

Pulling the plug on tampons

BY JEN CLEARY

I remember the moment so well. I was lying on the bathroom floor with my pants around my ankles — my eyes closed, clutching in between my legs. I thought I was going to die.

"Mom!" I screamed, "I think I got my period."

And from that point on I was proud to call myself a woman. The blood from my body had given me the right to bear that title.

So why is it I think it's so dirty?

Anne-Marie Long from the Woman's Health Collective, a working group out of the Nova

Scotia Public Interest Research Group (NSPIRG), has created a video to deal with these issues. It's called Alternative Menstruation Products, designed not only to better our health and the environment, but also to shape our views about our periods.

"The Keeper" is among one of the alternatives. This menstrual cup, which lasts at least 10 years, is made of a gum rubber tapped from a tree. Because the keeper is reusable, the blood is not disposed of quickly like with a tampon or pad. Instead your blood collects in the cup until you empty it. Some women actually save their blood in jars, mixing it with water, to feed their plants.

This makes for a much closer connection with your monthly cycle. However, it is this direct relationship woman are scared of.

Many people think the whole idea of collecting your blood and then re-using the product is gross. Even as I read this article to my roommates their faces contort in disgust. Girls, it's *your* period, it's *your* blood, it's from *your* body. It's natural.

Unlike main-stream products, which are designed to absorb the blood and take it away as quickly as possible, alternative menstrual products allow us to form a relationship.

"We're treating it as if it is any other time of the month when in fact it is a special time," says

herbalist Danette Steele.

Commercial products tell us to hide it, flush it and carry on with the rest of our day like nothing ever happened.

"We are really conditioned not to come in contact with our blood," Long says.

"Blood signifies injury and it signifies death, it's very taboo to literally get your fingers dirty."

It is this attitude that is hurting our bodies and the environment. Disposable products, such as tampons, have chemicals, perfume, glue, plastic, dioxin, and bleach in them. Surprisingly, there is no safety standard for these menstrual products.

They also may have anti-coagulants in them that actually make you bleed more so you buy

more tampons.

The waste from tampons and pads is what I find most disgusting. Each woman throws away about 10,000 to 15,000 menstrual products in her lifetime. These end up in wastelands, in the sewage systems, or are dumped directly into the ocean to choke fish and marine mammals.

Know your options. Have control over your own body. You are, after all, a woman.

For more information on the keeper you can check out the official webpage at <http://www.keeper.com/>. You can also go to the next Woman's collective meeting on November 22 at six o'clock in room 307 in the Dalhousie SUB.



Canada's most modern aircraft fleet!

AIRPORT STANDBY FARES

ONE WAY FARES - HALIFAX to:

VANCOUVER \$300* Plus tax \$46.13	CALGARY \$290* Plus tax \$44.63	EDMONTON \$290* Plus tax \$44.63
TORONTO \$150* Plus tax \$23.63	ST. JOHN'S \$100* Plus tax \$16.13	

* NAV fee add \$7.50 per passenger

FLIGHT SCHEDULE - HALIFAX DEPARTURES

NOVEMBER 1999

TO	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
VANCOUVER	18:55 ¹	18:55 ² 20:45 ³	18:55 ⁴	20:55 ⁵	—	—	—
CALGARY	18:55 ⁶	18:55 ⁷	18:55 ⁸	20:55 ⁹	—	—	—
EDMONTON	—	20:45 ¹⁰	—	—	—	—	—
TORONTO	—	15:00 ¹¹ 23:25 ^{12,13,14}	13:50	23:25 ¹⁵	—	—	18:05
ST. JOHN'S	—	18:30 ¹⁶ 19:55 ¹⁷	—	18:40 ¹⁸ 18:45 ¹⁹	—	—	—

¹Begins Nov 8 ²Week of Nov 1 only ³Week of Nov 8 only
⁴Week of Nov 15 only ⁵Week of Nov 22 only

AIRPORT STANDBY FARES: Are subject to available seats prior to departure. Passengers may register 2 1/2 hours prior to the scheduled departure of flight. Fares are subject to change without notice. Travel on any specific flight is not guaranteed. Payment (Cash or Credit Card only) must be made on departure. One way travel only. Schedule subject to change without notice.

CANADA 3000

★Reliable ★Affordable ★Air Travel

ASK GREENGIRL?



Well, there's no question this week, and so I had lots of time to just sit here and let my mind wander as I wondered what to write...

In my wanderings, I drifted to my favorite topic — activism, especially environmental activism. One thing I have become painfully aware of over the years is that environmental activists, particularly those directly involved in protests, are often considered radical, and possibly even violent. And yet when I think of the mandates of most activist groups, including those considered 'radical' by popular opinion, they stress such ideals as respect for life, protection of the earth for present and future generations, and informing the misinformed public. I have yet to find mention of militant actions or endorsements of violence lurking in their lofty aims. Obviously this is not to say that there are no militant, violent earthy groups out there, but rather to argue that they are definitely not the rule.

In fact, if there is a group which consistently uses violent and radical means to protect their interests, they might more easily be found on the other side of the fence. For example, how did a Californian Redwood tree fall and kill 'Earth First!' forest defender David 'Gypsy' Chain in September of 1998?

Could it possibly be that a Pacific Lumber logger, who less than an hour before had been recorded as yelling, "Get the fuck out of here or there's going to be a tree coming your way," had not known protesters were in the area, as the logging company claimed?

Cases of activists having violence done against them is certainly not a historic novelty. Remember what our own police did to students exercising their freedom to protest in Vancouver at APEC. We have all heard the horrors of pepper spray and pain compliance holds.

This same sort of violence continues on a larger scale. A Greenpeace zodiac (inflatable boat) was apparently fired upon by a Norwegian Whaling ship, while the Coast Guard passively looked on. This is despite the fact that the Greenpeace vessel was merely 'bearing witness' — a non-violent act in accordance with Quaker philosophy.

One can only surmise from these examples that protecting the interests of exploitive industries is of higher consequence than preserving the lives and rights of humans — not to mention the earth and its other creatures.

It also helps to attempt to discredit those endeavouring to organize change by dismissing them as crazy radicals or denouncing them as terrorists.

This is what we might call the backlash effect. It worked well to stifle the women's movement, and it seems to be functioning nicely against the environmental movement.

I guess my point is that we should all take a long, hard, critical look at what information the media feeds us. Realize that there are few sources of mainstream media which do not have interests to protect. And most of all, be careful not to brush aside so easily the dedicated (and ok — perhaps occasionally fanatical) activists all over the world who are so relentlessly toiling to save some semblance of this beautiful earth for its own sake, including our own.

Ask questions. Speak up. Send your queries and comments to Green Girl. Email: gazette@is2.dal.ca or drop them off in SUB 312.



The Big NEW YORKER PIZZA

DINNER TONIGHT, LUNCH TOMORROW!

EXTRA LARGE 16" PIZZA

Call for Delivery or Pick-up Today!
For All Locations

Call: 310-10-10

\$9.99
One Topping

Pizza Hut
The Best Tasting Pizzas Under One Roof

HEY!

WORK FOR THE WORLD-FAMOUS GAZETTE

The Gazette needs people to write.

COME TO THE MEETING AT 4:30 ANY MONDAY IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, RM 312 SUB INFO 494-2507

THE GAZETTE