

Women OK bishops' stand

By The Canadian Press

A Canadian bishops' condemnation of violence against women is getting generally favorable reviews from Catholic women, although a representative of a Catholic reform group says it doesn't go far enough.

The statement, entitled To Live Without Fear, was released last month and calls violence against women a sin, a crime and a serious social problem.

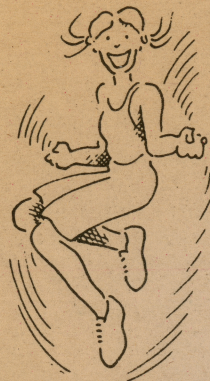
It cautions priests and pastoral workers against counselling premature reconciliation

between couples, even if it means marital separation.

"True reconciliation can occur only after the woman has been protected, the man has been held accountable for his actions, and he has genuinely repented," the statement says.

Joanna Manning of the Coalition of Concerned Canadian Catholics said the statement will lack credibility unless the bishops acknowledge violence against women is indirectly fostered by "sexist" church structures.

Women's pages: where's the harm, eh?



Make your move.

REMEMBER back in the '70s when newspapers, reacting to a still fairly young feminist movement, removed their "women's pages" or at least started calling them "Lifestyles," "Family," etc.

It was seen to be a bit of a feminist victory; after all, we said, we're just as good as men. Why should we be ghettoized into our own section of the newspaper? Why shouldn't we be treated equally?

In retrospect, it doesn't seem as important a victory as it did then. Certainly, we weren't prohibited from reading the rest of the paper if we wanted to. And having the women's pages removed (or renamed) might have given the illu-



Sharon Fraser

sion of equality, but that's about all it did.

Besides, women and men do have different interests and, in many cases, different responsibilities. Why are we unwilling to acknowledge that? Women are household managers, for example. What is wrong with reading somebody else's good ideas that make shopping easier and more efficient?

Women tend to be interested in

what happens to other people — who got married, had babies, who died. It's not gossip, it's news. Why don't we like having it on our own pages? (Before someone says, "well, men are also interested in people," ask your brothers, male friends, or husbands some questions about their co-workers or neighbors. Ask, "is he married?" Or "does she have children?" Or "does he come from Halifax?" The answer will be, "I'm not sure.")

Now undeniably, some of what used to appear on the old women's pages was trivial and patronizing. I was never able to enjoy Household Hints from Heloise, for example, although I like household hints. But I don't like George Will either and I have to stomach him in the daily papers, so why not Heloise?

All this reflection on the women's pages was brought about by an article in the *Washington Journalism Review* called "Women: Special Again." It says that newspaper readership has declined steadily over the past 20 years for both sexes but the decline among women is far more dramatic — 23 per cent fewer women read the paper in 1990 than in 1970, compared with 16 per cent for men.

In order to address this decline, many U.S. newspapers have decided to go back to designating certain pages for women's news, not without creating controversy. Accusations of sexism and of trivializing women arise, much as they did back in the '70s before newspapers made the decision to drop the women's pages.

But in some papers, women who are passionate about the importance of their work say that the success of the new sections is proving the need is there.

The WJR looks at women's sec-

tions from a number of American newspapers, comparing and contrasting both the news content and the attitudes of the people taking part in putting them together. There's still, unfortunately, a stigma attached to writing in a women's section.

"Some reporters said they didn't want to write for a women's section," said the editor of one of them. She sees that thinking as a form of oppression. "If people are embarrassed to write for women, they're embarrassed to write for themselves. They buy into the myth that the 'real stuff is the guys' news.'"

Which takes us right back to 1971, doesn't it?

Much of the news in the 1991 women's sections is different from 1971, although it still concentrates on areas of life that most directly affect women — family, consumer articles, advice on care of home, car, pets, and quick recipes.

We do well to remember that newspapers are doing this because they've targeted an unserved market, not because they're suddenly concerned that women are feeling left out. But if the new sections are interesting and readable and if they avoid weekly feature stories about women who are heavy equipment operators, what harm can they do, eh?

However, they'll never take the place of feminist newspapers like our local *Pandora* and all its sister publications across the country that deal with women's issues in profound and important ways. Those papers deserve our steady support but there's no reason why they can't be complemented with a recipe or two in our dailies. Or — oh, why not? — even a hint from Heloise.

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Women with opinions a threat to too many male dinosaurs

GETTING LETTERS from people you don't know is one of the best parts about writing a newspaper column. My all-time favorite letter is from a Halifax man who says the problem with columnists is they are allowed to express an opinion. He seems to be confusing columnists with reporters, who just present the facts. He writes that newspapers have no right to give space to people with their own ideas.

Letters to the editor, editorials and all columns would be killed if this guy got his way, but he genuinely believes voicing an opinion is very un-Canadian, at least in print. He is not alone. A man recently approached me in a mall to say he always read my column. His comment was followed with, "You're really opinionated but I guess I'm just not used to that from a woman." I tried to point out that everyone has ideas worth sharing and a right to speak out. He agreed that life would be dull if we all thought the same.

After what Liberal MP Sheila Copps went through last week, it's easy to imagine she might grow weary of the House of Commons and wonder whether it's worth the price. Copps took a tough stand in the House and veteran Tory MP Bill Kempling called her a slut. He hasn't admitted he made the remark, even after hearing the tape. He tried to say his line was "pain in the butt," as though that was much better. For Copps it's just another day in the mines.

The first time I met Copps she was standing in front of Parliament with high school students from her Hamilton riding. From where I stood it was impossible to see her face, but I could hear a woman expressing a passion and love of politics. Perhaps even more impressively, she was holding the jean-jacketed kids' attention. Moving closer, it was clear to see Copps meant what she said as she described how her work in the House of Commons helped people in her riding.

That day in the House, a Conservative MP began to catcall while Copps demanded the government ensure Canadian children had access

**Sandra
Porteous**



to adequate day care. When she sat down the MP bellowed something about Copps being a baby expert. Copps was back on her feet reminding that MP there was more to life than submarines and weapons. She left him for dead and quietly took her seat.

Copps sees the issue of women voicing opinions very clearly. We spoke this week and her reaction to the slut incident is enlightening. Copps said the House of Commons is very much like a men's club. "I'm of the view that when a man is elected as an MP, he is automatically in. The women MPs have to work twice as hard to belong," she said. Copps said any woman on the Hill with an opinion had to be ready to be called names. "Why is it that when I ask tough questions, they go crazy?" she said. "Is it because the attack is from a woman and that's not expected or approved of?"

Copps said she gets a lot of support from older women who say they admire her for dishing it out. Kempling is a dinosaur, but it is alarming to hear how angry he becomes when Copps gets on his case. Copps won't back away from expressing herself and, in fact, says it would be like admitting defeat if she let guys like Kempling get her down. "Politics is not for everyone but it's stimulating and I love it," she said.

Copps said that when her daughter grows up things will probably be different. "There may still be some men who think like Kempling, but hopefully they'll be afraid to say it even if they think it," she said. As the mother of a young girl, I can only hope so.

Sandra Porteous appears Tuesday and Thursday in The Daily News.

Roseanne Arnold a 'survivor' of incest

Comic actress tells weekend meeting she was abused by both parents

By J.R. MOEHRINGER
The Rocky Mountain News

DENVER

ROSEANNE ARNOLD, the comic actress both revered and reviled by millions of Americans, returned to her Denver roots on the weekend and shocked a crowd of incest victims by revealing that she was one of them.

Her Saturday night appearance came as a surprise to the hundreds at Montview Presbyterian Church, where Marilyn Van Derbur Adler also spoke.

Adler astonished Denver and the nation in May when she divulged that she was molested from age five to 18 by her millionaire father, the late Francis Van Derbur.

At Montview Saturday night, the 1958 Miss America spoke of the overwhelming number of people who have responded to her experience — victims, she said, who prefer the term "survivors."

"We anticipated 10 survivors would come forward to be a part of our new Kempe adult survivor program," Adler said, referring to the nationally acclaimed Kempe National Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect. "We have 1,100 men and women here tonight."

Adler introduced Arnold, a longtime Denver resident who got her comedy start as Roseanne Barr at downtown Denver nightclubs.

'Pillow over my face'

One of the nation's best known comedians — whose TV show, Roseanne, has been a ratings smash since its 1988 debut held the church gathering speechless with her graphic tale of sexual and physical abuse, which she said she and a sister repeatedly suffered as children in Utah.

"My mother molested me as a small child," she said. "My father molested me all through my life."

"As this Saturday got closer, each night I remembered more," she said. "Wednesday night, I remembered being two years old and my mother holding a pillow over my face. I remembered thinking: Lay still, play dead . . . I saw

my mother grabbing me by the hair on my 17th birthday and saying she wished I had died in the car accident the year before. I saw my father beating my head into the toilet bowl while my mother stood there saying, 'Not in the face, not in the face.'"

Recurring memories

Eleven years ago, Arnold said, her life seemed to be improving.

"My husband and I had just bought a \$60,000 home in Bear Valley, I had lost 120 pounds, I had three beautiful and healthy children, a part-time job at Fashion Bar in Bear Valley Mall."

But recurring memories and constant anxiety were subtle signs that she had suppressed a sad and violent past.

In time, she said, she achieved stardom and wealth. Her first marriage dissolved, and her second husband, Tom Arnold, whom she married in 1990, helped her confront long-hidden memories.

"Two days ago, when I was getting ready to come here," Arnold said, "Tom showed me a letter I had written to him . . . 'I need your help. I'm not going to pull through this time.' He wrote me back, saying, 'You saved my life by getting me into treatment (for drug addiction), and now I'll save yours.'"

Neither of Arnold's parents — with whom she has not spoken for two years — could be reached for comment on the weekend.

Several months ago, shortly after Adler came forward, her husband, Denver lawyer Larry Adler, got a call from Roseanne Arnold.

The comedian had read about Adler's childhood and was deeply moved. She invited the Adlers to visit in Laguna Beach, Calif.

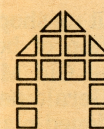
"We were with them a very short time," Adler said Saturday night, "before we knew why Roseanne had changed her name to Roseanne Arnold."

As the evening wore on, Adler said, it became clearer why Arnold had been so affected.

"Roseanne began to share, openly and painfully, memories of her childhood," Adler said. "She asked about coming to Denver . . . Just reading about me and having lived in Denver, she knew this would be a safe place for her."



Roseanne Arnold: "I remembered thinking: Lay still, play dead."



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NEWS

What a wet and wild womyn's night out

BY MADELAINE MAIZE

Yellow raincoats, multi-colored umbrellas, the aroma of incense, heart felt speeches and insistent cheers filled the spaces between City Hall and the Town Clock. Grand Parade was chock full of women and children ready to take back the night last Friday.

Despite the rain, hundreds of people came to walk together through the streets of Halifax, to take a stand condemning violence against women.

*"It is
a symbolic
event"*

It was the tenth annual Take Back the Night March held in Halifax. It has its roots in a spontaneous event in Europe in which women took to the streets to protest violence against women.

Maureen Meek, a member of the organizing committee of the march explains its purpose. "It's an opportunity for women to come together to talk about violence and demand to walk in the streets safely at night." As a staff member of the Service for Sexual Assault Victims she added, "We wanted to emphasize the extent of women's safety at jeopardy, for the majority of abuse is in the home."

Many women expressed how good it felt to see their peers, clad in fluorescent orange, guiding and controlling the crowd of marchers. The various chants, bellowed at the tops of their lungs, were energizing. "No means no, yes means

yes, wherever we go, however we dress."

However, one woman felt that there was not a lot of support from onlookers. "Many people watched the march, but it seemed to be more out of curiosity than anything. I did not hear any drivers beep their horns in support," she noted. "Then again, maybe, at least, people will want to know the reasons behind the march."

A melodic round was practised in the Grand Parade, then sung in the streets as people gazed from bar windows. "There are women all around the world, trying to be who they want to be. There are women all around the world, trying to set themselves free."

Meek said the "women only" nature of the event was essential to its effectiveness. "The issues are violence against women, safety for women and demanding the right for women to walk safe at night."

"It is a symbolic event, and we want to do it on our own - without the protection or the permission of men."

Some men did not like the idea of not being included.

"A woman got up in class and announced the Take Back the Night March today. She said all women and children are welcome, but 'men, you can cheer us on from the sidelines, but you're not invited to march,'" recounted one law student. "How do you expect men to understand if they are being excluded?"

One student, a member of a local fraternity, expressed that he also felt unsafe walking alone at night. Men are victims of violence, too.



Speaking up downtown.

DAL PHOTO: MARIA PATRIQUIN

Meek counters this. "I do not think that men feel the same way as women do," she pointed out. "I don't mean to minimize the effect of violence affecting men. Many women suffer violence simply because they are women. Men do not suffer violence just because they are men."

The march organizers wanted to address additional concerns of women. For some women, violence is not the major factor in their oppression. For example, women of colour must deal with racism on top of sexism.

Dolly Williams, representing the women of colour of the community, gave a controversial speech asking women to unite, while tell-

ing men to "get your acts together, and stop taking out all your problems on women. Stop making women feel inferior, because in fact, women are superior," she said.

A number of marchers expressed their disagreement with these statements. "We want equality, not superiority."

Many women who did not attend the March felt that it was simply too extreme for them to participate in. "I can't picture myself there, marching, 'taking back the night.' I would not be comfortable," said one female law student. "But maybe next year, if I understand it better, I will be there."

On the other hand, others believed that seemingly drastic measures had to be taken. "It may be

necessary in order to balance the scales that have for so long been tipped so overwhelmingly against women," commented a marcher.

The march ended in the George Dickson Centre on Gottingen St. where participants were greeted by Earthwitch, an all-women's band. Many stayed for the festivities, others dispersed downtown or to the Dalhousie medical school co-ed frat to watch the lip sync contest where the grand finale was a rendition of "Tits and Ass."

One marcher went to the Seahorse where "I used to love her but I had to kill her" was blaring...she decided to go home after complaining, disconcerted by the manager's assertion that everyone else seemed to be enjoying it.