

# Women in film

by Lorna Drew

We laughed! We cried! We cheered! We picked the popcorn out of our teeth and went home and told all our friends to see *Thelma and Louise*. This wasn't just another buddy movie with the genders reversed. This was a model, an icon, a political moment in women's film history that just might make a difference.

Mind you, it's not as if Hollywood isn't making movies with women controlling the narrative. The resurgence of the "woman's film" of the early seventies gave us a number of independent women in the driver's seat of plot (instead of behind the eight-ball). Alice, we were told, doesn't live here any more. She moved out, still with her children, mind you, and still looking for Mr. Right, but with the gumption to take off on her own. There were lots of broken relationships out there in seventies movies, and women were walking away from them, more or less intact.

With the eighties, however, we got into trouble. Shirley McLean, in both *Madame Sousatzka* and *Steel Magnolias*, showed us that life in the single lane, without hubby and the kids, just doesn't make it. Pretty woman Julia Roberts left an abusive relationship in *Sleeping With the Enemy*, but she still can't dress herself (and now she's out there in la la land with Tinker Bell). If film plots were real (instead of reel), fish

without bicycles are having it a lot easier than women without men. The smart woman opts for plot terminator one: heterosexual relationships ending in marriage. There is no terminator two, as Mike Douglas shows us in "*Basic Instincts*" (a bit of reactionary film-making that other(ed) smart women have retitled "*Attack of the Killer Lesbians*"). As for the career woman, she can just forget it. *Fatal Attraction* (what is it with Mike Douglas?) kicked her right out of the family picture.

But *Thelma and Louise* were different, and they are not alone. Jody Foster explored patriarchal violence from a position of narrative power inside the CIA. In *Rush*, Jennifer Jason Lee says "no" to the fathers. *Diplomatic Immunity*, a Canadian film that makes you proud to be one, shows women impacting on international politics in a women-centered plot powerful enough to inspire flag-waving. And then there's the daughter who torches the villain in Scorsese's remake of *Cape Fear*. In the original, she was rescued by her daddy.

Perhaps I'm being overly optimistic about *Thelma and Louise*. I tend to celebrate a moment as though it were a victory (remember the abortion issue), but it does seem as though we've got something to set alongside all those movies that lock us into marriage and motherhood. Mind you, I'm not knocking either. Those are two dirty jobs and some of my best friends are doing them. But we should remember that the hand that rocks the cradle hardly ever gets to rock the boat.



## RESOURCES FOR WOMEN STUDENTS

**The UNB Student Women's Collective formed in 1984 in response to the Task Force to the President on the Status of Women at UNB, the Student Women's Committee includes students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Through action, education and discussion, the Committee works as a collective to raise awareness regarding the status of women and issues of concern to us.**

**What can the Student Women's Committee do for you?**  
- if you encounter difficulties which you consider related to your gender, we can provide intervention, support and action.  
- if you have legal problems, we can provide resources and information.

- if you wish to sponsor an event or film, we can provide information and administrative support.

**What can you do for the Student Women's Collective**  
- get to know women students from all walks of life by attending relaxed, informal meetings and social events.

- suggest directions, ideas and methods for improving the status of women at UNB and in the community.

- participate in changing the social fabric of life at UNB by working to dispel the myths surrounding sex role stereotypes.

Information regarding meetings and social events will be posted at regular intervals during the academic year. Get involved a little or a lot! For more information, contact the Student Women's Committee by leaving a message in the Help Centre (SUB) or drop by our office in Annex C (Anthropology), Room 31. Hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday 11:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. and Tuesday and Friday 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or phone 453-4539.

**Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women**  
CCLOW is a national voluntary organization which promotes networking, identifies barriers, investigates unmet needs, publicizes critical issues and organizes meetings and conferences.

474-0641 - Pauline Jones

459-4521 - Judy Cumberland

**Le Cercle des Dames d'Acadie**

La mission de la Fédération des Cercles des Dames d'Acadie est de regrouper les femmes francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick dans le but de promouvoir les intérêts et défendre les droits des femmes d'abord, et des francophones. Pour réaliser cette mission, le Cercle de Fredericton favorise toute action visant l'épanouissement des femmes et des francophones; le plein accès des femmes et des francophones à l'égalité et la justice sociale, et leur participation équitable et à part entière à toutes les instances de la société.

**Day Care Centres**

A list of all registered day care centres is available from the Department of Income Assistance. A subsidy is provided by the provincial government for children who need day care and whose parents are on a limited budget. You need not be receiving Income Assistance in order to qualify for subsidized day care.

453-3216 - Nellie Charters

**Fredericton Lesbians and Gay Men**

FLAG operates Gayline, a telephone information/help line which provides information services for lesbians, gay men and their families. FLAG hosts social events, regular meetings and maintains a library. Hours are 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday.

457-2156.

**La Leche League**

Encourages and provides information about breast feeding. Consultation available in person or by telephone 24 hours daily. Meetings are held monthly. La Leche League provides literature, speakers and discussion leaders. The service is free but a membership is required for those wishing to join the league.

357-7441 - Lisa Vanostwaard

457-0760 - Carolee LeBlanc

**Legal Education Action Fund**

LEAF is a national, non-profit legal action fund committed to advancing women's equality by testing the new Charter of Rights

and Freedoms to win legal victories for women, to research legal issues affecting women, and to make its information available to women, their lawyers, women's groups and the public.

457-2514 - Allison Brewer

453-0698 - Betty Lee, Multicultural Liaison

**LINK**

A part of Girl Guides of Canada for women 17-30 who are not able to be actively involved in the organization while they are studying or working. One or two formal gatherings are held each year to help members keep in touch.

1-847-8142 - Alexandra Webb

**National Action Committee on the Status of Women**

NAC is the largest women's organization in Canada, representing over 500 non-governmental women's groups whose combined membership total about 4 million Canadian women. NAC's priorities include: housing, social services, family law, minority rights, health, reproductive rights, violence against women, peace, pornography and prostitution. For the past 15 years, NAC has researched, written and submitted positions and background papers on all those issues as part of its lobby and education efforts.

1-383-5808 - Pauline Roy, N.B. Representative.

**N.B. Advisory Council on the Status of Women**

A body for consultation and study which was created to advise the N.B. government on matters relating to the status of women in the province.

1-800-332-3087

**N.B. Native Women's Council**

A provincial aboriginal women's organization representing interests and concerns of Micmac, Maliseet, and other aboriginal women both on and off reserves. The council also administers services for the Outreach Employment Project. Located in the Victoria Health Centre, hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

458-1114

**The Overseas Women's Club**

A non-profit group for women from foreign countries. Informal meetings are held monthly.

455-3268 - Joan Coates

**Pregnancy Birthright**

Helps unwed mothers with living arrangements, finances, medical appointments, maternity clothes, and assistance in solving problems associated with pregnancy. Also helps married women who are having difficulties coping with a pregnancy.

454-1890

**Canadian Abortion Rights Action League**

Ensures that no woman in Canada is denied access to safe legal abortion. Its aim is the continued decriminalization of abortion and the establishment of comprehensive contraceptive and abortion services, including appropriate counselling.

1-849-7925 - Kit Holmwood

**Planned Parenthood of Fredericton**

Has professionally trained staff and offers counselling to individuals and groups on a variety of issues relating to human sexuality. Services include pregnancy testing, information on birth control, public education, etc., and a limited lending library.

454-6333 - 749 Charlotte Street

**Pro-Choice Information Line**

A 24-hour message answering service is provided for those who are seeking information on abortion, particularly where to go both within and outside N.B.

1-849-4613

**Reproductive Health Clinic**

Supports the right of the individual to seek education and counselling for knowledge and understanding of human sexuality. Therefore, it provides free and confidential counselling, education and clinical services on all areas of sexuality, i.e. birth control, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, pregnancy, puberty, talking with children about sexuality and outreach presentation. The

Clinic recognizes and promotes the concept of individual responsibility for free choice among considered alternatives. By appointment 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday. Twenty-four hour answering service.

453-5200 - Victoria Health Centre

**Rape Crisis Centre**

A 24-hour, 7 days-per-week telephone crisis line is provided for victims of sexual assault. In addition, the Centre provides support to survivors of sexual assault, incest and harassment. Information is available on police investigations, medical needs and legal procedures. The Centre provides guest speakers, literature and workshops for public education.

454-0437 - Crisis Line

454-0460 - Office

453-4837

**The Third Thursday Network**

A group to share experiences and information among all women. Meetings are held every third Thursday at lunch in the Lord Beaverbrook Hotel on Queen Street.

458-8981 - Linda Furlough

**Transition House for Abused Women and their Children**

Helps and cares for providing emergency shelter to women who are the victims of abuse. The house operates with a director, staff, volunteers, and the co-operation of the residents. The house also provides an excellent child care program for children of abused women. Located in Fredericton, the exact location is confidential for security reasons. A 24-hour crisis line and counselling are available.

459-2300

**Voice of Women**

A peace group also concerned with women's and native women's rights. VOW co-ordinates demonstrations and holds peace picnics. New members are always welcome.

455-2973 - Helen Thomas

**Women's Employment Outreach**

A counselling and resource centre for women re-entering the work force, anticipating a career change or furthering their education. The Outreach also helps women prepare for job interviews and resumes.

454-2220

**Women's Directorate**

A policy development unit that can provide information on issues of concern to women and on government services. The Directorate distributes publications to interested persons and has a small lending service of videos on women's issues.

453-2143

**Women Studies (UNB)**

The Women's Studies programme is an inter-disciplinary Minor providing an academic framework for the study of women's experience and the gender-based aspects of social institutions. There are course offerings in areas such as Sociology, Psychology, English, History, Anthropology, Political Science and Classics.

453-4676 - Dr. Wendy Robbins, Co-ordinator

**Women Working with Immigrant Women of New Brunswick**

A Fredericton-based group that promotes the interests of immigrant women in the province. The group serves as a liaison between immigrant women and community agencies to assist these women in adjusting to their new environment. It holds regular group sessions to provide information concerning taxation, day care, employment, and language; in addition, it publishes a monthly news bulletin and holding reading circles for student wives.

459-5868 - Maureen Morissy

458-5708 - WWIWO Office

The Student Women's Committee would like to remind women students that the above listed agencies are there for our benefit and should be utilized whenever necessary. Since most of the agencies listed operate on a volunteer basis, new faces are always a welcome sight.