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in a **NUTSHELL**

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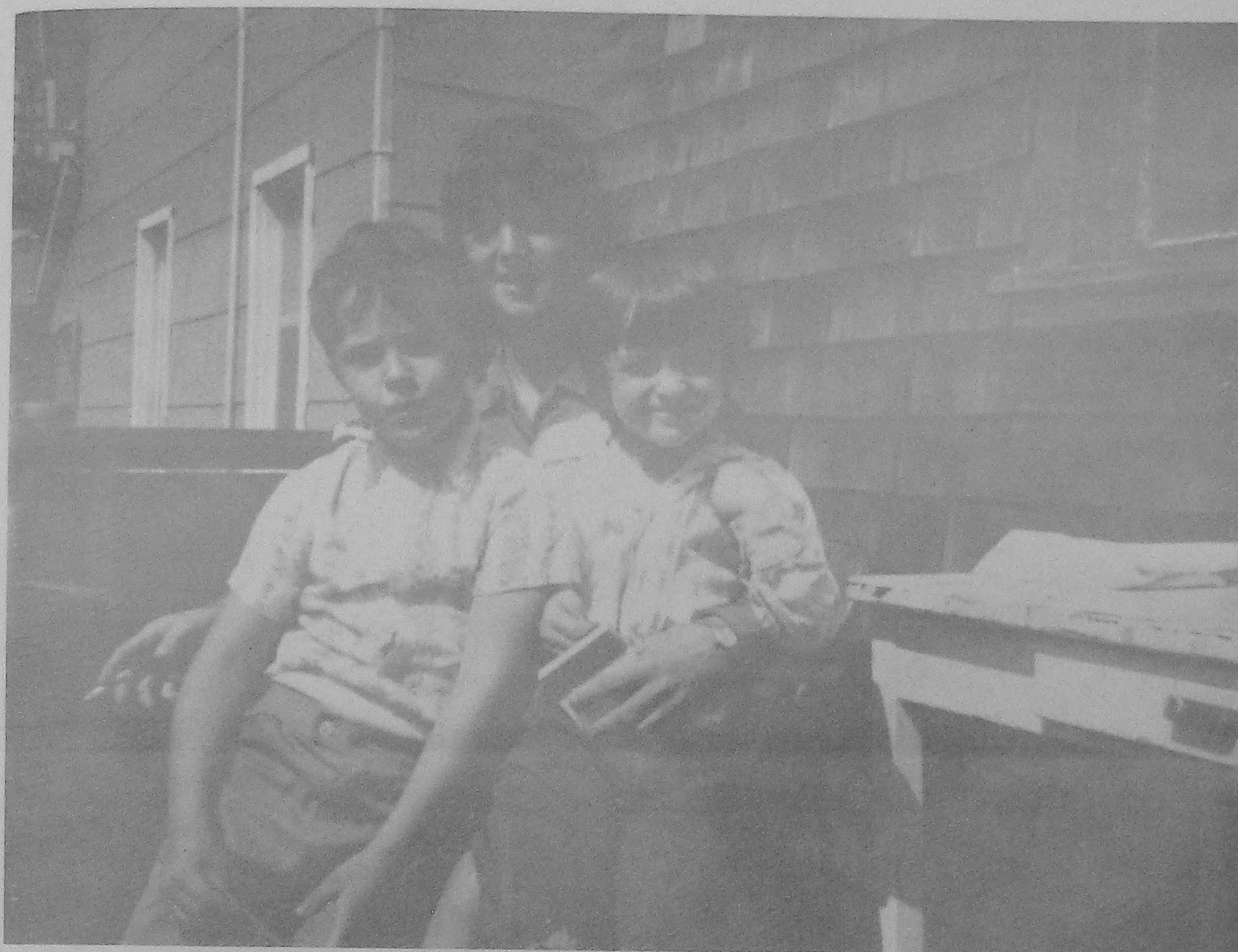


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in a nutshell

Mental Patients Association Newsletter



If you're caught in a mud slide

Patty and her two sons, Dougie (7) and Trevor (5), are old MPA members. Patty and Dougie are members in good standing. Trevor, however, has been banned from the drop-in center for a week for playing with matches. Patty talks to her kids about MPA.

Trev: What shall I say?

Patty: What's MPA?

Trev: MPA residence?

Patty: What is MPA?

Trev: MPA drop-in center.

Patty: What do you think of MPA?

Trev: Pretty good.

Patty: What do you like about it?

Trev: Um, a little bit.

Patty: What do you like doing there?

Trev: Looking for pop bottles.

Doug: Drinking lemonade mostly.

Patty: What do you think MPA is?

Doug: Drop-in center.

Patty: What do people do there?

Trev: They're mental. That's what Todd says. Todd says they're mental.

Patty: What does mental mean?

Doug: I think it means health.

Patty: Trev, what do you think it means?

Trev: I don't know. Maybe it means lying. What should I say now?

Patty: Who do you like at MPA?

Trev: Nancy and lots of people.

Patty: How could they change MPA to make it better for kids?

Trev: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!

Patty: What would you like to see them do?

Trev: Put pop bottles around and drop money. I want pop bottles around and lemonade and money!

Patty: What about things like toys?

Trev: Yeah, presents!

Doug: Little plastic airplanes.

Trev: Yeah!

Doug: I want a record.

Trev: Me, too.

Patty: Trev, what do you think about being banned for a week?

Trev: A little bit, a little bit bad.

Patty: Do you think it was justified? You were playing with matches.

Trev: I know.

Patty: What do you think MPA does for people, Doug?

Doug: Helps.

Patty: How does it help?

Trev: 'Cause of us.

Doug: If someone's stuck in a mud storm--mud slide, that is--MPA tries to push them out. They help people a lot in different ways.

Trev: Some other person helps them to get out and it makes them so happy.

Patty: Do you have anything more to say about MPA?

Doug: Just that they're good.

Motherhood, or I should be so lucky

Hollywood sure lied to me. All the cute stories on T.V. about cute little families with adorable children leading serene lives. They don't tell you the real things like feeling trapped and scared with a twenty-year responsibility ahead of you or people coming to you saying, "You know what YOUR kids did?" and then looking at you like you've failed as a mother because you haven't taught them right.

Let me tell you about being a mother. There's the constant quarrel with mommy being the referee, or trying to write an article on motherhood while Trevor is spilling milk all over the table and Doug is pulling the dog's tail. It's not really the big things that get you down (though they help) but the little day to day, minute to minute hassles.

Now, I will start at the beginning. Doug was two and Trevor two months when I started divorce proceedings. I was scared. I looked around and all my old friends were married or had left town. It was awkward being a mother among single people or a single among married people. I was going to church at the time and there were two classes for young people, "young marrieds" and "young singles" but nothing for young divorcees with children. I finally wound up in the young singles class, but what they talked about was dating, and how to get to be a young married but they did not realize the problem a young mother has just starting out of the house or the other things a single mother is faced with. I dropped out.

I forgot how to meet people after four years of making a husband and kids my whole life. I did what any normal sane person would do -- I went crazy. I started smoking dope and drinking heavily until one night after I smashed all of the dishes in the house the police ambulance arrived to take me away. Children's Aid took the kids and I was in the hospital for a week.

When released I was evicted and couldn't find a place in town because of a housing shortage so I was forced to move to a farm house five miles from town with no car or phone and isolation set in. After two months I couldn't take it any more so I took my only alternative--I moved in with two other single mothers. We had a two bedroom basement suite in crummy conditions among three mothers and five kids, three two-year olds and two babies. I got exhausted and again my shrink put me in the hospital for a week.

Arrangements were made through Children's Aid to keep the kids for one week and then they would return them. Upon release I went to collect them only there were now conditions -- my welfare was cut off--I had to get a job (impossible), a house (there was an incredible housing shortage--how?) and a babysitter -- then they would return my kids. It was all so hopeless I slashed my wrists and was committed for three and a half months.

Upon release the conditions for getting the kids back were the same and just as impossible. I gave up, became a drop-out, drank a lot, took a lot of LSD and anything else



that was around and changed my whole lifestyle from a middle-class wife to a counter-culture freak. After a year and a half welfare informed me that unless I did something soon my children would be put up for permanent adoption, so I moved in with my parents and they gave the kids back. Then I moved out into a communal living situation. The problem was they had come from a middle-class foster home to an unmiddle-class mother. Trevor adjusted; Dougie couldn't, so he went to live with my middle-class family until a few months ago.

My kids, contrary to popular opinion, aren't bad kids and there are some things enjoyable about being a mother. I hope when my kids grow up they're not sitting in group therapy talking about how mother fucked them up. They have to realize that when a person messes up a situation like that, they've had a lot of help. Credit should also go to the welfare department, my psychiatrist, the mental hospital and staff, and the society that writes the script with no room for ad libbing.

- Patty Servant

We're starting...

a "Residence for Women"!

After two years of talking and discussing the issue of a women's residence--it is finally becoming a reality. WE'RE GETTING A WOMEN'S RESIDENCE! The Sept. 12th General Meeting supported a motion establishing a Women's Committee and empowering it to take immediate action to set up a Women's Residence.

The question was raised as to whether children would be included and it was felt that this would be determined by the women in the residence.

In the past opposition has been mainly financial and anti-separationist. Our residences are now predominantly male, first because of agencies generally imposing the old double-standard of referring only men to mixed living situations and secondly because women themselves often cannot and do not wish to handle the problems of male chauvinism. It is felt that the establishment of a women's residence will result in more referrals of women and a gradual equalizing of the male/female ratio in our current residences and in MPA as a whole.

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growing up in a mental hospital

THE OTHER HALF

This is a story about the other half of my life.

Psychiatrists and social workers had already decided before I was born that I was going to be a mental patient. My natural mother had been locked up just before she gave birth to me and was locked up again soon after. The social worker from the Foundling Hospital told my foster parents, as they put it, that my mother was "peculiar" and Miss Callaghan soon had them looking for symptoms in me, too. Every month Miss Callaghan would come and discuss my "problems" with my foster parents. If I only wanted to stay in the back yard with my sister and make mud pies, this was a sign that I was too passive and withdrawn, and my mommy and daddy were supposed to encourage me to explore the neighborhood more. When I started to wander around the neighborhood, I went to a neighbor's garden and picked some flowers. The neighbor complained, and Miss Callaghan held a long session with my parents about curbing my hostile impulses.

If you're not a good boy...

I knew that my foster parents were afraid of the Foundling Hospital lady, but I didn't understand why. Because it was only me she could take back to the hospital. "If you're not a good boy, we'll take you back to the hospital where we got you," my mommy and daddy said. But sometimes they would make the hospital sound nice, the place where they picked me out from

animal for Doctor Bender. I was one of the first children to be "treated" with electric shock. I was six years old.

I won't go!

I gave up that little boy for dead thirty years ago, but now he's come back to life, kicking and

my friends the mice

Sometimes the attendants would leave the door to my room unlocked while the rest of the kids went to the dining room. I would roam the hall looking for something to read, something to look at, to play with,



struggling. I won't go to the shock treatment, I won't! It took three attendants to hold me. At first Doctor Bender herself threw the switch but later when I was no longer an interesting case my tormentor was different each time.

I wanted to die but I didn't really know what death was. I knew that it was something terrible. Maybe I'll be so tired after the next shock treatment I won't get up, I won't ever get up, and I'll be dead. But I always got up. Something in me beyond my wishes made me put myself together again. I memorized my name, I taught myself to say my name. Teddy, Teddy, I'm Teddy...I'm here, I'm here, in this room, in the hospital. And my mommy's gone... I would cry and realize how dizzy I was. The world was spinning around and coming back to it hurt too much. I want to go down, I want to go where the shock treatment is sending me, I want to stop fighting and die... and something made me live, and to go on living I had to remember never to let anyone near me again.

I spent my seventh birthday this way, and my eighth and ninth birthdays locked in a seclusion room at Rockland State Hospital. I had learned that the best way to endure this was to sleep as much as possible, and sleeping was all I could do anyway. I was in a constant state of exhaustion, and I began to have colds that lasted all year because the more sadistic attendants would turn off the radiator and open the window, even in December. Doctor Sobel said it was a sign of my sickness that I didn't like fresh air.

anything I could use to keep myself distracted. I would save part of my food and think for hours of when I would eat it. Sometimes mice would run through the room, along the walls, and I would watch them carefully and try not to scare them. I wished that I were small enough to run under the door like they could. Sometimes there was nothing in the room, nothing at all, and I would lie on the mattress and cry. I would try to fall asleep, but I couldn't sleep twenty four hours a day, and I couldn't stand the dreams.

I would curl into a ball clutching my knees and rock back and forth on the mattress trying to comfort myself. And I cried and cried, hoping someone would come. I'll be good I said. And the attendant would stare at me unexpectedly through the little window with wires in it so I couldn't break the glass and kill myself. Every few days, Doctor Clardy would come in surrounded by attendants and tell me that I had to learn to "adjust." "Well adjusted" was a phrase that Doctor Clardy used often. By the age of ten, I had adjusted well to being in solitary confinement.

And so I spent my childhood waking from nightmare to nightmare in locked rooms with scraps of torn comic books and crusts of bread and my friends the mice, with no one to tell me who I was. And when I was seventeen and the shrinks thought they had destroyed me, they set me free.

I was free.

- Ted Chabasinski

all the other little boys and girls though they never explained why they picked me. Three years old, I tried to remember or imagine how it must have been. I was in a crib in the middle of an ocean, thousands of babies like me, all screaming and crying for mothers they didn't have. My mommy and daddy pointed to me and the nurse brought me out, wrapped in a blanket. And they took me home to the Bronx.

When Miss Callaghan had discovered enough symptoms, I was sent to the Bellevue children's psychiatric ward, to be officially diagnosed and to be made an experimental

CHILDREN at M.P.A.

Children as a Minority Group Within MPA

Over the past 24 years the number of children at MPA has increased. I'm happy when I walk in to the drop-in center and see children, to see them becoming a growing part of our membership (no pun intended). When Aaron (at 7½ months old) became a resident at the West End Residence it showed the progress we had made in acknowledging that MPA as a community is complete only with children, residents included. But, unfortunately, too little attention has been paid to this fact. As a group, children are even more oppressed than we are as "ex-mental patients". They are a minority group at MPA.

Children are People, Too!

"Children are people, too," is an old platitude. But I feel it needs to be said again. In many ways we fall short of the mark in recognizing this. Too often children are seen either as "half-people" instead of "half-sized" people, or as appendages to their mothers. At best they are seen as "the woman's responsibility".

We are being oppressive in maintaining this attitude. That is not to say that children are, or could be, completely independent people each time they step in the drop-in center door. It would be psychologically impossible for them or for adults to make a complete adjustment from how society sees and treats children to how it really should.

Physical restrictions are ever-present; for example, houses are designed strictly for adults. Children face restrictions, i.e., Aaron can fall off the couch (which is designed for bigger people) and Trevor may need help reaching the water tap (also designed for bigger and stronger people).

Mothers Need to be Able to "Drop-In" at the Drop-in Center

If you've never been through it, it is hard to imagine the constant, never-ceasing work of child-rearing. Babies, especially, take up a lot of time. They don't bath as easily as they do in TV commercials nor do they feed, sleep and play as easily as depicted in movies of bliss and rose-covered, white-picket fenced cottages. Motherhood is damned hard work. Clean diapers and clothes do not drop from heaven.

IN A NUTSHELL is the official newsletter of the Vancouver Mental Patients Association, 1982 W. 6th, Vancouver, B.C.

People who worked on this issue included Barb Bussigel, Patty Servant, Frances Rooney, Lanny Beckman, Stan Persky, Barry Coull, Ted Chabasinski and Bonnie Ramsey, who took most of the photos.

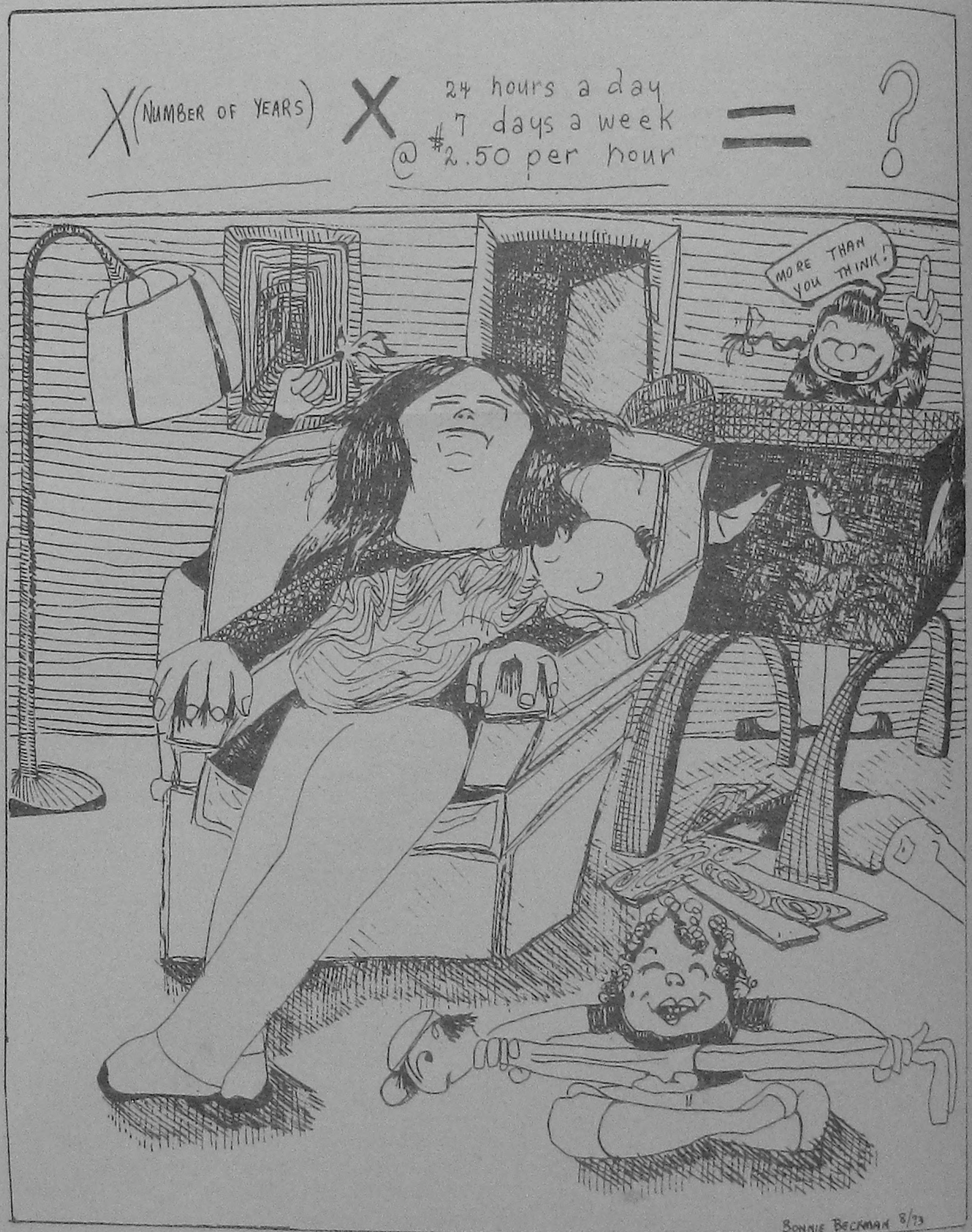
When mother and child arrive at MPA it can often be after a long hassle of finding coats, shoes, preparing formulas, etc. The trip there, if driving, involves seating the child safely in the car or bus (neither have facilities for children) or if walking, involves keeping the child from being run over en route. Both can arrive at MPA needing a break from each other. That's when our help--not criticism--is needed.

How We Can Help

The first way we can help is to start gathering names of people who would like to babysit--either at

ashtray--so move it. If he upsets it, clean it up. Don't criticize Jan for not being God--help her and get to know Aaron at the same time.

Children often like to be away from adults and to be "alone". Play areas could easily be fitted into the current space in the house. Outside, under the back porch, a sandbox could be built. A set of small swings could be purchased from the Buy and Sell. We could get toys and a toy box that children could open themselves. In the crafts area a short table and some small chairs could be set up, along with a small easel with paints, water and brushes. One



home or at the drop-in center. A woman is not a "bad mother" if she does not want to be with her child 24 hours a day. Don't worry, children are not going to take over the drop-in center with noise and confusion. Babysitting at the drop-in center usually only involves keeping children from hurting themselves. If Aaron is making his way around the couch, usually the only thing he can do wrong is upset an

bottom shelf of the library could hold children's books.

This way, children can be more independent; the facilities will be there when they want to use them. And no "grown up" has to be asked.

Especially Mother.

- Barb Bussigel

TUBAL LIGATION — WHY CROSS MY FINGERS OR MY LEGS?

I've decided I don't want to bear children. I have also decided to have a tubal ligation. It seems funny to be taking this permanent step when in fact I've never been pregnant. I'm 29 years old and have been having intercourse for 10 years. I've taken a lot of risks so I'm either very, very lucky, or sterile. There's no positive way of knowing, but I'm taking this step with that doubt in mind.

My years of experimentation with birth control have been totally frustrating. I refuse the condom strictly because it's ghastly—I'm sensuous and rubber doesn't feel like -- well, rubber feels like rubber. Coitus interruptus has the obvious continuous fear that "maybe this time he'll forget"—or like it so much that he'll "forget". I'm no help there—his orgasm is mine too. I don't want him to leave me then.

The diaphragm and foam methods I refuse because of the extra lubrication which raises the chances of bladder infection, and I've had more than my share. Abortion? No, it keeps me at the mercy of doctors and hospital boards for at least the next 15 years. Cross my fingers?....a pretty heavy burden to be carrying. Cross my legs?....

And what about the pill? Yes, that pill! The great answer. Science's lie! The side effects are minimized, questioned, denied, and then distorted to "psychological" reactions of the woman. The

AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE

I do adore
A door
That acts like a door
That opens like a door
And doesn't ever lock
like a door
Cause I've had that
galore before

- Molly Dexall

woman in this case is me! When on the pill I suffer from premenstrual tension all month long, have menstrual cramps all month, my stomach is constantly distended, and I have nauseous migraines at least 2 days

a week. My breasts are too sore to touch. (That makes lovemaking "free"?) I pee constantly. I eat like a pig. I bitch. I cry. I am miserable and I am angry. So, after many years (from 1961 through 1968 on and off) I tried to brave the fantastic, omnipotent pill.

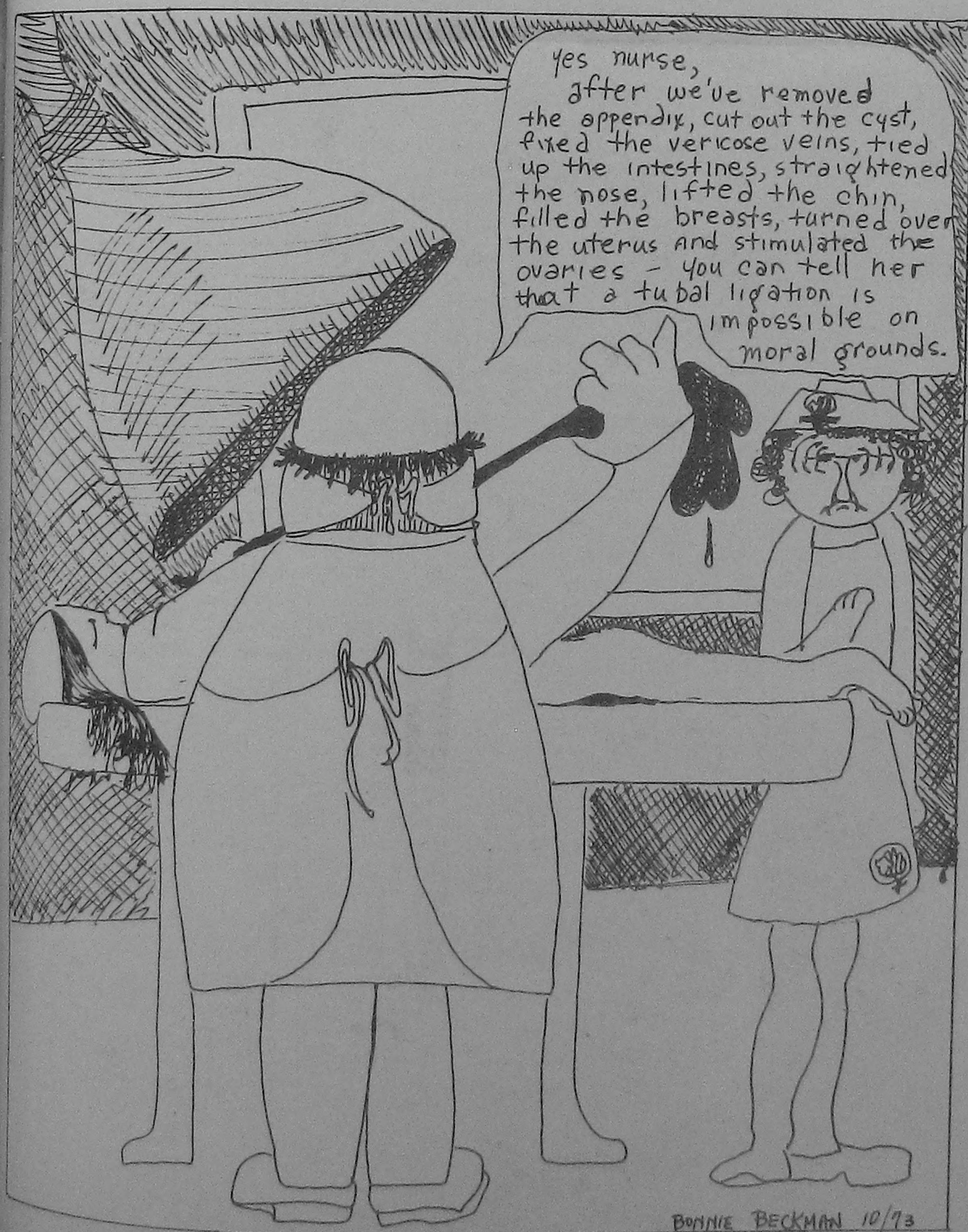
After a series of alienating and frustrating arguments with many different doctors I literally refused to try "this new pill", "just one more time".

So I tried the coil—science's answer to the pill. After insertion of the coil I spent half an hour on the surgery room floor—ringing for a nurse and unable to get up. The next 2 hours (the nurse finally came and helped me to a bed) were spent in utter fear that I was going to die, fear that I could not bear the pain any longer, and fear that what was happening inside me could cause so much pain. The nurse phoned a friend to pick me up. (They hadn't told me previously that I might not be able to drive.) The next 3 days were spent in bed on a liquid diet. At my 1 month check-up I was told that the constant pain and constant bleeding were "normal".

11 months later, still with constant pain, still with constant bleeding, I was told it was "normal". I had had numerous bladder and yeast infections and my blood count was 55. I was frustrated and on the verge of tears constantly—and VERY ANGRY at doctors. Naturally, lovemaking during this time was painful too—fine birth control!

Finally, some women recommended a local doctor who is very good. I went to see him. I told him I was sick of the "gulf service station" attitude, sick of being called a neurotic woman, and sick of being promoted by doctors as a guinea pig for science. I explained that I had kept the coil because I had been told my reaction was normal and also because I was afraid of the pain of having it removed. He explained that my reaction was "normal" only as opposed to "diseased". He then removed the coil, suggested I try a different "new" one, suggested I try the pill again. I refused. He suggested sterilization and I liked the idea. So we booked a series of appointments to talk about it.

I walked out of his office relieved and astounded. This was the first time a doctor had actually treated me like a human being. That was over a year ago and since then we've talked of the tubal ligation, of me, and of women's liberation. My name is on the hospital waiting list for the operation. I'm afraid of the operation but not of the results. I see it as a great burden being lifted from my shoulders, as freedom from the physical and psychological tortures of birth control and doctors, as an escape from being a reproductive machine for society.



BONNIE BECKMAN 10/73

- Barb Bussigel



JAN & AARON

Jan is a VOP worker at MPA. Two and a half years ago she decided to have a child. It took two pregnancies to get Aaron, who was a year old the day I talked to Jan about him, about MPA, and about life as a person who is also single, a mother and on welfare.

FRANCES: You and Aaron are on your own. Do you ever feel the need for a man around the house? Do you want to marry?

JAN: Sometimes I really need a man and sometimes I don't. I especially need one to keep things smooth when I want to do my thing & Aaron wants to do his. I would like a close relationship with a man, but I don't know where to begin, really. I'm not a virgin and it seems you have to play the virgin type to be able to start with a man. Guys don't accept us for what we are, they can do anything and that's okay, but they think it's sluttish for a woman to sleep with someone. I want a relationship that's straight out, open, honest, somebody to share things with, talk to. Marriage? No. No, not judging from the marriages I've seen. I'm not very optimistic about marriage.

F: Do you want more kids?

J: Yes, at least one more. But if I can, I won't have it in the hospital. Having Aaron was horrible. You don't know anybody around you, you're nervous, everything's cold and unfriendly--all beige and steel and fluorescent lights. You can't even be yourself enough to relax and just have the baby. It was just me and all those strangers. I'm very sure that if I'd been in my own home, with possibly a midwife and people around me who were concerned about me and cared about me, I would have been a lot better off. The doctor kept saying, "You're not pushing." I kept saying, "Yes I am, I'm pushing as hard as I can." I was getting more and more uptight as he kept telling me that I wasn't doing what I knew I was doing, and I finally said, "If

you don't give me something to put this kid out of here, if you don't fucking do something, I'm going to get up and walk out of here." This time I was hysterical. I was in a lot of pain and they couldn't care less. They just kept telling me to push, push, push. It's especially a man. Finally they took me from the waist down, they made me put my feet in stirrups just above me, and three doctors stood there watching, the way they would an animal in a cage or something under a microscope. It was humiliating, horrible, I felt so alone.

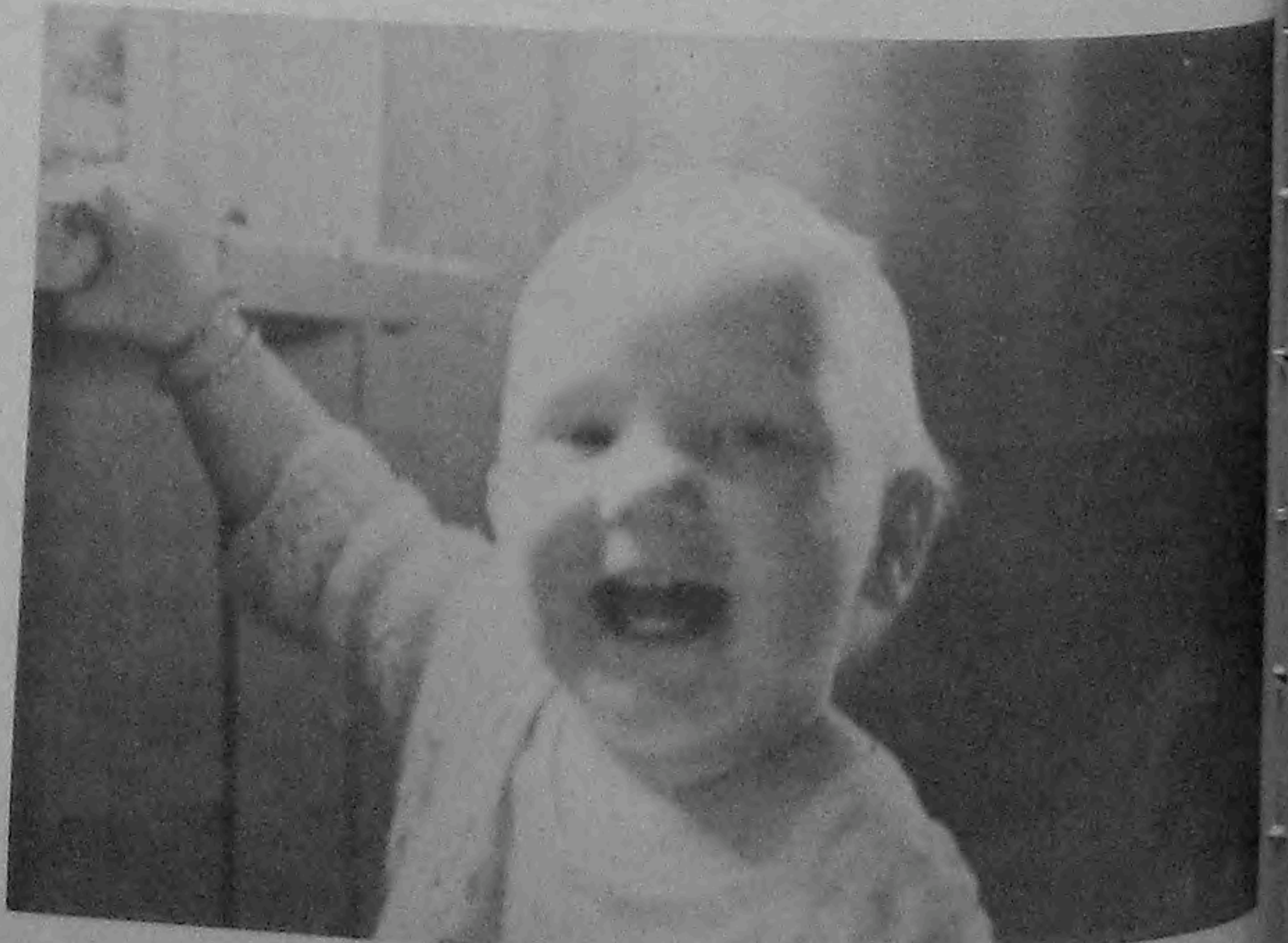
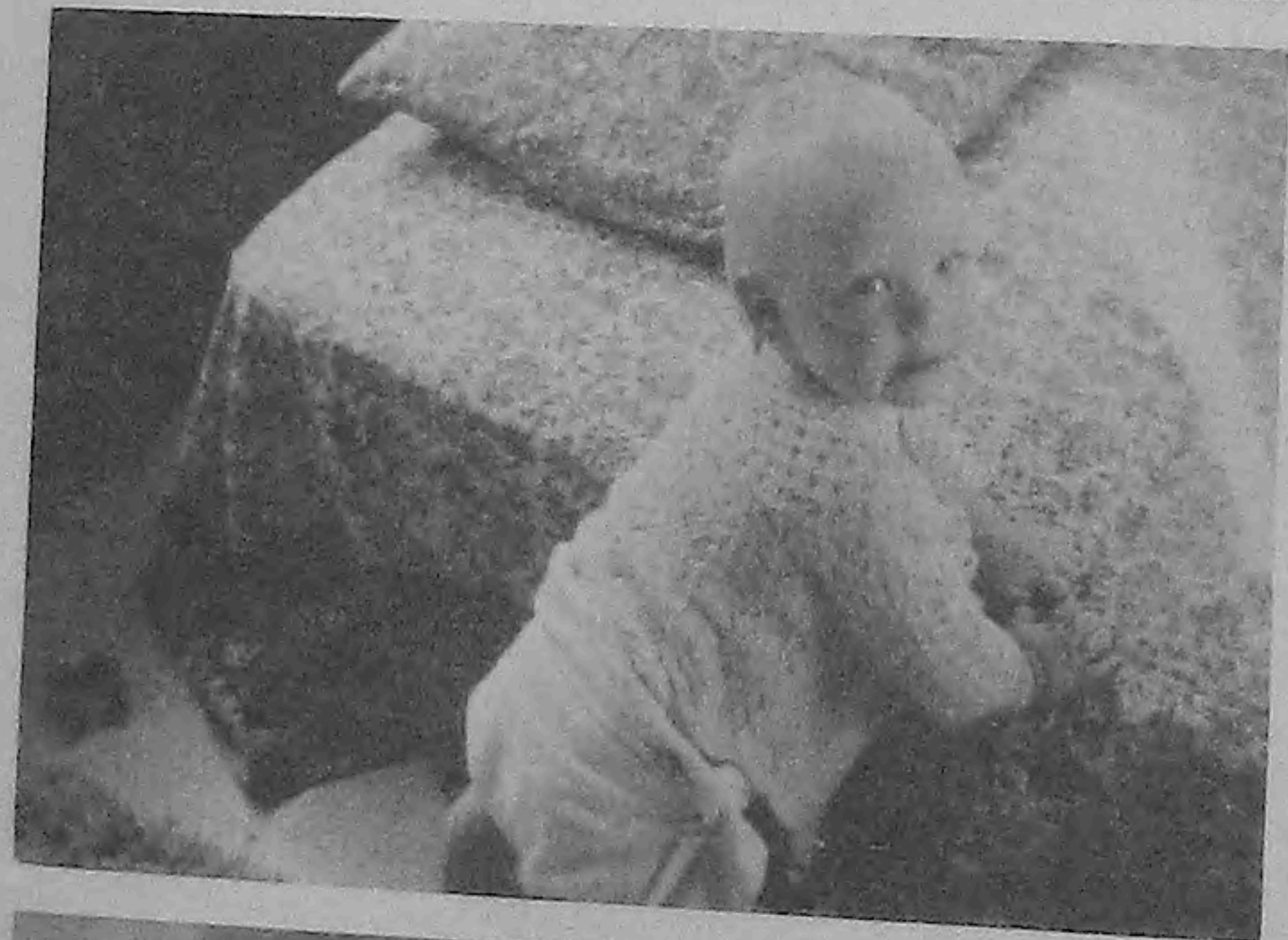
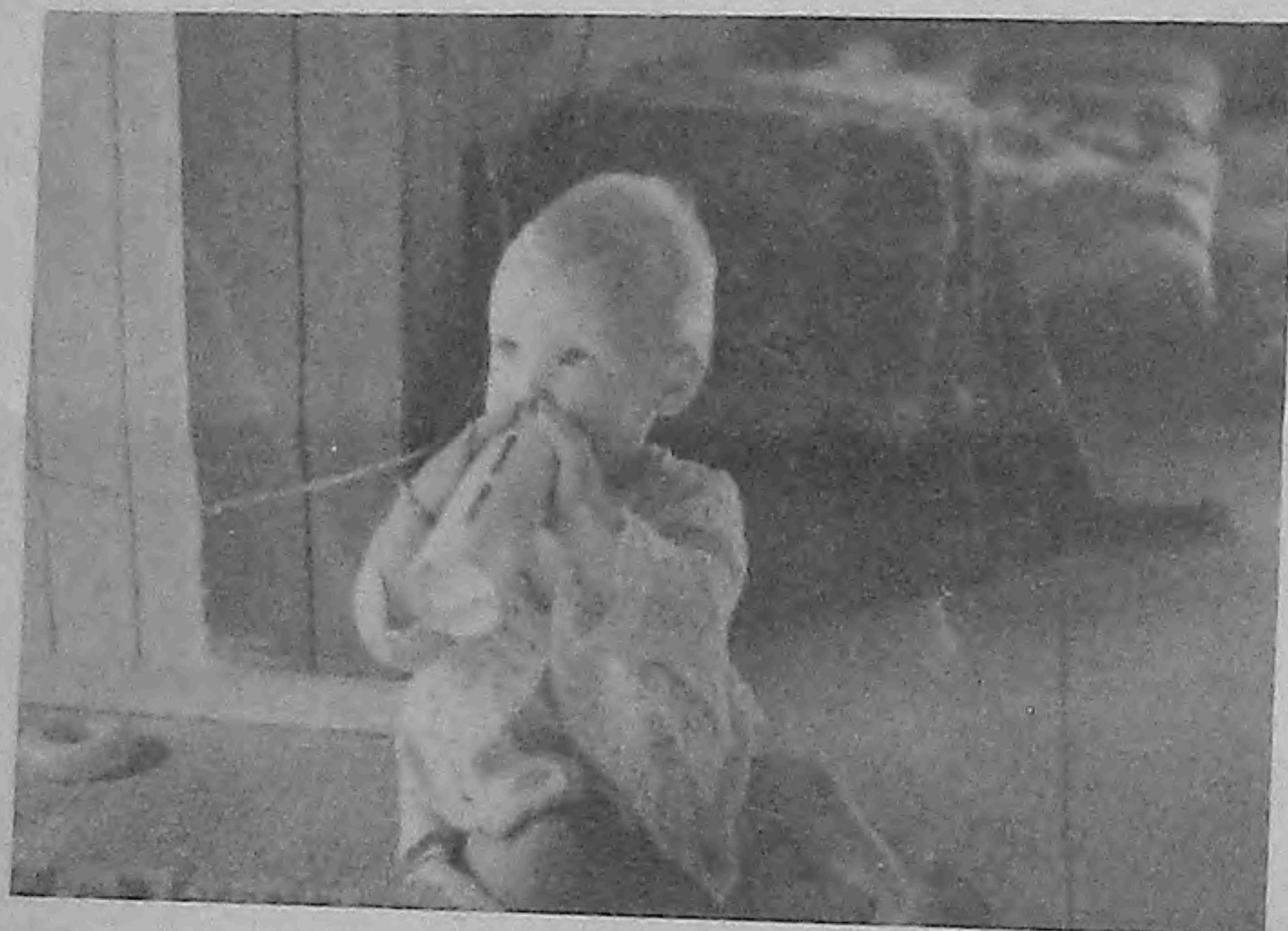
Just after Aaron was born they stuck another needle in me and then told me that it was to dry up my milk so that I couldn't breast feed.

F: WHAT?!!!!

J: Yeah, I just couldn't believe it. I really couldn't believe he'd have the audacity to do it, just like that, without even asking me. Long before I'd decided to have Aaron, I'd decided that if I ever did have a kid, I'd breast feed it if it was at all possible. They didn't let me, they just didn't let me. I couldn't do another thing about it. It's real insanity.

F: Were you treated differently from women who had husbands? Did you get the "sinful little unwed mother" thing?

J: Yes. When I had my miscarriage and when I had Aaron too. "You've made mistakes, but be a good girl from now on." That sort of thing. It's harder when you're all alone.



have no right to make it even difficult. That's another thing. When I had my miscarriage, I was in the hospital for a solid week. The thing was that I had my own doctor, but as soon as I got into hospital I lost my doctor. Any doctor that came along took care of me. They didn't even tell me why they couldn't come. I was weak, I was terribly depressed and all they could do was when I was going to the welfare people hassle you? They don't surprisingly even Children's Aid has, though. I showed up a couple of times; they wouldn't give their child to me. I had complained that I wasn't taking care of my child right. They wouldn't say what I was supposed to be doing, either. So Children's Aid came and looked around. It was that if your house is clean and you're a good mother. What about you and Aaron and MPA? The only thing that really bothers me about MPA, especially the drop-in center, is the total lack of consideration they have for children. People do have children. People should realize that when you have an organization like the drop-in center or the residences, there are going to be children involved. A lot of people don't want children in the drop-in center at all, which means they don't want a lot of kids there, especially women, who don't want MPA and who must take their children with them.

A lot of people around the drop-in center feel that I don't take proper care of my child. They're people, especially men, who don't even know what it's like to have a child. The other day a man brought Aaron downstairs (he can climb stairs really well, so I let him do it) and said sarcastically, "How long has he been up there?" That's happened before in different situations. It doesn't help anything and it just makes for bad feelings. I'm sick of excusing myself. I have my thing to do and Aaron has his. His thing right now is to grow up, to eat and sleep and play. I play with him and change him and look after him, but he's not the only thing in my life. When a woman becomes a mother she doesn't turn into a thing that just raises children. I have my life to live and I'm doing the best I can. A lot of times I may do things haphazardly, but not without thinking. A lot of people seem to think that, because I'm not devoting the entire essence of my being to Aaron that I don't care about him. A lot of women raise their children by everyone else's standards, they keep everyone else happy and lose themselves in the process. That isn't going to happen to me.

“ I’M PUSHING AS HARD AS I CAN ”

photos: Bonnie Ramsey

F:What could MPA do to make it easier for people with children and for the children?

J:The main thing is that they could have some kind of day-care center. The members could run it, and it could be a VOP project. Now, unless somebody is actually holding a child, he is in the way, somebody is bothered by him. They could have toys and diapers, too. But the main thing is a day-care center. It'd be good for the mothers and the kids and the people running it.



down with

Children are oppressed, and childhood is a myth created to facilitate their oppression.

In her book, *The Dialectic of Sex*, (passages of which are reprinted below) Shulamith Firestone points out that children are an oppressed class. In Chapter 4, "Down with Childhood," she shows historically how this oppression evolved starting with a description of the large patriarchal households where children in the feudal family were independent and equal to adults.

Gradual categorization and segregation into a class grew, first by language, second by activities and clothing, and lastly by the institutionalizing of education. She shows that in history, the concept of childhood is a relatively new idea, an artificial institution, created as a further class division for the purposes of oppression.

She bases her writing primarily on Aries', *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*.

Here are some passages from *The Dialectic of Sex*.

the myth of childhood

THE FEUDAL FAMILY

Originally, the family group was composed of large numbers of people in a constant state of flux. On the estates of noblemen, whole crowds of servants, vassals, musicians, people of every class as well as a good many animals lived in the ancient patriarchal tradition.

The child was just another member of the large patriarchal household, not even essential to family life. In every family the child was wetnursed by a stranger, and thereafter was sent to another home (from the age of 7 until 14 to 18) to serve an apprenticeship to a master. Thus he never developed a heavy dependence on his parents: they were responsible only for his minimal physical welfare. And they in turn did not "need" their children--certainly children were not doted upon. For in addition to the infant mortality rate, which would discourage this, the parents reared other people's children for adult life. And because households were so large, filled with many genuine servants as well as a constant troupe of visitors, friends and clients, a child's dependence on, or even contact with, any specific parent was limited. When a relationship did develop, it might better be described as avuncular (i.e. more like an uncle's than a parent's).



Transmission from one generation to the next was ensured by the everyday participation of children in adult life--children were never segregated off into special quarters, schools or activities. Since the aim was to ready the child for adulthood as soon as possible, it was felt, quite reasonably, that such a segregation would delay or stymie an adult perspective. In every aspect the child was integrated into the total community as soon as possible. There were not special toys, games, clothes or classes designed just for children. Games were shared by all age groups and children took part in the festivities of the adult community. Schools (only for specialized skills) imparted learning to anyone who was interested, of whatever age. The system of apprenticeship was open to children as well as adults.

DEVELOPMENT of the IDEOLOGY of CHILDHOOD

From the 14th century onward, the evolution of the concept of childhood developed as an adjunct to the modern family. First, a vocabulary to describe children and childhood was articulated; later (17th Century) another vocabulary was built especially for addressing children. Children's toys did not appear until 1600 and even then were not used beyond the age of 3 or 4. The first toys were only child-size replicas of adult objects. Also, in the late 17th Century, childhood as a new and fashionable concept was "in": examples were mother/child glorification in art and Rousseau's ideology of childhood. Purity, innocence, respect became necessary now that children formed a clear-cut

oppressed group. Their isolation and segregation had set in. The new bourgeois family, child-centered, entailed a constant supervision: all earlier independence was abolished.

Segregation Through Clothing

The distinction and oppression through clothing is important. Costume was a way of denoting social rank and prosperity, and graphically describes disparities of sex and class. Originally, children's clothing was modeled after adult clothing (in the fashion of the lower class).

In the 16th Century segregation of male (bourgeois) children through their clothing appeared. The male infant went from swaddling clothes into female robes. At about the age of 5 he switched to a robe with some elements of the adult male costume, then finally, he advanced to full military regalia. Clothing became another form of initiation into manhood, with the child in modern times begging to advance to "long pants."

Childhood did not apply to women. The female child went from swaddling clothes right into female dress. She did not go to school. Her activity did not differ from that of adult women. As soon as she reached puberty, as early as 10 or 12, she was married off to a much older male.

The class basis of childhood is exposed: both girls and working class boys did not have to be set apart by distinctive dress for in their adult roles they would be servile to upper-class men. No initiation into freedom was necessary.

childhood

Segregation & Oppression Through Education

We can also see the class basis of the emerging concept of childhood in the system of child education that came along with it. If childhood was only an abstract concept, then the modern school was the institution that built it into reality.

It's development had little connection with the traditional scholarship of the Middle Ages, nor with the development of the liberal arts and humanities in the Renaissance. (In fact, the humanists of the Renaissance were noted for the inclusion in their ranks of many precocious children and learned women. They stressed the development of the individual, of whatever age or sex.) The Jesuits, the Oratorians, and the Jansenists were at the origins of both the concept of childhood and its institutionalization, the modern concept of schooling. They preached the segregation of the child from the adult world. "Discipline" was the keynote to modern schooling, much more important finally than the imparting of learning or information. Thus, the function of the school became "childrearing," complete with disciplinary "child psychology." Schools multiplied, replacing scholarship and a practical apprenticeship with a theoretical education, the function of which was to "discipline" children rather than to impart learning for its own sake. Thus it is no surprise that modern schooling retards development rather than escalating it.

As the Age of Childhood emerged, fancy pieces were written about the innocence of children and their closeness to God ("little angels") with a resulting belief that children were asexual, child sex play an aberration. All this was in strong contrast to the period preceding it when children were exposed to the facts of life from the beginning. Any admission of this sexuality would have accelerated the transi-



tion into adulthood, and this now had to be retarded at all costs.

The development of special costumes soon exaggerated the physical differences distinguishing children from adults or even from older children. Children no longer played the same games as adults, nor did they share in their festivities (children today do not normally attend fancy dinner parties) but were given special games and artifacts of their own (toys). Storytelling, once a community art, was relegated to children, leading in our own time to a special child literature. Children were spoken to in a special language by adults and serious conversation was never indulged in in their presence ("Not in front of the children."). The manners of subjection were instituted in the home ("Children should be seen and not heard.").

But none of this would have worked to make of children an oppressed class if a special institution hadn't been created to do the job thoroughly: the modern school. It structured childhood by effectively segregating children from the rest of society, thus retarding their growth into adulthood and their development of specialized

skills for which the society had use. As a result they remained economically dependent for longer and longer periods of time. Thus, family ties remained unbroken.

The rise of the modern family, with its adjunct, "childhood," tightened the noose around the already economically dependent group by extending and reinforcing what had been only a brief dependence. This was accomplished by the usual means: the development of a special ideology, of a special indigenous life style, language, dress, mannerisms, etc.

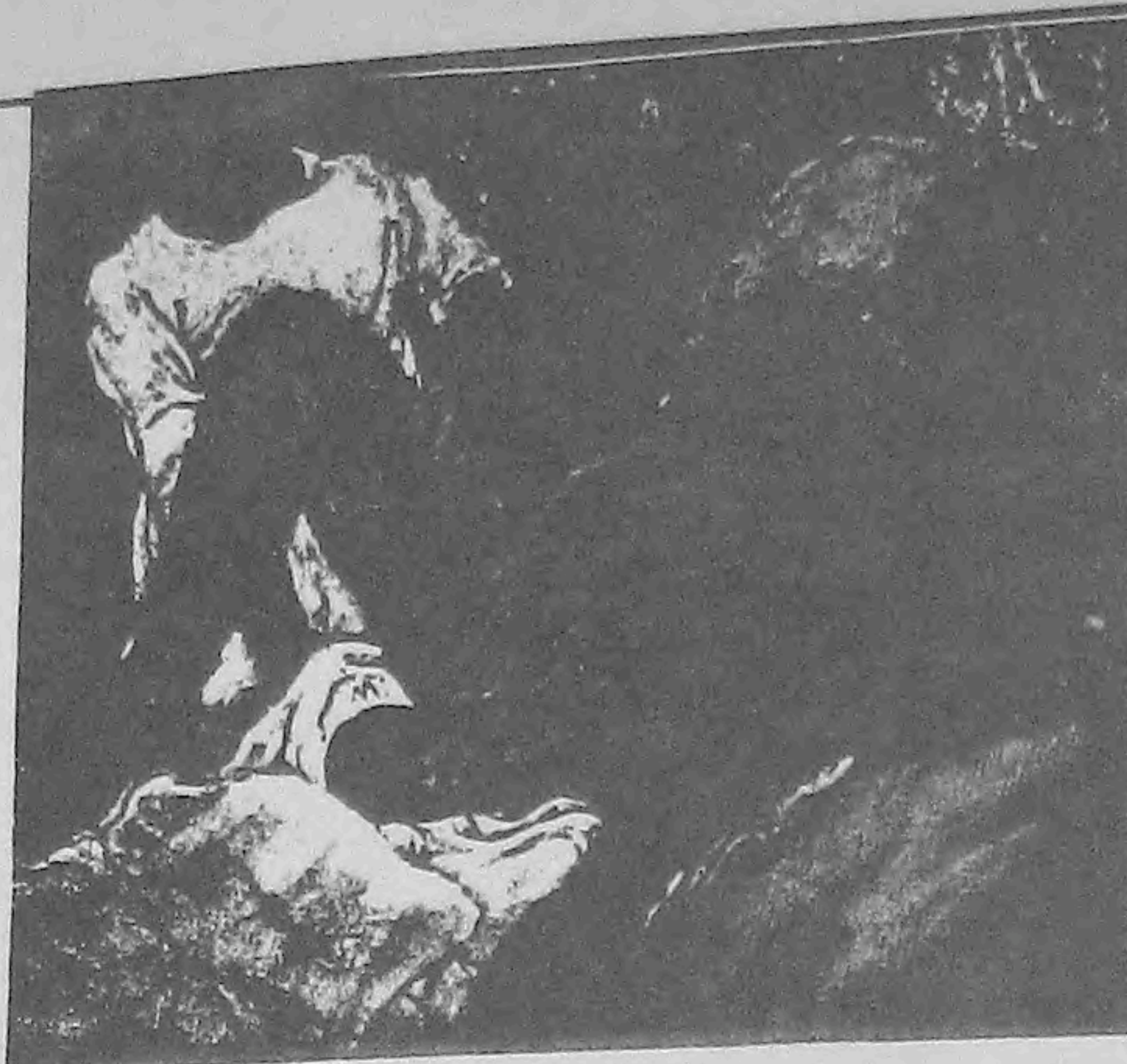
In conclusion, the development of the modern family meant the breakdown of a large integrated society into small self-centered units. The child within these conjugal units now became important, for he was the product of that unit and the reason for its maintenance. It became desirable to keep one's children at home for as long as possible to bind them psychologically, financially and emotionally to the family unit until such time as they were ready to create a new family unit. For this purpose, the Age of Childhood was created.

- From *The Dialectic of Sex*
By Shulamith Firestone



A red heart made of a breadloaf tie sits on my typewriter. It encloses the letter GH. My initials. Cliff Tied. . . . When he kissed my belly I felt he was kissing both me and you, little one, inside, his love to you direct. That instant I thought you moved for the first time, he more with you than I am, how can that be, now I feel you and here, there, I was more afraid of love than he. All three of us are tied in this heart, this belly.

Starlings land on the snow-covered compost heap. Through the slit between two apartments, through the thick brown branches of a snow-edged tree near the water, a green barge moves. You kick within: light thumps wave out slightly in short lines. Where you knock doesn't hurt, is slightly like a blood spurt in one spot of a large vein. I smile. Feel soft. The barge moves slowly through the upper-half of the tree. A chunk of snow falls



Two to four in the morning. you beginning to begin to come out. I awoke moments ago, felt a nook at the top of my womb, took a slow deep breath and felt with my hand to see if, yes I was having a contraction. Exactly the same as these hardenings I've been having except earlier this evening I noticed what I call my Viet-Con jeans were wet about the crotch. So I waited a few moments more, felt this dip in at both sides, almost six inches down from the womb's tip. Again. Fuck it, better get up and pee. Stepped into the bathroom and white sperm-looking stuff dripped onto a blue square of the linoleum. Yes, it may be, just may be, you, beginning to begin to come out.

- May 1

INTO LABOUR



off a telephone wire. I listen to the noonhorns and a dog whine and a typewriter. And maybe, just maybe, in Herstein's office this afternoon, I'll hear your heart.

Swimming breast stroke today I saw my fingers stretched blurred coneless. Light through the rafters' high windows reflected off the bottom. The fingers, six? Twelve? moved out there in green water unformed. Are yours like that?

Will today be the day? Will every night when I wake to turn will I say, will today be the day? Once I hear the gulls or starlings or robins call, I usually feel, no, not today but maybe (cause my womb is contracting and occasionally I get these little shoot like things travelling up my vagina-cervix) tomorrow. Then when I wake more, I think soon, two or three days, a week, maybe two, certainly by the

17th of May. Yet today there is still that thought / possibility, will today be the day?

- April 29

Saw Dr. Herstein yesterday and he stuck his finger up, diddled my cervix, put his other hand down hard about your head. You're a natural, he said, you and your husband going to go up to the bush for this baby? No way. He pulled out his hand and showed me his finger, it is thicker than most men's, I hadn't noticed before. You are more dilated than this. You might just be one of those women who dilates--he spread his thumb and middle finger about an inch and a half apart--this much before you even go into labour. Great, I thought. What's your guess now? Within a week, but I won't promise anything.

- April 30

6:46 6:53 6:59
Hot flashes. Cold waves. Pauses between. I can always tell when a contraction's coming cause the coldness comes first. And what do they feel like? This is what I've always wanted to know and haven't known and haven't asked and now I know that for every woman it is so different that any description is only a trace of what is. Going up an apple branch, a brass pole in the Ladysmith Fire Hall, or half the drainpipe of the white three-storey apartment across the way. Up fast as it tightens, then a liquid loop at the top, then, sliding down, fast, much faster than going up. No panic. No thought. No images. The only thing outside me is Cliff's hand on my spine. It takes two breaths till the pressure is exact, equal, balanced.
7:06 7:12 7:18

- Gladys Hindmarch

DIRECTORY

FREE MEDICAL

Pine St. Clinic	738-6622
East End Clinic	872-2511
Reach (Medical)	254-1354
KCHCS Clinic	731-6929
Gastown Clinic	685-2744
Abortion referral	873-3984
	688-7133
	736-8471
	874-2331
V. D. Control	736-9844
City Health Unit	683-2554
Gordon House (VD & Birth)	684-4191
Women's Self Help Clinic	873-3984

RECREATION AND COUNSELLING

Coast Foundations	879-2363
DRUG FREAK-OUTS	
The House (soft)	732-3301
Safer - VGH OPD	876-3211

HANDICAPPED RESOURCES

CENTRE	261-7281
LANGUAGE AID	688-5016
WELFARE - U.C.W.I.C.	731-0131
EMERGENCY	

Fire & Inhalator	34-1234
Free Ambulance (police)	683-1122
Crisis Centre	733-4111

HOSPITALS

Van. General	876-3211
Health Sciences (UBC)	228-3731
Riverview	521-1911
St. Pauls	682-2344
Lions Gate	988-3131

MENTAL

UBC Fac. Dentistry	228-2112
Gordon House (free)	683-2554
Reach	253-0232
Health Dept Loc 3	738-9844
Emergency Dental	738-9844
(8 - midnight)	

HELP

Crisis Centre	733-4111
K.C.H.C.S.	736-9971
NOW	736-7376
County Info Centre	736-3661
Cross Reach	732-3245
K.I.N.D.	733-4144
Kits Info Centre	736-3431
Woman's Place	872-1824
FISH	299-4824
	922-1311
Dial-A-Dietician	687-6439

LODGING

Youth Referral Centre	681-7205
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FEED-IN : 4:30 Daily - Free	
Tribal Village Hostel	
199 West 6th Ave	874-9009

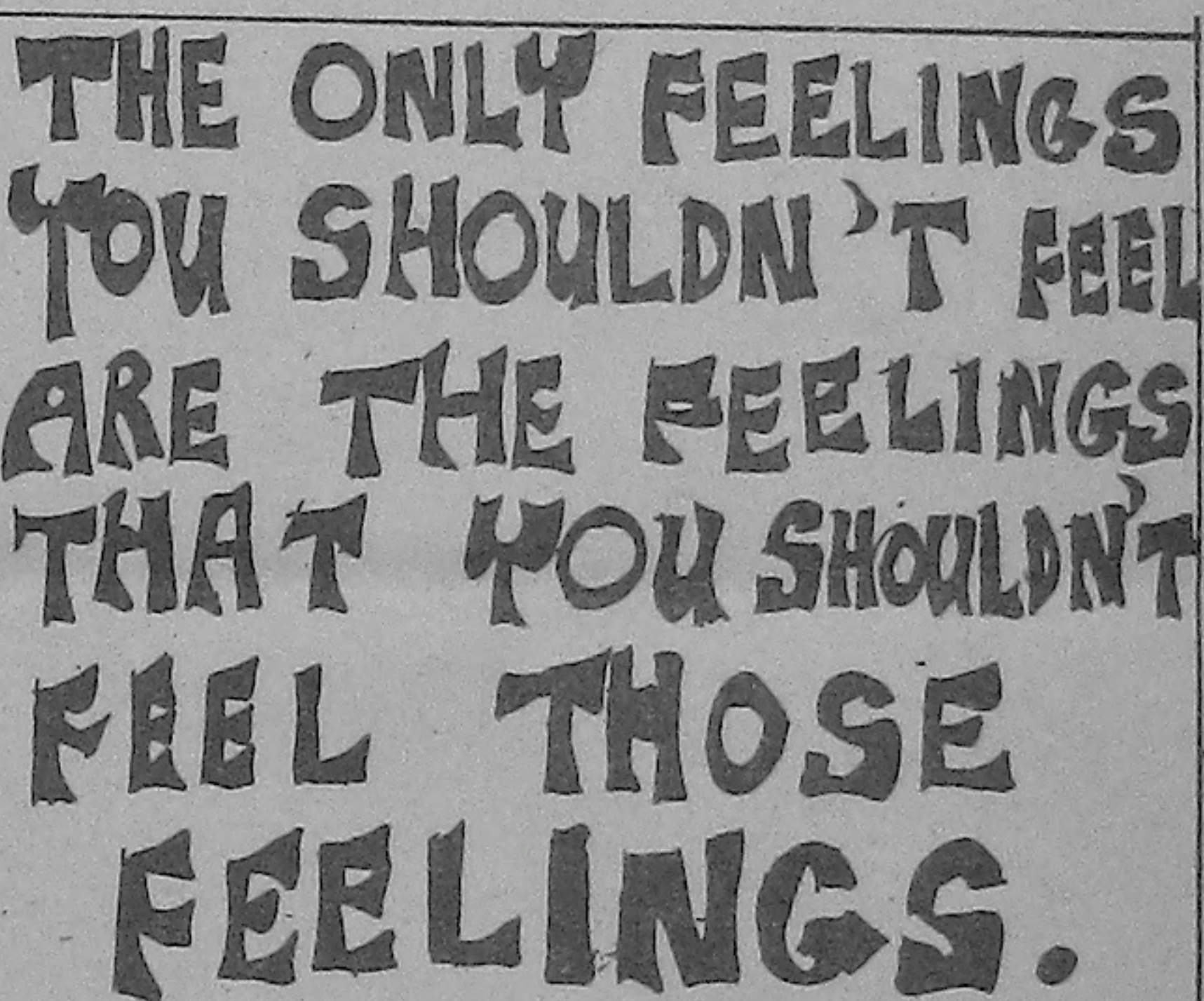
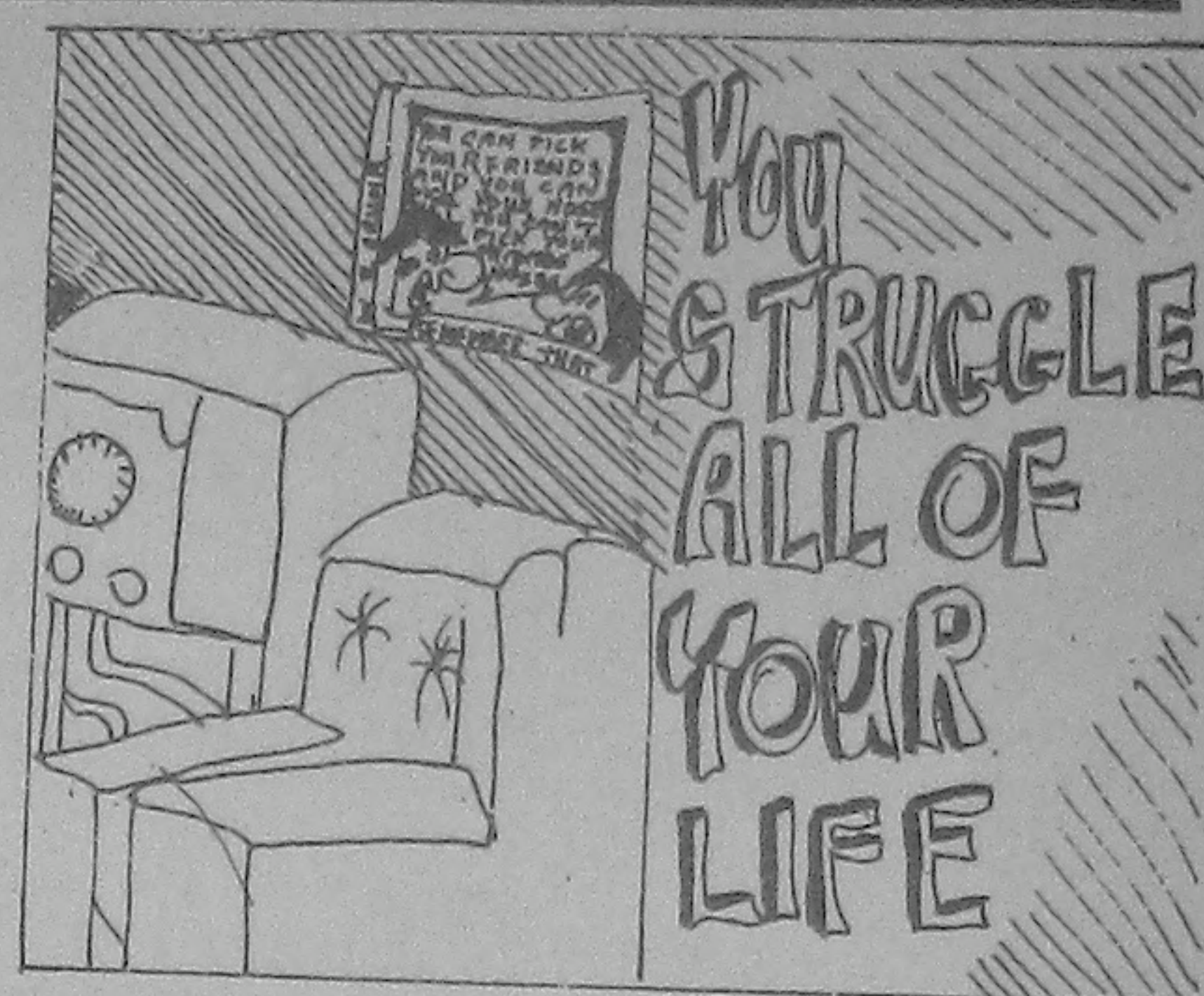
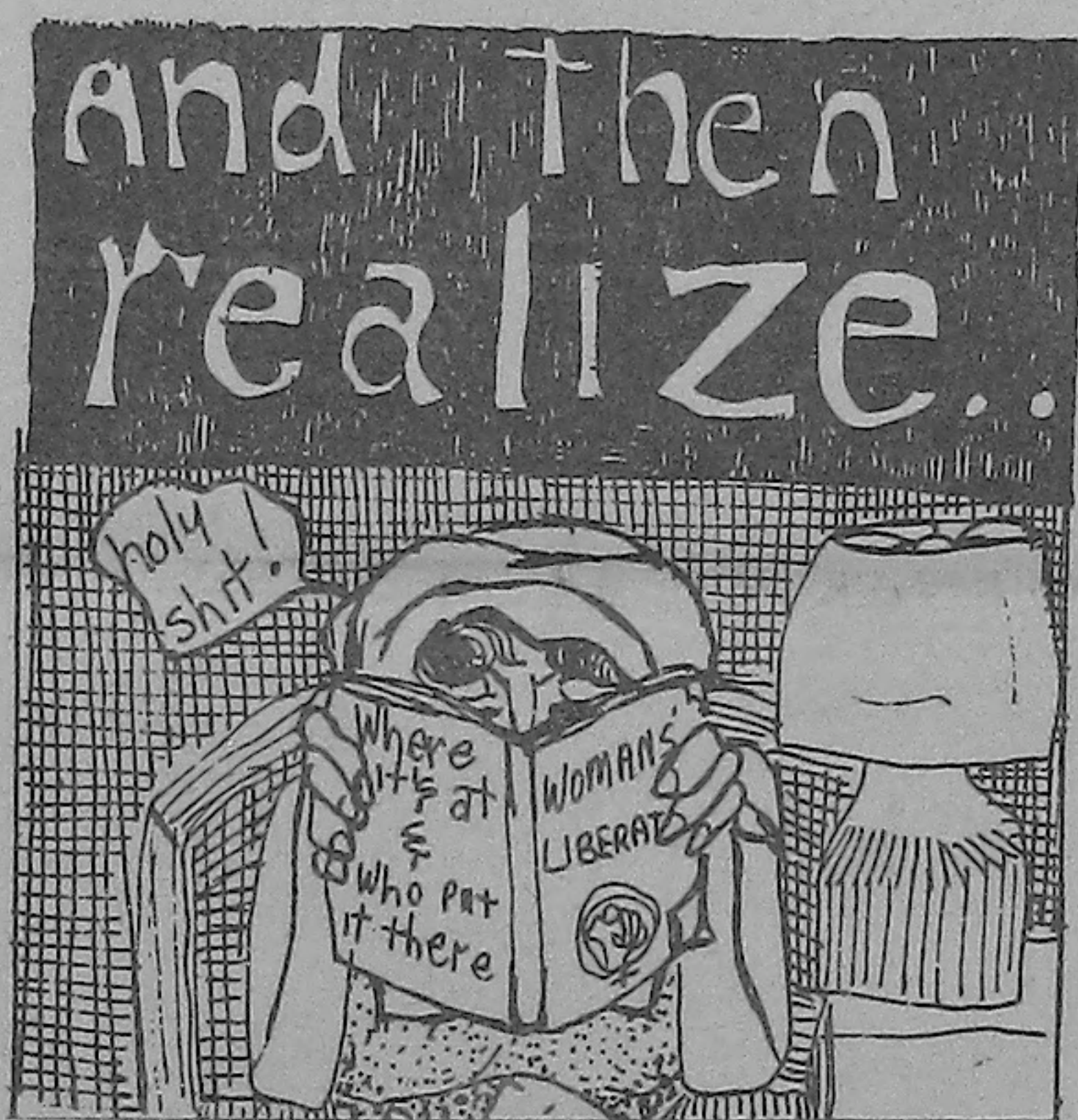
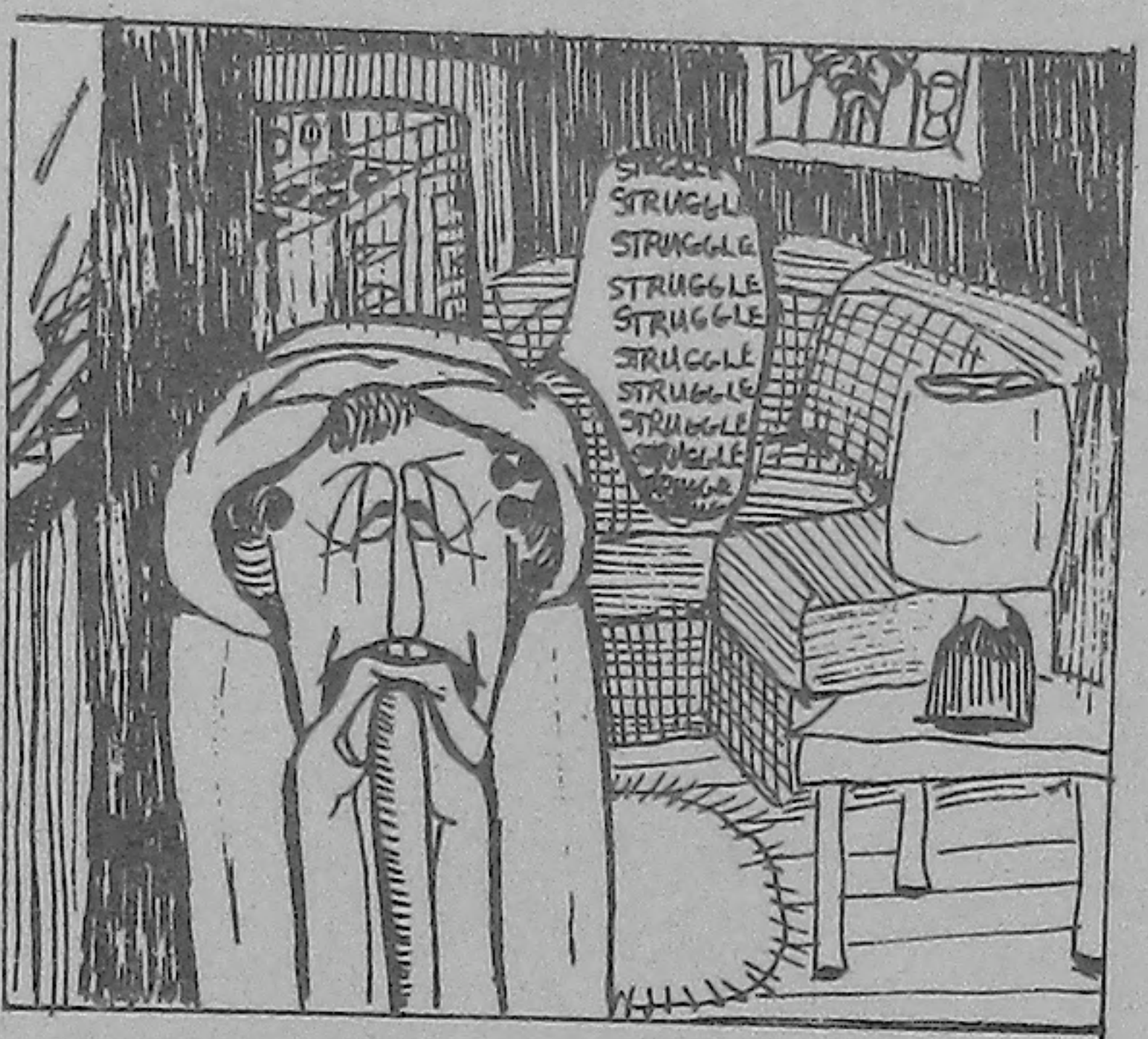
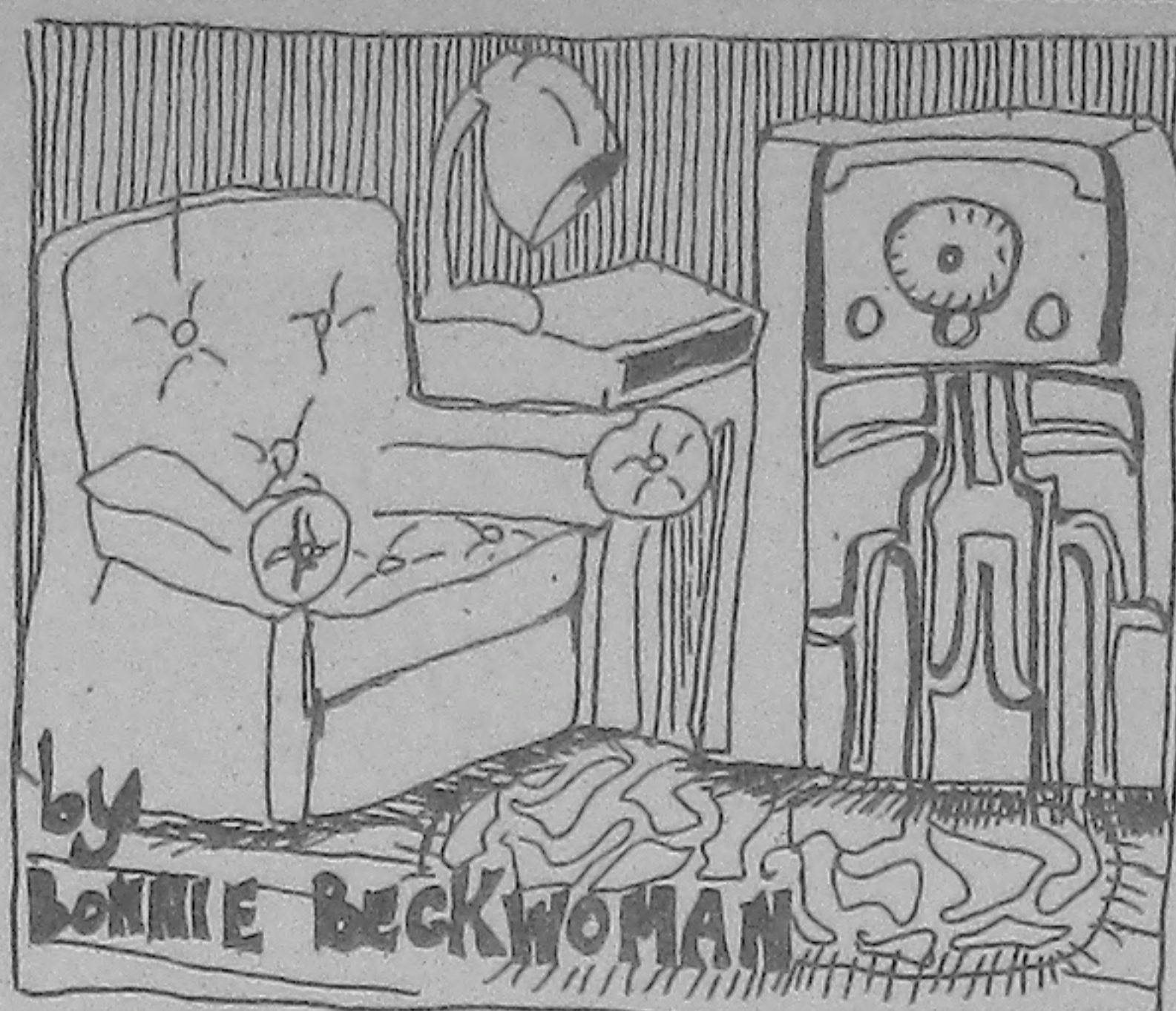
LEGAL HELP

Legal Aid Society	687-1831
Legal Assist. Society	872-0271
Van. Legal Referral	689-5629
Emergency	733-2065

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Phone the Drop-In Centre 738-5177

WEDNESDAY evenings: Supper
6:00 PM at the Drop-In



MPA RESIDENCES	369 E 21st Ave	874-9422
	1754 W 11th Ave	732-8222
	1656 E 4th Ave	253-6996
	1838 W 3rd Ave	733-5733

DROP-IN CENTRE	1982 W 6th Ave	738-5177
		738-1422

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTRES

West End Mental Health Team	681-8723
Burnaby Mental Health Centre	434-4247
Riverview OP Department	872-0211
New West Mental Health Centre	526-1601

AND

Birth Control Info	261-9821
Alcoholics Anonymous	688-1716
Methadone Rx	872-8311
Narcotics Addiction Foundation	736-6746
Salvation Army DeTox Centre	688-7796
Van. Women's Health Collective	873-3984
Van. Tenants Council	872-0296
Van. City Rental Grievance Bd.	873-7325
Single Parent Group	738-4652
Single Parent Co-op	434-3703
Single Mothers Co-op	683-2531
Loc 247	

MPA GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3

8:00 PM, 1982 W. 6th

SUNDAY afternoons: Writers Group
12:30 PM at the Drop-in

THURSDAY afternoons: Trip to Riverview
1:00 PM

DIRECTORY

Where to get help when you need it...(s.o.s.) or

How to help yourself before they help you

MPA DIRECTORY

Drop-In: 738-5177
738-5178
738-1422

Residences

East End - 874-9422
South House- 872-5526
West End - 732-8222
North End - 253-6996

OPEN LINES - 24 HOUR HELP

Crisis Centre 733-4111
Cool Aid 736-9971
MPA 738-5177
STAY 876-8232
NOW 736-7376

OTHER HELPFUL SERVICES

Cross reach 732-3245
K.I.N.D. 733-4144
Kits Info Centre 736-3431
Fish 299-4824
922-1311
Woman's Place 872-1824
Dial-A-Dietician 687-6439

Events and Activities:
phone the Drop-in Center
at 738-5177

Monday evenings 8:00 pm
at the Drop-in: group
with Tom Sandborn

EMERGENCY

Fire & inhalator - 34-1234
Free ambulance (police) 683-1122
Crisis Centre - 733-4111

HOSPITALS

Vancouver General - 876-3211
Health Sciences Centre (UBC) -
228-3731
Riverview - 521-1911
St. Paul's - 682-2344
Lions' Gate - 988-3131

DENTAL

UBC Faculty of Dentistry -
228-2112
Gordon House dentist (free) -
683-2554
Reach (dental) 253-0232
Health Dep't. 738-9844 Loc. 03
Emerg. dental 8 p.m.-midnight -
738-9844

FREE MEDICAL HELP

Pine St. Clinic - 738-6622
East End Clinic - 872-2511
Reach (medical) - 254-1354
Cool Aid Clinic - 731-6929
Gastown Clinic - 685-2744
Abortion Referral 873-3984
688-7133
736-8471
Women's Self-Help Clinic 731-6929
VD Control - 874-2331
City Health Unit- 736-9844
Gordon House Clinic (V.D. and
birth control 683-2554
684-4191

AND...

Birth Control Info 261-9821
Alcoholics Anonymous 688-1716
Methadone Rx 872-8311
Narcotics Addiction Foundation -
736-6746
Salvation Army DeTox Centre -
688-7796

DRUG FREAK-OUTS

The House (soft drug bummers) -
732-3301
V.G.H. O.P.D. 876-3211

Wednesday evenings 6:00 pm
at the Drop-in: supper

Sunday afternoons 12:30
at the Drop-in: writers
group

MPA GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22nd

8:00 PM, 1754 W. 11th