

WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?

- 22-29 International Peace Week
- 24 Voice of Women present:
 "Dark Circle" a new film about nuclear dangers and citizens action at the Unitarian Church, Superior St., 7.30.p.m.
- 25 International Women's Peace Day
 Voice of Women and National Film Board present:
 "If you Love this Planet" and "No Act of God" followed by a discussion by and about women acting for peace.
 11.00-12.30 to 12.30 - 2.00
 at NFB offices. Phone Terry Padgham at 595-7519

October

- 14 Margaret Randall, author of
 "Cuban Women Now" will speak at the Y on:
 "People, Change and the Church in Nicaragua" 7.00.p.m. Y Auditorium Broughton Street.
 Sponsored by IWDC, CASC and YM-YW
- 17 Aggie Jakubka, activist with the Greenham Common Peace Protest in Britain will speak at the Unitarian Church at 7.30.p.m. There will also be a film. Contact Terry Padgham for details, at: 595-7519

- 28-29 SWAG Conference: "Women and the Changing Family".
 See Registration Form in this issue for full details.

Sunday,
October 23 Victoria Council of Women (semi-annual meeting)
 11 a.m. smorgasbord brunch \$6.95
 1 p.m. sessions (eg. pornography, pesticides, hazardous waste, Young Offenders Act, women & fetal alcohol).
 evening: banquet
 speaker: Liz Bristowe
 "Abuse of the Elderly"
 contact: Edna Stevenson 386-9490
 Lillian Money 642-5379
 deadline: October 15
 OPEN TO THE PUBLIC/ALL WELCOME

November

- 4,5,6 B.C. Federation of Women Convention
 Naramata (Penticton) B.C.
 Call office for information.
- 5 Single Parent Resource Centre
 Annual Auction, 2.00.p.m. St. John's Church Hall. Call 385-1114 for further information

November 14

location: Victoria Council of Women (regular monthly meeting)
 Salvation Army Citadel
 757 Pandora Ave.
 speaker: Nell Bride
 topic: "Nutrition"
 contact: Edna Stevenson 386-9490

STATUS OF WOMEN NEWS

*****OFFICE REPORT*****

submitted by Shirley Avril

NEWSLETTER -extensive work on the Aug. issue, including co-lating and mailing as Stella was out of town and regular typist, Debbie Gregory, was unavailable.

CONFERENCE -distribution of meeting minutes.

-contract with Women's Building Society for refreshments at break times.

-2 mailouts to workshop leaders.

-final copy of new registration form

-liaison with up-island women. Second mailing done at end of Sept.

-several phone calls from interested individuals and groups. Most have also been mailed info.

-helped with press releases

-packages of conference

materials to over 60 groups invited to display.

OFFICE SPACE -continuing discussions with Women's building Society re: 1402 Stadacona

-discussions with Sexual Assault Center about United Way sponsored space in old St. Ann's Academy building.

PORNOGRAPHY -liaison between Women Against Pornography and a woman who was involved in a porn filming in Victoria last summer.

-questioning police re: a report of a film to be made in Victoria this fall, script written by a local video store owner. An XXX hard core porn film it SHOULD be illegal.

WOMEN AGAINST THE BUDGET

-press/media interview was done at the office

-leaflets are available from the office for distribution.

RESOURCE LIBRARY -continue to call tardy borrowers

-TANIS continues with indexing 'Kinesis' and KATHERINE OGG, a new volunteer, has begun to index NAC 'Status'.

REPORTS

-report of our activities sent to B.C. Federation of Women for the current newsletter.

-no time available to send contribution to NAC 'Memo'.

ECONOMY BRIEF -A flurry of phone calls and letters enabled SWAG to reserve a place for the presentation of a brief to the Royal Commission on Economic Union and Development Prospects.

-typing and printing of a brief the was written and presented by STELLA LORD.

SWAG BROCHURE -working with LOIS VICKERY on new brochure. It will be available at conference.

WOMEN'S FUNDRAISING COALITION

-organizing for the conference concert with LOUISE ROSE

-entertainment contract

-ticket printing

-sound equipment/piano

poster and advertising

-preliminary budget and discussion re possible concert with SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK.

VISITORS AND PHONE CALLS

-most common reasons for public calls are family law problems and negative images of women in the media.

COORDINATING MEETING MINUTES

September 6, 1983

ISSUES FOR YOUNG WOMEN

-a group is needed to plan for and do presentations.

-announcement to be in newsletter

-bank balance of approx. \$104.00

to be used to buy library resources.

B.C.F.W. MEMBERSHIP

-a decision must be made soon as membership dues are 'due' and convention time is soon.

-contact JOSEPHINE ADAMS, who has expressed willingness to be a south island rep. along with MARA from Duncan.

-ALICE ALBERT suggested we maintain our membership and try to address our concerns about making B.C.F.W. structure more efficient to better serve our needs.

SALE ITEMS AT CONFERENCE

-SHIRLEY AVRIL has sent for a catalogue of feminist items.

-she will also investigate buttons and record albums that may be available from Vancouver.

-display groups will also be able to sell items

PAMPHLET

- LOIS VICKERY and SHIRLEY AVRIL will have new brochure ready for the conference.

AUTUMN SCHEDULE

- no change in office hours
- evening time still under discussion

NEWSLETTER

- early issue in October to allow for conference registration forms to go out again

PACIFIC GROUP FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES

- SWAG is a member of this research group
- STELLA LORD will take care of info. and keep up with issues

BRIEF ON ECONOMY

- STELLA LORD is working on this
- Commission is coming to Victoria Sept. 14-15
- mandate is to look at economic goals and political means by which they can be achieved
- STELLA to consider technological change, unemployment, social services, erosion of human rights in B.C. all in light of the Canadian constitution and federal-provincial conflicts.

WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN ON SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

- suggested by a volunteer, GAYLE KAPALIK.
- she is looking into what is offered by the Legal Aid Office and the Unemployment Action Center and Federated Anti-poverty Groups and will make a presentation to coordinating committee when she has a proposal.

ROLE OF THE CONTACT PERSON

- SUSAN MOGER (health) requested clarification of her role
- the coordinating committee considers the contact person to be available for questions and individual referrals.
- this topic to be discussed at length, if necessary, at the annual general meeting in January or the next SWAG retreat

COMMISSION ON EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT

- one person commission, Judge ROSALIE ABELLA
- submissions, focussing on affirmative action, must be in by Sept. 30.
- NORRIE PRESTON and JENNIFER LOWEN to be asked, by SHIRLEY AVRIL, if they would consider writing a brief.

WOMEN AGAINST THE BUDGET

- CAROL MILSTONE involved in a meeting of women's groups with McLelland in Vancouver
- report to go into newsletter

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

- Volunteer Fair, Oct. 4,5,6, at UVic. We will have a table to advertise conference.
- Greater Victoria Multi-cultural Women's Group. ALICE ALBERT to attend their 1st anniversary celebrations Oct. 3.
- B.C.F.W. Convention Nov. 4,5,6 Theme: Pulling Together in These Hard Times. SWAG Delegate to be selected.
- Canadian Research Institute For the Advancement of Women Conference. Nov. 11,12,13. Forms in office.

PUBLICATIONS TO BE ORDERED

- Daycare Advocate
- Wellspring
- Getting There-Photostories of Immigrant Women



Drawing from Dreams

WEEKEND WORKSHOP OCT. 21-22-23

The Goddess speaks to us in our dreams. Learn to interpret your dreams and recognize her voice. In messages of Love and Compassion.

ANN ROSEMARY CONWAY B.F.A.
pre-registration 658-8770

Dream Hill Studio

4515 Emily Carr Drive

*****Announcements*****

- Any women interested in being resource persons for groups using the SWAG "Issues for Young Women" Video, please contact Alice Albert at 382-1536
- Surviving Unemployment - a support group for women led by Rowena Hunnisett (M.A.), Fridays, 9.30-11.30 a.m. starting October 7, 1983, at 1045 Linden Ave., Sponsored by SWAG. Fee: \$50.00 (may be paid in instalments; some subsidized places available) To register mail cheque or m.o. (\$15.00 to 5-305 Montreal, Victoria, V8V 1Z6 For more information phone 384-2833
- Self Defense for Women - course offered by Rowena Hunnisett at 2 locations: Vic West 'Y' 521 Craigflower (near the Bay St. bridge) Mon & Wed. 10.15-11.30 commencing October 3 (8 weeks) or Sundance Elementary School, 1625 Bank (nr Richmond & Oak Bay Ave) Mons 7.00-9.30p.m. commencing Oct 17 (8 weeks) Cost: \$50 employed; \$40, others Registration: to 5-305 Montreal, Victoria, V8V 1Z6 or call 384-2833
- Single Parent Resource Centre invites you to shop in an existing, unique way and at the same time contribute to a vital community service, by shopping at the Third Annual Auction, November 5, 2.00p.m. (view items between 12.00 & 2.00 when there will also be crafts and baked goods for sale). There is child care available and a tea room which everyone will enjoy. All activities take place in St. John's Hall (Balmoral east of Quadra). Call 385-1114 for info.
- Single Parent Resource Centre is sponsoring a course for Single Parent Women - "Directions". This is a life skills course designed for single parent women who are ready to expand their ability to take control of their lives in order to move on to greater independence and self-sufficiency. Sessions in Communication Skills, Self Worth/Self-Image; Parenting Skills; Stress Management; Goal Setting, Problem Solving and Decision Making. Next available session: November 28-Feb 3 or Feb. 20-April 13, 1984. 3 full days a week for 6 weeks and 1½ days a week for the last 2 weeks Facilitator: Jan Christie. For further information call the Centre 385-1114
- Attention book lovers: If you are a feminist, love books, and have a few hours to spare each week or

every 2 weeks, please consider volunteering to work in Everywoman's Books Victoria's feminist bookstore. Leave your name, address and phone number at the store and you will be contacted. Or phone the store at 388-9411

- Women Against the Budget meeting every Tuesday at Look out for their program on Channel 10 at the end of October. If you wish to help leaflet shopping centres or residential areas contact Judy at 388-3788
- Women and Therapy - a major conference for all who are involved in Women's Mental Health will be held in Toronto November 9-11. Keynote speaker: Phyllis Chesler. Contact: Professional Development Associates, 3 Cameron Cres, Toronto M4G 1Z7
- CRIAW Conference will be held in Vancouver November 11-13 at the Four Seasons Hotel. Topic will be Feminism in Action: New Knowledge, New Education, New Society. Registration forms available in the SWAG office

--- REPORT ---

To SWAG Members-- Re: McClelland--Women's Groups Meeting, August 9, concerning the new Human Rights Bill

Thank you for supporting me to attend the above mentioned meeting in Vancouver. It was well worth the ferry rides!

My overall impression of the meeting was that it was designed by the government to be anything but a consultation. I do believe McClelland dismissed our concerns as being "frivolous and vexatious".

The women who attended (about 15) were wonderful in their convictions against Bennett, the budget, and the bills. They were very receptive of their visitor from across the ocean (me).

The highlight of the meeting was Frances Wasserlein's (of Women Against the Budget) announcement that the Coalition has appealed to the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for their condemnation of our so-called Human Rights Bill.

I was asked by Frances to please pass along her gratitude in receiving our letter of support for Women Against the Budget, and her rally speech of July 27.

Julie Morrow, of Women's Programs (Van-couver office) thanked us for our letter to McClelland regarding Bill 27, and "assured" us that the points raised were being looked at....

We were also promised copies of the transcripts from the meeting, if they turn out from the tapes (sorry, can't remember which group taped it).

Thanks again, Carol Milstone

PRESS RELEASE from WOMEN AGAINST THE BUDGET-- August 9, 1985

Frances Wasserlein, spokesperson for the new coalition, Women Against the Budget, announced today that the Coalition has sent an urgent message to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

"We asked the Committee to condemn the B.C. Government for its cynical actions in slashing human rights protection for women in the name of efficiency and restraint," Wasserlein stated.

"Just 19 months after Canada ratified the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Wasserlein said, the Government of B.C. is dismantling legal protections against sex discrimination and firing workers who provide direct services to women in need."

Noting that Jack Heinrich, former Socred minister responsible for the status of women had endorsed the Convention, Wasserlein called on Labour Minister Robert McClelland to restore the rights of B.C. women and uphold B.C.'s international agreements.

According to Wasserlein, B.C. is presently failing to comply with commitments it has made under at least five of the Articles in the Convention.

"The Convention commits Canadian Governments to provide effective protection of women against any act of discrimination. There is clearly no such effective protection for B.C. women now, nor will there be if Bill 27 passes", Wasserlein said.

The Committee which oversees the implementation of the U.N. Convention is meeting at UN Headquarters in New York from August 1 to August 12, Wasserlein noted.

"It is Women Against the Budget's intention to bring to the attention of the international community the sham that is being perpetrated here, stated Wasserlein. Canada prides itself on a good human rights record in the eyes of the world. But here in B.C. the Government is not improving rights but taking them away."

"We are outraged by the cynicism of this Government which can make international commitments to improve the status of women and then, so shortly after, gut the very programs and measures that help and protect us," concluded Wasserlein. *See pg 8*

Letters



Dear Ms. Avril:

Thank you for your letter to my predecessor, the Honourable Larry Grossman, in which you expressed support for free-standing abortion clinics.

The provision for therapeutic abortions in Canada is governed by the Criminal Code, a federal statute which has been passed by Parliament in Ottawa. Regardless of personal views, we are bound to obey this law until it is changed by our Federal Parliament, and acknowledge the right of all our fellow citizens to be guided by it.

While many in the Province feel that abortion under any circumstances is unconscion-

able, I am also aware that others are in favour of it. Nevertheless, I can assure you that this government has no intention of recommending any liberalization of the present abortion law.

Yours very truly,
Keith C. Norton, M.P.P. Kingston and the Islands

Dear SWAG Members:

We would like to announce that in response to long standing requests from the East Indian Community here, we have launched an ad hoc project supported by the Minister of State for Multiculturalism.

This four month project is to identify the needs and concerns of non-English speaking East Indian women, in their quest to become more fully integrated into Canadian society. Based upon this assessment, we can then make further recommendations and formulate a practical plan of action.

No doubt you are aware of the frustrations and difficulties these women face. Therefore, if possible, any information you could share with us would be much appreciated. We may be reached by telephone at 592-1281 local 486.

Yours sincerely,
P. Mahinder Kaur Doman
(Project Director)

To SWAG:

Your August 1983 issue of Status of Women News gave rise to the following thoughts. I would appreciate feedback on the questions I raise.

Would free-standing abortion clinics such as Dr. Henry Morgentaler wishes to set up in Winnipeg and Toronto include counselling with regard to contraception for women not wishing to bear children so that further abortions would not be necessary? If a woman is entitled to "control of her body" after conception, does she not have a responsibility to exercise control of her body before conception? If she chooses abortion after conception she is actually assuming control over two bodies and two lives.

In my opinion it would be tragic for the quality and sanctity of life in Canada if abortion were to be regarded as an easy alternative to effective contraception. A person who practises celibacy is also exercising control over his or her own body and may, at the same time, be enhancing his or her own potential for mature love.

Some time ago I spoke with a woman, the mother of two children, who told me she had experienced a state of grief for two years following an abortion which she now felt she had undertaken for frivolous reasons. I know I am a very determined person, she said, but I feel hurt that my husband and doctor did not care enough to dissuade me from this choice.

What can we do to preserve for the next generation of Canadians a spiritual depth and commitment in matters of life, death, love, and sex.

Yours sincerely,
Doris Bergbusch

Dear SWAG:

Please send me your Guidebook to Organizing Conferences. Shella Brown at Secretary of State has just told me you've done one and I'm working on a similar booklet for women organizing in Sport and Fitness.

Thank you,
Betty Baxter
(Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport)

SWAG was asked to present a brief to the MacDonald Commission when it convened in Victoria on Sept. 12. The following letter gives a brief outline of what SWAG presented. The full text of the brief is available for perusal in the office.

Dear Ms. Hegan:

Further to our telephone conversation today, I confirm that the Victoria Status of Women Action Group would be pleased to submit a brief to the Royal Commission and present this at a hearing to be held in Victoria on September 14.

Victoria Status of Women Action Group has been in existence since 1972 and was formed in response to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women to work towards the implementation of the Report's Recommendations. SWAG has over 200 members in the Victoria area, is a member of the B.C. Federation of Women and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. We receive funding from the Secretary of State and have frequent contact with the National Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

As explained to you on the telephone, our brief will not be ready until September 8. As a women's organization, many of our members have family commitments during the summer months. This makes it somewhat difficult to pull together a comprehensive brief during this period. Our brief, therefore will focus on two major issues of concern to our group which fall clearly within the Commission's mandate.

- 1) Women have pressed long and hard for equal job opportunities. It has been made clear by politicians, economists and others, however, that the high unemployment rate Canada is now experiencing is not a temporary phenomenon. It is often pointed out that it is associated not only with the recession but with a longer-term restructuring of the economy which will require a retrained and possibly a smaller labour force. Our

brief will address the problem of structural unemployment and technological change as these may affect women in the labour force in the future. Depending on the policy options chosen by the government and the orientation of business and unions to the problem, these changes hold either the threat of serious setbacks in equality of opportunity OR the promise of consolidating what has already been achieved by opening up new areas of employment to women and greater flexibility in work organization.

2) Economic changes in Canada will affect the regions of Canada differentially. This is already evident in British Columbia. Unfortunately, these economic differences also reverberate politically. It is of particular concern to women in British Columbia at the present time that despite Canada's new constitution which purports to eliminate discrimination on an equal basis across Canada, the Human Rights Commission has been abolished by the provincial government. Cutbacks of services to those (many of whom are women) who need them are affected as regional disparities are stimulated by political response. As important as it is to find political solutions to steer Canada's economic development in a unified way, we would also like to re-emphasize the importance of guaranteeing on a Canadian-wide basis minimum provision of basic human rights and social and welfare benefits which, once eroded on a provincial basis, exacerbate the already existing regional economic inequalities which exist in Canada.

I enclose a copy of a brief that SWAG presented to the Provincial Government last year which is relatively comprehensive in scope but which will be useful as background material to our presentation September 14.

Yours sincerely,
Stella Lord

Letters from SWAG Members on issues
of concern to women

B.C. Director
B.C. Government Film Classification
Office
140 East 8th Avenue
Vancouver

We attended the movie 'Flashdance' recently and think the warning your office placed on it was incomplete. Different people are offended by different things. We are offended and angered by the over-use of female nudity. As you know, most of the films with nudity are of women--not men--which is very unequal and unfair.

People should be able to rely on your warnings and then choose either to go or not to go. It is stuffed in front of our faces all too often.

We ask for your consideration to this matter in the future. Thank you very much. Yours.... W. Ackinclose, A. Crisp, J. English, S. Brown, T. Davenport

The Editor,
Creative Computing Magazine
39 East Hanover Ave.
Morris Plains, N.J.

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to express a concern which is shared, no doubt, by many of your female readers. Like an increasing number of women, I have had to come to terms with computers in my work-place. My initial distrust and suspicion has turned to a certain degree of fascination with this new technology. Women such as myself will represent a potential new market for your magazine, as well as those products advertised within its pages.

I was concerned to see, in your April 83 issue, a full-page ad for a product which could only be described as pornographic. "Strip Poker", made for Atari and Apple II systems by Artworx Software Co. Inc., may seem on the surface innocuous enough. It is, however, part of a developing software field which includes violently racist and misogynist games like the now-infamous "Custer's Revenge". (In this pornographic game, the objective is to overcome a number of obstacles and have the white male character succeed in raping a Native Indian woman bound to a tree).

A pornographic video game is no different than other forms of pornography, despite the lack of realism in the graphics. Such games share the fundamental characteristic of porn, which is the objectification, degradation, and--often--brutal violation of the female. "Strip Poker" is simply at one end of a spectrum which contains at its other end games like "Custer's Revenge".

In order to succeed in creating the mentality which finds rape entertainment, first you have to objectify and dehumanize women as "other".

"Strip Poker" was, I was pleased to see, the only pornographic video game advertised in your April issue. Many women, before they consider subscribing, will want these questions answered: does Creative Computing endorse such products? Do you have any policy about the type of product you will accept advertising for? Do your advertisers have policy on this matter? ("Custer's Revenge" was made for

use on Atari systems by American Multiple Industries, a fact which I understand greatly concerned Atari.)

In a similar vein, other women were probably as offended as I was at the sexism of two cartoons which appeared in the same issue. I refer to one on page 60, wherein it is implied that—even though she may have learned to use a computer—a woman's primary identity remains that of "housewife". This cartoon would have been clever and non-sexist had you simply substituted the word "chef" for "housewife". The cartoon on page 291 has a more offensive tone: namely, that the only possible use a woman could find for a computer is as a step-stool.

You are no doubt aware that thousands of women are becoming computer literate, of necessity, to preserve their jobs or to be competitive in the job market of the future. Likewise, female children are now being encouraged to be as comfortable with computers as boys are. Women represent a vast, and still largely-untapped, market for publications such as yours, as well as the products advertised. This market is predicted to expand dramatically in the future as increasing numbers of women are forced to adapt to micro-technology in the work place. Some labour market analysts even believe that women will become the primary consumers of home computers, as they are forced out of the labour force by increasing automation of the work place and left with no alternative for economic survival but home computer "cotage industry".

You would thus be wise to not only refrain from offending this potential market through your advertising or editorial policy, but also to provide space to explore the specific concerns of women relating to the impact of computers on our lives.

Magazines like yours should be leading the way in exploring the social ramifications of this technology; in assessing the impact it will have on people's jobs, lives, and health (for instance, little is yet known about the effect of VDT's on the fast-growing tissues of children); and finding creative solutions to the inevitable social problems it will engender. You can start by overcoming stereotypical attitudes which assert this as a field only for men.

Sincerely,
Pamela L. Blackstone

!!!!!!!

We have received several letters acknowledging and supporting Carole Milstone's letter to B.C. Minister of Labour which appeared in August's SWAG News. These are some excerpts.

from Eileen Hendry, Vice-President, CACSW,
Western Region

"We, the community of women in B.C., are all still shuddering from the impact of this recent legislation. I have enclosed a copy of our press release to show that even though our mandate is towards the federal government, the severity of the situation in B.C. "caused" us to make a plea to the provincial government—serious business."

from Gordon Hanson, M.L.A. Victoria

"Our entire caucus are vigorously opposing this very disturbing legislation. Unfortunately, we do not have the votes to halt this government's action. The conscience of the community could be a powerful force in assisting us, and your help is greatly appreciated."

from Robin Blencoe, M.L.A., Victoria

"Our party will be opposing Bill 26 most strenuously. This government must be stopped. The attack on fundamental rights is intolerable!"

If I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me. Keep up the good work!"

Rowena
Hunnisett (M.A.)

adult counselling
relationship counselling
women's groups
peer counselling
training

5-305 Montreal St. Victoria
384-2833

ARTICLES

RED HOT'S TRIAL: 3-Ring Circus

On May 30th, in Victoria Provincial Court, Judge Darrell Collins convicted Red Hot Video Ltd. on three counts of obscenity under Section 159 of the Criminal Code. His decision has been hailed by some anti-porn activists as a victory for women, if only a symbolic one. Several Women Against Pornography (WAP) members were present throughout most of the proceedings, and we saw no victory for women in what took place in that court room. It is understandable that news of the verdict could be superficially interpreted as a victory. One had to be present at this three-ring circus to fully comprehend the inadequacy of the criminal justice system to address feminist concerns about porn.

We believe this decision could represent a potentially serious blow for women's and gay rights, given the prevailing politically right-wing climate in Canada.

Feminist concerns about pornography were not addressed in this trial; in fact, it became quickly apparent that women ourselves are considered irrelevant in terms of input into "community standards" (upon which the definition of "obscenity" was predicated). The primary consideration throughout the trial, and illustrated in the decision itself, was the imperative that the "moral welfare of the state" must be protected. What Judge Collins ultimately found offensive about the three films in question was not the fact that they demean, exploit, and violate women, but their sexually explicit nature. At one point in his decision, he recited a litany of the unacceptable sex acts he observed in each of the films. Itemized together with intercourse, fellatio, ejaculation, group sex, etc. were nakedness, masturbation, and lesbian sex. Rape and brutality received only passing mention. The very wording of the obscenity law makes it near impossible to deviate far from this perspective.

The Issues Before the Court...

The trial started with the defense (Red Hot Video Ltd.) applying, under the Charter of rights, to have Section 159 declared to have "no force and effect" and the charges dismissed. They were arguing - using sections 2 ("freedom of expression") and 7 ("right to life, liberty, and security of the person") - that the obscenity law was an infringement of their client's basic rights and liberties as guaranteed by the Constitution.

Collins was not impressed by this tactic, and he eventually decided that Sect. 159 was indeed constitutional, allowing the trial to proceed. This meant, however, that the crown now had the additional burden of mensrea, or proving criminal intent (ie, that the accused had knowledge of the nature of the material).

With the constitutional issue resolved, argument turned to the three issues in question. Red Hot video was charged under Sub. 1 of Sect. 159, with possession of obscene materials for the purposes of distribution. The Crown had to prove: a) Red Hot Video possessed the three films; b) they were "obscene", and c) they knew they were obscene.

First came the matter of establishing the corporate entities involved, their relationship, and whether possession could be proven against Red Hot Video. The defense argued that it was the Victoria store, incorporated under the name "Douglas Video Ltd.", which possessed the films, and that no clear connection between the two companies could be proved beyond a doubt; meaning no clear proof that the films originated with Red Hot Video. The Crown countered that all the evidence pointed to, at the very least, a "partnership", and more realistically a franchise operation.

On the second point, "obscenity" was measured against "contemporary community standards", with the defense producing so-called experts to testify that Canadians will and do tolerate pornography. Their basic thrust was to produce, as evidence of tolerance, the "social acceptability" and widespread pervasiveness of porn, (citing mainstream media interest in the subject as proof of its "legitimacy").

Finally, the matter of mensrea, with the defense and the Crown attempting to prove, respectively, Red Hot's "moral innocence" and their moral culpability. The summaries of both sides followed, after which the Judge adjourned to May 30 for his now famous decision.

The Crown: For this we waited a year?

This decision was not attributable to a brilliant job by the Crown. The prosecution, for the most part, relied on case law and adequately argued legal technicalities. While their expertise in this area cannot be faulted, there were a number of serious flaws in their overall approach. While having obviously done extensive research of legal precedents, the Crown was astonishingly ill-prepared in other ways.

For example, the confusion over the actual corporate entities involved could have been lessened had the Crown done their homework more carefully. In seizing the tapes from "Douglas Video" and subsequently charging Red Hot Video, they opened the way for a complicated and effective defense. A charge against "Douglas Video" of selling obscene materials, under Sub. 2 of Section 159 would have been easier and less convoluted to support.

Also, during the proceedings, the Crown attempted twice, unsuccessfully, to subpoena Douglas Video Manager, Don Watt. Had they served the subpoena earlier, they could have prevented his last-minute disappearing act. Instead, they put (absentee) owner Wayne Roberts on the stand, gaining very little useful information. Any of the women who regularly picket the store could have told crown counsel (and did) that Watt, not Roberts, was responsible for the day-to-day operation of the store, and thus they could have had the information they needed.

More, the Crown's first "expert" witness lacked credibility and had obviously not been well briefed. There to share his expertise as a psychiatrist with "some experience in treating sex offenders", he had surprisingly little knowledge of the available research on pornography. This witness was vulnerable to defense attempts to undermine his credibility and expose him to ridicule. When questioned about the available research, he could not cite one study by name, and knew of only "about eight" in existence. This happened in spite of the fact that we had provided crown counsel with a bibliography of over sixty studies. We spoke with him after, and discovered that he was unaware of our bibliography. His briefing had been negligent, not just in terms of information, but also preparation for the aggressive style of cross-examination he should have expected. This choice of witness seemed even more questionable when we later learned that crown counsel had obtained from Judy Erola's office a list of suggested witnesses, all of whom were highly qualified and credible, including prominent researchers like Malamud and Donnerstein.

Perhaps the most serious criticism, from our point of view, was the prominent lack of feminists' input in that court room. There is a great deal of knowledge and expertise in the women's community of which the crown could have availed itself. Many women have researched this issue, developed a comprehensive feminist analysis of porn, and could even have testified as to community standards, because of involvement at a grass-roots level in the community. (For instance, WAP has conducted about 20 workshops in the last year, reaching hundreds of women and some men, most of whom are not feminists.)

The glaring lack of feminist input was exacerbated by having to hear defense witnesses speculate about "what the feminists want". We were not asked to speak for ourselves. Moreover, if the defense can be allowed to produce witnesses as subjective as Vancouver film critic Michael Walsh, to give opinion evidence on "community standards", then we can well ask why the Crown did not produce a feminist, for balance.

Women made a great deal of valuable information available to the Crown, almost none of which was utilized. Crown counsel were aloof and unresponsive to input, ensuring - you may well speculate - that they be perceived as independent of influence from "fanatical pressure groups".

Not only was significant input from feminists lacking, however. The Crown - in the "community standards" debate - failed to stress the groundswell of anti-porn sentiment taking place all over Canada; or to point out that many mainstream organizations - such as churches, service organizations, municipal governments, community groups, human rights and minority groups, and unions - have joined feminists in deploring porn. There was no reference, for instance, to the nationwide Pay-TV protests and the Eaton's boycott, or the phenomenal impact of "Not A Love Story" on Canadians.

The Crown's case contained inconsistencies, both in court room strategy and the previous track record of the Attorney General's Ministry which, of course, Crown Counsel were representing. Their two "star" witnesses, Ontario film censor, Mary Brown ("conservative"), and B.C. film censor Mary Louise McCausland ("liberal") had radically different views on community standards, and thus on criteria for censorship. The defense was able to exploit this inconsistency, resulting in McCausland - the Crown's witness - being used against them.

We observed successful use of this tactic several times, but none more galling than watching the defense use the government's own previous policy against them. The defense argued there had been no previous prosecutions - despite the seizure of tapes on two occasions - and that this lack of prosecution (which was due to the government's longstanding refusal to prosecute) demonstrated a community standard of tolerance as well as their client's "honourable" intentions (mensrea). Of course, defense counsel intimated, what were they to think when the tapes were seized and later returned to them with apologies?! What indeed!

Another critical disadvantage was evident in the "style" of the person (who happened to be a woman) representing the Crown. Due to Antifaev's (Crown Prosecutor) generally accommodating and unaggressive manner, the defense was allowed to get away, unchallenged, with some amazing theatrics, distortions, and outright lies.

Defense witnesses Walsh and Boyanowsky were both allowed to monopolize court time. During their speeches both, but Walsh in particular, made numerous absurd but damaging statements, which should have been challenged.

Boyanowsky referred at length to outdated social effects research supporting porn (Denmark), and had to be reminded by the judge that this was irrelevant here. But not before twenty minutes had elapsed and this information, lent credibility by the endorsement of an "expert", was entrenched in the court record.

Walsh, at one point, insisted there was no such thing as a "Snuff" movie, which existed only in the realm of "myth". This was news indeed to the women (and one reporter) in the gallery who had attended WAP's screening and destruction of "Snuff" last fall. The Crown should have known about this well-publicized event, and they should have challenged this monstrous lie.

They should have leapt to challenge Boyanowsky, too, when he casually maligned Ontario film censor Mary Brown. His remark that Brown had told him her criteria for censorship were based on "what she thought her mother in Sarnia would tolerate" was, of course, sensationalized by the media. This followed Brown's thorough testimony wherein she described the way in which the Ontario Board attempts to ensure accurate representation of community values, and in which she had stated that the Board had conducted over 10,000 interviews.

Defense witness Don Sikorsky, who was invited to share his expertise as a photographer of strippers, and a denizen of Vancouver strip joints, was a clever defense ploy to introduce in evidence a dozen or so porn magazines and the three tapes on trial, which had been easily obtained at a variety of locations in Vancouver and Victoria. Time and again throughout the trial, the very pervasiveness of sexual exploitation was used to justify it.

Both Sikorsky and Walsh were entirely lacking in qualifications and credibility; were clearly alienated from real community standards; and gave evidence that was mere conjecture and highly subjective personal opinion. Neither man should have been allowed to take the stand, and the Crown should have done everything possible to block them.

There are other questions that remain to be answered. Why did the Crown only pursue summary conviction, as opposed to indictment? What rationale was used for the selection of the three tapes? They don't represent a continuum in degree of violence, being similar in content. We have, in fact, seen far worse tapes from Red Hot Video and have laid complaints with police on two of them. Why were these extremely violent films not included in the charge? Why did the Crown concur with the defense in seeking leniency in the penalty? And, why did the Judge, after finding Red Hot guilty on all three counts, settle on an absurdly lenient fine, far below the maximum he was empowered to impose?

The answer to these questions is patently obvious. They demonstrate the degree to which those in power fail to take seriously the problem of pornography.

They also confirm Andrea Dworkin's hypothesis that censorship laws comprise a battle between different groups of men to determine how much of their warped sexuality should be revealed. Women have no meaningful input into this process. We were reminded of this fact constantly throughout the trial.

The Obscenity Law: A Victorian Relic

Roget's defines obscenity as "immorality, dirt, filth, lubricity, salacity, smut...indelicacy, indecency, ribaldry, vulgarity", etc. While pornography certainly is immoral (because it exploits, degrades, and hurts women) and vulgar (because it reduces human beings to one-dimensional genital caricatures), it is hardly its "smuttiness" or "indecency" which concerns feminists.

This, however, remains the focus of not only popular idiom, but also Canada's present obscenity law. Given our concern with the violent, degrading, and exploitative nature of pornography, Sect. 159 has proven an ineffective weapon with which to fight back. We are convinced that, not until the link with sexuality is broken, not until porn is recognized and treated as a form of hate propaganda, will the justice system contain real justice for women.

The obscenity law - included under "Offenses Tending to Corrupt Morals" - could represent a potential threat as much to women and homosexuals as to porn pimps. It could be used to erode our right of access to information, given the anti-feminist political climate today.

The legal emphasis on morality was clearly articulated by Judge Collins in his decision. As stated earlier, what he found offensive was the sexual explicitness of the three tapes, not the dehumanizing way they portray women. Near the top of his list of "no-no's" were female nakedness, masturbation, and lesbian sex. Granted, pornography does not portray these subjects in the way we would wish to see, but erotica certainly could and does.

This trial demonstrated clearly that women have yet to achieve real input into the values which shape our communities. These appear to be the exclusive preserve of educated white men, who presume to speak for all Canadians; but who, in fact, were appallingly uninformed beyond their immediate milieu. (Walsh spoke authoritatively for the patrons of porn theatres - they have no complaints - and Boyanowsky was edified primarily by the views of his students.) The "well-intentioned citizen" referred to throughout the trial is obviously possessed of a penis. The organized protests of feminists were repeatedly dismissed, trivialized, or ignored. We are, we learned, "not representative" and "not significant." Defense counsel, in fact, stated repeatedly that there has been NO

public reaction to pornography, and that this lack of reaction equals tolerance. When feminists were referred to (grudgingly), it was usually in the same breath as the "Moral Majority".

Even the word "violence" is open to interpretation: throughout the trial, defense witnesses bickered about whether rape was necessarily violent, and they used the words like "spoof", "satire", "mockery" and "parody" to characterize the rape and torture scenes in the tapes. Rape? A little "harmless fantasy". Vaginal penetration with a human fist? A "circus stunt".

The real problem with the vagueness of the obscenity law is that it allows so-called experts to explain, interpret, and pontificate, investing their sexist views with credibility and legitimacy in the process; it permits blind speculation and subjective opinions to run rampant, allowing dangerous statements like those above to be made, and mocking the very meaning of justice.

If, on the other hand, the present obscenity law were repealed, replaced by the inclusion of porn with other forms of hate propaganda, we believe the emphasis on sexual explicitness, and thus morality, would be removed. Erotica would be less threatened because, unlike the present law, a distinction could be made, based on violence, coercion, and degradation.

More, current social effects research would probably be considered relevant. Freedom of speech rhetoric would not apply, since it is more generally believed that rights are not limitless; they are curtailed when they infringe upon the rights of others. Those elusive "community standards" would also become irrelevant, for what community generally wants to admit to its standard of tolerance for racism. The law would be far better equipped to recognize and deal with the combination of racism and sexism that is often pornography. The present law does not even begin to address the racism of porn.

This is the only ultimate solution to the semantic problem in Canadian criminal law, around pornography. The mere addition to 159(8) of the word "degradation" - as Justice Minister Mark MacGuigan has just proposed - is simplistic and unworkable. If men can argue about whether a porn rape scene constitutes violence, they will debate endlessly about degradation. (In fact, defense witnesses maintained that, since both men and women (in their opinion) were being degraded, it was perfectly acceptable.)

The present wording, in addition to its emphasis on sexual explicitness, results in polarization. It becomes a showdown between "liberalism" and "conservatism" with, again, no room for a feminist analysis. It presents a disturbing dilemma for feminists since most of us wish to be identified with neither

of these male ideologies.

Another serious flaw with the present law is its lack of "teeth." Women want Red Hot Video closed down. Section 159 does not have the capacity to effect any immediate, meaningful change in and of itself. The penalties set out are ridiculously lenient, demonstrating superficial understanding of the seriousness of the problem. As well, if effective enforcement does not exist, any law is meaningless. Improved enforcement should be as much the focus of lobbying efforts as law reform.

The Courts: A Microcosm of Patriarchal Power Relationships

There is a well-known slogan in the abortion rights crusade: "If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament." Variations of such supposition can be applied to the battle against misogynist violence: If men got raped, rape would become a capital offense; or if men experienced pornography the way women do; hate propaganda laws would be enacted faster than you can say "misandry"; "freedom of speech" rhetoric would be dismissed, as the ravings of "fanatics"; and men would receive prompt, adequate compensation through the courts.

As it was, the masculinist values of the court room created a forum whereby outrageously fallacious and/or sexist arguments could be advanced - legitimized and lent credibility by association with the power and dignity of the surroundings. The defense used every conceivable tactic to argue the "legitimacy" of porn and the social acceptability of sex exploitation. This resulted in a quasi-circus atmosphere, of which all but WAP members seemed unaware.

Here are some of the more phenomenal leaps of logic, sexist assumptions, distortions, and untruths we had to silently stomach:

-The defense cited mainstream media interviews with porn star Marilyn Chambers as proof of the legitimacy of porn (seemingly unmindful of the media inclination to dwell on controversy and sensationalism to sell papers).

-Defense witnesses described the rape and torture scenes in the tapes as "parody" and "satire", "done for humorous effect", with "no apparent ill will." Walsh described the tapes as having a "sweet innocence" and labelled porn a legitimate "genre."

-Both witnesses described a scene of vaginal penetration with a fist (Candy-stripers) as a "circus stunt" or "sexual gymnastics", with the woman's "obvious consent". (The lyrics of the background song are: "It hurts. Feel the Pain. Going deeper inside of me. Can't escape the feeling of misery.")

It is our own visceral, gut reaction to such scenes which tells us, as women, that we are witnessing abuse and degradation, not simple "gymnastics". That these men were so detached from female reality horrifies and sickens.

-Walsh - referring to the rape scene in "The Filthy Rich" - stated that, since men performed oral sex on the woman prior to raping her, this showed an attempt to "satisfy her"; thus she really had control, and this "softened" the rape. This statement betrayed the most amazing ignorance of female sexuality most of us had ever seen.

-Not all the offensive statements, however, came from the defense. During a break in the screening of the tapes, the Sheriff's Deputy got into the spirit of things, by parading through the corridors with a hand-lettered sign that read, "\$6.00 A SEAT", joking and bantering with co-workers.

In conclusion, we have for some time harboured serious reservations about the recommendation some feminists have advanced to simply add the word "degradation" to Sect. 159. After experiencing the trial, we are firmly convinced this is no solution, and that the energies of the anti-porn movement should be directed toward hate propaganda legislation. We should not further encumber an already antiquated law. We fear that - as with rape laws previously - powerful feminist lobbying groups and high-profile individuals are not receiving enough grassroots input before acting.

WAP, more than any anti-porn group we are aware of, has had first-hand experience with the legal route, both through Victoria's short-lived by-law and, more recently, the Red Hot trial. We have gained many insights from the experience of monitoring the trial, many of which we have shared here. We think our observations are important and we want to share them, and receive feedback.

We realize feminists can, and will, differ on strategy, but it is essential we begin to get together to explore these differences in more depth.

By Women Against Pornography, From Kinesis, July/August 1983

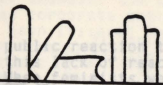
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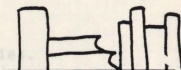
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RESOURCES



RECENT ACQUISITIONS

FEMINIST RESOURCES:

BROADSIDE (Aug/Sep)
WOMAN TODAY (Jul/Aug)
NORTH SHORE WOMEN (Sep)
ONTARIO NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (Aug)
South Surrey/White Rock WOMEN's
PLACE ASSOCIATION (Aug)

NON-FEMINIST RESOURCES:

Women's Office Newsletter (Summer/Fall)
WOMEN OF EUROPE (Mar/Apr)
RESPONSE to violence in the family
and sexual assault (Jul/Aug)
Canadian Ecumenical News (Sep/Oct)
Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence
of the Special Committee on
PENSION REFORM

PRIORITIES (Aug)
ACTION (Sep)
KINESIS (Sep)
CCCA Newsletter (Sep)

DIVORCE GUIDE for British Columbia
LABOUR RESEARCH BULLETIN (Jul and Aug)
Women's Programme Resource Bulletin
(Sec of State)

Vis-a-Vis v.1#1 Summer 1983

Newsletter of the National Clearinghouse
on Family Violence/Health and Welfare
Canada





STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION GROUP
AND
UVIC. WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE
CONFERENCE



Women and the Changing Family

October 28 and 29 MacLaurin Building, University of Victoria

FRIDAY EVENING: CONCERT (8 p.m.) featuring *Louise Rose*

SATURDAY ALL DAY: KEYNOTE ADDRESS (9 a.m.) with *Darlene Margari*

WORKSHOPS (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)

CLOSING SESSION (4 p.m.) with *Josephine (Aynne O'Connor) Adams*

WINE AND CHEESE (5 p.m.) reception for up-island women

WORKSHOPS

Choose 2 from Group A and choose 1 from Group B (registration includes 3 workshops). Group A are listed below; Group B is on the reverse side.

GROUP A: 10:30-12:00 and 2:30-4:00

1. STAYING HOME TO RAISE CHILDREN: *Diana Butler*

Approaching a traditional role in non-traditional ways, weighing the balances of bonding with children, loss of work skills, community involvement, isolation, day-care. Is there a feminist perspective?

2. COPING STRATEGIES FOR THE SINGLE PARENT: *Beatrice Keizers*

No money. No help. No time. How do you handle the burden of being a parent on your own? Are there advantages? This workshop will look at positive, practical ways to make your life more manageable.

3. GROWING UP WITH THE ABSURD: CHILDREN'S FEARS OF NUCLEAR WAR AND HOW WE CAN HELP THEM: *Nora Lupton and Denise Jesshope*

Violence and aggression, threat of the Bomb, a world without a future. How can we help our children cope? A workshop on establishing the acceptance by our children of peace as a value.

4. CHOOSING CHANGE AND COPING WITH STRESS: *Susan Nikum* (prev. Stein)

All change, positive and negative brings stress. What techniques and structures can we use to smooth our transitions? Can we ease family resistances? What are the costs of choosing not to change?

5. THE EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON THE FAMILY: *Dorothy Livingston*

No money, down-scaling goals and lifestyles - unemployed kids back home - parents out of work - husbands not working while wife works. A discussion of pitfalls and coping skills.

6. TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES: Panel chaired by *Susan Moger*

A holistic, positive approach to health including nutrition, exercise, massage and self help.

7. SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE FAMILY: *Joy Illington*

Cutbacks effect all of us. A look at what has happened in British Columbia since the July budget. Given these facts, let's develop strategies to preserve our community supports.

8. BUILDING EXTENDED "FAMILIES" OF LONG TERM FRIENDSHIPS: *Susan Slatkoff*

The traditional extended family has disappeared; modern, nuclear families are statistically short-term; the isolation of functioning only as a couple often spells the death of a relationship. This workshop discusses the importance of building emotional networks by nurturing friendships.

9. FAMILY LAW: *Gwen Brodsky*

What are the facts on marriage, divorce and property in B.C. today? A discussion also of the Family and Child Relations Acts and contracts to cover common-law, same sex, separate residence and communal relationships.

GROUP B: 12:30-2:00

10. INCEST: Linda Halliday
Naming the unspeakable, the facts, the figures, the myths, the hope.
How Sexual Abuse Victims Anonymous is changing the picture.
11. NON-SEXIST PARENTING: Christina Johnson-Dean
Practical ways that parents can encourage boys and girls to develop
non-sexist attitudes toward life, themselves and each other.
12. TO HAVE OR NOT TO HAVE: THE CHOICE ABOUT CHILDREN: Alice Albert and
Catherine Winter
Looking at the question from all sides, two women, each having made a
different decision, explore the pros and cons, the variables and the
ramifications of each alternative.
13. PAY FOR HOME MAKERS: Josephine Adams
A revolutionary idea or a sop to tradition? The feminists of Canada
are divided. What's your opinion?
14. CARE OF DEPENDANTS: Elizabeth Hamlet
Who attends the ill, the handicapped and the elderly? Why? What
supports are available to the caregiver? A look at community and
at-home responsibility.
15. ECONOMIC STRUCTURES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON FAMILIES: Milnor Alexander
and Stella Lord
Are our families governed by the structure of our society? How does the
structure of our economy affect families? What strategies will help
change the future?
16. INNOVATIVE CUSTODIAL ARRANGEMENTS: Jocelyn Gifford, Trudi Brown, Lynne Shields
Keeping the family together while living apart. What is best for the
youngsters? What is best for mum and dad? Will it work? Is it
worth it? A discussion of co-parenting alternatives.
17. LESBIAN FAMILIES: Jessie Mead and Jane Perks
The focus will be on the unique experience of lesbian households in the
society, the school (with children) and in the neighbourhood. At
home what are the dynamics of relationships. In the women's community
what are the structures, formal and informal, available to lesbians.
18. WIFE BATTERING: Sylvia McMechan and Transition House Board Members
A look at our local situation, the function of Victoria Transition
House and the recent parliamentary Report on Violence in the Family:
Wife Battering.
19. COMBINING PAID WORK AND THE FAMILY: Lynn MacFarlane
Two full-time jobs? This workshop will look at our assumptions about
labour, money and roles. A practical approach to changing attitudes
and dealing with child care, time management, sharing responsibility
with all family members, community supports, lifestyle. For one
or two parent families.

-----tear off and send in-----

MAIL YOUR REGISTRATION BY OCTOBER 15
IF YOU WISH DAYCARE, LUNCH, BILLETING
AND/OR CONCERT TICKET.

Concert.....\$ 8.00
Lunch (optional).....\$ 3.00
Workshops.....\$12.00
(bursaries available)

check if billeting required _____
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number of children _____ ages _____

WORKSHOP CHOICES

Group A: (Choose 2 and 1 alternate) _____

Group B: (Choose 1 and 1 alternate) _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

* REGISTER IN PERSON - Friday evening
7-8 p.m. or Saturday morning 8-9 a.m.

PREFERENCE GIVEN TO PRE-REGISTRANTS

MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO:
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MAIL TO: Box 6296 Stn. C
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Membership Form

Name: _____

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Membership is \$10⁰⁰ per year due March 8.
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