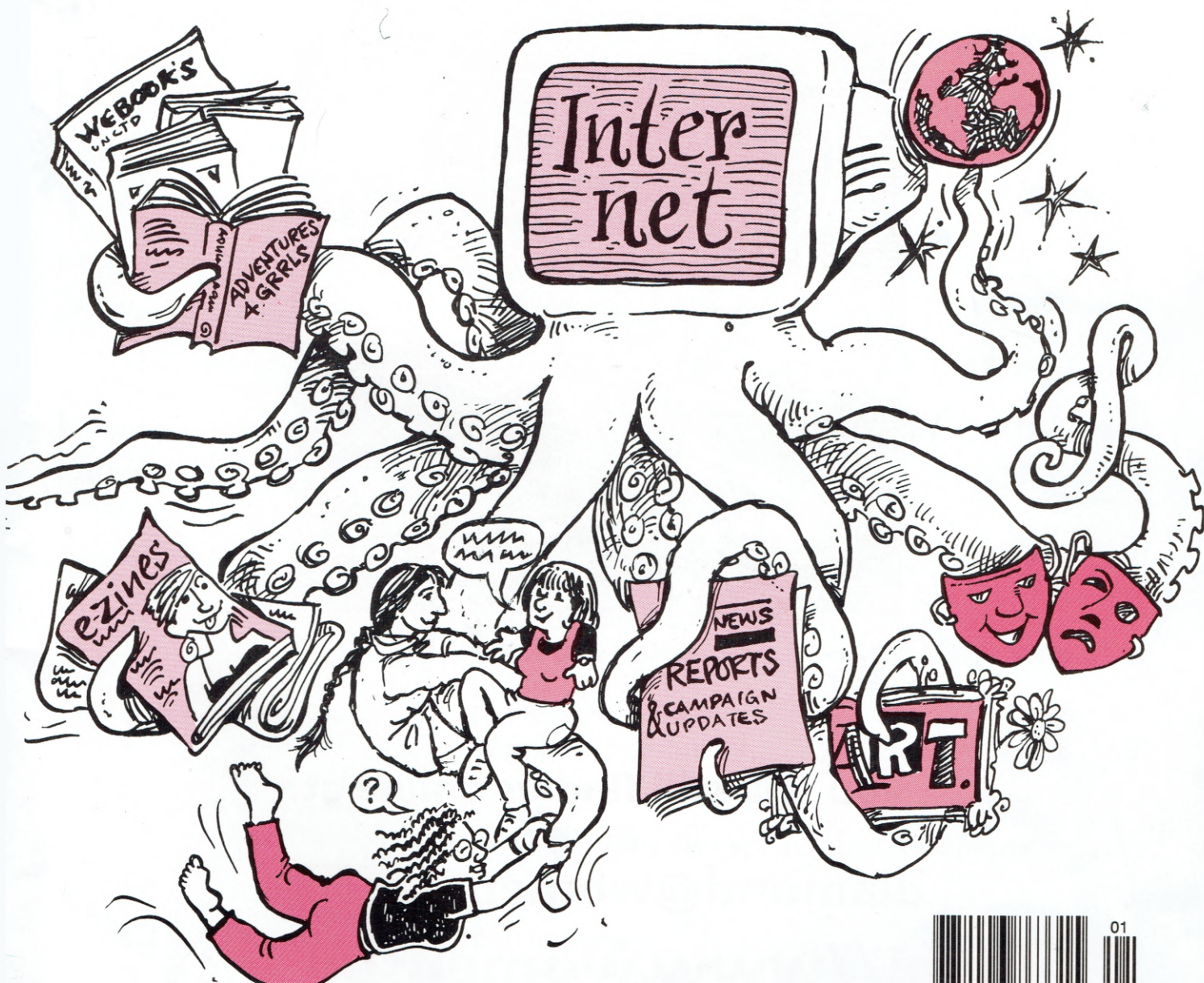


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Women's space

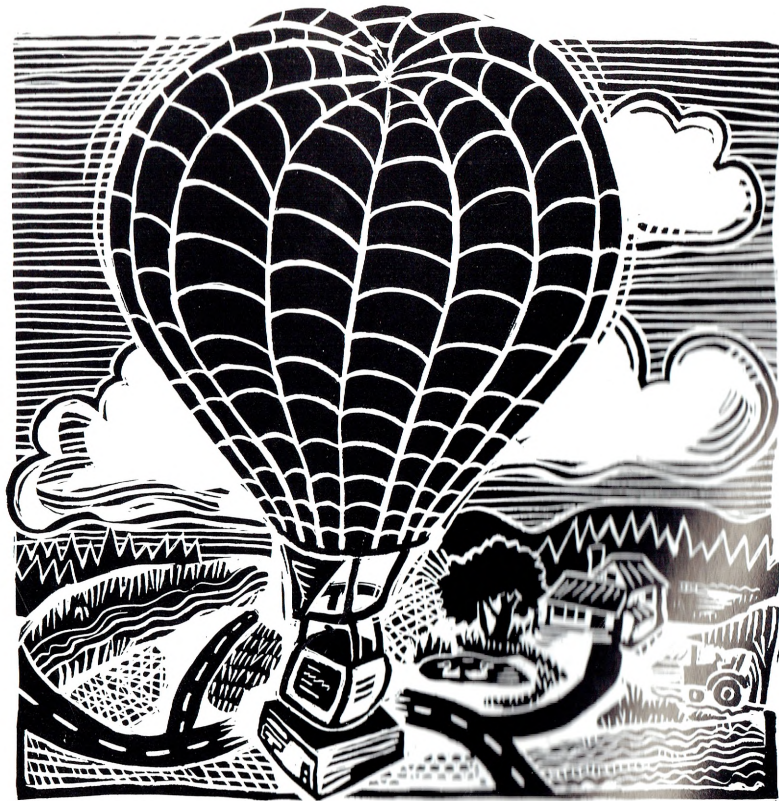


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Women'space aims to promote
accessibility to the Internet, its
tools, information and resources;
enhance the effectiveness of
women's organizing through
national and global connections;
bring global online resources to
local community actions; support
the exchange of ideas and
experiences amongst women.

Women'space welcomes articles
which promote equality.

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ONLINE ANTI-POVERTY ORGANIZING AND RESOURCES

by Penny Goldsmith and Sherrie Tingley

Public access sites are springing up in libraries, women's centres, community organizations, and skills centres. Women are sharing computers and sharing their knowledge about how to use them. Slowly, an online common space is beginning to surface which is not about high tech bells and whistles, consumer advertising, hate mongering or pornography. Grassroots community organizations are beginning to realize the importance of online communication and resources.

Projects such as PovNet in British Columbia, Mothers Against Poverty in Toronto, the Kitchener-Waterloo Chapter of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty and the Ontario Workfare Watch listserver workfare listserv are only a few examples of online anti-poverty work.

This article will provide you with a list of internet sites and organizing tools to get you started if you are interested in exploring anti-poverty resources online. Most of the URLs are Canadian, but several American sites that are very good organizing tools have also been included. If you know of other sites, or have stories about other online organizing stories, send them in to Women'space. Let's keep the momentum building!

PovNet

<http://www.web.net/povnet>

PovNet is a project set up in British Columbia to connect anti-poverty advocates who are doing case work around the province in a closed discussion group. It also houses a public web site, where general information about poverty issues are highlighted and links to other anti-poverty resources (including many of those listed below) can be found.

Charter Committee on Poverty Issues

<http://www.web.net/ccpi/>

"Bringing together low-income activists and poverty law advocates to ensure that poor people are able to make more effective use of their rights". The Coalition does legal research on subjects of concern to poor people, litigation on behalf of poor people, and advocacy for the respect and enforcement of international human rights law, particularly social and economic rights. The CCPI site also has background on Canada's UN Review of this fall.

Real Change

<http://www.realchangenews.org/>

Seattle -based anti-poverty site; includes articles from "Real Change: homeless newspaper past and present, movies, Hobson's Choice (an online poverty game), Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project, Homeless Speakers Bureau, StreetLife Gallery, StreetWrites.

National Anti-Poverty Organization

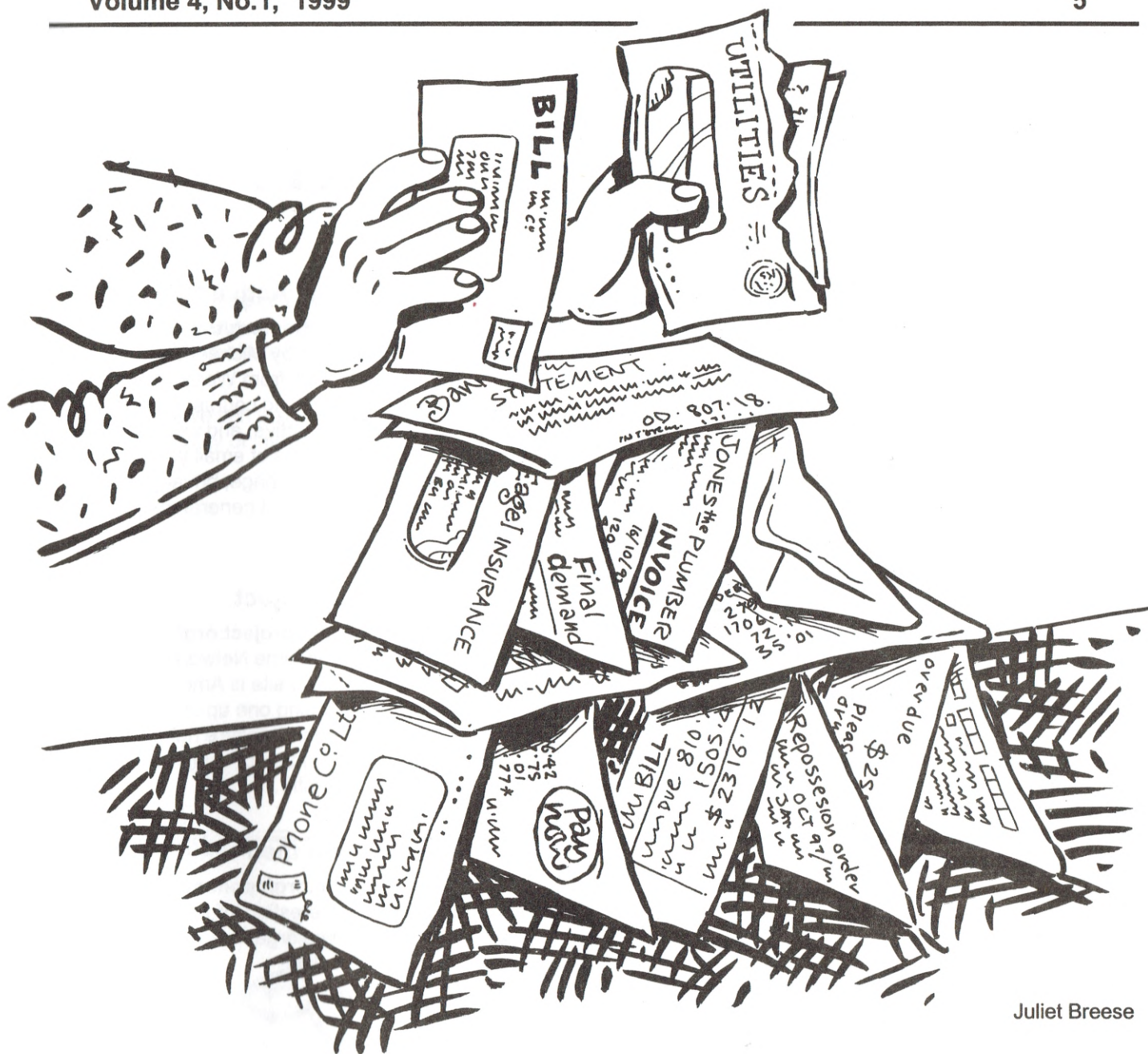
<http://www.napo-onap.ca/>

"A non-governmental, non-partisan advocacy organization of low income Canadians and others concerned about issues affecting poor people." Their web page includes a quiz about poverty, NAPO research projects, and their newsletter.

Canadian Council on Social Development

<http://www.ccsd.ca/>

"The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) is a national, self-sustaining, not-for-profit organization. Since 1920, the Council has been advancing social programs and policies to serve children, families and communities—programs that are central to the well-being of our society." The site is a gold mine for up-to-date statistics on poverty.



Juliet Breese

BC Teachers' Federation Poverty Student Learning Resources

<http://www.bctf.bc.ca/lessonaids/online/la2030.html>

Table of contents includes: Poverty in BC, What is Poverty?, Who Are the Poor?, Social Assistance, Living on a Minimum Wage, Blaming the Victim, TheGap Between the Rich and the Poor, Food Banks, The Global Connection, and a list of links to other anti-poverty sites.

Ontario Coalition Against Poverty

<http://www.web.net/~gccwat/ocap/index.html>

"We are not a charity, nor do we spend all of our time marching with signs and protesting things which will happen anyway. We seek to build a mass movement to change political consciousness and attitudes toward the poor. We will start this by working with the poor to achieve small changes that will benefit them." The web site includes a newsletter and updates on current projects, including a petition on child poverty, a social assistance action line, an "out of the cold" program, and immigration and anti-racism work.

ONLINE ANTI-POVERTY ORGANIZING AND RESOURCES (con't)

Workfare Watch

<http://www.welfarewatch.toronto.on.ca>

"The project's purpose is to monitor and report on the development and implementation of the Ontario Provincial Government's workfare policy. Workfare Watch provides a research-based analysis of provincial workfare policy proposals, program plans and implementation. It is intended to inform discussion on workfare in the community. The purpose of the project is to assure that any welfare-to-work measures undertaken by the provincial government respect the rights and dignity of workers and social assistance recipients." Includes bulletins, bibliographies, news releases, and links to other workfare sites.

Tenants' Rights Action Coalition

<http://www.tenants.bc.ca/>

The Tenants' Rights Action Coalition (TRAC) is a Vancouver-based coalition of groups and individuals working on tenants' rights and housing issues in British Columbia.

ORGANIZING ONLINE

Workfare listserv

<http://www.welfarewatch.toronto.on.ca/wrkfrw/list.html>

OW-Watch-L is intended to be a workspace for activists, welfare recipients, the labour, advocacy and the academic communities to share information and stories about the impact of workfare and welfare reform in their communities. We will also use the on-line discussion to share strategies for coping with the fallout of reform and community mobilizing to effect change. The list is based in Ontario, but advocates from other provinces participate.

The Virtual Activist

<http://www.netaction.org/training>

An online training course by Michael Stern from Children Now and Judi Clark from WomensWork. An interesting and thought-provoking course, the instructors talk about email tools being active, and web tools being passive, the pros and cons of email your local politicians, content of your web page, privacy concerns, internet service providers and general resources available.

LINC Project

<http://www.lincproject.org/>

LINC stands for Low Income Networking and Communications Project. The site is American, but is a really good prototype for setting one up in Canada?links to groups organizing around welfare rights, online listservs, newsletters, calendars of events around the country.

Communications in the Public Interest

<http://www.benton.org/cpphome.html>

Another US site, with interesting information about what's working with income organizing and advocacy online.

Penny Goldsmith is the co-ordinator of PovNet. Sherrie Tingley is an anti-poverty activist who looks after the Workfare Watch website and listserve.

Email: povnet@web.net



MAILING LIST

womenspace

"Using the Internet for Women's Activism"

The **womenspace** mailing list is the place to share our ideas and skills in using the Internet for women's equality. Learn how women are creating women-friendly space online, and developing resources for women. Let's share our knowledge of Internet resources which highlight a diversity of women's experiences on a broad range of issues.

Together we can build up a network of resources to draw on. As new sites become available, we can assess the quality of information made available. Let's share our growing understanding about using this new medium in our work and our lives.

To join the **womenspace** mailing list, send email to:

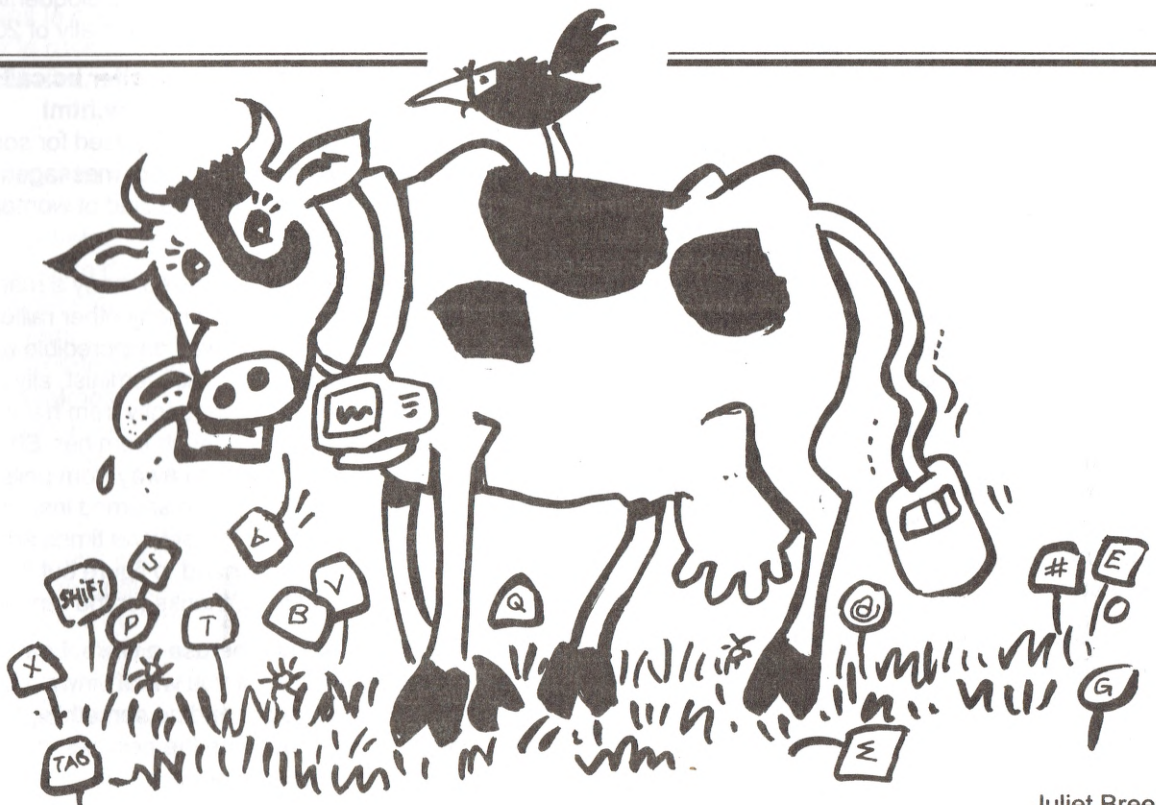
listserv@yorku.ca

Leave the subject line blank. In the body of the message, type:

subscribe womenspace Full Name

where 'full name' is your own name

Thanks to the Distributed Knowledge Project of York University for the womenspace list facilities & support.



Juliet Breese

Bonnie Agnew: Her Web Legacy

by Judy Michaud

Although sites pop up like pixilated posies on the web landscape, one seldom catches a glimpse of the real life person whose dedication and vision helps breathe that site into being. One such person was Bonnie Agnew of the Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter in Vancouver, BC, Canada. And sadly we are recognising her efforts posthumously, for Bonnie died on August 17th at age 51, after a brief and very painful battle with cancer.

In 1997 I had the privilege, as well as the great fun, of working with Bonnie on the web creation of Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter site at:

<http://rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/>

From the very start, Bonnie was very clear about what was desirable even if she didn't know exactly how we could go about doing it. She was very keen on the possibilities available to further women's equality on the Internet. I had little trouble interpreting her vision of the site although getting enough of her time to corroborate my interpretation was another matter. The web site, begun in February, 1997 and ready for viewing by August had to be woven in between all the other work that Bonnie was so intensely involved in. As well as the Internet, the newsletter, "Alliance News", September, 1998 mentions Bonnie's involvement in The Alliance of Feminist Transition Houses of BC; work with Lisa Adams of the National Association of Women and the Law to get legal aid restored; police accountability in Vancouver; Networking (an international campaign to link front line workers); work with First Nations women; work with Kim Pate of Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Society to end jailing of women who had been abused. Her legacy is extensive.

Bonnie was adamant that we should find the right artist and after some time spent searching, was delighted when Juliet Breese of London, England agreed to create the illustrations that portray women and their activities in such a warm and real women-positive manner.

One of the goals for the site was to become a resource of reliable current and historical information on the issues around equality for and violence against women. Articles from the 1970's onward can be found in the

Herstory section:

<http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/Herstory/herstory.html>

and reflect the past through 25 Years Of Activites And Feminist Influences. They include: Profile of the Rapist (1975); Rapist-Jogger (1979); Put 'Rapel' out of Business (1979); Who Will Speak for the Children? (1980); Rape Relief Tours the 'War Zone' (1981); Wanted: Red Hot Video (1982); The Rape Issue in Crisis (1983); The Truth As We Know It (1984); The 'Witchiness' of Women (1985); Sexual Harassment: Examples & Fact Sheet (1993)

The Current section at

<http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/Current/current.html>

includes: Jane Doe Wins against Metro Toronto Police; Fight For Status & Human Rights for First Nations Women in Canada; Bishop O'Connor Diverted; Myths and Realities Of Custody and Access; Fight To Restore Funding To Legal Aid; DNA Evidence and a National DNA Databank.

You can catch a glimpse of this vital, dedicated woman in Bonnie's eulogy, expressed so eloquently by Lee Lakeman, her beloved friend and ally of 20 years at:

http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/Herstory/bonnie_agnew.html

The web site is currently being used for something that Bonnie couldn't have imagined: messages of sympathy, support and testimony to the kind of woman Bonnie was.

Kim writes: "Bonnie organised many a march [Take Back the Night] as well as many other rallies, political actions, et cetera. She was an incredible and extremely principled organizer, activist, feminist, ally and friend. Many of us benefited frequently from her instruction and correction and learned much from her. She led by example and never turned away from personal or political struggles—nothing seemed insurmountable to Bonnie—I remember her several times advising that "we can't give up, we just need to figure out the right strategy here". Right, thanks for the reminder Bonnie!"

Drop by the site and peruse a while. Leave a note (wgacj02@web.net) if you will. If viewing the site inspires you to go out and do something to benefit women, it could become the best part of Bonnie's web legacy. I am sure she would agree.

Net Femmes

<http://www.netfemmes.org>

Actualités, Le calendrier Netfemmes, Appel à l'action, Ressources et recherche, Quoi de neuf sur NetFemmes

The website of the Information Centre on Adult Education and Women's Status (CDEACF) includes Current Events, News, Action, Research and Resources, NetFemmes Network and Communication Tools. An Internet network for women's groups in Québec. NetFemmes addresses the interests of community women's groups, providing information, online workshops, and tools for women to be able to work and take actions collaboratively, and to disseminate information globally.

"Le projet Internet au féminin vise l'implantation d'un réseau télématique pour les groupes de femmes du Québec. Un réseau qui servira à des fins de diffusion d'information, de communication mais également de collaboration, de concertation et de mobilisation.

Internet au féminin a pour objectif d'outiller les groupes de femmes sur le plan des technologies de l'information et des communications mais également de les doter d'une stratégie d'appropriation afin qu'ils puissent participer à la création de leur propre réseau. Les outils développés dans le cadre de ce projet ont pour but d'aider à structurer le réseau des femmes et à décupler les capacités d'actions du mouvement féministe communautaire.

Internet au féminin veut mettre toutes les ressources Internet à la disposition des groupes de femmes. Le site web du projet "NetFemmes" est un site rassembleur qui offre des contenus d'intérêt, une liste de discussions, des formations et des ateliers virtuels permettant aux femmes de s'approprier et d'expérimenter les nouvelles technologies. Autant d'outils grâce auxquels les groupes de femmes pourront collaborer à distance, se concerter, se mobiliser et diffuser des informations à l'échelle planétaire.

Le promoteur du projet, le Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine (CDEACF), ses partenaires, les groupes de femmes qui participent, et l'équipe qui travaillent depuis quelques mois à la réalisation de ce projet soutenu par le Fonds de l'autoroute de l'information (FAI) vous présentent donc le réseau Netfemmes et ses outils qui serviront à renforcer les maillages existants entre les groupes de femmes et à en créer de nouveaux."

new mailing list

Dialogue

We all know our sisters are doing great work. But sometimes it's hard to find detailed information and to share ideas when we each speak a different language. Much online work is being done in a language other than our own. Rosalie Ndejuru and the Centre de documentation en éducation des adultes et la condition féminine (CDEACF), based in Québec, have taken on this issue. From now until the end of January 1999 they will be running a mailing list to look at online ways to cross the language barrier between English and French. Aimed at Canadian women's groups, the list will look at three areas - previous work, the existing difficulties and finding solutions. Participants do not need to speak both languages, in fact being unilingual will add an important perspective. You just have to want to communicate in spite of the language barrier. The moderators will do a weekly summary of discussions in both languages. At time of going to press the list had not yet started, so if you and/or your group want take part in the online discussion email diamond@womenspace.ca and we'll be able to tell you how to subscribe.

Translation Service

There is a free translation service "Babelfish" provided by AltaVista at:
<http://babelfish.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/translate>

Enter the URL of the web page you wish to translate, and indicate which language you wish to use, eg. French to English, or English to French, (or German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese). The translation is literal, so you will get a sense of what is going on but the use of translation software, of course, misses nuances, and does sometimes humorous interpretations of expressions.
Still, a valuable tool.

Teleworking & Telematics

by Ursula Huws

For anyone trying to predict trends in the organisation of work and, more specifically, how these are likely to impact women, the word 'teleworking' (like its close cousin 'telecommuting') is becoming increasingly problematic. Part of the problem stems from the fact that everyone thinks they know what they mean by it, but once you try to define exactly what it is (so you can, for instance, measure how many people are doing it) the concept seems to dissolve into thin air. If you decide that a 'teleworker' or 'telecommuter' is some special kind of worker, then you have to work out how to define such a person: is it simply someone who works from home with a computer and an on-line link? If so, how much time at home or on the computer is needed to qualify? If you're making cakes or candles or teddy-bears at home, and do your tax accounts once a year on your partner's computer, does that make you a teleworker? Or how about if you normally work in an office but occasionally take work home? Or what if you work out of someone else's home (like my next-door neighbour in London who used to do secretarial work one day a week for a disabled man running his own home-based business)? Or how about someone who checks their email compulsively through the night at home but works somewhere

else during the day? As soon as you start investigating it becomes clear that, although many people - probably at least a third of the population in most developed countries - spend at least a part of their working life using the tools of teleworking, there are few who would define themselves primarily in these terms.

It is undeniably the case that the combination of cheap computing technology and high-capacity telecommunications (which is sometimes called telematics) has opened up a bewildering range of new choices in who does what work, where, when and how. It is, however, a big jump to go from there to the assumption that this means that more and more people will be working from their homes in the future. And an even bigger jump to assume that this will necessarily be liberating for women.

Teleworking Patterns

The evidence so far is that the ways in which work get decentralised vary enormously from country to country and region to region, depending on a range of different factors including the prevailing organisational culture, how regulated the labour market is, population density, family structure,

income levels and the availability of infrastructure. In the Anglo-Saxon-dominated cultures of the United States, Canada, the UK and Australia, for instance, home-based teleworking seems fairly widespread, with between five and seven per cent of the working population estimated to be working from home with a telematic link to the employer for at least one day a week in their main job. Factors which contribute to this include societies dominated by nuclear families and single-person households, very low levels of employment protection, leading to high rates of self-employment and temporary or casual work, a relatively loose, egalitarian work culture where people tend to be managed (and often paid) by results, fairly high standards of living, with surplus space in many homes, and relatively cheap telecommunications.

Scandinavia has similar levels of teleworking, but here the working conditions and work culture are rather different and, instead of being largely self-employed as North American and British teleworkers tend to be, those who work from home are more likely to be employees, who are trusted by their employers to work wherever is most convenient for them. In other European countries, especially in the Mediterranean south, there are much lower levels of telematic homeworking, which can be

opportunities and costs of homeworking with telecommunications



Teleworking & Telematics (con't)

attributed to higher telecommunications costs, extended families (meaning that the home is a far-from-private place in which to concentrate) and a more hierarchical work culture with a premium on face-to-face communication. In developing countries, where the costs of telephone calls and computers relative to incomes place them out of the reach for all but the richest, then this form of homeworking is likely to be a non-starter except for the very privileged for many years to come.

This does not, however, mean that telematics is not bringing about radical changes to women's opportunities for work.

Relocating Work Internationally

Relocating work to the home is only one of many options. Telematics makes it possible to shift many other kinds of work to any spot on the globe where conditions are favourable. For nearly two decades, for instance, routine data entry has been sent to the Caribbean, the Philippines or other low-wage regions using a satellite link to retransmit the results to the parent company; in 1996, according to 'The Economist', 20 per cent of US Fortune 500 companies were outsourcing their software development to India. Russia, Bulgaria and other Eastern European countries are also favourite sources of cheap programming. One of the most

rapidly-developing forms of telematic relocation is the call centre, a kind of work which is increasingly being concentrated in certain geographical areas: the declining industrial regions in the North of England, for instance, or New Brunswick in Canada, or Tasmania in Australasia. In Europe (where this form of work is growing by 30% per annum), it is estimated that 15% of call centre work is concentrated in Pan-European call centres, where operators work across national boundaries, with calls automatically routed to an operator speaking the appropriate language for the region where the call originated. This has led to some curious cultural interchanges. For instance the campaign to unionise the UPS call centre in Dublin, Ireland, originated among the German speakers who had been recruited to work there. Used to the formal collective bargaining which exists in Germany where the 'social dialogue' concept prevails, and every workplace has its works council with trade union representation, they were shocked by the lack of consultation with workers under the laxer Irish system.

Call Centres

Call centre work tends to reflect in an exaggerated form the general sexual division of labour. In the low-skill incoming call centres, dealing with such things as the sale of airline tickets, customer enquiries, telephone banking, mail order shopping or directory enquiries, the workers are overwhelmingly young

and female, many on short-term temporary contracts giving them few rights, and with stressful, highly-monitored working conditions. In one UK study, the average survival rate in any given job was around eighteen months. However there are also call centres involving more highly-skilled work, such as software help-lines, or aggressive selling (in so-called 'outgoing' call centres). Here, men predominate. These developments present particular problems for anyone concerned with equal opportunities. The sexual and racial division of labour is not new, of course: for the last quarter-century studies have confirmed that men and women, blacks and whites, are channelled into different types of work horizontally (i.e. in different occupations and industries) vertically (i.e. on different grades, with white men occupying the most senior positions) and contractually (with women, for instance, more likely to be in part-time and temporary employment than men). And in those years a variety of means have been developed to try to challenge this segregation. These include equal pay and discrimination legislation, affirmative action programmes, career acceleration schemes, special training courses for groups to enter types of jobs from which they have been traditionally excluded, anti harassment programmes, workplace childcare facilities and a range of other programmes.

What is new is that a fourth dimension has been added to the problem: space. When men and

women's rights in a changing workspace

women, and different races, are working alongside each other on the same premises, albeit in different occupations, on different grades and under different contracts, there is some hope of winning equality, either legally (for instance by finding a 'male comparator' and taking the employer to court under discrimination legislation) or through collective action (where workers of different sexes and races together develop trade union demands for equality). But what hope is there of sexual equality when, for instance, the women workers are physically segregated from the men, in a different part of the country, a different country or even a different continent?

Where You Live

It is one of the paradoxes of the 'information society' that while the world is apparently shrinking all the time, and distance has never mattered less, where you live now probably has more impact on your career options than at any time in the post-war period. Time was

when if a company was located in your town, it recruited locally for every function, from the highest to the lowest. Executives, secretaries, sales people, professionals technicians, shop-floor operatives while differentiated in many ways were still co-located. When employers have the world to choose from, the tendency is to break the work process down into separate functions and choose the most appropriate location separately for each function, either indirectly, by outsourcing it, or directly, by setting up a remote back office. This leads to a kind of geographical specialisation whereby like attracts like. High-skilled professional work, like research and development, may get sited somewhere like California, where there is a plentiful supply of specialists, but low-skill work, like data entry, may go to Barbados, or call centre work to the North East of England. The result is that if you are an ambitious young female computer science graduate you probably

have very good prospects if you live in Palo Alto. But if you live in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, you'd better start practising how to say 'Hi, my name's Tracey, how can I help you?' And keep that smile in your voice.

Email:

analytica@dial.pipex.com

Ursula Huws has been involved in research and analysis of the changing structure of employment since the 1960s when she became convinced that, in a money-based society, there can be no autonomy and dignity for any individual without economic independence, which is thus a fundamental prerequisite for women's liberation. She is currently an Associate Fellow of the Institute for Employment Studies and the Director of the social and economic research consultancy, Analytica, both in the UK. Details of her publications, and texts of some articles, can be found online at: <http://dspace.dial.pipex.com>.



Family: Sharing in the Creation of Adoption Resources

by Scarlet Pollock

The Internet is a-buzz these days with people connecting for support and information. Websites and mailing lists blossom where there is a need to fill a gap in available resources. There is excitement, empowerment, generosity and appreciation, brainstorming, sharing of stories, development of products and services, and a growth of community across international borders. It's a remarkable phenomenon.

Take Adoption, for example. It will take you weeks to find your way around all the resources that now abound. Three years ago it was difficult to find information online on what seemed to be such a specialised area of family life. Then individuals and groups began to help each other out by sharing what they knew.

Women often say their initial motivation to use the Internet is to keep in touch with family and friends, and in particular, their kids. Perhaps the development of adoption resources is part of this story. Prospective parents, families with adopted children and adoptees are eager to support and learn from each other. They are creating resources to meet their needs throughout the adoption process, while raising their adopted children, and/or bringing together parents and children.

Individuals' websites glow with the photos of their soon-to-be-adopted children, the adoption story they are writing to share with their child as a means of connection and expression of their love and anticipation. Many talk of their plans, the long wait, the travel, family and friends gathering to welcome the new child. They tell of new friends they have made on adoption mailing lists, and resources they have found. Thank you's are extended to those who have paved a way through their Internet efforts to embrace a shared vision of family building.

Many of the families are or become interracial, given the growth in international adoptions. This sets them apart from others, and inevitably seems to result in encounters and comments from which they wish to protect their

children. For some, it may be the first time issues of racism strike home. For others, it is a new form of racism which they will have to address. Mailing lists offer a space and an opportunity to share the pain and the strategies for dealing with difficult situations.

There are initiatives to maintain directories of the orphanages and geographical locations the children come from to help in their children's future needs to know their roots. Adoptive parents connect with each other to learn more about the culture and area where the children were born, to find or develop reading materials, music and toys to share with their children as they grow. There is enthusiasm and generosity and an enormous sense of appreciation for the much needed connection with others in a similar situation. Once their process of adoption is complete, many stay online to help others coming behind them.

Rainbow Kids (RK)

<http://www.rainbowkids.com>

Martha Osborne began the Rainbow Kids site in May of 1996. "It was born out of my frustration at the lack of information readily available to people who want to build their family through adoption. Not just the lack of information, but the incredible amount of conflicting information about who can/cannot adopt. My intention was just to build an information website, but Rainbow Kids has grown to be a larger resource than I had ever imagined....a labor of love." Today Rainbow Kids is an on-line magazine for parents of children adopted internationally. Every month you will find new stories, features, process-updates, and information on adopting children from all over the world. In addition there are links to information on the processes of adoption, otherwise hard-to-find books and music products relevant to families adopting children domestically and internationally. You will find Kim Reber and Martha Osborne's Celebrate the Child Adoption Bookstore at:

<http://www.celebratechild.com>

Adopting.com

Internet Adoption Resources

<http://www.adopting.com/>

is created by Julie Valentine - a single adoptive mom, a performing arts teacher, a web designer, and a volunteer for several adoption related organizations. From her home page you can find links in the area of your interest or stage of the adoption process: including Getting Started, Agencies and Facilitators, Letters to Birthparents, International Adoption by Country, Resources for Special Needs and more.

How do you to get connected with others who share similar adoption issues? Check out Julie's collection of information for more than 40 **Mailing Lists**, as well as Newsgroups, Bulletin Boards and Chat areas, at:

<http://www.adopting.com/mailling.html>

Here you will find lists addressing different aspects of domestic and international adoptions - including lists for adoptees, single parents, adoptions by country and cross-cultural adoption issues, and needs of children.

The National Adoption Center

<http://www.adopt.org/>

"a non-profit organization whose mission is to expand adoption opportunities throughout the United States for children with special needs and those from minority cultures."

Adopt

Assistance Information Support

<http://www.adoption-assist.com/>

This community adoption site was founded by Sandra Lenington, an adoptive mother, who, with her team of mainly volunteers has put together a wide range of assistance information and support Forums. Included here is a Reading Room with personal stories and professional articles, FAQ (frequently-asked questions) on adopting and how to Search for an adoptee/ birthparent, Infertility resources, Surrogacy information, Waiting Children and Waiting Parents, Parenting Resources - connecting willing parents with children in need of homes.

Adoption

<http://www.helping.com/family/ad/ad.html>

Initially a text-only service on Toronto Free-Net, this site has grown to become a Canadian guide to adoption resources. Founded by Robin Hilborn, who keeps the site updated with the latest developments in adoption. "Because the adoption situation changes so rapidly, especially in international adoption, putting the news on the World Wide Web is the fastest way to inform you".

Families with Children from China (FCC)

<http://www.catalog.com/fwcfc/>

"FCC is a nondenominational organization of families who have adopted children from China. The purpose of FCC is provide a network of support for families who've adopted in China and to provide information to prospective parents. The purpose of this site is to consolidate the information that has been put together by the families of FCC, in order make it easier for future parents to consider adopting from China."

Our Chinese Daughters Foundation (OCDF)

<http://indtech.itilstu.edu/~Liedtke/OCDF.html>

is a non-profit funding agency dedicated to supporting single mothers who have adopted daughters from China. Founder - Dr. Jane Liedtke, a single mother with a 5 year old daughter adopted from China. The website includes links to Our Chinese Daughters Foundation Newsletter, Grant Announcement, New American Families: Chinese Daughters and Their Single Mothers (book of personal stories), Chinese Culture Camp and Tour of China, OCDF Listserv, Resources and Information about Adoption from China, Chinese Culture, and Asian-American Organizations.

African Cradle

<http://www.africancradle.com/>

was founded by Amber Stime-Kassa, MSW, an Ethiopian adoptee herself. This is a non-profit adoption organisation which works directly with the Ethiopian government to place children for adoption. Photolisting Of Waiting Children and information on who can adopt, the process, costs and links to further site about Ethiopia.

Family: Sharing in the Creation of Adoption Resources (con't)

The search for an adoptee or birthparent can be a long process. Now there are a variety of support networks, search registries and tips on searching.

Reunion Registry

is offered at

<http://www.adoption.com/reunion/>

where you can register, search the database, read articles in the adoption library, chat and/or join in Bulletin Boards for adoptee support, search tips, reunion stories and discussions of searching for birth relative situations.

Voices of Adoption also have Search Resources:

<http://www.ibar.com/voices/resources/search.htm>

Voices of Adoption, is run by Denise Castellucci. The site also includes a newsletter, stories, events, activism, articles, resources, poetry, books/music/videos, art and more.

For activism on adoptee rights, check out

Bastard Nation

<http://www.bastards.org/>

"an organization dedicated to the equal treatment and dignity of all adopted citizens. We advocate for equal treatment under the law in the form of equal access to our original birth certificates and adoption decrees. We advocate against negative stereotypes of adoption and adopted people. We respect and provide resources for the full spectrum of adoptee experience."

The Adoption Connections Project: Women's Journeys

<http://www.sover.net/~adopt/>

"dedicated to bringing together birth mothers, adopted daughters, adoptive mothers, foster mothers, step mothers and other women and men who find ourselves within non-traditional families as we find ways to break our silence and begin to share our stories."

The Adoption Ring

<http://www.plumsite.com/adoptionring/>

This is a webring of sites on adoption which is run as a public service "for facilitating access to free adoption-related information of a primarily educational nature."

Whether or not you are interested in adoption, take some time to look around these resources. They offer examples of the highly empowering ways in which the Internet is and can be used. A shared vision, mutual generosity, and hope for the future have led to a valuable set of resources and connections, and offered much insight into the issues of adoptive families. Quite an inspiration.

Email: diamond@womenspace.ca

Kids Helping Kids

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/8677/>

"My name is Kaitlin.
I'm from Pennsylvania and I'm 10 years old.
I started this page so I could get
ideas from other kids
on how to help homeless children.
Please send me any ideas you have that
might help homeless kids.
Other kids are counting on us.
I need your help."



FIRST NATIONS ON THE NET

Early onto the Internet scene, First Nations sites have grown and flourished. Here you will find a wealth of educational information, community development, activism, support services, sharing of resources, and innovation.

HEARTS OF THE NATIONS

ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S VOICES... IN THE STUDIO 1997

<http://www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/cd-heart/index-e.html>

The Aboriginal Women's Voices Project brought together Aboriginal women from various Nations, cultures, languages, and musical traditions at Sleeping Buffalo Mountain in Banff, Alberta. "Each woman brought with her one song that was representative of the music place she came from. As a group, the women of Aboriginal Women's Voices created, rehearsed, performed, and recorded eight new songs.

This CD is a result of their journey together."

(Distributed by Sweet Grass Records) The website includes bibliographies, details and audio samples of songs.

PLANET PEACE

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY INTERNET PROJECT

<http://www.planet-peace.org/>

"Planet Peace is run by Indigenous community organizers and activists dedicated to the world-wide distribution of information regarding Indigenous and Environmental grassroots initiatives from around the globe. Its our mission to convey, inform, educate, and promote those principles which are dedicated to the protection and preservation of our cultures, traditional customs and ceremonies."

Here you will find information pertaining to: Defense Of Homelands, Sacred Site Protection, Cultural Preservation, Environmental Justice, AIDS Related Issues, Human Rights Situations, Treaty Obligations, Sovereignty Issues, Prison Issues, Permaculture, Ecological Restoration, Grassroots Activism.

INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

PROTECTING MOTHER EARTH

<http://oraibi.alphacdc.com/ien/>

This site covers Environmental Issues related to:

"EARTH - dumps, logging, mining of...

FIRE - nuclear... AIR - toxic emissions into...

WATER - fishing, dams, oil spills into...

We Speak For Ourselves...The Indigenous Environmental Network is an alliance of grassroots indigenous peoples whose mission is to protect the sacredness of Mother Earth from contamination and exploitation by strengthening maintaining and respecting the traditional teachings and the natural laws....We support basic principles of environmental justice - the rights of people to a clean environment regardless of race, economic position, gender, or national identity."

FIRST NATIONS WEB SITE ON SCHOOLNET

<http://www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/index2-e.html>

Education Resources for schoolkids, teachers and much more. This is a valuable launching point for links to a wide range of websites under the headings: Cultural Resources, Curriculum, Elders Teachings, Health Resource, Business, Legal, Listserv, Nations, News/Journals, Online Schools, Organizations, School Projects, Treaties & Legislation, Youth Resources

THE POWERSOURCE GALLERY

NATIVE AMERICAN ART AND EDUCATION CENTRE

<http://www.powersource.com/powersource/gallery/>

Sue Ellen Strapp's Powersource Gallery is "a collection of Native American artistic symbols portraying powerful people, powerful places and powerful objects."

NATIVEWEB

<http://www.nativeweb.org/>

Includes an extensive Resource Center with a Search Tool, Community Center, Native Technology site and Abya Yala Net (a project of the South and Meso American Indian Rights Center).

"NativeWeb exists to utilize the Internet to educate the public about Indigenous cultures and issue, and to promote communications between Indigenous peoples and organizations supporting their goals and efforts...

Indigenous Peoples have much in common amidst great diversity: spiritual practices celebrating inter-relatedness of all Life on Earth; and historical suffering at the hands of industrialized nations and corporate entities. NativeWeb is concerned with all this: Indigenous literature and art, legal and economic issues, land claims and new ventures in self-determination."

"Our purpose is not to "preserve," in museum fashion, some vestige of the past, but to foster communication among people engaged in the present and looking toward a sustainable future for those yet unborn."

NATIVETECH:

NATIVE AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY & ART

<http://www.nativeweb.org/NativeTech/>

NativeTech, by Tara Prindle, is an educational web site that covers topics of Native American technology: Beadwork, Birds & Feathers, Clay & Pottery, Leather & Clothes, Metalwork, Plants & Trees, Porcupine Quills, Stonework & Tools, and Weaving & Cordage. She offers information on how the materials are used, their history and development. You will also find a collection of Essays & Articles, Food & Recipes, Poetry & Stories, and Contemporary Issues.

"NativeTech is dedicated to disconnecting the term 'primitive' from peoples' perceptions of Native American technology and art... The presentation of NativeTech, made possible through my volunteered efforts and by space provided by NativeWeb, is my way to thank all those individuals who have helped me to learn the little bit that I know. The best way I know to thank a teacher is to use that knowledge to teach someone new. It is my greatest hope that in doing so the future generations will be less ignorant, and better enlightened, than the present. "

MINNESOTA INDIAN WOMEN'S
RESOURCE CENTER

<http://w.nnic.com/miwrc.html>

"The Path to Recovery is Within all Women"

The MIWRC Library includes holdings of over 10,000 books, research papers, articles, pamphlets, periodicals, and audio-visual materials. The Library distributes information and loans materials on areas related to American Indian Women and Chemical Dependency.

The MIWRC website has information on the library and its programs, and links to other websites on Native Women including Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center, Alaska Women's Network, Anna mae Aquash archive, Aboriginal Women and Disabilities, Native view of Pocahontas page, The Native American Women Playwrights Archive, Native American Health Resources on the Internet, and more.

NATIVE AMERICAN CANCER INITIATIVES

[http://www.aclin.org/other/society_culture/
native_american/nac/](http://www.aclin.org/other/society_culture/native_american/nac/)

Native American Breast Cancer Survivor's Network, Cancer related information, programs, resources and materials.

CAREERPLACE

INVESTING IN ABORIGINAL WOMEN

<http://www.careerplace.com/>

Native Women's Association of Canada.

"CareerPlace is the largest demographic database of qualified Aboriginal women seeking employment in Canada. Working with employers, CareerPlace assists Aboriginal women to find, maintain and progress in meaningful careers. At the same time, CareerPlace helps business and government forge stronger ties with Aboriginal communities and fulfil their personnel hiring requirements." Contact: nwac@istar.ca

Mailing List

FIRST NATIONS/FIRST PEOPLES

"Since its inception two years ago, this list has developed into a place where people of many backgrounds and experiences freely exchange information and opinion on the broad topics of interest to the First Nations."

You can request subscription to the First Nations Discussion List by sending a blank email to:
First_Nations-SUBSCRIBE-REQUEST
@home.ease.lsoft.com.

Internet Technology: Merely a Tool?

By Tamara Sayers

Is Internet technology more than simply a 'machine' or 'tool' that performs particular instrumental functions such as email? Or is this too limited a conception of the technology?

Focusing on Internet technology as a tool emphasizes its physical status as an artefact. It is true that the Internet is composed of tangible hardware like computers, cables, telephone lines and satellites. However, the technology also encompasses intangible aspects such as computer software, the knowledge that is needed to operate it as well as the human activities or practices in which it is embedded.²

Conceiving of the Internet as merely a tool is a popular response in Western culture. Many define Internet technology as a tool in order to defend themselves against the experience of the computer as an intimate machine. "In rebellion against feeling 'too much' they develop an attitude towards the computer that insists it is 'just a tool.'"³ Often it is women who respond in this manner. They use this strong reaction to the technology to assert something about themselves 'as women.' In Western society, it is a gendered response, which demonstrates being a woman is opposed to having a relationship with a 'thing' that is impersonal. Therefore, many women approach Internet technology as a tool. It is a means to an end not the goal itself. Their relationship to the technology is instrumental even when they are using it to communicate with others.

Not all women approach Internet technology in this manner. Defined as simply a tool is to strip the technology of its situation in social interaction. Internet

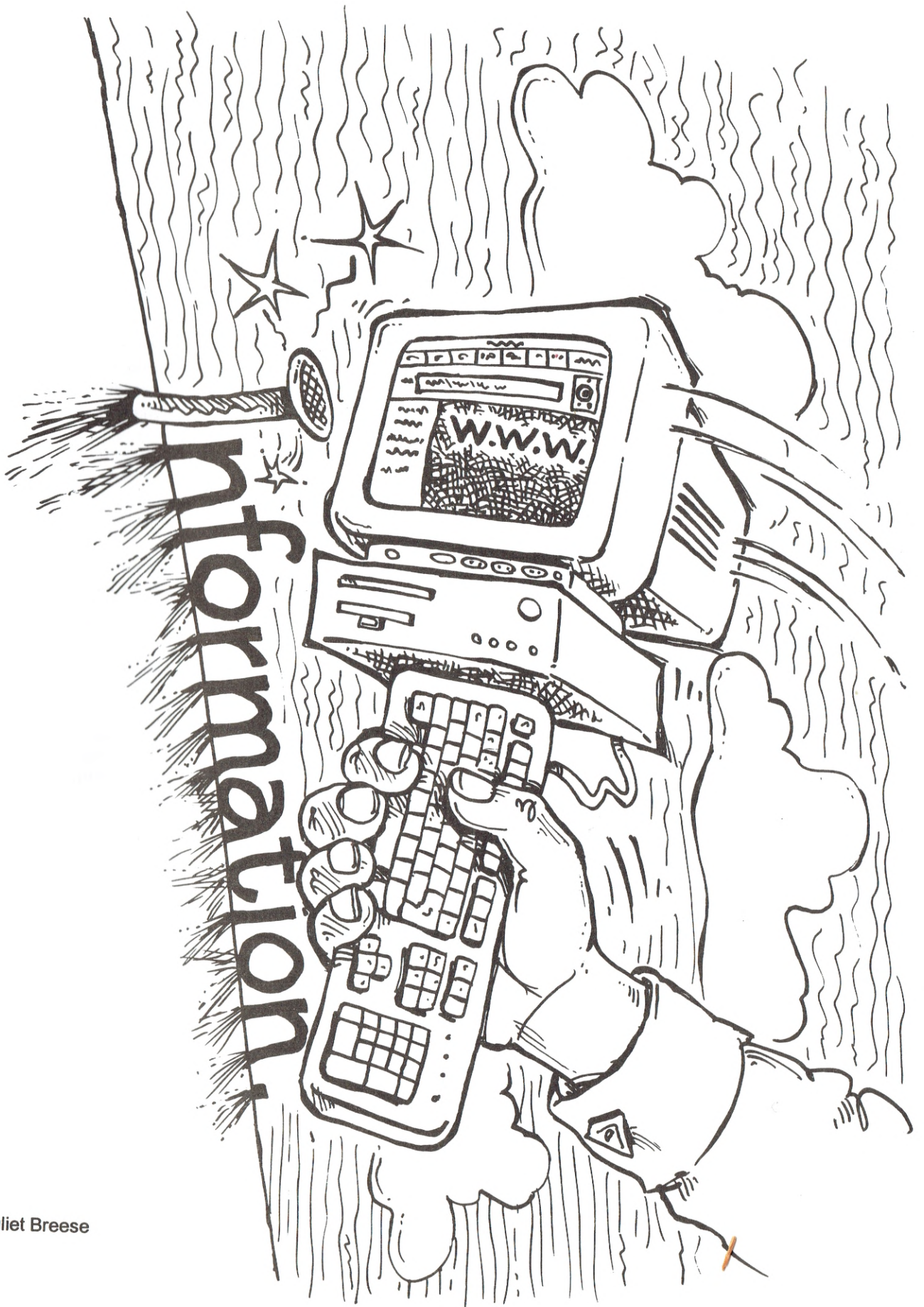
technology is not merely neutral hardware, rather whatever it appears to be lies in our interpretive engagement with it.⁴ Canadian women are using Internet technology in a variety of ways which do not necessarily fall into the traditional gender paradigm of women's interactions with Internet technology. These women have overcome barriers to accessing the knowledge and technique required to operate the technology.

Many Canadian women's groups are using Internet technology for communication (within and between organizations), lobbying, information, education, mobilization and consciousness raising. By appropriating Internet technology for their own use, these cyberfeminists are demystifying the technology and breaking down its association with masculinity which in the past has resulted in women's exclusion from and resistance to the technology. Seeing Internet technology as more than 'just a tool' opens up new and varied ways for women to engage the technology. This leads to the redefinition of women's relationships with the technology, building towards a future where women will relate to and use Internet technology in innovative ways.

**The
Internet:**

**Tool
or
Space
??**

Internet technology is more than its physical components. It also includes the knowledge required to use it and the human practices that surround it. By expanding the definition, technology can also be viewed as a space for social relations. Internet technology is a medium and engine of social relations. The technology not only structures the way in which people communicate socially but it is the space within which these relations occur.⁵ The Internet as a space/place is



Internet Technology: Merely a Tool? (con't)

constructed in social interaction initiated and maintained by individuals and groups. It is socially produced space somewhere between physical space (where the hardware, which composes the network, resides) and mental space. The space of the Internet does not exist anywhere in our physical reality. It doesn't even really exist 'within' the computer or data network. "It is a non-place that is created by people's interaction with technology that 'translates' digital data into a world that can be experienced by human senses."⁶ This world is not physical but is a forum for social relations, which are experienced consensually.

Conceiving of Internet technology as 'space' suggests a broader approach to thinking about the possibilities of the technology. Many Canadian women's groups are using the technology as not only a tool for communication but also as a forum in which to pursue a variety of women's issues and promote women's equality. By occupying the 'space' of the Internet these organizations are bringing women's issues into a 'new' public arena. Airing women's concerns via the Internet and conceiving of women's access to and use of the technology as an equality issue indicates that women's organizations are entering into a 'new' sphere of social and political struggle. This expands the arenas in which women are able to fight for equality. However, some fear that while women's issues are pursued in the 'space' of the Internet, the fight for women's equality in other spheres like the family and workplace will be neglected.

Looking beyond the 'tool' status of Internet technology is important because it offers a broader vision of the potential of the technology. The Internet provides an another space for women to fight for equality. Whether this space will be a catalyst to gaining greater equality in existing private and public spaces of Canadian society or conversely, detract from women's struggles for equality remains to be seen. Overall, Internet technology must be viewed by women as more than merely a tool if its potential for providing a forum in which women can successfully communicate, organize and initiate social change is to be realized.

Tamara Sayers is a recent graduate of the M.A. program in Sociology at Queen's University in Kingston where she attempted to combine feminist sociology with the sociology of technology - two fields that until recently have remained quite separate. She lives in Belleville Ontario with her Golden Retriever, Gabe. She is currently looking for employment.

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¹ This article is based on work done for my Master of Arts thesis entitled "Cyberfeminism in Canada: Women, Women's Organizations, the Women's Movement and Internet Technology." Available online at <http://www3.sympatico.ca/campus/mainpage.htm>

² This three tiered definition of technology as artefact, knowledge and human activities/practices was developed by Mackenzie, D. and J. Wajcman eds. *The Social Shaping of Technology*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985.

³ Turkle, S. "Computational Reticence: Why Women Fear the Intimate Machine." *Technology and Women's Voices: Keeping in Touch*. Ed. C. Kramarae. London: Routledge, 1988.

⁴ Grint K. and S. Woolgar. "On Some Failures of Nerve in Constructivist and Feminist Analyses of Technology." *Science, Technology and Human Values*. Summer 20.3 (1995):286-310.

⁵ Jones, S.G. ed. *Cybersociety: Computer Mediated Communication and Community*. London: Sage. 1995.

⁶ Mizrach, S. "Lost in cyberspace: A Cultural Geography of Cyberspace." 1997. Online. Available: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/seekerl/scholarly/lost-in-cyberspace.html>

BOOK REVIEW

BY JO SUTTON

Cracking the Gender Code: Who Rules the Wired World? by Melanie Stewart Millar
Second Story Press, Toronto, 1998 \$19.95 (Cnd)
\$16.95 (US)

Melanie Stewart Millar's book offers an analysis of the digital world's exploitation and exclusion of women, particularly women of colour. She makes a strong case for looking at the world of "hypermacho" man and digital discourse. Her prime example is her examination of "Wired" magazine. She poses the question: "what is going on here and what does it mean for women?" and explores the relationship between the rise of digital technology, the development of capitalism and the entrenchment of stereotypes of men and women.

Less strong is Millar's discussion of what feminists are doing to counter the sexism and racism of the Internet. Her analysis of online feminism is conflated to what she categorizes as 'liberal feminism' and 'cyberfeminism'. She seems to be unaware of the wide range of feminist online work which takes the Net as one more political battleground, one more set of tools which women are using to promote equality issues. Increasingly feminists of many stripes are engaged in online activism to achieve social change.

Millar perceives "the most dangerous aspect of digital technology is that it is closing the door on widespread debate and political participation" (p.175). This is a counsel of despair I find it hard to accept. To assert that the fight is over is to surrender long before it is necessary, and it does a disservice to all the activists who are working hard to open those doors. She does suggest that we develop a "feminist politics of anticipation", as a way to "anticipate and critically respond to the emerging digital culture" (p.67). More than this, an invitation to a feminist politics of participation would perhaps help us to join forces and develop our strategies to create a more useful technology which serves to empower rather than to exploit.

diamond@womenspace.ca

****New Book****

Wounded Workers: The Politics of Musculoskeletal Injuries

by Penney Kome
University of Toronto Press, Fall 1998
Cloth \$50.00 Paper \$19.95

"Hands hurt after work? Find yourself rubbing your forearms, and asking loved ones to rub your shoulders? Dropping your coffee mug or teacup a lot lately, or figuring out ways to go through doors without using your hands? You might be among the increasing numbers of people who have 'the number one occupational disease of the information age.' And yes, it can get very serious.

While the majority of job-related MSIs occur in manufacturing or retail, a growing number are associated with computer use. Students—as well as middle-aged adults—are reporting MSIs such as tendinitis, hand/wrist nerve problems including carpal tunnel syndrome, and myofascial pain. "

"Wounded Workers maps out the current situation for patients, caregivers, and advocates in Canada and the United States. It reviews current therapies (mainstream and alternative), ergonomics, legislation, litigation, union-management relations, and the trend towards de-compensation. Most MSI books focus on medical self-help. Wounded Workers exposes the hidden policy agendas that face MSI patients and their caregivers, and points to further resources for overcoming the barriers to recovery."

For more information about Wounded Workers, go to:
<http://www.cal.shaw.wave.ca/~komepond/page2.html>

or

http://www.utpress.utoronto.ca/publishing/catalogue/kome_wounded.htm

Also check out Penney's page of links at
<http://www.cal.shaw.wave.ca/~komepond/page4.html>

For Penney's article "SaveOur Hands" which includes web resources on MSIs, in Women'sspace mag, go to:

<http://www.womenspace.ca/vol22b.html>

Menstruation: Protecting Ourselves

by Susanna Eve

Are you still using single-use pads or tampons? Why not choose reusables?

There are many reasons to choose reusables and to forgo the single-use, chlorine bleached paper, pads and tampons while you are menstruating.

Concerned about the health of mother earth, the air we breathe, the water we drink? The process used to bleach wood pulp to create white paper products, including pads and tampons has many undesirable side results. One of the groups of toxic chemicals which is only created through this process is the group of organochlorines, the most "well known" being dioxin. First trees are cut down, then factories produce bleached paper for many things including pads and tampons. The excess chemicals and waste from these factories often ends up in our rivers and lakes. These chemicals are lipophilic, which means that they seek out fat and gather there, for example in fish. The end result is that these poisons end up in our water, our food and our bodies where they are most concentrated in fatty tissue like the breast. Think about putting this kind of chemically treated paper inside your body. For an in depth discussion of these topics and the whole sanitary products industry read *White Wash* by Liz Armstrong and Adrienne Scott (Harper Collins, 1992.)

Let's talk about garbage too. There is no such thing as a disposable item unless it disappears without a trace once it is used up. Tampons clog up sewage treatment plants when they are flushed down the toilet. Single use paper pads and tampons add mounds of garbage to our dumps, there is no such thing as disposable, they have to go somewhere, and don't forget all the packaging. The plastic applicators from many brands of tampons litter our beaches. Sculptures have been made out of these "beach whistles" as they are sometimes called. (You can see some examples in the National Film Board documentary *Under Wraps* - a film which "challenges the cultural myths and taboos that surround menstruation, while tackling health and environmental issues. (1996)").

Are you experiencing health problems such as urinary tract infections, yeast infections etc.? Some women find that switching to cloth pads means that many of these types of problems improve or go away all together. Some cloth pad companies also sell organic cotton pads which may make a difference.

In 1980, women started falling ill with a new disease, menstrually related TSS (Toxic Shock Syndrome). This disease, caused by a staphylococcus bacterial infection, progresses very rapidly and can be fatal. As many as 95% of women who contract TSS are menstruating, and almost 100% are using tampons. Super absorbent tampons, in particular those containing synthetic materials, seem to be particularly to blame.

For those of you are connected, the World Wide Web is an easy place to educate yourself about some of the many problems that single use paper pads and tampons present for women and for mother earth.

To learn more about what is the big deal about tampons and bleached paper pads, visit the following web sites:

S.P.O.T.: The Tampon Health Website

<http://critpath.org/~tracy/spot.html>

Includes articles, alternatives and action pages

Blood Sisters

<http://cug.concordia.ca/~qpirg/bloodsisters/sisters.html>

"born out of a guerilla girl recyclable pad distribution network, we are an ever growing group generating more creative projects to raise awareness surrounding menstrual girl-body politics"
Check out their action page.

For fun visit the

Museum of Menstruation

<http://www.mum.org>

Includes history of menstruation, resources, humor, safety issues (also featured in *Under Wraps*):

If you are looking for information relating to young women and menstruation, including ways of celebrating with them and encouraging the use of reusables look at Tamara Slayton's site, an all around good site about menstrual education and much more:

Womankind

<http://www.wco.com/~wkind/>

Okay, now that you are educated, you have decided that you need to make a change in your menstrual life style and you want to know what is out there in reusable menstrual wear. Many health food stores and environmental stores carry cloth pads and unbleached paper pads and tampons.

There are now quite a few companies/small businesses that sell reusable cloth pads. Pads are made in a variety of fabrics and have different shapes, and sizes. After all, not all women are the same size. Some pads are used with belts, some have velcro wings and some have snaps.

I belong to the **Moonwit Collective**. Moonwit is an acronym for Meeting Our Own Needs With Imagination and Tenacity. We make and sell cloth menstrual pads. Most of our members are women at home with children, who want to do something for Mother Earth and other women. We aim to educate women about menstrual products and menstruation and to encourage women to be **empowered**, healthy and comfortable in their bodies. Since the Collective's creation in 1989, we have always been a dynamic planetary group of people working on our own evolution while creating bridges for others to access their self-empowerment. Please visit our website:

www.chebucto.ns.ca/~aq389/moonwit/

washable pads "lovingly constructed by women for women, from a combination of 100% Cotton Flannelette and Terrycloth"

For other sites that sell cloth menstrual pads visit:

Glad Rags

<http://www.teleport.com/~gladrags/index.com>

"organically-grown cotton pads" Nursing pads, post-partum pads and diapers also available. (US)

Wild Witch Washables

<http://wildwitch.westhost.net/>

"Organic cotton flannel cloth menstrual pads" (US)



Many Moons

<http://www.pacificcoast.net/~manymoos/>

"washable menstrual pads ... made of brushed flannel cotton" (CAN)

For those times when a job, hobby etc.. would makes using cloth pads difficult, consider using the keeper, a reusable rubber cup. To find out more about it visit:

The Keeper

<http://www.keeper.com>

"a natural gum rubber menstrual cap that provides an alternative to tampons and pads". Includes information on how to use and clean the cap.

There are also now available several types of tampons made with either unbleached paper or cotton (sometimes organic cotton), visit:

Terra Femme

<http://www.biobiz.com/terrafemme/>

"...a chlorine-free, cotton tampon developed by women for women" This site, run by Willi Nolan, also discusses toxic shock syndrome, a U.S. class action lawsuit, chlorine-based bleaching, dioxin and women's health, and environmental consequences. (CAN)

Menstruation: Protecting Ourselves (con't)

Organic Essentials

<http://www.organicessentials.com>

Organic Farmers offer "organically grown cotton

...a positive alternative for our health, well-being, and our soil, water and air!" Cotton balls, swabs, tampons, are available. (US)

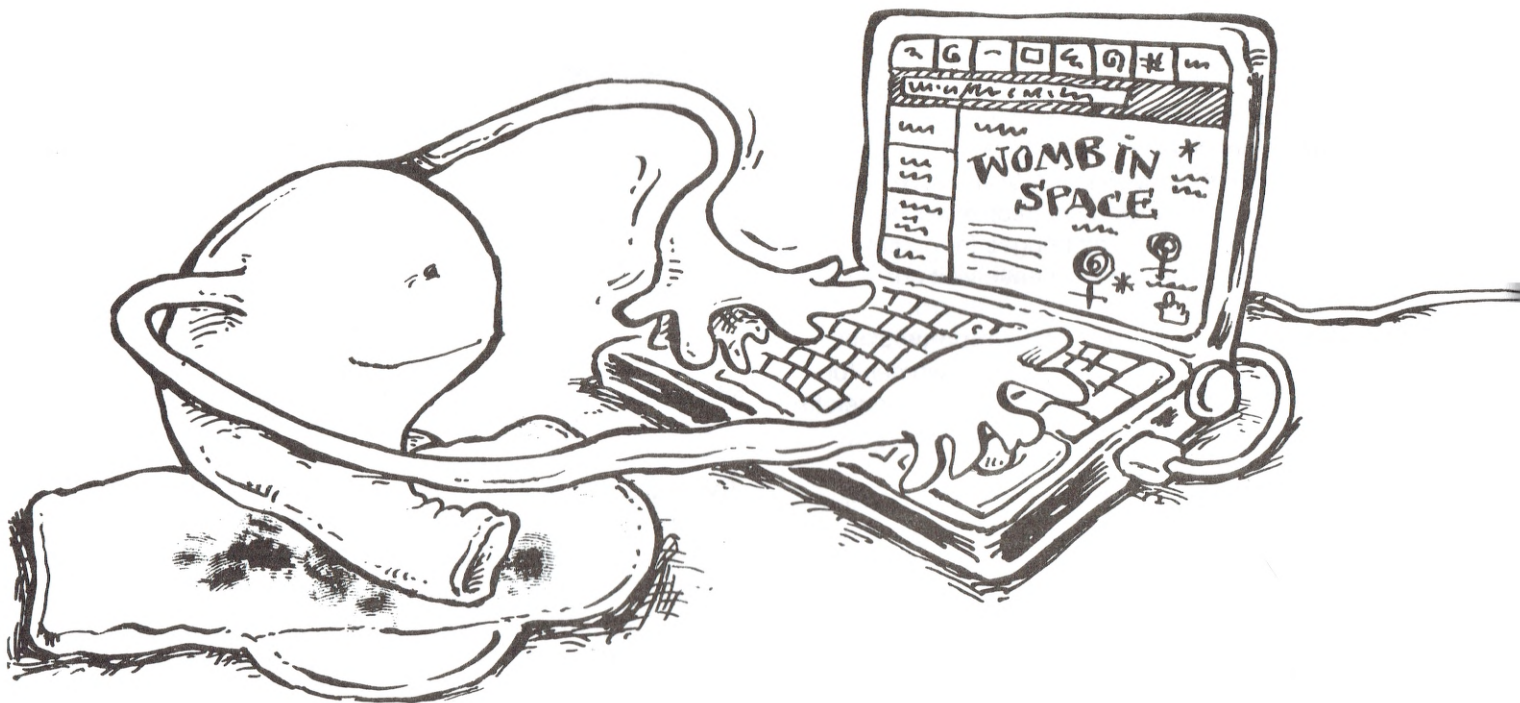
Let's not forget the economic side of all of this either. The sanitary product/feminine hygiene industry is a multimillion dollar booming business. To make it worse, here in Canada the government has decided that paper pads and tampons are not essential items and are therefore taxable. Reusables require an initial cash outlay but they pay for themselves in just a few months/ cycles and they last for years. Here is another way to refuse to pay an unfair tax. If you are really broke and desperate to purchase pads, please contact the moonwit collective and ask about our bleed now and pay later plan.

The sites that I have mentioned are just a sampling of some of what is out there in cyberspace. I personally have not used a paper pad or tampon in almost 8 years. Get informed and choose reusables when you are menstruating.

Please feel free to contact me for further discussion or to get more information about Moonwit's pads or our publication: *The Rag*.

Blessings to you all.

Susanna Eve (aq389@chebucto.ns.ca)



Feminist Archives

Archives are becoming more visible online, with information about their collections, newsletters and the online availability of their historical archives. For example, go to:

The Fawcett Library

London, UK

The National Library of Women

<http://www.lgu.ac.uk/fawcett/main.htm>

Includes Guide to the Fawcett archives and Special Collections, reading lists and newsletter.

"The Fawcett Library exists to document the changing role of women in society, in the past, now and in the future. It seeks to collect materials relating to the changing role of women in society and to make these available to personal and to remote users, however they make contact. It maintains links with other women centred libraries in an informal world wide network."

The Feminist Archive

Bristol, UK

<http://www.femarch.mcmail.com/>

, "houses national and international material including : periodicals, books, pamphlets, photographs, posters, banners, records, stickers, postcards, drawings, clothing, diaries, calendars, cassettes, conference papers, personal letters, and various ephemera. The main aim of the Archive is to collect and preserve feminist material from the 1960's to the present day."

Gerber/Hart Library

Chicago, USA

http://www.gerberhart.org/services/lbg_libraries.html

LesBiGay Libraries & Archives, Virtual Research Collections, Related Library & Education Resources & Organizations

University of Wisconsin System

Women's Studies Librarian

<http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/WomensStudies/progs.htm>

Collection of Archives And Libraries Links

Women's Justice Network

by Robyn Kalda

Over the past several years, Canada has been revising the Divorce Act. The government reached an impasse as it was trying to pass the first set of revisions, and in exchange for her tie-breaking vote, the government granted Senator Anne C. Cools' request for hearings on child custody and access issues.

Early this year, a Committee was set up—co-chaired by Senator Cools—to conduct these hearings. As the Committee's work progressed, it quickly became apparent that they were only interested in hearing one side of the story.

Father's rights groups were sought out, invited to present, and given plenty of time to prepare. Women's groups did not receive the same courtesies, often being given a limited number of timeslots and very short notice.

When women presented to the Committee—which listened attentively and with obvious sympathy to father's rights activists, sometimes giving up their question period to hear more from the men—they were treated with extreme disrespect. Challenged, refuted, and disbelieved by Committee members, women did not feel they were heard.

The Committee is now completing its work and will soon release its report to the Department of Justice and the public. As the Committee's report may lead to further changes to the Divorce Act, which will affect divorcing men and women for years to come, it's important that women's voices be heard and women's concerns be taken into consideration by the government. The Women's Justice Network is a new coalition of women's organizations, women, and men working together to do just this.

We're encouraging people to participate in a fax and letter campaign about the injustices women encountered in the Custody and Access Hearings. Make your voice heard!

There's background information, links, sample letters, and a list of suggested contacts on our website at

<http://www.web.net/wjn/>.

Of course, the coalition welcomes other groups who'd like to get involved. We also have an e-mail list, WJN-ACTION-L, on which this current action is being discussed. To join the list, e-mail wjn@web.net to introduce yourself and your interests.

rkalda@web.net

Antiracism & The Internet

Meanings & Tools

by Linda Szeto

One asks, what are the issues with antiracism work and the current usage of the Internet, the potential as well as the problems? Good questions, difficult responses. With the aid of my notebook and the Internet, I humbly transmit my thoughts on this subject to you; a collage of echoes bouncing off the cliffs and current of my journey in this work.

Many have written, preached and strived on antiracism work. Careers have been made and broken in the name of antiracism. So where are we today? In particular, where am I and where am I going?

As I dig into my past and try to put it on a canvass for better scrutiny, I struggle to make myself visible in that white blank canvass. I toil to put my colour, my features, my history, my heritage back into that canvass; to bring real life into that canvass bleached in the white sea of dominant eurocentric culture and history. This toil is a torturous labour of love, pain, tears and laughter. This agony and ecstasy, for me, is the liberating, empowering process of antiracism.

Process, that wonderful, machiavellian word! Yet, it is the 'process' that gives life and meaning to 'antiracism' work. It is the doing that sparks the flame in the struggle for racial equity, the light and warmth that guide and sustain us in the confines of racism. It is the sword which we use to slice the shackles of racial oppression.

Given the diversity of people and backgrounds in the antiracism movement, it is healthy to have many different swords parrying for racial equity, carving out different pathways to the goal of equity for all. Many mortal hands dancing with many different swords of justice and equity. Some are eloquent, some are merely competent, some are engaging in their naivete and some are dangerous in their self delusions.

A sword, however, only has effect if it is wielded by mortal hands. Whose mortal hands? That is the question. For me, the issue is about whose mortal hands and the ways in which these hands sway the sword in the name of antiracism.

As I survey the roads to liberation and equity, I scan for the song by Audre Lorde who so eloquently sang to us the prime directive, that we can not dismantle the Master's house with the Master's tools. From the dazzling (dis)array of the current mortal hands who weave the swords in the name of antiracism, one does not need to stare very long to see that most of these mortal hands have forgotten if not wilfully ignore this prime directive.

Is this why we are witnessing the entrenchment of the right-wing ideology and agenda? Beginning with the Thatcher, Reagan, Mulroney regimes to NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) to Bob Rae's Social Contract and Mike Harris's Tories in Ontario, we see all the social, political, economic and legal

entitlements we have fought for undermined and systematically attacked. Perhaps this explains the bitter irony in Canada where dominant groups are using Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms to beat back the rights of women, people of colour, Aboriginal Peoples, gays and lesbians, workers and people with disabilities.

Can we win the war against racism if we repeat the processes and structures of the colonizers? Does it serve our goal of equity to follow the eurocentric pattern of heaping our scarce energy and resources on a selected few put forth as noble 'community leaders and activists'? Whose agenda is being served when we knowingly partake in the sound bites of corporate media; our agenda of equity or the corporate agenda to manufacture democracy and consent? Whose future is being empowered when only a selected few are permitted to enter the foyer of the governing elites? Have we moved closer to equity when we imitate the colonizers we want to displace? Will equity be viable when the tools we use belong to those who have used them to subjugate us for centuries?

The 'net' is one of the Master's tool. We can argue convincingly that the net can assist us to communicate and organize in a wink of an eye. True. Nonetheless, can the net communicate without mortal hands or mortal voices to activate and create the content of the communiques?? More poignantly, do we control the

electricity, the servers, the hardware, the software and other resources used to power the Internet? In the aftermath of the ice storm in Quebec last winter, can the net surf the ferocious power unleashed by mother earth better than a hand made drum?

So, how do we dismantle the Master's house without the Master's tools when the Master is still strongly entrenched in its Mastership? Perhaps the first step is to stop searching for the 'Jedi Master' who can slay the Darth Vader of Racism. In our mortal realm, Che Guevara was slain because the Bolivian peasants failed to support and aid him. This is a useful reminder that heroes alone do not win the war for us. Most outcomes of battles are determined by the foot soldiers fighting in the mud and dirt. We are the foot soldiers against racism, whether we want to be or not.

Perhaps it is wiser and more pragmatic to stop separating ourselves from the picture, the sword from the mortal hands that make it dance, and the shaping of equity from its end goal. To compartmentalize the doer, the act, the tool and the meaning is to disengage the heart of antiracism work. We don't need to be heroes. What we need is to open our hearts, minds and bodies to the endless possibilities of saying no to oppression, in the myriad facets of our day to day living.

It is in this arena that the Internet and magazines such as Women'space can be the swords that slice deep into the Master's palms. We can use the net to transmit and share our stories. Not the epics of Luke Skywalker, Diana or Hilary whose lives are maintained and sustained by the focal lens of dream makers. I am talking about the small moments in our daily living when we

manage to maintain our humanity in the face of greed and apathy. The fleeing seconds we take to look into the eyes of the homeless to acknowledge their existence with a smile or our spare change as we pass them on the streets. The agonizing moments when our

We need to open our hearts, minds and bodies to the endless possibilities of saying no to oppression

bosses commend us to jump to their tune, we pause to remember that the deaths of 26 workers in the Westray mines in Nova Scotia might have been prevented if all the bureaucrats did their job within their mandates. The more often we pause, the easier it is to slow the impulse to jump. With practice, we can rekindle our moral courage not to say "yes boss, how high do you want me to jump", instead, we say "boss, before I jump, can we explore other alternatives?"

These small acts will not crumble the Master's house, but if there are sufficient numbers of us doing them consistently, we could slow the consolidation of the Master house. If there are enough of us saying no and walking away from the seduction and comfort of the Master house, we could build our own house, on our own terms and grounds. Furthermore, we need sufficient numbers, a critical mass, to build a sustainable oppositional community of our own. So for those of us who refuse to jump, we have another place to turn to for support, livelihood, and protection when the Master's hand strangle our economic earnings in reprisal. All the che guevaras need their companeros of the Sierra.

Is this attainable? Equity is not some principle robe that we could don on and off. Equity is a state of being that only has meaning in the act of doing. To succeed or to fail are eurocentric categories and ways of knowing. What matters is the process and the path we use to shape equity. We don't need a light sabre to slice away the Master's house but we do need to walk away. We have spent over 500 years trying to take over the Master's house. For all our sweats, tears and blood, we are faced with the likes of Mike Harris, Peppergate and MAI (Multilateral Agreement on Investment) today. It is time to abandon that Master's house.

We could use the Internet and Women'space to search out the pockets of individuals and groups that have already walked away from the Master's house, to bridge the isolation and to share our stories. But we must remember that the net is only a tool. We are the living souls that breath energy into this cybernetic sabre. The viability of the oppositional community we build depends on the ways we weave the swords.

So friends, I extend my sword to you in salute and in invitation, the present is one of struggle, the future is ours.

Linda Szeto is a sociologist currently living in Grand Falls, New Brunswick. She provides consulting services in adult education training and facilitation using the healing arts of taiji, policy analysis and development, strategic planning and action research. Linda is also a mother, an author, and a taiji enthusiast. She can be reached by email: szetol@nb.sympatico.ca or at: Box 1681, Grand Falls, New Brunswick, E3Z 1C9

Surfing the Ethers : Women's Spirituality

by *Connie Tanaka*

Am I one of those new age, goddess worshipping, crystal carriers that have moved into the feminist landscape? You bethcha! And because of it I've endured my share of quizzical looks and polite sarcasm. I am waiting for someone to suggest that I search for a twelve step program that addresses "purging the pagan within". Seriously though, I barely notice the barbs because paganism has had such a profoundly positive effect on my life that I am confident that for me, this is the right choice.

I began a conscious spiritual journey in 1985 while I was searching for some reason to remain alive. In the beginning it came to me through books, lent and gifted from friends and the Motherpeace Tarot cards, which I now read for others on a regular basis. There was no big flash of awareness but as time passed, my attitude began to change and I was enjoying frequent bouts of genuine happiness. Instead of something to prop me up, the woman spirit journey I was on, wove itself into my essence, lifting me towards what I now feel is the very highest expression of my being, that of pure love.

Don't get me wrong! It is a journey indeed, with a destination you move towards. I don't wake up in the morning and dance my way through the day on a cloud of white light and love. And I am basically a very skeptical person who questions almost everything. But I just can't ignore the many coincidences and the outright miracles that now occur in my life. Problems are viewed differently and endorsed as part of my existence. Negative emotions like resentment, fear, guilt, jealousywell... they're not worth holding onto anymore..... My ego no longer demands this nor does it demand that I win.

Staying on a spiritual path for me, is a struggle. I need people and animals and spiritual tools to remind me where I am going and to support me on the way. I make time, short periods each day to focus on the journey. I ask for guidance for the day by choosing a tarot card at random. I focus on it's message here and there throughout my day. I have stones that remind me of the need for emotional, physical, spiritual and mental balance. I say thank you for the love and abundance that surrounds me and I have fat little goddesses all over my house. I am humble that I should be given such luxury, when so many of my fellow human beings are forced to live in hunger, terror and pain.

I also take part in gatherings, retreats and rituals with other woman who are like minded, pagan or not, whenever the opportunity arises. Last year, 25 local women (local being Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada) joined to celebrate the crones in our midst. Five wonderful women were honoured..... and presented with crones crowns, amethysts, poetry and music. They in turn, shared some of their journey. All of them spoke of fear and how it immobilized them for so many years and some even felt that every negative emotion stemmed..... from fear. My friend Anne, who is pagan like me, gifted us this beautiful ritual that made every woman there feel good. At the end of our evening, even though there were only two pagans in the group, we went into the back yard and all of us participated in a spiral dance.....wonderful and empowering.

One night, curious to see if there was anything that supported a woman's spiritual journey on the Net, I typed in "women's spirituality". I was genuinely surprised to find Alta Vista coming up with over 3000 matches. There was everything I could ever have dreamed of finding. Here are just a few.....

The Ladies of Wellesley

<http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/2704/spirit.html>

This web site begins with "It's said that the common conversion experience for a pagan is to find that there is a name for the belief system you have developed". You will find here a list of relevant reading material with a brief review of the subject of each selection. And don't forget to click on "Ask the Oracle" for an on line reading in tarot, I Ching, or Numerology. Lots of fun.

The Goddess Mound Experience

<http://www.goddessmound.com/>

Cristina Biaggi, Ph.D, is an artist, author and lecturer from Palisades, New York, whose particular expertise is on the Goddess centered cultures that flourished in prehistoric times. Dr. Biaggi's main purpose for the site is to locate a home for her Goddess Mound, a "sculpture" and "temple" of the Goddess. There is also information on her book "Habitations of the Great Goddess"

Women-Related Religion/ Spirituality Email Lists

http://www-unix.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/f_rel.html

Joan Korenman's list of online forums includes over 40 women-related email lists that focus on religion or spirituality.

Women's Spirituality Ring

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/1501/wmspring.html>

"The Women's Spirituality Ring is a webring which welcomes women of Jewish, Earth Religions or Pagan, Christian, Moslem, Bahai backgrounds as well as any other traditions. It is primarily feminist, cross-cultural and interfaith in nature".

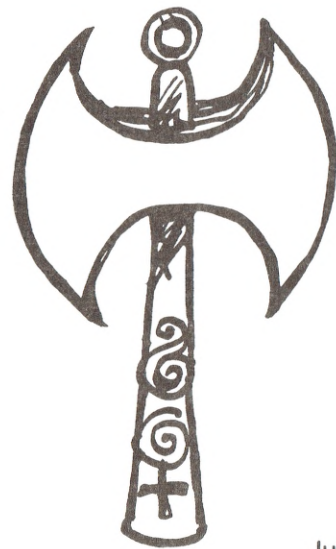
Be prepared to spend a few hours!

Women's Spirituality Book List

<http://www.newvision-psychic.com/bookshelf/womenspirit2.html>

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We're interested in hearing your views on articles that appear in the magazine, and on women and the Internet issues

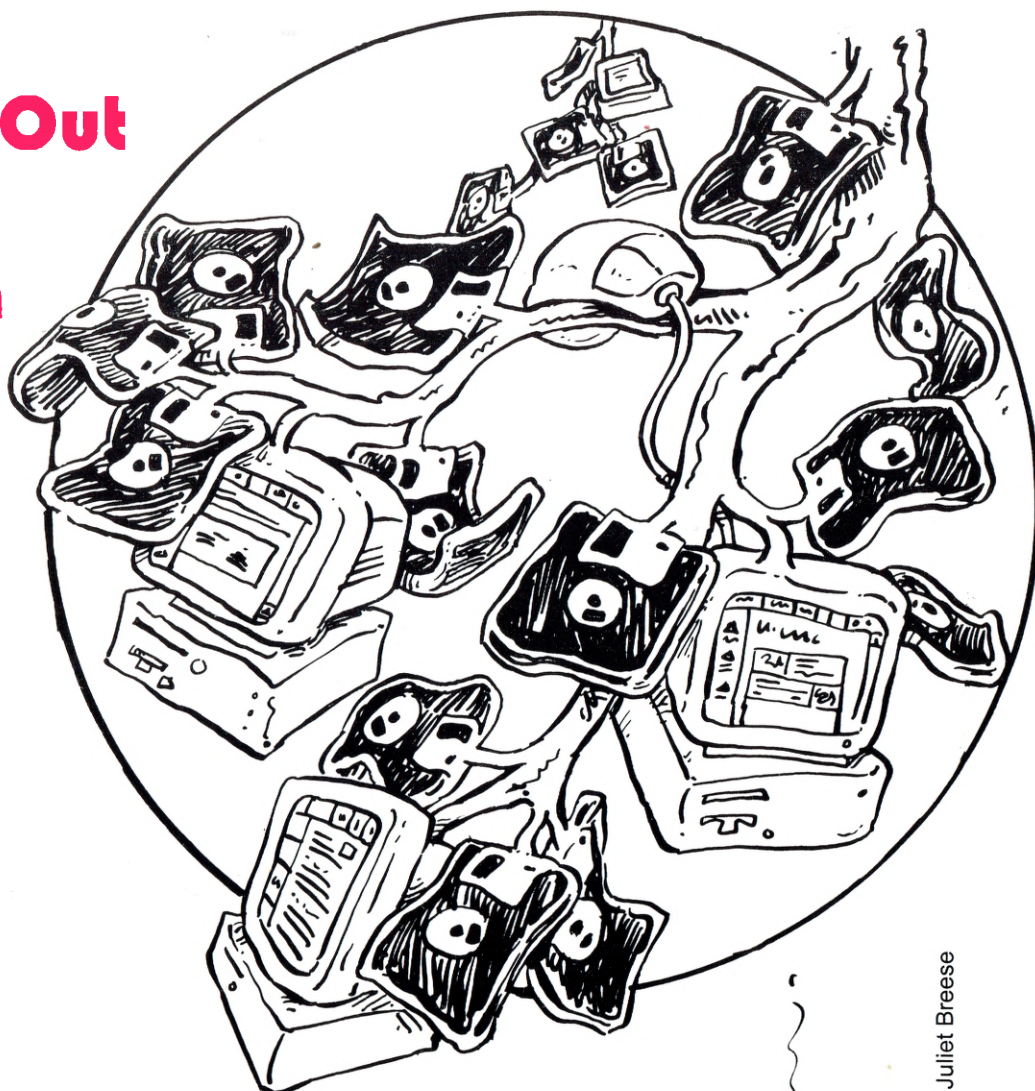
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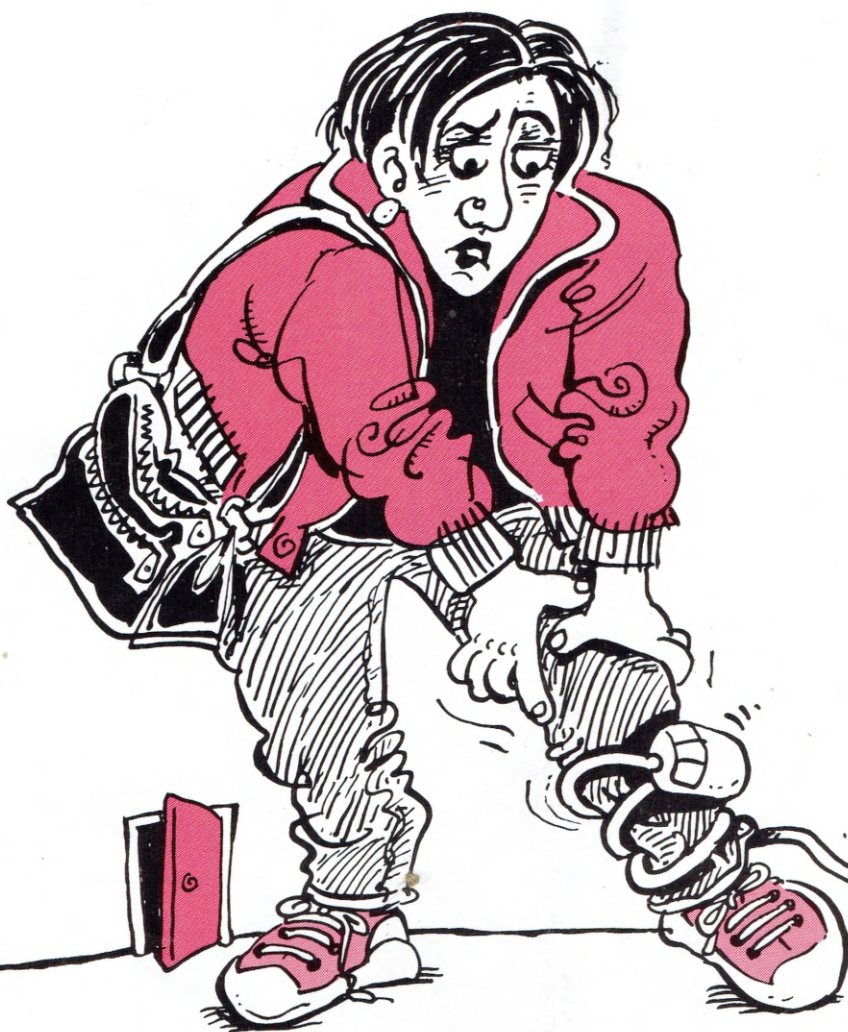
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