

International Women's Day Supplement

PULL-OUT SECTION!

Single and satisfied!

by Caroline Mitchell

Each holiday, I go home to visit my family with a flourish of tales of university life and verbal pictorials of newfound friends and experiences. And each time I step through the door, my grandmother greets me with a hug and yet another interrogation about my future marital plans.

As a student at the tender age of 21, it is easy to explain why I have declined to take the plunge into matrimony. However, for many single women, it is a tiresome chore to explain that marriage is not part of the present picture, and may not be for some time—if it is at all. The realization has yet to come that being single can be a pleasant and rewarding lifestyle for women.

Even in an era that some would call liberated, single women in the 1980s are faced with a barrage of articles in women's magazines which promise them a mate in ten easy steps. WLU sociologist Dr. John Peters notes in his article "The Single Female" that unmarried women are "stereotyped, stigmatized and treated as a minority." While single men are merely called "confirmed bachelors," single women beyond the marrying age (an average of 24 years in Canada) have been labelled spinsters, with all the derogatory meanings the word implies.

Although the word spinster is rarely used today, the stereotypical image has remained to haunt single women. Nevertheless, many women are opting for singlehood as a lifestyle—either deferring marriage or brushing the option aside completely.

The numbers are growing. But who are these women, and what is their lifestyle actually like? Are they happy?

Judging from how difficult it was to contact and then squeeze an interview into their schedules, single women are anything but inactive. Contrary to the impressions some people have of the lonely, unfulfilling life of the single woman, these women lead active, interesting, and—yes—socially

acceptable lives.

The possibility of financial independence has finally enabled many women to make the choice to remain single. Although not all are highly educated, many feel free to pursue careers and education to an extent never before realized by women.

Dr. Josephine Naidoo of Laurier's psychology department has observed that the limitations imposed by poverty have been lifted for many women, giving them a chance to lead independent lives. Naidoo went on to explain that marriage now seems to benefit men more than it does women. Men are given a helpful mate, whereas the woman's potential to lead a productive life is sometimes severely limited.

According to many single women, doing things alone can be more rewarding than having to compromise your own desires for the needs of another. Most women who have remained single well beyond the usual marrying age have no regrets.

Dr. Grace Anderson, a member of Laurier's department of sociology and anthropology, says that remaining single was not a conscious decision but something she just drifted into.



single. Dr. Anderson feels that single females have more freedom "within the limits of means and imagination." She has been able to devote more attention to her career, set her own schedules, and travel more extensively than she might have if she were married. Anderson also feels that she has avoided putting all of her "emotional eggs in one basket."

Other single women believe that they have acquired a better hold on their identity

childless and some opt for single parenthood, but most say they regret missing this part of life. Nevertheless, it is something which they feel they can accept.

Loneliness is a constant threat to any single person. However, while they sometimes feel a lonely pang, most single women believe that being alone does not mean you have to be lonely. Most feel that friends are an important part of their lives, and have a close companion to whom they can turn. Man-woman relationships definitely do exist, but single women agree that marriage is not a cure for loneliness. Happiness depends on the self.

Not all single women are as stable as the ones cited above. Many are lonely, unhappy, poor, and desperately trying to find a man with whom they can spend their lives. Single females who are happy admit that one must be emotionally strong in order to weather emotional storms alone. They also admit that while not actually searching for a mate, marriage is often at the back of their minds—but as an addition to an already full life.

Stereotypes do not change overnight, but improvements can occur with time. People should realize that remaining single, if only for part of a lifetime, is not a jail sentence; it can be a rewarding and full lifestyle.

Many women are opting for singlehood as a lifestyle — either deferring marriage or brushing the option aside completely

Many women agree that they were so busy leading interesting and often challenging lives that the years just slipped by. Some marry later in life, but for others remaining single is a happy alternative. Most women interviewed by *The Cord* said they would not marry simply for the sake of marrying. Lynn, a 22-year-old Laurier student, vocalized the feelings of many women: "Spending my life alone would make a difference, but I won't settle for second best."

There are many advantages to being

by remaining single. Lynn feels that being single gives her a chance to take responsibility for her self and her own life.

Single life, like married life, has its drawbacks. Many unmarried women find that they are excluded from some social functions because they are single. They are also subjected to the questioning of married friends and relatives who ask, "Why isn't a nice girl like you married?"

Childbearing is another issue in the minds of single females. Some prefer to remain

UW-WLU Option

Women's Studies popular

by Laura Upcott

The Women's Study Option, since its introduction in January, 1983, has become increasingly popular among students.

The program is offered jointly by Wilfrid Laurier University and University of Waterloo. Dr. Arlene Guinsburg, coordinator for the Women's Studies Option of WLU, stresses that the success of this "cooperative venture" rests on the fact that "the strengths of one university match perfectly the weaknesses of the other." As a result of this collaboration, students are able to enrol at either university.

This year enrolment tripled to 37 students in Women's Studies at UW. As many as 55 attended at least some classes to hear guest lecturers and view films. Twenty-one students enrolled in the Women's Studies 300 course offered at WLU.

Coordinators at both universities are exceedingly pleased with the turnout. Lindsay Dornay of UW commented that "we're really quite excited. We feel the course is grounded; it's becoming known and the people are interested in attending." Guinsburg added that "we have succeeded beyond our

wildest expectations."

The Women's Studies Option was developed "to meet a major need in society," said Guinsburg. "An enormous transformation" has occurred due to changing attitudes towards women.

The purpose of the program is to sort out such fundamental problems as the difference between women and men, said Guinsburg. Insight into women's roles in history, art, science, sociology and the business world is achieved by studying the course material. The Women's Studies Option, Guinsburg says, "is a significant departure from what has been done in the past."

According to Dornay, the study of women "gives new perspective. Familiar things then become dynamic." She adds that the program is a necessary aspect of modern university programs of study because "it's a complement to many of the traditional methodologies and theories of university disciplines."

Guinsburg and Dornay agree that a knowledge of the issues surrounding women is an asset to many careers. It prepares students for many of the service occupations in the area of social work, like setting

up shelters for battered women or managing daycare centers. It is helpful background for the areas of personnel, counselling, politics, advertising, or law. A good knowledge of the issues surrounding women is important in most areas of the work world, say the coordinators.

Students enrolled in the Women's Studies Option must complete the W.S. 200 and W.S. 300 courses, as well as three core and five elective courses from an approved list. The courses are selected from all areas of the arts and are designed to provide students with a good understanding of various disciplines as well as of women.

Some new courses have been developed in answer to the increasing awareness of the deficiency of research in several areas of study. "We wouldn't need courses in Sociology of Women if a lot of the study and data didn't exclude women," noted Dr. Anne Hall of the WLU Women's Studies program.

The proposal to introduce a Women's Studies Option was brought to the WLU Senate during the summer of 1982, and the Option was introduced last January.

Peoples History...

MARCH 8:
INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY!

Since 1910, International Women's Day has commemorated the struggles of women in the work-place, in the home and in society the world over.

International Women's Day Supplement

Battered women: tragedies of violence

by Birgitta Johnson

On the edge of Kitchener's downtown core in a residential section of town is Anselma House. It is an unpretentious old home, indistinguishable from those on either side of it.

Inside Anselma one encounters the usual household activities. The smell of fresh baking mixes with sounds of laughter while hoards of children run between the playroom and the kitchen, stocking up on milk and cookies to energize their current pasting, cutting and colouring projects. The house seems to have a pulsating vitality all its own.

It is difficult to associate these activities with the function that the house serves within the community. Anselma House is a shelter — a half-way house for women who are the victims of mental and physical abuse.

Maria is a 17-year-old student who is enrolled in the local separate school. On the surface she appears to be like any other young woman. She has a passion for roller-skating, gymnastics and pizza. But when Maria first arrived at Anselma House two-and-a-half months ago, she was a different person; hostile suspicious, and always on the defensive.

Maria had just left a home where she had little other than brutality. There, she was the victim of daily beatings delivered by both her father and her brother for as many years as she can remember. Various concussions and other types of injury have made her a continuous out-patient at the local hospital; the extent of the psychological pain she has suffered

cannot even be estimated. Maria is presently undergoing therapy with a psychologist and feels positive about the progress she is making.

But Maria has some problems that counselling will not cure. She must find a place to live. She cannot remain at Anselma House much longer; the increasing demand for the kind of facilities that Anselma offers and the lack of funding that plagues its successful operation precludes that solution to her

Her boyfriend pleaded with her to forgive him, claiming that his outburst was the result of financial stress and that he would never hurt her again

housing problem. Maria has already over-stayed her allotted time.

At only 17 years of age, then, Maria must struggle to find a suitable home within the means provided to her by welfare. While other young women can anticipate going home to a warm family environment, Maria will have to settle for an empty apartment and whatever meals she can provide for herself. And she will lack the family support that is so vital to a developing teenager.

This is Jayne's fourth visit to Anselma House. The first time she arrived, the 19-year-old virtually fell on

the doorstep, a picture of rags and bruises. Her injuries were serious and she required immediate hospitalization. On this occasion her boyfriend had forced her head through a window and a shard of glass pierced her eye. He has at other times been responsible for concussions, bruises, a sprained ankle, broken toes, a dislocated kneecap and a broken front tooth.

The first time Jayne was beaten she felt shocked and frightened. Her boyfriend pleaded with her to forgive him, claiming that his outburst was the result of financial stress and that he would never hurt her again. Jayne accepted his excuses and ignored her fears; as the beatings increased in frequency and ferocity, she became more intimidated and less capable of pulling herself out of the mire that her life had become. It was a basic instinct for survival that forced her to seek help at Anselma House.

Also residing at Anselma House are Louise and her three children, ranging in age from 18 months to eight years. Louise is a veteran of nine years of marriage to an alcoholic and a drug addict. The children are unaware of the severity of the problem because Louise has struggled frantically to preserve their illusion that they come from a normal home. For the children, then, the move to Anselma House held no logic.

Now Louise is often awakened in the night by the distressing sound of crying in the neighbouring beds. Brian, James and Catherine have never witnessed their father's rushes toward their bedrooms, armed with a knife and a chemically induced intention to murder his children as they sleep. And they have never seen his subsequent remorse that inevitably results in a promise to take his own life.

The experiences of the past nine years have driven Louise to a state of physical and emotional exhaustion. She has wrung herself dry in the care and protection of her children; the challenges she must now face as a single parent are overwhelming. Louise has no job skills, and the children are too young to be left alone. She has no alternative for the present but to apply for welfare, since she must wait at least until the baby is old enough for school before she can consider re-training or taking a blue-collar job.

Both Louise and her husband grew up in homes devoid of love and encouragement. It is her desire to reverse that trend and to bring the cycle of abuse to a halt in the new generation of her family. Louise does not want her own daughter to grow up as starved for affection and as vulnerable as she was when she met her husband.

Unaccustomed to being treated with any kind of affection, Louise had been easily won over by the little that her husband bestowed upon her. In her naive haste to take advantage of her unexpected good fortune, Louise neglected her education in order to get married; now, at 33, she must start over under circumstances more difficult than ever.

The experiences of Maria, Jayne and Louise are representative of the epidemic of spouse-battering that is quickly being revealed as one of Canada's most appalling violent crimes. The statistic that one

Facts on family violence

What wife battering isn't

Family violence is not an uncommon or 'freak' occurrence. Recently there has been much publicity about child abuse, and the police, the courts, and concerned citizens have been quick to rally to the cause. However, there has not been nearly as much attention paid to wife battering.

Unfortunately, wife battering occurs in every neighborhood across Canada: in upper class homes in Vancouver, within working class families in Cape Breton, and in Waterloo. It crosses all economic, geographic, and cultural lines.

Battering is not merely the result of a family 'tiff' that got a bit out of hand. More than 75 per cent of the women surveyed in a British study on battered women stated that the physical abuse was rarely preceded by verbal disagreements.

Nor is battering a one time occurrence. According to one of the staff members at a Montreal shelter for battered women, more than three-quarters of the women they receive have been beaten at least ten times.

On top of physical violence, battered women are subjected to the psychological violence of the taunts and threats by their husbands, and of trying to reach out for help outside the family — help that is often not there for them.

Battered women are more than just a bit 'roughed up'. In a survey of battered women in shelters across Canada, it was found that more than one third of the cases required and received medical treatment. Battered women are slapped, punched, kicked, bound, burned, knifed, and shot.

Why men do it

It is hard not to wonder why men beat the women they supposedly love. If battering is not an uncommon occurrence, there must be some common factor in cases of marital violence that explains the phenomenon.

According to Linda MacLeod of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of women, men's and women's socialization have set the scene for marital violence. She notes four historical themes that have led to beating:

1. men were considered to own their wives
2. women were expected to obey their husbands and conform to the ideal of self-denial (and self-sacrifice)
3. men had complete authority over their wives that was unquestionable within their own home
4. women's place was in the home

Wendy Ayotte, a member of the collective operating Assistance aux femmes, a Montreal transit shelter for battered women and their children, elaborated on this theory.

"It comes down to the patriarchal power in the family. Women have only been persons before the law in the past sixty odd years. A lot of men see violence as

a means of disciplining their wives which, in their minds, is perfectly justified. And it is condoned by society — by relatives, the courts, and the police, who all turn a blind eye to the situation," says Ayotte.

Personal experience seems to confirm this explanation. When asked why she thought her husband beat her, a woman recently out of a Montreal transit shelter for battered women replied, "Society — my husband was taught every horrid thing he did to me from the day he was born."

Men have been raised to assume power and control. They have also been socialized to be aggressive — aggression that has often mistakenly been labelled as 'natural' or 'instinctive'.

According to J.J. Gayford, author of *Battered Wives*, "Pregnancy is the factor that most often precipitates violence in marriage." This supports the theory that men use violence to assert control, and beat their wives when they feel a lack of power.

Pregnancy and women's sexuality are areas where men feel they have little or no control, and to many men, this poses a threat to their power over their wives.

Why women put up with it

Battered women do not get a masochistic thrill out of being beaten. Unfortunately, however, it is not very easy for battered women to pack up and leave after one punch. Their situation, sociological, financial, emotional, and legal, makes escape very difficult, if not impossible.

According to Linda MacLeod, the most important factor that keeps the battered wife with her husband is her isolation.

Says MacLeod: "Our society has been organized around the belief that the home is a private and peaceful domain, and that a woman's role in the home is to preserve privacy and peace. When a woman asks for help because she is being beaten, she challenges this belief and so challenges the very roots of many of our institutions, among them our legal and medical institutions...The result is that the woman is frequently punished by and isolated from the outside world if she ventures into it for help."

A second reason why battered women remain in a violent relationship is the wife's financial dependence on her husband. A woman cannot receive welfare payments as a single mother until she has her own address, and she can not have her own address until she has the financial means to live away from her husband.

Even in middle or upper class homes, where there is no shortage of cash, the wife often has no access to the family funds, and is completely dependent on her husband to pay for her and her children's basic needs.

Thirdly, in spite of the violence that exists in the family, there is often still a lot of love, and that is hard to surrender. Says Ayotte, "A lot of women remain silent hoping that their husbands will change. They don't. Few men seem to even question their behaviour."

Domestic crimes are too often ignored because of the supposed sacredness of the family unit

in ten Canadian women is a victim of abuse is quickly becoming outdated. The number of women who are battered and need help continues to grow at an alarming rate. Each of the 141 women who sought shelter at Anselma House last year has a horror story all her own.

The atmosphere of normality and well-being that the residents of Anselma House generate for themselves and for their children comes from a feeling of desperation bordering on hysteria. It is this variety of "peace" that is bought only at a high price, and that is too brittle to withstand much pressure. The calm may dissolve without warning into a flood of tears and an outpouring of anxiety or even panic.

Now that these women have taken the first terrifying step toward freedom they must learn to deal with life on their own. The hard times do not end when the beatings have ceased. The socialization process has emphasized to these women that failure as a wife — no matter what the reasons — means having failed as a woman. Domestic crimes are too often ignored because of the supposed sacredness of the family unit, and victims are often reluctant to expose the disorder of their private lives to the cruel judgment of the community. In the face of this type of adversity and with the prospect of huge financial stress, it is not hard to understand that many of these women will return time and time again to the homes that they once fled in terror.

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Tae Kwon-Do, Wen-Do

Martial arts: a defense for women

by Amanda Bramall

The ideal female candidate for a self defense class is a 'jock' who looks like she could play quarterback for a football team or centre for a basketball team, who enjoys getting bruises and being hurt. Right? Wrong!

Although these characteristics may indeed classify a woman who enjoys self defense classes, she is not the best candidate. The women who appear the most defenseless are apt to be those who will ultimately have to use self defense techniques;

attackers, unfortunately, don't have the courtesy to pick on people their own size.

There are several myths women associate with self defense which have arisen out of a lack of understanding about self defense. As the name suggests, it is a means by which one can protect oneself, but it offers much more than this.

Chung W. Oh, Master of Tae Kwon-Do, believes that physical fitness is foremost—"the self defense techniques, self control, and finally indomitable spirit." Chung Oh isn't the only one who believes in

the importance of fitness. Each self defense school in Kitchener advertises "physical fitness" in bold type on their placards.

Almost as important as physical fitness is self confidence. Your own abilities to defend yourself increase your confidence. "It doesn't matter

course that progresses at a slow, continuous rate; they'd rather learn something in a "few short lessons."

Wen-Do—"the woman's way"—is a system of self defense for women developed in Canada that provides an alternative for these women.

A typical Wen-Do course

self defense for women, says the Wen-Do course should be called an "awareness course."

What is learned in Wen-Do will not be remembered three years later because of the speed of the course, he says. The martial arts' constant repetition and firm and disciplined training becomes imbedded in the unconscious and comes to mind automatically when needed, says Butcher.

For those women who don't have the time but strongly desire to take a self defense or "awareness" course, Wen-Do is a good start. Wen-Do teaches women to be assertive. They learn appropriate responses to varying degrees of dangers, as well as useful techniques in daily situations such as discouraging an over-affectionate dancing partner.

In half of all rapes the victim knows the rapist; 45 per cent of all rapes occur either in the victim's or the attacker's home. Rapists are ordinary men. Better street lighting, staying indoors or carrying mace will not always be sufficient. Women have to make the move towards protecting themselves in a way that they have complete confidence.

As Randy Butcher puts it, "Some defense is better than no defense."

A woman is assaulted in Canada once every eight minutes, but only 10 to 30 per cent of the students taking self defense are women

how small the woman is, she can attack a man once she knows the technique and skill—with this comes confidence," Chung Oh says. The longer you practice the art, the greater the confidence you develop and the further you enhance your self-esteem.

Those women who do take self defense also have their own reasons. Joanne Amatrude, age 18, is a black belt in Tae Kwon-Do at Chung Oh's school. She became interested in the sport at age 12 because of her brother's interests, but says "it has become a release for tension, frustration, stress and excess energy." Amatrude also feels she has gained "a slight edge" to be able to protect herself.

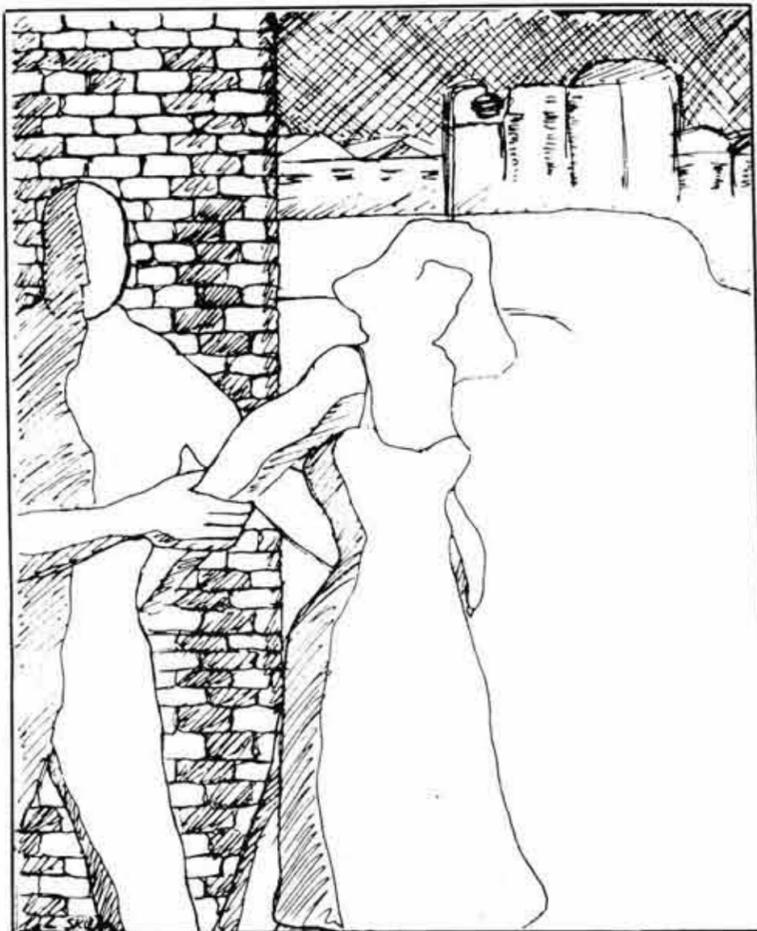
Several other women have joined the school because of friends, boyfriends or husbands. All agree that they really enjoy the sport. Some, who never considered becoming black belts, are now well on their way and look towards the goal with anticipation. "It's a way to become physically fit and yet learn something of great value," says June.

Despite these many positive aspects of self defense and in light of the fact that a woman is assaulted in Canada once every eight minutes, only 10-30 per cent of the students taking self defense are women.

Several women complain that they're not interested in taking a

teaches hard and soft techniques, adapted and refined from the martial arts. Half the time is spent in discussions, building an understanding of how assault situations develop, and preparing psychologically to take appropriate action against an attacker.

But Randy Butcher, manager of Ron Day's Scarlet Dragon Society—a school of self defense in Kitchener—does not advocate Wen-Do. "It gives a false sense of security because any martial art takes time and effort, not just a few short hours," says Butcher. Butcher, also the writer of a soon-to-be-published book on



Rise up for bread and roses

by Barbara Saunders

The last year has been a struggle for many women. Our employment rights and wages are still not satisfactory. Our right to choose if and when to have children, our right to define our sexuality, our right for equal pay of equal value are still areas where we continue to fight for control.

We still face the daily possibility of nuclear annihilation while women in Central America and the Caribbean face the threat of U.S. invasion. Women have stood together over the past year to fight for what is ours. We have supported campaigns for affirmative action quotas, for equal pay, for the legalization of abortion clinics and we've played an important role in the growing movement for peace.

Rise up in 1984. Let us show our strength and our ability to take control of our lives. Women around the world have claimed March 8th as a day of protest and solidarity. We come together to celebrate our victories and show our determination to work for equality, liberation and peace.

History of IWD

International Women's Day occupies a special place in the history of women's and workers' struggles on this continent. It grew from the actions of militant working women struggling for better wages, working conditions and the vote.

It was 1857 when women in the needle trade staged a demonstration in the Lower East Side of New York City to protest poor working conditions and to demand equality for working women. They were angry about indecent wages and a 12-hour working day. When the procession left the poor district in which they lived and worked and moved into the wealthier areas of town, they were dispersed by the police; women were arrested, and some were

trampled when confusion resulted. Three years later, in March of 1860, these women formed their own union.

March 8, 1908

Thousands of women, this time in the garment textile industry, marched once again from the lower east side of New York City. Fifty-one years had passed since the earlier demonstration, but their demands remained the same. In addition they wanted laws against child labour and they wanted the vote.

March 8, 1910

Clara Zetkin, the German socialist champion of women's and workers' rights, proposed that March 8th be set aside each year as International Women's Day, in memory of those first struggles.

Bread and Roses

Our slogan, "Bread and Roses," comes out of the struggles of working women. On January 11, 1912, 14,000 textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts went out on strike for better wages and working conditions. With the cry of "Better to starve fighting than starve working," these women stayed out for nearly three months. Their courage inspired the song that has become the anthem of the women's movement, "Bread and Roses."

Since the rebirth of the women's movement of the 1960s we have reclaimed March 8th as a day of protest, solidarity and celebration. In memory of the plea of those earlier working women for economic security and a better quality of life, we celebrate our ongoing struggle for bread and roses.

The Women's Centre at the University of Waterloo has organized a day of displays, films and speakers at the Campus Centre. The last presentation at 7:30 will be the movie "Women Want" followed by discussion. We will then adjourn for celebrations at the Duke of Wellington dining room at 9:30 p.m. RISE UP!

Safety in doubt

New contraceptive rejected in Canada

by Jackie Kaiser

The contraceptive sponge, a new method of birth control for use by women, is an inexpensive, convenient, over-the-counter method that was introduced to the United States market last July. In Canada, however, the Health Protection branch has rejected the application of the VLI Corporation that manufactures the sponge, and the sponge will not be available in Canada unless they can present more satisfactory evidence.

The Today brand contraceptive is a small, round polyurethane sponge treated with the spermicide nonoxynol-9. The dampened sponge is to be inserted into the vagina before intercourse, and can be left in place for 24 hours. It may be removed using the attached ribbon six hours after intercourse.

"So far, they (VLI) have not been able to provide us with evidence" that would merit the approval of the sponge for the Canadian market, said Jean Battar, spokesperson for the Health Protection branch. The VLI application was rejected last fall, she said.

Although the details and problems of the submission are confidential, Battar noted that use of the sponge has been associated with cases of toxic shock syndrome in recent weeks.

And while the decision to reject VLI's proposal was made well before the link with toxic shock was established, "this more or less backs up our decision," she said.

"I wouldn't want the thing out there," said Battar.

Although the sponge has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, it is acknowledged that two common carcinogens exist in small amounts in the spermicide. The manufacturer has responded to criticism of the sponge's safety by noting that tests have not yet been able to detect the presence of the carcinogens; if they do exist, then they seem to be present at very low levels.

Other doubts about safety include the possibility of cervical irritation with continued use. To date, however, no significant connection between sponge use and irritation has been established by tests.

Controversy has arisen recently about a link with toxic shock syndrome and deformations in babies born to long-time sponge users but more intensive studies in the coming years will be necessary before a causal relationship can be established.

According to the manufacturer's advertisements, the effectiveness of the Today sponge in preventing pregnancy is "in the same range as the diaphragm." One clinical study reported in the January issue of Ms. magazine has, however, raised doubts about this claim.

The study, done in the United Kingdom and Canada, indicated a failure rate for the sponge of 27.1 per cent—significantly higher than the 10.8 per cent failure rate of the control group that used the diaphragm method. However, this failure rate was based on the 48-hour use of the Today sponge and not the currently recommended 24-hour use.

Advantages over the diaphragm include ease of insertion and 24-hour effectiveness without reapplication of spermicide. The cost of each sponge—about \$1 in the U.S.—makes the method about as expensive to use as the diaphragm. There is no odor or taste to the spermicide.

International Women's Day Supplement

Religion's demonization of women

by Joan Sullivan, The Muse,
for CANADIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

"I permit no woman to teach or have authority over men. She is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor."

1 Timothy 2:12-14

Christianity has always used the Genesis story as a reason to repress woman. Eve, Adam's wife, weak and easily tempted, is said to have committed the primal sin of biting the apple of knowledge. The fall of humanity rests on her — because of her, the human race is cursed with original sin, and because of her, all women suffer through labour pains.

The Garden of Eden story also makes an astounding reversal of the biological fact that man is born of woman. In Genesis Eve is made from Adam, and thus subject to him.

For centuries women were classified as daughters of Eve, submissive and morally unstable. The Middle Ages, with its chastity belts and witch hunts, offered a single redemption — virginity. At the time when women were considered to have, at best, half souls, the Virgin Cult gained great popularity. Earlier it had been assumed that Mary had had other children besides Christ. But during this time she was thought to be a perpetual virgin, and the belief in the immaculate conception grew stronger.

There were two role models women had at that time — Eve and Mary. To follow Mary would mean purity — a denial of the sexuality — that would almost equal a man's. But, as most men needed lovers and children, most women were forced to follow Eve, and fall into the man-made trap of their sexuality.

The "evil" of sexual expression was focussed on women throughout the Christian religion. Since sexuality was the Devil's domain, it was a simple step to link women with Satan. Women were the carnal creatures. If they tried to twist away from the repressive bonds, they were accused of falling into the Devil's temptation. No

wonder there were so many witch-burnings. Some women must have welcomed even that title as a change from their iron clad roles.

The virgin/whore classification, born before the dark ages, persists even today.

The Roman Catholic church refuses to ordain women as priests. It refuses to give women sexual freedom through birth control. Until recently, women weren't even allowed on the altar, and some extreme Catholic sects refuse to recognize even the reforms of Vatican II. Other religions have been more open-minded. The United Methodist and the Episcopal Church, with some other Protestant Churches, have ordained women as priests and have not taken such a strong stand against birth control. Religion today is almost entirely male-based. God is presented as male, working with a male dominated hierarchy of church leaders to save mankind.

One of the earliest attempts to get sexism out of religion was Elizabeth Cady Stanton's "Women's Bible," published in 1895. The furor this created was only slightly greater than the furor she created when she wore pants in public. Feminists were chastised from the pulpit, bibles were waved in indignant anger. Women were told to stop their blasphemy and go home where they belonged. Again and again the bible and the Genesis story was quoted to support this subjection of women.

There are other myths, and earlier gods where women had some authority. Why do we use the terms "Mother Earth" and "Mother Nature?" These go back before a patriarchal society redesigned religion for political purposes.

Long before the birth of Christ, in the first stage of religious worship, humanity was nature-based. Life and death ran together in cyclical harmony. People worshipped an all-powerful, wise female goddess. Women were the healers, the ones full of medicinal lore. Cycles of menstruation were linked with the cycles of the moon. Blood and birth were full of mystery, not sin and evil as they later became. Just as women were not burdened with all facets of human sexuality and characterized as evil, there was no "devil figure"; no manifestation of evil

into symbols. It was not needed until man alienated his sexual self from his spiritual self.

The patriarchal societies were linked with sky gods — the male-dominated culture and a predominantly male religious hierarchy. The old myths were rewritten to fit this structure, although worship of female goddesses continued after the birth of Christ.

One rewritten myth concerns the original version of Genesis. Pieces of the older version that have been linked together indicate why the church fathers saw fit to change it.

The story is of Lilith, Adam's first wife. There is no fall from the human race in her story. Man and woman were created simultaneously; some myths say as twins joined back to back. Lilith was independent, and very much an individual.

There are few references to Lilith in the bible. In one version, she is the serpent in Eden. The "official" version is compiled in the Alphabet Ben Sira, a 15th century Jewish commentary on the bible. It reads:

"God then formed Lilith, the first woman, just as he formed Adam, except that he used filth and sediment instead of pure dust. From Adam's union with this demoness...sprang innumerable demons that still plague mankind...Adam and Lilith never found peace together, for when he wished to lie with her, she took offense at the recumbent position he demanded. "Why must I lie beneath you?" she asked. "I also was made from dust, and am therefore your equal." Because Adam tried to compel her obedience by force, Lilith, in a rage, uttered the magic name of God, rose in the air, and left him." (Alphabet, as quoted in the Book of Genesis, by Robert Graves and Raphael Patai.

Lilith tried to live independantly along the Red Sea. God sent three angels to try and persuade her to return to Adam, but she refused. Finally she was left alone, "but God punished Lilith by making one hundred of her demon Children perish daily."

Unlike the biblical Genesis, which avoids sex and equates nakedness with shame,

Lilith clearly wants sexual independence. The myth that held male and female as equal was turned into a moral lecture.

The story was probably changed with the Hebrew invasion of Canaan. Early in the first millenium B.C., Lilith was associated with the matriarchal society, and the old forms of worship had no place in the new religion. Lilith was increasingly demonized as time passes — from a probable comforter of women in labour to a strangler of new born babes. At one point she was considered the bride of Satan — at another, the mistress of God.

Amulets, used as protection against Lilith, are still in use today. Mothers sang "Lilla abi's" to their young children as charms to keep Lilith away. Earlier, she has been pictured as a beautiful woman, by the Middle Ages she was portrayed as an aging hag.

Her twisted story gained popularity along with the Virgin Cult. In the Dark Ages, when religion and superstition were hardly separate, people had completely segregated the sexual from the normal. On one hand was a woman who never lost her virginity; on the other a sensual being who was thought to attack sleeping men.

Lilith was associated with female intelligence and sexuality. Eve, her tame side, represented weakness and amorality. Mary stood for purity and a denial of sexuality. These three figures were developed by men in the name of decency. Their desire for holiness twisted a woman's natural need for freedom into something evil.

Even though these stories were written over two hundred years ago, they reflect how religion has shaped women and their image and role in society.

It is only now, in the twentieth century, that people are beginning to accept their sexuality and do not see it as evil and separate. Perhaps the characters of Eve, Mary and Lilith can finally come together as one, a complete being and end the centuries of division that have punished so many for a crime of trying to be a complete individual.

Sexist language denies equal status

by Alma Graham

What is sexist language? It's language that excludes women or gives unequal treatment to women and men. It's language that tells a woman she is two things. She is a man and she is not a man. If a woman is swept off a ship into the water, the cry is "Man overboard!" If she is killed by a hit-and-run driver, the charge is "manslaughter." But if she encounters visible or invisible signs that say "Man Wanted" or "Men Only" (under Ontario human rights, visible signs give her legal right to complain)—she knows that the exclusion does not apply to plants or animals or inanimate objects but to female human beings.

While watching a film in nursery school on primitive people, a three-year-old girl was told that "man invented tools" and "man discovered fire." Later she asked her mother, "Mommy, weren't there any women in those days?"

A very good question, and one that prompted her mother to do some thinking about just how unfair to women the English language is. After all, if all human beings are consistently referred to as "men," then a woman is automatically denied equal status.

And in employment practices, only in recent years has an effort been made to eliminate sexist labels from job titles. Newspapers now have changed their job listings from the segregated "Help Wanted — Male" and "Help Wanted — Female" to a single, nonsegregated list.

Yet, gender-free job titles can make a difference. When the Los Angeles City council approved a plan to abolish the titles of "policeman" and "policewoman," replacing them with the classification police officer, women on the force became eligible for promotions to ranks for which they had been ineligible in the past.

As the little girl in nursery school noticed, "man" is one of the most overworked nouns in the English language. It is used to mean a person, worker, member, agent, candidate, representative, voter, even astronaut. Consider the legislator. He is a man of the people. To prove that he's the best man for the job, he takes his case to the man in the street. He is champion of the working man. He speaks up for the little man. He remembers the forgotten man. And he believes in the principle "One man, one vote."

If we agree to stop overworking the word "man," what other words are we going to use in its place? The cardinal rule is simple: Be inclusive. When referring to the human species, we can say people, human beings, or men and women. For "mankind" we can substitute humankind, humanity or the human race. "Primitive man" can be changed to primitive people; "pre-historic men" can become pre-historic human beings; "man's conquest of space" can be the human conquest of space.

Where job titles are concerned, the major rule is: Be specific. Name the occupation by the work performed, not by

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the gender of the worker. "Mailmen," "firemen" and "cameramen" are mail carriers, fire fighters and camera operators. A "workman" is a worker, a "newsman" is a reporter, a "foreman" is a supervisor and a "watchman" is a guard.

Whether a male or a female does the job shouldn't affect its title. Instead of saying "steward" and "stewardess," we should use the inclusive term flight attendant; and instead of saying "maid" or "janitor," we can specify whether we want a house or office cleaner or a building superintendent or custodian.

But the pronoun is the real problem. How do we avoid referring to the unknown singular subject as "he"? Our language needs a common pronoun but none of the various ones suggested has yet shown signs of gaining acceptance. The likeliest candidate is already in the language, at least on the level of informal speech. This is the quasi-singular "they," as in "Everybody will wear what they want to wear." Often you can reword a sentence to avoid singular pronouns altogether. Thus, instead of saying, "If the student practices this exercise, he can learn it," you can say, "If students practice this exercise, they can learn it." Finally, once we have included

both females and males in our language, we should remember to treat them equally. Instead of saying: "Henry Harris is an up-and-coming lawyer and his wife Ann is a striking brunette," we might say either: "The Harrises are an attractive couple. Henry is a handsome blond and Ann is a striking brunette," or "The Harrises are highly respected in their fields. Ann is an accomplished musician and Henry is an up-and-coming lawyer."

Equal treatment also should be accorded women of achievement. Consider a headline that appeared a few years ago: "Writer's Wife Becomes Mayor." This "wife" had been the first woman ever elected to the local City Council but even when she became mayor she remained a "writer's wife."

In 1976 the New York Times updated its Manual of Style and Usage, cautioning writers that "in referring to women we should avoid words or phrases that seem to imply that the Times speaks with a purely masculine voice." But despite this resolve, a front-page story that same year, reporting on a study of retirement income, cited statistics on a "married retiree and his wife" — without any indication that some married retirees might have husbands!

Wives. Ladies. Girls. A man's property. Someone fragile and polite. An innocent. Not only has a woman been defined as something less than a lady and something more than a girl, she has been called fickle and foolish, silly and superficial, and above all, weak. In our language the qualities of the adult — strength, courage, will, wisdom and self-reliance — have been given exclusively to the male. Thus it is no wonder that until recently the word "woman" was avoided as though it were something bad to be and that "girl" is like calling a Black man a "boy" — it makes the adult unimportant and immature.

Now increasing numbers of women are showing a new pride in their adulthood. They do not like to be called "honey" or "dear" by male grocers or bank tellers who hardly know them. They do not like to be called an "old maid" if they're single or a "housewife" if they're not. They are not "girls," "gals," "wives," "ladies," or "the fair sex." They are women — and beginning to be happy about the fact.

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