

# MUSE

Feminist Magazine

FREE!

ISSUE 4  
SUMMER  
1/07

ISSN:177-1720



**Feminism and the Internet**

**Postcard from Ladakh**

**Lost: My Self**

**Plus.... food, body image and politics.**



## How to Get Involved

We are really keen to receive writing, images, art, etc, from women to be included in future issues. Muse reserves the right to select content based on the Muse Values and Profile, and on available space. For information on contributing, email [muse@riseup.net](mailto:muse@riseup.net) and we will send a copy of the Muse Profile and Contributors Information.

Deadline for Issue 5 contributions is 2 March 2007, and deadline for Issue 6 is 18 May 2007.

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We are a group of young women, living in Wellington, who have come together to provide a space for women's voices.

Muse is produced by the Muse editorial collective - Karen Price, Jenn Jones, Tanya Newman, Karin Brown and Keiller MacDuff.

Additional editing of this issue was completed by Karen Price, Karin Brown and Keiller MacDuff.

Design and cover illustration by Jenn Jones.

Muse wishes to thank all those who have contributed to this issue.

## Editorial



Kia Ora!

Welcome to issue 4 of Muse Feminist Magazine - a Wellington based zine providing space for the voices of young feminist women in Aotearoa New Zealand. We hope you enjoy our summer issue - hopefully a relaxing yet stimulating read for a sunny afternoon.

Issue 4 takes a journey through cyber space, as Jenn reviews and recommends some feminist websites and then takes a look at the darker side of the worldwide web - internet harassment. Amber Jane profiles the life of women in the Northern Indian region of Ladakh following a recent trip, and Nat shares her personal experience of being a young woman living with anxiety. Try out Deb's Chocolate Cloud recipe on page 24, it's sure to impress even the most discerning guest! And you can catch up on the latest "Things that make you grrrr". We were swamped with content for this column! It's a regular, so if you have a 'grrrr' moment that you want to get off your chest, please send it in and share it!

Have you seen the first few issues of Muse? Noticed content gaps that need to be filled? Interested in contributing to a zine by and for young women in Aotearoa? If so, then we want to hear from you! Share your thoughts with other young feminists, argue a differing perspective, or introduce us to a topic that is important

to you. Contributions that we are keen to receive include (but are not limited to): personal experience stories, articles, opinion pieces, art, creative writing, letters, profiles, reviews, etc.

The theme for the next issue is motherhood/parenting/reproduction, so we're currently seeking contributions on these and related topics. The deadline for submissions for issue 5 is the 2nd March. [We will continue to collect content on other topics for use in future issues, so if you have anything else to share, please do!]

Also, we're seeking more young enthusiastic Wellington feminists, with energy and passion for producing a feminist magazine, to join our collective. If you are interested, please get in touch!

We hope you are all having a restful, safe, fun summer and we look forward to continuing to bring you a vibrant feminist media alternative in 2007.

Happy reading, and look out for issue 5 in April!

The Muse Collective.

P.S. We are currently printing 1000 copies of Muse. These are mostly distributed in Wellington, but we are also sending them around the country. We have received many requests for further copies, but due to our small budget we are not always able to provide them. To secure a copy of issue 5, send us \$5 and we will add you to our mailing list.

### Disclaimer

Muse is a forum for feminist voices and discussion. Our purpose is to provide space for expression and encourage a diversity of perspectives. These are not necessarily the perspectives or opinions of the Muse Collective. We do not represent all women or all feminists.

# Letters

We would love to hear from you! Share your thoughts on issue four. Letters can be sent to muse@riseup.net or Muse Magazine, P.O Box 11731, Manners St, Wellington.

Please note: all letters here have been replied to directly but to clarify for readers - Muse accepts letters from men and women which we may print depending on space. However, as this is a feminist zine aiming to provide a space for young women's voices, we only publish content from women.

Kiaora musettes,

I love the zine and am quite into contributing to it. The only thing missing as far as I'm concerned is anything from the perspective of or addressing mothers. As a solo mother of one I find that there is a great lack of any alternative/feminist view of mothering published anywhere, let alone anything for us independent mothers. There are so many images in advertising the main stream media of the 'good mother' cooking cleaning having a ball with her little angels and still looking hot for her suitable wonderful hubby. Lck. On the other hand, there are lots of good blogs out there and a great column called Mother Superior in Bust mag but it might be good to have something in Muse? I would never want to assume that all women are or want to be mothers but the majority of women are either going to be mothering in the future or currently are.

arohanui

kathy b

Dear Muse

Well done on the continued production of your zine. There is no doubt that you cover an important subject, not only on an international level but more relevantly on a local level.

A Wellington based feminist zine has a lot to offer, providing free and easily accessible information and Muse provides an important section of the spectrum of ideas out there.

Keep it up :)

Kylie

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: letter to ed.s

Date: Sat, October 14, 2006 9:38 pm

To: "Muse Feminist Magazine" <muse@riseup.net>

Dear Muse collectivistas,

Just wanted to say thanks for your great little free zine. It's so nice to read something from local wahine that is not mainstream bullshit like the sexist 'Capital Slime' and the only-good-for-the-fire 'Salient'.

A few comments on issue 3 though. The 'In Brief' article on tampons for Zimbabwe seems rather naive and bordering on colonialist racism. Tampons and pads cause huge environmental, health and economic problems compared to "rags and tree fibres" which I personally have never heard or found lead to infections. This all sounds very close to corporate and colonial meddling to me...

The 'In Brief' article on male contraceptives worries me that it is promoting more chemical poisoning of people, be they men or womyn. It would be nice to see an article on healthier, fairer safe-sex options such as simple condoms. Anyone know the pros and cons of IUCDs?

And a note to army-grrl Private J. Salter: nice feminist critique of the NZ army but how about critiquing the army itself and the state that commands it? I don't know if the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, Timor or Korea really would consider us "friends". And I'm sure the Vietnamese are really thankful for our Taranaki-made Agent Orange and our SAS Maori that were sent in looking like Vietcong to slaughter whole villages only to return later in NZ army uniform to 'help' them. And perhaps you should ask your Maori comrades also about their thoughts on Parihaka and Maungapohatu and the battles of Wanganui etc. As you said yourself "war is effectively terrorism" so what really makes you "love [your] job and... hope other women will join"?

Em

PS. Sorry to sound so harsh but it's only because your zine is worth the critique. Yay for you all. Kia kaha.

## Muse Responds:

Thanks for your interest and feedback Em, particularly on the tampon donations to Zimbabwe. Unfortunately the 'in brief' did not do justice to this story, and some key points were regrettably omitted from the original - found on a major feminist news website. Muse was not attempting to comment on the nature of menstrual alternatives for women (we fully support these, and Muse has done a couple of features on alternative menstrual products in an earlier issue). The focus was intended to be on the economic crisis in Zimbabwe, its effect on local industries, and subsequent negative consequences for women. The closure of local factories resulted in a lack of supply of the menstrual products women were accustomed to using. Foreign donations to directly support Zimbabwean women (organised by a women's group within Zimbabwe) were also blocked by the government. The rags and tree fibres mentioned were not alternative menstrual products. They were literally raw materials used as a last resort. They were often dirty, resulted in infection, and were not used by choice. We apologise if the tone of the 'in brief' appeared to disrespect 'alternative' menstrual products or the women concerned. This was certainly not our intent. We agree that multinational meddling is not acceptable, and Muse certainly does not want to encourage such behaviour.

We're pleased to see Muse is generating discussion and debate - long may it continue!

**Reclaim the Night March**

Around 100 women and children took to the streets of downtown Wellington on November 23, 2006, to reclaim the night, take back the streets and voice their anger and distress at the ongoing sexual violence perpetrated against women. The march also highlighted that most abuse actually takes place in homes, not on the streets, and it was noted that often the most unsafe place for women is their home.

**Migrant women's needs not met**

The Families Commission has reported that the needs of migrant women are not being met in NZ hospitals. The stressful experience of giving birth compounded by lack of local family support, language barriers and diverse cultural customs are cited as relevant issues. However some migrant women stated that they felt empowered birthing in NZ as they were in a position to do more for themselves.

**Judge's dodgy comments in rape case**

A Christchurch judge's comments in a recent rape case have demonstrated a disturbing attitude amongst some in the judiciary. During the August 2006 sentencing of a 36-year-old man for raping a 14-year-old girl, Judge Stephen Erber stated that the girl was "partly the author of her own misfortune". He referred to her consumption of alcohol and "flirtatious" behaviour as contributing factors in the situation, clearly showing that victim-blame is disturbingly alive and well in NZ.

**Flexible Working Hours Coalition**

A new coalition of professional, business, community groups and trade unions was launched in November 2006 with the aim of supporting a Private Member's Bill on flexible working hours into legislation. NZ has a culture of working long hours compared to other OECD countries, which undermines family life and makes it hard to juggle family commitments. Flexible working hours legislation would change this, giving employees the right to request flexible working hours and employers the obligation to consider such requests seriously. Parliament will decide early in 2007 whether to support the Bill.

**White Ribbon Day**

Thousands of white ribbons were distributed around NZ on 25 November in recognition of White Ribbon Day, an international day where men wear a white ribbon to demonstrate that they do not condone men's violence against women. The campaign seeks to include men in addressing the widespread issue of men's violence against women in NZ, and encourages them to challenge each other on attitudes and behaviour that condone/support/tolerate violence towards women.

**All women considered "pre-pregnant"**

Due to roughly half of all pregnancies in the US being unplanned, federal guidelines are encouraging women to consider themselves "pre-pregnant" at all times. Women of child-bearing years are told to take folic acid and avoid activities like smoking and regular drinking in addition to managing body weight, asthma and diabetes. The motivation is not to protect women's health, but is instead designed to protect babies that women may or may not bear in the future. Noticeably there are no guidelines for men as potential fathers.

**Abuse of Zimbabwean women**

While 60 percent of murders in Zimbabwe are related to domestic violence, efforts to combat such violence continue to meet huge opposition. One Member of Parliament recently publicly opposed a Bill designed to battle domestic violence, stating that women were inferior to men and the proposed Bill would be "dangerous to society".

**Russian women more mobile**

In a country where previously only men had access to cars, Russian women are gaining newfound independence with the numbers of female drivers increasing by 50 percent in the last five years.

**Westpac providing childcare for workers**

The private sector is beginning to take some responsibility for providing support and resources to employees who are also parents. Westpac is leading the way in the financial sector with three childcare centres planned for the children of Westpac employees, with more centres to follow.

**Trafficking of women rife**

The UN reports that women continue to be trafficked at frightening rates. Approximately 500,000 women and children are taken to Europe every year where they are abused in the sex industry. They are kept in their positions of exploitation by crippling debts, lack of social support, physical and sexual abuse and threats made against them and their families.

**Recent CEDAW news**

The Cook Islands became the 184th country to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in August 2006. Over 90 percent of UN members are now party to the Convention. Those states that are not party to the Convention include Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Montenegro, Tonga and the United States.

# When women's rights are not our own...

I recently wrote an article on the impact of postmodernism on feminist history. I spent hours delving into postmodern theorists such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, and their application in feminist history by women such as Joan Wallach Scott and Judith Butler. By the end of it, I was quite convinced that postmodernism was truly the way to go for my discipline. It was able to take into account problems with feminist theory such as differences with the overarching category of "women", and allow all women's voices to be heard and valued within history (or herstory!)

Essentially, postmodern history celebrates diversity of opinion and experience, encourages plurality of truths, and promotes a

"deconstruction" of language and the way that it operates through symbolism, myths and signs. With it comes a shift from feminist history that examines women's lives and experiences with the purpose of advocating for equity and equality, to gender history, which examines the relational concept of gender as a social construct and the power relationships inherent in relationships. In itself this is not a bad thing, because an understanding of women's oppression certainly requires an investigation into the aspects of gender relations that contribute to it. But what concerned me was the shift in mindset away from women's history and feminist history, in favour of only studying gender history. To me, this is unacceptable. Gender history should be a complementary discipline, not the primary one.

This shift towards "gender" studies, away from women's studies, is part of a wider trend in our society that transfers any focus solely on women to a focus on how men are also affected by these issues. While trying to be more pluralistic in our focus, while trying to accommodate different groups within "women" we start to lose sight of the aims of feminist disciplines. Suddenly, it is "PC gone mad" if we focus solely on women's issues, and do not take a gendered focus that takes men into account.

Strictly speaking this new discourse is not postmodern, and skews the relational aspect of gender studies - which looks at the way the sexes interact and impact each other's lives.

Postmodernism may have been the starting point, but the new trend is having a much more damaging effect on the women's movement. Campaigns that highlight violence against women become simply anti-violence campaigns. Women's Rights Officers become Gender Officers. Women's organisations shy away from denouncing the ills of society that affect women, and point out how men suffer too. The discourse becomes about single issues, such as violence, rather than about systemic oppression of one gender by the other. In fact, gender is often taken out of the equation all together.

I don't know the solution to this problem. What I do know is that when women's rights are demonised as too politically correct, or as reverse sexism, something is seriously wrong. Particularly when we live in a world where one in four women have been raped or sexually abused, earn 86% of what men earn, and are still subject to demeaning and objectifying stereotypes in the media. No amount of deconstruction or semiotics or postmodern theory will solve these problems. Only advocacy and activism grounded in personal experiences can.

Jenn Jones

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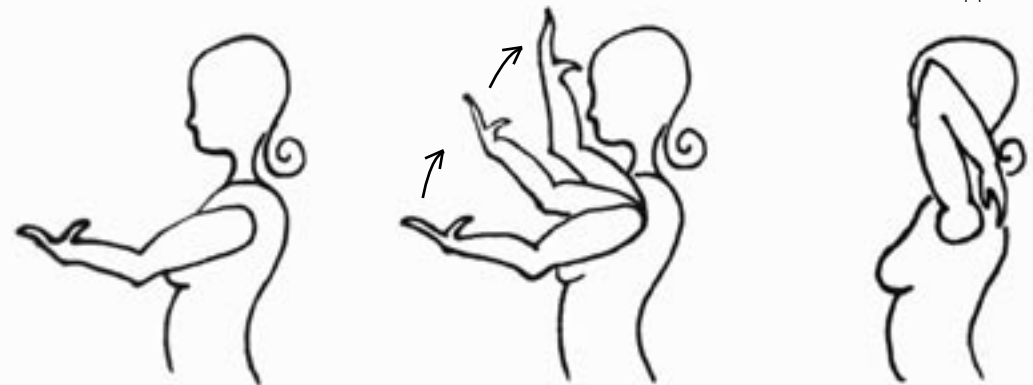
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## How to self-congratulate

Step One: Extend arm, palm up

Step Two: Raise arm above head

Step Three: Bend elbow and pat self on the back



karin brown

things that  
make you go  
GRRRR!!

Every day there are so many frustrating, sexist, ridiculous or unacceptable images and comments that we see or hear and that make us go grrrr! Often there is no-one around to vent to - or for self-preservation you just walk away. This column is for you to express your anger and sheer disbelief at the things that happen to women in every day life.

### Advertising

I have spotted an ad for Ford Fiesta cars around in some magazines/newspapers recently. It has the normal picture of a shiny oil guzzling car plus the headline "A WOMAN'S PLACE IS..." wherever she damn well pleases. Feisty Fiesta indeed! What a patronising load of crap. Maybe we should celebrate? Ford gives us permission to be where we want to be. So long as we get there in their irresponsible-mobile that is. This is not about empowering women, though I fail to see how driving a particular brand of car could truly empower anyone! This is Ford's token women's car I guess, in an industry generally pedalling to men. Speaking of pedalling how about an ad promoting women cycling. What's that old saying? A woman needs a car like a fish needs a bicycle! (KB)

### More Advertising!

I'm sure there are many, but at the moment I'm SO sick of all the cleaning products being advertised by women. Particularly the one where a new mother worries over how clean her toilet is when people come to visit, and also the one where the woman is so worried about

how clean her toilet is she spends all day moving the toilet freshener around the bowl, then collapses on it in despair. As if we have time to worry about those things! (JJ)

### Women's Refuge

While collecting for women's refuge recently a man comes over to donate saying "keep up the good work, women's refuge does such great work. But where's the men's refuge?" (JJ)

### London

When I was in London for a holiday I was reading a magazine called "The Big Issue", sold by homeless people to help them survive. I thought 'what an amazing progressive magazine it is that advocates for homeless people's rights, gay rights' etc. Then I came across an article which was basically about how great bikinis are, because you get to look at half naked women. I complained to my sister who lives in London, who simply said "its part of the 'page three girl' culture - people just don't think its sexist here". (JJ)

### One-liners

I was driving behind a big four-wheel gas-guzzler the other day. On the cover of the spare tyre it said: 'I wish my wife was this dirty!' (KBr) The same thing is stencilled on the fence up Allenby Terrace too. (JJ)

### Gender and Men's Studies

It really bugs me that when people ask you what you studied and you tell them Psychology and Gender and Women's Studies (in my case), they come back with the wonderfully unintelligent 'What about gender and men's studies, ug, ug'! Usually I actually bother to explain what the course covers, why we still need feminism and feminist analysis, but sometimes I just say 'What do you think History is?' (NG)

### Politically correct

Definition: "Showing an effort to make broad social and political changes to

redress injustices caused by prejudice. It often involves changing or avoiding language that might offend anyone, especially with respect to gender, race, or ethnic background." (1)

Why is it that the term 'politically correct' has been commandeered by the 'right' (and in fact the centre and some of the left too) and taken to mean something completely different from what it really does? There is an add for a bank or insurance company on TV that has the line 'The politically correct stole bull rush', the National Party under Brash had a PC Eradicator and even here in the UK there is an ad that says in a sarcastic tone 'In these politically correct times history now has a his and her's' (i.e. herstory).

This makes me so angry - what is so wrong with being politically correct? Either the term is totally misused, as in the bull rush example (that may have been about children's safety but I don't think it had anything to do with political correctness) or it is referring to respecting other people, often members of marginalized groups and even (!) learning to see things from their perspective or respecting their wishes in how they are treated (as the National Party use it - albeit inconsistently). Of course this is the sort of 'nonsense' some people want to 'eradicate' because apparently it is too much effort for them - Grrrr! (NG)

*Ref 1: The American Heritage® Dictionary of Idioms by Christine Ammer. Copyright © 1997 by The Christine Ammer 1992 Trust. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company.*

Contributors:

KB = Kathy B

KBr = Karin Brown

JJ = Jenn Jones

NG = Natalie Gousmett

What makes you go GRRRR? Email and tell us - muse@riseup.net with "grrrr" in the subject line.

# Building Bridges - and why we should bother

*“What we risk reveals what we value.”  
Jeanette Winterson*

I've often heard some women who don't like feminists or call themselves “I feminists” or “post feminists” say that women are women's own worst enemy. This is usually followed by talking about how bitchy and mean women are to each other. I don't think that many feminists would try to claim that any amount of bitching, backstabbing or even bad meetings would make other women a worse enemy to them than the patriarchy for its years of rape, violence, control and oppression. But I have heard feminist women talk about being treated badly by other feminists and how traumatic and disappointing this experience is.

I am feeling motivated to write about this right now partly as a result of a rather upsetting weekend-long feminist workshop that I and many other Wellington feminists attended. I do not want to write about the events of the weekend in depth, only to say that communication was not good, people behaved badly at times, there was conflict and many women left feeling hopeless and upset. The way that I have heard many women talking in the aftermath of the weekend has made me realise what extremely

high expectations we have of other women, even other women who we hardly know. I think that for many of us having a bad experience with other feminist women is so much harder to take than having a bad experience with any other group. Our expectations of each other are so high, and so the disappointment when those expectations aren't met is huge. I have heard women say that they feel really reluctant to attend feminist events outside their usual familiar groups because it feels too unsafe.

I have also been finding that lately the feminist groups that I am involved in have lacked passion and energy. We feel a bit lost and listless. I often feel that we have huge amounts of energy and passion when reacting to a crisis or responding to a negative experience we have had with men, but when we come together just as women we don't really know where to start! This is hard to deal with and many women have felt discouraged and stopped coming to meetings as a result. Many of us have had such amazing, cathartic, life changing experiences in women's groups that we attend expecting it to always be like that. When we arrive and find that it is unexciting and hard work we feel let down.

While I completely understand and relate to both these feelings I find it really sad and feel that it is somewhat of a victory for the patriarchy that women are not managing to find broader solidarity with each other than we are. I guess that what I am trying to do by writing this article is

to encourage us not to give up on each other. Wider solidarity among feminist women is worth fighting for.

I am not suggesting that we should lower our expectations of each other because I do believe we are capable of working together amazingly and achieving huge things. But I think we're going to need to put some work in to get to that point and that it is likely to push our tolerance and sometimes be hard and boring.

We struggle so hard and so constantly to work with men, in personal relationships, in groups and in families. Most feminists I know struggle to live alongside men and to do political work with men every day. For me personally this has involved struggling to resolve issues of sexism in countless groups. Running some horribly disempowering workshops for men on sexism (and some more successful ones), trying to work with rapists and dealing with being objectified, ignored, belittled and patronised by men I love and trust. None of this has got any easier. I have learned lots of hard lessons. I have incorporated a great deal more separatism into my life but I have not given up on men. It is too important. I have to exist in this world. I have a brother, a father, male friends and most importantly a nephew and a son. Giving up is not an option.

The fact that I can't give up on men makes it even more important that I struggle to build wider and stronger networks and relationships with other women. And surely if I can endure hard work and disappointment for

men I can endure it for women too!

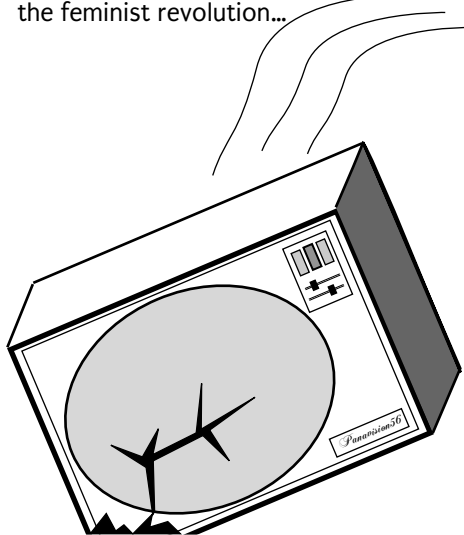
It is lovely to think that we can all come together with ease and automatically be full of energy and have our shit together (by which I mean being able to communicate in a way that works and feels safe for everyone). Perhaps this doesn't seem like a lot to expect. It shouldn't be. But we have all been struggling to live under the patriarchy! The fact that we are feminists doesn't make us immune. If there is one thing the patriarchy has worked hard at, it's eroding women's ability to come together and find solidarity without men. I do not want to condone bad behaviour. I am just saying that we are all human. We are hurting and we are passionate. There is urgency and excitement and desperation. We are often scared and often angry. We often get it wrong and sadly we treat each other badly sometimes. I think that this is all a side effect of how deeply we care and just how important it is. If we are going to create a truly strong feminist movement we are going to have to push through the hard bits and challenge bad behaviour in women, just as we have all become accustomed to challenging bad behaviour in men. We have to have high expectations of each other but we also have to have the commitment, understanding and trust to help each other live up to those expectations. It's not easy and it's scary, but I believe it's one of the most important and rewarding things we can do and to me it's what feminism is all about.

*some thoughts from Lenka*

# the revolution will not be televised...

by Jenn Jones

... it will be online. The internet these days is full of amazing feminist resources that are just waiting to be read! But it can be really hard to find particular stuff when you need it – when you google “feminism” the first site that comes up is Wikipedia, the next is for the Feminist Majority Foundation, and the next few sites are kind of random. One is even an anti-feminist site! Seeing as I spend half my life on the computer and internet with work, study, and for fun, I thought I would give the low-down on some of the feminist sites available which include useful news, information, activism ideas and links to other sites. These are essentially online portals to the feminist revolution...



## Feministing

[www.feministing.com](http://www.feministing.com)

Weekly feminist newsreader. Interviews with inspirational feminists. Links to hundreds of feminist websites. Probing commentary on the sexist, racist and homophobic nature of society. Thoughtful and intelligent discussion forums. \*sigh\* this is a feminist web-geeks heaven! Feministing’s mission statement says: “Young women are rarely given the opportunity to speak on their own behalf on issues that affect their lives and futures. Feministing provides a platform for us to comment, analyze and influence.” It is a news-based blog by a group of young women in America, who point out the raging sexism in everyday life. Basically, I can’t get enough of this site, and recommend it to everyone, particularly if you need to be reminded why we still need strong feminists. It gives me new reasons every day!

## Feminist Majority Foundation

[www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org)

This website is chock-a-block full of real feminist bits. That is, there’s a lot going on at [feminist.org](http://feminist.org)! The name was chosen after a Newsweek/Gallup poll indicated that 56% of American females

self-identified as feminist – and they also believe the majority of men would support the goals of feminism too. FMF was formed in 1987, and describes itself as “a cutting edge organization dedicated to women’s equality, reproductive health, and non-violence.” FMF explains that its goal is to utilise “research and action to empower women economically, socially, and politically. Our organization believes that feminists - both women and men, girls and boys - are the majority, but this majority must be empowered.” The cool thing about this site is that you can sign up for feminist news updates, delivered straight to your email. The downside is that it is very American focussed, both the news and the site. That said, there are some good links and some excellent activism ideas on this site. I particularly like their sister site, Feminist Campus ([www.feministcampus.org](http://www.feministcampus.org)) because it shows the organisation taking a lead role in spreading the feminist message to American tertiary campuses.

## Girlistic

[www.girlistic.com](http://www.girlistic.com)

Girlistic say that they are “the ultimate online feminist resource”, which is a pretty big call considering the number of sites around that do similar things. Girlistic’s introduction states “Providing education and entertainment, pop and politics, culture and community, resources and shopping, Girlistic is the first place to visit for women-centered information.” Again, big call to make! What I like about Girlistic though is the combination of fun

empowering stuff to do, like on their DIY page, their expansive links page (I mean expansive as in 133 links for “resources”, and 214 links to what they entitle “that’s life” which encompasses sexuality, sexual health, motherhood and blogs). It also has a snazzy new online feminist zine, which explains itself as “a blend of refined intellect and raw entertainment. Think: Ms. and Bitch have a threesome with Bust and the result is a bouncing baby Girlistic.” Their online zine came out on the 1st December and looks great (but quite big to download). They have a myspace page too, if you’re that way inclined. ([www.myspace.com/girlistic](http://www.myspace.com/girlistic))



## The F Word

[www.thef-wordzine.com/welcome.html](http://www.thef-wordzine.com/welcome.html)

An online zine created by Melody Berger, a women’s studies major at Temple University in Philadelphia. As well as featuring some pretty amazing illustrations, there are interviews with some pretty cool feminists, like Bitch (formerly from the musical duo Bitch and Animal) and Gloria Steinem. Other articles featured on the e-zine confront issues such as gender identity, international feminisms, and feminist craft (yay!). There is also a really great links section to online resources about AIDS, Racism, being Body Positive, Disability, GLBT, Homelessness, and Animal Rights. The site is quite user friendly with a focus on all forms of sexuality, creative

arts/writing, and a call for interested women to contribute. The only downside is the website isn't updated as often as I would like!

### **Wo! Magazine**

[www.wo-magazine.com](http://www.wo-magazine.com)

Another feminist e-zine!!! Looks like Muse might have to get internet savvy to keep up. Wo! Magazine is an Australian site, which combines a downloadable PDF zine, a blog (online journal) and a "lad-busters" page, which is where people can send in photos or ideas for good old fashioned activism like stencils, adbusts, and other forms of subverting popular culture. The main focus of the site however is their full colour zine, which has really admirable aims: "It is an attempt, of sorts, at repositioning feminism in a society which is still obsessed with the 'hairy bra-burner' myth. We want to pick ourselves up from feminist 'ground zero', dust ourselves off and redefine the 'f-word'." In other words, Wo! Magazine aims to challenge the myths perpetuated in the mass-media and elsewhere whilst providing timely, intelligent and amusing commentary on issues that affect us." Wo! also comes from a pluralistic perspective, which is something that is coming across very strongly in many of the third wave, or current generation, of feminist websites. I have the feeling however that as Wo! is a quarterly e-zine, not much will change on their webpage for periods of time. Oh, and there is also a myspace page for Wo! Magazine too. ([www.myspace.com/wo\\_magazine](http://www.myspace.com/wo_magazine))

### **Guerrilla Girls**

[www.guerrillagirls.com](http://www.guerrillagirls.com)

Guerrilla Girls are awesome, and their site is worth checking out to get some ideas for activism if you're interested in the way women are portrayed in the media, in art and in Hollywood. The GG's aim is to highlight and eradicate sexism, racism and homophobia from the art world and Hollywood, and take drastic measures to do so! The GG crew are all anonymous and wear guerrilla masks when they have public appearances. Their pseudonyms are based on famous female artists. Their site is well organised, and is bright and colourful. My favourite section is where you can view all the feminist activism they have done since the early 80s, in their stickers, posters, billboards and protests. There are also cool downloads like their posters or stickers, so you can spread the GG love.

### **Guerrilla Girls Broad Band**

<http://ggbb.org>

GG Broadband is an interesting site, but is quite hard to use. The site also doesn't have much flow... basically it's a lot of cool but unrelated feminist snippets. They have three main headings: war, the 'f-word' and culture. These all have various sub-headings, loosely related. There are some great graphics on this site, downloadable anti-Bush posters, a cute animation, and an interesting quiz about your feminist workplace personality. It's a

good site to spend an afternoon on, but there isn't as much meat there as there could be.

### **Anarcha**

[www.anarcha.org](http://www.anarcha.org)

Although I don't identify as anarcha-feminist, I really enjoy this site and find it really useful and enlightening. Anarcha provides an alternative perspective on the whole to the more generalised or liberal feminist sites such as Feminist Majority Foundation. The site includes a really good image library, and there are some great anarchist and gender resources such

as the "Sallydarity" page. Another purpose of this site is to be a place where anarcha-fems can publish their work, share ideas, and generally be heard. Yay!

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So, happy surfing! If you have any feminist websites that you think are worth spreading the news about email us at [muse@riseup.net](mailto:muse@riseup.net).

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## INTERNET HARASSMENT

Jenn Jones



For someone that spends at least half of their working day on the computer, I tend to be quite selective. There is a lot of rubbish out there, and unless I know the organisation or it's an official site, I rarely visit. That said, there are a lot of diamonds that are easily missed amongst the rough. To me, the internet is a place where women can gain access to information and resources. The internet is great for women because it provides a space where they can express their opinions, join online support groups, read feminist blogs and news, and participate in online forums. The possibilities are endless. However, the internet does have disadvantages for women. To begin, many women do not

have the technology skills to use the internet, nor the money or resources to own computers and internet connections. Computer technology is not a subject that many women study, and on the whole the internet is a man's domain. Essentially, the internet is a microcosm of society, where oppression of women is replicated and perpetuated. Internet pornography has to be the most obvious expression of this, and the hazy guidelines and rules about censorship on the internet has led to hundreds and thousands of hard-core porn sites catering to every sicko's fantasy.

In addition to porn, internet sexual harassment is another major issue on the internet for women. In an article

in the *Social Science Computer Review* (23:4, 2005) Azy Barak identified two main forms of harassment most prevalent on the internet: gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention. Barak defined the first as “unwelcome verbal and visual comments and remarks that insult individuals because of their gender or that use stimuli known or intended to provoke negative emotions” (p.78). This category can be further divided into active or passive harassment. For example, active harassment is directed at particular users, through derogatory or degrading remarks, telling sexist jokes or making comments of a sexual nature. Here

you’ll ever get”. Then there is also unwanted sexual attention, which Barak defines as “uninvited behaviours that explicitly communicate sexual desires or intentions toward another individual”. This could be suggesting or proposing sexual acts, either explicitly or implicitly, in comments on forums or message boards, or in an instant message or email. These are all common forms of internet harassment, and some users register with websites purely to harass other users – there are even special names for these users: “trolls” and “flamers”. This in turn creates a mindset of acceptability of harassment as a natural part of the World Wide Web. Trolling websites

**‘female usernames in internet chatrooms receive 25 times more threatening and sexually inappropriate messages than people with traditionally male usernames’**

are two that I have encountered on a blog I used to write: “They’re probably busy gagging on your cock”; “You sound like you got some sand in your vagina”. Many female online-opinion columnists or bloggers experience this sexual harassment daily. Feminist bloggers experience it the worst, with many moving to ban anonymous or unregistered users from commenting.

Passive harassment on the other hand isn’t as intrusive, or aimed at particular users – which makes it less identifiable and often more accepted. For example, it could be part of a computer user’s “profile” such as a pornographic picture for their user name, or including in their interests something like “best screw

is a hobby, a game. It is not seen as either harassment or sexual harassment.

Research has shown that it is specifically women that are targeted for these kinds of harassment. According to a study by University of Maryland’s A. James Clark School of Engineering (June 2006), those with traditionally female usernames in chat rooms receive 25 times more threatening and sexually inappropriate messages than people with traditionally male or even ambiguous usernames.\*\* On average, female user names received 163 malicious private messages a day in the study (which is huge). And this doesn’t include spam emails for Viagra, Cialis, or porn sites.

\*\*see [www.physorg.com](http://www.physorg.com) for more details on the study

Melanie Killen, Professor of Human Development in the University’s College of Education and Associate Director of the Centre for Children, Relationships and Culture, provides a description of the harassment: “Gender stereotypes and gender-targeted messages are very prevalent in internet chat rooms. Some people use the protected anonymity of the Internet to send provocative messages, often basing their assumptions about the recipient of the messages on very little information.”

Internet sexual harassment goes relatively undetected and unnamed. Often we don’t realise that it is harassment, such as with passive harassment, or spam for pornography. Even when we name it as sexual harassment, most people wouldn’t complain, or act against it. Barriers to eradicating this behaviour often seem insurmountable when faced with the size of the internet and the many many ways that predators can get around rules, laws and regulations. The repercussions of challenging internet sexism and sexual harassment can be huge: I felt completely ostracised from the internet community where I used to blog for a number of months after I wrote a post challenging the sexism rampant on that site. But the rewards can be great too. I received over 100 comments on the topic, to varying degrees of support. Unsurprisingly, those users only interested in “trolling” did not see the validity in my complaint. But many women users on the site agreed with me, and asked for the harassment to stop.

A dialogue was created about what sexual harassment on the internet was, and how we felt. This goes to show that every individual effort to stand up against internet sexual harassment will make a difference – but a collective stance against it will always be more effective.



#### GLOSSARY

Blog = online journal, diary or column; short for “weblog”.

Trolling = making deliberately inflammatory comments to incite angry responses or start an argument.

Flaming = sending messages or posting comments that are deliberately hostile and insulting, whereby the user is attempting to assert their power or authority over another user.

Flamer = someone who engages in “flaming”.

#### TAKE ACTION AGAINST INTERNET HARASSMENT!

If you see or receive unwanted comments, pictures, or attention, report it. Most websites have a moderator who controls the content of their site, and blogs and forums tend to have rules and conditions. You have the right to be safe from sexual harassment - in the real world and in cyber world.

# Postcard from Ladakh

by Amber Jane



Amber Jane spent July 2006 staying in a small village in Ladakh, 'the Land of High Passes', a magical and mountainous region in the Indian Himalayas, where the local women are taking the sustainable development of their land into their own hands, and giving the rest of the world some valuable lessons in cooperative community action.

Ladakh, viewed from above from the window of a descending plane, resembles an estuary at low tide, when the water has drained away leaving paths and channels. The mud-coloured, featureless moonscape is broken only by snow-topped Himalayan peaks, and occasionally, a patch of green where people have ingeniously captured the melted snow to grow crops and carve out an unlikely livelihood. Everyone comments on how amazing it is that humans have settled and flourished in one of the world's harshest corners; a high altitude desert which is completely frozen

for much of the year. Although politically part of India, Ladakh is closely related to Tibet in language, culture, religion and history.

Several decades of change brought about by the arrival of tourists, the cash economy and economic development in the 1970s have caused upheaval in every aspect of the Ladakhis' ancient, unchanging way of life. Many of these changes have particularly affected the lives of Ladakh's women.

Traditionally, the household was the centre of economic life, with extended families working their land and tending the animals together during the brief agricultural season. Within villages, reciprocal labour-sharing meant that there were always enough hands, even at busy harvesting times. The status of women, as the hub of a village-centred way of life, was largely equal to that of men, and they enjoyed considerable influence and personal freedom.

The spread of the cash economy has drastically changed this balance. Considerable portions of the male population have been drawn into paid work in the capital, Leh.

The women are left behind to manage the family, agricultural work and the running of the village alone. Children now spend their time within the formal education system, and so don't have the time, and are not receiving the instruction, to allow them to help out. Life in the villages has become a struggle for many women.

As the men have moved away from working the land, and the Ladakhi households now buy consumer goods rather than producing all they need within the village, the status of the women has taken a dive. In the modern economy, women are largely marginalized, their work not measured by cash. Decision making in the new economy and in the formal political system is done largely by men. The influence of new fashions, ideas, television, music videos and advertising has undermined the traditional values and lifestyle, with many people (particularly the young) believing that the old way of life is backward and that the modern is unquestionably superior. In this new society, women have lost confidence, claiming that they do not 'know anything' because they are not well educated, don't speak English or work in a paid job, despite their huge and rapidly-expanding jobs as the lynchpins of the village economy, society and culture.

In 1991, the Women's Alliance of Ladakh (WAL) was formed to counter the negative trends arising from economic development, assert traditional Ladakhi culture and agricultural systems, and to provide a voice for women. WAL works to foster participatory development that considers the needs of women, children, communities and the environment.

At first, the work of the Women's Alliance was daunting. 'Initially [the women] were

hesitant and shy,' said Dolma Tsering, WAL President (1). But the Women's Alliance has grown both in power and in numbers. Spread over 100 villages throughout Ladakh, and with 5000 members, the Women's Alliance is now the strongest political force in Ladakh (2). A measure of the WAL's success, according to Dolma, is that the fact that the local men are always threatening to start up a Men's Alliance, although they 'never seem to actually do it.' (3)

The activities of the Women's Alliance include encouraging traditional agricultural practices, including the shared-labour system and the avoidance of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Every year they hold a festival to celebrate local knowledge and skills, such as spinning, weaving, dyeing and food preparation. They also urge people to look after the environment, especially in regards to the plastic and



1. Kaul, Ashima. 2006. High Altitude Battle Against Globalisation. [www.boloji.com/wfs3/wfs304.htm](http://www.boloji.com/wfs3/wfs304.htm) Accessed October 2006.

2. Participational Development in Ladakh. [www.infochangeindia.org](http://www.infochangeindia.org) Accessed October 2006.

3. As above fn.1

packaging waste that now litters Ladakh's otherwise pristine environment.

The Women's Alliance also works with local people to educate them on the hazards of some new consumer products. As people whose only products traditionally consisted of things grown or found in their local environment, most Ladakhis are frighteningly unaware of the toxicity of things they can now buy in the stores. It is common for Ladakhi people to burn plastic in their kitchen stoves, use pieces of retrieved asbestos to cook bread upon, throw used batteries into waterways or open them and use the fluid inside as paint, or incorrectly use and dispose of chemicals.

One of WAL's great successes has been working with local government which resulted in a ban on the use of plastic bags in 1998. The women have not let half-hearted law enforcement thwart their efforts; in 2006 the Women's Alliance celebrated Environment Day by marching en masse through the centre of Leh, and conducting surprise inspections of stores to



To make contributions write to Women's Alliance of Ladakh; Sankar Road, Chubi, Leh, 194101, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir. Phone: 01982-50293.

make sure that they were not using plastic bags. Those who were had their bags promptly confiscated.

In 2003, the Women's Alliance began agitating for action to stop violent crimes and sexual abuse against women in Ladakh. They helped organise a large silent demonstration to raise awareness of the issues and to condemn a case of gang-rape in the region. The Women's Alliance has also worked closely with Ladakh's first woman gynaecologist to encourage women to take legal actions against men who refuse to support their illegitimate children.

The work of the Women's Alliance to protect and preserve Ladakh culture and environment and to stand up for the rights and welfare of women has had a real effect on the community. There has been a major shift away from the use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers. Women's sense of confidence is reportedly much improved. The members of the Women's Alliance cultivate pride through their own example. In Leh, where only the old people wear traditional dress, with the middle-aged favouring the Indian shalwar kameez and the youth looking like they've stepped off the streets of Wellington in their jeans, sneakers and hoodies, the Women's Alliance women stand out and emanate a grounded pride in their traditional handmade garments, long plaited hair and turquoise jewellery.

'Only a few years ago, women were considered backward and ignorant,' Dolma recalls, 'now we're respected as one of the most influential voices in Ladakh.'



Yep, I was 25 years old and on the verge of a big overseas trip when I realised I had lost my SELF. I was so busy and stressed that my life seemed full, but I couldn't even describe myself without talking about what I did for others. The first indications that things weren't quite right were near breakdowns at the end of last year when I was working full time in a stressful policy role, working on the Muse collective, holding a position on a governance board and attending national meetings, etc, etc. Not to mention trying to be a good partner, friend, flatmate, daughter and sister. The pressure sometimes got to be too much and I would just physically and emotionally collapse. Sound familiar? It is likely that if you are a woman then at

some time you have felt like you are trying to do EVERYTHING and be everything for everybody – apart from yourself.

I started having some minor anxiety attacks (also known as panic attacks) when I was getting closer to winding up my life in Wellington and heading to the UK, so I couldn't really ignore it anymore. This scared the hell out of me because I am a self-admitted control freak. At first I couldn't understand what was going on but after some hard work with a counselor, friends and family I worked out some of my problem:

1. No time for myself: I was so run off my feet that I never had time to relax, do something for me, put my feet up, read a book – I didn't even really know how to. And don't even mention the guilt I felt if I did!
2. Trying to do everything: I just had to learn how to say no. It took practice and helped that I had friends who understood women have the right to say no, because that is not the message women are given anywhere else. Plus in a small feminist community who feels like they can say no if it means letting other women down?
3. Trying to be everything for everyone: I realised that I actually defined myself by what I did for other people. It was a common 'female' thing of constantly giving and gaining self worth from how much I sacrificed and gave to others. I actually had trouble defining myself without talking about helping others (e.g. being supportive, caring, a good friend, etc).

These are all ways that we are taught to be as women, we are to deny ourselves in order to be what others 'need' us to be. This may mean being the perfect mother, sister, daughter, feminist, partner or worker and often it means being all of these. But we can't be super-woman even if this is

what is expected of us. Many of us try to fill those impossible shoes and neglect our own needs and make ourselves unwell - losing our 'selves'.

In order to salvage some sense of my 'self' and begin to address the anxiety I was experiencing, I endeavoured to introduce some positive, pro-active strategies to my life. I would take 10 minutes a day just for me, to totally switch off and clear my mind. Breathing exercises or meditation were helpful, especially with anxiety. I know this may sound like a luxury, but for me it was good to try at the very least to find 2 hours a week to do something just for me (the book I read recommended 1 hour a day, 1 day a week and one week every 2 months but of course it didn't offer suggestions for how to fit this in and no surprises, it was written by a man!)

I practiced saying 'no' or 'I will have to think about that and get back to you' when people asked me to do things. It really helped to surround myself with friends who supported me to say no and would rather that I missed their party or a meeting than stretch myself and become unwell. Women are not given the right to say no in our society, so this can be a hard one to do.

I still have to remind myself that my friends and family love me for who I am rather than for what I give and do for them - this is really important. I also completed an exercise to help me define myself. For this I wrote 5 things under the following headings, trying to think of things that aren't just about helping others.

1. People who are important to me

2. Things that I enjoy or that give me pleasure

3. Things that I am good at/skills

4. My values and beliefs

5. My goals and dreams

6. Things that I need in my life

This helped me get a picture of myself wider than just what I do for others, and I now know that if one part of my life is a bit shaky for a while, there are lots of other parts to lean on.

Unfortunately, no matter how far some people insist we have come, women still do the vast majority of caring work. This includes all the support that women offer their partners and friends as well as being a mother, caring for an elderly parent or being a poorly paid caregiver (e.g. in a rest home). All too often this work consumes women and is at the expense of our own needs. I believe this is a feminist issue. For me being feminist is about treating myself, not only others, with respect and compassion.

I am not an expert in the area of anxiety. But I do know how anxiety affects me and the tools I find useful for living with it. All women are unique, therefore we experience stress and anxiety differently and deal with it in different ways. I am sharing my experience in the hope that the things that helped me start to find my 'self' again may be useful for other readers who can identify with my experience.

**BY NATALIE GOUSMETT**

For more information try:

- The Women's Comfort Book. Jennifer Loudon, Harper San Francisco, 1992.
- The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook. Edmund J. Bourne. New Harbinger Publications, 2005.
- Panic Attacks: What they are, why they happen and what you can do about them. Christine Ingham. Thorsons, 1993.
- Or you may wish to contact your local Women's Health Collective.

## Leaving (For Michael.)

On the morning before departure  
the ducks circled your hut  
in indignant squalls.

You made me coffee  
when we met in the sun drenched kitchen  
even though you don't drink it.

We talked about leaving,  
returning. The uncertainty of the  
future cupped in our palms.

## Deb's chocolate cloud Recipe

3 egg whites

Pinch of salt

3/4 cup castor sugar

1 cup desiccated coconut

2 tablespoons cocoa

Beat egg whites until frothy (peaking).  
Gradually add salt & sugar while  
beating until mix is white, thick & glossy.  
Mix cocoa & coconut together separately,  
then gently fold into egg white mixture.  
Drop mix on baking paper & cook for 20 minutes  
@170 degrees Celsius. Allow to cool before  
dipping in melted cooking chocolate.

## a different sort of dieting

by Lenka

This is about the relationship that women have with food and with their bodies, and about the subtle ways we as feminists manage to maintain the unhealthy aspects of that relationship, even though we've learnt not to talk about dieting. This is something that I have given a lot of thought to. Turning these thoughts into writing was prompted some time ago in reaction to the way that 'healthy eating' was discussed in "10 wise ways women's

to wellness" in issue 2 of muse. It's been half finished on my computer for some time and only now, after listening to the conversations over dessert at another community potluck, that I've found the motivation to finish and submit my writing.

Because of the huge impact that food and body image has had on my life I don't feel that I can discuss this issue honestly unless I do so in the context of my own experiences. I must locate myself in my body. I wish that I could give an in-depth physical description of my body so as to locate myself within it, however I have not yet learned to view or talk about my body in a way that I feel is 'healthy', and I fear I cannot do so without being self-deprecating. It seems relevant to say however, that my body has never been what is deemed 'attractive' by our society and since the birth of my



son ten months ago, it has moved even further away from it. Having said this, before I became pregnant my body came close enough to the ideal that I at times experienced the false power and sense of approval that this brings, as well as the particular type of objectification and sexual harassment that many women choose to take as a compliment. While I was visibly pregnant I found that this type of attention stopped and was replaced with an entirely different type. Everyone, from friends to complete strangers seemed to think it appropriate to comment on my body, it appeared to become public property. Pregnant women's bodies are objectified but this objectification is not sexual. Now that I am not pregnant, have put on weight and am usually accompanied by a baby, I appear to have become quite invisible. My adorable baby is public property for everyone to comment on. I am just an accessory to him.

For as long as I can remember I have found my body entirely unsatisfactory, been trying to change it, found it hard to believe anyone else could find it attractive. I did not see this as having a negative body image because this is how I had always seen other women respond to their bodies and on the continuum of self loathing mine seemed pretty minor. I don't remember when I first began feeling guilty about what I ate, but this was also something that I believed to be normal. The fact that I enjoyed eating and did not particularly enjoy exercising meant that I have existed in a perpetual state of low level guilt

probably since around puberty. I have at times bought into various alternative ideas of 'healthy eating' from fasting to low carb to dairy free, claiming to be doing so because it was 'good for me' while actually hoping or believing that if I could do this for long enough I would lose weight. I always got a sense of virtuousness from the sensation of hunger and felt that I was doing something morally repugnant when I was eating anything other than salad.

It is only in the last few years, through women's consciousness raising groups that I have taken part in, that I have come to realise and grieve for the pain and unhappiness my body image has caused me. I now consider it to be a birth right to feel beautiful and sexy that has been taken from me. I have made huge efforts to look at and talk about my body differently. I now ask women not to put down their own bodies around me and ask people not to comment on mine. I'm not sure that I will ever be able to separate how I feel about my body from how society talks about women's bodies, and I feel absolutely furious about this.

Because of the huge amount of thought I have put into trying to improve the relationship I have with my body and with eating I am now mistrustful of what is really going on when I hear people talking about food in most contexts. Within the circles that I move many women have been analysing and deconstructing their body image in a similar way to me. It is something we discuss often. Many of us have got better at pulling other women up on talking about bodies in



an unhealthy way. Despite this, I often hear other feminist women taking part in moralistic discussions about food, of a sort that are very similar to those that happen in the mainstream. Many feminists still consider these conversations perfectly acceptable. Often these conversations are about health and what food is healthy and what food is not. We all want to be healthy. It is important to look after yourself and this means watching what you eat. We would never discuss cutting down our sugar intake in order to look good in a bikini for summer but it is perfectly alright to cut down on sugar because it is bad for you in other ways. The lines between healthy eating and weight loss are pretty blurry though, especially since the food that

makes you put on weight is usually food that you can justify cutting out for other health reasons. Discussion of weight, when framed in terms of 'health' rather than appearance also often slips by unnoticed. We are told constantly that being fat is not healthy and therefore should be avoided, but since the vast majority of women in our society know deeply that fat is bad and a good proportion of those women are convinced that they are fat, this is not only completely unnecessary but deeply damaging.

I have found discussions about eating healthily to be just one of the subtle ways that we manage to reinforce our bad relationships with food without actually talking about fat or weight loss. Most of the people in my life are very politically active people. We have no trouble finding reasons to restrict what we eat. There are lots of political reasons to avoid different foods. We can cut out animal-related food because of the exploitation, we can cut out a zillion brands of foods because they're produced by evil corporations, we can cut out foods that aren't organic because of the effect on the environment. Perhaps we have worked hard to transcend the guilt we associate with food that makes us fat, but we still have guilt and sin associated with food, it's just for political reasons now. This is still about control. This is still eating disordered behaviour. It also happens to be a lot of the same foods we felt guilty about



This language permeates our thinking constantly. We cannot pick up food without assessing its' goodness or badness before taking a bite. Feeling virtuous or guilty. Wouldn't it be wonderful to just eat! To eat with joy and relish!

In the short term I want to deconstruct this issue further in feminist circles. I would like feminist spaces to be one space where my issues with food and with my body are not reinforced. Dialogue needs to be opened up in order to find healthy language to use when talking about health and food. I would like us to constantly challenge ideas of health, to challenge ideas of 'good food' and 'bad food'. And to constantly remind ourselves that most women in our society can't think about food without thinking about weight, and as a result any conversation about food has the potential to reinforce negative body image.

As a feminist I have a long term goal that women's bodies and our sexualities will one day belong to ourselves. That our daughters will grow up believing that they are gorgeous and sexy regardless of their body shape. We will be able to have a relationship with ourselves that is separate to the way we are portrayed in the media and in society. We will be able to enjoy food and decide what food is good for our bodies in a way that is healthy and not projected onto by outside factors. We will be able to get honest health and nutritional information that is not in fact trying to shrink and control us, but trusts women to make decisions about their own bodies.

before. Weight loss is just a side effect. (Perhaps we can see it as a pleasant reward for being so virtuous!) All of these restrictions that many of us place on our consumption create a culture in which food is being talked about a lot. Often health-related diets get muddled into the conversation, someone is on a raw food diet, someone else is trying to cut down on carbohydrates. No one notices that this has stopped being political and become about just depriving ourselves of food for the sake of it. We are so used to talking about what we should and shouldn't eat that it seems perfectly normal.

A language has developed in which food is ascribed moral attributes. Chocolate is 'naughty', chips are 'junk' food, wheat is 'evil', sugar is 'bad', raw grated carrot salad is 'good'.

## The Feminist Bulletin Board...

### Looking Back, Moving Forward

Queen's Birthday Weekend, 2005, saw hundreds of women gather in Wellington for a convention marking the 30th anniversary of the United Women's Convention held in 1975. Looking Back, Moving Forward is a record of this weekend, profiling attendees, exploring what has changed for women over the years, and considering the many challenges women in New Zealand still face.

For enquiries and orders email [admin.janus@xtra.co.nz](mailto:admin.janus@xtra.co.nz)

### Young Women's Hui

Interested in joining other young feminists in organising or attending a young women's hui? Keen to participate in feminist discussion, networking, skill-sharing and consciousness-raising? For more details, or expressions of interest, contact Camilla Belich at [Camilla.belich@gmail.com](mailto:Camilla.belich@gmail.com) or Karen Price at [karenprice@paradise.net.nz](mailto:karenprice@paradise.net.nz).

Next issue Muse will be publishing more feminist notices. Email us your text (25 words or less) to [muse@riseup.net](mailto:muse@riseup.net) by the 2nd March. Muse reserves the right to select notices based on based on the Muse Values and Profile, and on available space.

## Opportunity to provide support

We are a small group of young women, living in Wellington, who have come together to create this free feminist zine. Muse is produced on volunteer time and resources, but we really need assistance to get copies printed and distributed.

If you are interested in making a donation to Muse you can:

- fill out the form below and post a cheque to Muse Magazine, PO Box 11731, Manners Street, Wellington
- make a direct credit to the Muse account (details below), and provide your name/organisation

For more information email: [muse@riseup.net](mailto:muse@riseup.net)

Thank you!

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girls  
are  
strong!

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and photography!  
email [muse@riseup.net](mailto:muse@riseup.net)  
for more info

