

**Interview with Linda Grubish**

**Interviewed by Kathryn Brewer**

**Interviewed on July 16, 1999  
at the offices of Minnesota Women's Press, Inc.  
St. Paul, Minnesota**

**KB:** Linda, could you briefly describe...give me an overview of what you've done with Minnesota Women's Press?

**LG:** Sure, I started here in January of 1992 as a Sales Representative. I worked as a Sales Representative until 1994. At that time, my job was split in half to be half sales, half marketing. So for about two years I did marketing for the Minnesota Women's Press, which included the tenth anniversary celebration--getting that publicized, making contacts in the community, doing advertisements for the paper, for the business in general. Then, about two or three years ago I went back to full-time sales, and that's what I've been doing since then.

**KB:** Do you like that sales or the marketing better?

**LG:** I like them both, and it's fine to do either one.

**KB:** Can you tell me what it's like to sell ads for the Minnesota Women's Press? Just talk a little bit about that.

**LG:** Sure. It's exciting. It's a creative job. It can be very stressful, at times. Clients can be extremely demanding. It's, I think, very different to sell ads for this paper than it would be to sell for many other papers, general papers out there--specifically because clients who come to us expect a lot more because we are the "Women's Press". They view us as a friend, and something they can really trust, and that if their ads don't work for them it's almost like a betrayal for them. You can't always guarantee that in an advertising situation, because maybe their product is not something that's really going to fit with the client base.

**KB:** In other words, they expect customers to be delivered? That's the kind of disappointment they might have?

**LG:** Kind of. Sometimes it's really true. It's been an exercise in learning how to be very specific with people about how I think this might work for them, and really know, from a marketing point of view, how to sell an advertisement to a client that I think is going to work for them. ...Trying to get a lot of information from them about their business and their business goals and their general marketing plan--who they're really out there

looking for. We work with so many small businesses that they don't always take the time to think about that. They are the expert of their legal practice or their medical practice or their massage therapy business. They're not the expert on how to market it. They can really start to depend on us at the "Women's Press" to provide that for them--especially in this paper. And from my viewpoint, we need to provide that for them for their ads to work here, and it's really good customer service in general. They tend to expect that, because we are the "Women's Press".

**KB:** Is this the only advertising outlet for many of the customers?

**LG:** For many of them, because we deal with so many small businesses and they can't afford to do a lot. If they do something, they usually pick us.

**KB:** Where else might they go, just out of curiosity?

**LG:** Let's see...some of our competitors--for our bigger clients--Minnesota Parent is...was, not necessarily out there anymore. It was just sold. But that was a big competitor because our demographics are quite similar as far as numbers of women, so if the ad agency was looking to reach women, they would choose between us or Minnesota Parent. If it's a small, woman-owned business, we are pretty much the only thing out there for them, if they're looking specifically to find women. We are the only women's newspaper/directory in the five-state area.

**KB:** Do you sell for both the Directory and the paper?

**LG:** Right. Local newspapers are sometimes a competitor for us like the "Villager" or the "Gazette" or the "Bugle", but their distribution bases are so much smaller than ours. Sometimes if a person is trying to choose between the two, they'll go with one of the local newspapers, because their rates are quite a bit less, That's how we base our rates--how many people we reach. So, does that answer your question?

**KB:** Yes, absolutely. You talked about the fact that it is an exciting thing to do. Tell me a couple stories that would suggest that this is exciting? Why do you say that?

**LG:** It's exciting when you can talk with a client, really get down to the bones of their business--create an ad that I really think is going to work for them, and have them place it, and it works. That's the exciting part. The whole process there is what's really exciting.

**KB:** And how does it get stressful? ...Which is another thing that you described.

**LG:** It gets stressful when people expect you to be at their beck and call and you can't be. You do tend to develop a real relationship with your client and they expect a lot out of you--that they are your only client. I can't always be that for them as much as I'd like to. Sometimes that's stressful. And then it gets stressful when so many people--like this time of year when the Directory is coming to a deadline--there's so many more people coming

and calling and wanting something that we need to provide for them. That's how it gets stressful. It can get stressful when people decide not to pay their bills, if you need to call them about that. And sometimes people are just really rude because you're a customer service person, and they can just be downright nasty. People tend to beat up on salespeople and sometimes that does get stressful. It doesn't happen often, but that does happen here as well.

**KB:** It's interesting to think that they expect more from you because it's the "Women's Press", but don't always treat you in a way that would be...

**LG:** It is. On a personal level that gets hard because with that person that may be treating you that way at this particular moment, you've probably developed a relationship with them, and worked really hard for their business. It's an exercise to keep everything on a business level and not take it to heart.

**KB:** Is it different now than when you started? Talk about those differences.

**LG:** When I started, let's see, the office was about a quarter of the size that it is right now. There were two full-time sales people and one half-time sales person and we pretty much all sat in the same room. We just had burlap dividers between us.

No computer, so we kept all of our notes--all of our client information--in these huge notebooks. It was really difficult to keep it all organized. Nothing was computerized. There were two computers in the whole office and we had to schedule our time on a computer to do our letters every day. So each one of us would get like an hour or half an hour or something like that at the end of the day to do our letters.

There were times when I would sit in my little cubicle, and I would listen to Mollie [Hoben; Co-founder and Co-publisher] make phone calls to our distributor or our printer--somebody like that--and tell them, "Well, you know, we can't pay this month, but I think we'll be able to pay you next month." Little things like that. Nothing ever worked. Our copy machine never worked. It was old and needed to be replaced. We didn't have the money to do that, so that was different.

**KB:** Did you think the place was going to survive?

**LG:** I never worried about that. I don't know if it was Mollie and her presence that made that all okay or what, but it wasn't like that for very long when I was here. It was only like that for about the first year, year and a half. And then, we made a profit the first year that I was here and things just really escalated up from there.

It was only another couple of years before we had computers and all of the sales people had their own offices. So you could actually go into an office, shut the door and be able to hear yourself talk on the phone--that had been really hard. Being able to have all of our information on the computer made it so that we could deal with that much more, that

many more people--clients. It was a smart thing to do at the time for the "Women's Press", because they needed to grow. The only way that the sales people could help them grow was to be able to handle more people, more efficiently. The computers made a huge difference.

**KB:** Did you get some sort of sales management program for the computers then, or did you develop your own way of handling your customers?

**LG:** When we finally got computers, I had brought my computer from home about six months before that. I finally said, "We aren't using my computer at home. I can't deal with this anymore. I'm going to make a database and put all my stuff in there. If you don't like it, well that's tough. This is what I need to do to survive, otherwise I'm going to go insane."

**KB:** How many customers might you have had on that database when you first did that?

**LG:** When I first did that, I probably had fifteen hundred people.

**KB:** Oohhh! Are you serious?

**LG:** Yeah. We had like two thousand clients or more. And we probably have contact every year with most of them, fifteen hundred to two thousand.

**KB:** I didn't expect it to be that much.

**LG:** Yeah. I would say that there was probably that many people out there on my database that were claimed as mine, but there was no way that I could physically deal with all of those people. There is a master list, which we recently changed to the 'mother list' to give a more womanly take on it. [laughter] But there was that piece already out there in one of the two computers that we had, so it was easy enough to pull my accounts off of that, so I'd have general information to put into a database. So I created a database where I could keep all of my information. It's the same database that we use right now.

**KB:** Really? Well that was wonderful, so you didn't have to go out and buy anything? You were able to...

**LG:** We just made it work in the Microsoft Works system that we had. That's what we've been using since.

**KB:** Were there any differences in interacting with your customers back in those days? That was early 1990s, so that was awhile back.

**LG:** For me there was a big difference. I hadn't been doing sales for that long. In fact, this was my second sales job. I had a degree in advertising and marketing in journalism, so I had the tools to be able to work with a person, but I didn't have necessarily have the

get up and go, or the courage always to cold call people--which has changed significantly. It doesn't bother me to pick up the phone and make a cold call now. So that was different. It was a lot of getting used to that.

**KB:** How about the customers? Did they react the same to the Minnesota Women's Press as they do today?

**LG:** Yeah, in most respects.... I think that our reputation has grown and we've become better, so that we have that many more clients coming to us, which is really nice. We don't have to make the cold calls as much. We have a lot of inquiries that come in. As far as people and their attitudes, I think it's pretty much the same, although they don't view us as quite as grassroots as we were then.

As we've grown, they'll see us as more professional. I can't even tell you how I think I know that, but I do know that. We're getting a different caliber of client. We're not always getting the woman who's starting her own business, selling women's menstrual products. [laughter] We're getting more ad agency things--things that come from an agency like the hospitals. As sales people, we've all gotten better about approaching those people and knowing how to approach those people with a concise plan about why this paper should work better for them. Does that answer?

**KB:** Yeah. It does. I've heard it talked about on several of these interviews...this whole idea of the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval. ....That if, in fact, somebody places an ad in the Minnesota Women's Press in some way that somehow there's this almost guarantee that goes with it. Do you have any thoughts on that topic? Have you observed that?

**LG:** Oh, definitely. ...Especially with our smaller clients. If they spend their money with the "Women's Press", they expect to be able to get that back, which you can't always guarantee in an advertising situation. I'm sure that they would go to other papers with that same attitude, but it's different I think with us, because we're women dealing with women. We're the "Women's Press", who is out there fighting for women. We're championing women's rights, and we're really pushing the edge on many topics as far as women's rights. We still are, which is amazing. So, they expect that we're never going to deceive them. Even though they understand the fact that they aren't going to get a return, because maybe their business doesn't fit quite right or just advertising in general, they still expect us to not betray them.

**KB:** Do you ever hear from customers who try one of your advertisers and become disappointed in the advertisers and then call back and say, "Well wait a minute..."

**LG:** We get that a lot.

**KB:** So, are you brought in on that case?

**LG:** We usually are notified of it. There's really not a lot we can do about it. That is a hard situation to be in, because it's one person's word against the other and without any concrete anything, I can't go to my advertiser and say, "Well, we heard from so-and-so that this mechanic was really bad at last months visit, so therefore I'm canceling your advertising." We can't run a business like that.

**KB:** What do you do?

**LG:** We don't do anything, really. We pretty much tell the people who call that that was really nice. We'll notify the appropriate people. Thank you for letting us know. That's about all we can do. In some ways, I'm sure that we do take it to heart more than I'm leading on, because if that person, that advertiser somehow becomes behind in their payments or something happens with that relationship, we are more likely just to go ahead and cancel them. ...If we've heard complaints from readers.

**KB:** Now, is it true? Do readers complain to other forms of media about people that run ads in them?

**LG:** That I can't answer with any...

**KB:** Isn't it interesting? I wonder whether there's a difference there....

**LG:** I would expect there is a difference. They probably expect to find not such great things in the Star Tribune because it's a very general, broad, wide open audience.

**KB:** ...and lacks that seal of approval.

**LG:** Lacks that seal of approval. They don't expect to ever see weight loss ads in our newspaper, even if it's a fitness trainer who's doing it all correctly for all the right reasons. Not to be the sexy woman, but to have a stronger body and be healthy. They still don't expect to see those ads in our paper, and we do get flack about some of that kind of thing.

**KB:** Talk more about that. That's such a fascinating topic. So have you turned down an ad because it's inappropriate for the Minnesota Women's Press?

**LG:** Yes.

**KB:** Can you describe what those ads might look like?

**LG:** I turned down a lyposuction ad about a year ago.

**KB:** Did you talk to somebody about that or just make the executive decision...?

**LG:** I talked to Mollie about it. That would be her final decision. I probably would have run with the ad, because the client was reputable, what they were saying was not

derogatory. The only thing that was a little off-key was the fact that they were showing was the backside of a woman, and where they were going to liposuction. We've run other things that were similar, but I think the graphic element of that ad was just too much. ....Pushed us over the edge.

**KB:** Any others?

**LG:** We don't take ads from a lot of tier companies, multi-level companies. We don't take ads from them, for the most part, unless they prepay us. We're very cautious about that.

**KB:** I don't understand. A tier...?

**LG:** You know, like an Amway situation. There's a ton of those out there. Amway's a reputable company, Mary Kay's a reputable company--there's a lot of reputable ones out there, but there's a lot of not so reputable ones out there. Somebody that calls up and wants to place an employment ad, that you're going to earn \$6,000 a week. We're not going to run that. We're going to tell them we don't take those kind of ads. We pretty much make all of those tier companies prepay their ads, which we don't necessarily do with other clients, because they're so likely to go out of business.

**KB:** So that's a business reason as opposed to something to do with a value system?

**LG:** I think it has to do with both. We don't want to deceive our clients with some of those that promise way more money than you would probably ever really make. We want to make sure that our readers aren't being deceived by something like that. That's one of the reasons we turn down those ads, and the other is a business reason. We want to make sure we get paid for what we have in there.

**KB:** Do you have, then, an overall philosophy about what advertising at the Minnesota Women's Press should be? ....Like the content of the advertising. Or is it kind of on a case by case basis?

**LG:** It's really on a case by case basis. Somebody else could come in and advertise a cellulite reduction pill, and they could do it in a very respectful manner, and that would be okay.

**KB:** Has that changed? Have you noticed a difference in ads that are acceptable over the time of your tenure, this last seven years?

**LG:** I think our ads are pretty much the same as far as content. We have a lot of ads from health care professionals, a lot of service-oriented businesses as opposed to retail. We don't have a lot of retail advertising and that's always been true.

**KB:** Now do you think that's because of the nature of the paper or that you don't pursue it or what?

**LG:** I think it's the nature of the paper. I think retail businesses would prefer to go in either a daily or a weekly newspaper, because their turnaround time's a lot [faster]. Most of the time they're advertising a sale, and that's why I don't think we get much retail business. We don't get as much restaurant business as we used to either, but then we don't pursue that very often, either, because too many restaurants have not paid us.

**KB:** I am interested...do you consider yourself a feminist?

**LG:** Yes.

**KB:** Do you think it's important to be a feminist to sell ads at the Minnesota Women's Press?

**LG:** I think you definitely need to agree with the philosophy of the newspaper and the organization, which is feminist. Yes.

**KB:** Have you ever had, without mentioning any names, of course, people who are not feminists work in the sales area...that you can think of?

**LG:** I don't think there ever has been. I think people know if you're going to come and work at the "Women's Press", you need to know what you're getting into. We're not going to have a right-wing fundamentalist even apply. ...At least we hope we don't.

**KB:** What do you think is the best part of your job?

**LG:** All the people that I work with. I like that the best.

**KB:** Talk about that a little. What aspects of the people that you work with?

**LG:** Maybe it's because we're all feminists and we all have the same ideas. [laughter]

**KB:** I laugh but it's probably...

**LG:** It's true, because there are not all that many people out there that you can openly talk about feminist issues with. We're a very different dynamic organization with women in it. I can't even give you another example, but we're different in how we work with each other. We work really hard on communicating properly with one another and not being catty, or backstabbing, or anything like that. Especially in the sales department that could come up because people could be trying to steal accounts. Oh, just all kinds of yucky stuff could happen.

I really haven't seen a whole lot of that here, ever. Right now, there's none of that. We are *so* a team--the whole sales staff, the production staff, management--everything is working like a well-oiled machine right now. That hasn't always been the case. There's always personality conflicts, but it's not like any other office situation that I can think of having walked into. Where it's a group of women and they're trying to work with each other,

there's usually a lot of talk behind one another's back and that sort of thing. There's none of that here. There's none of that 'ishy' attitude. I think it's because management is so respectful to everyone, and everyone tries to be respectful, and the feminist philosophy.

**KB:** Let's talk about that. What do you think are the most important values of the Minnesota Women's Press?

**LG:** Hmmm. [pause]

**KB:** Of the company?

**LG:** From what we do as an organization or from internal aspects?

**KB:** I think it can be either. It can be either. What's most important to this company in terms of a guiding philosophy? Maybe that's a better way to put it.

**LG:** Maybe a guiding force... I think Mollie and Glenda [Martin; Co-founder and Co-publisher] are the most important pieces of the company, and think of the company as people. [pause] That's a difficult question for me to answer because there's so much that's important.

**KB:** You talked earlier about issues such as respect and communication?

**LG:** Internally, those are the most important factors. Respect.... Management's always willing to listen. They're willing to work with your life situations to make your job and your home life work well together. They value their employees and they tell you that. You never feel like you've done a really good job, and had no one say, "Good for you." That's not something that would ever happen. We're praised and stroked and told we're really wonderful and it's a very affirming place to be. So internally, those are the most important pieces.

Externally, our outreach is extremely important. That's not a philosophy, but trying to get to other women and sharing this positive attitude and this positiveness about women. Center for Feminist Business--not right now maybe because it's smaller--but on a bigger scope it going to be a really *big* thing for us in sharing the way that we work internally with other places.

**KB:** ....Spreading the word, so to speak.

**LG:** Well, spreading the feeling....spreading the positiveness....spreading the respect.

**KB:** Is there anything that these values may have prevented the Minnesota Women's Press from doing that would have been helpful? ...To make it more profitable, for example?

**LG:** We could've been much more profitable had we not stuck quite so close to our values.

**KB:** Can you give me some examples of that?

**LG:** If we would have accepted different types of advertising. If we would have pursued different types of advertising. Maybe this is why we don't get a lot of retail advertising. We don't pursue the fashion industry at all. We aren't a typical women's publication where it's a lot of fluffy stuff--a lot of how to do your hair this season, or what's the 'in' color, or how to give yourself a manicure. Had we subscribed to more of that, I think we could've been more a flash in the pan--more profitable--and then we would have gone away.

**KB:** Okay, so we've talked a little bit about issues of profitability, had you not had the value system. How about employees? If the company did not have the value system that it does..?. Are these feminist values that we've been talking about with regard to the Minnesota Women's Press? Maybe that's the best way of putting it....

**LG:** It depends on what your definition of feminism is.

**KB:** That's true.

**LG:** In my definition, yes.

**KB:** Okay. So this is a feminist organization, then. Why don't you give me a working definition of feminist organization, if you could.

**LG:** It's going to be different for every woman that you talk to. In my personal opinion, it has to be a place where a woman can come to work and feel secure, feel respected, have affirmations in her work, be proud of her work and be encouraged.

**KB:** Is there any differences in terms of interacting with customers or suppliers that you could see in a feminist organization? ...And when I say feminist organization I guess I'm asking you to talk about Minnesota Women's Press, because it's a live example of a feminist organization...

**LG:** From a feminist point of view, from a human point of view, we aren't going to go out a try to sell somebody a huge ad, one or two times, to get their money. We're going to take the time with the client. ....Sit down and say, "Okay, what is it that really is going to work for you?" And come up with a plan for them.

So many other places will just want the quick sale. There's lots of times when a client will call up and say, "I just want to do one ad, and I want to test it. I want to do a bigger one because I know I need to do that, because if I'm going to test it, I have to have a

presence there." When really, you need to sit down and figure out what overall is going to work for them, because one ad is not going to do it.

**KB:** So that education process you talked about and...

**LG:** Yes. So from a feminist point of view, we're not out there just to take these people's money. Yes, we need their money to survive, but the only way we know that we're going to build a relationship with them is to do a good job for them and not just be in it for the money. I don't think any of us are just in it for the money when we're out there talking to a client.

**KB:** Is that a characteristic, do you think? ...Not being in it for just the money.

**LG:** Yes. Oh, definitely.

**KB:** So there's a set of values or something that goes beyond the money.

**LG:** I know it is, because other sales places you would be in it for the money or else you would lose your job. You would have a sales quota that you would have to make and it wouldn't matter to them if it was the right or the wrong thing to do for the client. They would want you to make your dollar quota for the week.

**KB:** You don't have a sales quota? You've never had a sales quota?

**LG:** No.

**KB:** How are you measured, then?

**LG:** How are we measured? That's a good question for Kathy [Magnusson; General Manager]. I don't know. We're measured on...I don't know. [laughter] You know what, I don't know what we're measured on. We've always just grown since I've been here. ....A little bit every year.

**KB:** Now do you think that there's a particular way of assigning jobs and tasks within the company that fits in with its value system?

**LG:** One of Glenda's things that I've heard her say a million times is, "If you're not happy with what you're doing right now, we'll try to find something else within the organization that will make you happy." [pause] So does that answer your question?

**KB:** Yeah.

**LG:** There's a lot of freedom in this place, too. People need that to succeed.

**KB:** Freedom of...? Doing particular jobs? ...Or freedom of structuring the job in a way that works for them?

**LG:** Freedom in structuring the job in a way that works for them.

**KB:** How about making decisions? Is there a particular feminist bent to that that you see within this organization, the way decisions are made?

**LG:** A feminist bent to that.... Well, yes. I think that we, for the most part, make a lot of our decisions as a group--or at least the initial directions that the company is going to go in as a group. We do Feminist Forum once every couple of weeks. If Mollie and Glenda come up with an idea, they will typically--and Kathy--they will typically run it past the group just to get feedback from everyone. It's really important that somebody--one person or two people or three people--have the final say on whatever happens. Otherwise nothing would get done.

**KB:** Do you have some experience with that?

**LG:** Well, when I was doing the marketing, it was a marketing committee that I headed up. It was almost impossible to get anything done, because everybody has their own ideas. It's great that everybody has their own ideas, but sometimes it can be taken too far. If that person has this one particular idea, they think it's really going to happen and they will get very upset if it doesn't. I think that's been a struggle within the company in general....that somebody needs to be established as the person who makes the final decision. At this point, I think they've finally done that. Everybody understands we'll all get to give input, but somebody else is going to make the final decision and that's just the way it's going to be.

**KB:** So is that feminist do you think?

**LG:** It is very feminist in that you're getting everybody's input, but in order to get anything done, somebody's going to have to make the decision and make it move forward. I don't think, if it wasn't a feminist organization, we'd even be asked. I think that's part of the respect and the communication issue.

**KB:** Some of this might be just a little repetitive. In terms of generating revenues, are there things specific to the value system of the Minnesota Women's Press that shape it in terms of the way it generates revenues? We kind of talked about that a little already.

**LG:** ...We're not going to just go in to get a quick sale. We're going to go in to build relationships. In the long run, it will be profitable for us, but it will be over the long term, not just this week. We've become a little less circular in how we do things as far as generating our revenue, in that we have a lot more structure in the business end of it--in the accounts payable department, in the collections department--than we did when I first started.

**KB:** Talk about that.

**LG:** When I first started, there was a half-time accounts payable/accounts receivable person. Norma [Olson; Systems and production coordinator] I think did some of that. It's grown into a whole department where Norma, Sue [Dahlen; accounting and subscriptions] and Sarah all will do that.

Sarah does collections, which is a huge piece of it. When I first started no one did collections. Mollie did collections once in awhile. And Mollie, you know, she doesn't have the sternest personality in the world. I mean she does and she doesn't. But, no one wanted to stay on top of that because it was an icky part of the business. I'm going to have to call this person that we've considered a friend and make sure they pay us. Kathy made a big difference with this, too. "We've gotta get paid. We've gotta get paid what we're worth. And we have to price our products appropriately. And we can't be ashamed of our prices." The fact that Kathy came in and made sure that we were going to have a ten per cent profit on what we did. That Sarah is doing collections has made a big difference. I would see those two pieces as being more standard in industry and less feminist. We needed to make those to make our business work.

**KB:** Any other areas like that that you can think of that have changed since you started?

**LG:** Well when I was talking about one person making the final decision. That has changed. It used to be more that the group would make the decision and everybody had a real personal piece in that, and that needed to change, too. We needed to know that everybody could give input, but that one person is going to make that final decision.

**KB:** What about jobs themselves? Has there been any change over the last seven years in the way jobs are structured?

**LG:** The sales department, I think, has become more loosely structured than it was in the past.

**KB:** Really? That's interesting.

**LG:** And it has worked really well. I don't know what I want to say here. [pause] Maybe the time that gets spent, it's more understood that sales people maybe aren't going to work the traditional hours that other people are...that everybody has a lifestyle that they have to accommodate. Because we're on commission, it's easier to allow that department to be a little bit looser. That has really been a good thing for the company, because if you have happier sales people you're going to have more sales. The whole thing about sales is to motivate your salesperson to go out there and talk to people and get on the phone. So that loose structure is much better.

It used to be that we had to be here on the dot at 8:30, at least it was implied that you needed to be here early in the morning until late at night. You needed to look really, really busy, and make it look really hard while you're here. We went through a lot of

sales people that way. Now that things are a little bit looser, we can make more decisions on our own about what happens with our clients. It's much better. ....Much, much better.

**KB:** ....And have you noticed that loosening up in other areas of the organization, or has it tightened up?

**LG:** I don't think it's tightened up and I guess I don't really know. I don't hear from that many other divisions of the company.

**KB:** Do you interact much with the other divisions of the company?

**LG:** Oh, yes....a lot. I haven't heard anybody complaining about anything for a really long time. [laughter] So my assumption is everybody's pretty happy, and I guess that somehow whatever shifts have been made, people are happy--especially in production. That was a really a hard area for us for a really long time. We went through a lot of production staff in seven years that have been unhappy. If production doesn't work, sales don't work. We don't make any money. So whatever shift has happened there, I'm not sure what it is, has made a big difference.

**KB:** You talked earlier about the fact that there are so many different kinds of feminisms--and I know sometimes when you get a bunch of different feminists together you can have a lot of conflict. How have these different types of feminisms been reconciled, do you think, in the Minnesota Women's Press? Because I assume they've been successful at doing it and that you have been successful in doing it. How do you think that's happened? Or is there kind of a more common form of feminism at the Minnesota Women's Press?

**LG:** No. I think each person has their own individual form of feminism. We have common ground. Everyone has common ground on some level of the feminist philosophy. I think it's the idea that it's okay to have your own definition of it, that has been what has made all these different ideas work. If Mollie and Glenda came in and said, "Alright, everybody has to be militant..." "....Hate men," like Susan said in a meeting one day, "and date only women and have no children." Then, obviously that's not going to work. Somebody might have that view of a feminist....somebody who doesn't know what feminism is would have that view.

The other thing that could be a real trigger is the abortion issue. There's common ground on that, but everybody I think has their own definition of what's okay with that. It's alright that everybody has that. So it's that acceptance, that respect level for your co-worker that makes it all work. That is a really big thing. Everybody's extremely respectful of everyone else and accepting of their ideas.

**KB:** ...and differences between.

**LG:** And differences between lifestyle and ideas and opinions and everything you could think of.

**KB:** I'm interested in getting your sense of the impact of the Minnesota Women's Press. You've worked here a long time. You've been an observer, I presume. Were you familiar with the "Press" before you started working here? Were you a reader?

**LG:** I was a reader, but not for a very long time.

**KB:** Okay. So you've been a reader for probably eight years. I'm assuming you've continued to read it now that you work here. [laughter] Can you talk a little bit about the impact of the Minnesota Women's Press over the time of your observation, participation? And think about it either narrowly or broadly. Whatever seems to make most sense to you. If you think basically what you're most comfortable talking about is the impact on yourself, that's okay. If you are comfortable talking about your impact on an advertiser that you know of, or perhaps a community of women at large. Can you just think about that a little bit and talk about what you think some of the most important effects of the Minnesota Women's Press have been?

**LG:** I think I can only answer that personally, because there's too many clients to list--people that I could have had an impact on, or that we could have had an impact on. Women at large....it's such a nebulous [thing]. Personally, I've grown up an awful lot working here. I've had a lot of support for a lot of life situations from this place. I've become a much stronger woman.

**KB:** Have you become a stronger feminist, do you think?

**LG:** Yes, I guess you could say that. I don't have a real great definition of feminism in my own mind. I could take pieces from so many different places, and yet, everything [unclear]. I mean I'm a mother of two. I'm married. I live in the suburbs, you know? I'm everything that a right-wing Christian fundamentalist is. [laughter] It has impacted the way that I'm raising my son, which is a good thing. It's impacted my relationship with my husband--maybe he doesn't like that very much, but that's just too bad. [laughter] I'm not answering your question...

**KB:** Yes you are. You're doing a good job.

**LG:** I can't really think of anything else I could say about that.

**KB:** What I'd like to have you think about are some stories that you can tell me about--experiences at the Minnesota Women's Press. If you were just going to try to come up with a story that you thought was a funny experience or a rewarding experience or a happy experience or a weird experience. Something that has happened either in terms of working here at the Minnesota Women's Press, or in terms of working with your clients out there in the world, that you think is worth saving for posterity as a part of the history of the Minnesota Women's Press.

**LG:** I remember when I first started working here--and I didn't know Mollie at all. [laughter] She has a real thing about machines, the copy machine that never worked especially. She would stand out there, and yell at that copy machine, and kick it. I used to think to myself, "My God. If she treats that machine that way, what's she going to be like if we ever have a run-in on a personal level?" [laughter] I thought that she was just someone to be feared.

**KB:** A tough person.

**LG:** ....And she's a very strong woman, but she would never abuse anybody. [laughter] So that's sort of funny. I don't know. What else has happened around here? It's funny how even though you have certain people stay forever, and certain people move on, it really doesn't matter who comes in. I think it's because of Kathy and the interview process, and who we hire--it always flows and feels like one big family. ....Almost more than my own family does in a lot of ways. That's interesting. [pause]

**KB:** How about with customers or clients?

**LG:** Customers or clients? Well, I could tell you a couple of yucky stories, but they're not really worth saving. I can't think of anything right now, Kathryn. I really can't.

**KB:** Okay, that's fine. That's fine. Anything else that you think ought to be recorded here? Questions that I should have asked that I didn't ask, or things that you've thought about that ought to just somehow become part of the record in some way about the Minnesota Women's Press.

**LG:** You've been very thorough.

**KB:** Okay. Thank you. Thank you so much.

(break in recording)

**KB:** We were just visiting about the difficulties in talking about feminism and coming up with a definition, and you were just kind of talking about that a little. Why don't you...?

**LG:** Kathryn had asked if there were things that could be changed about the employee interviews to make them different or easier or something. ....Maybe to have employees think about their definition of feminism, because I really struggled with that. I had said that I really think about my definition of feminism almost in terms of a person; that is the epitome of Glenda and everything that she is and does. She is feminism.

**KB:** Okay, thank you very much.

(break in recording)

**LG:** Okay, the recorder's back on. It's going to be interesting... Not have Glenda and all of her knowledge, and to not have Mollie and all of her knowledge about feminism, I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. The [unclear] of the company will change a bit.

**KB:** So when you think of the company, you think of it always as a feminist organization, then? Does that permeate the organization?

**LG:** It really does. When I think of it in terms of Mollie and Glenda, I always think of it as a feminist organization.

**KB:** And when you think of it in terms of specific jobs or something, do you not always...?

**LG:** Not always. It can become much more general business at that point.

**KB:** Interesting...

**LG:** What makes it a feminist organization with Mollie and Glenda is the feminist theory pieces that we have in feminist forum. The personal time that you spend with Mollie and Glenda about learning the ways of women. That's my own definition of it. I'm sure they'll be able to pass that on to someone else, but it will be a big challenge. I just have to throw Cynthia [Scott; editor] in there, too, because she's an extremely strong force in this place. And she has obviously not been around as much as Mollie and Glenda, but her vision of what should go into the paper to make it feminist, and to make it for women, and make it important in the community is extremely important. But really, Mollie and Glenda....they hold us all together.

**KB:** Thank you.