



Laurie Swim, *Eve's Apple*. 62 x 71".
From *The Joy of Quilting* by Laurie Swim. Penguin Books, 1984.

Women Out Front in Clayoquot Sound

by Valerie Langer and Jan Bate

Les auteures discutent du rôle des femmes dans la campagne contre le tronçonnement des arbres à Clayoquot Sound, une vaste région forestière sur l'île de Vancouver en Colombie britannique.

Six a.m., Clayoquot River Bridge, west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Sue Fraser, a 71 year old grandmother from Port Alberni (the logging town 100 km from Clayoquot Sound), shifted her purse onto her shoulder to eat her breakfast on the gravel road. She was prepared to be arrested. As the vehicles that bring the loggers into work (called crummies) rumbled down the logging road, Sue put down her coffee and moved to the front of the large crowd of environmentalists. The MacMillan Bloedel manager descended uneasily from his truck and, approaching the group, began to read the court injunction banning citizens from interfering with the company's work. Sue was asked to move so that the loggers could continue through to log in the Clayoquot River Valley. With her belly virtually touching the grill of the truck, Sue stood firm. Seventy-five supporters stood behind her. The air was filled with tension. This was the 20th day of the blockade, the fourth blockade in the fourteen year history of logging disputes in Clayoquot Sound.



Diana Thompson, *Hellebore*, 1985. Pastel on paper, 22 x 30"

The police arrived, as usual, to enforce the injunction, and to escort companies, by order of the courts, through citizen blockades to log on public lands. As the police came forward they looked at the grandmother, purse on her arm, standing squarely in front of the first crummy. Moving behind Sue, they swiftly dragged Julie Draper, Gary Gagne, and other "organizers" to the paddy wagon. It was an obvious plan to try to immobilize the blockade.

Sue calmly approached the police. "Please arrest me," she said. The police continued to arrest the supporters around her. She tapped the police officer on the shoulder again and, this time more forcefully, said, "I am from the generation that started this whole mess and I want you to arrest me." Reluctantly, the police arrested her and put her in the paddy wagon amidst cheers and welcomes from the others. The 25 people arrested were driven to Ucluelet and charged with criminal contempt of court. Sue Fraser, however, was released without charge. It's

bad press to arrest a grandmother.

The Clayoquot River Bridge blockade lasted four weeks, until fire season shut the companies down. Sixty-one people were arrested for actions organized under the banner of Rainforest Summer 92. The people who put their liberty on the line for

Clayoquot Sound, the largest tract of temperate rainforest on Vancouver Island and one of the largest remaining tracts in the world, were women and men ranging in age from 13 to 72. The group these blockaders faced across the bridge was uniformly male. The judge who granted the ex parte injunction was male, the arresting officers were male, the loggers and the managers were male.

The debate over Clayoquot Sound has been characterized as "jobs versus the environment." Posters produced by industry public relations companies show a solid bunch of working fellows, chainsaws in hand, gathered around a giant, newly felled tree. The caption above declares, "Don't Let Your Love of the Wilderness Blind You to the Needs of Your Fellow Man." Indeed, the jobs are so guarded by governments, unions, and industry in this debate are men's jobs. Sue Fraser, Bonny Glambeck, Maureen Fraser, Julie Draper and the host of women working to protect Clayoquot Sound who are residents of the region will not benefit from the incredible effort put into saving logging jobs by virtue of their sex. Logging is a bastion of male work; loggers are the highest paid workers in Canada.

There is no debate surrounding the 60 per cent of logging jobs lost due to mechanization over the last ten years. It is taken for granted that jobs will be lost to market forces, even if as much as 60 per cent of the jobs are lost for this reason. There is no tolerance for jobs lost for environmental reasons, however. Environment is considered ethereal and irrelevant by those lobbying for jobs.

A look at the demographics of the environmental movement in Clayoquot Sound and at some of the key players for its protection who live outside the region is interesting. Women are key in the wilderness debate. In Tofino, the tiny town on the southern end of Clayoquot Sound, many of these women are involved in the tourism industry. A number of small but successful enterprises have been built up in Tofino over the years, catering to the crowds who come to experience the wilderness. Dorothy Baert set up the Tofino Sea Kayak Shop in 1988. Maureen Fraser began a tiny bakery called The Common Loaf Bake Shop fourteen years ago. It is now a famous and successful enterprise. There's Cristina Delano-Stephens at the

Alley Way Cafe and Joan Dublanko who runs a bed and breakfast. These are all jobs which have given women a good living. They are independent of corporations and they are not battling for respect in a man's job. They are dependent for a living on Tofino maintaining its wilderness characteristics. They live and work in Tofino because they love the wilderness.

Logging has traditionally meant moving on once the local resource has been depleted. The loggers who would be employed to cut the Clayoquot River Valley (and we will not allow them to cut the Clayoquot River Valley) are from Port Alberni. They have to come 100 kilometres over the mountains to get work. Franklin River Division of MacMillan

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Bloedel, near Port Alberni, has overlogged the forest of their area. Now that they have run out of wood in their own back yard, they consider it their right to look into ours. The same goes for the closer community of Ucluelet. Although only 40 kilometres away from Clayoquot Sound, Ucluelet is actually in Barkley Sound to the south. Unfortunately, they have also logged their own back yard and are dependent on our greener pastures for the next few years of logging jobs.

The people who have been arrested and gone to jail for Clayoquot Sound have been of all ages and all genders; artists, tour boat operators, retired school teachers, restaurateurs, divers, ex-loggers, fish-

ers, and mothers. The area is inspiring. It is lush. It is wild. It is big (compared to what's left in the rest of the world and on the rest of Vancouver Island). It has trees up to 1,500 years old and 5 metres (15 feet) in diameter and it is likely the last area of ancient temperate rainforest on Vancouver Island large enough to perpetuate the entire biological diversity of this type of forest ecosystem.

We do not know yet how big a temperate rainforest has to be to be able to sustain itself. We do know that ecological preserves studied in many areas, including tropical rainforest, exhibit what is called ecosystem decay. Ecosystem decay is the progressive decay of the forest margins where the forest meets developed (i.e. logged) areas. It is indicated by a loss of biodiversity and a loss of wildlife habitat, and it is apparent in areas set aside as natural reserves, no matter how large the reserve.

Over the last fourteen years, groups like the Friends of Clayoquot Sound, the Sierra Club, and the Western Canada Wilderness Committee have been working to save Clayoquot Sound. Saving the area is our last hope to maintain the undiscovered complexity of the ancient temperate rainforests of Vancouver Island. Over 50 per cent of the forests on this 3.5 million hectare island have been logged, most of it in the last 25 years. This of course does not reflect how much of the loggable forest (productive forest in industry terms) has been logged. We estimate that to be in the 70 to 80 per cent range. Because of Clayoquot Sound's isolated location, only about 20 per cent of its forests have been logged. Now, with the rest of Vancouver Island's forests in scattered fragments, companies like MacMillan Bloedel and Interfor have been pressuring even harder for cutting rights in the large intact area of primeval forests of Clayoquot Sound.

Out of desperate frustration with the bureaucracy and the "talk and log" processes, over 100 people have been arrested in blockades. Literally thousands of hours have been spent on negotiating committees (the Clayoquot Sound Sustainable Development Task Force and the Commission on Resources and the Environment—CORE), and all the while cutting permits were given in what environmentalists consider critical wilderness areas. As we were negotiating, the very apples

we were supposed to be dividing up were being eaten. As a result of this lack of fair process, environmentalists opted out of the Clayoquot Sound negotiating process and continued only tentatively in the Commission on Environment and Resources process.

After the Clayoquot Sound Sustainable Development Task Force failed, the NDP government had to decide whether to put Clayoquot Sound in their CORE process or whether to make a cabinet decision on the area themselves. The tension over the fate of Clayoquot Sound mounted as the NDP stalled for five months.

On April 13, 1993 Premier Harcourt announced that Clayoquot Sound would not be part of CORE. Instead, 62 per cent of the area was designated for logging and 33 per cent was designated protected. Under analysis, 74 per cent of the productive forests (that's the big trees) have been designated for logging and the protected areas (some of them already logged—how generous of the government) are in fragments and are located mainly in bog and marginal forest areas, the exception being the Megin River watershed. Forests in fragments are more susceptible to ecosystem decay than are large tracts of forest.

There used to be 89 pristine primary watersheds over 5,000 hectares on Vancouver Island. Today only five remain intact. Three of those five are in Clayoquot Sound. That is why women like Sue Fraser are willing to spend time in jail. It is not an issue of the survival of union jobs, it is an issue of the survival of an ever diminishing ecosystem.

K. MISENER

Dorothy

My God!

They are analyzing Dorothy in Jungian individuation.
They are saying her journey is the journey of AMERIKA,
That New York is the promised land,
and Kansas

really

had nothing to do with Oz

and she can't go home again
except she does.

Her trek to see the Wizard is a metaphor
for
the farmers moving to the city.

That the forest is only mechanization and confusion
That the lion is my conscience
That Toto
rest his puppy soul
is really our own soul
that we'll give anything to save
anything

The Wizard of Oz is meeting with the Pope on the weekend
He'll be taking lessons on dogma and how to make it accessible.

Your god!
not mine, not anymore.

K. Misener is a disillusioned flower child trying hard not to buy in or buy too much.

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