

'Self-imposed barriers': women chemists

by Geoff Stone

Dr. Katherine Darvesh, a researcher in the Dalhousie Chemistry Department, says women aren't even considering the option of a career in science.

Darvesh, who attended a symposium on women and careers in chemistry this past June, is concerned that women need more role models and less stereotyping in order to get involved in science.

Darvesh cites statistics showing that while 40 per cent of those studying undergraduate chemistry are women, the number drops to 25 per cent at the masters level and 10 per cent at the Ph.D. level.

Darvesh says the science community is trying to determine the reasons behind the decline of women in graduate studies. Some contributing factors are daycare, time con-

straints on women, and society's attitudes towards working women.

But Darvesh says the most important problem is that of female attitudes towards science. "There are no barriers to a female student going for a Ph.D.; there will be a job offer. The students are simply not choosing to."

Darvesh says female students come into the class and wonder why none of their professors are women. Without a role model, it is difficult for them to see science as a possibility. As a solution to this, Darvesh says women need a higher profile when they are involved in science.

Darvesh says with many of the women who do go into a Ph.D. in the sciences, the education of their parents was an important factor. It is these role models who helped them realize they could work as well

in science as men.

Darvesh says other problems include the sex stereotyping of women in the media. She says scientists are often portrayed as eccentric men with "flyaway" hair, images that most women cannot relate to themselves.

The most interesting statistic for Darvesh is that at present, roughly 50 per cent of medicine and law students are women, but this is not reflected in science. She says many women justify going into medicine rather than science by saying, 'I don't think I would be intelligent enough to do research.'

"This is going from the frying pan into the fire," says Darvesh. "It's a woman's own self-imposed barriers. The two careers are equally difficult." It is misunderstandings and the image of research which have led students to believe research is a more difficult

profession, she says.

Darvesh says such efforts as summer research grants and science weekends help to dispel the myths about research, but she says placing women in positions of authority and advertising the role women play in the science community are the keys to getting more women involved.

In addition to being concerned about the numbers of female researchers and professors, Darvesh says in 1990, around 3/4 of the Ph.D.s in Canada will have to be imported from the United States. This will be caused by the retirement of many of the professors universities hired in the boom years of the 1960s and '70s. Darvesh is hoping students, and in particular women, will take this opportunity to really consider the option of graduate studies.

Women's Events



Three Halifax women, Heather Levy, Joyelle Desy and Janet Noade, are compiling an anthology of poetry, fiction and artwork by Nova Scotia women who love women. Manuscripts can be mailed or dropped off to 2466 Robie St., Halifax, N.S., B3K 4M1. For more info, call 423-6947.

I've Heard the Mermaids Singing, a gentle tale about the pretensions of the art world as seen through the eyes of an innocent and whimsical temporary secretary named Polly, continues to be shown through to Nov. 29 at Wormwood's, 1588 Barrington St., 3rd floor, at 7:00 and 9:00 each evening.

A one-day workshop on **The Free Trade Deal and Nova Scotia** will be held at the Henson College Auditorium, 1261 Seymour St., in Halifax on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Speakers will present a detailed analysis of how the free trade agreement with the United States will affect Nova Scotia, and will focus on what the deal will mean for women, social programs, the economy, and military and foreign policy. For further information, call Paul Burgwin at 423-4579 or 423-2468.

Women's Employment Outreach will be offering a pre-employment workshop series on December 1st, 3rd, 8th and 10th from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Please note all workshops should be attended. To sign up, call 422-8023. Free for women! This workshop takes a look at résumé writing, creative job search techniques and successful interview skills.

Coming Together: A Conference by and for Lesbians on December 4th, 5th and 6th. For more info, call Vieth House at 453-4320.

The **Women and Management** series sponsored by Dalhousie University's School of Public Administration continues next week with a lecture on **Managing the Caring Professions**. Marie L. Campbell, post-doctoral research fellow in the School of Social Work at Carleton University, will discuss information technology in nursing and social work on Thursday, Nov. 26 at 8:00 p.m. in the MacMechan Auditorium, Killam Library.

Siberry's The Walking a worth — while effort

by Andrew M. Duke

The Walking has Jane Siberry continuing in her quest to do something different in the Canadian music scene. Siberry does not bare her breasts or flaunt her sexuality, nor is she content to merely sing "lovely" ballads that are written for her.

The follow-up to *Jane Siberry* (her independent debut), *No Borders Here*, and *The Speckless Sky*, Siberry's *The Walking* (Duke Street/MCA) is yet another step in a different direction, though the music remains accessible and the lyrics imaginative.

The title track, "The Walking (And Constantly)", separates itself from the others because it has Siberry sounding a lot like Joni Mitchell. "Red High Heels" is an "Eleanor Rigby" sung by Eleanor herself, but with a happy ending. Most



Toronto's Jane Siberry has released an easily appreciated, musically accessible, and lyrically imaginative new album in *The Walking* (Duke Street/MCA), the follow-up to her previous three LPs.

of the songs eventually deal with love, and "Goodbye" is the most direct. Beginning with the image of a seashore, the track ends with the lyric "I went to say I love you/but instead I said goodbye".

The remaining tracks on the album are lengthy pieces (averaging eight minutes), but due to structured improvisation and recurring themes, the format works. It is refreshing to hear Siberry dare to forego the usual five-minute limit she used on "The Waitress", "Mimi on the Beach", and "One More

Colour". Siberry takes care of vocals, guitar, and keyboards,

with the help of co-producer John Switzer and session

players. Anne Burne, who performed on Pretty Green's debut, plays additional keyboards.

"The White Tent The Raft", with lyrics like "there's a red leaf/that falls from a purple tree", reads like abstract poetry. The focal point is "a white tent that sits in the middle of a raft that floats down the middle of a river". Siberry does not write rhyming couplets, she writes stories, and instead of reading them she sings the words.

The other epic, "The Bird in the Gravel", has Siberry playing the master, the servant, the maid, the boy, and the bird during an autumn day.

"Lena is a White Table" is a disembodied conversation on

the way to "the edge of the earth" in search of, what else, a white table. Again, it is easier to mention what is being said than to explain the intent. Here and on "The Lobby" (with "put down that chair"), one notices a preoccupation with furniture.

A man who takes on the characters of a cowboy, a boogaloo, and an Indian, and insists on calling a lady "Margaret" when her name is really Ingrid, is dealt with on "Ingrid and the Footman".

The Walking is easy to appreciate and a worthwhile effort. Siberry deserves much respect for concentrating on what she obviously enjoys doing instead of mainstreaming her efforts to please the public.