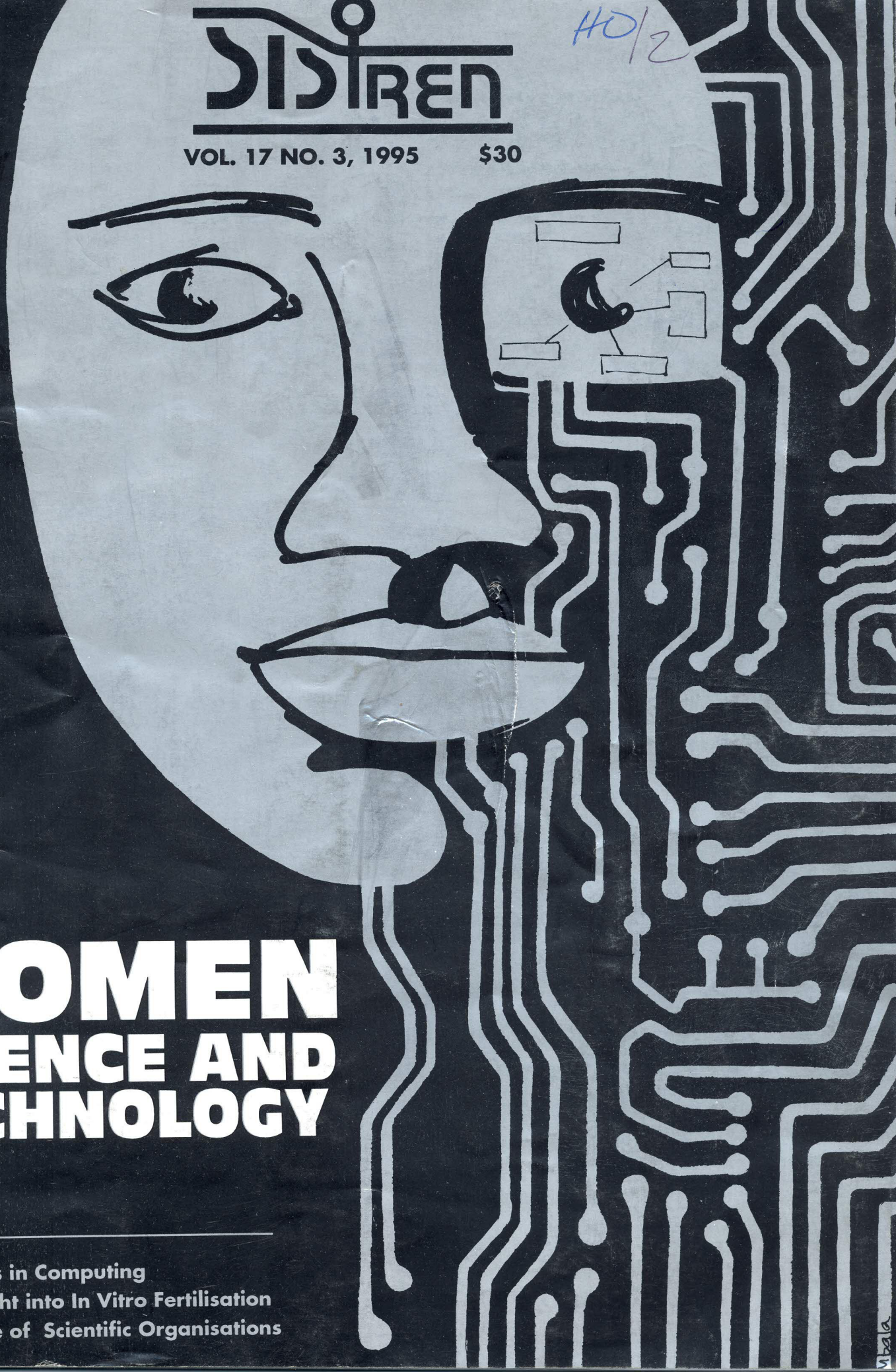


# SIREN

40/2

VOL. 17 NO. 3, 1995

\$30



## WOMEN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### INSIDE

- Pioneers in Computing
- An insight into In Vitro Fertilisation
- The Role of Scientific Organisations

Mbsala

## SISTREN OUT DEH!

### WOMEN'S BUREAU WORKSHOP SERIES

Sistren in collaboration with the Women's Bureau conducted a series of workshops on "AIDS", its causes, effects, care and possible cure. These were done in four of our rural parishes. Four members of the Collective created a skit looking at the situation of a middle-aged woman to whom the disease was transmitted, by her husband, who had an "Affair" with his Secretary. The skit was presented at different locations, to stimulate discussion between Sistren, the participants and the sponsors. In each of the parishes, the persons who were responsible for organising the workshop provided a spokesperson on "AIDS" from the Ministry of Health. These individuals were able to give statistics and other factual information to both the participants and the audience. The Women's Bureau identified the rural communities in which the workshops were held.

### ASSOCIATION OF DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES (ADA) RETREAT

ADA's 1995 retreat took place at Crystal Springs Resort in Portland in November. Two days were spent in open sessions, in which Member Agencies participated, and on the 16th a closed session was held for staff reflections. The objectives of the retreat were as follows:-

- To increase the understanding and relevance of ADA as a Collective
- To review ADA's performance as per the 1995 Workshop.
- To formulate the 1996 Workplan and Budget.

Some of the recommendations were:

- ✓ To support Staff Training Programme
- ✓ To conduct workshops on Accounting and Accountability.
- ✓ The workshop will be sponsored by ADA, and will be conducted by ASSIST.

The complete report on the recommendations coming out of the Retreat will not be available until it is completed by the Facilitator. Afolashade and Desmarie Campbell attended.

## *At The Meeting Place*

**PASSING THROUGH:** Karina Smith, was here to do research for her Master of Arts degree. Her focus was on Sistren, but she was also looking at Women's Theatre in Jamaica and the Caribbean.

*cont'd on pg. 27*



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Sistren is produced three times a year by the Sistren Theatre Collective as part of its ongoing efforts to highlight issues of concern to women in the society. Sistren is a non-profit collective of women. Other activities include theatre, workshops using Drama-in-Education methodology, 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-earning project. Contact: 20 Kensington Crescent, Kingston 5, Jamaica, West Indies. Tel: (809) 92-92457 / 92-96171

## APOLOGIES

For the absence of the following features which did not appear in Vol. 17 No. 2. These were **Women in the Arts**, **Health Update** and **Meeting Place**.

Also, **Profile** in last issue (Vol. 17 No. 2) which did not feature the children of Sistren as was previously stated. We have since corrected this.

For having printed the article **Marginally Female** by Dee Robinson which many of our readers found offensive.

# ACQUAINTED



Lana Finikin with two of her children

Photo: Charles Ferguson

## SISTREN PROFILE

**I**t is said that at times the last shall be the first and the first the last. I follow the saying by introducing our readers firstly to Nicole Turnbull, who is affectionately called 'Nin-Nin'. Nin-Nin is the last of Lana's four children. The 'wash-belly' in plain Jamaican terms. In fact, she came twelve years after her three brothers.

"From the very first time me get pregnant, I was hoping to have a girl," Lana told me, but after having three boys she felt the fourth child would have been a boy. Throughout her groaning, grunting, twist-

ing, sweating and finger snapping, she was convinced that it was going to be 'boy agen!'

Tears of joy flowed unashamedly when she was told 'it's a girl!' Her addition to the family consisting of three boys made it easy for them to pamper her.

Nicole who is 9 years old, has been a member of ASHE's Academy for a little over a year, and hopes to be a member of the Ensemble in the near future. In fact she has performed with the Ensemble as part of the

chorus when they travelled to the United States with one of their major productions.

In ASHE she has been exposed to dancing, drama and singing. These are artistic abilities that she has cultivated and has grown to love since the age of seven, when she took part in a summer camp at the Cultural Training Centre. ASHE has helped Nicole to develop a positive self esteem. "I've learnt that I can be my own person and don't need to be like anyone else," she said confidently.

Nicole's birthday is December 26. Its no wonder that she's such an active and talented child. She's a Capricorn. She makes friends easily and loves to dress up in fashionable (in style) clothes. The activities at ASHE along with school work, takes up a lot of energy. However, with her mother's approval, she would like to add swimming to an already hectic schedule. Some of the fun things that Nicole enjoys doing are, playing dolly-house, playing video games such as Mortal Combat and watching cartoons and comedies. 'Tom and Jerry' as well as 'Sister Sister' are her favourite television programmes. Nicole also likes to play basketball.

Nicole reasons with a sense of maturity and intelligence. She regrets that she might not get the chance to be a gymnastic, because it's not taught at her school, Portmore Missionary Preparatory. In fact, she doesn't know if its taught in Jamaica at all.

Lana's three sons are Craig, Hopper and Nicky; these are their pet names.

Donald (Craig) Newell is the eldest of the three, Lana express that he's her "sof' spot" because he is the first child.

Craig is 24 years old and was born under the sign of Cancer. He loves to play Chess and computer games because they both develop his mental capacity. Another one of his interests is fishing. When he is out at sea, the serenity and the ambiance or natural beauty of the environment allow the inner person to get closer to God. He has taken his Nazarene vows, which dictates that he doesn't eat or drink anything alcoholic and also not to eat anything from the vine.

Craig has spent approximately 3 years in Canada where he started a family. He is the

*Cont'd on pg. 22*

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In this issue of Sistren, we highlight the role of science and technology in the development of women. Science is such an integral part of our modern lives, that to be ignorant of it is to almost be excluded from society. From deep space exploration, to the study of the mind, science and technology enables us to understand and control ourselves and our environment. Scientific discovery has shaped the course of world history and continues to

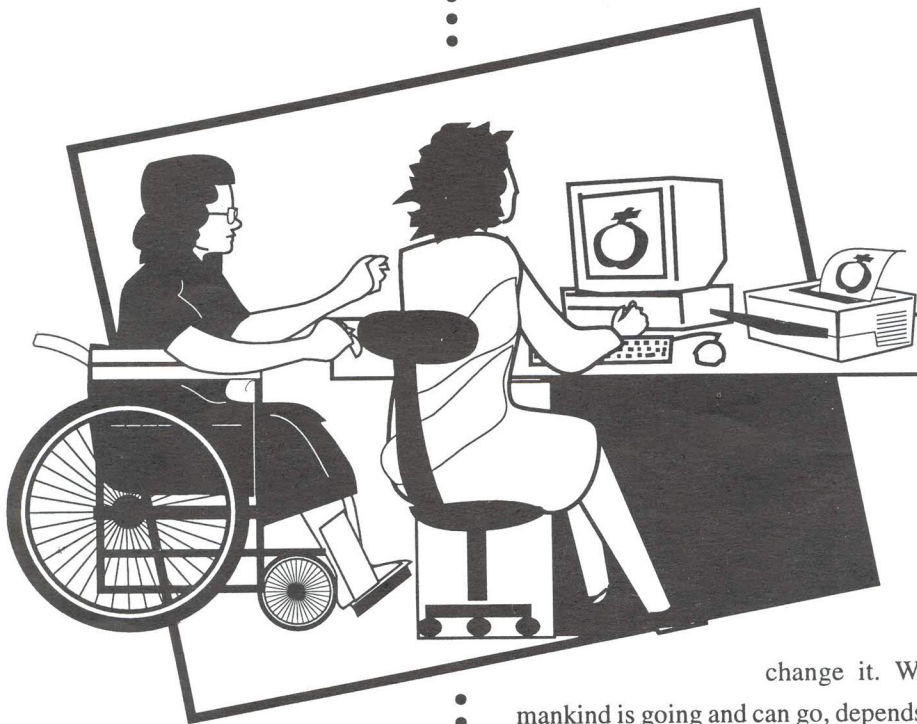
it spreads? The human race would be extinct. Technology created the sewerage system, the system of roads and space travel. Where would we be without the printing press or the hypodermic?

It is important that we learn about science and have educated creative minds researching, questioning, and advancing the knowledge and ability of man. Fresh ideas and ways of doing things are key to advancement in science and technology. This is exactly where women have a pivotal role to play. Women approach problems from a different angle than men, and so are able to offer alternative solutions. The symbiotic effect of both male and female scientists must necessarily produce more, if not better solutions.

Sistren address the plight of women in today's world, especially those at the grassroots level.

As the world changes, so must women, in their approach to life and in their attitudes. Science and technology are an essential part of today's world; as such it is imperative that we, as women immerse ourselves in the many disciplines of the sciences. Our freedom, our justice and our equality, depend on us. We determine our destiny. Science teaches us about our environment and ourselves and education gives us this knowledge. Education is gender blind, not gender proof, so we have a unique perspective to offer, to the process of scientific discovery.

We hope you enjoy this issue and invite your comments. ♀



change it. Where mankind is going and can go, depends to a great degree on the level of scientific advancement of the species. Stunting the growth of a particular group of scientists or potential scientists is to sow the seeds of our destruction. This fact is starkly contrasts with the present global plight; not enough water, failing crops, and pollution everywhere. We need as much brain power as possible working on these global problems.

Imagine the effect of the ebola virus if we did not understand how to contain it or how

# A WOMAN OF STRENGTH & CHARACTER



**DIANE ROBERTSON**

BY GRUDGY

**S**he looks no different from anyone else; yet, from the outset, she is obviously alert, observant, pleasant and approachable. When I begin to speak with her, I got a sense of her deep spiritual awareness, insight and vision, that her cool, calm persona, subtly hides from the naked eye.

The lady I am speaking about is Diane Robertson, Consultant Pharmacist and Medical Herbalist. If the name has not struck a chord, allow me to remind you that she was the first 'loud' voice to awake Jamaica to the importance of alternative medicine especially as it relates to the use of locally grown herbs and other natural products.

Mrs. Robertson cannot be considered part of the new 'hyped-up' era of herbal products since she has been practising pharmacognosy, the name given to this branch of medicine, for over 20 years. Prior to this, Mrs. Robertson worked as a pharmacist, having gained a solid educational background in the field, at the Kingston Public Hospital, "that shows you how old I am because that place has been long closed down. I was part of the last batch to graduate from that institution," she quipped,

Her interest in natural products and their medicinal value, grew while she operated her own pharmacy, the now defunct Shortwood Pharmacy. "I would secretly

watch some of my customers come to the pharmacy and leave without filling their prescriptions. Instead, they would go home and use home made remedies or buy herbal products and other natural products. Later, the doctor would reduce the dosage, believing that the drugs were actually working," Mrs. Robertson explained.

These observations, out of which her insight was born, led her to author the first of three books called "Back to Eden."

Mrs. Robertson travelled worldwide, to increase her knowledge of herbs and plants, experience other cultures, and examine the role of natural products in daily life. "It was

amazing to see the number of natural and health food stores abroad . . .," she reminisces.

With the firm conviction that Jamaica was wasting the potential of its locally grown products, she decided to establish her own garden at Diamond Road on Old Stony Hill Road in St. Andrew. The once small garden operation blossomed into a large and growing concern, serving both local and overseas markets. As well as the herbal products business, tours of the gardens were conducted on a regular basis.

The operation existed for three years, employing women from neighbouring communities. An unexpected result of the operation was its effect on people's opinions affording them practical evidence of what was previously superstition.

After her experience with growing her own products at Diamond Road, Mrs Robertson was employed to Times Store as a Consultant Pharmacist. While there, she assisted with specialised sales also.

But, one might ask, "How long has Times Store been converted into a Drug Store?" the simple answer is, "It never was!". With her strength and determination, she was able to convince management to allow her to promote the dynamic field of pharmacognosy, as she worked as a Manager of Retail Sales, in the book stores! This she has been doing for the past 6 years.

Her determination to be a part of the groups which market and promote a number of the more popular and highly rated herbal products now on the market may be startling, but Mrs. Robertson explained, "I don't believe that herbal products should be marketed on a multi-leveled basis. Those products should be put in the appropriate places such as a pharmacy and be properly monitored by a trained person. The manner in which the products are promoted is a mere commercial gimmick." she emphasised.

Her strong views on this and other areas relating to the field have gotten her mixed reactions in some quarters. She explained that as she continued to advocate for more research and exportation of these products, "some of my very colleagues believed I was getting insane," she related.

She pledges to remain very active in her practice as she travels worldwide to share ideas at seminars, workshops and lectures.

She was instrumental in forming a local organisation, the Wholistic Herbal Association on which she serves as the Chairperson. She has also published two other books, "Live Longer, Look Young" and "Jamaican Herbs".

Because of her commitment and dedication, Mrs. Robertson was conferred an Honorary Doctorate by the Opened International University of Complimentary Medi-

cine, through the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations recognition of her work in this area.

Mrs. Robertson has been married for 31 years and is the proud mother of three children.

### FACTS ON NATURAL PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

It is estimated that sales in \$US of Natural Products for 1995 stood at the following:-

Natural Food Stores	\$3 billion
Mail Order Sales	\$300 million
Herbal Teas Only	\$213 million ♀

## LANDMARK IN WOMAN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

The approval, in 1979, of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), was a landmark in the history of women's human rights. CEDAW incorporated the norm against gender-based discrimination as well as all of the standards relating to women or having particular significance for women that had been set in past instruments.

CEDAW's preamble acknowledges that despite the UN's various efforts to promote human rights and the equality of women, "extensive discrimination against women continues to exist." It declares, moreover, that this discrimination violates "the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of the sexes and human, national and global development."



CEDAW moves beyond the guarantees of equality before the law and equal protection under the law found in earlier instruments. It sets out measures aimed at achieving substantive equality between men and women, regardless of marital status, in all fields of political, economic, social and cultural life. Unlike previous international instruments concerned with women's status, CEDAW allows for temporary measures of affirmative action. It binds states parties to seek to modify cultural patterns of behaviour and attitudes regarding the sexes, and attempts to impose standards of equality and non-discrimination in private as well as public life. ♀

### STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

STATE	SIGNED	RATIFIED
Antigua & Barbuda	-	1st August 1989
Bahamas	-	6th October 1993
Barbados	24th July 1980	16th October 1980
Commonwealth of Dominica	15th September 1980	15th September 1980
Grenada	17th July 1980	30th August 1990
Guyana	17th July 1980	17th July 1980
Jamaica	17th July 1980	19th October 1984
St. Kitts & Nevis	-	25th April 1985
St. Lucia	-	8th October 1982
St. Vincent/Grenadines	-	4th August 1981
Suriname	-	1st March 1993
Trinidad & Tobago	27th June 1985	12th January 1990

(Reprinted from *Children in Focus* - Vol. 7 No. 3, July-September 1995)



*Verna Foster-Christie as she reads the blue print*

**M**rs. Verna Foster-Christie grew up always wanting to do traditionally male-dominated jobs. Building construction drew her interest at a young age, and she learned to lay blocks rough cast and granite walls under the tutelage of her brother, when she was 15 years old. Years later she heard of the Women's Construction Collective (WCC) and joined them, at first applying for training. Verna continues to be active in the Collective ever since.

Verna Foster-Christie is by all accounts, an exceptional woman. Growing up with four brothers and four sisters only served to exacerbate her already tomboyish tendencies. Admittedly, she preferred to be in the company of boys, doing what they did and generally learning to do 'male type' activities. Interestingly enough this has not made her any less feminine. Her soft spoken and easy going manner does not hint at the dynamo of self confidence and determination humming beneath the surface. While learning to lay blocks with her brother, she helped build the Dover Seventh Day Adventist Church, which still stands today. Later when she was older, Verna would take courses in Basic Masonry and Carpentry at the National TVET Centre. Upon

graduating, Verna grabbed an opportunity to work on a project that was about to begin at about the same time. Initially, the man in charge was very skeptical about hiring a woman as a mason, and Verna found herself in the office doing menial tasks.

Undaunted, Verna pressed for a chance to work on site and eventually got one. Her determination led her to buy books on blueprint reading, and become proficient at reading drawings. Despite a heroic effort to prove herself, she was still grossly underpaid. At one point she had to assume the duties of the foreman, because he was perpetually drunk. Verna eventually left the company because of the unfair treatment she was experiencing.

The Women's Construction Collective began as a result of a programme started by the Population Council, in 1981 called "Women Low Income Households and Urban Service in Latin America and the Caribbean", the goal was to incorporate women's concerns into the urban planning and service delivery process. Three metropolitan areas were targeted, Kingston, Jamaica being one of them.

In May 1983 Ruth McLeod, one of the 15 members of the Kingston working group, who was working as a consultant to the Incorporated Masterbuilders Association, submitted a proposal to the Working Group to start a project, and place unemployed women as trade workers in the local building industry. The working group was especially interested in this project and work began on making it a reality.

Out of the informal discussion group which met every Sunday at the Tivoli Com-

*cont'd on pg. 29*

# CONSTRUCTIVE THOUGHTS

by QUILL

*Verna and her daughters working together*





Ah always used to wonder why Mama just accept her life; why she never rebel or if she couldn't rebel why she never run way. She just stay deh and tek it. Ah used to wonder why she never go to Kingston and leave out a di situation. Me see me cousin madda when she came from town. She used to look nice. She red up her lips and cutex her finger and press her hair. Me say, 'Lawd! Town nice, ee?' Me say to meself, me would a waan go.

Me could hardly imagine town. Two time me go a town pon festival. But me never go noweh else. When me go a church and dem preach and say, 'Yuh need to be Christian because when yuh go to heaven yuh a go drink milk and honey,' me feel seh town must be like dat. Yuh siddung and yuh get everyting. Me tink town a pure pretty building. Me decide seh, if anything and me get di chance, me a go a town.

Only one and few people would a press dem hair in di country if dem a go town or so. Me decide seh me a go tief and press me hair. One Saturday, ah go to market to one lady name Miss Birdie who used to press hair. Me go to her and do it fi four shilling. When me go home and dem see seh it press already, dem get out on me. 'Yuh bun up yuh head! Yuh a go a hell!' dem say. But dem couldn't stop me. Every Saturday, me go a Miss Birdie and spend me four shilling.

Me faada get a ticket fi go a America and do farm work. After dat him start get lickle money. Me know cause me used to bank it. Me was finishing Senior School and me did waan go a High School. Me tell him. Him say, 'Cho! Me nah spend no money pon gal pickney, because dem a go look man.'

'Send her,' me stepmadda used to say.

Tings weh me and she used to talk me couldn't tell him. Him was very strict. Him never believe pickney should have free speech. Him used to hinder me from go mongst people.

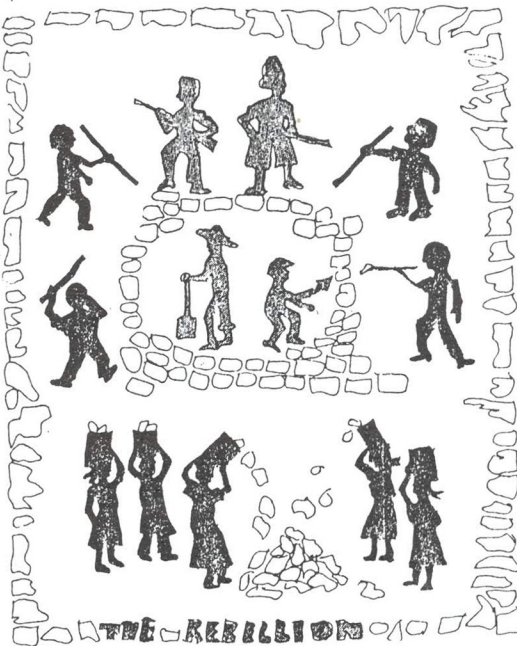
'Mek she go do sewing,' him say.

'All dem tink yuh must do is sewing and me nah go do it! Me no like hold needle and threat and me nah do it,' me say. Me a grow breast and have hair under me arm and him

# COUNTRY MADDA LEGACY

*Excerpt from the book Lionheart Gal*

waan treat me like me a lickle pickney. Him waan me stay inna di yard till man come ask fi married to me. Das all him waan me fi do. Yet still him a say, 'Me no waan spend no money pon gal pickney for all dem do is look man.' Di argument drag out, till eventually him mek up him mind to send me go a one Commercial school in Black River. Me start learn shorthand and typing and me did a do subject too. Me did waan turn teacher.



One day me a come home from school. One man name Daley gimme a drive inna him car. A woman who live near to me was coming from Black River. Now Daley, him a go straight up di road and me a turn to one side. A lickle below di cross road, di woman see Daley. She beg him a drive. Daley say him going turn straight up, so it no mek no sense him pick her up, for is only five chains to di cross road. Him drive off. At di cross road me come out and turn up.

Di woman go up and tell me faada seh she see me in Daley car. Dat was what cause di bombshell. Me faada say, 'Yuh a look man! Me nah send yuh back a school! Yuh bun up me money!' Him nag me morning, noon and night. Me get fed up. Me tell di woman seh she mash up me school life for me did only go a di school bout two term and me never reach noweh yet.

A few weeks after me deh home, me go a shop and me see some a me friend from di Baptist church. Me and dem go up di road and chat. Me stay long. Me faada come look fi me. Him come inna di crowd wid a piece a ackee switch and start beat me. 'Yuh gwine mek boy trouble yu?' him sey and him cut me up.

Me did vex. It put me in mind of Zipora for me skin swell up. Me did waan go a town long time, so me tek out me grip and me pack some a me clothes in deh and put it near di fowl roost. Me get up bout five o' clock and go outside like me was going look after di fowl, but me no catch no fowl. Me tek up me lickle suitcase and me go down inna di bush. Me put on me boot and me clothes and me walk through Granvale bush go a me madda yard. Me go deh and me start cry.

Me stay deh fi two weeks. Me write me sister and tell her seh me a come a town. Me cousin give me two pounds and me tek di bus and run way come a town.

When me reach me couldn't recognise noweh in town but me never fraid. When dem say, 'West Street,' everybody come off di bus and so me come off too. Me tek one taxi go a me sister in Harbour View. She glad to see me. 'A time fi dem stop treat yuh like pickney!' she say.

Town never nice at all. Me feel some breed a hungry for sometime me sister never have no dinner at all. Dem send me fi go do domestic work. Me never like dat and me lef it. Me do waitress work, bar work and factory. All kind a work. Me live all kind a place till after a time me settle down wid Sistren. Me start life over plenty time. Dat a no notten to me, for me did determine no fi go back a country go live. Me determine no fi live how me madda live. ♀

# INNOVATIVE COOKING WITH SOLAR

by Claudette Wilmot

I have been cooking using a solar box cooker made from cardboard, aluminium foil, glass and newspaper since 1989. Thanks to my mother-in-law, Cynthia.

Cynthia Wilmot saw solar box cookers in use while travelling through South America. Her enquiries led her to make contact with Solar Box Cookers International a non-profit organisation that is committed to spreading the knowledge of solar cooking in areas of the world that have adequate sunshine. They were prompt in their response to her enquiries sending information on how to construct and use the solar box cooker. Over the years they have continued to update her on the spread of solar cooking globally.

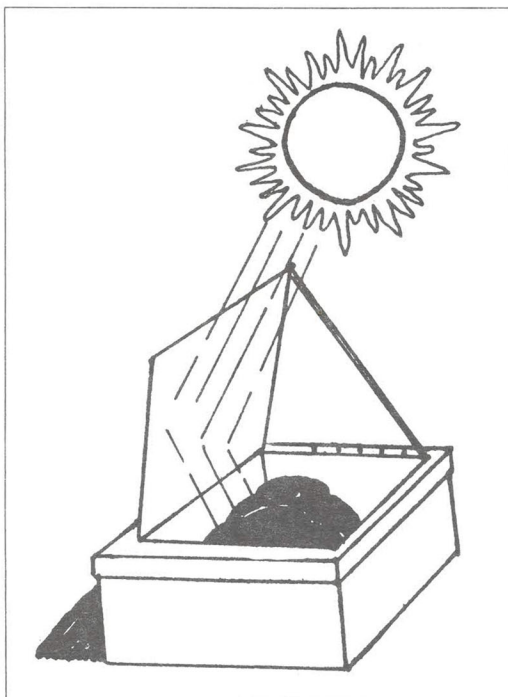
Cynthia approached the Jamaica Flour Mills to build and test two prototypes. Having secured sponsorship, she approached me for assistance. I was at that time employed at the School of Hope for Persons with Mental Retardation. I eagerly embraced the project which I felt my students could successfully partake in. We employed a fellow teacher, Roy Reid, to build the first prototype.

I used my vacation leave to 'field test' the solar box cooker with tremendous success under a variety of conditions. I prepared meals such as stew beef with vegetables, peas and beans, chicken, bread, cakes, muffins rock cakes and rice.

My confidence in my ability as a 'solar cooker' increased with experience. The cooker was also of tremendous value to me, personally. I progressed from 'field testing', to preparing most of our meals with sunshine. My family was becoming more environmentally aware and during a difficult pregnancy in 1990, I appreciated even more the fact that the solar box cooker did not need constant monitoring, so my cooker allowed me time to rest and relax. Solar cooking was a good conversation piece, my

neighbours were fascinated by the solar box and the wonderful taste of the food prepared using it.

The Jamaica Flour Mills launched the Solar Box Cooker in September 1990. It brought to the school, particularly my students, the positive attention of the general public by focusing on their abilities, rather than their disabilities. It also fulfilled Cynthia's dream of bringing this simple technology to the awareness of the Jamaican public.



*A solar box cooker*

The Jamaica Flour Mills and their public relations staff did a great job. They also funded a further 20 boxes which were completed by my students and their staff.

The Solar Box Cooker generated much interest throughout the country. I was called upon constantly by various groups to explain and demonstrate its use. A number of cookers were sold and the funds generated were used to build improved versions of the solar cooker. Experiments were conducted using ply board and sheet metal to construct the enclosure.

It was my hope to begin an employment skills training workshop using the Solar Box Cooker as our first project. This was not to be, for the administration of the school, having given us their blessings could do no more. At that time it would have cost approximately \$500 to build a cooker. We also hoped to find an organisation that could subsidise the manufacture of the cooker.

We approached Jampro and they helped us to develop a management plan as well as to locate prospective investors. However, we were not successful in this venture, primarily because we were not out to make a profit.

I tried to do as many demonstrations as possible, sometimes taking leave from my regular job to do so. Solar cooking has taken me to many places but my greatest experience so far was being invited to attend the first Global Assembly of Women and the Environment held in Miami in November 1991. I was invited to be a "success story" presenter. I did demonstrations that were well received but due to my job obligations I could not honour all my engagements.

The conference was an eye opener. I returned to Jamaica feeling good about myself and my efforts. Thousands of women from all over the world gathered together for one week, seeking solutions to the world's environmental problems. They wanted to hear from women who were working at the community level, doing what we called 'simple things'. There were women like me who felt they could have done more and were made to appreciate ourselves and our worth.

I also met solar cookers from other countries. For the first time, an international group of solar cooks sat at one table sharing ideas and giving support and motivation to each other.

*cont'd on pg. 23*

# BIOTECHNOLOGY AND WOMEN IN CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURE

One of the largely overlooked effects of the changing face of world agriculture is its impact on the lives of women in developing countries. Women, through new educational opportunities, can now be found in all areas of agricultural practice. However, women in agriculture in the developing world are usually seen as field hands or labourers.

Biotechnology (apart from early fermentation processes), is one of the later technologies to be applied in the development and improvement of agriculture, both in the industrialised North and in the less industrialised South. This "new" technology is being applied to "old" agricultural problems such as improving crop yields, conferring resistance to plant and animal diseases, developing improved varieties of plants and maintaining old stocks which have been traditionally successful.

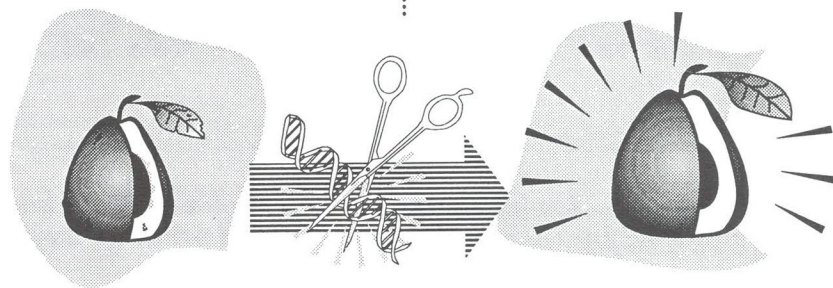
The impact of this technology on women in Caribbean agriculture will be examined.

Biotechnology generally refers to that group of scientific and engineering principles which apply and process biological agents for the production of useful goods and services (Sassion, 1989). Biotechnology draws on several biological disciplines and techniques: molecular biology, cell biology, genetics, recombinant DNA technology, tissue, cell and organ culture, and fermentation (Persely, 1993). Agricultural biotechnology has relied significantly on developments in these fields.

Tissue culture and micropropagation techniques have found wide applications in the Caribbean and other developing countries where agricultural biotechnology has been applied to local problems (Swaminathan, 1982; Toure, 1989; Persely, 1993). Plantlets derived from tissue culture provide large quantities of disease free planting material to farmers in and out of traditional growing seasons. Most of the larger Caribbean islands including Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Dominica, Barbados, Guadeloupe, and Puerto Rico have the ability to engage in tissue culture research.

Impact studies conducted by international world organisations on biotechnology and the developing world generally agree that biotech-

nology as it is practised in the industrialised countries of Europe and North America can have adverse effects on the socioeconomic and cultural traditions of developing countries (Sasson, 1989). Shiva (1989), in her assessment of the damage to traditional agricultural practices in northern India shows that the negative effects of the green revolution may be duplicated and exacerbated in those regions by biotechnological innovations in agriculture in developing coun-



tries. Appropriate technology transfer is thus being stressed by most workers in the field.

Caribbean women are, however, not seen as being as disenfranchised as are the vast majority of women in developing countries due to the technological innovations introduced to rural agriculture since the 1960's (The World's Women: UN Trends and Statistics, 1991). The effects on Caribbean women, of mass productive agriculture as against subsistence agriculture is therefore not directly comparable with women in other developing countries such as India and in parts of the African continent. In the Caribbean, the number of women actively engaged in agricultural pursuits is fifteen (15%) percent which is similar to that of women in industrialised countries, eighteen (18%) percent as opposed to more than eighty (80%) percent in other developing countries.

## Biotechnologists In The Caribbean

Biotechnology in the developing world and its potential has been the subject of several studies. Caribbean biotechnology, however has not received much attention. In one of the few studies conducted on women in science and technology in the Caribbean, Moore (1988) indicates that thirteen (13%) percent of the females

she interviewed were involved in agricultural science and technology. While this may seem low the sample size was biased towards the Jamaica female workforce. Ellis (1988) in a more comprehensive study of the region, indicates an increasing trend in the numbers of female graduates in the Faculty of Agriculture at the St. Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies, in the period 1982-1988.

In a review of the status of biotechnology in Latin America and the Caribbean, it was shown that in Barbados, Guadeloupe, Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago there was only one institute in each territory using new plant biotechnologies (Chaverra, 1989). Similarly, as in several other developing countries, these institutes concentrated on tissue culture capacity either in newly established research laboratories or in other agriculture ministry or university labora-

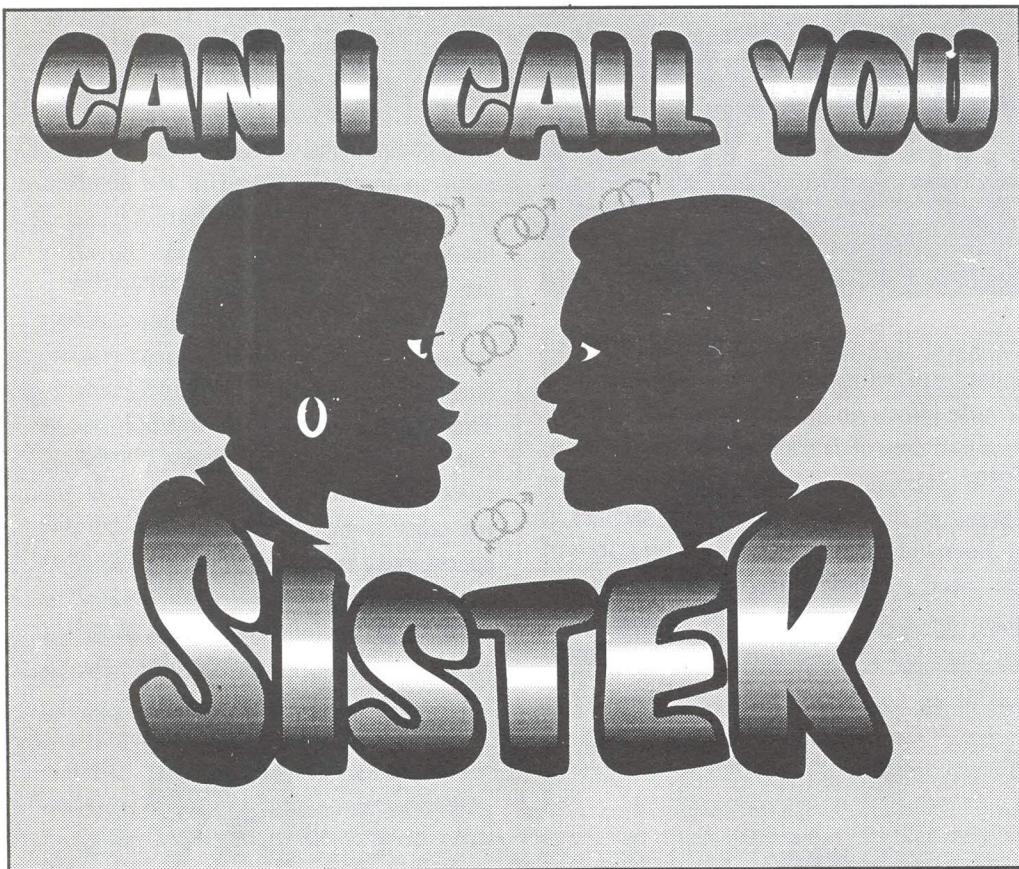
tories. The 1992 directory of biotechnologists in the Caribbean (CBN Directory, 1992), however, lists several institutes in each of the forementioned islands as utilizing plant biotechnologies. These include The University of the West Indies (UWI), the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institutes (CARDI), and research laboratories in the several Ministries of Agriculture.

## Female Workers And Biotechnology

Many innovations in agriculture in developing countries seek to alleviate local dependency on external sources of food imports. The Caribbean is no different. Biotechnology in the region can have tangible effects on the quality of life by reducing the food import bill, improving the nutritional profile of the population and alleviating demands for costly chemicals in agricultural production.

Women, who are seen as playing a pivotal role in all phases of agricultural production in the Caribbean (Cumberbatch, 1986), benefit directly and indirectly from this new technology. As agricultural workers, they can now function in less labour intensive environments. For those workers in the fields, the hard labour involved in harvesting is sometimes relieved as they are now

*Cont'd on pg. 29*



**We caught up with Xavier Campbell and spoke to him about the roles played by men in the family. Read what he says.**

**T**raditionally, women have been the primary care givers in society. The maintenance of the home, as well as the jobs related to caring for the young and simply the running of a household has been seen as woman's job. There is a trend however, toward greater sharing of household chore by men and women. Tasks such as washing, cooking and taking care of the baby which were once viewed by society as solely a woman's responsibility are now being done by both men and women. One such man gives us his views on what it's like.

Xavier Campbell is a tall dark skinned man who sports a full beard. He could easily be an athlete, probably one of Jamaica's lost track wonders. He, however, is very artistic by nature and enjoys drawing, painting and writing poetry. Not surprisingly, Xavier is a graphic artist by profession working extensively with computers to create designs for customers.

Another fact which adds to the enigmatic

character of this man is that he grew up in a traditional Jamaican family of five boys, with his parents believing strongly in separate roles for men and women. In this type of home, the male spouse did not do any of the duties of the woman and vice versa. It is a miracle that Xavier now has the diametrically opposite view on this issue.

Xavier and his wife have what may be called a functional approach to the management of the household. They have agreed that any chores to be done are to be undertaken by the person present, for instance, if Xavier gets home first he will prepare dinner and do any other chores rather than leave them for his wife. This arrangement has a sort of self regulating feature about it, which results in chores being essentially equally divided. A synergistic effect of this approach, according to Xavier, is a closer bonding and greater rapport between he and his wife. Xavier does a lot of the cooking, as well as managing the care of their 3 year old daughter, which gives him great delight as he is able to spend quality time with her. He

can often be heard fondly telling stories of the mischief that he and his daughter get up to during their quality time together.

His wife, Diane, is a professional manager and works long hours, very often coming home late. This necessitates Xavier having to cook and take care of the child as well as doing other household chores. On weekends Mrs. Campbell attends to those things that Xavier did not get around to doing. The weekend also allows the Campbell family valuable time together, going out on picnics.

Despite what may be to some an almost offensive state of affairs in the Campbell's household, Xavier insists that this is the most practical or logical solution to his situation. He suggests that men would be well advised to stay home for a few days and experience being a house husband. This in his estimation would give them a better appreciation of what it takes to be a wife and may not so easily take for granted the role of women in the home.

Before leaving for his next appointment, he pointed out that the love, understanding and deep affection he felt for his partner allows him not to be offended by helping or doing whatever he can to assist. He also stated that most men who live on their own have to do their own household chores and its not offensive why should it be so now when one has a partner. ♀

*Tasks such as washing, cooking and taking care of the baby that were once view by society as solely a woman's responsibility are now being done by both men and women*

*Since I believe our Region's greatest resource is the creativity and spirit of our people, I would like to suggest that the institutions in which science and technology are taught, from primary, through secondary and tertiary levels, have a significant role to play in the stimulating and encouraging this creativity and attitude of critical enquiry, particularly regarding scientific phenomena.*

**A** consideration of the constraints on gender, science and technology in small, developing countries such as those of the Caribbean readily identifies several fundamental problems, the resolution of which will require all the creativity that can be garnered. One Jamaican man of letter writes - "Creativity is the common thread which runs through all forms of human knowledge. (Einstein. . . Picasso. . . Marx. . . and Keynes) . . . are all connected by their engagement in the creative process rather than by what they produced, which on the face of it was very different. It is their common immersion in that process of creating which gives clues to learning, education and our common humanity" (Rex Nettleford). I would like to describe science here as one manifestation of this creative and critical enquiry.

Since I believe our Region's greatest resource is the creativity and spirit of our people, I would like to suggest that the institutions in which science and technology are taught, from primary, through sec-

manpower needs, but in the broader sense of creative, critical enquiry and action.

I believe it is important for our University to include material on the History of Science in its curriculum particularly for science students. It is important that this history fairly records the contribution of women scientists and the contribution of black and other non-white scientists. I cannot describe to you the pride I feel in knowing that Mary Seacole was a woman of colour, or the surprise I felt on learning that Pushkin, Alexandre Dumas and Chevalier St. George were men of colour.

And what of the work-place? The work-place has an obvious role to play in continuing the development of both male and female scientists and technologists which began in the teaching institutions. Much has been written on the subject of the female scientists who performed the experiments, gathered the data and made other important contributions to the furtherance of science and reaped none of the rewards. That this still happens is evidenced in the fact that while there may be several female scientists working in various scientific institutions few manage to reach leadership or decision-making positions. What can be done to correct this? I see two possibilities. One is for the male scientists who hold the positions of leadership to actively encourage excellence of achievement and act as mentors for their female as well as their male employees. I am not here asking for special considerations, only for fairness and equity. The other is for the few female scientists who do achieve leadership positions to advance the agenda of women in science.

To reflect that women were originally once foremost among human technologists and inventors and that they have a key role to play in shaping the science and technology of the future, the proposed activities of the consortium are being called the Once and Future Programme. ♀

*(Extract from a paper prepared for seminar on Gender Science and Technology by Patience A. Dennis, Government Chemist on February 24-25, 1994)*

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## **GENDER, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:**

# **THE ROLE OF SCIENTIFIC ORGANISATIONS**

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ondary and tertiary levels, have a significant role to play in the stimulating and encouraging this creativity and attitude of critical enquiry, particularly regarding scientific phenomena.

The University has a special role to play. The University must educate our young people through the reconstruction of curricula to include issues such as gender, redesign of teaching methods and redefinition of the standards used to judge performance from those inherited from the past. The University must train our young minds, not only in the narrow sense of meeting

# THE SOFTER SIDE OF ENGINEERING:

## ANA TREASURE

by Michael Gabay



Anna Treasure

*'Women have a unique perspective to bring to the profession, and have the opportunity to add to the dimensions and flavour of the discipline.'*

**D**riven, smart, and the epitome of composure, she presents an unlikely picture to the un-informed. A civil engineer by profession, she has deep rooted convictions about the role of women in the development of third world (especially Latin American) countries.

Despite her supposedly rough and tough male dominated profession, she has managed to excel in both academic and professional life. She has, on top of everything overcome a language barrier to be able to work in Jamaica.

The lady in question is Mrs. Ana Treasure, a principal engineer at the National Water Commission.

Ana Treasure is not a Jamaican, having been born in Panama City, Panama. She is the first of three siblings, having one sister and one brother, both of whom now reside in Jamaica. While growing up in Panama she showed early signs of an interest in student affairs giving her first speech at the tender age of five! This interest developed into a full blown involvement in the student movement. Ana had developed a profound respect and admiration for General Torrijos, the leader of the military govern-

ment. At the meeting, he told her wanted her to help build a new country, as an engineer. Ana found this very puzzling as she had no interest in this area, yet. Unfortunately six years later, the General was killed. It was only at this time that Ana decided to study engineering. The builder was born.

After earning her BSc. in civil engineering, Ana decided to further her studies in England, pursuing a Masters degree in Water and Waste Water Management in Developing Countries. At the same time she still remained active in the student movement, as vice president of the African-Caribbean Society. While at University in England she encountered discrimination at the hands of some African students. These students thought Ana should not be in engineering since she is a woman. As fate would have it, these very students had to come to Ana for help! She could easily have taken advantage of this situation and refused to assist her male classmates. Ana however being above that type of petty rivalry, used the opportunity to foster better relations with her fellow students, and gain their respect in the bargain. A second and more profound event occurred while she was in England at university; she met a Jamaican

gentleman named Michael Treasure, the man she was to marry. Michael Treasure is himself an engineer, and after earning their Masters degrees, Ana and Michael came home to Jamaica.

Ana feels that women are coming into their own now and are just as capable as their male counterparts in engineering. She points out that engineering is about mathematics, not brute strength. To put it another way, engineering is about thinking and problem solving not sweat and muscle. This fact reveals just how far from the truth stereotypes can be, particularly in gender issues.

Mrs. Treasure feels very strongly about the role of women in the development of family. Women have a critical role to play in family life, and should be careful not to jeopardise this by 'taking on too much' in their careers. There is a potential conflict in cases where women have a family and at the same time are trying to advance in their chosen field. Being a wife and mother is a very demanding task in itself, moreso when you have a career. Furthermore, Ana says women are not recognised enough for their contribution, notwithstanding the fact that engineers, generally, are not involved to the extent that they should be in society. Women have a unique perspective to bring to the profession, and have the opportunity to add to the dimensions and flavour of the discipline.

'Women can be independent, and capable professionals without losing their femininity,' added Ana.

Ana has been a resident of Jamaica for four years where she lives with her husband and 17 month old son José Francisco. ♀

*Information for this article was provided by Mrs. Treasure in an interview.*

# WOMEN- MOVING OUT!

by Sharon Coburn

It has often been said that women are the weaker sex and inevitably several attempts have been made to marginalize them specifically in areas previously dominated by men. In many cases, women are discriminated against and are not granted equal rights with men. Statistics prove that women constitute less than one seventh of the top administrators and managers in developing countries as well as in France, Japan and Spain. The 1995 Human Development Report shows that the female wage rate is on average three-fourths of the male wage rate even in a country such as the United States. It is an established fact that women, on average work longer hours than men in nearly every country. This in itself speaks to the ingenuity of women and their dedication and commitment to production. In industrialized countries, about two-thirds of the women's total work burden is spent on unpaid activities. For men, the shares are reversed, they earn much more even if it is of a lesser level than that produced by women.

The most exciting aspect of the report, however, is that much progress has been made since the 1970's in improving the welfare of women. We are well aware that the lifestyle of women is determined by culture. Education for many women has been used as a stepping stone and as a means of upward social mobility.

Women have, in the past, and even more so in present times pursued further training in entrepreneurship, technology and science. A very significant trend is that women have been "stepping into the corridors of power", shaking off centuries of stereotypes. Increasingly, women have been presenting themselves as high powered individuals standing tall on platforms which were previously dominated by men.

The track record of countries led by women has been outstanding, propelling them to take centre stage. In countries such as

Britain, Israel and India, significant developments have taken place in many sectors, accompanied by social and political stability.

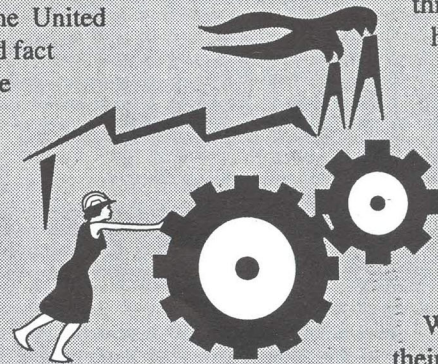
Women who are in great demand, need an abundance of energy, wit, brain power and assertiveness, not just a pretty face. In the area of science and technology, women need 'strength of character'. They need to devise strategies to best address the demands of a rapidly advancing world.

Women have a greater sense of process in that we can see through things. In addition we have a greater eye for detail and a high level of resourcefulness. Women are especially good organizers, planners and implementers of programmes.

Women have proven their ability to initiate increased levels of production at any level effectively. The special talents and skills that are needed to compete in a man's world are evident in a woman. The competitive spirit, the will to achieve at any cost, the struggle for self reliance and autonomy. Super career women have in the past developed coping skills to deal with the rigours of the business world.

We have long said 'bon-voyage' to the days when women were regarded as primary care-givers and disciplinarians. Women in many areas have shaken off the dependency syndrome and have begun to 'dismantle the glass ceilings' and to smash inequality in the areas of training and employment, science and technology.

Even so, women still have to deal with problems such as access to credit and power in some areas as well as matters of national priorities and budgetary allocations. The resilience of women and their ability to persevere as well as their overwhelming desire to be successful, have endowed them with "eagle's wings" as it were equipping them with the necessary tools for scientific and technological superiority. ♀



**W**hether we admit it or not, women are “technology phobic” and one piece of modern technology that we view with great trepidation is the personal computer. I recently had an interesting conversation with two women who are not “like most of us” and who are pioneers in the computing field.

**Vilma Gregory**, a woman of boundless energy and infectious laughter is Executive Chairman of **Vilcomm Services International**, a multi-media and multi-lingual computer company, “the only one of its kind in the Caribbean” she informs me proudly.

“A multilingual and multimedia company is quite a combination”, I remarked, and was immediately given the history of the company.

Vilcomm Services International began as a small community project in Caribbean Terrace, a compact community in Harbour View. “I had just returned from post graduate studies in foreign languages in France with two computers, a vision of poverty alleviation for Jamaica’s down trodden women and a new methodology for teaching the Jamaican adult to learn. I then decided to begin with teenagers in my own community”.

Vilma recalls that the Caribbean Terrace project was a tremendous success. “I had taught myself to use the computer by using my own foundation in foreign languages. I basically used the same methodology with the kids and I found that even though I thought I was quick in learning the computer, they were even faster.” The success of this project opened other doors and her methodology filtered to the schools and from the schools to Industry and then to the Financial sector.

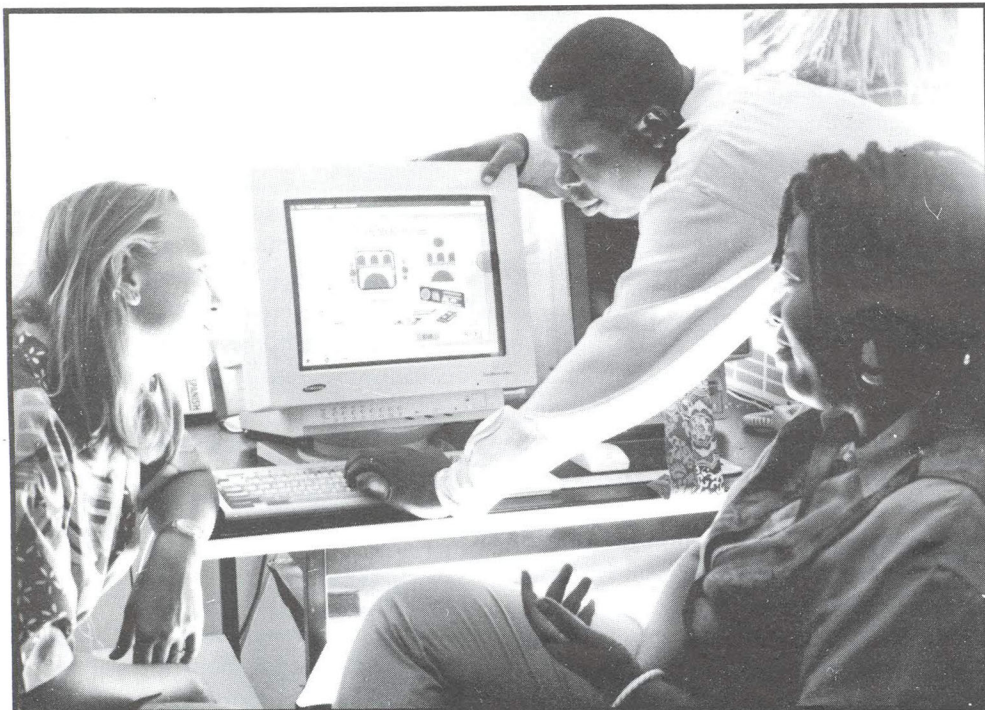
With the introduction of multimedia technology in the early 90’s Vilcomm found a comfortable niche. “Multimedia technology simply means putting video clips, text photographs, and voice together and putting them on CDROM”, she explains. After nine years in the business, Vilcomm Services International is now taking the best of Jamaican art and science, repackaging it on CDROM for export and “we are effectively putting Jamaica and Vilcomm on the technology map and we are doing it multilingually, in French, Spanish, Italian and German”.

Vilma is convinced that once the fear of the computer is overcome, Jamaica will create its own niche in the area of multimedia technology. “Jamaicans are naturally a creative people, we are into sound, graphics, and movement and that is essentially what multimedia is all about, once we get the hang of it we will be well on our way.”

In the meantime Vilma has begun to pave the way. She has made headway in the international arena and recently took her products to CeBIT 96, the world’s largest international computer software exposition held in Germany. “There we won several awards and actually outperformed the established giants such as the Philippines and Columbia.”

# PIONEERS IN COMPUTING

by Heather-Mae Sutherland



*Vilma Gregory (centre) looks on at a demonstration.*



*"There is the need to develop a national public awareness programme on information technology. The public needs to know what it is and how it can benefit each of us," . . .*

By early '97 the Jamaican public can expect to see all her products on-line, including her long awaited Multimedia Reggae Music Windows based software.

Her mention of the word 'on-line' took me further in the realm of the computer world and to another exciting new development, the Internet. This brought me to the other pioneer in the field, **President of Digital Transtec Limited, Lorna Green.**

Her airy office was deceptively devoid of the telltale equipment that would give the visitor any indication that they were in the presence of a "techie". But, Lorna is no stranger to the computer. She holds a diploma in computer programming and a degree in computer science. "I enjoy the computer field because it matches my personality, I have never been one to conform to the status quo and I like being different."

In fact she is quite used to being the only woman in the room and having lived in North America for almost 20 years, she is also used to being the only black woman on the team.

On her return to Jamaica, she found the computing field equally male-dominated. However, her "technical know-how" and managerial savvy secured such top positions as Vice President of Information Services at Telecommunications of Jamaica and Vice President of Information Technology at Island life.

Now, as head of Digital Transtec, she has her hands full. "When people hear of Digital Transtec, they immediately think Internet because of the work we have done to introduce the internet to Jamaica. We do offer more than this kind of service to the Jamaican public. We are the local representative



*Lorna Green, President of Digital Transtec*

for some major US corporations such as Digital Equipment Corporation, Netrix, AT&T Paradyne and Oracle; and in addition, we provide business solutions in information technology for local companies.

Lorna is undaunted by the fact that as a woman she stands alone in her field. "My competitors think I am aggressive and it is unfortunate that there is a tendency to see this as a negative because I'm a woman." But Lorna is positive that she will succeed in this business environment and she says Digital Transtec will be the cutting edge company of the sector.

To my question of how we as women can overcome our fear of the computer and eventually launch ourselves on the untrodden path, the answer was unanimous, the need for strong Government and Private Sector support in promoting the industry. "There is the need to develop a national public awareness programme on information technology. The public needs to know what it is and how it can benefit each of us," says Lorna.

Vilma agrees. We need a campaign such as this just to sensitise the population and women in particular. "I strongly maintain that the computer is yet to equal the mind of the human being, imagine that we have trillions of bytes of memory that we are yet to use, and the computer still has to beat that."

Meanwhile, Vilcomm has begun to tackle the process with Vilcom's computer awareness programme, a guided self-instructional course on the computer which allows the user to actually become familiar with the basics of the computer, while learning it.

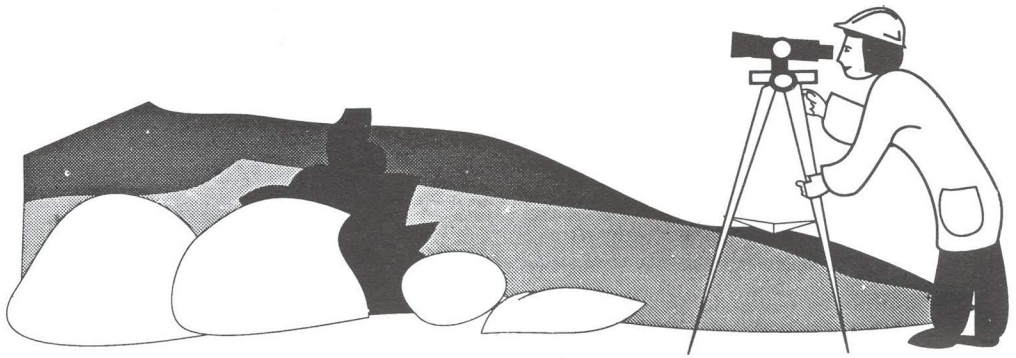
Then, there is hope for us on the horizon, I offered. And again there was an emphatic yes. "In fact I think it's women who will demystify the computer and will change its image of being an alienating tool", says Vilma. "We will bring our own instinctive approach to the computer, transfer the appeal syndrome so that when you see the computer you will want to jump on it. That's where I think women will make the difference." ♀

# STATUS OF WOMEN GEOSCIENTISTS IN THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN

The majority of the women geoscientists resident in the Caribbean have been educated at the University of the West Indies (UWI). The UWI data show that between the period 1964-1992, 39% of the graduating class in geology at the UWI comprised women. For the period 1978-1992 only 39% of the female graduates are currently employed in the profession as compared to 63% of male graduates. A survey conducted of anglophone Caribbean women geoscientists indicates that 87% of them were employed at the end of their first round of job interviews. 91% of these women enjoy their job, although about half (57%) cited obstacles at the workplace which made it difficult to be promoted, and 39% stated that they had experienced some form of sexual discrimination by their male co-workers. Women geoscientists have still not attained the recognition accorded to their male counterparts. Although sexism is practised by some employers it is only one of the factors that contributes to the lower rate of employment among women geologists as compared to men. Other contributing factors are the lack of female role models in top level positions, and domestic responsibilities. However, there is a trend that shows an increasing number of women entering the geosciences which is likely to change the attitudes of the employers and male geoscientists, and provide women with greater opportunities for employment.

Since the establishment of the Department of Geology in 1961 more than 1400 persons from within the English-speaking Caribbean have taken one or more courses in geology over the period 1961-1992 (Jackson, 1994). From this number 273 persons have graduated with either a major, general or special degree in geology. With the exception of the first graduating class in 1964, there has always been at least one female graduate coming through the system.

The majority of women interviewed were aware that there were different levels of sexual discrimination at the work place.



48% were aware of discrimination practices regarding employment of a woman, more than half (57%) were aware of discriminatory practices in the promotion of women, but only 10% felt that women were being deprived of awards, fellowships, scholarships etc because of gender. Similar views were also expressed by Latin American women geoscientists.

39% of the women geoscientists experienced various forms of sexism and prejudice. Many of these centered around field work and the problems encountered in sending them into the field. The profession until recently has been male-dominated and facilities for women are often lacking when field parties are arranged. Since geology is a very field oriented discipline, women feel that they are at a disadvantage when it comes to gaining field experience if they are prevented from doing fieldwork. Employers are often skeptical about having a woman work in the field with male crews, as additional arrangements have to be made for their protection.

The survey has shown that women who are currently employed as geoscientists in the anglophone Caribbean obviously enjoy their job and have aspirations of furthering their education in the field, mostly in the those areas in which they are now working. Although fieldwork is a deterrent for some graduates entering the profession and employers do tend to prefer to hire a man rather than a woman (Jackson, 1993), those women who were hired all expressed an interest in fieldwork. However, the major stumbling block was the additional staff and infra-

structure that had to be put in place for allowing women to do fieldwork. This was seen by most of the respondents as placing them at a disadvantage when it came to promotion.

Although some of the older women hold managerial and senior positions, they are still overshadowed by the men and often have difficulty in getting their cooperation. This is likely to change in the future in that there is an increasing number of females graduating in geology at the University of the West Indies (Jackson and Allen, 1991). This is substantiated from the data collected from the questionnaire in this study, in that it showed that more than half the sample (61%) were under 30 years of age. A similar trend was also seen in Latin America where a survey showed that 56% of the women geoscientists were younger than 35 years of age. This indicates that there should be changes that will remove some of the problems currently encountered by women in geology within the next ten years. ♀

*(Extract from a study done by Trevor Jackson,  
Department of Geology, UWI)*

## READERS,

**Do you have a poem,  
an article or just  
your comments.**

**PLEASE SEND THEM IN TO  
Sistren Theatre Collective  
20 Kensington Crescent  
Kingston 5, Jamaica, W.I.  
or Fax it to 968-0501**

# ORGANIC FARMING

Farming is one of the best and most direct ways to be in touch with the earth. You can produce your impact on the planet earth.

The best way to learn about and care for the earth is to get your hands dirty. Farming can be an art form regardless of how much space you have in your yard to plant flowers, sprout rows of vegetables or cultivate luscious fruits. But aesthetics are not the only benefit from organic farming - economics and health might just be a catalyst for a different kind of growth.

In comparison to food produced by commercial agriculture, per acre, a home garden can reap two to four times more food and save in produce costs.

Like many other environmentally sensitive methods, organic farming is not more widely used because of habit. With a little time and thought devoted to organic farming, it will help to relax, offer rewards, cost less and produce more.

## What is organic growing ?

To grow crops with little or no unnatural inputs, organic methods provide a rich, balanced soil by combining well established practices such as crop rotation, recycling of manures, and composting for fertilizer.

The use of synthetic fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides and fungicides upsets the natural balance thus their use is minimized.

Organic growers recognize that a properly balanced ecosystem will produce healthy plant and animals with few pests and disease problems.

## Plant Nutrition

Instead of adding chemical fertilizers to the soil as a direct means of feeding the plants, organic growing feeds the soil in such a way that nutrients are released, in balance, at a rate that can be absorbed by the plant according to its own needs.



(Source: Jamaica Organic Growers' Association)

Soil amendments are made by means of:

- \* Compost
- \* Mulch
- \* Returning crop residue to the soil
- \* Mineral fertilizers and trace elements (especially rock powders made from mineral bearing rocks)
- \* Animal manures (preferably composted)
- \* Green Manures, mainly legumes
  - Planting of nitrogen-fixing, leguminous trees and crops.
- \* Liquid fertilizers made from manure, special plants and fish or seaweed.
  - Biodegradable fertilizers such as bone meal.

All these processes encourage earthworms, bacteria and micro-life in the soil and add to its fertility.

## Benefits of Organic Growing

Emphasis on quality rather than quantity, thus a healthier produce for a healthier family.

**Environmental integrity:** The elimination of soil erosion, fertilizer run-off and pesticide pollution. Pesticides and fertilizer create residue in our food and contaminate our yards.

**Independence:** Greater and greater reliance on farm or garden generated inputs, such as animal manures, composts and plant sprays. Thus decreasing the cost of production.

**Sustainability:** The Maintenance and improvement of the land and its preservation for future generations.

**Economic:** Utilizes local resources, labour intensive, increases self-sufficiency lessens dependence on imported materials. Therefore decreasing demand for foreign exchange. ☉

# WOMEN AND LAW

by Gina Morley  
and Suzanne Dodd



## THE CONSTITUTION

The Jamaican Constitution offers no interpretation to embrace gender, therefore it is not unconstitutional to deny women's rights.

According to Suzann Dodd, "Laws may be passed to effectively bar women from professions, membership in organizations limit access to goods and services without offending the Constitution. Further, a woman has no legal remedy, for instance when denied a loan because her husband will not co-sign, or give his permission for her to accept such loans.

Section 13 of the Constitution of Jamaica grants fundamental rights to all citizens, regardless of colour, religion, political opinion or sex. However, Section 24(3) omits 'gender' as a category which can afford different treatment thus sanctioning or permitting sexual discrimination where racial, ethnic or religious discrimination and harassment are unconstitutional.

Section 24(3) of the Constitution of Jamaica:

Affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective description by race, place of origin, political opinions, colour or creed"

## FAMILY LAW

In 1975 the JUDICATURE: (Family Court) ACT was passed which created a specialized court dealing exclusively with matters relating to:

- (a) affiliation
- (b) maintenance
- (c) adoption
- (d) custody

This court also makes provision for special counselling services which facilitate a new approach in dealing with family problems as well as a Child Abuse Unit to confront the ill treatment of children.

con'td on pg. 29

# WOMEN IN THE ARTS

by Pat Hyman

## RHEIMA SCARLETT



*"I think art is alive and well and women are certainly more than making their contribution . . . women are taking over from men not just in the business world but in the art world as well . . . women are more creative and are creating things that are distinctly their own."*

So affirms Rheima Scarlett, well-known artist and current principal of the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts. She believes that women are developing their own style, (more so than men) and are doing very well in all areas of the arts.

Mrs. Scarlett places credit for her early influences in art on her father, a builder. She spent many hours in his draughts' room watching him design buildings. Another family influence was her mother, a retired teacher, who used to produce 'marvellous' drawings for her botany and biology classes.

The influence from both her parents were later developed in high school by her teacher, Edith Burrowes, at St. Andrew High School, where Rheima sat her Royal College of Arts examinations.

"In those days my parents didn't ask if I wanted to go to university," she smiled as she recalled, "my choice was what I wanted to study, when I got there."

Not surprisingly, she chose Art which she considered to be her strongest subject and selected the University of Manitoba in Canada. She was then 19 years old.

Four years later, equipped with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, and having specialised in "Life Sculpture", she returned to Jamaica where she taught art up to sixth form at various schools.

She further enhanced her qualifications with a teachers' training certificate at Mico Col-

lege before going on to do her Masters in Art Education at Georgia State University. She spent seven years in the United States, during which time she headed the Art Department in two schools.

During this period, Rheima had also married, lived in England, and had her two children (her daughter is now an architect and her son has just completed his Masters in Finance). She took breaks from time to time, away from the formal working environment, taking care of her children and painting, the medium she chose to concentrate on.

Before taking on her current job as Principal of the English-speaking Caribbean's foremost college of the arts, she did stints at the Jamaica Foundation of the Arts, the Jamaica Telephone Company (developing their cultural affairs programme) and was also Principal of the Hillel High School.

She looks on her current work at the Edna Manley College as a challenge. She started there just over seven months ago, less than a year after the Ministry of Education had combined the four schools (Drama, Art, Dance and Music) so as to give them college status.

Her major teething problem is that the four entities at the College, having been responsible for themselves for so many years, have not yet gotten accustomed to being part of a 'whole' with responsibilities not to each other and with final decisions being made elsewhere. As she sees it, if the college is to be viable, all have to work toward the same goal. The college therefore has to accommodate its students by allowing them to work across disciplines and become 'wholes', instead of just painters or dancers. As principal she would like to see the students do classes in other disciplines.

"With the world the way it is you need to have more than one skill," she expounded.

Mrs. Scarlett has big plans for the College. For starters, she wants to expand the student body, and to see an improvement in the level of academic training. The only discipline where students have achieved the level of a CXC is Art, and this is because Music, Dance and Drama, are not taught in high schools. Students in these three fields enter the school with more interest than knowl-

edge. Some as she points out, are quite talented but do not have the academic qualifications.

"We need to have the academic background for the level of education we are trying to give people here, after all it is a tertiary institution and therefore we have to make sure that what we turn out into the public are qualified ladies and gentlemen, not just those who can sing or use a paint brush but who are able to express themselves and do themselves and the College credit," Mrs. Scarlett explained.

She feels however that the College can still 'blow its own horn' a little more as not enough persons are aware of what takes place there and what the graduates are doing.

"There have been some very, very good graduates who have been gobbled up a lot by the other Caribbean islands and we have those who are working in the United States and England," said Rheima.

Mrs. Scarlett believes that people need to become more aware of how the skills learnt at the College can be utilised, pointing to over 130 areas that students can get involved in, once they have been exposed to training at the College.

Another major challenge for her is the development of a Bachelor of Fine Arts programme, processing for which has already begun.

Rheima Scarlett pays tribute to the late Edna Manley, for whom the College was named... "She really has been one of the great Jamaican artists whose name is known worldwide and so it is hard to think of a better person to have named the school after."

As for Rheima Scarlett, and her art, . . . she continues to paint, although not as much now as she did before taking up her current role. Her speciality is nature with her influence being Monet, whose work she loves.

"Whenever I go anywhere and there is a Monet Exhibition on, you cannot get me away from it, even though he was an impressionist and I'm more realistic," she commented. "I think where we are similar lies in the way lighting

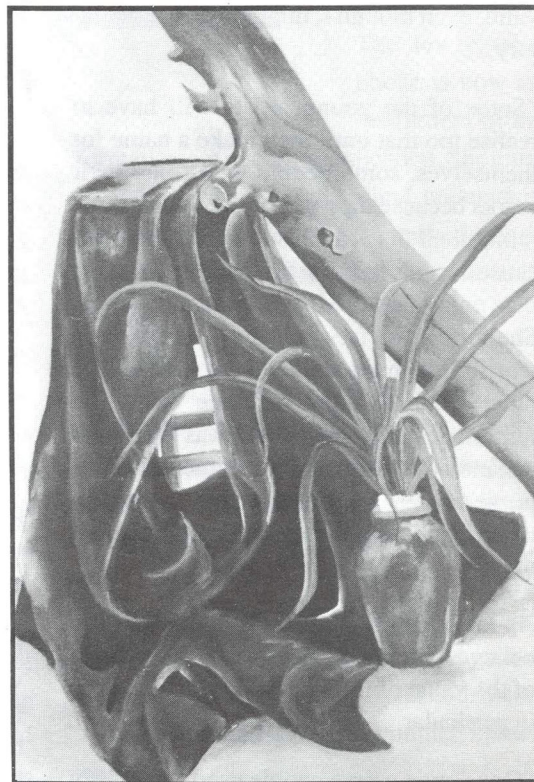
affects our work."

She has mounted exhibitions each year since 1990; her next will be in November. Whereas she had started out doing large pieces she concentrates now mostly on miniatures, primarily because they are popular with those who like her work, are more affordable, but also because they fit better in the smaller apartment type dwellings.

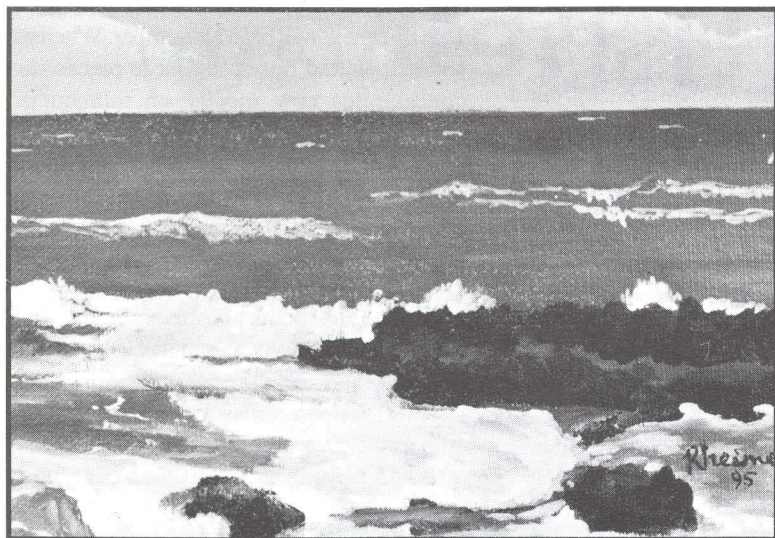
She regrets not being able to work in ceramics and photography as she had done in the States, citing the expense of setting up a studio as her main reason for not doing so. And so the equipment she brought when she returned to Jamaica to establish her studio remains packed away.

Outside of her exhibitions and at her home, it might be difficult to obtain pieces of her work, for she is concerned about the high 'mark-ups' in galleries and for the most part does not exhibit in them.

"The gallery 'mark-ups' move the works from affordable to unaffordable and so they just sit in a gallery for a year or two. Without the markups, I can keep the prices down. I am not trying to prevent the galleries from making a living but if they didn't put the prices up so high . . ." she leaves the sentence unfinished. "I want my work to be affordable, to reach out to an inclusive but



Rheima's painting 'Still Life with Leg'



Another of Rheima's paintings 'Robin's Bay'

wider appreciative market. I do my work now and I enjoy it and I have a fairly large group of people who enjoy it too," she concluded.

She observes however, that critics are oftentimes reluctant to critique work at 'non-gallery' exhibitions. Criticism is important and she points out that young artists must observe criticisms which are sometimes very valid. What they have to do, she said, is to look and see for themselves whether the criticism is valid, even though it might not congratulatory.

"Some of the young artists will have to realise too that until they make a name for themselves, some people won't buy their works because they prefer to buy the name rather than the art. This is unfortunate because they are looking for investment rather than enjoyment," Mrs. Scarlett also noted. She further advises young artists not to be worried too much about this as there will be other people to appreciate their work. The important thing, she added, was to always expand on experience, experiment and improve constantly, making sure that every piece is a little more dynamic than the last one.

As far as art in Jamaica is concerned she believes that Jamaicans have become aware of the value of fine arts and original pieces in particular.

"Once upon a time people used to just say 'I want a picture to match my sofa or my

curtain', but now I think people are becoming much more appreciative of original work. They are now

buying original work when they can afford it."

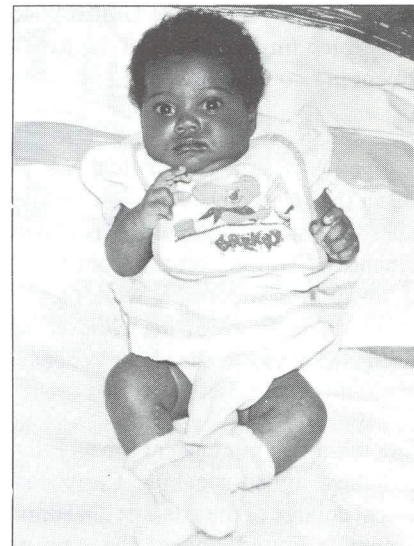
Here she again expresses rue that the price of art pieces are so expensive that a lot more people cannot afford to buy them. She believes that the average Jamaican should be able to get an original work from one of our Jamaican artists to hang in their homes, something they are now not able to do. They will view an exhibition but are seldom able to buy.

According to Mrs. Scarlett, one of the major problems that she finds in Jamaica, is that not many artists are able to live off their art alone. She also believes that Jamaica's art should be exhibited more often abroad recognising however, that Americans tend to buy more prints than original pieces.

In speaking enthusiastically about her discipline, Mrs. Scarlett referred to the relaxation it afforded.

"Art is a great thing to have around you," she commented, "It is very soothing. It is also a great relaxer for the person who is doing it."

Rheima Scarlett is also the immediate past president of Woman Inc. She is a fitness enthusiast, she also loves music (she plays the piano 'a little'), and reading which she finds almost as relaxing as painting. She is very involved in her church where she is a lay reader. Mrs. Scarlett is a firm believer in the notion that one ought to do as much as one can and that the more you do for others, the better you will feel about yourself. ♀



Nicole at 7 weeks old

father of one child, Tevon Newell, who lives in Canada with his mother. He went to Calabar High School, Charlie Smith High School, St. John's College evening classes and UWI evening classes. "School is important because education is the key to better development", states Craig.

Locksley (Hopper) Newell, is the second in line, he's a sports enthusiast and loves general sports activities. He too went to Charlie Smith High School and while there was on the football team. His love for football, his favourite sport, allows him to play for the team in his community in Portmore. While at school, his favourite subjects were Mathematics, Technical Drawing and Electronics.

Born under the sign of Virgo on September 12, Hopper is a family person and can be relied on to get certain chores done. He pays the bills, fixes things in the house and is committed to whatever he does.

Nkrumah (Nicky) Newell, the youngest son, born on January 30 under the sign of Aquarius, has been described by his siblings and his mother as the 'comical one', who always gave jokes. In 1992, at the age of 16, Nicky's life was cut short under tragic circumstances. He's dead but not forgotten. Quite often "If Nicky did deh yah" would be added to conversations that would benefit from his comical character. "He will always be missed," Lana sighs after sharing some of his numerous antics with me. ♀

*Thousands of women from all over the world gathered together for one week, seeking solutions to the world's environmental problems.*

I returned to Jamaica feeling recharged. I changed jobs and began working with 3D Projects a non-government group dedicated to the development of the disabled, doing community-based rehabilitation, operating in St. Catherine, Manchester, St. Thomas and St. Mary. I co-ordinated activities in St. Thomas, an ideal parish for solar cooking.

I decided also to concentrate on training participants in solar cooking in the hope that their trainings would have a snow ball effect. My present job lends itself to the dissemination of the solar cooking concept. Our staff consisting mostly of women (parents or relatives of children with disability) are accustomed to constructing simple rehabilitation aids which in some cases are more difficult to construct than a solar cooker. They are already training parents to teach their children, so imparting another skill would be no problem. They are based in the communities and would be most visible.

I have been receiving tremendous motivation from my co-workers to step-up my solar cooking activities. A number of environmental foundations are interested in assisting us in the venture.

I still feel as strongly as ever about the benefits of solar cooking for all. My enthusiasm for solar cooking is still high. Most of all, I see myself as a trainer and feel that it is in this way that I can make solar box cooking a viable alternative and a meaningful contribution to society. ♀

*If interested please contact  
Claudette Wilmot at 982-1432 (work) or  
write to her at P.O. Box 167, Kingston 2*

# WOMEN, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

by M. Gabay

**S**ince time immemorial, science has been an integral part of human societies. The far flung and ancient a place as the Maya civilisation, depended on scientific discovery and practice. The Romans in their road building, steam baths and transport of water, demonstrate some of these applications. Science has been depicted as the laboratory, and the absent-minded scientist. As a result of this we tend not to see the myriad applications of these same principles in our everyday life. It is the women who have mastered these techniques and applications.

The mixture your mother gave you as a child to settle an upset stomach, ointments for insect bites, cramps and even headache. All these are known to most if not all women. Is this not science?

Gradually, women have become more involved in the traditional scientific fields such as engineering or medicine. Several major discoveries have been made by brilliant women, for example Madame Curie in chemistry.

During the mid to late seventies, women exploded into the job market. Attendant to this explosion or as a result of it, women have gained advanced education, and entered every facet of scientific endeavour. There hardly exists an area which has not been affected by the large numbers of women, with advanced degrees entering the job market. Interest in science and technology has also exploded as a result of

various programmes and the role models in these fields.

Critical thinking and an ability to manipulate abstract ideas and concepts is key to succeeding in science. This ability is not specific to men. Women are quite capable of this type of thought. Old world stereotypes still exist, but to a far lesser extent than in years gone by. In today's information age a foundation in science is crucial just to keep up. This environment demands that everyone especially women, get a good grounding in science. The housewife would

be unable to function if she could not program the microwave or video; or even understand how to read physiological changes in her child's health. The lowly telephone is now an instrument of in-

formation not just communication. She must be able to use computers and understand them; the protection of her family depends upon her knowledge of Science and technology.

In summary, science and technology is a must if one is to function in modern society. Women recognize this and are moving purposefully and in great numbers into the various branches of science and technology. There are many more female engineer and doctors than ever before in the field. The pool of scientists is that much greater and as a result more effective in addressing world issues and advancing human knowledge. ♀





# POETRY PAGE

## CRUDE OIL

by Michael Gabay

That sinking feeling  
Is at me again  
Seeping down from my brain,  
Pervading my very thoughts  
My day is coloured by  
this thick oozing mood  
Raw, unrefined and black.

Time itself slows  
Under the burden  
Of this gruesome flow  
I can only live it through  
Cringing at this invasive presence  
I must sleep now.

---

## THE MORE YOU GIVE TO GAIN

by Sharon Coburn

Give strength, give kind thoughts  
Give deeds give wealth;  
Give love, give tears and give thyself.  
Give, give and always be giving  
He who gives not is not living  
The more you give, the more you live  
and help others to live also  
Give until it hurts  
Give till life stops giving to you.



## SCIENCE IS

by Ta'amra Irving

Biology, Chemistry and Physiology  
are sciences you see  
Studying about Jamaica,  
the Universe and all  
Geography, Physics and Trigonometry,  
preparing to be  
Sciences they call them.  
Sciences they are.

Ship and Satellite, Space Crafts and all  
Rain Gauge and Telescopes  
Tools use to discover when ever you want to  
Mankind and Nature  
Formulas and Laws  
Science is the key to find it all out  
and stand tall

---

## I'M WOMAN

by Shirnette Wilson

I am what I am  
Because God made me so  
I'm black, I'm strong  
I'm woman.

I'm a provider, a fighter, a survivor  
My womanhood can't be hidden  
My intelligence can't be suppressed  
Neither can my femininity.

Often times the scales of injustice  
Pollute the atmosphere trying to choke  
me to death  
Give me room to breath, to expand  
To show you all that I am  
Because I'm strong  
I'm woman.



## RARE BEAUTY

by Shirnette Wilson

The very mention of the word  
Sends deep dark shivers of fear  
Running down your spine.  
There's no need to be afraid  
Because hidden below the sediments  
of my skin  
Is the same components that made you.

The colour of my skin doesn't represent evil  
But rather a complement of rare beauty  
and wonderment  
My arms extended to you is not a symbol  
of violation or harassment  
My smile has no hidden demonic powers  
in it  
Come and get to know me  
In me and around me is mystery.

I open up to you the blackness of my arms  
And engulf you into my warm embrace  
What you feel is life, humanity, softness.

I'm given an outstanding colour  
One that represents intelligence,  
strength and power  
Adjust your minds  
Leave all the superstitions behind  
And follow me to a world of blackness.





# FACTORS AFFECTING THE CHOICE OF SCIENCE SUBJECTS BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: A PILOT STUDY

*(An extract from a study done by Barbara Bailey and Elsa Leo-Rhynie, 1994)*

The vital importance of science and technology, in national development as well as in our daily lives, is evidenced by the many ways in which sophisticated equipment, time and energy saving devices, and communication modes which improve personal interaction, have become accepted parts of our every day existence, and essential to our efficient and effective functioning at home and at the workplace. The need to establish and maintain a pool of human resources which can contribute to, and also intelligently use, the new advances in this area becomes a priority in small countries like Jamaica, in an age when international trade and competition is constantly expanding, and the ability to keep abreast of all the information needed for strategic decision making is an important priority.

The premium, therefore, which is attached to competence in science makes it a highly prestigious, sought-after qualification, and an option of first choice among many students who demonstrate the potential, or who have the intellectual capacity to understand and apply the relevant concepts. The education literature, at both international and national levels, is full of references to the gender difference which exists in the choice and pursuit of science subjects. Boys elect to do more courses in science, enjoy science more, and achieve at higher levels in science, than do girls (Hamilton, 1976; Glasgow, 1978; Leo-Rhynie, 1978; 1989; Spender, 1982). Local researchers have examined gender differences in spatial ability, field independence and abstract reasoning, abilities which have been identified as reliable predictors of success in science, and have found significant differences favouring boys (Mitchellmore, 1974; Hamilton, 1976; Leo-Rhynie, 1985; Webb, 1985; Salmon, 1986). The common perception among students, that science subjects are more suited to boys, and arts subjects to girls, still persists to some extent; but this has been changing over the years, and increasingly, girls have been electing to pur-

sue science courses, and have achieved success in this area. Although the pattern of entry for arts and science in the Caribbean Examinations Council examinations (A-level) still reveal the male-science, female-arts link, there have been increasing numbers of entries from girls in the science area, and in 1986, pass rates of girls exceeded those of boys in A-level science subjects (Leo-Rhynie, 1989).

The subject choices which girls and boys make at the high school level determine to a large extent the courses they pursue at tertiary level and the careers they eventually enter. Careers that demand a background in science, because of their importance to national productivity, tend to be high status, high salaried careers such as engineering, medicine, computer science and architecture; so any reluctance on the part of girls to pursue science subjects effectively bars them from these areas of work, and the concomitant responsibilities and rewards. These often include the development of policy and strategy in important areas of the nation's economy, and so carry a great deal of power. In Jamaica, such power still resides, for the most part, in male hands.

The educational successes of girls and women in Jamaica and the Caribbean, which have paralleled the relative lack of success of male students have been widely publicized since the mid 1980s. This has given rise to the 'men at risk' concerns about the fate of boys and men at all levels of the educational system and in the professional and managerial categories of workers nationwide. The concerns seem to be that women may soon wrest power from men because of their educational advances, but this education gap has existed for some time, without significant change taking place in the uppermost levels of decision making in the public or private sectors. Gender differences in access to and involvement in an educational area such as science and technology which is so important in na-

tional development is, however, an issue warranting examination, as Jamaica can ill afford to lose the potential contribution of any of its human resource in this vital area.

Jamaican and other Caribbean students usually have to make their choice of science, arts or business subjects at the end of Grade 9 - the third year of high school - so that they can spend two years in preparation for the CXC examinations in these subject areas. The choices made by a fourteen year old, who may still be in the process of trying to decide on a career, can tie that teenager to a narrow range of possible options, and may not include the study of a science subject at all. In some instances, parental and family influence is so very strong, particularly when the students are 'bright', that students are pressured into doing those courses which their parents and other significant persons in their lives perceive as having high status, but which are not at all appealing to the student. Some schools, recognising the importance of science in today's world, have a policy which dictates that every student do at least one science, but when this is a forced choice, it is often not given the level of attention which would result in the use and application of the concepts learned in everyday life, or the pursuit of advanced studies in this area.

In schools, access to the study of science subjects is ostensibly open to all students, but a number of factors operated to encourage or dissuade students from developing the interest and making the decision to pursue studies in this area. When examination entry statistics suggest that such factors are encouraging to boys, but discouraging to girls, then exploration of these factors becomes an important research objective.

## METHOD

Some of the factors which operate when students in high schools have to make science subject choices, and the gender differences in these choices, are explored in this paper. Data were obtained from a pilot

study carried out in one co-educational high school in the Kingston and St. Andrew Metropolitan Area.

A survey questionnaire was developed in order to obtain the information needed to satisfy the specific objectives of the investigation. The sample consisted of a total of eighty (80) students, randomly selected from the grade 10 classes of a co-educational high school. Following administration of the questionnaire of this group, ten (10) questionnaires had to be discarded because of incomplete responses, or obvious lack of understanding of the requirements of the exercise. Responses are therefore recorded for seventy (70) respondents - thirty six (36) girls and thirty four (34) boys.

## RESULTS:

### Reasons for doing science

The reasons offered by the students focused on the usefulness of science and its value as a preparation for their lives in the future. As the students expressed it:

*"To be well rounded and because I am uncertain of what I want to be, I take different subjects."* (Girl)

*"The present and the future revolve around science, and to succeed in general you must know it."* (Boy)

*"Good preparation for the world of work; interesting; offers another high paying career choice; high status."* (Boy)

In many instances, the students identified the careers they hoped to pursue and indicated that they needed science to qualify in these areas. Girls were much more specific in terms of their career goals than boys. Boys mentioned becoming doctors 4 of the 34), a chemist and a horse trainer, while one indicated that he wanted to be like the television character, McGyver; girls expressed the need for preparation for careers such as medicine (12 of the 36 girls), veterinary science, airline pilot, chemical engineer and dietitian/nutritionist. A number of the respondents mentioned interest, competence and/or enjoyment of the subjects.

### Selection of science as a favourite subject

Science was the favourite subject of twelve (12) girls and fourteen (14) boys, and for

*The strong biology content of medical courses may well make it more attractive to girls than courses with a heavy emphasis on the physical sciences.*

eight (8) of these girls and twelve (12) of the boys, biology was the favourite subject. The majority of the sample, thirteen (13) girls and sixteen (16) boys, favoured the business subjects, and more girls than boys - eleven (11) to four (4) - selected arts subjects as favourites.

The male students for whom science is a favourite subject seem to have greater confidence in their ability to do well in this area, and to make use of these subjects in the future. They seem to link their liking for the subject with its utilitarian value, coupled with their own ability to exploit this. The girls of whom sciences is the favourite subject seem swayed by the reputation of these subjects as being important; their competence in, and the usefulness of the subjects to them is secondary.

Members of the samples were asked whether the integral part which mathematics played in science, and any difficulties they may have experienced with this subject, and also whether their previous mediocre performance in the science subjects had made any of them hesitant about electing to do science. They were also asked to identify any other factors which may have made them think carefully about doing these subjects. Ten (10) students, five (5) girls and five (5) boys, indicated that they had experienced no hesitancy at all in deciding to pursue science subjects. The responses of the remaining students are shown in table (see table below).

A number of the girls revealed a certain degree of uncertainty in their comments, for example:

*"I am not smart enough for chemistry and physics"*

*"I thought chemistry would be hard, I may not remember all the formulae"*

*"I will be under pressure during exams"*  
(2 girls)

*"Not relevant to what I want to do in the future"*

*"I'm wondering if I can get a good grade"*

*"I wasn't sure"*

None of the boys made additional comments, but their major concerns seem to be with their own previous performance in these subjects and the teachers who will guide their learning. For girls, the major concerns seem to be with their ability to do the necessary work at the standard required, particularly given their opinions about mathematics.

The importance of subject choices in the proposed careers of students prompted the question on the extent to which they had given serious consideration to the careers they hoped to follow. Ten (10) girls and fourteen (14) boys indicated that they had not yet made a career decision; of the twenty six (26) girls who had made such a decision, thirteen (13) were planning science related occupations. Of the twenty (20) boys who had made career choices, ten (10) had selected science based options. Careers selected by both female and male students were as shown in table below.

### Science based career choices of students

Career	Female	Male
Medicine	10	2
Aviation/Pilot	1	3
Veterinarian	1	

**TABLE: Factors which made students hesitant about doing science courses.**

Factors	Female (n=36)	Male (n=34)
(a) Inclusion of, and difficulty of mathematics	10 (27.7%)	7 (20.5%)
(b) Previous poor grades in science	9 (25%)	12 (35.2%)
(c) Both (a) and (b)	2 (5.5%)	1 (2.9%)
(d) The teacher	2 (5.5%)	7 (20.7%)
(e) Difficulty of the subjects	2 (5.5%)	1 (2.9%)

# PROGRAMME UPDATE

## SISTREN TEXTILE

**S**istren Textile is the screen printing programme area of Sistren Theatre Collective.

In this area we produce T-Shirts with various designs such as Lionheart Gal which depicts the life stories of Sistren Members, Abstract Woman and Woman and Urn. We also print curtains, cushions, and wall hangings, which depict the Caribbean Goddess series. All of the designs are Sistren's designs, however, if you are not interested in our designs you are welcome to design your own and we will then print them, whether on wall hangings, t-shirts, cushions and curtains.

Sistren Textile sells these production on calendar events such as Valentine, Easter Christmas and Mothers Day. During these times we print and make things to suit the occasion. You can either stop by or place your orders by phone prior to the appointed day.

### Summer Holidays

During the summer children at the annual Schoolers Summer Workshop were taught basic screen printing using their own designs.

### Christmas Bazaar

In December, Sistren Textiles had their annual bazaar. At this event we also took pleasure in thanking our many customers, friends and well wishers, who we were able to serve and who had supported us. This event was mixed with cultural entertainment which included a fashion show. If you are interested in any of our goods, please feel free to stop by or call. Our warm welcome awaits you. ♡



at the Meeting Place, **Rebecca Knowles** is on a one year leave of absence, and is now working full-time with the "Teens In Action" group in Seaview Gardens. Rebecca will be returning to Sistren in June 1996.

**WORKSHOP WITHSIT -STUDENTS:** Eleven students from all over the **United States** visited **Sistren** in **October '95**, to participate in a **Workshop** looking at "**Sistren Then And Now**". They were taken through the history of the organisation by way of Sistren's method's using games, and exercises. Prizes and surprises were available to them. The children's games were specifically done for the participants to be able to analyse and critique what the games mean to them. Questions were posed, to see how much they have heard, or read about Sistren.

The History Trail was the most dynamic, the students were asked to - Fill in the Blank, between 1977-1995. Sistren provided them with photos, pieces of costume, props, books, clippings, to help them to create a scenery of Sistren's history of plays workshops, and social events such as: **Labour Day Project, House Opening, Parties and Social Functions.**

Most of their expectations were met. They were able to see "**Women Celebrating Themselves while Working for Change.**" The latter is a statement made specifically by one of the students as her particular expectation. They are all part of the annual programme put on by the School for International Training (S I T).

### FACTORS AFFECTING

*cont'd from pg. 26*

Nutritionist	1	-
Engineering	-	2
Dentist	-	1
Computer Analyst	-	2

Interesting is the greater level of interest shown in medicine by female students, and the absence of female interest in engineering and computer science, both of which have strong mathematical bases. The strong biology content of medical courses may well make it more attractive to girls than courses with a heavy emphasis on the physical sciences. ♡

### MEETING PLACE *cont'd from pg. 2*

Karina is from the **University of New Castle - New South Wales.**

Karina by the way is Australian/Jamaican. Sistren caught up with her in Australia last year July when two members of the group attended the "**Third International Women's Playwrights Conference**", held in **Adelaide**. Members of Sistren did a small performance and workshops at the **Monash University in Melbourne Australia** at which Karina was in attendance. Karina Smith, we wish you all the best.

**ON THE MOVE:** Since our last gathering

**Textile BAAAZAAAAR:** The **Textile Christmas Bazaar Sale** happened in **November 6-December 21, 1995**, at Sistren's H.Q. **The official opening took place Friday December 1, 1995** as scheduled. The programme included: poetry, songs, dramatized reading, and a fabulous fashion show, the young girls did extremely well modelling the lovely designs. The total evening was Serenaded by none other than the "**Alpha Boys Band**", directed by **Mr. Sparrow Martin**. Textile items were on display in two of our rooms, some members of the audience made purchases. The evenings programme was a success. ♡

# HEALTH ♀ UPDATE

## IN VITRO FERTILISATION

**I**n Vitro Fertilisation is a method of fertilising the egg outside the body, and placing the fertilised egg into a healthy womb to develop. Women and men who have problems in producing egg or sperm or other factors which make fertilisation impossible, are prime candidates for In Vitro Fertilisation.

The egg is fertilised outside of the woman (in a petri dish) and at a certain stage of development put into the uterus of the woman to allow complete development into a foetus (baby). The process involves six essential steps.

1. Investigation of Fertility
2. Counselling
3. Preparation of people concerned
4. Extraction of egg, sperm
5. Implantation of fertilised egg
6. Observation - prenatal care and delivery.

During the process of In Vitro Fertilisation there are some risks involved at various stages. Firstly, during the extraction process there is a small risk of infection while the egg is being removed from the woman.

Secondly, the ovaries must be stimulated in an effort to increase the production of eggs, so several may be available for fertilisation. There is some risk of over stimulation.

Thirdly, multiple pregnancies may occur. In this instance, several of the fertilised eggs implanted may develop into embryos resulting in several foeti. The constraints of

space in the uterus reduce the probability of all such pregnancies going to term is greatly reduced, with the attendant high morbidity and/or mortality rate of pre-mature births.

In Vitro Fertilisation is an expensive endeavour, however, it is not available in Jamaica. As well as the direct medical cost of the actual procedure, there may also be costs for relocation, as the patient will in all likelihood have to be observed for an extended period of time to ensure proper development. Prenatal care is another one of the costs involved. Yet another cost could be simply due to not being successful in getting pregnant at the first attempt. One



therefore has to try again thus incurring additional costs.

The success rate of In Vitro Fertilisation is affected by several factors, which include:

*In Vitro Fertilisation is a method of fertilising the egg outside the body, and placing the fertilised egg into a healthy womb to develop.*

1. The specific problems suffered by the couple
2. The age of the couple
3. The centre at which the procedure is to be performed, and the expertise of the health provider.

Dr. McDonald stated that there are many social questions to be considered by the couple involved. Questions of genetic parentage, the child's own curiosity, as well as legal ramifications of the procedure (particularly when surrogate mothers are involved). Dr. McDonald was at great pains to point out that all parties involved be very sure that they will be committed to the child come what may, before they decide to undergo this procedure. ♀

*Dr. Olivia McDonald is a consultant obstetrician/gynaecologist and Medical Director at the Family Planning Board. The information for this article was gleaned from Dr. McDonald in an interview.*

## BIOTECHNOLOGY

*cont'd from pg. 11*

primarily involved in the less arduous tasks of planting and weeding.

Developing countries are seen as centres of global plant and animal biodiversity. Shiva (1989) sees women in developing nations as playing an important role in passing on their expertise in seed and plant collection, storage and hence preservation of older and less well known varieties. It has also been documented that women have been robbed of traditional roles in some developing areas of the world, notably in Africa and India by both the green revolution and the newer biotechnological revolution. This however, is not seen in Caribbean and Latin American countries, where historically male and female slaves were given equal tasks to perform during colonial days (Antrobus, 1988). Today, women in the Caribbean continue to perform similar tasks to men in the area of agricultural production.

The introduction of disease-free, tissue cultured planting material into agricultural production which can control the use of inorganic chemicals in crop production is one such innova-

tion. The advent of increase informal agricultural trade between the islands may thus be positively influenced by biotechnological innovations in the region.

Improved, genetically engineered varieties of food and cash crops mean that women generally can now look forward to better diets for their families and themselves. Thus, women as caretakers in society have felt the positive impacts of this new technology. This is already quite true of industrialised nations. It is noted, however, that in rural societies this impact may not be felt due to one of the largest constraints in developing nations: the lack of workers skilled in the technical expertise required to implement these changes in traditional rural agriculture. A cadre of young scientists, technicians and field workers is needed.

A look at the number of women in the industry as listed in the CBN directory shows that new areas of research have been opened up for women in the scientific professions. Since it has been established that tissue culture is the most usable form of biotechnology in the developing world, then the new technology has directly impacted on the lives of both professional and non professional women in the region.

## Conclusion

Caribbean women occupy a unique role in many statistical evaluations of global trends in agriculture. While they can sometimes be grouped with women in other developing countries, they can also be grouped with women in the industrialised nations of Europe and North America. Using imported biotechnologies, developed by and for the industrialised nations of the world, it is evident that they stand at the crossroads when compared to women in other developing regions such as India and Africa.

As with other technical fields the impact of biotechnology on women in the developing world has not been adequately documented. Detailed studies of the impact on the lives of rural, urban and suburban women in Caribbean agriculture therefore needs to be undertaken. This is considering that most researchers concur that females occupy a central role in all agricultural production in the region and are hence an important determinant in the functioning of this vital sector in the economies of Caribbean islands. ♀

*(Extract from a study done by Angela T. Alleyne Dept. of Biology, UWI Cave Hill Campus, Bridgetown)*

## Women and Law *cont'd from pg. 19*

The family court is established in Kingston, and therefore all family matters outside of Kingston are brought before the Resident Magistrate of the respective parish.

The primary Acts which Family Law encompasses are:

1. The Maintenance Act (maintenance of child or wife)
2. The Affiliation Act (which deals with paternity)
3. Custody of Children
4. The Matrimonial Property Act. (property obtained by the parties during marriage).

Under the Affiliations Act which deals with the supportance of children born to people who are not married to each other, an Order may be obtained for the maintenance of a child up to the age of 18 years or to 21 if the child was attending a tertiary institution or is specially handicapped.

In respect of maintenance of a child under the Affiliation Act:

- (A) A mother must take out a summons

against a reputed father before the child attains twelve months, or if such a summons was taken out after a child attained twelve months, the mother must prove that she got something from the reputed father within twelve months of the child's birth.

- (B) Unless a mother obtains an order for a child before he reaches the age of sixteen she will not be able to have the order extended until the child is eighteen.

*NB: In both the Affiliations and Maintenance Act a duty is put on mothers to support their children.*

Maintenance, is concerned with the support of the wife and children of a union and Affiliation with the relationship between father and child.

Maintenance can only be obtained by a legal wife who has not in any way sacrificed her right to maintenance by adultery or desertion.

Common Law wives are not recognized by law, so cannot obtain Maintenance, although their children can. ♀

*(TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE)*

## Constructive Thoughts *cont'd from 8*

munity Centre that the name Women's Construction Collective (WCC). Verna joined in 1993 and the rest is history.

Verna has built the addition to her house using the skills she learned at TVET and WCC. Other projects she has completed include the renovation of a house in Jacks Hill, Buff Bay, and Leicesterfield, where she trained eight women to become masons.

Currently, Verna is doing the renovation of a building to house the offices of the Association of Development Agencies, her husband being the head mason on the job. Even their daughters are involved in the building trades, learning masonry and steel fixing under the watchful eyes of dad and mom. This involvement in building gives the girls a tremendous sense of self confidence.

As chairperson of the WCC, Verna intends to offer a wider range of courses to include electrical installation, and plumbing. She is a shining example of what you can achieve with a little determination and confidence. An inspiration to all Jamaican women. ♀

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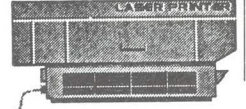
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# From Our Mailbag

## NOT APPROPRIATE

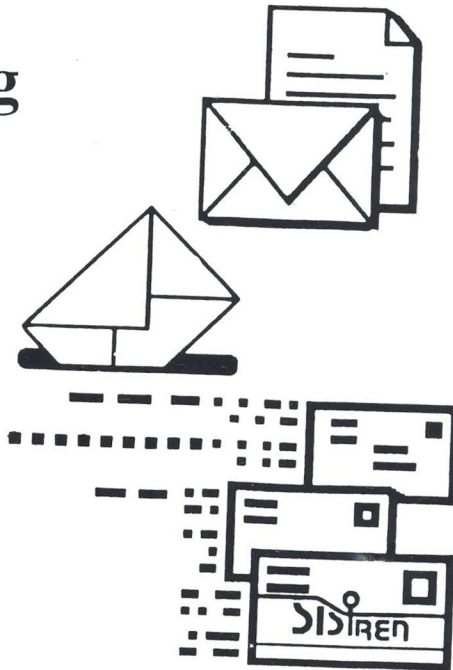
Dear Sistren,

Recently, we received the latest issue of the Sistren magazine (volume 17, no. 2). I read through it with interest, as I always do and then came across **Marginally Female by Dee Robinson** — I was stunned.

I will try to use a few specific examples to explain to you why we find this piece so troubling and bewildering. But it is the general sense of it that is at the root — the suggestion that women are somehow not whole unless they are with men; the argument that women are to be valued only if they conform to society's norms, especially those norms pertaining to beauty and femininity, and the failure to challenge the patriarchal and oppressive construction of the norms themselves; as well as the stereotyping of feminists and lesbians as ugly, angry, and even violent women.

Indeed, it is the stereotyping of lesbians and feminists that struck me first as bizarre. The author describes the woman as ugly and masculine and writes 'you'd assume she was a Lesbian, for there was nothing remotely feminine about her', and goes on to suggest that she'd have some excuse for dressing and acting this way if she were a feminist. To my knowledge, feminists and lesbians have no uniform appearance nor dress code and few of the feminists and lesbians I know, choose to challenge patriarchal oppression by 'behaving as young male hooligans,' or by 'acting out' in public.

Dee continues with an effort to undermine a notion that women have struggled against for centuries — that women are to be valued more for their appearance than for their skills



and intellect. Thus, she writes that 'one couldn't imagine a man being attracted to her if he was straight . . .', suggesting both that women's value hinges on men's appreciation of their beauty, and of other 'feminine' qualities including meekness before men. In fact, Dee points out what she feels is a fundamental paradox for her subject — the fact that she desires "to be a man's woman", yet is "no woman at all." What, in her mind, are the characteristics of a woman? What does it mean to be a 'man's woman'. And why, in any case, would Sistren print something that advocates this notion of womanhood and femininity?

There is a final implication in Dee's story that is particularly distressing. It is the suggestion that the subject, because she has chosen not to conform to society's norms, somehow deserves the verbal abuse (from school girls and shoppers on the plaza), and psychological abuse (her boyfriend betraying her by desiring

and pursuing another) she receives. This thesis is apparent throughout Dee's story but it is her final paragraph that conveys this notion clearly where she writes, ". . . she doesn't understand that when Siggy wants a girlfriend, she doesn't fill the bill."

As you can see, the issue is a serious one for us. Any help in resolving it would be deeply appreciated. I look forward to receiving a response sometime soon.

In solidarity,  
Rita Parikh  
Inter Pares

Dear Rita,  
We apologise for allowing such an article to have been printed. However, the necessary steps have been taken to correct this. Editor

## STUDENT SAYS THANKS

Dear Madam,

I am a student of Clarendon College. This is the school that you came to last month, to speak to us during careers week. You performed a play about women which I found very enjoyable. I understand the economic hardship that you must face so I am sending a contribution of \$20. I am not a rich person hence that's all I can afford.

I would really like to see Sistren Theatre succeed and that's the reason I am sending the money. I can see that your group is a really talented one. Please keep up the good work.

Yours truly,  
Keisher Brisco  
Clarendon

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# SISTA ANSA AND GRANNY A CHAT BOUT TECHNOLOGY

MI HEAR DI PICKNEY DEM PON DI BUS A TALK BOUT SINTING NAME CABLE TV. DEM A TALK BOUT SHOW MI NEVA HEAR BOUT INNA ALL MI YEARS A LIVING!

GRANNY, DIS IS A NEW AGE! DI AGE OF COMPUTA AN CONCORDE. DI AGE OF TECHNOLOGY!

DAT MEAN DAT TINGS CAN BE DONE FASTER AN BETTER THROUGH ELECTRONICS. FOR EXAMPLE, MI COUSIN A LONDON SEN MI SOME MONEY AN SHE SEN IT THROUGH ONE MONEY TRANSFER PLACE...

MONEY TRANSFER? YU HAVE BANK ACCOUNT?

ME GRANNY?! MI CAN BARELY SAVE ANYTING OUTTA WHA ME EARN. MI HAFFI MEK IT STRETCH FI FOOD, CLOTHES AN SHELTA.

AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT! WHA DAT HAFFI DO WID CABLE TV AN TECHNOLOGY?

PLENTY! MI COUSIN A LONDON USE HER MONEY BUY A PIECE A PAPER CALL A "MONEY ORDER". DEN SHE GO A DI MONEY TRANSFER OFFICE A LONDON, AN PAY DEM A LIKKLE MONEY FI DEM SEN IT TO MI. DI PIECE A PAPER COME FROM DI COMPUTA A LONDON TO A COMPUTA INNA JAMAICA IN SECONDS. SO MI JUS GO A DI MONEY TRANSFER OFFICE A HALF-WAY TREE AN COLLECT MI MONEY!

MEMBA YU OWE MI A LIKKLE SMALLS FROM THREE WEEKS NOW...

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MORE DAN DAT! NOW A DAYS DEM ALL A MEK CAR WID VOICE!! IT TALK TO YU! IT TELL YU WHEN YU DOOR NUH LOCK GOOD, WHEN YU GAS OR YU OIL A RUN LOW DEN YU NEVA HEAR DI PICKNEY DEM A TALK BOUT NINTENDO OR VIDEO GAMES?

YES! ONE DAY MI DEH PON DI BUS AN MI HEAR "SQUIGGLY SQUIGGLY!" WHEN MI LOOK, DI SOUN A COME FROM ONE LIKKLE FLAT BOX INNA A LIKKLE GIRL HAN, AN HER FINGA DEM A MOVE FAAS FAAS A TOUCH SOME BOTTON PON DI BOX...

DAT'S ONLY ONE TYPE AN SIZE A VIDEO GAME. DEM HAVE NUFF MORE. AN TECHNOLOGY A MORE DAN DAT. IT USE FI IMPROVE HOW PILOT DRIVE PLANE, HOW AIRPORT OPERATE...

AN ANY INFORMATION YU WANT, ANYTING YU WAAN STUDY, YU CAN GET PON COMPUTA..

TEK YU TIME WID ME, CHILE. MI UNDERSTAN WEH YU A SEH, BUT MI NUH KNOW HOW ALL DAT A GO HELP MI IN ANY WAY.

ANYWAY, PASS DI REMOTE DEH ANSA, MEK MI TUN ON DI TV!

KLIK