

Sexual equality absent in Saudi Arabia

by LESLIE PERRY
Citizen Staff Reporter

Equality of the sexes may still be far from reality in Canada but in Saudi Arabia it is non-existent.

Cyd Taylor returned to Prince George this week after spending two years in Saudi Arabia and talked in an interview about life in that country.

She and her husband, Brock, and their children Gabriel, 4, and Chloe, 2, lived near the town of Dhahran at the University of Petroleum and Minerals where he taught computer science.

"Women in Saudi Arabia can't drive a car, work, attend university, dress as they please or shop for themselves and they're compelled to be married by age 20."

"Religious police patrol all the towns and cities ensuring the laws of Islam, making sure all shops are closed five times a day for prayer and that women are properly dressed."

"A woman must be veiled from head to toe from the time she starts to menstruate and if she appears in public with a veil that doesn't cover her completely, she will be stopped by the police."

Taylor says the woman's husband, never the woman, is addressed by the police as it is considered beneath a man's dignity to question a woman about something.

She says western women in western clothing are occasionally harassed by the police as well.

"This sounds like an oppressive existence to us, but Saudis are sincerely religious people."

She says most people willingly abide by the writings of Koran or Islamic law. "The women accept this as their role in life."

Taylor adds, however, that she heard of some women who are bored with the life their religion compels them to lead and get around it by having telephone love affairs though she says "they never meet the men they have illicit conversations with."

She says all Saudi women are expected to live in the privacy of their husbands' homes so they can be "protected from the outside world and particularly other men."

All Saudis live in houses that are built within walls and the inside of the house is divided into men's and women's quarters.

Taylor says the social life of all men is with other men and women may associate only with other women.

"The women are not allowed to accompany their husbands to any social gathering and the only time in her life a woman may dance with her husband is at her wedding."

She says Saudi men are allowed to have up to three wives but "each of them must be equally supported and the man must share his devotion equally as well."

"Some Saudi women



Citizen photo by Dave Milne
Cyd Taylor sits with her children Gabriel, left and Chloe, 2.

have become more westernized as many take annual trips to London and many go abroad to become educated, but once these women come back they are under great family pressure to marry and produce at least two sons; daughters don't count."

She says there is no open prostitution or "red light districts" in the country as that would be tantamount to publicly ridiculing women.

"Women are venerated there, and are treated as exalted objects, like pieces of gold, that must be kept safe, protected and untouched."

"All films, television programs, newspapers or magazines with pictures of nude or semi-nude women are censored and pornographic literature isn't available."

She says the university compound where she lived is sanitary and has all modern conveniences but the country in general is "filthy" and many Saudis still live in mud houses.

"People throw garbage out of windows and cars

onto the streets and animals eat this as they wander through towns and cities."

"Many places are riddled and have open sewage as well."

She says the compound where they lived had a recreation centre, Olympic-size swimming pool and tennis courts as well as a children's nursery.

"Children start going to the nursery as young as two and a half and they were driven to and from the school every day. That was very convenient for me."

Taylor says she spent most of her spare time painting, sailing, reading and swimming. They lived five miles from the Persian Gulf.

"It took me a year to adjust to the country. I could not get used to the tremendous heat or to the way women were treated."

She says temperatures are usually about 35 degrees during May and get up to about 50 degrees during June, July and August with 100 per cent humidity

but frequently no rain. "The breeze that comes off the Gulf doesn't give any relief because it's hot and full of sand."

"I felt bitter and resentful about the attitude to women but when I saw that most of the women themselves seem to be happy and how deeply they believe in their religion, I could accept the way of life there."

In spite of the great social and cultural differences between Canada and Saudi Arabia, Cyd says she and her husband have decided to return there for another two years.

"I wanted to go back because of the travel opportunities. Saudi Arabia is not a particularly interesting country, there is no theatre, opera, entertainment, the music and dance is simple and unappealing and even the architecture is dull, but other parts of the Middle East are fascinating."

"We get six weeks holiday every year and we're so close to Egypt, India, Turkey, Iran and other very interesting countries."

NORTHERN IRELAND

Top nurse has hands full

by TED BARTIMUS

BELFAST (AP) — To ambulance drivers in Belfast she is Sister Kate, the woman waiting at the door for the victims.

Her christened name is Kathleen O'Hanlon. She can't watch a gory TV show because it makes her sick to the stomach, but she is one of the best emergency-room nurses in the world.

"If someone hands me a blown-off leg or arm, it doesn't bother me to stand there holding it awhile," says the petite woman with a handshake like a wrestler.

During Northern Ireland's nine years of terrorism this nursing sister—a British colloquialism meaning senior nurse—has held more than a few mangled limbs while surgeons fought to save the lives of bomb, gunshot and fire victims. The Queen has recognized the skill of this Irish Catholic colleen and made her a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

The Royal Academy of Nursing has paid tribute to her front-line cool by making her chairman of its Accident and Emergency Room Forum.

The casualty room staff at Royal Victoria Hospital speaks of her skill and humor, student nurses flock to her lectures, and one ambulance driver who has seen it all calls her "one tough cookie but a great lady."

At 47 and with no immediate family nearby, Sister Kate spends most of her time working, with time off for sleep and some television "and maybe a trashy book, some kind of silly novel." Once in a while there is a day to get away from it all, walking the wild and windy Northern Ireland coastline.

Her savings go toward an occasional visit to the families of her 20 first cousins living in the Boston area. She always takes along her high school football jersey to wear when she roughhouses with the kids. "I love it here, we have such a good team at this hospital," she says. "People say to me 'Why do you stick with it?' But I don't see why all the decent people should have to leave just because of a violent few. This is my home. I was born here, and I'm not afraid to live here."

Royal Victoria Hospital is a concrete octopus with glass tentacles splayed over acres of barricaded no man's land dividing Roman Catholic and

Home and Family

Rev Christensen Citizen Family Editor

Protestant strongholds at the top of Falls Road, the neighborhood where Kate O'Hanlon was raised.

Its formal entrance is brooded over by a statue of Queen Victoria dressed in grime. Inside it has gained renown for treating burn and blast victims. Its reputation attracts specialists from dozens of countries, including Rhodesia and South Africa, to watch new techniques for deal-

ing with trauma cases.

Through all the internal warfare which everyone in Northern Ireland calls "the troubles," Sister Kate has listened for the insistent claxons which have become Belfast's anthem—those ambulance sirens heralding more mutilation on her sterile doorstep.

Stationed at the swinging doors leading to the underground driveway, Sister Kate makes the first instant medi-

cal judgments on casualty cases without, she says, moral judgment.

"The minute those people come through the door they cease to be instigator or victim. They become patients, and the ones who need treatment the most get the highest priority."

She says her sense of humor and love of a joke, plus years of seasoning and training, help her cope with the pressure.

"I keep calm. If I lose my head, then everyone else around me is going to lose theirs. We've had up to 150 people in shock come through those doors in an hour. This isn't a job where you can flap about and say 'Oh Dear, oh dear.'"

'BEAUTY FROM ABOVE'

Christian model succeeds

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Every day a tall, statuesque blonde passed the doorman at the St. Paul Hotel as she fetched rolls and coffee for the other saleswomen at a nearby store.

And almost every day, the doorman said: "What are you doing in St. Paul? You should go to Hollywood and become a star."

Pamela Norman took his advice. Today her name may not be in lights but her face has been on everything from fashion magazine covers to oil commercials.

Besides her modelling successes, she has acquired a husband in gospel rock singer Larry Norman and has become deeply involved in Christian pursuits.

Mrs. Norman also teaches

"Christian charm" to young women and is currently writing a book that will be titled Beauty from Above.

"I think as Christians we should look as good as we can," she said. "There's no reason to look dowdy."

At 28, she says she has about three years of modelling left. Then she plans to devote more time to the charm school.

"I teach what they would learn in an average John Robert Powers course as well as the things girls have to learn to deal with—like anger and frustration," she said. Her 10-week course costs about \$100.

Although she has had "sev-

eral" movie parts offered, Mrs. Norman turned them down when nude scenes were later added.

"God always seems to open the door to something else," she said of her success in finding work.

She played the lead in Just Last Summer, a Christian film that is shown mostly at colleges and churches.

Mrs. Norman said she continued to work with a Bible study group she started with her husband in the living room of their Beverly Hills home. The classes, which outgrew their apartment, were moved to the beach, and at one time involved about 2,000 young people.

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Dear Ann Landers: Do you believe in astrology? I have been following my horoscope in the paper for a long time and it seems like they really hit it on the head a lot of days.

I have some very intelligent friends who wouldn't make a move without consulting their astrologers. These people aren't dummies. They are bank presidents, lawyers, doctors and women executives. Please give me your frank opinion, Ann. Is there anything to this horoscope stuff? — Gemini

Dear Gem: I have never paid a great deal of attention to my horoscope but when your letter arrived I decided to check it out. Since I was born on July 4th, I am a Cancer. My horoscope reading for today was as follows:

CANCER (June 22-July 21): You are sympathetic and understanding about other people's problems. They think you are a sucker. You are always putting things off. That's why you'll never make anything of yourself. Most welfare recipients are Cancer people.

Dear Ann Landers: Me, a guy of 17 writing to you. I can't believe it. But I've been hit with a problem I can't handle and maybe you can help.

I am in love with a girl who is 16. She is great to be with and I just can't see myself going with anyone else.

Ann Landers
sex before — with five other guys to be exact — and has admitted she was "loose" with a few others. I've been involved with several chicks before this one, so I should be able to forgive her and forget about her past. But somehow I just can't.

Is alcoholism ruining your life? Know the danger signals and what to do. Read the booklet, "Alcoholism — Hope and Help," by Ann Landers.

This is the first time I have ever been in love and I know it's the same with her, but I can't erase those other guys from my mind. If I break off I'm going to be heartsick, but I think I have to do it. Please help me. — Haunted By The Past.

Dear Haunted: Do what you have to do and see how it goes. Maybe you'll meet someone you like as well — or better. If not, you just might get a different perspective and decide you want this girl after all. My advice is to split and see where it goes from there.

Enclose 50 cents in coin with your request and a long, stamped, self-addressed envelope to Ann Landers, P.O. Box 11995, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

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