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Editorial

Johanna Stuckey

The articles in this issue are aimed not primarily at aging or old women but at those now young who are in the process of becoming old. All young women need to know what it means to be an older woman in our society. It is younger women who can join with their older sisters in political action and intergenerational networks. More important, it is younger women who need to act now to ensure that they themselves do not have to live below or at the poverty line, do not lose their dignity and autonomy, do not become frightened potential victims each time they go out.

Now is the time — when we are young or middle-aged — to start planning for our later years. Now is the time to consider setting up housing co-operatives or buying rows of houses near one another. Now is the time to begin a life-long exercise and nutrition program. And now is the time to start building up networks of friendship with other women, most of whom will, statistically, outlive the men in their lives.

Feminists have done much to make younger women more accepting of themselves and more demanding of their rights. We now have to turn our attention to the deplorable plight of many of our older sisters. All the older women of Canada now living below or at the poverty line (two out of three women over sixty-five) need our help desperately. In helping them, we help ourselves.

Aging is — and should be — a natural, comfortable, and rewarding experience, but for the majority of Canada's older women it is not, as Leah Cohen's recent book *Small Expectations* effectively demonstrates. It is time we demanded that society begin to live up to its myths; the "Golden Years" are far from so for most older women. It is a situation that we can no longer tolerate.