

Womyn'say

New Brunswick women underpaid

One might think that things have changed drastically as far as the gender gap goes. In women's sphere of work and its components (salary, status, power and type of work) some change is indeed visible. More women fulfil more positions of leadership, authority, power and influence. UNB has its first woman President at the helm, a female Editor-in-chief of *The Brunswickan*, a female Dean of Law and a woman President of the Student Union.

However, statistics taken from the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women's 1996 Report Card show that women have a long way to go before they equally share the top jobs with men. Only 22% of the full-time UNB Faculty are women, not unlike the national average in higher learning institutes. Unequal pay for equal work remains at the centre of the struggle. Things do not seem to change that fast.

In government, on campuses and in the general workplace, 52% of women actively participate in the labour force in NB. Three quarters of New Brunswick women make less than \$20,000 a year, compared to 45% of men. Our salaries do not

fairly reflect the work that we do. Furthermore, let's not forget that, inside the home, women's responsibilities are not valued as "real" work. The household tasks and childcare are still not equally divided between men and women.

In New Brunswick, women's most common occupation is that of secretary, whereas the most common job for men is truckdriver. We still teach children that gender differences are an important part of social interaction and acceptance. Little girls are mostly urged to play with dolls and little boys are given trucks or cars.

In the meantime, women continue to fight their way through Old Boys' networks and non-traditional jobs. They enter fields once reserved for men and seek out role models and advice from those pioneering women who broke the ground before them. The gender gap exists and focuses on the inequalities between men and women in all the spheres of their lives: work, relationships and social status, although one might wonder about their sameness in competence, strength and intelligence.

Nadine Goguen is a member of the UNB Womyn's Collective.

AIDS awareness week: few are unaffected by the epidemic

"Getting High, Getting Hot, Staying Safe." This is the slogan for this year's AIDS Awareness Week, beginning September 30 to October 6, 1996. Many of the activities and events planned across Canada for this week try to inform, educate and make the public aware of the ramifications of impaired judgment upon activities that may lead one to become infected with HIV.

HIV/AIDS has become a societal concern over the past few years. The rates of infection may appear to have stabilized somewhat, but this is not the case. Statistical data and reports from HIV/AIDS research reveal startling results. Historically, the impact of HIV/AIDS devastated the homosexual and bisexual communities around the world. The greatest loss of life occurred within this population, and societal misperceptions labeled HIV a "gay man's disease." This led to stigmatization, a reluctance to fund research and an obstinate refusal to work with people infected with the disease. This has changed in the past several years, and progress has been made in terms of preventative measures, new treatment for persons living with HIV/AIDS, and an understanding of the social nature of this disease.

Yet the spectre of HIV/AIDS has given rise to some new high-risk groups, including women and First Nations people. The World Health Organization predicts that, should

current trends persist, over 50% of the world's women will be infected by the year 2000. In Canada, research has indicated that a high rate of HIV/AIDS infection has been identified among the First Nations people. Furthermore, young gay men still remain one of the high risk groups, despite the world's homosexual/bisexual communities' rally against HIV/AIDS.

The AIDS Walk this past Sunday raised a tremendous amount of money for research purposes, but the AIDS Walk is just one part of the fight against HIV/AIDS, which has given rise to eloquent and sometimes heartbreaking public displays. People were initially unwilling to deal with HIV/AIDS, but gradually more were affected by this epidemic, losing parents, friends, siblings, lovers and relatives. The voices of those affected cried out, demanding that the world listen and become aware of the impact of HIV/AIDS on everyone, gay and straight.

Regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender or culture, HIV/AIDS has touched us all. Yet we refuse to give up, fighting a battle that at times may seem overwhelming. Awareness continues, the recognition of this disease's victims as humans instead of a statistics raises the compassion and empathy toward a possible cure.

Red ribbons are available at the Student Resource Centre in the SUB.



Nuclear Disarmament: An Explosive Issue

Last week I attended a Roundtable here in Fredericton to explore ways of supporting and advancing the growing international effort to abolish nuclear weapons. Sponsored by Project Ploughshares, it was one of 18 such events held in September in 18 cities in 10 provinces.

Douglas Roche, O.C., Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament (1984-89), member of Parliament (1972-84), chair of the United Nations' Disarmament Committee at the 43rd General Assembly (1988), and currently vice-chair of Canadian Pugwash, visiting Professor at the University of Alberta and author of two books on disarmament, served as resource person and discussion leader.

Two matters struck me during the two-and-a-half hour gathering. The first had to do with how uninformed the general public (myself included) is regarding nuclear weapons. We know they exist, but do we know how many? Currently there are 40,000. We know they pack a big punch. But are we really and fully conscious, beyond just a theoretical awareness, of the extent of devastation they unleash? It is massive

and total: people, animals, trees, plants, water, air. Damage is neither partial, selective, nor sustainable.

The second matter had to do with the reluctance in our society to do away with these weapons. Most feel they are a necessity, in spite of their potential for devastation. What supports their continued existence is the argument for deterrence — deterrence against other nations and against terrorist groups.

Perhaps we should think for a moment about this argument. First, 40,000 nuclear weapons pose an incredible risk, even if they are simply standing on alert. Accidental detonation is a distinct possibility. Accidents, as we all know, do happen.

Second, is deterrence against terrorist groups really an argument? Where would a second (retaliation) strike be directed? Terrorist groups, as we know, hide among the general populous, whose survival, let alone welfare, they seem to care little about. If Saddam Hussein, to give a much-touted example, were to achieve nuclear strike capability, would the West consider a retaliatory nuclear strike against the people of Iraq who, for all intents and purposes, continue to be innocent bystanders in the Persian Gulf skirmishes?

Third, it is argued that nuclear weapons are necessary in an unstable and volatile world. Instability and volatility are, and always have been, as anyone knows who has read history, part of the human endeavour, and are unlikely to cease in the near future. To then argue that nuclear weapons are needed to make the world a safer place is a bit of a logical if not a moral stretch.

Douglas Roche and others argue that a new window of opportunity lies before us. The Cold War is over. Technologies and inspection procedures are now available to detect nuclear buildup. Wars, if they must erupt, can still be fought with conventional weapons, as illustrated in the Persian Gulf. What we require instead is the will to eliminate nuclear weapons.

That is the biggest problem, of course. It is not in the interest of the military-industrial complex, and uranium companies, to stop producing them. Some among them will also argue that maintaining and developing these weapons provides jobs.

There is, however, a strange irony in this economic argument. While maintaining a nuclear arsenal may make good business sense, eliminating them makes much better human sense. While jobs are important, our lives are even more important.

Mohammed Bedjaoui, President of the World Court, stated in July of this year that "nuclear weapons, the ultimate evil, destabilize humanitarian law which is the law of the lesser evil. The existence of nuclear weapons is therefore a challenge to the very existence of humanitarian law." Nuclear Weapons States (Russia, U.S., England, France, China) have agreed to an ultimate disarmament. They have not agreed on a strategy for immediate and unequivocal elimination. Non-proliferation and Test Ban Treaties are a step in the right direction, even if they are discriminatory and arrogant, as India has rightly pointed out. Why are nuclear weapons as a deterrence limited only to current Nuclear Weapons States?

In issues of any sort I always want to ask, as a Christian, at least this question: what would Jesus do? Jesus lived in a time of great instability and conflict. Yet he never advocated military buildup. He never argued for retaining weapons, least of all those capable of unleashing massive damage and destruction to humans and environment: the very things of God's creative hand. Instead, he taught that lasting peace would come only through justice, and the care and concern of others. To attain that might even entail going as far as turning the other cheek.

The Western world contains innumerable people who still adhere to the teachings of Christ, many of whom hold high positions in government, industry and the military. These teachings are meant to inform public as well as private action. One wonders how many consider the teachings of Jesus naive when it comes to nuclear weapons?

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