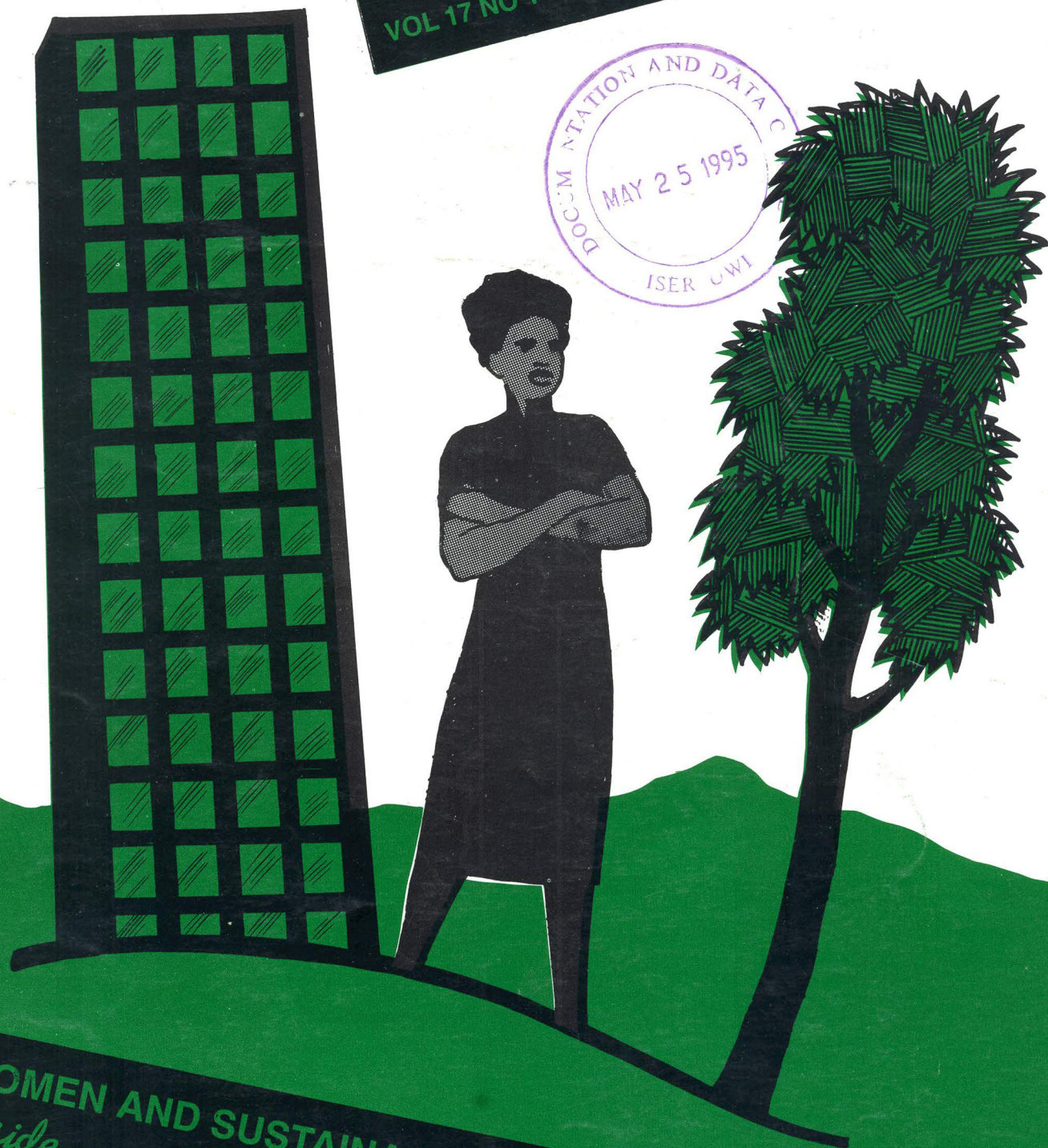


SIREN

JS30

VOL 17 NO 1 - 1995



"WOMEN AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT" *Inside...*

- BEIJING AND BEYOND
- A YARN SPUN FOR GOLD (Getting into Export)
- JERLINE TODD... WOMAN IN THE ARTS
- and much much more



Sistren Out Deh!

Afolashade (Programme Officer) returned from her studies at the COADY International Institute, St Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia, Canada. She graduated with a Diploma in Community Development. The course was well attended by 54 students from 24 other countries.

Afolashade attended the Prep Comm III DAWN Meeting in New York in January. This meeting was to give guidelines for the World Summit on Social Development (held in Copenhagen, Denmark, March 3-4), and the Beijing Women's Conference (scheduled for September).

Sistren's Annual Retreat to look at structure, finance, personnel, management and Programmes was held at Springburn House in Meadowbrook on the weekend of February 10-12, 1995. The sessions were facilitated by Yvonne McCalla-Sobers.

Resource persons were Gerry McDaniel & Alicia Dobson of Mac II Communication Assoc.

The collective takes this opportunity to again thank everyone for their individual support and contribution, especially in light of the usual busy weekend schedules. We also wish to thank the house and kitchen staff at Springburn House, headed by Mrs Rochester.

We strongly recommend this venue to anyone who has not yet tried it.

Springburn House
1 Springburn Avenue
Kingston 19
Meadowbrook
Telephone:
809-969-6850
969-7237

Afolashade represented Jamaica at a National Conference on the problem of violence against women. She presented a dramatic piece to reflect this particular issue. The conference was held in Managua, Nicaragua between March 30 and April 6.

AT THE MEETING PLACE

 Congratulations to Rebecca Knowles now sitting in the chair as Assistant Managing Director of Sistren

Theatre Collective. Rebecca was appointed by the then Managing Director Marion Bernard just before her resignation in November 1994. Becky we know you will do your best.

Welcome to Dawnette Hinds: Sister and member of the **KULCHAFUSHAN** Cast. Dawnette a.k.a. Josie is now employed to Sistren as Popular Theatre Community Animator. Yes Josie, young and vibrant actress, fresh new and innovative ideas is what we need. Keep on keeping on.

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Jerline Todd
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Sistren is published three times per year by Sistren Theatre Collective as part of its on-going efforts to high-light issues of concern to women in the society. Sistren is a non-profit collective of women. Activities include theatre, work-shops, and research. Sistren has also experimented with film and video, and produced a book of members' life stories (Lionheart Gal). Sistren Textiles is the group's income generating project.

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"SORRY HONOR!"

It has been brought to our attention that a statement which appeared in our article on Mrs. Jean Small, and published in our last magazine (Vol. 16 nos 3 & 4) under the caption "Profile" may be construed by our readers as being defamatory of Miss Honor Ford-Smith.

To the extent that Miss Ford-Smith is readily identifiable by the general public, and our readership in particular, as being one of the pioneers of the Sistren Theatre Collective, a statement in our profile on Mrs. Small may be interpreted by our readers as inferring that Miss Ford-Smith exploited members of the Sistren Theatre Collective. We unreservedly apologize to Miss Ford-Smith for the inference from which we disassociate ourselves entirely.

We would like the public to recognize Miss Ford-Smith's contribution to this body. She is a highly respected person, whose work has been an inspiration to us. Her acclaimed knowledge of education and the theatre has helped to make the foundation a solid one. Miss Ford-Smith along with other founding members set the pace for Sistren's inception, built a number of workshops pieces, designed workshops and created some of Sistren's major plays such as - "Down Pression get a Blow", "Belly Woman Bangarang" and "The Case of Iris Armstrong". Sistren and Honor Ford-Smith co-wrote and edited the autobiographical book - "**Lionheart Gal**" which made it to the best seller list. Together we produced a documentary on the experiences of women in the sugar belt - "Sweet Sugar Rage".

We say without reservation, that the statement by Mrs. Small was racist, unfair and unnecessary. Sistren's existence, its work and success have nothing to do with the colour of one's skin. For publishing this comment without editing it, we are very, very sorry. In addition, we publish below the full text of the apology sent to Miss Ford-Smith's Attorneys by Mrs. Jean Small, the user of this unfortunate comment.

Sincerely,



Sistren Theatre Collective

JEAN SMALL

c/o The Philip Sherlock Centre
For The Creative Arts
U.W.I.
Mona Campus
Jamaica
March 3, 1995

Ms. Honor Ford-Smith
c/o Myers, Fletcher & Gordon
Park Place
21 East Street
Kingston, Jamaica

Dear Ms. Ford-Smith,

Re : Statement

"Sistren really represented 13 women who have grown, who sought to perfect their art but they also were exploited by educated white skinned women."

contained in profile on me published in Vol. 16 Nos. 3 & 4 of 1994 "Sistren" magazine.

I hereby register my apology to you for the defamatory content of this statement made by me. I am sure that the editor and publishers will agree to have my statement of apology published in their next issue, if you so desire.

Jean Small (Mrs)
cc. Mrs. Sandra Minott-Phillips

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The world has reached a turning point. Ever since the end of the cold war there has been an unsatisfiable pre-occupation with talks of peace, co-operation and yes, sustainable development. Sustainable development has become the international goal for the 21st Century.

Sustainable development has been described as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs..... Living standards that go beyond the basic minimum are sustainable only if consumption standards everywhere have regard for long term sustainability.

Simply put, the concept implies development for all, but without bankrupting the environment for future generations.

Although differences may exist as to how to achieve sustainable, balanced development, there seems to be a general consensus that the first step toward this goal is the elimination of absolute poverty. This calls for a fair distribution of the benefits of development within and between nations and between the sexes.

This equity will remain unachievable however, if women continue to be marginalized. The status of women and the pace of economic growth correlate.

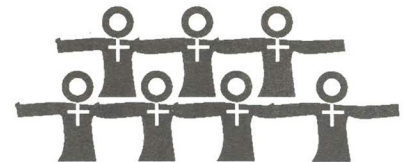
The level of health care and education available to women determine the quality of life of children. The principle of equity is however rooted in the provision of legislation to ensure equality, development and peace.

In this issue, Sistren examines those areas of fundamental importance in the quest for equality, peace and development for all. The challenge exists at the international level as seen in the promise of the Beijing conference, at the national level where legislations are being enacted in response to the needs of women and at the community level where women are meeting the challenge of self-reliance and self-empowerment.

In addition, we have our usual features; Health update which calls for a return to preventative health care; Women in the Arts with Jerline Todd; Sistren Profile focuses on Yvonne Rose using her spirit of self-reliance to survive whole. Teens In Action with Rebecca Knowles is a story of undaunting courage and triumph in the face of adversity.

We continue to provide you with excerpts from Lionhart Gal. This issue also sees the revival of the Mail Bag and a continuation of the series Ansa and Granny.

We hope you enjoy this issue and invite your comments.



SISTREN PROFILE



Yvonne "Shuggy" Rose (left) and son David Fuller Jr. (right). Bottom centre is Myrtle "Bess" Thompson-Rose.

SISTREN presents the first of a series of profiles on the children of some of Sistren's founding members. This issue, we feature Yvonne Rose, daughter of Myrtle "Bess" Thompson-Rose.

A Bit About "Bess"

During her 18-year career with Sistren, Bess has taken on the challenge of a number of responsibilities. She has served as founding member, teacher, actress, and has participated in the workshops mounted all over the island. She has represented the organization in the press and overseas. She has even done screen-printing. More recently, she has been assisting with the group's accounts, even though, she says, she "doesn't really like accounting very much". She has risen to every occasion, willing to take these tasks in order to make the organization work. This attitude of willingness is one that is also found in her own life.

In her own life, the objective she

has always worked towards is one of independence and she relates that she has always been willing to do whatever is necessary to attain this goal. Her first conviction that the way forward was through independence came about while watching the experiences of her mother who was stuck in a violent, abusive relationship. After that, she says, she was determined to take care of herself. Despite setbacks such as teen-age pregnancy and limited means, she feels that today, she has achieved her goal.

Sistren, she feels, is an important group because of its purpose of helping women who are also experiencing setbacks caused by a lack of independence. "Getting together with other women is a necessary part of becoming independent because you become stronger when you hear that your problems are shared by others." The pride in her voice is evident when she speaks of her daughter, Yvonne, who has

PERSONAL NOTES

SELENA - OUT - but onto new and different things. Selena Tapper, outgoing Regional Officer for CUSO is now on to 'greener pastures', and the challenges of a new career. Walk good.

LEITH - IN - Dr. Leith Dunn is new Regional Officer, CUSO. Leith is a stalwart and backbone of the women's organizations in Jamaica, Europe and the Caribbean. Gwan Leith, we know you can make it work.

CONGRATULATIONS -

to Bev Hanson on her first grandchild. Her younger daughter Karen Sessing had a son September '94 - Joshua Retemiah. Congrats Bev, you have now joined the nanny/granny posse.

inherited this sense of independence and who has listened to her mother's advice to always try to be self-reliant. Here, Yvonne talks about her experiences.

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BEIJING AND BEYOND

Sandi Graham

Fate dictates that the Fourth World Conference on Women be held in China. This eastern country of over 1.1 billion people is known as the Land of Hope, and rightly so.

China's annual GNP growth rate has averaged at 9.6%, its foreign trade reached US\$195.7 billion in 1993 and predictions are that the total volume of exports for the rest of this decade will reach US\$1,200 billion. Per capita disposable income of rural and urban residents trebled over the last 15 years.

Once held in the grip of a century of humiliation, poverty and degradation, the Chinese people believe that their dream of a dignified lifestyle and national prosperity is about to come true.

Women the world over share a common history with the Chinese people - a history of oppression and abasement. Beijing represents the crossroads where these common conditions will form the bedrock of discussions which hopefully will hasten the climb out of poverty and degradation.

The theme of the Conference is "Action for Equality, Development and Peace." For its part, Jamaica, through the Jamaica National Preparatory Commission has carried out extensive research and data gathering on the status of women in Jamaica.

A national report on such status has already been compiled for the conference.

Among the critical issues examined in this report are inequality in the sharing of power and decision making at all levels; insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women, the lack of awareness of, and commitment to internationally and nationally recognized women's rights; poverty; inequality in women's access to and participation in the definition of economic structures and policies and the productive process itself; inequality in access to education, wealth, employment and other means of maximizing awareness to rights and the use of their capacities and violence against women.

Minister in charge of Women's Affairs the Hon. Portia Simpson who will lead the delegation to the Beijing Conference is emphatic about the issues which are at the top of her agenda to the conference.

"The continued oppression of women worldwide, unemployment, lack of proper health care and the general peripheral status of women will be addressed at the conference. The contribution of rural women in agriculture will also be addressed."

What does the Minister expect to take back so that the interest, hype and activism go beyond Beijing?

"The Conference hopefully will create a ripple that will spread worldwide. Here in Jamaica I hope to see more women becoming active agents of change and not just interested bystanders."

Let us also hope that the Chinese expression "women hold up half the sky" will be adopted as it speaks to equality which is the genesis of peace, development and justice. It is also a counter to the Jamaica proverb "women luck deh a dungle heap, fowl come scratch it up" which suggests the ambivalence and uncertainty associated with the future and fortune of the woman.

The road to Beijing may very well be the road to the full emancipation and progress of women worldwide. Delegates to the conference may well be advised to take a trip to the Great Wall of China. The most imposing and best protected section of the Wall is not far from the City of Beijing.

That trip might represent their climb out of marginalization and a rejuvenation of the spirit of commitment to the pursuit of dignity, equality, peace and development.

Women all over the world have a particular vexing stake in ensuring that the Beijing Conference will launch a profound revolution to break down all barriers to progress and prosperity. After all, to borrow from a celebrated dictum of confucianism "suffering from hunger and cold, they have no sense of shame to hold."

Compiled from various publications of the Beijing Review and the National Report on the Status of Women in Jamaica.

A Yarn Spun for Gold

Getting into Export

by Camile E. Drake



One of the innovative and fashionable crochet pieces produced for export.

All the world's a marketplace - a global marketplace. Products are more standardized and there is definitely a demand in that marketplace for anything Jamaican: garments, music, services.

President of the Jamaica Exporters' Association Mrs. Beverley Lopez is convinced that once Jamaican exporters become more efficient in their production and hence able to produce volumes, they will find a permanent stall in this global marketplace. Already a small cottage industry in Kingston has found its niche in overseas markets.

A Yarn Spun For Gold

Crocheting in the normal parlance connotes "mix-up" and squabbles. A group of women here in Kingston have collectively managed to reinforce the positive and creative side of spinning the yarn.

They meet twice a week, Mondays and Thursdays on Osbourne Road in Kingston to deliver their finished goods, stock up on supplies and receive their remuneration for sitting long hours pulling thread. Their common bond is a love for crochet and a desire to spin that

yarn into something beautiful and creative. Yarn is weighed and given to the women. Their input is time, talent and a crochet needle. In the ease of their homes and self supervised the women are able to make about \$1,000.00 weekly. The sky is the limit.

The First Stitch

The business was started some 20 years ago as a cottage industry by Richard Vassall. His idea then was two-fold: doing something with a high export potential which could provide employment for a few people and doing something that was DIFFERENT. He has always had a love for fashion. The first product was a knit shirt for men which was purchased by both men and women. Thereafter the product line became diversified. He made a switch to making accessories:

There were headaches in terms of consistency in making the ladies dresses. Each woman's stitch is different. Crochet is like handwriting. It differs from person to person. So we decided to go into something that was still innovative but which required less precision of stitches.

It was not long after the first stitch that the simple cottage industry moved from local distribution to exporting to Florida and Atlanta. The business has also grown in numbers with more women joining and others passing on the mantle to others. This has meant promotion from within. Manager, Richard Vassall, refers to his right hand, Venice Johnson, who really turns the Vassall vision into the mission. Mrs Johnson started out as one of the girls from the inception of the business. With the many changes within the

business has come the production of scroungies, mock-the-dread-tams, regular tams, hats, berets, slippers, kofis. Based on the research, the colours adopted are trendy and ethnic: red, green, gold, white, black (African colours). According to Richard Vassall who is responsible for the distribution of the goods, sales are booming.

"We simply cannot keep up at present with the kind of demand that we are getting. We are therefore thinking of introducing machines into our operation."

With the assistance of the Jamaica Exporters' Association, the Richard Vassall Collection has been collaborating with a funding agency in the United States. This U.S. group has seen the potential in the cottage industry and is of the mind that machines can be accessed to do more of the volume of work. These machines, the manager affirms, will not replace the ladies. They will do mass production and the ladies can then return to the more intricate pieces. Perhaps, even return to making crochet dresses, he says.

In an interview with one of the crochet queens, Miss Maitland, she disclosed that many women needed to realize that once they have a skill, they are able to

move on with ambition. This skill is what allows you, she adds, to be independent so that "when the 9 to 5 fold up, you can do your own thing." She recounts how she learned to crochet in secondary school but never thought that one day it would be her main stay. Miss Maitland is just one of the many women who have joined the cottage industry doing work at their leisure.. Another non-traditional area of export being served by a woman is that of hat making. In 1989 Gillian Thomas started the Chapeaux line of hats. Her beginning is a simple tale. She needed hats and was hard pressed to find one locally that really suited her mood and taste not to mention the occasion. She started out importing hats but soon realized that as the Jamaican dollar decreased in value, her costs became prohibitive. It is said that innovative ideas are borne out of a need for survival. Gillian's need for survival pulled her towards manufacturing the hats herself here in Jamaica. She admits that today she sells far more of her manufactured hats than when she was importing them.

Chapeaux sports hats for every occasion and for everyone. Prices range anywhere between \$450.00 and \$950.00 depending on how exquisite the design is.

The Chapeaux brand is not only sold in Kingston. It is wholesaled across the island and moreover, is exported to the Caricom, Canada and the United States.....

These are just two of the small businesses that have been mushrooming in the local export industry. The JEA President said there is a tremendous amount of potential in this industry. Last year non-traditional exports alone increased by 24% which in real terms amounted to millions of dollars of foreign exchange for Jamaica. Mrs Lopez added too that it is time we as a country stop presenting the image of being a "Sample Land" and gear ourselves towards production. This she believes can only come through efficiency. The JEA with the technical assistance of the U.S. based Small Business Export Development Group is attempting to adopt more efficient methods in our local industries whether large or small like the Richard Vassall cottage industry. Out of this co-operation, Mrs Lopez says, it is hoped that these efforts will bear fruit. We look forward to that harvest in the very near future. For next year the harvest should bring a 15% increase in non-traditional exports.

The United Church of Canada's General Council Offices are Moving

Effective March 20, 1995 -Offices and Book Room • April 30, 1995 - Berkeley Studio
The new address for the General Council Offices, the Book Room, and Berkeley Studio is:

3250 Bloor Street West, Etobicoke, ON, M8X 2Y4

The new numbers are: Main Tel: (416) 231-5931 • Main Fax: (416) 231-3103

Book Room: (416) 231-6597 • Voice Mail: (416) 231-7680

Please note that the main telephone number includes Berkeley Studio.

When Sending Mail please include the following information:

The United Church of Canada

[Name]

[Division/General Council Office/Department]

3250 Bloor Street West, Etobicoke, ON M8X 2Y4.

Effective April 1, 1995

The United Church Observer

478 Hutton Street, Toronto, ON M5R 2R3

Tel: (416) 960-8500/Fax: (416) 960-8477.

JERLINE TODD

Sixty-four year old Jerline Todd is one of the oldest members of **SISTREN** Theatre Collective, as well as one of its founding members. Even today, she marvels at the fact that she has spent the last eighteen years of her life working in the arts and on stage in particular. Miss Todd is wardrobe mistress as well as actress.

"Toddie" as she is affectionately called by her sistren, looks back on the past eighteen years with a great amount of satisfaction, especially about her work amongst young people. Her only regret is that the work of the organization she has helped to create has not yet impacted on the wider society to a degree to which she is satisfied.

Like other members of **SISTREN**, Jerline works in popular theatre. Therefore, her work is dedicated to bringing social and economic issues to the forefront, and offering practical solutions using drama and real life experiences to achieve goals. **SISTREN** works primarily amongst 'grass-roots' people in general, particularly with women and children.

Todd's enthusiasm for her work is evident when she speaks of it and the impact that popular theatre can have on problem solving. The work incorporates two elements - the use of plays and workshops.....both of which are still in great demand, not just locally by schools and community groups, but in other countries as well.



Jerline (left) caught on stage in the 1989 production - "Buss Out" addressing prison conditions. At right is Bev Hanson

SISTREN's work has taken her on several occasions to Canada, the USA, other Caribbean Islands, England, Holland and Germany.

"We never dreamt of the impact we would have on the world, when we started out at first," Todd states. "Then we looked on it as something to do in the evenings after work".

Her entry into the theatrical world was a result of being in the right place at the right time. She was involved in the Homes Bureau and Special Employment Programme- for women in the late 1970's when CVSS invited women from CTC to participate in drama classes at the School of Drama. The orientation idea was that they would then assist in the holding area at a nearby all

age school, keeping the children occupied between shifts.

They were then asked to perform at the Labour Day concert being held at Jamaica House. For this, they chose a play which dealt with the plight of women working in factories. Honor Ford Smith, then tutor at the Jamaica School of Drama, assisted them.

Jerline's role was that of factory manager. She laughed at this point in relating her story. "Ah looked so crazy," she recalls. "Ah was the boss and yuh wanted to see me in jacket and tie." She added that they were thirteen very nervous women on the stage that night.....all unsure of their reception in this their first really public performance.

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Passing the Baton

Rebecca Knowles and Teens in Action

by Marie Gregory

Sinner city communities are very much in the news at present, usually for negative reasons. Mention inner cities and the words "violence", "drugs", "rape" and "incest" may come to mind.

After all the hand wringing, someone is sure to ask for solutions. There may be vague talks about the need to end political tribalism, to allow communities to manage their own affairs, to create employment. Does it ever go beyond talk?

In one area, yes, positive action has come out of a bad experience. What happened was grim, brutal, almost primitive. A teenaged girl was gang raped by her very own peers. She was thirteen years old at the time. Strong action was called for. It was provided by Rebecca Knowles. The year was 1987. What had happened to the teenaged girl inspired Rebecca to examine the links between violence, poverty and disillusion and to seek ways of encouraging the community to participate in social organization in a spirit of tolerance. Out of this "TEENS IN ACTION" was formed.

"Teens in Action" received funding from international agencies to supplement local help and fund-raising. The organization, based in Seaview

Gardens, seeks to offer girls empowerment in various ways. Through drama, it aims to educate by tackling the many problems- of teenaged girls such as rape, incest, drug abuse, parent/child conflict.

It offers workshops which allow community members to discuss issues which affect them and to examine possible solutions.

Peer counselling sessions cover many topics including HIV/AIDS awareness. Personal development deals with social pressures and attitudes and the promotion of healthy relationships between teenagers and the community.

One goal is to awaken in teenagers a sense of their own potential, mentally and physically.

Rebecca accepts that younger girls will join them, and after a year or two will move on, perhaps even out of the community. Violence and teenage pregnancy also account for some attrition. Occasionally there is pressure on the girls from the boys in the community who do not wish to deal with girls who seem to know where they are going, sometimes the girls themselves cannot deal with the idea of their own empowerment as young women.



*Rebecca Knowles - the driving force behind **Teens in Action**.*

Even if the girls pass through and move on, something has been gained. In any attempt such as this, the social issues of the community must be taken into account. There is tension in inner city communities coming from the violence which breeds fear. Gang wars, drugs, politics are part of the mix, often girls will not turn out. Those girls who do go out at times of violence are sometimes linked with those who are causing it.

The parents press for clubs and generally want to see their daughters lift themselves up in life but there is an understandable ambivalence as so many are single parents and can see their own situations being repeated by their daughters. Some will try to save their girls from becoming mothers at an early age, others will see this as part and parcel of everyday life. Some mothers are proud of the fact that they have become grandmothers, even though their daughters are only sixteen. They feel pride if their daughters find men of 40 or so believing that they will take care of them.

Rebecca wants to reach the parents to educate them and to

continued on page 20

"HOLDING UP HALF THE SKY!"

Inspired by the old Chinese proverb "Women hold up half the sky", we present images of women in various areas of national development.



Maroon women planting trees to restore the environment.



Jamaican women have achieved world status in the fine art of pottery.

Women in National Development



Thatchwork has long been a significant income generating activity



The viability of crocheted apparel and household items is sustained by active community outreach projects.



Sistren's work involves public education through popular theatre techniques.

ME OWN TWO HAND

Excerpts from Lion Heart Gal

In my country, as a child, ah learn to do plenty wid me own two hand. Ah use to help Mama to mek starch from cassava. On a Friday morning ah use to follow her go down a Alligator Pond to buy cassava and help bag it. At di yard we scrape and grate di cassava, wash it, strain it out and dry it. Den Mama sell it to the women who carry it to Coronation Market in town.

Odder women use to work in dem home, plaiting straw. Ah used to love to plait di straw too. Dere was a craft centre out on di main road and we used to carry di straw-work out deh to sell. Later on, ah learn to do embroidery at di craft centre.

Me aunty who we used to live wid, was one of the few women in Top Hill, St Elizabeth who used to work in de field.

We used to go next door and play wid dirty pot. Sometime we play hide-and-seek and dolly-house and pretend we a madda and faada. One day me was playing di madda. After we send di pickney go a school di boy who was playing di faada hold me down and have sex wid me. Me frighten. After him done, me jump up and run home. Me see plenty blood. After that me never talk to him fi bout three weeks, for me did vex. It gwan, till me figat bout it and we start talk back again and hide and have sex. In country, das what children

used to do. Hide and have sex. It might happen when yuh madda send yuh go a shop or when yuh playing dolly-house or hide-and-seek. By di age of thirteen or fifteen most girls lose fi dem virginity.

When ah was eleven, me teacher come down a di shop Mama was keeping. Him did waan me fi tek di scholarship. Mama tell him, 'No, me nah do it. Me nah spend no more money pon gal pickney. Gal pickney just a go tek man inna grass head. Me no business wid them.'

After time, Mama find out a was having sex wid the boy ah used to play dolly-house wid. She never like him. She quarrel seh him black and no have notten. So me just stop talk to him.

Ah was more interested in getting education. After ah leave primary school, ah go back a evening class. Di time came when a needed money to buy books. Ah went to Mama. Ah beg her fi help me fi buy them. She could a did help me, but she tell me no. She wouldn't do it. Me did feel bad. Me had was to leave di class sake a Mama never help me: Mi wipe the nursing out a me hand.

One day ah was at home when Gem, a friend from school days send and ask me to come and stay wid her baby and let her get fi go down a di shop. Ah was in two minds about going down deh. It was her bredda me used to

have sex wid when we was playing dolly-house.

'All right,' ah said. 'Soon come.'

After Gem lock di door and gone, me in deh a relax till an see di door move. Him come out and face me.

'Wah yuh a do in yah,?' ah ask. Him laugh. Dat time me a get up. Him come and hold me down pon di bed. Ah try to push him off me, but him was bigger and stronger dan me. Ah couldn't fight him off any longer, so ah give up and let him do what him waan fi do.

Mama suspect me for me start get fat. One morning she decide seh she a carry me go a Blackie. Is di first time me go Bush Woman. We went straight into di room like yuh going to doctor. Di woman say Mama must stay and talk to her. One next woman carry me go out a di hut fi go bathe me. She throw some heap a water inna one big pan wid some bush dat dem boil. She say me fi throw farthing inna it and ah stand up in di pan. She sop me down all ova. Me body never look so different dat time. She give me one sop in me back and it sound in me belly. Den she say, 'Yuh pregnant.'

When we was coming back from di woman, Mama never say notten. When she come home, she go a me aunty and she talk to her. Ah never listen dem. A child couldn't listen big people when dem talking. As far as dey were concerned, ah was a child. Dem talk. Den dem quarrel over it. Dem ask me who is di pickney faada. Me no tell dem. Dem curse me.

Me start get so big me caan walk. Me waan baby clothes. Mama say me fi plait di plaiting and wid

dat money buy flour bag fi mek napkin fi di baby.

One day, ah went to di toilet and saw blood. Ah told me sister. She said, 'Go and bathe.' Ah don't remember what happen after dat. People tell me fits tek me. Das when people find out who di baby belong to. Ah hear di boy start to fret. When him hear seh me have fits, him jump ober me cousin who was sleeping wid him. Him start bawl. 'She a go dead now!' Das how dem find out seh a fi him baby.

After di baby was one year old and she start walk, di boy start study fi dentist so Mama approve of him now. Him start walk up and down after me and fool round me. Me cousin get vex. She come ina di house come look fi him. Dat time him not even dere sometime. She still come bodder me. Me decide me a go lef di situation.

Me uncle did work at Alpart and him know people. Me tell him seh me a big woman now and him fi get work fi me a Mandeville. Him say him know a friend in Mandeville dat need smaddy fi come do domestic work. So me leave Marie wid Mama and me aunty and go a Mandeville do work - wash, cook, clean and live-in. Di lady ah was working wid had a son name Foreman dat did like me off. He was a plumber. Me never interested in him. Him never good-looking and me always like good-looking people. Him ask me to married to him. Ah never know wah fi answer him. One day di woman come tell me, 'Yuh bredda come to yuh.' Me no have no bredda. Me wonder a who. When me come out no di boy me see. Him tek set. Me never like it. Me did waan get way from him, so me say, 'All right.

Me will married and get rid of the boy.' Me did a look a easy way out. Me was hoping for a saviour.

Me stop working wid di madda and me and Foreman move a one next house and start living togedder. Mama come stay wid me fi help get ready fi di wedding. One day ah was coming from his house when an saw Sonia, a girl from my country, standing up in di park in Mandeville. She say she come fi look for somebody and night come dome and ketch her. Ah tell her 'You better come and spend di night at me house.' She follow me home. Di next day she say she waan fi stay fi di wedding. After about a week Mama say, 'Dat man is along with dat girl.'

Now, ah never feel no way bout a man having more dan one woman so long as di man keep it to himself and support him family at home. But my husband! Him hardly give me notten fi my two. Him hardly come home no more.

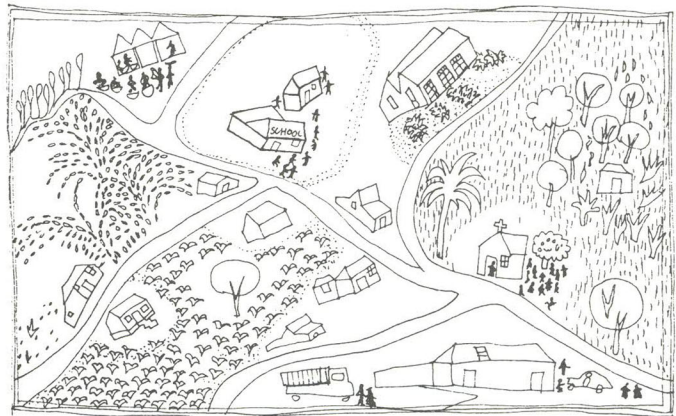
One morning ah siddung inna di house and tek off di ring off a me finger. Ah use one file weh him got and start file di ring. Ah cut one side right in two. Ah couldn't get di odder side fi cut. It did tough fi file. Ah just break it and fling it over di garden. Ah never even go look back fi it.

One day Mama say, 'Mek we go home back a country.' We go. Ah was dere fi two months during which time him still wouldn't give me notten for di pickney dem. Me say, 'No sir!

Ah haffi try do something fi meself and me pickney.' Ah pack up and lef di seven months pickney pon Mama and go a town fi fight it gwan.

One of di tings ah get conscious of is mi personal life. Ah begin to tink about how ah would like to see me children grow and what ah would like to provide for dem. Di conditions at Cassava Piece was too bad to bring dem into it. Ah wanted somewhere for me and me four children to live. Das what ah wanted. Ah knew ah was gifted wid me hands. Baldwin is a carpenter. So ah set me heart on building a house.

Building di house mek me feel proud of meself for me never wait pon no man fi do it. If Baldwin say him cyaan do something me find anodder way out, but me nah siddung a wait pon him. Me tek me own decision and me stick to it. Ah wouldn't look fi no man to save me again. Ah wouldn't married again, for dese kind of nowadays man are not di gentle or kind people ah would guarantee fi spend me whole life wid. Baldwin and me have an understanding. Him know dat nowadays me tek me own initiative and depend pon meself and tru dat, him haffi respect me.



Top Hill, St. Elizabeth

HEALTH UPDATE

THE HEALTH COST OF DEVELOPMENT

BY CAMILLE E. DRAKE

"Jamaica's health sector in relation to its economic status shares an enviable position: one with many successes."

According to the Senior Medical Officer of Health, Dr Alafia Samuels, when we compare Jamaica with other countries which share the similar characteristics, Jamaica fares very well. She revealed that our infant mortality rate was down to 27 per thousand live births and our life expectancy at birth was now 70 years. Also our women were having an average of 2.5 children as compared with 5 or 6 in previous years.

In children, our health officials had worked assiduously at reducing the number of deaths resulting from gastroenteritis and dehydration promoting oral rehydration fluids. Statistics show that previously there were more than five deaths in every thousand cases of diarrhoea in children. This figure has been improved by widespread adoption of oral rehydration therapy in homes, health centres and hospitals. Immunization levels too have been increased from 30% in the 1980's to 90% today.

These are a number of the successes that have accompanied our continuing development as a nation as we seek to improve health standards. Dr Samuels however, pointed to a number of weak areas that have

simply lagged behind development. One area was industrial development, its resulting pollution and occupational hazards which together have brought about negative effects. Yet there is inadequate institutional capacity to deal with these effects.

Dr Samuels cited another factor: service delivery. Public hospitals, she said, although having undergone structural adjustment, had not been able to cope with the developing needs of our nation. The consequences are not unknown - suffering, inattention to urgent needs at the public hospitals and long waiting lists for critical surgery. This deterioration would, of course, she added, not be reflected in the positive figures previously mentioned. The impact here is more on quality than on quantity. Unfortunately, these statistics only capture the latter. So, she said, the figure will tell us that the number of persons dying from diabetes for example are on the decrease. What we will not hear so easily is that people are losing their toes or legs because of inadequate service delivery.

On the matter of public health, Dr Samuels spoke of a definite deterioration in the capacity to deliver service. Her view was that instead of being preventative, public health in Jamaica had now become curative. "This is a wrong philosophy!" The shift has been attributed to the lack of

qualified staff to carry out their important functions.

Dr Samuels cites the example of the Grade 1 public health inspector, whose duties include premises inspection, ensuring that toilets function in homes, ensuring that there are no mosquito breeding spots, and ensuring that shops are kept in a sanitary condition. The Ministry finds itself with less than 50% of the required Grade 1 inspectors at post, and hence can only respond to complaints instead of being able to do routine promotive and preventive inspections.

In an effort to assist the entire system, the ministry has adopted the use of auxiliaries. These auxiliaries are trained for shorter periods and they work alongside the fully trained professionals. These auxiliaries are trained for shorter periods and they work alongside the fully-trained professionals. The advantage here is that they can deal with common routine matters freeing up the professionals for the more technical aspects. The nurses and pharmacists have already introduced auxiliaries. The public health inspectorate may have to adopt that strategy, Dr Samuels shared.

As Jamaica becomes "more developed" with an aging population certain health trends are emerging.

Continued on page 17

AT THE MEETING PLACE CONT'D

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Sistren, under the guidance of Programme Officer, Afolashade successfully organized and implemented a seven (7) week training course on Leadership Development, with the members of the Inner-City Women's Group. The sessions were held on Saturdays at Sistren (Feb 4-March 11.) The graduation exercise held on March 18, was a resounding success. "Gwaan Shade, You Large."

Special thanks to all the Sistren who worked together to pull it off. A special one to Vivien Morris-Brown (facilitator) and Tamara Poplar (Social Work intern) who also contributed significantly.

Sistren Research successfully launched the new Docu-Drama on the life and work of the Honorable Louise Bennett-Coverly a.k.a Miss Lou. The work was the initiative of members of the Sistren Research team investigating the different aspects of her life and work from childhood to womanhood. The contribution and impact Miss Lou made on the lives of many many adults

Health Update *continued from page 16*

We are shifting away from communicable diseases to chronic diseases in the older age group. In young men, ages 15 - 24 years, the trend is towards violence and trauma. It is important to note that despite this fact, 95% of all discharges are from government hospitals.

Since development and health correlate and are mutually dependent, the the change in one affect the other. The hospitals are already staggering under the burden of having to provide care. The question we asked then is: are there any solutions?

Dr Samuels pointed out that many times ailments can be prevented or can be managed at

home. This she said could go a long way in alleviating the pressure on the overburdened health sector. Self-care simply means - if you are hypertensive, you should try not to be obese, and to exercise and take medication every day; in short: caring for yourself. But what about the hospitals? Will they be required to make adjustments also?

Dr Samuels mentioned cost recovery which is already being implemented in the hospitals where formal fees are charged.

She cautioned however, that it would make better sense not to charge for preventative medicine. If the costs are prohibitive, she

and children at home and abroad. The film crew Metro Vision, along with Director Cynthia Wilmot and cast worked very hard to accomplish this feat.

The video dubbed "The Drums Keep Sounding" was officially launched on March 6, 1995 at the Island Life Auditorium. Get your copy now from Sistren Research(Bev Hanson)

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added, persons will become ill and it will cost more in the long run to cure the ailment. The authorities however are examining cost recovery for cutative services at the health centres islandwide.

All in all, the race for excellent health is not a quick sprint. The successes of yesteryear can easily be eroded by what has been left undone and been ignored. Tomorrow will bring new diseases along with the old. Can we say that we are equipped to deal with them as a nation? Dr Samuels feels we can, if we plan, now that we have the time. She is convinced that it must start with each individual through good personal hygiene.

Women And The Environment

by Cecille Daley

The reports about the environment and the damage it has suffered can often make any effort to correct things seem too small. However, there are women who are discovering that the smallest attempt to change things can make a difference and who are ultimately achieving significant results. Says Marguerite Gauron, founder of the Portland Environmental Protection Association (PEPA), many women are taking leadership roles in environmental preservation. Much of the action being taken is not necessarily at an organizational level, but is the result of a personal commitment to making a contribution.

The two women featured here are only two of many who are making a difference. They are of different ages and backgrounds, but they seem to share a common viewpoint: if you see something that needs to be done, sometimes you just have to get started and do it yourself.

Certainly, that is how it was for Pauline "Sister P" Petinaud, when she first arrived in Content Gap some 13 years ago. "Sister P" is known for having started the Content Gap Model School which produced the talented Content Gap Model School Drummers, winners of many festival awards. Last year, the first two students to successfully sit the Common Entrance Exams in many years, graduated from the school.

"Sister P's" work in environmental preservation and education in the community is also extensive, although she describes it as "nothing really organised, I just try to live naturally." It began, like her teaching, from a realization that "something had to be done, and someone had to do it."

Among the first things she noticed after getting to Content Gap were the effects of deforestation on her property and the surrounding areas. Soil erosion was high, she says, because of the 'slash and burn' method used by farmers and indiscriminate tree cutting. There was also the problem of the destruction of the bird population. A farmer who uses organic farming for her crops, "Sister P", soon realized that her produce would suffer if these methods weren't curtailed. "Because I use no pesticides or fertilizer," she relates, "the birds are important to me for controlling insects. If there are no birds, my crops do badly."

"Since the trees were being cut down", she continues, "and the soil was being eroded, I began to plant trees, especially lumber trees; I stopped people from cutting down anything except lumber trees and I maintained a whole section of my property as woodland to block the effects of high winds, I also maintain the trees that the birds like to inhabit." In addition, she stopped people from shooting birds in the area, keeping in touch with the authorities to alert them of these activities.

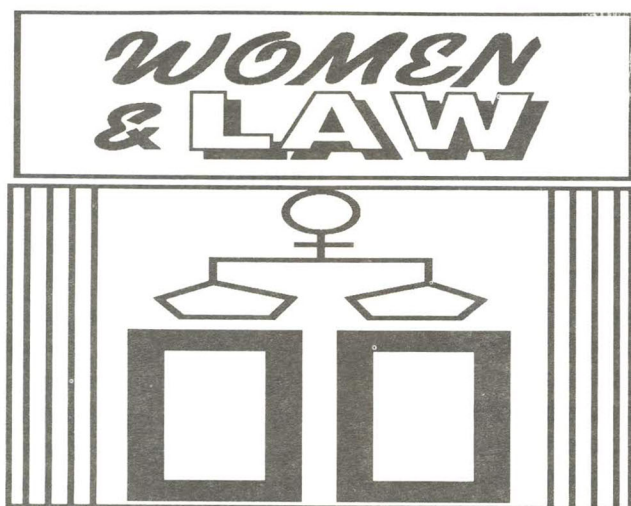
Through the school, and direct conversations with the people of the community, she passed on useful environmental tips, like the way 'khus khus' grass prevents soil erosion, or the fact that burning plastic and batteries emits poisonous fumes.

She went on to get into eco-tourism, only she calls it "just a small guest house which doesn't even have a name. It's very different, a real alternative place for nature-lovers." Guests are able to tour the woodlands, go bird watching, and eat vegetarian if they wish.

She also got into exports, employing the women of the area to gather medicinal herbs for export to New York where they are transformed into tonics for sale there. "They are all wild herbs and it generates income for the community, especially the women and this makes a difference because it makes them more independent. In years past, the only thing to do was have a baby. Now, I think they have a lot more pride because they can help themselves." In addition, she notes, there is less burning of trees because the herbs need to be protected for the income they bring in.

After 13 years of gradually extending the scope of her activities, "Sister P", a single mother of one, is not daunted by the number of projects she is now involved in. "I just delegate to whoever has the skills to help me," she points out. "I'm not the kind of person who has to prove that I can do it all myself, nor do I want to be the kind of person who criticizes but does nothing. Once I see that something has to be done, I just get it

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WOMEN AND THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BILL

"Narrow", "inadequate", "limited", "deficient." These were just some of the reactions of women to the "Domestic Violence Bill" which was passed in the House of Representatives on March 14.

The passage of the Bill represents a recognition of the growing problem of domestic violence and the need to put in place legislation to address this. The Bill is entitled "An Act to provide remedies for domestic violence through speedy and effective relief and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto." The proposed Act seeks to address the problem of domestic violence and abuse in the home by restraining the abuser. It also seeks to provide protection against psychological

abuse. Psychological abuse involves acts such as verbal assault, harassment, molestation and stalking.

Persons falling within the protective scope of the Act include a spouse, parent, child or dependent and is referred to in the Bill as "a prescribed person."

Two types of orders - protection and occupation orders will be employed to deal with domestic violence. Protection orders may prohibit an abuser from entering or remaining in the home of a prescribed person; from entering or remaining in any areas specified in the order, from entering the place of work or education of a prescribed person; from following or waylaying the prescribed person; from making persistent telephone calls or

using abusive language to the prescribed person.

Occupation orders are to allow the abused to occupy the home for a period while excluding the abuser. A breach of the orders is an offense and attracts a fine of \$10,000 or 6 months imprisonment or both.

While the passage of the Bill may seem encouraging concerns have been raised about the limited definition of the term "household". The definition covers only households where the parents are legally married or live in a common-law union. The narrow definition ignores the complexity of the Jamaican family structure and interrogates the claim of the pilottee of the Bill, Junior Minister in the Ministry of Legal Affairs A. J. Nicholson, that the Act was tailored for the Jamaican setting. Another quarrelsome issue relating to the Act is the lack of provision for counselling for both the abused and the abuser.

Although it is clear that the Act has some shortcomings which must be addressed to make it relevant and effective, it is undoubtedly a step in the right direction. The citizens of this country, especially women, must find a way to add their voices to the debate to ensure that its deficiencies are corrected.

-Sandi Graham

Coming up in

SISIREN

**JUNE
SEPTEMBER**

LABOUR VS CAPITAL: "Working class women in the '90's"
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY: "The contribution of women"

Profile...

continued from page 6

Taking care of herself has been a way of life for 23-year old Yvonne Rose for as long as she can recall. "I remember when I was small, coming home from school and seeing notes from my mother on the table or bed giving me instructions on where dinner was and what should be heated up or cooked." So, it's not surprising that by the end of high school, she already had definite goals: to be financially independent and to be a cosmetologist. In pursuit of the first goal, she began working at 18. She didn't immediately

pursue cosmetology because of her mother's doubts about such a career, but in the end, her interest in the art won out.

Now a teacher of cosmetology at the Hair 'N' You Academy, she is still looking ahead into furthering her career. "I'm going to be pursuing a course in Aromatherapy and Reflexology in order to improve my qualifications. Eventually I'd like to have my own business."

Yvonne feels that it is her close relationship with her mother that has given her the spirit of independence. While she grew up with both her parents, it's her mother who she remembers as being the one who was involved

in every aspect of her life as well as in the affairs of the household. Because of her mother's determination to give her a sound education and a solid start, Yvonne never felt deprived even though there were economic constraints. "She was a part of everything. She helped me with my school work, she paid my fees, she made sure that I was always in a new school uniform at the start of each term. I always had all the supplies I needed even though it was difficult at times and she had to make sacrifices for herself."

Bess's example in the way she has lived her own life has also inspired Yvonne. She remembers when Bess made the move

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Passing...

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help them understand their daughters. She wonders how many of them talk to their girls about the workings of their bodies, the impact of teenage pregnancy, the risk of sexually transmitted diseases.

Some parents are unsupportive of community togetherness and do not want to see clubs established to help in their struggle to uplift themselves. Teens in Action is a success story and has had some outstanding achievements.

Workshops have been arranged in various parts of Jamaica, churches and women's groups have recognized what is being done. Medals for drama have been gained in Festival, "Women's Day", "Earth Day" and "Drug Awareness Week" see participation, radio and T.V. have allowed teens to express their views. Environmental projects

have received attention. There are former members of Teens in Action at the University of the West Indies and C.A.S.T. Those who have completed their education return to give something back to the community.

Future plans include extra education and tuition for those who are weak, training in fashion designing and dress making so that all young women can learn a skill; greater use of sporting facilities to encourage healthy bodies and friendly competition and the teaching of discipline through self defense. The controlled art of Martial Arts will be included. One of Rebecca's concerns is that more people contribute to the training of youth, as idle hands may well turn to crime. She does not see this as a purely Jamaican phenomenon. She is troubled by the fact that although many people refuse to enter the area, they are willing to criticize from the outside.

She feels they should help and see the residents of inner city areas as brothers and sisters. Without training they cannot succeed. Similarly when loans are obtained for the starting of a small business, Rebecca would like to see a grace period before the recipient has to start paying back the money. Without such a period the situation becomes impossible. Money management is a skill to be learned by many at this level. Such a service could be offered by outsiders who wish to get involved.

Rebecca has been involved with Sistren for more than 18 years. Though Teens in Action is an independent group, it has received help from the Sistren Theatre Collective, as the baton is passed the next generation. It will now be up to them to sustain it.

The mailing address is 1651, Seaview Gardens, Kingston 11.

JERLINE TODD

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But they need not have worried. The audience loved the play. In fact, the response was such that the group was motivated to continue working in drama with the continued guidance of Honor Ford Smith. That was the beginning of SISTREN and their work in popular theatre. All their productions are based on issues of concern to women, and often have a special effect on the audience because they are based on reality.

Two such productions which came instantly to Jerline were "QPH" and "Belly Woman Bangarang." The first highlighted the sufferings of the elderly and placed special emphasis on the very tragic fire at the Eventide Home. The latter showed the concern of the group with the high level of teenage pregnancy and the danger in which these young persons put their lives and the communication barrier between children and parents.

It was easy to see that this was really an issue of concern for her. "Yuh know, it's so nice to them when they have sex but they don't know the

danger, even now," she commented. "In our days it was unwanted children; now it is unwanted children and AIDS." With the successful start up of SISTREN, Jerline and the Sistren Theatre Collective soon expanded their work to include textile painting which they now teach islandwide. Some ten years ago, they decided to incorporate workshops into their programme with excellent results.

"We were concerned that our productions were not creating the interaction we wanted with the audience. We didn't want them to just laugh at the jokes without dwelling seriously on our message," she explained. "We wanted them to see that by discussing issues they could find solutions to problems."

The programme has been so effective that schools and community groups frequently request their presentations on special themes. This means that Todd has worked on a wide range of issues during her career in the arts - AIDS, drug abuse, inter-personal relationships, problems at the workplace, water shortages - to name just a few.

"I was over 40 when I became

involved in drama. Since then I've gained a lot of experience, exposure and satisfaction. It's good to know that you're working on something serious; something that has helped other people to survive." Jerline commented as she reflected on her 18 years in popular theatre.

She encourages other persons, (again she mentions the young in particular), to get involved in the arts as she has done. She uses popular theatre as a good example of how people can keep themselves occupied and "stay out of trouble" while helping each other. This is why she has a fervent wish to see similar programmes formed across the island.

"Yuh know, one of my greatest concerns right now is to see the crime ease down," she added. "Ah hate to see the condition in which young people kill themselves with drugs or whatever. I am 64 and a lot of them will not live to see a half of my age."

For herself, she hopes to work in development theatre until she gets too "shaky" to continue.

Profile...

continued from page 6

from teaching to work with Sistren and how surprised she was to see her acting on stage. She considers Bess to be a success because of her willingness to move into new areas and to make an impact through her work. She also feels that her mother's triumph over problems in her own youth are reasons for her to be considered a success. Bess has overcome such obstacles as a father who

didn't acknowledge his responsibilities to her and then pregnancy when she was 16. "Today," says Yvonne, "I'm seeing her interviewed on television and in magazines, I'm seeing her go abroad to represent her organization. These are things I never dreamed that I'd ever see her do."

Like her mother, Yvonne has a strong sense of family

responsibility. Her plans for the future as far as her personal life is concerned, are definite: "I want to be able to get a car and a house for myself and my mother. I'd not think of leaving her because we're such close friends. Even if I got married, I'd still want her living with me."

Interviewed by Cecille Daley



CAN I CALL YOU SISTER?

Samuel Kinghorn, Special Corporal attached to the Office of the Commissioner of Police, is not one of those men who feel threatened by the so-called rise in dominance by women. He is in fact quite impressed by the manner in which women are willing to take the forefront in so many issues concerning their families and communities.

Kinghorn, who is also the Secretary for Fathers Incorporated, speaks highly of the many women he comes in contact and, who are not afraid to come forward. He gives two examples. One is of Mrs Polly Hornell, the headmistress of Stony Hill All Age and President of the Stony Hill Kiwanis Club, whom he refers to as a perfect role model in her community. "Mrs Hornell gets things done," he stated emphatically "and she does this

while trying to elevate other persons and help them."

SISTREN also came up for mention by Mr Kinghorn. His respect for them has arisen from admiration of their work in problem solving among community groups. He met the members of SISTREN through his work with Father's Incorporated. The two groups had worked together on a workshop involving rival political bodies. The workshop was very successful in getting the groups to work together.

"Sistren is doing very good work," he commented. "They have played important roles in helping women and children with problem-solving and behavioral attitudes. They have a positive attitude which works wonders."

"When one looks at where they are coming from and the contribution they have made to society you cannot help but feel happy for them," Kinghorn

added. "They are dedicated to their goals and have shown us that when you are down you are not out but with determination you will succeed."

"I sit on a lot of committees and it is very rarely that you find men coming forward to take up offices on these committees. Women are the ones in the forefront. My Parent Teachers Association is a good example of this," he commented. "And so," he went on, "I am in total support of them when they advocate equal rights. They are out there, so give them what they deserve. I am happy to see that they are no longer contented to stay at home and in the background." This is high praise coming from someone who is part of a group formed by a group of men who took 'objection' to being told that men were not taking their roles as parents seriously enough.

- Pat Hyman

Women and the Environment

cont'd from page 18

done. As Malcolm X puts it: "by whatever means necessary." Mabel Wilson also likes to get things done herself. As a craft vendor, and head of the Craft Vendors' Association in Port Antonio, she is concerned about keeping the areas around Port Antonio clean. During her travels between home and the craft market, she has plenty of opportunities to see the littering that is done.

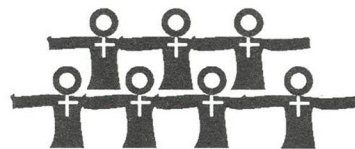
In order to correct this, she keeps in touch with the authorities, both public and private, to get immediate action. "As quick as I see them doing it, I phone the police, or someone in charge to let them know what is happening. As long as I am passing by and seeing it done I always stop and talk about it. Tourism is my business and my life. It has given

me a livelihood so I want to protect it."

As a member of PEPA she has joined the game warden committee and steps in to stop bird shooting whenever she hears the guns being fired. Undaunted by her advanced age, (she is 70), she tries to "do every little thing" to protect the environment. A farmer all her life, she uses organic farming on the plot of land she cultivates. One of the recent results of this was a 40 pound sweet potato which she grew there. It was exhibited at the craft market, and then made news before being sold for \$200.00. In addition to these activities, she continues to maintain the house she built and in which she raised her three children after she and her husband split up 45 years ago. Although the children are now grown and living away, she is still

busy looking after boarders who share her home with her.

She says that her commitment to tourism and to maintaining her part of the tourist product arises from something she has learned: "In all the time that I've sold my crafts to tourists and taken care of the business of tourism, I've never wanted for anything. When I've treated them right, I've never been without. Not a week goes by that I don't get a sale."





Dear Editor,

Your magazine is of great value to me. As I am now in arrears with my subscription I have enclosed a bit more money than the one year, which if there is surplus, you would be at liberty to apply this to whatever you wish.

Keep up the good work.

Jane Heather
9728-81 Avenue
Edmonton
Alberta, Canada
T6E 1W2

Dear Editor

Reading one of your magazine for the first time, I was so impressed with its contents. Please fill me in on how I can become a subscriber.

I enjoyed the article "Defend the Culture", by Imani Tafari Ama, Muta and Yasus. Respect is due to them as spiritual leaders.

I would also be interested in back issues and will even pay for them. Kindly accept this request a serious.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Interested reader
Selwyn Lloyd Glasgow
Lot 158 Blue Berry Hill
Wismar, Linden
Guyana S.A.

Dear Sistren,

Kindly accept our appreciation for the magazines and research papers you sent

us. We were out in the rural areas, helping elderly women and promoting our Aids play. That is why you have not heard from us for such a long time.

Sistren, we admire you. We are following your footsteps. You are our idol. Through you, our work has become powerful and positive. May you congratulate us for forming Frontline Arts Craft, which we shall launch, officially, on the 26th of November of this year. The Arts Craft does crocheting of blouses for adults and children, in various colours and patterns also sets for chair backs, doilies, bed spreads and tablecloths. We will be sending samples to you. Anyone interested can contact us. If you have more posters and stickers, please send us some; and others if necessary, as long as they speak positive about women.

Anxiously awaiting to hear from you.

Thanks in advance, and remember wherever you go and whatever you do, do it with love. Peace and love be with you.

Lumumba Nyembo
Highfield
Harare, Zimbabwe

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