

Two 'Insight' speakers excellent models for 600 women attending

By LYNN RHODES
Herald Correspondent
Journalist Joyce Beaton and feminist-activist Laura Sabin, key speakers at the Sheridan College 'Insight' conference for women, provided excellent models for the nearly 600 who attended the Saturday conference.

Both related their experiences—sometimes humorous, sometimes frustrating—as women breaking into a male dominated power structure. Recent co-founder of Golden-glow Publications Miss Beaton confided: "I'll tell you what feels good about a woman being in business for herself.

When that male voice calling the company says "Hello, sweetie, is the boss in" and you can answer, "sure she is cutie, you're speaking to her!"

Yet Miss Beaton believes "the quickest way to failure for us (women) in the business world is to pretend we're men. . . and we have had to make our own rules and stop thinking Betty Friedan or Germain Greer or Gloria Steinem are the women we must emulate." Since Janice Johnston and Miss Beaton established Golden-glow Publications and enjoyed the success of selling 1,000 copies of poetry books, Joyce wrote in two months

(500 sold in 2 days) and an five Penny Gazette, a tabloid about arts and crafts.

"We are losing that female passivity—that masochism - makes females willingly put up with exploitation and accept roles which subject them to the wills of others," she said.

It was lack of foreseeable opportunity for promotion and desired pay at the company both women were formerly employed with which inspired them to strike out on their own in competitive field of print media.

"We knew we could no longer put up with being anything less than we were capable of becoming and hoping for chances in a job that were never to come."

Admitting that at first they were "playing office," they soon "changed our attitudes towards ourselves" and "stopped whining and got on with serious learning, trying, failing, accepting failure, picking ourselves up and going at it again."

Although Miss Beaton and Miss Johnston took their new career seriously, some didn't. "We were acting like Rodney Dangerfield who claims he

"don't get no respect" said Miss Beaton relating the day her ex-boss "kept assuring me he had always taken "Golden-glow" seriously."

Pointing out the irony of misnaming Golden-glow Publications while confirming its acceptance both the company owners. They sent their former employer a bunch of Golden-glow wrapped in ribbon and placed in a box with a note saying, "This is Golden-glow, we are Golden-glow."

While some "give the impression that they're just waiting for you to fall flat on your face," Miss Beaton said others have been very supportive.

Her candid anecdotes were easy for the women at the conference to identify with.

"I always thought women who made it on their own like that were different, but she's not like the rest of us, really," said a housewife who asked to remain unnamed.

Miss Beaton encouraged "the rest of them" to do what she and Miss Johnston have done; Develop their hobby be a pottery or printing, into a business.

After all, it was shortly after

the womb to the tomb" by parents, teachers, textbooks, government laws, and the church "into subservient roles," she said.

"Women are endowed with intelligence and can do anything a man can do—as bad as well as anyone can do as bad as Trudeau. . . but we have not made up our minds that we, as people, are endowed with the intelligence and fortitude to do anything we want to do."

She stressed some women and men should never marry and some women and men are suitable for executive positions.

"I know we have different gentility, but why does that have to make a difference?" she asked.

Social conditioning, to biology, is responsible for sexual roles said Mrs. Sabin.

"When I ask young girls in high schools what they are going to do with their life, 75 per cent say 'get married' and I reply, 'yes that takes 10 minutes, then what?' not one boy ever told me he's getting married but they all do."

Marriage is "a battlefield" not "an ivory covered castle," said Mrs. Sabin, "we don't teach them about their sexuality or the difficulties of marriage—all the training they get is limited to home ec and eggs golden-rod."

Teenage girls all believe their marriage will not be the one out of four doomed to end in divorce, she said.

Divorce, immigration, abortion citizenship, and property ownership laws were de-

scribed by Mrs. Sabin as "archaic."

She advised a dozen housewives to commission a lawyer to incorporate them into "Housewife Legal" to do chores—a legal loophole to join Canada Pension Plan, Unemployment Insurance and the like.

"It's devious, but legal, and there are all kinds of deductible fringe benefits," she said, "and it's worth a try to bring those boys in Ottawa to do something (about lack of economic rights for unemployed housewives)."

Forming such a company for mutual benefit is one way women can support each other said Mrs. Sabin, who cautioned against disunity.

"If women divide, men will conquer," she fears.

Women irresponsible in their

jobs, Queen Bees who claim 'I made it on my own', housewives who resent career women and career women who put down housewives "set us back 20 years," she said.

"I cannot make decisions for all women—every woman - must make decisions for herself. . . and not make disparaging remarks about women with different choices," Mrs. Sabin said.



JOYCE BEATON

Charlie's mother died last night

Charlie's mother died last night. She was the only person in the world who cared if he shaved changed his socks or wiped his nose. She did all these things with the greatest love a mother knows—but she forgot one thing. She forgot to make arrangements for him if she should die first.

I suppose she always thought Charlie as she affectionately called him would go first. He was born 40-odd years ago while she was working as a cook in a lumber camp. There was a doctor called who didn't have the patience to wait for Charlie to arrive at his appointed time. Charlie was injured at birth and today is what is referred to as a mentally retarded adult.

I first remember Charlie as he leaned over the playpen to play with my 10-month-old son just a few hours after we moved to his neighborhood. His nose was running and his stance was ape-like as he tried to reach for the baby. His appearance scared me at first until he raised his face and smiled. "Nice baby" he said "I like the baby." I wiped his nose and settled down to watch both children enjoy their interaction. Charlie was 18 years old at the time.

Charlie was 18 and had never been to school. His mother tried the regular schools a couple of times but it was before the special schools for trainable retarded and there was nowhere for Charlie to go. So he loped around town in his rubber boots. Everyone knew him and he was generally well treated. The police chief had a special chair in his office where Charlie regularly held court. The service station had a bench with tools just for Charlie and he would go in and fool around there for a few hours each day.

Not everyone was as understanding. There was a time he wanted to play with a group of kids and one ran home frightened. The parents demanded his mother have him locked up. I was witness several times to adult males on the street asking him about his sexual prowess and then roar with laughter at his embarrassment and confusion.

There was also the time his father died and he hid for days behind the furnace in their basement. There was also the time my only daughter died and he met me in the street. His arms went around me and gently patted my back like you would a baby and said "Sorry sorry."

Charlie dreamed of adventure but has had little in his life. He would tell stories of how he was "going up north 18 miles." When we moved away he was sure we were "going up north 18 miles" and it gave him great delight and he wanted to come with us.

A miracle happened the year we moved away. Charlie became a worker at a sheltered workshop for the adult trainable retarded. The first time I saw him upon my return to the old neighborhood he was wearing a suit and tie and attending a concert with some of his co-workers. He spotted me during intermission and without hesitation gave me a big bear hug that rocked me near off my feet in the lobby. "You see my suit?" he asked pulling me over to meet his friends. Charlie felt proud of himself for the first time in his life at the age of 30. He had even been taught it wasn't nice to ask for money (a bad habit he had acquired while on the streets when well-meaning adults were always pressing money into his hand).

Charlie's teenaged sisters were astounded of their brother and wouldn't bring their boyfriends home because of him. Now that their mother is dead nothing has changed. He has no home.

His mother didn't think there would be any need for a guardianship. I suppose she always hoped her other children would take care of him. Well they won't.

There are areas in Ontario where people like Charlie can live. Homes that are not institutions as such but where he can be taken care of while going to work each day.

Hopefully Charlie won't have to hide behind the furnace again but will have friends who care about him for the remainder of his life.

"Preaching to converted" but gaining moral support

Women with a wide range of lifestyles gathered at Sheridan College Saturday for Insight, a conference for Women featuring films, speakers and seminars focusing on choices for women.

They came to glean from each other moral support, advice for problems, encouragement for plans, and ideas for personal growth.

A business woman, in charge of buying for a large corporation, complained: "The men expect me to get the coffee. . . I grumble all the way to the cafeteria. . . I hate myself and resent them, but they don't realize they are demeaning me and I don't have the nerve to speak up because I don't want to be rude, but. . ."

Then there was a divorcee who decided to enter law school, and called herself a "late bloomer"; the grandmother whose husband claimed "a good marriage was falling apart"; because she started night school a month ago; a woman who felt obligated to stay home with her toddlers though boredom drove her to hate every minute of it.

In the words of speaker, Journalist Joyce Beaton: "Only women can understand other women, their fears, uncertainties, lack of role models. . . We hunger for strong women."

Former Ontario Status of Women Council chairman, alderman, board of education member and initiator of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Laura Sabin is now founding a trust company in Toronto.

Seeking nomination for the Progressive Conservative seat in North York in the next election, is Catherine Charlton, public affairs manager for the Ford Motor Company of Canada and Ontario Status of Women Council member.

The first woman to graduate from the University of Toronto with degrees in electrical and aeronautical engineering, Elsie MacGill, is spearheading the conversion of the old Metro Toronto library building into a centre for women.

Conference organizer



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Budget depleted

Administration committee has urged regional council to stay within the official functions budget.

Last week the committee agreed that no additional funds be allowed this year for bus tours, flowers or conventions.

Chief administration officer Ernest Reid said the budgeted funds are almost depleted and it "will be somewhat overcast at the end of the year unless some restraint is imposed now."



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