the restaurant as it offended other patrons. She has since lodged a complaint with the Human Rights Commission who are presently considering if they can hear the case.

A petition was circulated around the city, and an informal protest on a weekday lunchtime expressed a level of outrage at the discouragement of public breastfeeding that surprised even the organisers. As Annie Millard, the woman who suggested some kind of protest said – she hardly had to do anything, the action took off by itself.

So on a Wednesday lunchtime over 100 men and women gathered outside the cafe with placards and babies, to picket and sing protest songs. It was a turnout that amazed even the people of Nelson, often mythologised as the home of hippies, potters, and feminists. Protesters said it was a

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basic human right to be able to feed a hungry baby in comfort, otherwise women with young children were forced into staying home in an age which accepted discreet breastfeeding.

In reply a screed of letters to the Nelson Evening Mail have chronicled the opposite viewpoint. Correspondents said they still found public breastfeeding embarrassing and indecent and wanted their opinions respected. The rights of mothers had to be balanced against the right of the cafe owners to run their establishment as they pleased and for any person in public not to be subjected to sights they found disgusting.

Many have pointed the finger at the local council, saying facilities should be provided in Nelson as larger centres have already done. However the women who came out onto the streets were simply saying that public breastfeeding was acceptable. Certainly, they said, it was less offensive than smoking in a restaurant and they did not want to be shunted off to special rooms for something they saw as perfectly natural.

Through it all, the babies keep getting hungry and still have no clue about the fuss going on around them.

## CAUTIONARY TALES

Tomorrow's Schools is already costing some teachers their jobs. Maryan Street warns teachers of the dangers of not knowing their rights.

**Recently Boards of Governors of some secondary schools have been attempting "clean sweeps" in their schools while preparing to become Boards of Trustees or to hand over to them. Their efforts have more often than not cut across the conditions and rights of some of their employees, the teachers.**

Two examples of this are incidents where Boards of Governors exercised non-existent powers. A passing acquaintance with the teaching award would have shown them that they should have done things differently. Under the Labour Relations Act it is the union's responsibility to enforce the Award and make sure it is not infringed. This will make it necessary for PPTA branch officers and union members in schools to be vigilant and conversant with their award.

On Thursday 30 March a Head of Maths received a letter from her Board of Governors thanking her for her service of 14 years but saying that when she turned up for work on Monday 3 April she would be a basic scale assistant teacher and no longer Head of the Maths Department.



MARYAN STREET

PHOTO: GIL HANLY

This was not the first the woman had heard of such a suggestion, but the decision to act in this way came as a shock to her, as one might imagine. A quick phone call to her PPTA field officer confirmed that the Board, as employer had no right to do such a thing, and would have been in breach of the award if they proceeded with the action.

That information was conveyed rapidly to the branch officers and the Board of Governors. The matter was resolved over the weekend, and the woman turned up for

work on 3 April having agreed to go through procedures referred to in the award for voluntary relinquishment of a PR (Position of Responsibility – usually head of a reasonably large department). This suited her well because she did not wish to be a department head any longer, and she was moved into the Science Department for which she was more appropriately qualified anyway.

The second example is of a Board of Governors who passed a by-law in 1988 with a view to dispensing with two teachers in particular who were approaching the age of 60.

Under the Education Act of 1964, Boards may pass by-laws from time to time to affect the running of the school as long as those by-laws are consistent with the Education Act. Some Boards have passed a by-law at some time requiring compulsory retirement at age 60. But most of the time, because of an agreement between the PPTA and the Department of Education, that by-law is not put into practice.

However, in this case the Board of Governors had a policy of employing fresh young things who are newly trained and qualified in order to up-date the image of the school. PPTA would encourage such a commitment to the trained and qualified policy, but would not endorse the wholesale slaughter of competent classified teachers upon reaching the age of 60. Some teachers are still competent at 60; others are incompetent by 35.

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The Board of Governors wrote to the remaining teacher (one had been dispensed with over the Christmas break) thanking him for his 36 years' service to the school and saying that his services would no

longer be required as of March 29 or thereabouts. That Board of Governors was aware of its rights as an employer but was not aware of its responsibilities under the Secondary Teachers' Award. In such cir-

cumstances the Board is required to give the teacher three months notice. So the PPTA won a three month stay of execution for that teacher, putting off the evil day until the end of June, and at the time of writing is still arguing over legal technicalities with the Board.

These are the morals of the two stories:

Know your Award – know where it is kept, do not let it out of the school, make the Board of Trustees get their own copy and swot it up; If the employer (the Board of Trustees) flexes muscles you're not sure they have, check your Award;

There are procedures for dealing with incompetent classroom teachers and school administrators, including principals, detailed in the Secondary Teachers' Award. (The primary situation is different here – check with your NZEI field officers). They are there for everyone's protection – teachers, students and parents. Make sure they are used properly. Do not let a Board of Trustees believe they have indiscriminate hiring and firing powers – they do not;

If you are getting on and would like a change of scenery, just check the Board of Trustees' policy and practice on retirement age, especially if you are thinking of applying for an integrated boys' school in central Auckland, not far from another famous boys' school. Your days could be numbered!

## KITCHEN TABLE

Linda Hill is sitting at the poor woman's answer to the business round table.

The Kitchen Table is an economic monitoring group made up of women of all ages who have been meeting for over two years on the last Saturday of the month at Christchurch WEA. The group discusses everything that's happening in New Zealand's economy and what we women think about it – politics, economics, unemployment, parties, unions, schools, and especially how it all affects us.

We have seen that opinion does make news when it comes from the Round Table, so we too send out press releases that are being picked up regularly by the Christchurch media. This is a low input, highly effective way of making women's voices heard and spending an interesting afternoon with a nice bunch of women at the same time!

If you don't live in Christchurch, why not start a Kitchen Table in your town? We have evolved an easy, rotating, minimal organisation package and some tips for

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cultivating media contacts. We would be happy to share information on this with any women elsewhere who are interested. We would like to see women's views being regularly picked up by media right around the country.

Contact in Christchurch: Moira 518-472; Torfrida 891-327; Toa 588-495 or write to us c/- Kitchen Table, 99 Idris Rd, Fendalton.

## DAY OF RECKONING

One year after the Cervical Cancer Inquiry, women are marking its anniversary with action. Lynda Williams is one of those women.

The Auckland Women's Health Council is currently organising a conference to mark the first anniversary of the release of Judge Silvia Cartwright's Report on the Inquiry into the treatment of cervical cancer at National Women's Hospital.

Saturday 5 August will represent a year since the publication of this report. Members of the Women's Health Council decided to commemorate the event by pro-

viding an opportunity for women to assess just how much has been achieved in the past year both locally and nationally in terms of implementing the Judge's recommendations.

There was also a perceived need for women to be able to say a special thank you to those involved in the Inquiry and a number of key people have been invited to attend the forum, including Judge Silvia Cartwright. Sandra Coney and Phillida Bunkle have been asked to give a talk and we will also be hearing the firsthand story of "Ruth" of the *Metro* article, as Clare Matheson has agreed to share her experiences.

As Clare's book has now been completed there is the possibility of hosting a book launching in the evening with Clare as our guest of honour. Without her willingness to let her story be told through the *Metro* article things may have turned out very differently. It is hoped that the publication of her book may be in time to be celebrated at this event.

Auckland's Mayor, Dame Catherine Tizard is to open the conference, and most of the morning will be spent listening to guest speakers. This will be followed by workshops where women can discuss a number of issues related to the Cartwright Report, including workshops focusing on the report's recommendations. A final



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plenary session in the afternoon will enable women to report back from their workshops and the Minister of Health, Helen Clark, has been invited to come along and receive these reports.

Both the Australian and the New Zealand documentaries on the Inquiry will be

showing continuously through the day.

**Date: Saturday 5 August, from 9am to 5pm. Venue: Freemans Bay Community Centre, 52 Hepburn Street, Ponsonby, Auckland. Cost: Supporting \$20 plus, Waged \$20 (\$15 if registered by 22 July, 1989), Unwaged \$10.**

## PURPLE PROSE

Alice Walker's book *The Colour Purple* caused a furore at a Nelson school a few months ago. Naomi O'Connor looks at why.

***The Colour Purple* seems to have faded from all but the winter sunsets in Nelson. For a while however in late March and April purple controversy was spreading all over the country from this provincial South Island city.**

Alice Walker's Pulitzer prize winning novel first hit the headlines this year when the opposition spokesman on education, Dr Lockwood Smith questioned the teaching of the book to sixth formers at Nelson's Nayland College.

Dr Smith said writing that focused school pupils' minds on "incest, violence and lesbianism" should not be taught in schools, and *The Colour Purple* should be withdrawn as a textbook.

His call was prompted by a Nelson woman, one of the co-ordinators of the Campaign for Excellence in education, Mrs Ruth Suckling. At the time Mrs Suckling said she believed she was speaking for many parents concerned about teaching



methods in the schools. She took the matter to the political arena after failing to have the book removed from the college.

The novel was thrown into the centre of a circus ring. For weeks the controversy raged, in Nelson and around New Zealand in the period just before the election of parents to school trustee boards. Mrs Suckling herself was standing for the Nayland board.

The local paper, the *Nelson Evening Mail*, ran columns of letters for and against the novel. It became a symbol of the

decay of education standards or the flagship of liberal and relevant teaching, depending on the camp of the correspondent.

Unlike *Spycatcher* there were no public readings of the offending book.

Like *Spycatcher* sales of the book soared as people sought to find out exactly what the uproar was about.

Mrs Suckling, whose daughter is in the sixth form class studying the book at the time, said she wanted parents to know what was being taught and she wanted them to have the right to object if they were concerned. She said she had experienced first hand how hard it was for parents to raise concerns against the "closed ranks of educationalists".

The co-founder of the Campaign for Excellence, Mrs Agnes-Mary Brooke said there was a battle for the minds of New Zealand children going on and pupils were being taught what to think, not how to think. Much of children's education was devoted to the demands of pressure groups who wanted to persuade youngsters towards an acceptance or practice of deviancy, including homosexuality or lesbianism, or to propagandise them about issues like feminism, racism, sexual harassment, child abuse and incest, politicised peace and trade union issues, she said.

Although the central concern of many who objected to *The Colour Purple* in classrooms appeared to be about parent control over the influences on their children, the publicity concentrated on the sexual aspects of the novel.

After a while Walker's account of a black woman's life in the south of the United States began to sound like the most tawdry kind of Airport bestseller. Lesbianism, sexual abuse, infanticide, violence, incest became the keywords in an emotive public debate which threatened a lot of people whatever the colour of their politics.

The school teaching the novel stayed out of the limelight as long as it could, until eventually compelled to answer some of the allegations made about the handling of Mrs Suckling's original complaints. The acting principal Mr Derek Chapman, issued a statement assuring parents their views were seen as important at Nayland, which prided itself "with its efforts to make parents feel at ease and to take very seriously any concerns raised". The school also agreed to a request from the newspaper for a group of students to collate a report on sixth formers' reaction. They wholeheartedly supported the novel's use.

A specially appointed review committee finally recommended the book remain available for teaching and the school's board of governors endorsed their recommendation, including a provision that parents and students had the right to choose to study alternative material if they wished. That decision was released in the third week of April.

A fortnight later school trustee boards results were announced and Nelson watched eagerly to see if the purple debate had reached a conservative groundswell.

*The Colour Purple* touched a very sensitive nerve in the people in New Zealand, and in the end in Nelson the voting parents appear to have reacted against the conservative campaign.

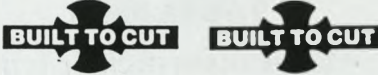
It has all faded into the mists of issues past now, but deep running concern remains for reformists of all ilks - what should adolescents read and then discuss in class? Now the dust of the wild allegations about Walker's supposedly purple prose has settled, the prevailing question stands clear, in all its complexity.

## LESBIANS, RELATIONSHIPS AND BELONGINGS

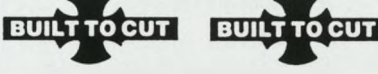
Una Jagose writes from Wellington.

The Women's Legal Resource Project is considering making submissions to the Justice Department on proposed amendments to the Matrimonial

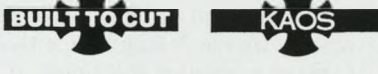
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**Property Act, urging them to include lesbians in the definition of de facto relationships.**

At a lesbian public meeting held on 17 April, it was decided that wide consultation with lesbians throughout New Zealand was essential before a decision could be made. The Women's Legal Resource Project want feedback from lesbians as to what they think of the issues involved. The following is a brief summary of the issues raised at the meeting.

At present the Matrimonial Property Act (MPA) provides for the equal division

of property (belongings) when a heterosexual couple's marriage breaks down. Moves are afoot at the moment to extend this equal sharing provision to include de facto relationships where the couple have been together for three years. "De facto" has been specifically defined as heterosexual only. The meeting was called to discuss whether or not we want to lobby parliament to have lesbians included in the definition of de facto and therefore get coverage under the amended act. Lesbians have yet again been ignored and made invisible and the working party organising the proposed amendments has not even considered including us in its definition of de facto relationships.

At the meeting four options for resolving disputes about the division of property after a relationship breakup were presented and discussed.

The first option is what the present legal situation is for lesbians. That is, our relationships are not recognised legally but it is possible to draw up cohabitation agreements in which both parties decide the terms of their relationship, what belongs to who and what to do with their belongings if/when they break up. Such agreements enable lesbians to decide before they separate what each other's interest in the property is or will be.

The main point that was brought up about this option was the fact that lesbians do not all have equal access to or knowledge of the legal system. Also, regardless of what option lesbians choose to make submissions on, the empowerment of lesbians as to their legal rights and how to enforce them and protect themselves was a main priority. This was considered to be the responsibility of lesbians who have the privilege of access to the system and information about it, to share that knowledge throughout lesbians' communities.

The second option was to lobby for coverage under a definition of "de facto relationship" and to have the principles of the act apply to lesbians, with a provision to "contract out" of such blanket coverage. In this way, lesbians would be covered and protected to some extent by the act but would have the option of saying, "I don't want to be included by this legislation".

Again, such an option would need the foresight of future planning and lesbians would have to discuss and sort out what legal protection they want for their relationships and act accordingly. Such an option would still provide a legal method of resolving disputes, even if lesbians were unsure of their legal position and had not made any previous agreement. The act would also apply to those women who were not aware that they were included, whether or not they wanted it to, and who didn't draw up a "contracting out" agreement.



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The importance of drawing up a definition of "de facto" that was not heterosexual was also raised and one suggestion was: "Two people living together and evidencing a commitment to sharing their lives on a bona fide (legitimate) domestic basis."

The third option considered was optional coverage under the MPA. That is, lesbians could contract into the act and the definition of de facto relationship. This would give lesbians the choice of being covered by the act if they feel it is appropriate to them. For lesbians unaware of such a provision, the present law would continue to apply (as described in the first option).

The final option was some form of an alternative dispute resolution process. It was envisaged that a system would be set up and run by and for lesbians and thus suit our needs. At the meeting, the mechanics of such a proposal were unclear and this seems to be a drawback to the idea. Such an opinion would be a complete turn away from both the present situation and the other two options, all of which include the male-dominated legal system.

The MPA is a piece of legislation designed specifically to meet the needs of heterosexuals and we must question whether it is appropriate to apply the principles and philosophies of the Act to our own relationships. Does the philosophy of equal division of belongings inherent in the Act apply automatically to lesbian relationships?

The courts need not be involved unless the lesbians themselves could not settle a dispute about their property, but the white middle-class male judiciary would be the ultimate deciding factor in a dispute. The court system has never been sympathetic to lesbians and for us to elect to take our breaking up disputes into that system was discussed at length and seen by many to be unsatisfactory.

On the other hand, coverage under the amended Act would provide a backstop for lesbians who cannot settle their own property disputes. It would almost certainly prevent some lesbians from being "ripped off" when their relationship ends. The Act recognised inequality of earning power and recognises all contributions to a relationship, not just monetary ones.

The possibility of government departments also recognising relationships and thus cutting some benefits where one woman is on a benefit and one is earning also arises. At present we are seen as "single women" regardless and this does give us some advantages. However, legal recognition of our relationships may have advantages in other areas, for example in countering the line in custody disputes that lesbian relationships are "pretended family relationships".

One of the reasons why this issue has arisen now is one of lesbian visibility. The

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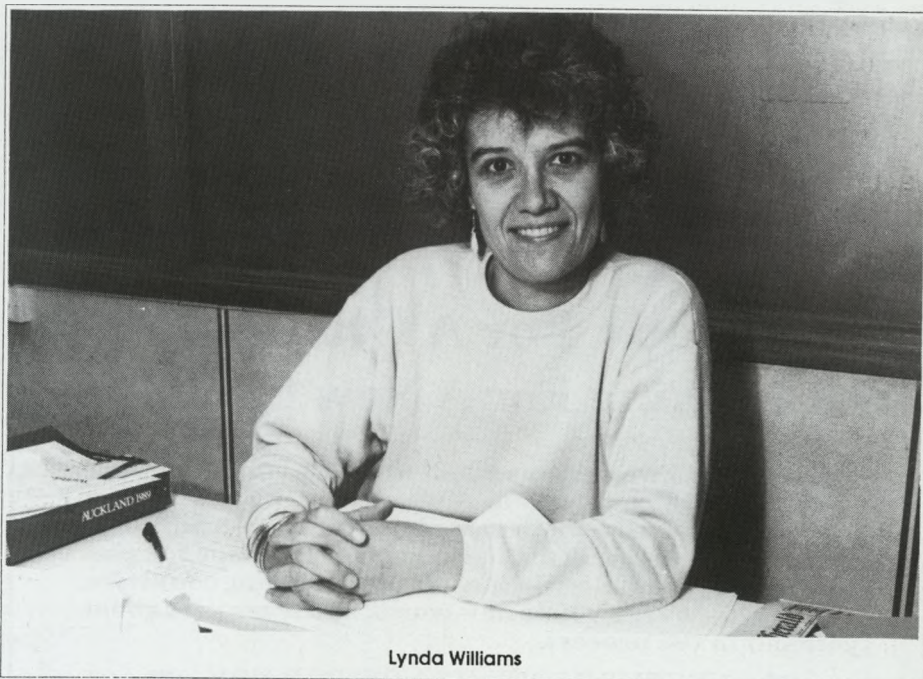
Happy Birthday Broadsheet!

working party responsible for proposing amendments to the Act ignored lesbians and the Women's Legal Resource Project feels it is essential that we have a say in the proceedings, even if it is to positively say we do not want to be included in the Act.

No matter what lesbians decide to do in

regard to this proposal, the role of education and the provision of information to raise lesbians' awareness as to their legal rights and protection of themselves is essential and was seen by the lesbians at the public meeting to be one of our main responsibilities to one another.

The Women's Legal resource Project wants to co-ordinate a wide cross-section of lesbians' views on this matter and forward them in submission form to the Justice Department. Please sent your ideas/feelings on the proposals to: Women's Legal resource Project, P O Box 6528, Wellington. The deadline is the end of July. The next meeting about this issue in Wellington is on Monday 14 August at 7pm, at the YWCA, 35 Vivian St. This meeting will be a chance to further discuss the issues and formulate a strategy for action. A fuller report on the meeting is available from the Community Law Centre at 172 Taranaki St. Lesbians wanting a copy can go into the centre or ring (04) 850-289 and ask for it to be sent.



Lynda Williams

PHOTO: GIL HANLY

## FERTILITY ACTION

This women's health activist group now has an Auckland office. Worker, Lynda Williams talked to Pat Rosier about it.

**For several years now Fertility Action has operated out of Sandra Coney's house. Now it has an office that is staffed from 10.00 to 2.00 week days except Wednesday.**

"Now we can provide a more accessible service than Fertility Action has before," says Lynda Williams, the part-time paid worker. There is information

available on all aspects of women's health care and files on specific topics are being built up.

Fertility Action aims to help women get the knowledge they need to find their way around the health system. They will give assistance with getting access to your medical files and taking a complaint to the appropriate authority if this is what you wish to do.

This development in Fertility Action's work has been made possible by the generosity of one woman who has paid the office rent for a year. Fundraising is ongoing.

**The Fertility Action office is at Suite 5, 208 Ponsonby Rd, Ph (09) 780-357, P.O. Box 46148 Herne Bay, Auckland.**

## BHUTAN

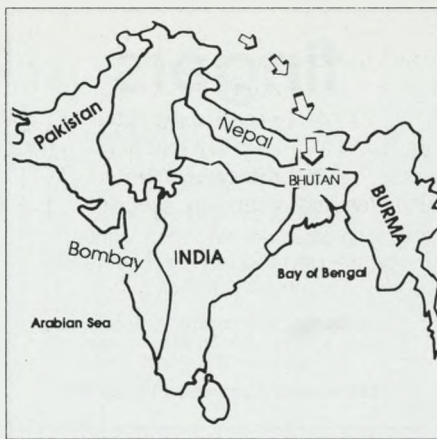
Jackie Frizelle is working with women in Bhutan, one of the world's most isolated countries. She talked to Carolyn Mark.

**Bhutan is a tiny country of 1 million people high in the Himalayas, bordered by China and India, and close to Tibet and Nepal. Although isolated and economically under-developed, Bhutan has always maintained political and cultural independence.**

A New Zealand agriculturalist, Jackie Frizelle is spending two years in Bhutan with Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA), running training programmes at the Royal Veterinary Institute near the country's capital, Thimpu. In 1984 Jackie did her first stint with VSA in Papua New Guinea, teaching agriculture at a local high school. Formerly she worked in Taumaranui and Westport as a farm advisory officer with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

It is only in the last 20 years that westerners have been permitted to travel within Bhutan, and VSA volunteers are among the few foreigners able to live and work in this remote Buddhist country.

Jackie says she is finding a classic "development" situation – Bhutanese women do the greater part of the agricul-



tural work, but have virtually no access to training programmes to develop their skills and get a fairer share of the resources.

However, official attitudes are changing. A recent report studied the impact of development projects and found that women received little or no benefit, and recommended that women extension officers be trained. Jackie is pressing on with plans to set up such courses.

In the past women were never specifically excluded from a career in agriculture, says Jackie, but opportunities were certainly never provided.

"The major problem with finding female recruits is that so few girls make it through the educational system. Many lack confidence, and would need to break a few

cultural barriers to be able to perform the work"

An example Jackie gives of this is transportation. In Bhutan the major form of transport is walking, sometimes for days on end to get from one village to another. Since many women will not walk without a companion, female recruits would have to show a great deal of courage to set off alone.

Jackie's job is to train Pasture Assistants. These are extension workers who promote pasture establishment, better management and improved animal husbandry. The trainees have limited schooling, the equivalent of New Zealand Form 2 level, so the course is skills-based and practical.

Jackie has introduced a women's perspective with the goal of sensitising the male trainees to at least see their work from a women's viewpoint. One of her methods has been to use a role-playing game which sets up two groups of farmers, but with different inputs and resources and techniques. At the end of the game one set has become very definitely better off, the other is on the verge of collapse. The punchline reveals the gender of the two groups. Jackie reports that the trainees clicked very quickly into what was going on.

"I was concerned about playing the game with them because I was worried they'd miss the connections and the whole issue of women as the exploited farmer in the game. I was very wrong. They had no problems making the connections – they're all from farms and the issues were very real to them."

Another major problem lurks in the background of gender relations in Bhutan's rural scene – the question of land use. There is a danger that in Bhutan, as in other countries, improvements in pasturing and stock development will lead to women losing access to traditional cropping land. This would have serious implications for both women's status as crop food producers and the amount of food available for families.

Jackie's workload is heavy, with a new course beginning this year and serious staff shortages. VSA is urgently seeking an animal husbandry trainer to work with her. "A creative teacher is needed with a lot of initiative and patience, who is sensitive to women's issues," says Jackie.

VSA's programme in Bhutan is now into its fifth year. So far the focus has been on agricultural, educational and health assignments. Apart from another worker with Jackie, VSA is also looking for experienced primary teachers to help the Bhutanese government complete a major reform of its primary educational system.

Anyone interested can contact Marion or Carolyn at VSA, PO Box 12-246, Wellington, phone (04)725-759.

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## OUR WOMAN **IN** T.H.E HOUSE



ALISON McCULLOCH

WOMEN fought against some fast-track policy making in the New Labour Party (NLP) and succeeded in entrenching themselves firmly in the party's executive and council at the NLP foundation conference in June.

The conference saw some important policy initiatives pushed through in haste, often without enough discussion, and in the face of vocal opposition.

While the inevitable time shortage was one reason, another was the dominance over proceedings of the Leader, **Jim Anderton**. His accessibility to the podium and microphone to put his point of view became a sore point among party members who were either denied debate or given a two minute speaking time.

Despite this, Mr Anderton kept most of the 400 people at the conference behind him on policy matters, and in particular the draft economic policy paper. Anderton tied acceptance of the paper to his own standing, telling the conference that if they did not accept the paper he had nothing more to give them. After a fierce debate, which occasionally turned into a shouting match, the paper was adopted by a large majority.

Feminists at the conference were one of the most united groups, and, because of good numbers, were able to force votes on two major issues. This vote flew in the face of the hurriedly adopted interim constitution of the party, and was not supported by Anderton. Debate on other issues were put off, using both the draft constitution as a reason, and time.

The first push by feminists was a resolution demanding that the top bodies of the party comprise at least 50 percent women.

That was eventually passed and Anderton said later he supported the move, despite his earlier opposition to the issue being voted on. He, and other party functionaries, feared more groups would also demand votes on specific policy issues.

On the abortion issue, women were not quite so successful. Several feminists persuaded the chair that the conference should vote on whether or not to vote on a remit. Under that remit Mr Anderton would be called on to introduce a private members bill liberalising abortion laws.

Losing that vote means the issue will, in the meantime, be left up to the new national council. The party's next conference, likely in November, is the only other body able to rule on the issue.

One party member pushing for liberalisation, **Adaire Hannah** from the party's Wellington organisation, told the conference that abortion had to be addressed now because of the current review of the Crimes Act. Pro choice feminists want abortion decriminalised, which means an amendment to the Crimes Act, and the repeal of the Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion Act. This would, among other things, do away with the need for two certifying consultants and change the rules about giving contraceptive advice to young people.

Because of the relatively tough accountability clause adopted, in the interim, by the conference, Mr Anderton would be obliged

to make the move if told to by the party.

Apart from the voting victories, the loud voice of feminism at the conference also seemed to provoke a male backlash. There were anti-feminist interjections at times, and resentment at women for pushing forward feminist issues. The close voting on those issues also reflected some-



Sue Bradford

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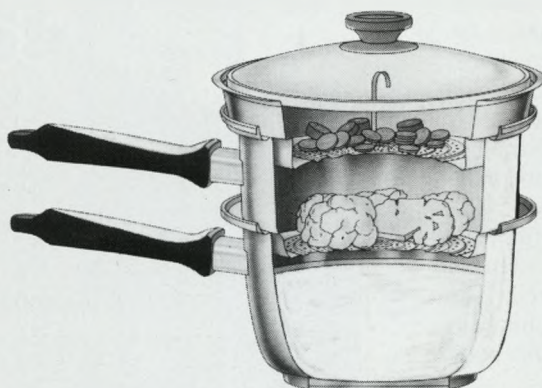


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thing of a male-female split.

The other important event for women was the election to the vice presidency of the party of unemployment rights activist **Sue Bradford**. [See *Broadsheet* 165 for an interview with Sue]. Bradford's win came as a shock, to both party members and Sue herself. The acting vice president, **Frances Holloway** of Dunedin, was obviously supported for the job by Anderton, and was widely tipped to win.

Bradford comes from political activism outside the Labour Party, while Holloway had been a party member. Bradford believes the party can deliver for women and said she planned to argue for the private members' bill on abortion, through council and executive.

Bradford said she took on the job "determined not to sell out". Unemployed with four children, Sue Bradford recently made the news leading the unemployment march to Wellington as national co-ordinator of the national unemployed workers' group, Te Roopu Rawakore. Her job on the executive is likely to be difficult, especially since she is further to the political left than Anderton.

In what was a reaction to Labour MPs moving further and further from Labour Party policies, the NLP members called for the party's strong accountability provisions. However, it has no hard and fast

policies yet and in the five months until the next conference Anderton's own policy ideas could become entrenched as party policy.

Being the NLP's sole MP, Anderton will be called on to put the party's view on issues of the day. This will leave the council under pressure to approve policy measures before there can be any recourse to the membership.

Bradford could play an important role in stopping the "interim" decisions of the conference becoming permanent policy statements.

There was a lot of idealism and enthusiasm at the conference, but the party still has many contradictions found in the Labour party it broke away from. The party is trying to accommodate disparate political groupings whose political agendas often oppose the electorate and Parliamentary thrust of the party.

While Anderton, and most of his supporters, want to "tinker with capitalism" as one party member put it, the party's ultra left factions want nothing less than its overthrow. They know that certainly won't happen under an NLP government, but find the party a convenient vehicle for their views.

Four women's "commissions" met during the conference. They reached general agreement that the NLP's priorities

for women should be setting up good party structures, economic policy, child care, pay and employment equity, pornography and violence against women, and pro choice abortion laws.

There was virtually no conference wide discussions of women's issues, nor of other issues like the Treaty of Waitangi, Pacific Island issues, education, environment, housing and health. Groups of NLP members had produced policy documents for the conference, which had the status of discussion papers. These were looked at in groups, but, other than a conference wide discussion of economic policy, they were reported back and left to be studied by the ruling council or the next conference.

Many of the people who will effectively run the party are former Labour activists. At times the "top table" at the conference looked like Labour revisited.

The party has yet to face a test in the mainstream political arena. Meanwhile it is setting up offices, hiring staff - including a fulltime women's organiser - and making plans for things like a party newspaper, and an NLP critique of the Government budget in July.

Optimism is rife. A lot of women are involved and there is still a commitment to democracy, accountability of MPs and wide discussion of policy.

## THE NEXT ACT

Passing the torch may be the biggest challenge for women in 20 years.

(Excerpts from an article by Barbara Ehrenreich originally printed in *Ms* December 1988 and reprinted in *Wel-In-Formed* the Women's Electoral Lobby, N.S.W. February newsletter)

"While we 'second wave' feminists (the ones who came of fighting age in the sixties and early seventies) were doing all the things we've been doing now for nearly two decades - agitating, marching, going to meetings, arguing, making up, and going to more meetings - something else, which is easily as important in the long run, was going on: a new generation of women emerged from underfoot and got tall enough to look us in the eye. Whether feminism is going to continue as a huge and powerful movement, or as any kind of movement, depends on them. And that means it also depends on those of us who are older, and whether we are willing to do something most of us have never imagined having to do - pass the torch, or let the 'kids' out of child care and up onto the stage.

These things don't happen automatically. The feminists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century won the fight for suffrage, but never got around to the equally crucial work of torch passing. As a result, they were succeeded by a generation of women whose greatest act of daring was to smoke in public. Between 1900 and 1960 the word "feminist" sank to the level of a psychiatric diagnostic

category.

Like our suffragist foremothers, we may be facing a major generational gap. At the older (post-40) end of the feminist spectrum there is a lot of burnout. At the younger end of the female spectrum there are the various syndromes (post-feminism, prefeminism, et cetera) that come from never having burned at all. The post-40s are likely to see the post-feminists as wretched ingrates. The wretched ingrates are likely to see the post-40 feminists as haggard burnouts. And an awful lot of young women - raised by feminist mothers, teachers, and big sisters - are likely to see feminism as another dreary maternal concern, on a par with remembering to take an umbrella when you go outside.

...Now, when I was 26, everyone was 26, or so it seemed. We built a movement that was - in its style and temperament - as young and excited as we were. But today's 26-year-olds face a movement that is established, institutionalised, and even, perhaps, a little set in its ways. I'm proud that feminism has gotten so grown up that the movement is no longer improvised, from week to week, out of a few key kitchens. But where are today's young women going to get a chance to test their own ideas and leadership skills? Where are they going to find the space in which to develop their own theories and agendas?

(Some) organisations have already been thoroughly infiltrated by under-30-year-olds. But no one could deny that the over-40-year olds tend to have a pretty tight grip on the leadership. And while we're at least conscious of other kinds of limitations (too white, too middle class, etc.), I don't see a whole lot of worry about being, pardon the expression, too old. To the contrary, our feminist enterprises are riddled with covert and unacknowledged ageism. I see it in groups I am involved in, groups that have, at least in principle, a deep commitment to social justice and equality...

Women's studies programmes are another setting in which young women might discover "the movement" and each other. Embattled outposts just a few years ago, women's studies programmes have become what could be called the "reproductive organ" of the Women's Movement: the one place where knowledge and insight are systematically transmitted to the young. But, important as it is to the survival of feminism, women's studies is not likely to be the crucible for the next wave. For one thing, it's limited to the 52 percent of young women who go to college at all (and, of course, to the far smaller percent who are willing or able to take courses with no clear vocational goal). Then there's the "studies" aspect: women's studies classes are not consciousness-raising groups; they're real courses, with deadlines, exams, and grades. In the academy, as elsewhere, older women have authority; younger women are, at best, apprentices.

But don't younger women have to learn from older women - professors and organisational leaders - in hard-won positions of authority? Certainly they do, but among the things they have to learn are leadership and confidence in their own creativity: qualities that are not easily transmitted across a generation gap. If those of us who are older expect to be succeeded by a next generation of feminist activists and leaders, we're going to have to make a conscious effort to create the organisational "spaces" in which they can test their wings.

For example, we could encourage the formation of young women's caucuses and infor-

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mal get-togethers within women's organisations and enterprises. We should get in the habit of seeing youth as one of the dimensions of diversity - along with race, ethnicity, and class - that we want to encourage at all levels of our movement. At work, we need to take conscious responsibility for "mentoring" the young - and beyond that, learning from them.

Torch passing may be the biggest challenge we've faced in the 20 or so years since we got the movement going. Psychologically, many of us in the post-40 bracket are still 26. Ours, after all, was a movement of "daughters"; our mode was rebellion, our mood was anger; and perhaps the most fundamental point we had to make was that women's lives should not be perpetually subordinated to reproduction and the needs of the next generation. There was

nothing to prepare us - and how could there have been? - to think about the next generation of feminists.

The next generation of feminists will have their own ideas, some of which will be different from ours (meaning, from our point of view, wrong). They'll do things in their own way (meaning not exactly the right way). But most of the time we'll be right there doing things with them, except, of course, when we have other things to do - like catching up on our reading or learning entirely new skills, like meringue dancing or scuba diving. We won't be the "daughters" any more; and we shouldn't have to be the "mothers" of the movement either. But with luck there'll be a new honorary category for us to fill, something like "Big Sisters." ■

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# —THE WORD IS OUT— B I S E X U A L I T Y

**D**uring the Lesbian and Gay Conference held in Auckland over Easter, a bisexual woman broke down in tears as she complained of little support from both the straight and lesbian communities. Some people offered criticism of her presence and demand for support, others endorsed it.

Emotive as this may seem, it raises some of the questions at the heart of the bisexuality debate. Should bisexual women be involved in lesbian political groups or should they be forming their own; does the presence of bisexual women impinge upon and contradict the principle of lesbian only space; are lesbians guilty of stereotyping and ostracising bisexual women; and where do bisexual women stand in relation to this sexist and lesbian-fearing society?

Although bisexuality is not new, in recent months the debate has become heated both here and overseas. In England arguments have taken place in the pages of *Spare Rib*, where two polarised views have been expressed.

In her *Spare Rib* article, Melissa Benn tries to place bisexuality in a "wider discussion about feminist sexual politics". She sees the need to talk about bisexuality without bitterness, to define it, and identify what it is that is considered so terrible about it.

Benn offers one definition of a bisexual woman as: "someone who has sexually loved/desired both women and men and who is open to both again." Like lesbianism and homosexuality, bisexuality has historically been seen as perversion or the act of the sexually immature. Many women, says Benn, may not act out or express either side of their bisexuality for years.

Like many things, sexuality is an area that people like to see in clear cut terms. "One of the reasons bisexuality is so threatening [is that] it faffs about with matters



by Lisa Sabbage

*Top of the pops  
in the controversy  
stakes, bisexuality  
has been a hot topic  
of late. Just where  
do bisexual women  
fit in socially and  
politically?  
Read on for an  
airing of opinions*

This article is not an attempt to speak for bisexual women. It presents the ideas and viewpoints of some lesbians. Broadsheet would like to continue to air opinions and discussion on this topic and welcomes input from our readers.

that seem life and death to most people, but only because sexuality is deemed to be a signifier of what is at the core of us, and for sure, it does determine what we are and the kinds of choices we are going to make."

Within feminism, the biggest accusations against bisexuality come from lesbians, says Benn. "To some, it seems it's a 'you're with us or you're against us' situation. Bisexuality is sponging off lesbian struggles, violating a safe place which lesbians have created. Bisexual women are gatecrashers at the party who didn't stay to clear up afterwards."

There are two issues being conflated here, she says. The first is the necessity of creating, sustaining and defending a specific lesbian (and gay) culture. The second is a prescription about other women's sexuality.

Lesbians often see bisexual women as suffering from a failure of nerve who won't take the final step to lesbianism, she says. She identifies a lack of tolerance for women who remain bisexual, and worse, for those who "go back" to sleeping with men. Yet feminism "with its emphasis on honesty about sexuality, and modern lesbianism with its emphasis on coming out, have both affected the bisexual woman as much as her lesbian sisters."

When it comes down to it, according to Benn, it does not really matter if some women love women *and* men. She stresses that the real problem is that homosexuality still isn't a valid choice in this world. She believes that part of the condition for feminism changing society at large is that it changes itself. Feminism, Benn says, can show the world how things can be done differently.

She points out that in England, bisexual activists have persuaded two Lesbian and Gay political groups to include them in their campaigns and to use the term "bisexuality" on membership forms.

"We forget too easily that 'identity' is created as a reaction to the oppressive, stifling, normative, brutality of 'out there'. The central tenets of a feminist 'radical pluralism' about sex have to be built on changing ourselves and changing the world"

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other, a militant and active defence of lesbianism and bisexuality, and a defence and development of a new critique of heterosexuality.

"None of these are possible or desirable without the other; without any of them we will go wrong in our thinking on bisexuality - all sexuality."

The thrust of Sarah Roelofs' response to Benn's arguments is that they depoliticise sexuality and ignore the reality of women's lives. According to Roelofs, Benn "reduces lesbian identity to one 'choice' in some supermarket of sexual orientation".

Sexuality, stresses Roelofs, is political, and that has been one of feminism's most important principles. She sees labels as important and dismisses the "I hate labelling, I'm just me" argument as implying naturalism or the "I was born like this" theory.

The other theory often bandied about, explains Roelofs, is that everyone is naturally bisexual, and that we all have the capacity to be both. But as Roelofs points out, one of the roots of feminism is an analysis that sexuality is not biologically given, but very much socially constructed.

"Human beings are born with the capacity to be sexual, but the way this is expressed is socially conditioned by the particular society we are born into. Nobody is 'naturally' sexually anything."

Roelofs acknowledges that women do not become lesbians overnight and that

many women may go through a bisexual process on the way to lesbianism, or remain bisexual. Feminists, she says, are not "against" bisexuality when it describes the reality of women's lives.

"Nobody is arguing against bisexuality as an adjective, but as an analytical political term for changing the world it leaves a lot to be desired."

She emphasises that society is capitalist, patriarchal and heterosexist. These systems construct heterosexuality as the normal, natural sexuality, just as gender differences between men and women are constructed. We absorb heterosexuality in positive terms as we grow up, and are taught about lesbianism and gayness only in negative terms or none at all. This imperative to be heterosexual has been analysed by feminists as "compulsory heterosexuality".

"We do not live in a Habitat of equally presented sexual lifestyles... compulsory heterosexuality is not some unpleasant accident of fate that we can educate ourselves out of, 'talking, thinking, acting as if we live already in the world we want to be in' - as Melissa puts it. Would that it were so easy. There are intricate, mutually beneficial relationships between capitalism, patriarchy, and compulsory heterosexuality."

Contrary to Benn's argument then, Roelofs says that who we sleep with definitely *does* matter. If it did not then lesbians and gay men would not have to fight for homosexual law reform.

Roelofs is disparaging of the membership of bisexuals in lesbian and gay political groups and believes that the principle of autonomy is crucial. Her Lesbian and Gay rights group (unlike the two mentioned in Benn's article) have decided not to include bisexuals. "Our view was that we were a campaign specifically for lesbians and gay men, against that specific oppression. If bisexuals wished to set up a Bisexuals Liberation Campaign or the Campaign for Bisexual Rights - they could do so."

As you can imagine, since both articles were published, the pages of *Spare Rib* have carried expressions of defence for both viewpoints.

Some of the polarities of ideas and emotions conveyed in the exchange between Benn and Roelofs also exist closer to home. Among lesbians at the Auckland Lesbian and Gay Conference the bisexuality debate sparked both anger and acceptance.

Julie Glamuzina, for instance, wrote in the Wellington Lesbian Newsletter that she felt bisexuality was a red herring which had diverted attention away from issues and concerns of lesbians and gay men. Her belief was reinforced when "most of the time allocated for a discussion on anti-discrimination was spent discussing the

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demands of one bisexual woman. Thus the session was effectively hijacked by a woman identifying as bisexual." She felt disappointed that little interest was shown in issues like the forms of discrimination experienced by Maori lesbians and gay men, or by people with AIDS.

As a result of the statement made by the bisexual woman demanding support and recognition from the lesbian community, a lesbian caucus was called. A statement came from the caucus of acceptance that women identify themselves as bisexual, but that bisexual women are not part of the lesbian community. Before the statement was read aloud, it was made clear that not all lesbians present supported it and that it was part of an ongoing debate.

Julie Glamuzina stresses that opposing the calls for support by the bisexual woman and questioning the presence of bisexuals at a lesbian and gay conference, was not done to be "mean" to bisexuals, but because of the principles involved. Like Sarah Roelofs she believes that bisexuals who want support should form their own support groups, organisations and conferences, rather than use those built by lesbians. She underscores the fact that the issue is not about women who in the process of coming out as lesbians call themselves bisexual, or about lesbians who from time to time have sexual relationships with men but who still identify as lesbian. It is, she says, about women who over a number of years identify as bisexual rather than as

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lesbian.

Jenny Rankine holds a different view. She is adamant that bisexual women are a part of her lesbian community.

"I understand the need for lesbian space where you know that all the other women in the room are lesbians. In a heterosexual, homophobic world it's very important and necessary for that social space. It's in this context that bisexual women come up as an issue the most. But it seems to me that it must be possible for women who don't know what they are, or who are in the process of coming out, or who think they're lesbians but are still in marriages, to mix with lesbians who are confident, safe and comfortable with their lesbian identity. It doesn't seem to me that there needs to be a conflict about that."

The difficulty arises, she says, over particular lesbian venues. Jenny believes specific nights can be allocated for women to mix – whether they be lesbian, bisexual or unsure of their sexuality. She points out that both bisexual and lesbian women need validation of their identity.

"They need to be able to mix comfortably and feel accepted by people of their own kind. That can be done without lesbian and bisexual women being mutually exclusive.

"Very rigid definitions of what a 'lesbian' is are responsible for scaring away our own people – women who are too scared to come to lesbian events, dances, and concerts."

Jenny says the argument that bisexual

women enjoy heterosexual privilege is not as simple and clear as it sounds. She thinks there is something hypocritical about this attitude because many lesbians can experience the same privilege. For instance those who look more "straight" enjoy the heterosexual privilege that appearance affords.

"Lesbians are seen as having the right to come out to who they chose, on their own terms, and at their own time. Bisexual women don't seem to be given the same choice. What we appear to be doing is demanding more of bisexual women than of lesbians."

What about the stories of lesbians who have been emotionally burned by their involvement with bisexual women? Jenny acknowledges that there are women who have played with being lesbian and run back to being with a man. But she emphasises that the thing to blame is homophobia which creates fear of the stigma attached to being a lesbian. Older lesbians experienced this betrayal at a time when homophobia was more blatant than it is now, she says.

She empathises with women who have felt burned by individual bisexual women, but warns that we mustn't fall into the pit of stereotyping them as vampires seeking fresh lesbians to humiliate and drain.

"It can be easy for some of us who have been out for a long time to forget the power of that fear and the way it operates. What beats that fear is acceptance and support by your own kind. The more support given by lesbians the more likely it is that women are going to accept the lesbian side of themselves. So in the long term I think that a hostile attitude toward bisexual women is going to be totally counter productive for our community as a whole."

Jenny's analysis is that lesbians are not under the control of men and are therefore dangerous to male dominance and are a potentially disruptive group. In this context, she sees bisexual women as potential allies to lesbians because they may not be under men's control in the same way that heterosexual women can be.

"The debate about lesbian only space sometimes gets so far away from real political action. Nothing is said of the bisexual women involved in the Homosexual Law Reform campaign. To me it's the action that women take and how useful it is that it is important. I would like to see bisexual people making their own analysis, and expressing where they see themselves, particularly in terms of patriarchy and heterosexuality.

"The political action we take as individuals is almost useless – the most successful work is when we are involved as a group. To me the first step is coming out as a lesbian, but if you don't organise with other lesbians, the change you will make in your life is minimal. Being lesbian is not



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enough. Potentially it is, but only if you organise.

"There are some areas where I know bisexual women would not be welcome. But I think as lesbians bisexual women are obvious allies." ■

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## THE COMMISSAR

Dir. Aleksandr Askoldov  
(USSR)

"Made 21 years ago by Aleksandr Askoldov and immediately suppressed, this is a film of stunning brilliance and powerful imagery finally revealed. *The Commissar* of the title is a woman. She is respected by her men, ruthless, and sexual. She is pregnant and it is too late to abort. She is billeted with a Jewish family, in order to bring to term her child, who she will then, eventually, leave behind when she returns to battle. The Commissar is a magnificent character, of heroic and human proportions. She seems to be Mother Russia, herself: large, fierce, gentle, relentless defender of the revolution, bearing her children in the midst of warmth and of turmoil, then weaning them too soon - abandoning the child in its most basic needs, ironically, in order to survive. There is no alternative here: not to fight the Whites would clearly mean being killed by them. That much is certainly clear.

"It is the children in this film who, through their play, reflect the horror of the war raging outside the closed courtyard, 'playing' out scenes of arbitrary violence against villagers. Finally, three gang up on the older sister, physically and psycho-

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logically terrorizing her. Like a Greek chorus they have echoed the forces which threaten to invade the boarded up bunker in which they are sheltered and where their father, in horrified exasperation, angrily denounces them for their murderous pogrom to the accompaniment of their non-stop wails of contrition. A very powerful and apparently politically provocative film, one can only surmise because of its overt Jewish sympathy and simultaneous reflection of a history of anti-semitic persecution, its release is a remarkable gift of glasnost." Joyce Mason, *Broadside*, Nov 88.

Cissie Colpitts One (Joan Plowright), Cissie Colpitts Three (Joely Richardson) and Cissie Colpitts Two (Juliet Stevenson) in a scene from *Drowning By Numbers*.

## SALAAM BOMBAY

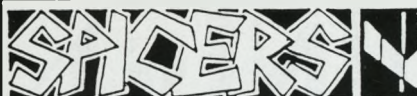
Dir. Mira Nair  
(India)

It is quite rare to get an Indian film made by a woman. This film by Mira Nair has received quite a bit of acclaim on the film festival circuits around the world and was said to be one of the best films at the London Film Festival.

It is a film about Bombay's underworld, its street life and the children and young people who inhabit it. Roughly the storyline revolves around Krishna (a ten year old boy) who finds himself in Bombay and is rapidly forced to learn to survive on the streets.

Pratibha Parmar (Spare Rib Feb 89) said of the film "*Salaam Bombay's* tapestry of lives is woven with great sensitivity. There is no sentimentality or sensationalism, even in Chaipau's relationships with Salssal...a rebellious young Nepalese girl who has been forcibly sold as a virgin prostitute." "What emerges is a portrait of children who have never been allowed a childhood free of poverty and harshness, nor the luxury of innocence in a city oblivious to their plight."

The authenticity of the film is due to the fact that Mira used real street kids in real locations. Mira and Sooni wrote the script



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after "talking to children on the streets, in the railway stations, in the brothels, in the children's homes, everywhere. The story grew out of this reality..." In the end, Mira feels that "the film does capture what we had set out to capture, in terms of this appetite for life the kids have, the irreverence, the fun and the dignity of the children and of the whole environment."

It is worth mentioning that the makers of *Salaam Bombay* took responsibility for the street kids once the film was finished. They were sensitive to the way that the filming process would alter the children and were keen "not to change their lives so dramatically that it would become artificial." But at the same time they wanted to help the children postfilm and have set up the Salaam Balak Trust. The purpose of the Trust is to raise money to finance the creation of two learning centres to cater to a total of sixty children.

## DROWNING BY NUMBERS

Dir. Peter Greenaway  
(UK)

Said to be less inaccessible and obscure than *A Z and Two Noughts* which I walked out of at a previous film festival. It is a story about three women, all called Cissie Collpitts, who dispose of their respective partners by drowning. "They are absolved from retribution by the love-lorn coroner, Madgett, who pursues all three with a tenacity that ultimately leads to his own untimely demise." (Rose Collis, SR)

The film is littered with game-playing which some see as clever and intellectual. I usually find Greenaway's films a total bore and even though the plot of this particular offering sounds as if it could be promising, I wouldn't hold my breath.

## DEAD RINGERS

Dir. David Cronenberg  
(Canada)

Beverly Alcock said of this film in a *Spare Rib* review: "more mainstream misogyny ...has little to recommend it to women viewers - unless you're prepared

to engage in an evening of self-loathing..." Enough said!

## MAPANTSULA

Dir. Oliver Schmitz  
(South Africa)

"Panic is streetwise, cocksure and a flashy dresser. He is a petty criminal who survives by picking the pockets of rich businessmen, and through him we see something of what it's like to live in Soweto. There are family quarrels, the worry about paying the rent, the night life and kids playing in the streets - all patrolled by apartheid." (Pauline Cohen, SR Feb 89)

The politicisation of Panic, one of life's survivors, takes place when he is imprisoned as a petty criminal and can no longer ignore the reality that surrounds him.



Director of *Salaam Bombay* Mira Nair

## THE LONELY PASSION OF JUDITH HEARNE

Dir. Jack Clayton  
(UK)

"When Judith Hearne's old aunt dies, leaving her nothing but her Catholic faith and little savings to live on, she's forced to move into a seedy boarding house, run by the oppressive Mrs Rice. Judith tries to survive by teaching piano..."

"Judith's final extravagances allow a whole generous woman to escape the mean broken body. She does not remain in the worn stereotype of passive victim." "Judith Hearne's gradual disintegration is given great pathos by Maggie Smith."

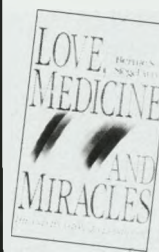
"The film quietly explores the use of faith and guilt to control women's lives."

"Not the film to see if you're feeling lonely, but certainly one which can make your choice to be alone, positive and hopeful." (Cherry Smith, SR, Nov 88)

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## DAUGHTER OF THE NILE

Dir. Hou Hsiao-Hsien  
(Taiwan)

This Taiwanese film revolves around a young woman, Lin Xiaoyang, and her family. Lin is "a devotee of the Japanese comic-strip *Daughter of the Nile* and identifies with its heroine, Carol, an American girl who travels back through time to Ancient Egypt and falls in love, hopelessly, with the pharaoh Memphis." (*Monthly Film Bulletin*, April 89) Hence the name of the film.

Lin lives in a world of fantasy whilst the men in her life run around doing the important work. "Daughter of the Nile is a film about being - and feeling - marginal."

"Hou has an acute sense of the way that Chinese society casts women in the role of domestic anchors while pushing men into physically and/or intellectually 'macho' roles on a larger stage." (MFB)

## A SHORT FILM ABOUT KILLING

Dir. Krzysztof Kieslowski  
(Poland)

A completely unsentimental anti-death penalty film. Brilliantly filmed but not for the squeamish as the murder scene is very graphic (and apparently takes forever).

## A WORLD APART

Dir. Chris Menges  
(UK)

"*A World Apart* is the latest in a line of films made by white directors, which are either set in Africa and use it as a backdrop to the events in the white community, as in *Out of Africa*, or are about the political struggles of the African people against apartheid, as in *Cry Freedom*."

"Based on the life of Ruth First, a white South African journalist who was killed by a bomb planted by the South African authorities in 1982, *A World Apart* is written by her daughter Shawn Slovo, and is based on their relationship during her formative years."

"Molly cannot come to terms with the family breakup her parents' political commitment brings...Diana becomes the first white woman to be imprisoned under the 90 Day Detention Act.

Molly is "looking for love and affection from an absentee mother too busy fighting for the rights of others, to give it. "It's not fair" she cries. A sentiment I would echo...It's not fair that white filmmakers should continually make films in and about Africa which deal in such a superficial way with the emotional price that the Africans themselves pay, day in day out."

"A World Apart left me unmoved: it was like being at a side show wishing you had a ticket for the main event - the story of the Black African people themselves.

(Karen Alexander, SR, Sept 88)

If its any consolation, the film is apparently beautifully shot and a bit of a tear jerker.

#### CELIA

Dir. Anne Turner  
(Australia)

"This is a tale of childhood based on the growing revolt of a young girl as she combats the forces which seek to deprive her of her pet rabbit and her closest friends (the communist family next door). (SR, April 89)

"Celia is a film about children taking more control over their lives. It is about their struggle to explain events to them-



Maryanne Fahey (Pat Carmichael) and Rebecca Smart (Celia Carmichael) in *Celia*

selves from a perspective grounded in their own experience of the world. Since 'their' perspective is, for the most part, dominated by imaginary constructions, they inevitably end up confronting the way the adults in their lives deal with crises." (Cinema Papers, 72)

*Celia* was awarded the prize for the best feature film at the 11th International Women's Film Festival in Creteil, France.

#### NOT TO BE MISSED:

Distant Voices, Still Lives

Women on the Edge of a Nervous Breakdown

Family Viewing

(reviews in June *Broadsheet*)

#### FILMS THAT PROMISE TO BE WORTH SEEING:

Red Sorghum, dir. Zhang Yimou, China

Emerald City, based on David Williamson's play (Australia). (Auck only)

Little Dorritt, dir. Christine Edzard, based on the Dickens book.

Coverup; Behind the Iran Contra Affair, Dir. Christine Trent, (won documentary prize at the 11th International Women's Film Festival)

Brightness, dir. Souleymane Cisse, Mali

From Russia with Rock, dir. Marjaana Mykkanen, Finland

Little Vera, dir. Vasily Pichul, USSR

#### DATES:

18th Wellington Film Festival,  
Embassy Theatre,  
July 7-23;

21st Auckland International Film Festival,  
Civic Theatre,  
July 14-29

13th International Film Festival,  
Dunedin, Octagon Theatre,  
July 21-Aug 3

13th International Film Festival,  
Christchurch, Regent Theatre,  
July 28-Aug 10

#### AUCKLAND WOMENS FILM FESTIVAL

Outreach (and possibly another venue),  
8, 11-15th September.

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## IN VISIBLE COLOURS

An International Women of Colour and Third World Women Film/Video Festival and Symposium, Vancouver, Canada, 15-19th November 1989.

Some of the aims of the festival are to make films by women of colour and third world women more visible by creating more opportunities for their exhibition, promotion and distribution; to further the analysis of race, gender and class in the particular contexts that women around the world find themselves in; to foster support, understanding and appreciation of work by these women. 70 films will be showcased.

Work by Maori and other indigenous women and women of colour can be submitted to:

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In Visible Colours/Women in Focus

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Copies of entry forms available from Liz Difiore, c/- *Broadsheet Magazine*.



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SECOND MAORI FILM  
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Mon 31 July - Sat 5 August.  
Screenings at the Maidment  
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Sun 30 July

Powhiri (Opening ceremony)  
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1.00 Opening speeches

7.30 Screening of *Hine* and  
*Keskidee Aroha*,  
Merata Mita

Mon 31 July

Films around the theme of Maori  
Dance/creativity

7.30 *Matenga*, Ramai Hayward

Tues 1 Aug

Theme focuses on Maori youth

12.30 *Big Brother, Little Sister*  
(Story by Witi Ihimaera)  
*Kingi's Story*

(Screenplay: Maori youth)

7.30 *Kingpin*

(Screenplay Mitch Manuel)

Wed 2 Aug

Whenua night

7.30 *Te Utu*, Robert Jahnke

*Spirits and the Times will Teach*,

Barry Barclay

*Bastion Point*, Merata Mita

Thurs 3 Aug

The meeting of Maori and Pakeha  
cultures



Merata Mita

GIL HANLY

12.30 *The Neglected Miracle*,  
Barry Barclay

7.30 *Two Rivers Meet*,  
R. Habib  
*Karanga Hokianga*,  
Merata Mita

Fri 4 Aug

*Patu*, Merata Mita

Sat 5 Aug

12.30 *The Prophets: Tuhoe*  
*Ringatu*,  
Barry Barclay  
*Waikato*, Barry Barclay

7.30 *Hotu Painu*,  
Peter Tureii  
*Huakina*, Ted Nai  
*Ka Mate*,  
Barry Barclay /Tama Poata

● Closing ceremony - to be arranged  
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Queries, Submissions and

programmes to Ella Henry, Ph:  
(09) 668 170 or (09) 390 789.

Submissions from Maori

filmmakers are still welcome. Ella Henry would especially like to hear from any new Maori filmmakers. This festival is part of an ongoing process of showing indigenous films and next year an international indigenous film festival is planned.

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# THE SPOTS ON THE APALOSA

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YOU'RE MEAN, you ARE! YOU JUST DON'T LIKE UNCLE HARRIET! YOU'RE TRYING TO MAKE HER GO AWAY!...



...JUST LIKE DAD! YOU MADE DAD GO AWAY, TOO! YOU DON'T CARE WHAT I WANT! I HATE YOU - I HATE YOU!!...



NOW LISTEN HERE - HORSE? HORSE!!... COME BACK HERE THIS MINUTE!!...



HORSE?...



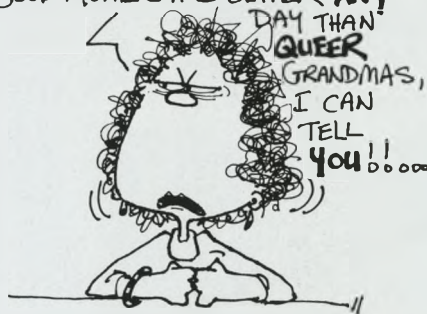
I DIDN'T DRIVE YOUR FATHER AWAY - HE LEFT ME! BUT HOW WOULD YOU KNOW? YOU WERE SAFE AT GRANDMA'S THE WHOLE TIME...



I'M JUST TRYING TO BE A GOOD MOTHER, THAT'S ALL!...



GOOD MOTHERS KNOW WHAT'S BEST FOR THEIR CHILDREN... GOOD MOTHERS ARE BETTER ANY DAY THAN QUEER GRANDMAS, I CAN TELL YOU!!...



GOOD MOTHERS DON'T GO OFF AT 65 AND HAVE AFFAIRS WITH 70-YEAR-OLD, JACK-BOOTED, CIGAR-SMOKING HARLEY DAVIDSON FREAKS!!!



WHAT'S THIS?! ANOTHER ONE OUT TO MAKE ME FEEL GUILTY! YOU'RE ON THEIR SIDE, TOO, I SUPPOSE?!...



PERISH THE THOUGHT...



CATS ALWAYS SIDE WITH CAN-OPENERS...



## TAKE THE POWER FROM THE DOCS

*Sandra Coney  
talks about health  
care, power and what  
being a  
consumer  
representative  
really means*

**I** want to share with you a little joke that is circulating in the women's health community in Auckland. The immediate past chairperson of the New Zealand Medical Association said at a recent Obstetrician and Gynaecologists' meeting in Wellington that the biggest threats to modern obstetrics are feminism, consumerism and midwives. To which we said 'Hooray!'

I'm not going to say anything about midwives today, and only a little about feminism. My main focus will be on consumerism in the wake of the Cartwright Inquiry – which fell like a bombshell on the New Zealand public and the medical profession. The public was appalled at what doctors considered normal practice and the doctors were appalled that what they considered normal wasn't considered so in the real world. None of this was news to feminists in the women's movement who had been discussing, analysing, writing about, and attempting to change normal medical practice for years.

Medical school training and teaching practices had long been criticised. ANSEARCH (the organisation that has since become the PHA in New Zealand) women had raised it at the Role of the Doctor Conference in 1985. At the

**This is the text of an address given at the Public Health Association (formerly ANSEARCH) conference in Auckland in May 1989.**

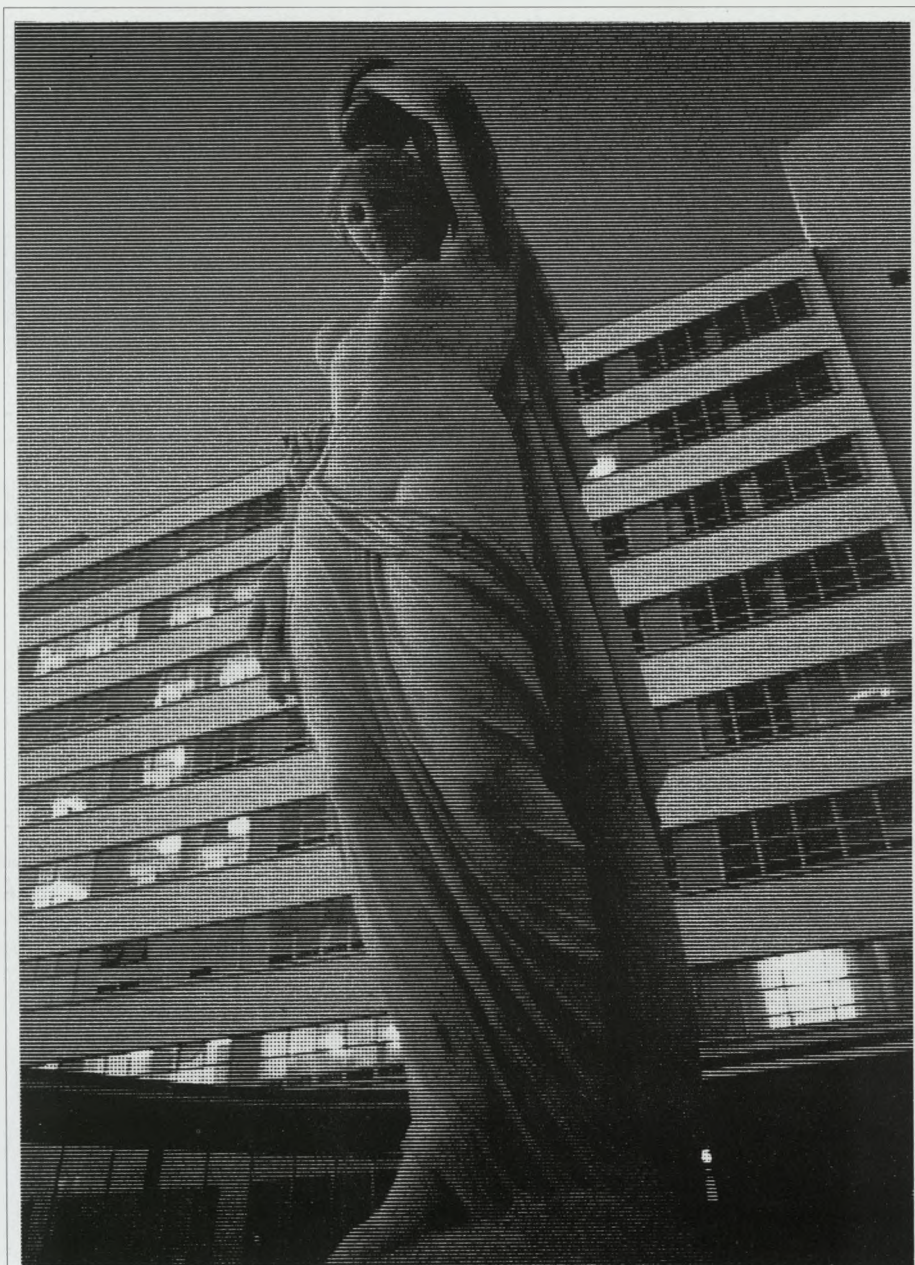


PHOTO: JOHN REYNOLDS

### The post-Cartwright experience has been one of entrenchment of power

Cartwright Inquiry we discovered that an Auckland health group, Maternity Action, had written to Dr Gabrielle Collison, medical superintendent of National Women's Hospital (NWH) in 1985 about the use of non-consenting anaesthetised women to

teach students vaginal examinations, to no effect. It was seen as normal.

Unethical research had been a particular focus for many years. From 1980 women protested about the New Zealand Health and Contraceptive Study, a study which went through no ethical committee, and which violated the requirements of informed consent. Once again to no good purpose. The study was referred to the Medical Research Council (MRC) which saw a few problems but essentially gave it the thumbs up. It was seen as normal practice.

Women in Auckland had been complaining for years about the cattle market that was National Women's Hospital (NWH). The reputation of some of its

doctors for crudity, arrogance and bullying was legendary. While I worked at *Broadsheet* we had article after article on women's experiences at NWH. The only effect was the establishment at NWH of a public relations committee, the chairman of which came to see me as editor of the magazine to try and get us to haul off. The only problem he perceived was that women didn't understand why they had been treated the way they had. He did not question the medical treatment, it all came down to a communication problem, with the women unable to grasp why what was being done to them was good for them, and - of course - normal practice.

Women all over New Zealand had fought centralisation of maternity services, the brainchild of Dennis Bonham, a policy for high tech birth which through his strategic placement on key government committees he was able to see imposed on the whole of New Zealand. Bonham was widely seen as dictatorial, difficult and a violent opponent of home birth.

There was nothing particularly new for women's health activists about the Cartwright Inquiry, which is why many women felt their experiences had been especially legitimated by the inquiry. What was new about the inquiry process was the level of public scrutiny of these practices, an exposure feminists had not been able to achieve previously. What was also new was the opportunity to confront the people, their culture and their medical practices in an open, impartial, non-medical forum - in the public eye.

The outcome of the inquiry process was a report which, after careful objective examination of the facts, supported the criticisms feminists had made and essentially the explanation we had provided for how things could have happened. The Auckland Hospital Board, the superintendent of NWH, the Minister of Health and the Department of Health speedily pledged support for all Judge Cartwright's report. "It will be implemented," said the Minister.

Like many feminists I do not have faith in the system and it was with a great deal of scepticism that I received these protestations. At times I felt like an irrevocably bitter and twisted and burned out old feminist who was too graceless to accept the sincerity of those making the promises. But I didn't believe them.

I prepared myself for a short struggle to see the recommendations accepted, judging that the most difficult to achieve would be a national screening programme, simply because it was probably the most costly recommendation and spending on health is not currently fashionable. But even the



Sandra Coney

**A consumer representative is not just any old person who uses health services, that is a consumer.**

**A consumer representative is actively engaged in grass-roots community-based work on health issues**

cynic in me has been overwhelmed by the resistance of the system to change and the lengths to which those within the institutions will go to avoid sharing power. It is now ten months since the Cartwright Report. The further we get from 5 August 1988, when the report was released, the fainter becomes the chance the recommendations will be implemented as they were written.

A certain number of changes have been made on paper. There are now guidelines for ethical committees, guidelines for conducting research, codes of teaching practice, protocols on carcinoma in situ and taking smears, and numerous reports have been penned. But these new guidelines for practices will only be as good as the people carrying them out and as the checks put in place for monitoring them.

I am reminded of my late, lamentable experience as advisor to the Auckland Area Health Board committee monitoring the implementation of the Cartwright Report. The judge had advised the review of all dysplasia cases at NWH. Her inquiry had

only looked at carcinoma in situ (CIS), but there was a distinct suspicion that if Professor Green and his followers were disinclined to treat CIS, they would have been even less likely to treat lesser degrees of cervical abnormality. This matter of a review had also been raised by Dr Graeme Duncan and another Wellington doctor, who had looked at the recall files, and the monitoring committee was aware of specific cases being reported in the media and through the inquiry Cancer Hotline, of women who were referred to the hospital with abnormal smears and simply being sent home with nothing being done.

Doctors at NWH were up in arms at the thought of their files being reviewed by other doctors, and the board was scared to bits of upsetting them. Some board members and officers were worried too about the cost and mooted the idea that these women would be found through the national screening programme when it eventuated.

Nobody wanted to actually get in and start going through the files, so there we were discussing the vexed question of the dysplasias and a board doctor gave a report, the substance of which was her profound statement, "Well, it all depends what you mean by dysplasia." Now I have heard more "It all depends what you mean..." statements in the past three years than I wish to hear for the rest of my lifetime. It is the escape route through obfuscation of the medical profession.

"It all depends what you mean by research..."

"It all depends what you mean by cancer..."

"It all depends what you mean by consent..."

Consumer groups are very clear about what it means. It means the doctors and bureaucrats do not wish to share power. We are adamant that unless we are part of the processes, the medical system cannot, will not, change. But change it must.

The aftermath of the Cartwright Inquiry has been a struggle by the old guard, the medical elite in boards, hospitals, and universities, to not give us power. They do have a problem about that, which they dimly perceive. They sense, though not accurately, the mood of distrust, frustration and assertiveness in the community. Community involvement is on their agenda, but they do not understand what it means, and they wish it to happen entirely on their terms. They want to make merely cosmetic changes, ones that make them feel progressive, responsive and liberal, but not real change. They only want to give the shadow of their power, not the substance.

I said they have only dimly perceived

the mood out there in the real world, because they think we will be satisfied with so little. They do not realise we will not be content with what we are given but wish to negotiate terms of involvement acceptable to us.

Because there is so much confusion about the terms, I wish to discuss the concepts at the heart of the demands by health groups.

Most health and research committees have in the past been almost entirely medical: closed shops where like-minded people go through processes which cost the tax payers a lot of money but really only shore up medical power. I mean the kind of committees in the Health Department, universities, and MRC where they fly people around the country, put them up at smart hotels, pay them to be there, if they're not paid from their employers (the tax payers again), so they can sit about pontificating and publishing glossy reports that nobody reads.

Some of these committees have had the odd lay person. Invariably upper middle class people, usually women, who are known socially to those in charge, well-meaning people, but abysmally ill-informed.

The response to the Cartwright Inquiry has been an increased recognition on the part of the institutions of the need to involve non-medical people. So whenever a committee is set up, a lay representative is invited. When those of us working in the community hear about these committees – and we rarely do because the institution informs us, we hear through our own networks, which are very efficient. When we hear about these committees, no one will know a thing about the lay person. We will ask around and they will be complete unknowns, people plucked from the dinner table, who can be relied on not to give too much trouble. The tame lay person is as much as the system can tolerate at the moment.

It is important to stress that what is required for effective consumer input is representatives of consumer health groups. The difference is fundamental and critical.

A lay person can be anyone who is not a doctor. Their experience of the health system may be negligible. They may have no ongoing education or development on issues of patients rights or specific health matters. They may not understand how the system works, who has power and who doesn't, what current concerns among health consumers are. They have no systems of support other than personal ones. And most important, they are not accountable to anyone.

It is quite easy for such a person to be totally overwhelmed as the only non-medical

## New guidelines for practices will only be as good as the people carrying them out and as the checks put in place for monitoring them

person on a committee. They are up against a medical block which will know the hidden agenda behind what's on the paper, which will, on the whole, support the interests of other professionals, because to break ranks means to be discredited and marginalised. Thus lay people will often not understand the language, will not be able to deal with the force of medical arguments, will not even be able to deal with the personal behaviour of some doctors, which can be dismissive, arrogant and baffle with science.

Doctors are practised at defining reality. I have even heard doctors argue that they are health consumers because they have babies, get sore toes and have 'flu injections.

When women in the women's health movement talk about consumer representation we have key characteristics in mind:

1. Involvement in a consumer health group which supports the person and to whom she reports back. This is important because it means the person can check out her experiences as a representative against her own reference group, can discuss difficult issues that have arisen, and get support. It means she is experienced in the area, she is an expert, she has an ear to the ground, and is continually receiving information from other sources, so has something else to test her experiences against.

2. She is there representing her group, not as an individual. This makes it harder to pick her off, and is a protection for her so she is less likely to be personally blamed for positions she may take on issues, and to suffer personal repercussions. This is something we in the Auckland Women's Health Council feel very strongly about.

3. She will have gone through some sort of community process in being selected for the position. She will have a mandate from her community and represent them.

4. She will represent an organisation with a developed health perspective, to which she has subscribed in joining the group.

5. She will not be the only consumer representative.

A consumer representative is not just

any old person who uses health services, that is a consumer. A consumer representative is actively engaged in grass-roots community-based work on health issues. It is not acceptable for the institution to pick the person, which is what they want to do. At the Auckland Women's Health Council we are already seeing a tendency for those setting up committees and advisory groups to isolate "acceptable" people and request them, rather than asking for a representative from the group and leaving it to the group to do the selecting.

Given that consumer representation is necessary to modify medical power, it is inappropriate for those holding medical power to be consumer representatives. In fact, I hold that medical professionals should not be able to be members of consumer groups, because they would have split loyalties and a vested interest in aspects of the health system consumers want to change. Their own interest group – doctors – is so strong we need to balance things up, in the short term at least, by developing our own power base. In the Auckland Women's Health Council doctors must apply to belong and each application is considered on an individual basis. Where the woman is trusted she will be permitted to join, and this has happened, but doctors cannot hold office.

Consumer groups are not groups which have been set up to help people in the community but are part of the community. They are not social or community worker based groups who act on behalf of the community. Such people often have ties to the system, they often think they know best what the people they help want, but do not have a mandate to *represent* them. They are not selected by them, not accountable to them.

I realise there are not many groups that fit this criteria and there will not be until the resources owned by the community are shared more equitably. Most community-based groups struggle on pathetic resources – broken down typewriters, recycled envelopes and starvation budgets.

I resent the money spent on research in New Zealand. At a time of excessive stringency in health spending I do not think we can afford to spend so much on research, most of which is totally esoteric, and may help the researchers' careers or the drug companies' marketing campaigns, but which is a luxury we cannot afford. We are 18th of 22 OECD countries in health spending; life expectancy in New Zealand is one of the lowest of OECD countries. We may improve that figure by spending more on health promotion, primary health care and health groups.

I looked in vain in a recent incredibly

glossy and expensive publication by the MRC called *Health Research '88* for information about how much money the council gets from the government. There was a graph on where the money was spent, which told me that only nine percent of the money spent on research went on social medicine or public health, but no mention of amounts. There was also no information about money spent on administration.

Until some of that money, and other mis-spent money from the health budget, is re-routed to consumer groups, a strong network of community-based consumer groups will not develop. To me it feels as if we are losing the struggle over the Cartwright Report at the moment, because of the superior resources of the institutions. They can afford to hang on. They can afford to drag it out. They can afford to twist and change, to disappear there and reappear here. Those of us in the community cannot match it.

I started by saying that the post-Cartwright experience had been one of entrenchment of medical power. The system wants to be seen to be responsive without actually changing. I want to trace some examples of the response of the system:

1. The MRC has announced that women's health will be a focus and will set up a women's health committee. We heard that various consumer representatives were being considered but were not asked to be involved. Instead, a wholly professional committee was formed, which has mooted research those of us working in the community consider would be entirely useless to our needs, even though the proposal said it would be useful to community groups. As far as I know there has been no consultation with the community about the membership, terms of reference or priorities for research of the women's health committee.

So the MRC can feel good about having a women's health focus, but so far there is no evidence it will benefit women in the community or women's health groups at all. I suspect that the only people it will benefit are women health professionals who will be able to use it as a route to enhance their careers. It is ironical that feminists have succeeded in making women's health a priority issue only to watch women who owe little allegiance to their sex co-opt it for themselves. It illustrates the resilience and opportunism of the system.

2. Then there's the Auckland Area Health Board, and I note that Mr Titter, appointed to bring them within budget, has said that 95% of the Cartwright Report

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will be implemented. We are all wondering what is the five percent which is going to be left out. Another example is the ill-fated monitoring committee, now replaced, by Titter, with a new task force of medical professionals and board employees. As Lynda Williams of the Auckland Women's Health Council said in *Broadsheet* in May, "The power has been placed back in the hands of the very people who are resistant to change."

3. Finally there's the university, the most recalcitrant of all. On television last night Dean North said they wanted to apologise to the women damaged by the

unfortunate experiment but they couldn't because their lawyers advised them not to. How feeble! The issue apparently is compensation – I believe the university is not insured for this. It does not accept the claims for compensation that have been lodged by some of the women and their families so we can look forward to the unseemly spectacle of the university and the board fighting women it has abused and maimed, using taxpayers' money.

The medical elite and the institutions are "responding", they are *not* giving up power. ■

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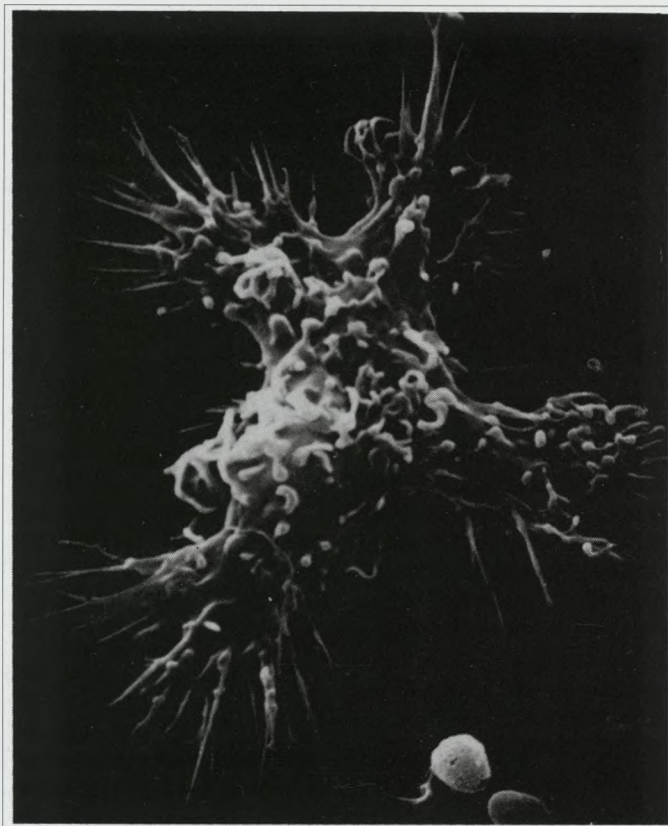
*The food is always of the highest quality and at peak freshness because it turns over so fast. No rancid nuts or seeds here! The fresh fruit and vegetables are organically grown and the book section is the pick of the bunch. Homoeopathic remedies and the nature's Sunshine range are lined up in alphabetical order for easy access. The oils are in a cool, dark cupboard where they're supposed to be.*

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## A B C's OF IMMUNOLOGY



Scanning electron micrograph of a normal human monocyte (blood cell), a type of macrophage. Magnification: 8400 x. Courtesy: Ralph Albrecht, University of Wisconsin.

**A**fter a slow start, winter has finally set in, along with all those familiar aches, pains and fevers of the 'flu. But be grateful, those symptoms are actually a sign that your immune system is working.

Most of us don't give the causes of all this misery a second thought. We just want to feel better. What many of us don't know is that these symptoms are the signs of a competently functioning immune system working to rid our body of an infectious agent. The fact that we feel bad now probably means that we will feel better soon.

Our immune system has been getting a lot of press lately. AIDS, increasing numbers of immunological disorders and diseases like "Total Allergy Syndrome" or Twentieth Century Disease are all in the news. Other diseases like multiple sclerosis, arthritis and diabetes in which our immune systems attack our own bodies also seem to be more prevalent. And a chronic illness which occurs after infection with the Epstein Barr virus (ME) is so common now that it has been termed the

*Susan Elliott explains one of the most complex and vital systems in our bodies*

**Our immune system does not reside in specific organs, it is made up of a diffuse network of white blood cells and chemical messengers**

### OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

**O**ur immune system is a complex organisation of cells and organs located throughout our bodies, connected by chemical messengers that travel in our blood and other body fluids. Unlike other body systems, our immune system does not reside in specific organs. Instead, it is made up of a diffuse network of white blood cells and chemical messengers. In a very general sense, our immune system can be divided into two distinct components – humoral immunity and cellular immunity.

Humoral immunity refers to antibacterial substances known as antibodies in the "humours" as the ancient Greeks called the bloodstream. Circulating antibodies are our first line of defence against infection. They attach themselves to the infective agent, either killing it outright or making it possible for white blood cells to kill it. However, there are so many different infective agents that we cannot possibly have enough types of antibody to destroy every potential infection. When our bodies identify a new virus or bacteria

This article has been reprinted from the Spring 1989 issue of *Healthsharing*, a Canadian women's health quarterly. Susan Elliott worked for a number of years in immunology research and is a member of the *Healthsharing* collective.

or a foreign protein, in the case of an organ transplant, other components of the immune system are alerted and kick in to make new antibodies that are specifically directed against this particular threat to our health.

Cellular immunity refers to the different kinds of white blood cells that become involved as the second line of defence against infection. Some of them can destroy the infection immediately, others pass the word on to even more potent cells that rapidly reproduce themselves and flock to the site of the infection.

Communication between defense cells is essential to orchestrate a response to an infection. Our immune cells communicate by means of chemicals called lymphokines that are produced by some of them and recognised by all the others.

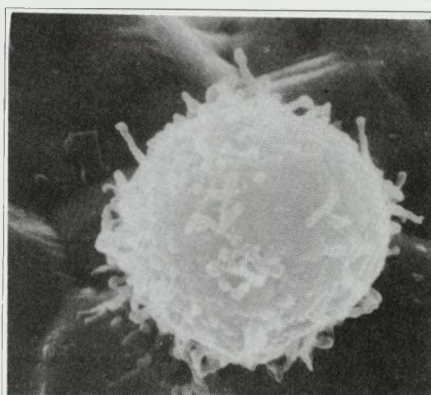
## DEFENCE CELLS

**O**ur blood is composed of red blood cells or erythrocytes (which carry oxygen to our tissues), platelets (which aid in clotting) and white blood cells or leukocytes (which are our defence cells). Leukocytes include a variety of cells: macrophages, lymphocytes, neutrophils, eosinophils and basophils. One of the symptoms of an infection is often an increase in the total number of white blood cells in the blood or leukocytosis. When there is a reduction in the number, as in AIDS, it is termed leukopenia.

The macrophages or "cell-eaters" are the largest of the leukocytes. They make up only about eight percent of the total number of leukocytes but are extremely important nonetheless. Some of them congregate in the liver and the spleen where they eat up old red blood cells, viruses or chemical pollutants. Others remain in the blood ready to engulf any invader. When macrophages spot an infection such as a virus particle, they send out a lymphokine called interleukin-1 which alerts other defense cells to spring into action. Interleukin-1 causes the body temperature to rise giving us a fever. This further stimulates the immune system since all the cells work more effectively at a slightly higher than normal body temperature. Interleukin-1 also breaks down muscle fibres to release needed nutrients, resulting in aching muscles and fatigue.

The smallest of the immune cells but the most diversified is the lymphocyte. Lymphocytes comprise about 25 percent of the total number of leukocytes. There are two types of these cells, B-lymphocytes and T-lymphocytes.

B-lymphocytes (also referred to as B-cells) are formed in the bone marrow.



A normal human leucocyte under scanning electron microscope. Ca. x 13,000.

## The fact that we feel bad now probably means that we will feel better soon

When they have matured, they move out and live in the blood or in on of the areas of lymphatic tissue (like the tonsils) scattered around the body. They produce antibodies "on demand" against infections. Once a B-cell receives information about what kind of antibody to produce, it churns out quantities of that particular antibody. It is now specialised and cannot make any other kind of antibody. As soon as the infection is destroyed this group of B-cells retires since their special antibody is no longer needed. A few stay on in the body serving as "memory" cells, ready to reproduce themselves if that same infective agent shows up again. This process is termed "acquired immunity" and explains why a person who has had the virus causing chicken pox as a child will probably never get it again even if exposed to someone with the infection.

T-lymphocytes (also called T-cells) are named because they migrate from the bone marrow when newly formed to the thymus, an organ located behind the breastbone, above the heart. There they mature and specialise into the more than ten types now recognised. They are identified by protein markers that appear on their surfaces, and which have been given numbers to distinguish them, hence the name "T-4 lymphocytes" which have been featured in press reports about AIDS. T-lymphocytes have the ability to recognise hundreds of millions of different invaders, each one identifiable by its characteristic biochemical markers. T-lymphocytes are

critical to the immune system because even if there are great numbers of B-lymphocytes around, without properly functioning T-cells our body can't mount an effective immune response and we will catch infections like pneumonia. Three of the more important T-cells are the "Killer T-cells," the "Helper T-cells" and the "Suppressor T-cells".

Killer T-cells are activated by lymphokines to reproduce themselves and rush to the site of the infection. Their methods are different than the macrophages which engulf the invader and "digest" it. Killer T-cells latch on to the invading cell and kill it by causing it to split open.

Helper T-cells direct other T-cells. When they come into contact with an invader or receive a chemical message from a macrophage, they stimulate other elements of the immune system to gear up. One helper cell can activate hundreds of other cells by releasing a lymphokine called interleukin-2. Interleukin-2 is thought to work by de-activating Suppressor T-cells which normally keep everything on hold and turn off the immune response once the infection is cleared up. By de-activating these cells, our immune process is set in motion and all the elements work together to destroy the infective agent. Helper T-cells of the T-4 category (the one involved in AIDS) also produce chemicals called interferons which also work to regulate the immune response. Some interferons keep macrophages at the site of infection, others enhance killer cell activity and still others stimulate B-lymphocyte antibody production.

Suppressor T-cells turn off the defense cells as soon as the infection is cleared, to prevent the immune response from getting out of control. These are the cells that are thought to be defective in people with auto-immune disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis where a continuous immune response against the lining of the joints causes pain, swelling and eventual deformity.

Medium sized cells called neutrophils make up 50 to 75 percent of the leukocytes in our blood at any one time. Although capable of travelling throughout the body, neutrophils tend to remain in the blood. They migrate to areas of infection, exude chemicals that attract other cells and cause symptoms of inflammation such as swelling and pus formation. Like macrophages they can also engulf foreign matter but will only destroy it if it is packaged in a particular way. Neutrophils will only accept particles, for example, that have been attacked and surrounded by antibodies.

Cells responsible for allergic reactions

normally make up only four percent or less of the total leukocytes. They are called eosinophils. They secrete chemicals called histamines which cause blood vessels to dilate, allowing other immune cells to get to the area of infection quickly. Excess histamines are released when a person comes into contact with something she is allergic to. The result is often a runny nose and eyes and a constriction of bronchial smooth muscle in the lungs making breathing difficult. People with allergies have a higher count of eosinophils in their blood.

The least numerous of the leukocytes are basophils. They make up less than .5 percent of the total leukocytes. They also produce histamines and are found in increased numbers in certain infections like chicken pox, smallpox and chronic sinus congestion. Although they constitute only .5 percent of the leukocytes, their total number in an average person with six litres of blood is approximately 200 million.

#### ANTIGENS AND ANTIBODIES

**A**n antigen is any substance either from outside our body ("foreign") or part of our body ("self") that triggers an immune response. Examples of foreign antigens are viruses, bacteria or pollen. Self antigens are portions of our own bodies like the joint lining that is attacked in rheumatoid arthritis.

An antibody is a Y-shaped chain of protein made by B-lymphocytes to match each antigen. B-lymphocyte antibodies are manufactured as a response to an invading organism. For example, when a virus enters the body, B-lymphocytes go into high gear and produce custom-made antibodies which are only able to blend to that particular strain of the virus. Sometimes antibodies can inactivate an infection themselves, but more commonly they attach to the infective agent and make it "visible" to other cells like macrophages or killer T-cells which then destroy it.

Antibodies travel in the blood and other body fluids when not attaching themselves to antigens. They are transferred to the fetus during gestation giving the baby a temporary "passive immunity" against diseases the mother has been exposed to in the past. Unfortunately this type of immunity is short-lived and by the time the child is about six months old she must begin to depend on her own developing immune system which produces antibodies as she is exposed to infections. If a very young or premature infant develops a serious infection, it is sometimes possible to boost the child's immunity by

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#### ORGANS OF THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

**E**ven though there is no one "immune organ", a number of organs are important to the immune system. These are the bone marrow, the thymus, the spleen and the lymph nodes.

Blood cells are formed in the bone marrow which is the spongy substance found in the centre of our bones. Leukocytes destined to become T-lymphocytes travel from here to the thymus where they mature and specialise. The thymus also releases hormones into the body which affect the cells of the immune system. The thymus itself is very sensitive to stress hormones released by other organs in our bodies. When we are under a lot of stress our thymus can shrink and thus leave us vulnerable to infections.

The spleen is located behind our lower ribs on the left side of the body. It is normally the size of a fist but in certain immune disorders it enlarges dramatically. Before birth, blood cells are formed in the spleen, but after birth the site of production moves to the bone marrow and the spleen is no longer essential for life. Vast numbers of leukocytes congregate in the millions of tiny blood vessels of the spleen. They are on alert for any infection in the blood that passes by. They also get rid of old unwanted red blood cells and debris. Occasionally they become over zealous and start destroying healthy red blood cells causing anaemia. When this happens the spleen is often surgically removed. People who have had a "splenectomy" for this reason or because their spleen was badly damaged in an accident may be slightly more susceptible to infection, but for the most part they live normal lives since immune cells are found in so many other parts of our bodies.

Lymph nodes are small dense structures up to an inch in length, found all over our bodies. There are a number of them in the armpit and along the chest, all interconnected. They contain large numbers of lymphocytes which trap infections present in body fluids other than the blood. Because they are interconnected, cancer cells can often spread quickly through them which is why the ones on the chest wall and in the armpit are sometimes removed during a mastectomy. Like the spleen, they are a part of a larger system and are not essential to life.

Even though our understanding of the immune system is rapidly increasing, there is still a great deal that is unknown. As researchers uncover the mysteries of the immune system we can only marvel at the design and functioning of one of the most intricate and vital parts of our bodies. ■

# WORKING IN A WOMEN'S CENTRE

*Do we have unrealistic emotional expectations when we work with women?*

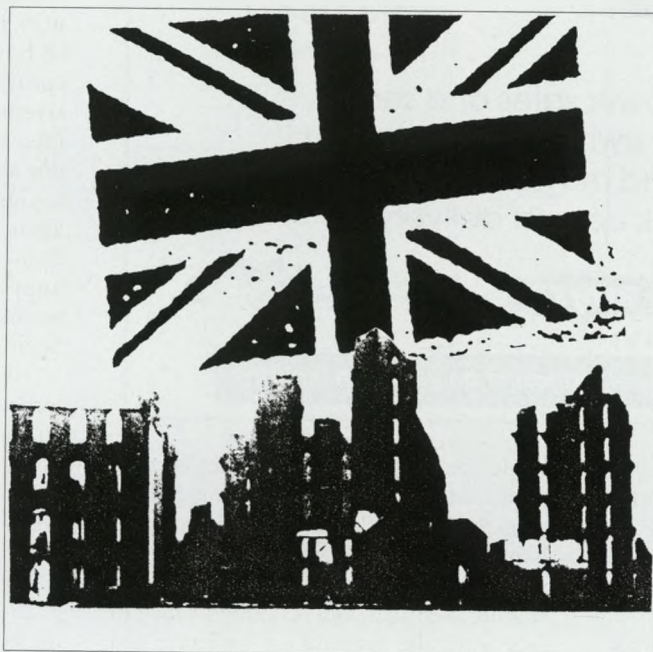
**I**n those heady days, after years of hard slog by feminists, when women's projects were finally receiving funding, we felt ourselves to be part of the final stage of the revolution. Before Thatcher's axe!

The centre was on a busy main road on a borough with a strong multi-cultural mix, including West Indian, Greek Cypriot, Indian and Irish. Funding came from the Greater London Council (GLC) and was administered by the women's committee of the local council who took over funding when the GLC was abolished in 1986. Our employers were local women who formed what was formally known as the Support Group. Before funding the Support Group had run the centre on a voluntary basis and the transition to becoming responsible employers and a full management committee was a painful one for many of the women involved.

How to implement a system where the workers would feel truly accountable to the management and where both groups could feel heard and understood was the challenge. Workers felt at times that the management women were not as involved with the centre as they should be and management women felt that after (in some cases) years of voluntary work they could at last take a back seat. The conflicts that were to arise between some workers and some management committee women would repeatedly drain our energy and enthusiasm.

What happened?

Some workers had no formal connection to or theoretical background of feminism. All of us were committed to the centre and the women who used it. We



**Gabrielle  
Kearney  
Franchini**  
writes about  
working in a  
women's centre  
in a radical  
London  
borough

were women with our own strengths and experiences, women who had lived and worked in the world: one had come out of a violent relationship, others were part of multi-cultural families or had the experience of being a Black woman in Britain, two women were lesbian, for another English was a second language, another had recently separated from her husband, who was a media figure ...

We started to have ideas and found that suddenly we could act on them and make a difference in our community. We set up classes, opened a café, bought a minibus

and washing machine and dryer. We opened ourselves to "all women" and yes, women began to flock in. Some brought their children, our files bulged, the noticeboards ran hot and none of us could sleep. The ideas kept coming.

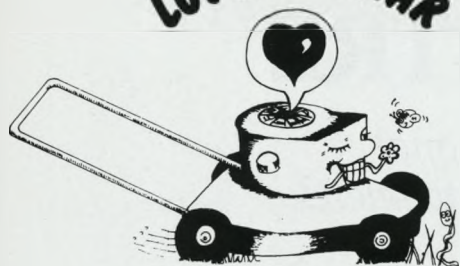
After a while we noticed one woman didn't work, she sat leafing through magazines. She was pregnant and it became clear that she was very ill because of cigarette smoke in the office. She had applied for the position of finance worker but had been subsequently offered a job as a general centre worker. The collective was agreed on the need for an Indian woman working in the centre and this woman was the only Indian who had applied for a position. We learned about racism in such painful ways. That was the first crisis after I started working: three of the old workers sacked this woman after her three month probationary period. She'd never been warned or consulted (no-one knew how), and it wasn't even the responsibility of the workers to make such a decision. The scars went deep. The old workers had tried to do their best, we new workers were angry and confused and the management tried to assert their power.

It was decided we needed job descriptions. Basically we all did what we felt like doing except for the finance worker. This worked well, only for some of us our part-time jobs seemed to become full-time.

Some of us were shy and said nothing.

The ones with big mouths became scape-goats – for a time. But we all had turns as scape-goat. The Black worker said she just wanted a boss. She'd been employed as a child-care worker but someone had thought that degrading and that she should

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have counselling and office responsibilities. Only after months of dis-satisfaction on all sides did her true feeling come out. She said, "Feminism is just a white middle-class past-time. If I wasn't paid, I'd never come in here."

The management committee were white, articulate and predominantly middle-class. How could we attract a wider spectrum of more representative women to be involved? Some workers worried that new management women would be too radical or smart. None of us were that confident about speaking out in large meetings.

Our building was falling to bits and

while the women on the women's committee at the council went on management consultancies and training workshops we bumbled along with our lives and our jobs and the women coming in off the streets, sharing their pain and bringing us face to face with the realities of violence and oppression, sickness and mental anguish, isolation and their strength and humour and love. We'd pour our love and support on the women. Always doing our best. All over the building there were cups of tea, laughter and nods of recognition. English as a second language classes, yoga, writing groups, pregnancy testing, counsel-

ling, knitting, library groups, Black women groups, the very strong lesbian group, consciousness raising singing ... and down in the creche the children in a crowded, too-small, free-for-all.

Sometimes we workers could help each other, sometimes there was nothing left.

We didn't even have staff meetings when I started. Once we did only two of us would agree to take the minutes. It was a year before we got around to having a chairperson. We couldn't control the vagueness and lack of decisiveness until someone had the bright idea of ruling an action column down one side of the page in the minutes and saying at the end of each item on the agenda, "And who's going to do that?" then the following week after we'd approved the minutes we'd go over the action column to see what had or hadn't been done.

How did we deal with the very disturbed woman who visited the centre daily and touched such raw nerves in us? Some of us wanted to ban her from the centre and others wanted to do more for her. To disagree was to provoke – or so it seemed sometimes.

And each woman had a turn as scapegoat. And each of us suffered from insomnia at some time. Conversations that we couldn't switch off from when we went home kept spinning in our heads. There was a bitterness and envy among some workers and yet a strong kind of solidarity arising between us at management meetings. Support came from other women involved in women's projects in the borough, like women involved in a strong community-based pre-school nearby.

We took comfort in the regular and relaxing parts of our jobs. Part of the job though was its very unpredictability. It could be hectic, but I loved it!

But I was talking about crises! We had them over and over. Conflict between management and workers, personality clashes all over the place, racist comments overheard in one of the classes and resentments between groups who used the centre out of official opening hours.

We were working in isolation so when I became involved in the organising of the first conference for women in women's centres I had a great deal of optimism and interest. Each centre was different because there was no one definition of feminism or of how that could or should translate practically. Each centre had its own flavour and that included the problems. There was a lock-out in one centre that dragged on for weeks and became national news. Many women feared that explosive charges of racism and homophobia might be made within their centres. We admired the courage and power of the angry and



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articulate but we didn't want to be in the line of fire.

Further stress, breakdowns of communication and goodwill – suspicion grew like an uncontrollable virus. This was reflected by the saddest time in the centre, when the building, decaying even further, began to empty out. The women stopped coming in. More workers took sick leave and hours weren't always worked. Unhappily we lost contact with each other while many management women drifted away and an emergency committee from the council was established.

Perhaps it was just a phase and something we just had to live through, I don't know. I do think we needed a clearer and more supportive constitution and to be more honest with each other. I left just as the building did fall apart. There were hopes that with a new site and a new management things would take a turn for the better. But I had a feeling that things were unfinished somehow.

Attending the annual women's therapy open day in London helped around that time. Susie Orbach addressed the women present, saying that feelings of envy, anger and betrayal between women often destroy our work, politics and relationships. She maintained that women "bring their longing for the understanding of their mothers, plus their wounds, to their relationships." Seen in this context, we can begin to understand the disappointment and frustration of unmet needs and the, at times, inappropriate expectations and desires among women. In what other work setting would we expect so many emotional needs to be met? This is not a case of mother-blaming but one way of seeing what we could be expecting and longing for from each other, sometimes without realising it.

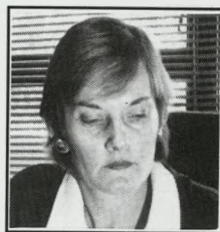
After Susie Orbach's talk we broke into small groups and continued the discussion around two main issues. They may be a useful starting point for some women's groups wanting to break through the frustration and often unspoken chain of resentments that can block our work and our relationships together. The issues were expressed as questions:

1. How does the conflict around a wish to merge (psychologically) and a desire to differentiate (stay separate) manifest itself in the work settings, political groups, friendships etc of the women there?

2. How can we use an understanding of envy as a signpost for our own conflicted longings and as a way to help us move forward individually and collectively?

Well, these are my thoughts today. Of course there's very much more to be considered and I would like to see the discussion expanded and clarified. *Broadsheet* would like responses to this piece from women working in rape crisis, health centres, refuge and so on. How do these issues apply in New Zealand? ■

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# THE FAR BEACH

KYLIE HARTFORD

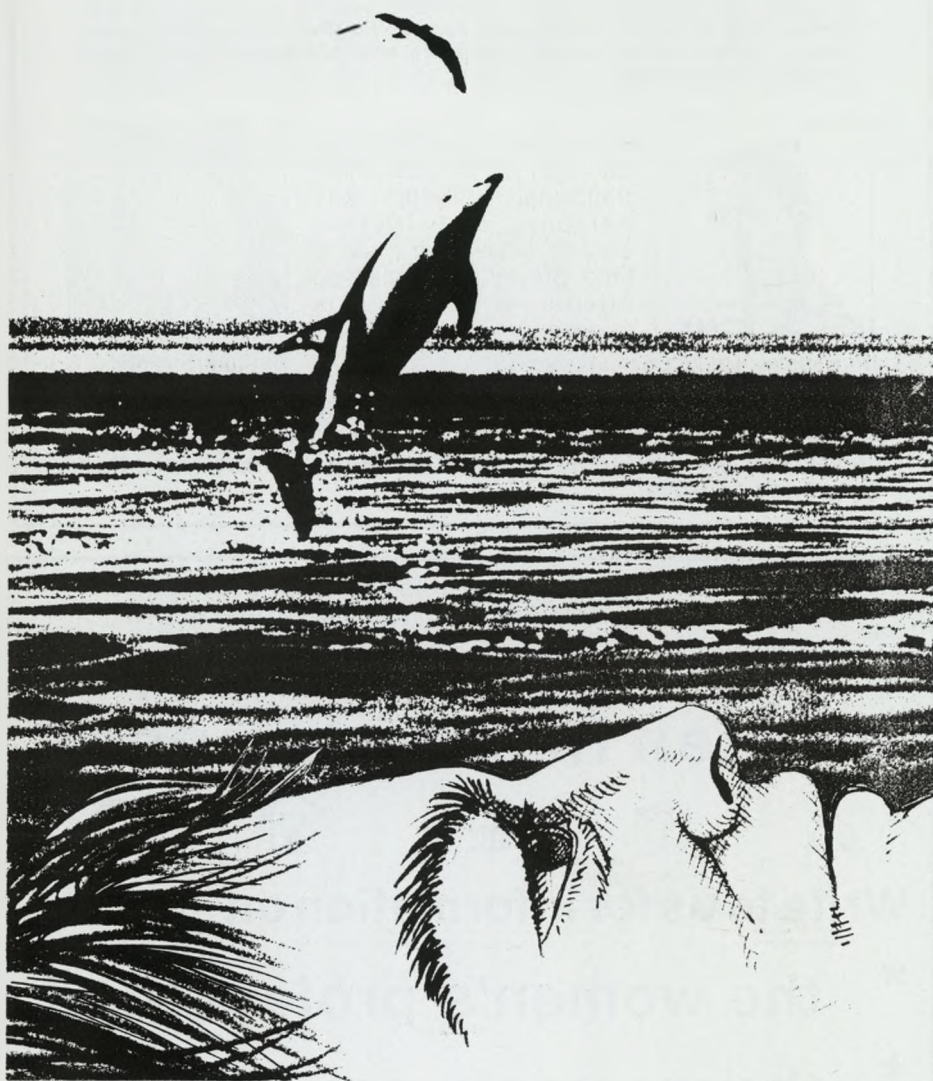


ILLUSTRATION: SHARON ALSTON

**W**hen you lose a child you lose more than one person. You lose the person they would have partnered, the children they would have had. You give up the idea of becoming a grandparent. And with that renunciation, a whole network of potential relationships disappears.

But if it is death that takes your child away from you, at least your loss will be formally recognised. Society has its routines. There will be a funeral, flowers, messages of condolence. Grief and mourning, no matter how deep and awful, come

eventually to an end.

But if you lose the living essence of your child, if that child on the very threshold of adult life becomes at one careless turn of an anonymous driver's wheel, a blind and shuffling automaton, what then? The debris left over from such a disaster is something society prefers to ignore.

He looked first, with his shaven head and his sleepy unfocussed eyes, like some horrible caricature of himself as a very small baby.

"Do not be maudlin," I said to myself. "Concentrate on present realities."

I hid the family photograph album, but I could not forget where it was. In the end my resistance broke and I got it out and turned to the very first page. And there he was, a few weeks old, and recognisably the same person. What cruel joke had God or Fate or some faceless hit-and-run driver played on me that the clock should have been turned back twenty years and given me back the baby who had seemed such a miracle when he was newly born?

But the friends and well-wishers who came to visit him when he was discharged from hospital had no such background of memories to bind them to this empty shell. Most came to see him once and went away embarrassed. Few were able to speak to me directly about him. Some could not even meet my eyes.

Friends of his own generation seldom came a second time.

Of my generation, some struggled with it for a while. Those who had children of the same age were the first to drop out. And those who offered to baby-sit so I could have a break, became suddenly and evasively unavailable when they learned he was incontinent and epileptic as well as blind.

His hearing he retained, together with a grab-bag of automatic responses which were all he had left of language or communication. When he first produced one of these responses, I thought he was getting something back. I was typing at the time.

"Letter Grandma", I heard him whisper.

But it was a false hope. Some residual connection was there. Pieces left over from a lost and scattered jig-saw puzzle. That was all.

"Letter Grandma", he said whenever the typewriter began to chatter. Thinking to foster some return of speech and understanding I replied with a full sentence. Though his grandmother had been dead ten years, I replied, "Yes, I am writing a letter to Grandma."

He was clearly pleased by my reply. When next we went to inspect the mailbox he said it again. And though he had so little effective speech or understanding, our expeditions to the mailbox clearly filled him with joy. He had some way of knowing what a life-line that mailbox was to me.

When I first became house-bound I took out subscriptions to every periodical that was available, to women's magazines and literary reviews, and every publication that would keep me connected to my former life. I wrote letters, articles, stories. So important did the postie become to me that I even valued rejection slips, those flimsy tokens of my continued association with the real world. When my son and I went to the mailbox together, he would reach in and feel for whatever was there, and pull it out and hold it between his

hands as though it were a bird that at any moment might try to escape. Making his faltering way back to the house, my hand at his elbow, he would repeat, "Letter Grandma", over and over until we returned to the kitchen, where he laid his treasure on the table beside the piles of paper that kept company with my typewriter.

His speech never developed beyond the primitive two-word shorthand that he started with.

"Eat-a-dinner", he'd say. "Shoe-a-sock", or "Walk-a-garden". But his favourite phrase, spoken with enthusiasm when something pleased him, was, "Good boy! Good boy!"

His only other word was "Mum". Three times over, with a rising inflexion of anxiety, from around six o'clock in the morning, and intermittently throughout the day whenever I left the room, and on and off after he was in bed until he finally went to sleep, I lived with that cry.

"Mum! Mum! Mum!"

I live with it still.

For though there is no channel through which my grief may be acknowledged or expressed, society never-the-less has its expectations. There is an unquestioned assumption that an accident victim will return home, to be cared for inevitably and forever, by his mother. Alternatives to home care are few, and in any case, who in any institution would respond to his anguished cries of "Mum! Mum! Mum!"?

And I share that assumption that this is my responsibility. I collude with it. I would feel guilty if I did not. Until I set out to write this story I was not fully aware of the interaction between internal and external demands. I am his mother. Therefore I look after him. That is taken for granted. Neither I nor any other person has ever questioned that.

He had not been living at home when the accident happened. He had been flatting with a group of friends in another town. Like most young men he tended to regard any member of the parental generation as persona non grata. He guarded his independence, came home rarely, and as to his private life, well, who knows?

And yet when he was injured I was sent for. When the hospital had done all it could for him he was discharged into my care. No one gave so much as a passing glance at the career to which I had only recently returned.

And now I live with him. With his losses and with mine. With the loss of the life he could have had, and the life I could have had. What we might have shared, and what we might have kept separate. His memory is gone. Mine is sharper than ever. I am never free from the awareness of loss.

Who then would imagine that such a situation could have its compensations?

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- **Honouring the Treaty - an Issue for Pakeha**  
Tuesday 11th July 7 - 10pm
- **TV, Curse or Blessing? Implications for Young Viewers of the new Broadcasting Act**  
Saturday 29th July 1 - 5pm

Enquiries to Centre for Continuing Education, University of Auckland, Private Bag Auckland, Tel: 737 832, 737 831

That over the years a structure could emerge bearing satisfaction of its own?

Recently my son and I returned from the mailbox with a packet of books. He carried it into the kitchen and set it down with reverence, on the table beside the typewriter. And then he sat expectantly while I opened it, whispering his magical incantation, waiting for the sound of speech. Speech which his damaged brain could no longer interpret, but whose intonation he never failed to appreciate.

I selected a book.

"It's poetry", I said. "By Keri Hulme. It's called 'The Silences Between'".

"Good boy!" he said fervently. "Good boy!"

I turned a page, and three lines leapt out at me. I read them aloud to him. They said,

*I asked for riches  
you gave me  
scavenging rights on a far beach*

"Good boy!" he said again.

I closed the book and added it to the collection I kept for reading after he was asleep.

"Good boy", I replied. ■

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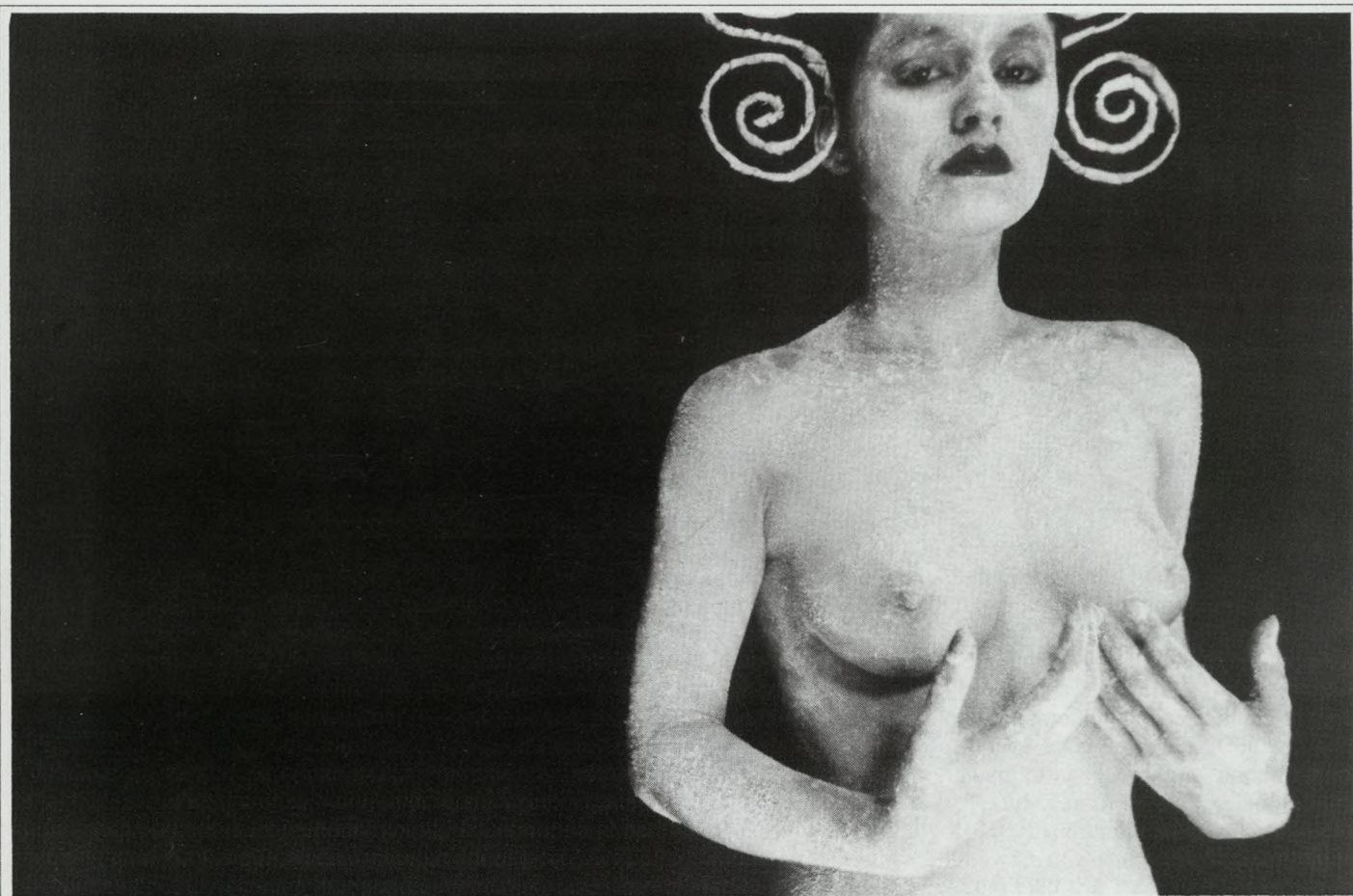
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# STROKES AND ART ATTACKS



Untitled 1987, Fiona Pardington

## WOMEN BEHIND THE CAMERA The Montana Lindauer Art Award Auckland Society of Arts July 31-August 10

Art has always been a potent weapon in the reaction against the subjugation of women. In New Zealand the work of painters like Jane Zusters and Claudia Pond-Eyley has consistently highlighted fundamental feminist issues.

Women photographers, with an equally powerful message have largely lived in the shadow of their painting counterparts with gallery dealers reluctant to show their work and art critics placing greater emphasis on painting.

This year is the 150th anniversary of photography and to celebrate, the Montana Lindauer Art Award (traditionally for painting) has been given over to photography. The exhibition consists of work by twelve leading New Zealand photographers, with an award of \$15,000 going to the artist judged to have submitted the best work.

Among the invited artists are five women: Megan Jenkinson, Fiona Clark, Jane Ussher, Fiona Pardington, and Ans Westra. Feminist themes are not dominant in the

work of Jane Ussher and Ans Westra, but the remaining three have all paid serious attention to the position of women in society and history.

The post-modernist images of Fiona Pardington challenge the sexist assumptions that saturate the media and the consciousness of the general public.

"In both text and image we are confronted with the ritualisation of submission, the eroticisation of domination, and very clearly defined examples of gender stereotype," says Fiona. "The very rich and rugged type at the helm of this ocean racer, or the beautiful socialite, usually embroiled in intrigue, resting in her sumptuous boudoir."

These improbable ideals permeate our culture and have as much, if not more influence as pornography in the form that oppressive sexual relations take.

Fiona's photographs subvert the popular male-dominated ideology and set out to shock the viewer into reappraisal. Her male nudes, which often include an element of satire, aim to reverse the tradi-



tional availability of the female body in art for the male gaze.

"Male nudes that are available to us in an historical sense are never prepared for the private erotic gaze of the female consumer, but rather are grandly striding embodiments of civic pride in public places. Women should reconstruct their experience of the male body."

Nudity fascinates Fiona and it is a recurring theme in her work: "The nude body recalls our infancy, our vulnerability, it reminds us of our mortality. The knowledge of the body relocates us strongly within the realm of the corporeal."

The colour photography of Fiona Clark [see Strokes and Art Attacks in *Broadsheet* issue 167, April '89] is in complete contrast to the self-consciousness of Pardington's art. Calling herself a photographer, not an artist, Fiona Clark's work is infused with compassion and sensitivity. Recently she was commissioned by the AIDS Foundation to make a pair of albums documenting the reality of life for AIDS patients. It was a difficult, emotionally demanding task and the resulting images shine with the photographers integrity.

"I classify myself as a feminist photographer," she says, "and I will always look for my history through women. I look towards a tradition of New Zealand women artists and writers like Hodgkins, Rita Angus, and from Maoridom, Te Puea."

Many of her thoughts about women and "womenhood" are implicit in a series of illuminated sandsaucer images she showed recently at the Fisher Gallery in Pakuranga.

"I regard my sandsaucers as very womanly. They are based on the idea that New Zealand women deal with flowers and the idea of flowers as protection. One is of roses and wallflowers: I did that because I was a bit of a wallflower at school. Another has irises, pansies and maidenhair fern. I am a single woman, living out in the country, and as such I am viewed as a maiden aunt. Most men think they are awful and most women like them."

An unflinching desire to show things "as they are" has often enveloped her in controversy. In 1975 a series of photographs of transvestites were physically removed from the Active Eye exhibition as they were regarded as pornographic. For Fiona, it is the sincerity of the intent that makes the difference between pornography and art. She feels this so strongly she appeared before a Commission of Inquiry into Pornography last year.



The Virtus Moral Series, Megan Jenkinson

In 1980 she was involved in the setting up of the "Women's Gallery" in Wellington and in 1985 she helped organise and exhibited in a show commemorating the passing of the Decade for Women—"Women View Women".

The third photographer who has devoted time and energy to feminist issues is Megan Jenkinson. Hers is the cerebral approach – her intricate, painstaking collages with their obscure academic titles make complex and subtle observations about history, the environment, the subjection of women, politics and corporate greed. (To mention but a few of her concerns.)

A lecturer in photography at Elam, Megan Jenkinson's usual practice is to make a series of images around a central theme. One of these "Virtus Moralis" – evolved around "the tradition of depicting moral philosophy through metaphor, allegory and personification."

The personified Virtues are transposed into the present and suggest a modern-day uncertainty about the triumph of virtue over vice. In the series she also deals with

the way the history of art has always been dominated by men. In the work "Artem is weighed down by the cumulative influence of HIS history" Jenkinson shows a woman bearing guilt framed classical portraits on her back. "Women are seen through a male interpretation in art more so than in writing," Jenkinson says.

She has enjoyed major international success – most recently inclusion in an exhibition called "Photography Now" at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Women photographers in New Zealand rank with the best in the world and it is fitting that some of them, at least, should achieve recognition through this Art Award exhibition.

**Margaret Whibley**



## HOT OCTOBER

Lauris Edmond

Allen and Unwin \$24.95

*One of the things I found really interesting in Hot October was reading the daily detail of university life at Victoria University in the 1940s. We don't get much of history like that, with so much humble detail.*

I didn't actually imagine that the book would take this form when I decided to write it. The reason it did is that I looked up these letters that my mother had kept, thinking they would give me information, in the way any biographer looks up source material, to remind me of things I had forgotten. I was amazed at how they held together as an almost daily chronicle of the exact facts of that life. It would have been a great pity to just take pieces out, and so at that point I decided to edit them a little and use them as they were, in the hope that I could manage to have a seam that didn't show where they join the past tense narrative.

At first I felt quite a silly ass about publishing the letters, because they are so exuberant and, incredibly naive, and so starry-eyed about the least little thing that happens. I don't feel that way now!

That's partly where its appeal comes from, because we lose that freshness and it's quite good to be reminded that many of us used to be like that – the layers of cynicism come later.

That's right. Everything was



Sherrin: Living with AIDS, Life's tough when you're a skinny girl, Fiona Clark

as though for the first time, which if course it was. I was a shy, quiet country person, but one that was very expansive and voluble inside, that had a habit of talking about things and searching around to see what they were really about.

Your search for ideas comes through very clearly, and your excitement at the whole world of the intellect.

That's right. And that had been part of how I grew up. My parents, particularly my father, who was less formally educated than my mother, were very interested in off-beat theories. My father be-

ent one. There were a lot of reasons why I did it, but more than anything else it was the women's movement, which really changed my life. Although I didn't quite know what it was that was happening, I had the experience, which is now well documented among women, of coming to a point where my secret, unadmitted, not quite unfulfilled because I did always write, but unfinished and certainly unpublished ambition to be a writer – and a writer of poetry – had to be acknowledged. I had to give more time to it and bring it out into the open. Then, to my utter astonishment I looked around, I read Betty Friedan, and here was a whole world full of people who were experiencing the same thing.

How that social/historical process operates so that it happens to individuals and it also happens millions of others at the same moment, I just don't know. It's a fascinating question. I did not start to read feminist literature and think, "That applies to me". It happened to me, and then I read feminist writers and it was confirmed, but I think that, too, is very common. In the late sixties, early seventies I was beginning to doubt my conviction about my marriage. I had a

very settled, conventional, unenquiring attitude to it before then. I think now that I had simply gone along with what we call conditioning, but I didn't know the word.

In lots of ways it was a very good marriage, but it became much less resilient, and in the end quite unable to cope with changes of the sort I was making. In other words it had rested on conventional ideas of a father's public life and managing role and a mother's caring role – being at the beck and call of husband and children. To take my cue from other people and not decide things for myself, which is part of that role, is not very natural to me. Nor in fact, was being the person in authority natural to my husband. So there were major changes and the marriage broke up. We now live separately and quite amicably and are good friends, but live in very, very different ways.

Along with that, the time had come to say I was a writer and buy a typewriter and type poems out, put them in an envelope and send them to an editor and say "Would you like to publish these?" So all these things happened together. In my case the changes included some quite fundamental recognition of the kinds of personalities my husband and I were – as individuals we didn't fit that old convention, although it had appeared for a time that we did. I think that was probably for me, and a lot of others, because we were immature people

...the time had come to say I was a writer and buy a typewriter and type poems out send them to an editor and say "Would you like to publish these?"

and we could fit into a mould. As we grew up we grew into separate people. That's really how I see that.

Writing *Hot October* was partly an exploration of myself initially, of how that completely unadmitted ambition to be a writer was nevertheless a very central thing right through my life. The letters confirm it as a central thing even when I was a child. They are articulate letters and they often sound like me – still – although obviously they are awkward and naive at times. And so, keeping my writing "out of the way" was an even more strange and unnatural act than I think I had supposed. But I don't regret any of it now. I don't think "If only I could have done it differently". I was very whole-hearted about that life and about my children. In some ways I think I'm part of quite a lucky generation in that I could be so without conflicts about what was conventionally required. And now I don't have conflicts about the sort of life I lead because on anybody's terms I'm "allowed" because I'm older. Of course, according to the social climate now I'm allowed anyway because women now are.

A lot of women now have conflict around having children and the outcome is that they enormously burden themselves – they do everything at the same time. It was hard for me – physically it was very arduous – but in many ways now I think it's harder for women – work and family.

*I would like to talk a little about your relationship with your mother, which comes through Hot October as an unusual one. It seems to have operated right outside the, perhaps stereotypical, pattern of leaving home and needing to withdraw – often with some hostility.*

Yes, It did. I too am quite struck by that. I didn't think at all about it, it was entirely natural to be so completely open to her, and I think she was quite a remarkable person. Other people in the family I have talked to while I've been doing this book have confirmed that she was a very interesting and quite exciting person to tell

PHOTO: ROBERT CROSS



Lauris Edmond

came particularly involved with Social Credit, which seemed pretty much a way to a utopia, an ideal society. Although a lot of things in the family came from my mother, and she was by a long way the more powerful influence on me, an interest in searching for a definition for the meaning of life that was not the conventional one really came from my father. It was quite lucky for me that that was the family I grew up in.

In my family it became a central passion that you were against orthodoxy, because it was always wrong – medical, political or religious orthodoxy were all bound to be wrong. Which, I think, is the reason I was so attracted to a very conventional, bourgeois family, into which I married. I'm sure it was because they seemed so much in the centre of the "right" way to do things, and my family had not been. Now I think that habit of questioning everything – even if they overdid it and were often irrational – was a very good way to start to think, and I'm very glad of it.

*You are probably best known for your poetry. What pushed you in the direction of Hot October, which I notice you call an autobiographical story.*

I did that because I was very aware that what I tell is my truth, my story, not anybody else's. The "true" story doesn't exist, everybody's perception is a differ-

things to. She was a good talker but apparently a spectacular listener. So that was apart of it. I think she was a very talented woman who didn't have herself a personally fulfilling life aside from her family. She did do some things and eventually she did quite a lot of writing. When I was a child she wrote some plays which were performed by the local drama group. Later on she wrote poems and stories – quite a lot, but she didn't try and publish anything.

There was quite an affinity between us – I wanted to explain things and so did she, so it was partly just that – and it was partly that becoming detached from her in the way that you described didn't actually happen to me until years and years later. I remained in some quite crucial way dependent on her and fully inside that relationship until a long time afterwards.

*It would be fair to say I think that you are well established as a New Zealand poet. Are there new challenges for you in that area?*

There always are. Oh yes indeed. There

**She was a very interesting and quite exciting person to tell things to. She was a good talker but apparently a spectacular listener**

is always a better poem that you haven't yet been able to write. There is no point where I could imagine saying "that is over". A writer doesn't actually get to retire.

I think that's a wonderful thing about being a writer – I don't plan to ever retire.

The only thing that can happen is that

poetry deserts you. That happens to people. In fact last year I didn't write any poetry for quite a long time and I was really quite depressed about it. It was while I was working on *Hot October*, which is quite a different sort of project. But I haven't yet had to say I stopped. My next obvious project, since you can't quite predict what you'll do about poetry, is volume two of the autobiographical story. I've started on that but I haven't got very far yet.

Volume two will be very different. There are some letters that I will use, but they become less detailed as my children began to take more time, so they will have a less important part to play in the next book.

I am looking forward to it. I really value writing about women's lives in New Zealand – until I was about 15 everything I read was set somewhere else, mainly in England.

I wrote *Hot October* because I wanted to find out things about myself. Having done it, I discover that it's a little piece of social history.

tions are evident in her use of korari built structures which represent the various stages of a weaver's life and instruction in the materials of kie kie, harakeke, muka, ti kouka and pingao.

She works predominantly with kie kie, which is collected from the bush in summer, processed by boiling and drying and combined with other materials. Prince holds strong the ties of the land and spirit of place, the identification with nature and the shared knowledge of experience in Maori culture. Thus, her shelter constructions convey the enfolding and fostering sense of the land. This suggestion of shelter is combined with a quality of portability which she says "seems well-suited to the concept of a spirit place and being which occurs whenever a weaver sits down to work".

Although locating her work within the tradition of Maori weaving, Prince also seeks to place herself and that tradition in a wider context. For example, of the sculptural installation "Ki te whereo Ao – ki to Ao Manana (From the darkness to the light), she says:

"The work to me means the progress of knowledge from one state to the next, which must inevitably carry with it the interplay between traditional forces and more modern ones that both link and separate them. It also involves confrontation."

She goes on to say,

"Traditionally the wharenuī of the marae is seen as the collective body of the people – I see each of my constructions as a body – 'whare' – in which to work – to shelter: to construct – to remove oneself from conflict. I've used traditional materials

collected from the land but also new materials collected from my immediate environment: paint, steel, canvas and silk threads. The rigid steel shapes at the entrance of each whare represent the collision between old and new and the process of resolving and adapting – which I choose to leave on the outside."

Congratulations *Broadsheet* on a fine magazine!

## ASA GALLERY

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July 3 - 13

GALLERY I & II

**Roger Gulse**

GALLERY III

**Vera Sterk**

'Inside Furniture'

July 17 - 27

GALLERY I

**Mark Cross**

New Work

GALLERY II

**Bela Trussell-Cullen**

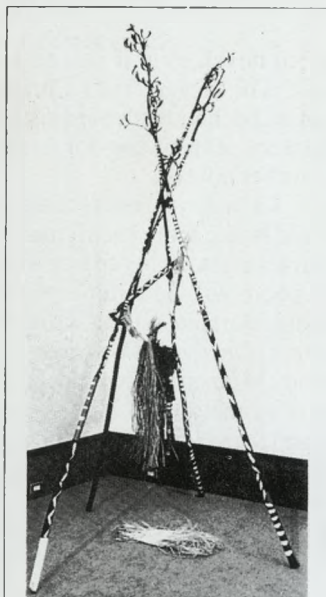
Coloured Screen Prints

GALLERY III

**Harley**

'Life'

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PONSONBY 1002  
PHONE 784-160



Diane Prince, *Working in a working house*

**DIANE PRINCE**  
McDougall Art Annexe,  
Christchurch, 30 May – 2 July

Born in Wellington in 1952 and with tribal affiliations to Nga Puhī and Ngāti Whātua, Diane Prince makes sculptural installations within the weaving tradition of Maori women. Her colours and motifs recall traditional Maori weaving patterns, such as those found in taaniko. The same tradi-



PHOTO: GIL HANLY

Sally Smith, *An Angel Slowly Reveals Herself*  
Acrylic on board 122 x 92 cm.  
From an exhibition at The Proba Gallery, Auckland.

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The Women's Press \$19.95

If you're a self-confessed crime writing fan like myself, then you're bound to enjoy these two latest titles from The Women's Press Crime series.

*Death Wore A Diadem* is just the kind of book to occupy a few hours of a rainy weekend. It's a mystery set in nineteenth century Edinburgh and involves a visit by the French Empress Eugenie to a school for girls, the theft of her diadem, and the murder of a housemaid. Add to this a cold-hearted, power-hungry headmistress and a rebellious lesbian student involved with her tutor, and you've got most of the elements you need for a bit of light crime reading.

The student in question - Christabel McKenzie, and her lover Eleanor Stewart, discover who the killer is and uncover a conspiracy to keep the scandal out of the papers. You'll have to read the book to find out whether they triumph over all the odds stacked against them.

Apart from the lesbian lovers and the historical Scottish setting that Iona McGregor has woven into the story, *Death Wore A Diadem* is a fairly traditional, but

well-crafted novel, even if you do guess whodunnit. The characters of Christabel and Eleanor and their battles against nineteenth century sexism, beg for development in further novels.

*Reader, I Murdered Him* is more challenging and hence more satisfying. It's a collection of short stories by sixteen women, some of whom will be familiar to crime aficionados. Barbara Wilson wrote *Murder in the Collective* and *Sisters of the Road* (both Women's Press titles), Val McDermid is the author of *Report For Murder*, and Sara Paretsky is the creator of five novels featuring Chicago-based private investigator and tough gal V.I. Warshawski. The stories of the previously unpublished or less well known authors sit comfortably alongside these crime "experts".

The collection is full of surprises. Firstly, the excellent introduction to the book by Alison Hennegan. She traces the herstory and approaches of women crime writers from the 1860s through Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers, to Ruth Rendall and the writers in this collection. Secondly the body of the book proper is remarkable for the high standard and diversity of the stories included.

Some of the stories are concerned with murder - women plotting as well as solving it, some are humorous (Barbara Wilson's "Murder at the International Feminist Bookfair" and Anne Stanesby's "Non-Custodial Sentence"), some take a

more psychological tack ("A Taste Of Life" by Sara Paretsky and "All in the Family" by Sheila Radley), many draw in very real social and political issues in the subtext of the story ("Teddy" by Sue Ward and Jane Burke's "Permanent Personal Secretary").

All of the stories in *Reader, I Murdered Him* will keep you up reading into the wee small hours and wishing they were all novels rather than short stories. Buy this book and guard it with your life.

Lisa Sabbage

**WHERE DID SHE COME FROM?**  
New Zealand Women Novelists  
1862-1987

Heather Roberts  
Allen and Unwin \$29.95

This is the book for you if, like me, you enjoy reading novels and if, also like me, you are interested in how we are portrayed by our writing sisters.

Schools should find it really useful because Roberts tries to place all the novelists firmly in the context of the attitudes of the day, thus providing some potted New Zealand social history plus a range of references under the title "Secondary Sources". The "Primary Sources" are of course the authors and their book titles.

And what a fruitful task of reading and research this list represents. Roberts tells us in her introduction (for me the best written section) that her aim is to tell us of books that have been "... suppressed by people who consider that the experiences women novelists write about are unimportant and irrelevant." Now, thanks to her, we can no longer claim ignorance of our very own foremothers' fiction because Roberts has documented so much of it for us.

There is another very important aspect of reclaiming works that have dropped out of sight, for whatever reason. This is to show that 125 years of women's writing in New Zealand has established "... a strong female tradition in which the writers are linked across the generations by personal contact and friendship, by common themes and subject matter, and by a universal commitment to describing and interpreting women's lives in New Zealand since European settlement." Roberts makes her subject matter very plain: she is not discussing only "a few well known names of serious novelists." She says "... popular fiction reflects as accurately as serious fiction the issues which concern the contemporary public."

One of my favourite examples of this comes from romantic novelist Esse Summers. According to Roberts, in her first Mills and Boon novel written in 1957 Summers has her heroine dishing up a

meal consisting "... of roast mutton, boiled potatoes, baked pumpkin, and broad beans..." by 1984 however, the appeal to the taste buds was made through 'succulent venison cubes, sprinkled with chopped glace cherries, ground almonds, circled with snowy rice decorated with red and green peppers and pineapple rings.'

Roberts concentrates on literary detection and description from a feminist perspective, not on literary criticism. This requires us to put aside ideas about "good" or "bad" writing which we might have learned from teachers, critics and publishers. For now, Roberts is asking us to look beyond such value judgements, usually based on male perceptions, and to consider how (or whether) our women writers have tackled the social, economic and political issues of their own particular times. In the 19th and early 20th centuries they adopted a feminist stance and, says Roberts: "It is extraordinary, but also disappointing, that more than a century later the same arguments still rage"; until very recently most have echoed racist and heterosexist beliefs (there is, as yet, no good indigenous lesbian novel); only a handful in the past have depicted women's mutual support and friendship as reality and strength.

The book's seven chapters go from "The Pure, White Sisterhood - Temperance, Feminism and life in New Zealand" to "Only Connect - The Possibility of Community". Here, Roberts relates how in the 1970s "... Pakeha writers became slightly more sympathetic to their Maori characters but... reflected a general attitude that Maori culture should remain distinct, but that Pakeha should dictate where that distinction lay." She finishes with a discussion of novelists Keri Hulme

and Patricia Grace who, like other Maori writers, have provided us with a fresh view of "... what we consider New Zealand culture to be." Roberts points out that Grace's *Potiki* "... is testimony to the strength of... the necessity of community, not just when faced with external threat but always in order to give strength to each individual."

In order to avoid losing days of enjoy-



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able re-reading I have stopped myself from checking on the mere handful (how shame-making) of named novels familiar to me. From (faulty) memory then: I suggest that

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in Edith Grossman's *Heart of the Bush* there is a crucial exposition of the simplistic evolutionary theories of the time (yesterday's version of today's sociobiology). The doctor attending a birth assured the husband there was no reason to worry about the apparently appalling suffering of his wife, as women simply were not biologically advanced enough to feel pain as men did. (Over a century later the doctors still maintain it's all in our heads.) Then I would qualify the statement about Sylvia Ashton-Warner being unusual among her writing peers in taking women's paid work seriously. Actually, Roberts had already referred to Georgina McDonald's *Grand Hills for Sheep* where a strong-minded young woman turned successfully to dressmaking rather than domesticity. Also, both McDonald and Mary Scott describe very seriously, I believe, the drudgery of women's farm work - unpaid but seen by the women themselves as an occupation - while Scott does present characters concerned with fitting in their writing round family obligations, a very common female predicament. One omission that surprises me is Frances Keinzly's lively *Tangahano* written, I think, in the 1950s or the early 1960s. This was about a working-class family shifting to a hydro town (actually based on Mangakino where I understand it caused a considerable stir). Even after many years I find that I remember the woman's fierce pride in making and keeping her home properly clean, an attitude many women do identify with.

Altogether the attractively produced *Where Did She Come From?* makes a splendid foundation for a brisk discussion of one kind or another. And we should pay practical attention to the author's closing reminder of: "... many novels... still totally inaccessible even to the dedicated scholar. We cannot afford to go on losing the words of these women... we need to hear them, and we need to hear them now." **Margot Roth**

**THE SHAPE OF RED: INSIDER/OUTSIDER**  
Ruth Hubbard & Margaret Randall.  
Reflections. Cleis Press. \$24.95

**THE AGE OF SEX CRIME**  
Jane Caputi.  
The Women's Press. \$29.95

**INSIDERS: WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF PRISON**  
Una Padel & Prue Stevenson.  
Virago. \$18.95

It may seem odd to review together a book of letters between a biologist and a writer, a book on serial sex murders and a book on women in prison. Though diverse in theme, these three works have something to say

about women as insiders and women as outsiders; as outsiders in the patriarchal world and as insiders within the confines of a woman's place.

Ruth Hubbard and Margaret Randall present a series of letters they wrote to each other over quite a short time period, which deliberately explore the insider/outsider theme. Hubbard is a feminist biologist whose work straddles the outer edges of insider-dom, as she explores biology, particularly sexism in biology, from within the system, as a woman working at Harvard University. Margaret Randall, social activist, poet and writer, who has been involved as a foreigner in, social activism in Central America, is now an outsider in her own country, as the United States immigration department attempts to deport her. Through their letters they explore the insider/outsider theme in relation to various of their life experiences, such as heterosexuality, incest, scientific work, political activism, ethnicity, feminism and family. The letters make fascinating reading, though perhaps the theme seems a little strained at times.

A comment from Margaret Randall serves as pointer to the themes developed in *The Age of Sex Crime*. She says: "...being a woman both defines an inside identity within my conception of self and defines me as outside in the misogynist social construct." Jane Caputi's exploration of the mythologising media treatment, as opposed to the reality, of serial sex murder, makes it clear that women's social status as outsider/other is finally expressed in woman murder. When I was much younger I used to enjoy reading Colin Wilson's books, which dealt with existential alienation and, not infrequently, with sex murder. His conception of the sex murderer was as the ultimate outsider, the alienated man who steps right over the social boundaries. I can now see that Wilson's approach contributes to the mystification of sex murder, for in fact it's the murdered, not the murderer, who is ultimately the outsider. The murderer expresses, with an exaggerated intensity, patriarchal attitudes to women and their sexuality, e.g., woman as temptress, as dangerous, to be dominated, as other. The making of these murderers into cult figures, such as Jack the Ripper, just shows in a frightening way how many men are fascinated with the subject. Caputi documents the increase in serial sex murders, making an analogy between the genocide of witches in the Europe of only a few centuries ago and our "age of sex crime". Her book is extremely disturbing and I found it very hard to finish because it literally kept making the hairs on the back of my neck prickle and I worried about having nightmares. It is an important contribution to scholarship on violence against women and ranks with the works

of Daly, Dworkin and MacKinnon.

Padel and Stevenson's book on women in prison, *Insiders*, is a series of interviews with women in Britain who have experienced prison life. "Inside" is rather a strange expression for prison, if taken in the context of the insider/outsider concept where inside is belonging, warmth, being accepted and outside is lonely, looking in, rejection, brutality. Perhaps the book might as well have been called *Outsiders*. The women describe the indignities of prison life and the indignities of their lives before and after prison; and no doubt the situation in New Zealand is not too different.

These three books, despite their disparate subjects and approaches, all underline aspects of women's experiences as outsiders in the patriarchal state.

**Hilary Haines**

**WORKING YOUR WAY BACK TO WORK**  
A guide for New Zealand Women  
Alison Kuiper and Judi Pattison  
Heinemann Reed \$19.95

The title is accurate, this is a practical how-to-do-it handbook for a successful re-entry into the paid workforce for all those orbiting home execs. But the book is also about your value as a woman and the worth you are entitled to place upon yourself, paid or not.

Its approach is realistic and helps sift probable work expectations from the remotely probable and totally improbable. This is an invaluable aid for an indecisive Piscean such as myself to more clearly define present and future work and life goals.

The book's emphasis is not only on working but also on knowing the reasons for wishing to return to paid employment. In showing the reader how best to obtain this objective in a way that will sit comfortably with her own preferences in lifestyle and work, it also encourages her to recognise and build on her strengths.

When a woman has been at home for a few years, bound pretty much to the household by her responsibilities to young children, she easily loses confidence in her ability to cope with the seeming hurly-burly of the business world, no matter how successful any pre-children career. This book has been designed to dispel such fears. Even if you have no desire at all to return to the business world, a quick glance at the Homemaking, Community, Recreational and Educational skills list on pages 24 and 25 is a wonderful morale booster to those of us who sometimes feel passed over as homebodies in these go-getter days.

By a careful progression of practical exercises the reader is shown that the skills she possesses, whatever they may be, are

marketable, and that options are available for her to extend her horizons if she wishes to do so. The authors recommend that these exercises be undertaken with a friend or a group of women who are all considering a return to paid work. Certainly this



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for Pakeha*

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*Happy 17th Birthday  
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suggestion has merit for confidence boosting in a supportive atmosphere and would probably provide a few laughs along the way too.

It is refreshing to have a book totally orientated to New Zealand women and therein lies its real value. As Ann Hercus says in her foreword "It uses real-life stories of real New Zealand women, it tackles very realistically, the problems women in this situation actually feel and worry about."

Through continual assessment and analysis of one's own needs and wants, the book encourages self-growth. Coupling the co-authors' positive attitudes with their practical approach should enable many women to embark on hitherto unthought of goals or ones they considered well beyond their scope.

The section entitled "The Balancing Act" refers to fitting in time at work with time for the family, which is of paramount importance for many women. Once again, there are no problems, only solutions through consideration of the facts and appropriate decisions.

This book, sensitive to the needs of women, the family and the employers, has every chance of becoming the bible for any New Zealand woman contemplating a return to the paid workforce.

**Pat MacKay**



## ODETTA LIVE

The first I ever heard of Odetta was in the movie "Hairspray" when Pia Zadora played the part of a beatnick who smoked a ZZjoint, and once the effects hit her, waved her arms in the air saying "I am Odetta, I am Odetta".

The movie was set in the sixties—a time when Odetta was established as the queen of folk in the American music scene, even before the folk revival boom of the hippie era. She is probably best known for her recordings, especially the early Vanguard records, but also for her association with Harry Belafonte in TV and live performances. She has a lifetime involvement with the Civil Rights Movement.

Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, and a host of other singers have traced their inspiration through folk music back to the music that Odetta recorded and performed.

Nearing 60 years of age and with over three decades of performance under her belt, Odetta came to New Zealand in June and played one concert only at the Auckland Town Hall. I was lucky enough to see



Odetta

her.

Odetta exudes passion like only a gospel singer can. She communicates with her audience like a folk singer and gets lost in her art like a jazz musician. When she plays the blues she is as blue as the best. She doesn't play her guitar, she caresses, coaxes and hammers the chords out of it—all the while crooning, wailing, whistling or bringing life to ancient melodies and lyrics.

Odetta appeared at the start of her concert

and got everyone to sing the song "Kumbaya", then left the rest of the opening set to a local act—Margaret Layton and Colin Spear—who ended on a great note (despite the rudeness of a few in the crowd calling for Odetta) with a song entitled "Empty Bed Blues".

After half time Odetta returned and delivered a remarkable, spine tingling, heartrending repertoire of old gospel standards, black American work songs, witty ditties (oh so witty), haunting folk songs and complex jazz pieces. She had the Town Hall singing, clapping, stomping and humming. She communicated with us, the audience, throughout the entire concert and praised us on our energy (spiritually speaking).

Her concert was a wonderful experience—even thought provoking. When she did a 15 minute set of "In and Out Your Window" with all the adult ramifications, and then asked "has the nursery rhyme, Rockabye baby on the tree top ever bothered you?", she gave the audience something to think about.

After more than an hour, Odetta left us on a high. The audience could have taken more, much more.

**Tanya Hopman**

## SHORT SHARP SHOCKED Michelle Shocked Polygram

This record had me hooked after the first few bars of the first song, "When I Grow Up I Want to be an Old Woman", with its tongue-in-cheek lyrics about what women are expected to be and do—marry an old man and have 120 babies.

The whole LP is steeped in an infectious country, blues, even rockabilly feel that makes you want to dance around like a lunatic—when no one's looking of course. That's the affect it had on me anyway. Michelle's strong deep voice is allowed to come to the fore in songs that are not over produced, with a band that must be as good a bunch of musicians as you're likely to find anywhere.

Born the eldest of eight children in a fundamentalist family, Michelle ran away from home at 16 and went to Dallas in search of her father, "one of those hippy, atheist guys," she says. Once the two were united, he encouraged her to play guitar,



so she listened and learned from his old bluegrass and blues collection—musicians like Doc Watson, Leadbelly, Norman Blake and Guy Clark.

"Short Sharp Shocked" has a very strong stamp of Texan rural identity. Michelle's southern drawl is audible in most of the songs, especially when she makes some of her verbal asides, the kind that remind me of the Elvis Presley slur. Most of the songs refer to memories of Texas and of old friendships, like "Making the Run to Gladewater", "VFD", "Anchorage", and "Memories of East Texas".

The lyrics are simple but evocative. For instance "Memories of..." could be memories of anyone's home town:

*"I learned to drive on those  
East Texas red clay backroads  
And I mean to tell you my friend  
they weren't no easy roads  
You had to watch out for all the curves  
down by Kelsey Creek  
And detour through the Lindsay's  
Pasture  
When the waters ran too deep."*

# LIVING WITH AIDS

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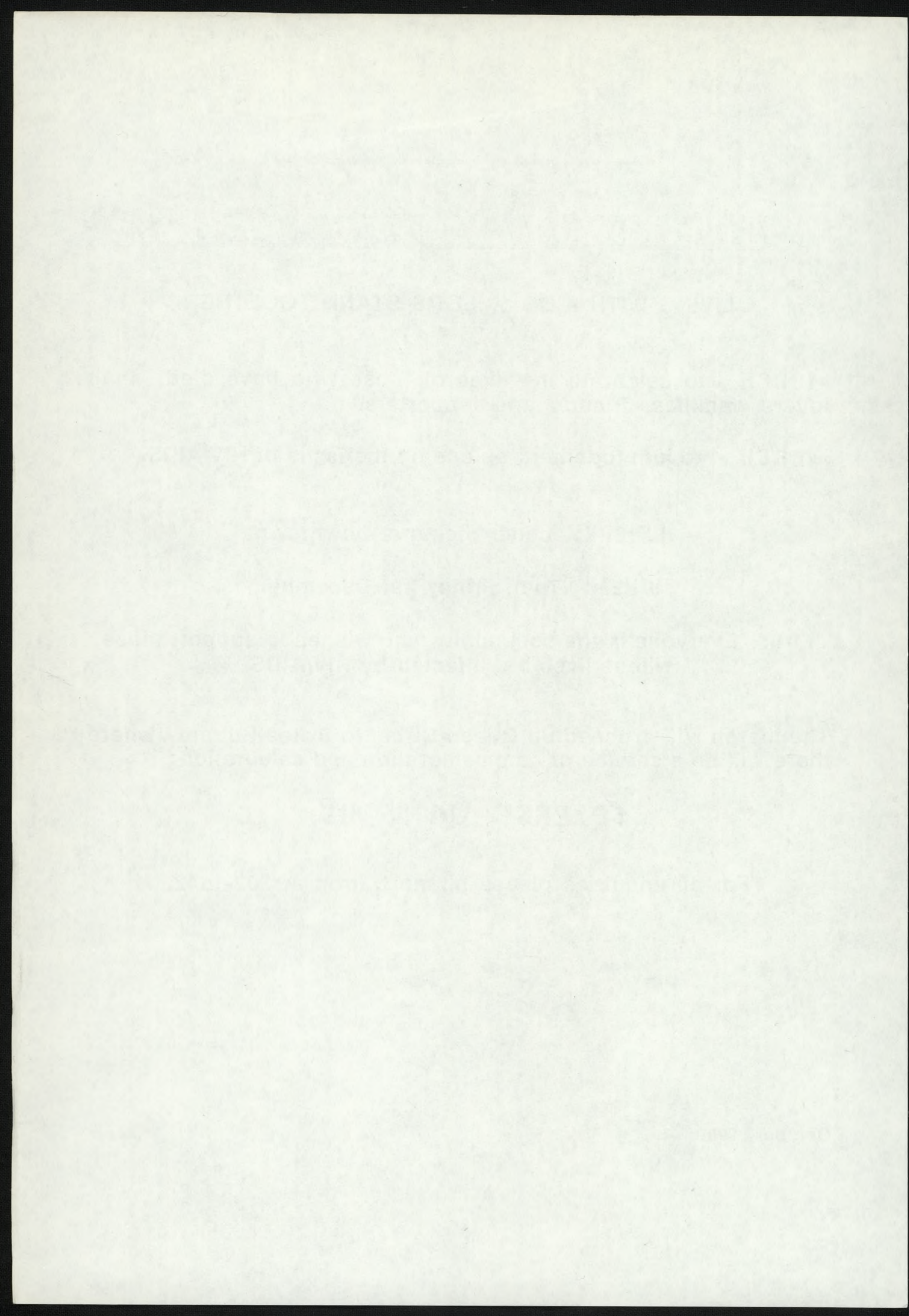
**WHEN:** 7pm, Friday 1st December.

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# SUSIE ORBACH

Susie Orbach, best selling author, innovator and commentator, is a feminist psychotherapist uniquely qualified to address contemporary issues of vital significance to women - and their partners.

Author of "Fat is a Feminist Issue", "Outside In - Inside Out", "Hunger Strike", "What do women want?" and "Bittersweet". Susie, with Luise Eichenbaum, co-founded The Women's Therapy Centre in London in 1976, and The Women's Therapy Centre Institute in New York in 1981.

Susie lectures throughout the UK, Europe and the USA on Women's psychology, the difficulties between women and men today, and technical issues in psychotherapy.

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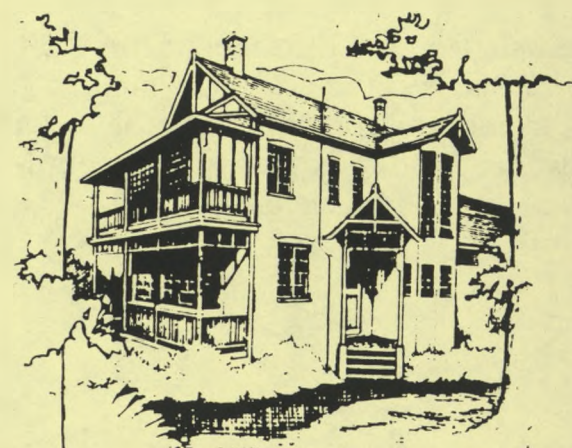
**THE EMPTINESS WITHIN -  
THE SEARCH FOR INTIMACY**

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**AN EVENING WITH**

**SUSIE ORBACH**

*MONDAY 11 DECEMBER 1989*



**AUCKLAND FAMILY COUNSELLING  
SERVICE INC.**

You just need to substitute the name of your own town – Paraparaumu, Manurewa, Orakei, Cheviot, or Nelson, for East Texas. At the same time though, the song also conveys a sense of the obstacles we have to steer around and learn lessons from in life.

"*The L and N Don't Stop Here Any-more*" is the only track on the record not written by Michelle, but her rendition of it is an especially moving one. Again it's a song that has a strong American identity, but does have more universal applications, dealing as it does with unemployment and the gradual death of rural towns.

Refreshingly, Michelle Shocked is not afraid of being political or being identified as such. After travelling to San Francisco and New York she went to Amsterdam where she became involved in squatters' movements and the politics of the homeless. She drifted back to Austin, where her mother had her committed to a psychiatric hospital in Dallas until the insurance money ran out. She explains that she took the name "Shocked" in reply to the Republican National Convention in Dallas where she was arrested in 1984. "Michelle Shocked" because that's the way I felt. That said it all."

There's also a quirky, humorous side to Michelle which comes out in songs all through the record. You hear this in "*Graffiti Limbo*" for example, and "VFD" which is about kids playing games with fire:

"We was racing Inevitability, ma

We was making trouble for the VFD, ma

We was raising insurance premiums, ma

We was spreading fear of arson."

Michelle Shocked has a real talent. This LP is fun, serious, moody, danceable, and cruisy. It takes you through a range of emotions before it ends. I particularly like the last song "*Black Widow*" which uses Michelle's voice alone with a mandolin. It leaves you hanging on the edge wanting more, and if you're anything like me you'll want to play the whole thing again. "*Short Sharp Shocked*" is another record (or CD if you can afford it) to add to your collection. And Michelle Shocked is another performer to keep your ears and eyes out for.

Lisa Sabbage

## SECOND HAND ROSE

Two women and their guitars make up **Second Hand Rose**, who are currently working the ski season circuit in Queenstown.

Penni Bousfield and Tracey Haskell had been friends for a few years before they started playing together as a duo in Auckland last September. You may re-

member Penni from her work with **Siren**, **Meg and the Fones**, and **Working Holiday**, bands which all played regularly throughout the North Island.

When Tracey left to go apple-picking in Nelson after Christmas with her husband, two year old twins and another couple and their child, Penni went along as paid child minder. They continued to perform in Nelson where they built up such a following that they were performing two or three times a week. Not bad for a band in a small city!

Initially the duo had intended to return to Auckland at the end of the picking season, but things worked out so well for them they decided to try Queenstown, where there is apparently a lot of work for musicians during winter.

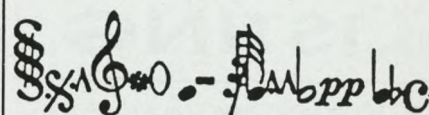
Penni says what helps the duo is that it has a repertoire varied enough to play to audiences as different as restaurant clientele and pub crowds. Occasionally the two women play with backing musicians on bass, drums and lead guitars, but usually they perform on their own. Second Hand Rose plays a cross-section of music – folk, country, jazz, pop, and blues.

"We do cover songs in a range of styles, relying mainly on vocal harmonies for our arrangements. Basically we sing songs we like and aim to have fun and hopefully make money at the same time!"

The last we heard, Second Hand Rose were doing just that, having fun and making their living from their music. There are a lot of keen listeners waiting for them to dig themselves out of the snow and make an appearance in warmer climes.



Penni (left) and Tracy, *Second Hand Rose*



Readers, don't forget if you want women to know about your band, or want to contribute reviews of women's music, don't be shy.

Put pen to paper or hit the typewriter keys and drop us a line. This music section is for you.



Look out for *Broadsheet* interviews with KD Lang, Judy Small and Enya coming out soon

## STAGE EXIT

Women's niteclubs seem to have a limited shelf life, faced with trying to cater for everyone's tastes and deal with the financial realities of a business venture.

After a year of operation in Auckland and many setbacks, the Stage has been forced to close its Parker Rolla door for the last time. On the last night only a handful of women were there – being entertained by musician Maxine Naden on lead guitar and vocals who was later joined by singer Truda Chadwick, Edwina Thorne on trumpet, and Clare Bear on bass.

Aside from the nights when The Guile played this was one of the best impromptu jam sessions I had encountered since the days when I used to go to the Alex (now demolished). Trust it to be the last night.

However, there is still hope for keen dancers and socialites out there, (the ones who don't mind alcohol and smoke anyway). Dianne Scott, who operated the Stage, has refused to remain inactive and has organised a women-only night at Candyos every Wednesday. Candyos is in the Chase Plaza, the cnr of Queen and Victoria Streets, Auckland.

Tanya Hopman

## LISTING

< BOOKS WE DON'T HAVE SPACE TO REVIEW >

Bantam are the publishers of *When Am I Going To Be happy?* subtitled, "How to break the emotional bad habits that make you miserable". Even for an avid fan of personal growth books, this one just did not hit the spot. It begins rather depressingly with anecdote after anecdote of women who are depressed and miserable. Maybe that's a necessary part of the "becoming happy" process, but I just kept longing to read about someone who was doing it right, who was transforming potentially negative situations into happiness, or whatever it is we are supposed to do.

The last chapters are full of advice, with a very big effort to see it all from a man's point of view – which could be helpful, up to a point. But it's overdone, as much as the assumption that every woman who has an empty, lonely feeling inside her is longing for a man.

Jan Thorburn

*The Hide and Seek Files* by Caeia March and Jan Clausen's *The Prosperine Papers* are two new lesbian novels from The Women's Press. Lesbian (in)visibility is a theme in both, although the stories are very different. Dale, in *The Prosperine Papers* is uncovering her Grandma Rose's past and discovering aspects of it that make tantalising connections to her own

lesbian life. The tension builds as Clausen explores, through the story, issues of power and control over personal histories. Dale becomes a real, complex person and I enjoyed her somewhat cynical attitudes. *The Hide and Seek Files* is full of lesbians – three generations at least – and covers a lot of ground very fast. I would have liked more development of some of the characters, two of whom live together for many years as "man" and wife.

The Women's Press handbook Series – with a distinctive yellow and white cover – has brought out four new titles. *The Handbook of Non-sexist Writing* by Kate Miller and Casey Swift is a reprint of a very useful book that has been around for some time. A good one to give to copywriters who can't think of alternatives to "mankind" and the like. *Hidden Loss*, edited by Valerie Hey and three others, is about miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy. The London rape Crisis Centre wrote *Sexual Violence*, The reality for women and Marilyn Lawrence's *The Anorexic Experience* is made available again by being included in this series.

Pat Rosier

### Goodbye To Women's Place Bookshop

It is with sadness that *Broadsheet* records the closure of the Wellington Women's Place Bookshop. We hope that it is not forever. *Broadsheet* magazine can now be purchased in the capital city from *Unity Books*, *Pathfinders*, and the *Roger Parsons* bookshop. See the Bookshop directory for details.



### BEACHES

Dir: Gary Marshall

The radio DJ who loudly gave out prizes at the Auckland preview of this film proclaimed that the audience better have lots of tissues at hand "because this is a real woman's movie".

Strange how after all these years, tears and expressing emotions are still seen as things that only women do, off limits for men, and not the stuff that "real" films are made of. American feminist film critic, Kathi Maio, makes the distinction clear in her review of *Beaches*.

"The 'woman's film' is that exercise in schmaltz, also called 'weepie' and 'tearjerker', that focuses on a woman protagonist and her emotional life. It is a film about human relationships and the joys and heartbreaks they bring. People often die in these movies, but not of a bullet to the guts or a cleaver to the skull. They die



Barbara Hershey and Bette Midler in *Beaches*

of despair or disease. And their loss is felt by those around them, and by the audience, unlike the demise of countless humans mowed down in male 'action' movies."

*Beaches* is about the 30 year friendship between two women, CC Bloom (Bette Midler) and Hillary Whitney (Barbara Hershey) who meet on the beach at Atlantic City as 11 year olds. Mayim Bialik plays the 11 year old, stropky CC with gusto, and deserves special mention.

The friendship is unexpected and unconventional – CC is a working class Jewish girl who wants to be a singer and actress, Hillary is the daughter of an old moneyed family. After this first meeting, their friendship grows through prolific letter writing until they are reunited in New York as flatmates. Their relationship survives geographical distance, living together, jealousies, marriage, divorce, success, and ultimately even death.

The fact that the film is centred around a friendship between two women is reason enough to see *Beaches*, even if it does give way to the tradition of the American dream of wealth and glamour. But Bette Midler's performance is also worth seeing the film for. Midler's characterisation of the ego-centric, insecure but bright and brash CC is perfect and she delivers some wonderful lines like "Well, enough of me, let's talk about you, what do you think of me?" You should see the movie for that and the other well-timed one-liners Midler delivers.

The friendship between Hillary and CC finds its most visible expression in Hillary's daughter who could almost belong to both of them. She is also the key to the final test of the two women's friendship.

You could call *Beaches* an emotional epic. It certainly pulls at your heartstrings and manipulates your emotions. So much so that at times it falls into the Hollywood syrup trap – squeezing out every last sob it can muster from you. Having said that, it's a film well worth seeing, for it's subject matter and its performances. I much prefer it to *Rainman*, and it beats the pants off *Rambo I, II and III* for entertainment value.

Lisa Sabbage

# WHAT'S NEW

## ■ AUCKLAND

**Womens Electoral Lobby** conference, 7-9 July, Knock Na Gree, West Coast Rd, Oratia, West Auckland, more info Ph 836-1878.

**Towards a Nuclear free and Independent Pacific Hui Programme:** Pacific Environmentl Concerns 6 Sept, Otara Arts and Music Centre; Japan's New Invasions in the Pacific, 2 Aug, Ponsonby Community Centre; Fiji - Recognition of Indigenous Peoples Rights in a Democracy, 1 Oct, Ponsonby Community Centre; US Military Bases in the Pacific, 1 Nov, Otara Music and Arts Cenre; Te Hui Oranga 1989, 1-3 Dec, venue to be announced. Info PPANAC, (09) 2747706 (Philomena); PCRC, 375862 (Jane); Tamaki NFIPC, 776128 (Julie/Alice).

**Fay Weldon** will be taking two Sargeson writing workshops: Fiction, 16-18 Sept; Screen Writing 23-25 Sept. Each costs \$199. Residential. Contact Wemsley Willcox (09) 463-730. **Total Struth** Play about two women, a stripper and a feminist stand up comic, with a lot in common. 13-23 July, Drama Studio, Auckland University. Tickets \$10 unwaged, \$15 waged.

## ■ HAMILTON

**Patients Rights Advocacy** First Wed of month at 7.00pm, 65 Tawa St. Ph (071) 435-837

**Continuing Education** events - Celebrating Women Loving Women, a lesbian and gay women's gathering, 14, 15, 16 July, Rm JGO9. Nga Ahuatanga Mo Nga Wahine Maori E Hiahia Ana Ki Te Tiaki Ki Te Whakahaere, Rm AG 10, 24, 25, 26, July, 9am-4pm, and 11 Aug 9am-12 noon. How to Be Angry and Survive: A workshop for women, 4 Aug 7pm-10pm and Sat 5 Aug 9am-4pm. Women's Book Festival Sept 17-24. Bridging Courses for women starting or returning to university, 27 Sept, 9am-12.30pm for 8 weeks. For info Gillian Marie, Cont Ed, University of Waikato, Private Bag, Hamilton or phone her 562-889.

## ■ WANGANUI

**Lesbian Line** available for info and support on Mondays, 7-10pm, phone (064) 56833

## ■ CHRISTCHURCH

**Women's House** Cramner Centre, cnr Montreal and Armagh St, Ph 796-970 or 667-725.

**Lesbian/Gay Radio** every Wed 7-8pm Radio UFM 98.3. Lesbians first Wed of each month.

**Aoraki Lesbian and Gay Support Group** pot luck tea meetings at members homes third Sun every month, contact Morrigan (056)34-813, or Brian (056)43-853. PO Box 784, Timaru.

## ■ NATIONAL

**Not the 1990 Calendar!** Produced by the He Taua/Atac Coalition. \$10 plus GST per copy to P O box 68553, Newton (Auck)

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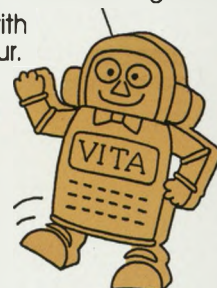
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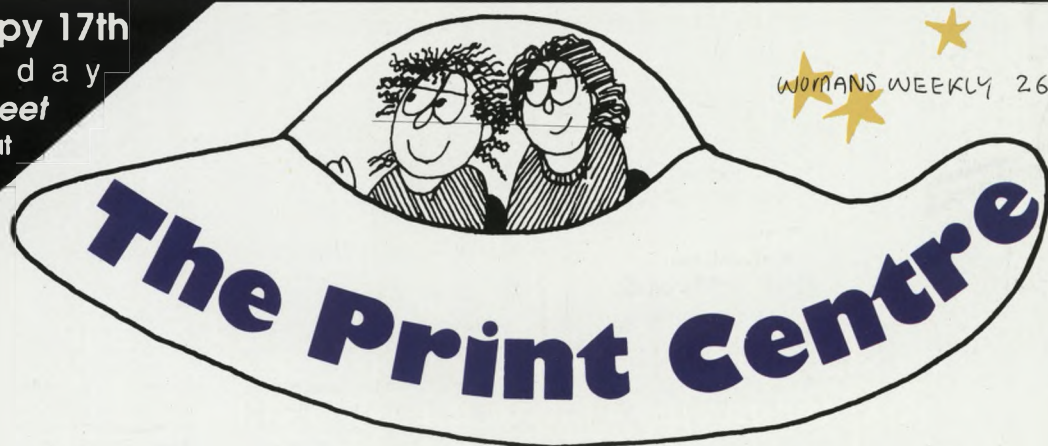
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