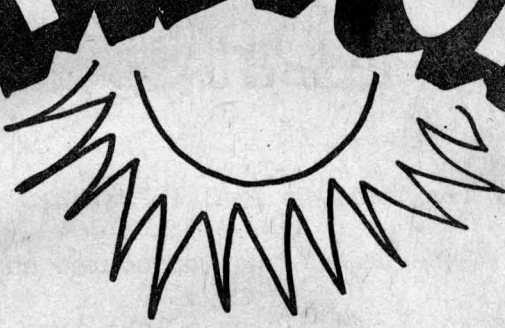


PRAIRIE WOMAN



A NEWSLETTER OF SASKATOON WOMENS LIBERATION AUG/SEPT-79



EDITORIAL

"Hello. Yes, this is Prairie Woman.

What? gone under? No, of course not.

What's that? It's been a long time.. oh, yes, well I see what you mean, but, well, ah, it has been a hot summer you know.

Yes, well, I'm glad you understand.

Now, what can I do for you?

You want to write an article? Super! And what's your topic?

Demise of the Women's Movement?
Don't you think that is a little premature?

No, eh? How about inaccurate and boring?

Oh, I see. You think it's a reality.

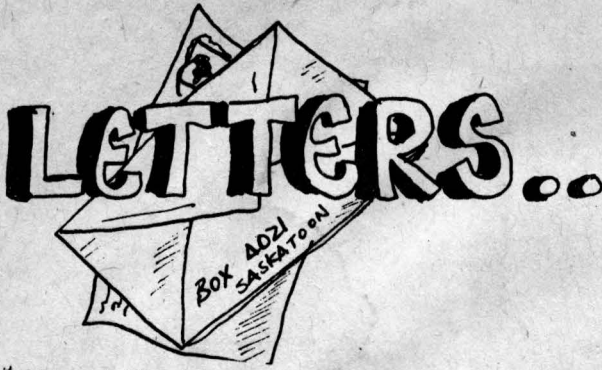
Uh-huh.
Well let me tell you what I think it is, a bunch of unadulterated bullshit.

Yeah, that's right and by the way have you heard of Saskatchewan Working Women, Herstory Collective, Women and Drug Use Society, Saskatoon Lesbian Society, Interval House, Women and Law, Saskatchewan Human Rights Association, Women's Action Collective on Health, University of Saskatchewan Women's Directorate, Women and Religion, Union Books, Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women, Rape Crisis Centre, Women's Division of the Department of Labour, Women in Society Today, and Saskatoon Women's Liberation?

No? Well, check it out."

click

Prairie Woman Collective
August 1979



Editorial note;

it has been editorial policy of Prairie Woman that only articles written by women be accepted, and that contributions from men be limited to letters. Therefore to be consistent, we are printing the following submission as a letter.

Dear Prairie Woman,

In an innovative international sharing experiment, Regina's University Co-op Daycare is setting up links with a daycare in a refugee camp near Lusaka, Zambia. This exchange program will share information and perhaps even people.

Those people living in the camp are Zimbabweans who have been forced by the war between the Patriotic Front (Zimbabwe African National Union, ZANU, and Zimbabwe African People's Union, ZAPU) and the white minority controlled Muzorewa-Smith regime to become refugees. Zimbabwe is the traditional African name for what is now known as "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia."

As of February, 1979 there were 32 expectant mothers, 440 mothers with babies and 400 other women living in the refugee camp. There were also 452 infants, 350 children aged three to five, and 90 children six or seven years old.

The basic focus of the linking project is education and solidarity. Saskatchewan people will learn more about the efforts of the Patriotic Front to regain control of their country and will also learn a new perspective on daycare and the role of women in society.

Ken Traynor, who worked as a CUSO volunteer in southern Africa, spent the last week in March in Regina as

part of a cross-country tour speaking to local groups about the situation in southern Africa and the ZAPU Patriotic Front (PF) daycare project.

"In both the present liberation struggle phase and even more importantly in the reconstruction phase following independence, all of Zimbabwe's man and woman power must be utilized," he said.

The daycare will enable women to take the necessary training to ensure they will be productive and equal in a free Zimbabwe, he said. As in Canada, women in southern Africa are fighting to shed their sexist-defined traditional roles in society. The Zimbabwean African Women's Union has been established as a women's component of ZAPU PF.

In June of this year two representatives of the Patriotic Front, Saul Ndlovu (ZAPU PF) and Fambesai Chukur (ZANU PF), visited Saskatchewan as part of a national tour. They related to Saskatchewan people concrete details of the new constitution of the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government headed by Bishop Abel Muzorewa and Ian Smith. Through 123 entrenched clauses in the constitution, the white minority which makes up only 3% of the total population, among other things retains complete control over four key areas: the Civil Service Commission; the Judiciary Commission; the Defence Commission; and the Police Service Commission.

Meanwhile, the war is continuing in Zimbabwe. The Patriotic Front now controls 75% of the rural areas of Zimbabwe. The Patriotic Front is committed to continuing the struggle until the illegal white-controlled Muzorewa-Smith regime is overthrown. The war has forced approximately 60,000 Zimbabweans to seek refuge in Zambia. Many thousands more have gone to Botswana and other 'front-line' states.

Providing for the primary needs of the refugees is a considerable problem. The Patriotic Front is taking responsibility but the economic demands



Zimbabwean refugee
camp daycare

are very large. In many camps people are able to eat only one meal a day. Although a number of international development agencies are assisting the Patriotic Front, there is need for more support.

The Patriotic Front is also establishing training programs which will enable the Zimbabwean refugees to fully participate in a free, independent Zimbabwe. CUSO is assisting in the establishment of the daycare in the refugee camp near Lusaka. It is realized that a basic precondition for women's full participation in Zimbabwean society is the provision of adequate daycares and trained daycare workers. The ZAPU PF daycare project is seen as a prototype for future daycares.

CUSO is also organizing the establishment of the international daycare link. CUSO currently works in 34 Third World nations including Zambia, Botswana, Mozambique and Tanzania in southern Africa. Both Regina and Saskatoon have active local committees.

On May 12, 1979 CUSO Regina and the University Co-op Daycare held a benefit to help express their solidarity with the Patriotic Front. This bene-

fit which featured Myrow the Magician, Rod Coglan, and Sod Hut and the Buffalo Chips raised \$1600. Other Regina organizations that contributed to the success of the benefit were: Canadians Concerned about Southern Africa; Ina's Health Store; Meika's Kitchen; Molson's Brewery; Regina Committee for World Development; University of Regina Student's Union; the Women's Action Collective on Health and Greenhouse.

In addition to education about the Zimbabwean struggle and raising funds in solidarity with the struggle, it is hoped that an exchange for staff between the two daycares can take place. Two workers from the University Co-op Daycare, Molly Barber and Mary Durham, have applied to the George Drew Memorial Trust Fund for a grant to cover the cost of a two week stay in Zambia. Molly and Mary have agreed to do follow-up work that would include presentations to interested organizations, the production of a slide-tape show and media work. If the proposal is accepted the project would get under way in October, 1979. There is also a possibility that two Zimbabwean daycare workers would return to Saskatchewan with Molly and Mary for a period of up to four weeks.

by Bill Robb



WILDERNESS
TRIPS
FOR
WOMEN

GEN. DELIVERY
WASKESIU LAKE, SASK
S0J 2Y0

The first of "Wilderness Trips for Women" took place June 8, 9, 10. Seven women, ages ranging from 25 to 56, camped to Grey Owl's cabin in Prince Albert National Park. Preparation included gathering one week ahead of time to become acquainted with each other and to practice skills on the river in Saskatoon. Most participants were novice canoe-campers but a learn-as-you-go approach sharpened the crews as time went on.

The most rewarding part of the day was after the evening meal with a day's adventure behind and a chance to share the camaraderie we had come to appreciate. The pleasant weather alternated with squalls but the singing voyageurs maintained high spirits throughout the weekend.

The group met again June 27 to view the film "Grey Owl", and to see slides and photographs that were taken during the trip.

Another canoe trip is being planned for women over 40, August 25-26 from the Clarkboro Ferry to Batoche. Response to the suggestion of trips for women has been good, and there may be

a backpacking weekend in the fall, and a snowshoe trip this winter.

There is a need in this province for opportunities that appeal to women to gain confi-

dence in both a physical and "spiritual" way; the wilderness is an ideal setting for such self-assertion. In the supportive atmosphere of other women, each person participates in her own trip, discovering and sensing new wonders in the natural world and in herself.

Wilderness Trips for Women is a private non-profit organization at the present time. So far, no attempt has been made to obtain finances from sources other than the participants. Part of the reason is to eliminate red tape, and not be forced to compromise philosophy. However, sponsorship is desirable so that women from low income families will be able to participate. The Saskatoon Region of the Community College has been very helpful in printing brochures and providing publicity.

Colleen Gerwing

As women, and as feminists, there is a lot we need to say, and lots of ways to say it. One of the strongest is through a feminist theatre. I'm interested in organizing women's theatre..... how about you? If you have ideas, scripts, enthusiasm, please give me a call soon and lets talk about it!

Sheila Crampton
1303 Coy Avenue
Saskatoon.
Phone 665-0263

Another 8's canoe trip is planned for sept 1-3. For more info, contact Colleen at above address.

6

CANADIAN FEMINIST NEWS

Women Workers & Health in Quebec

For many years the Ligue des Femmes du Quebec has been fighting for equality and rights of Quebecois and immigrant women. Today the Ligue des Femmes du Quebec (LFQ) is undertaking research into the health of women in the garment and shoemaking industry.

The objects of the project are: (1) to direct the results of this research to provincial ministers and pressure them to take action to improve working conditions of women workers, (2) to acquaint women with their rights in health protection, and (3) to make the public aware of their depressed working conditions.

(Taken from Bulletin)

Toronto

♀♀♀

300 Ontario trade union women attended the "First Women's Conference, Bargaining for Equality," sponsored by the Women's Committee of the Ontario Federation of Labour. Fight for equal pay and rights for women workers were discussed. The gathering, held April 20-22 in Toronto also voiced support for CUPW and called on the OFL to organize a conference of unionists to discuss government cutbacks.

♀♀♀

(From Kinesis)

Equal Pay - that will be the Day

After an hour-long debate in the Ontario legislature May 17, a private member's bill was passed to give women in Ontario some hope that wage equality could become a reality.

Representatives of many women's groups which form the Equal Pay Coalition Group were present to hear the debate.

In a press conference before the debate in the legislature, the Coalition had presented arguments in favor of equal pay for work of equal value.

Having been passed on a voice vote by NDP and Liberal members, it will now be considered by a legislature committee. A good deal of public pressure from women's groups will be needed for this concept to become law.

(From Kinesis)

♀♀♀

News from B.C. (From Kinesis June /79)

In Victoria, a group from the Can. Association for the Repeal of the Abortion Laws (CARAL) gathered at the Prov. Legislature on May 13 (Mother's Day) protesting against the unfair abortion laws and handing out pro-choice leaflets. The most encouraging feature of this rally was that the numbers increased from 50 one year ago to 150 pro-choicers today.

♀♀♀

A Victoria building supplies company was ordered to pay \$280 in lost wages to a woman who has refused employment because of her sex.

The Human Rights Board of Inquiry ordered Sechelt Building Supplies to pay Kathleen Grafe 2 weeks pay after the company refused to hire her because "she wasn't strong enough to do the job." According to the Board the company violated Section 8 of the Human Rights Code which covers discrimination in employment on the basis of sex.

Testimony revealed that a company representative wrote over Grafe's application form: Bitch reported us to the Human rights. He was quoted as saying "I am against fucking human rights. I don't want to have anything to do with this human rights bullshit."

♀♀♀

At the BCFW (B.C. Federation of Women) convention last November, it was decided to hold regional conferences throughout this year to assess the relevant of BCFW and its function and strategy. A regional conference was held recently in Vancouver. Groups represented included: Working Women Unite, Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion, UBC Women's Centre, Women in Focus, Vancouver Status of Women and Rape Relief. The major goal of the conference was to evaluate the history of B.C.F.W. and was attended by 180 women. Although no concrete resolutions or decision emerged, it was agreed that BCFW is still a success, having united women's groups across the province.

♀♀♀

In hospital meetings across the province in June, abortion was an election issue in some B.C. communities. Anti-abortion candidates were successful in Richmond and Powell River, capturing all the vacancies on these hospital boards. This may mean an end to abortion at these hospitals.

At the same time, pro-choice supporters of abortion also scored victories. In Langley, the anti-abortion candidates were all defeated. In Surrey, a group of women succeeded in enrolling over 2,000 pro-choice members in the hospital society.

In the end, 2 pro-choice candidates and one "pro-life" were elected to the 11-member board of trustees. The pro-choice position now has a 2 vote majority. However, the "pro-life" movement is planning action. In B.C. 3 groups have joined together in a province-wide mobilization.

The Vancouver Group, Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion (CCCA) is prepared to be a centre for information and assistance in setting up groups to deal with the "pro-life" movement.

♀♀♀

A new women's art gallery in Vancouver opened up in January of this year and has 2 specific aims: to provide a space where women-defined art can get public exposure and to be controlled by women artists. The art gallery contains graphics, paintings, photographs, weaving life-size figures and paper mache animals with feminist ideas often portrayed.

Each artist's work is on display for approximately a month and then is for sale.

♀♀♀

Women's Dreamspace, a collective, cooperative project by numerous women, will be part of a show in celebration of world unity and the year of the child, held August 1 to 16 in Vancouver. The project will involve things like contraception and birth control to UIC and all the hassles. Many women from very diverse political backgrounds have come together to work on this project.

♀♀♀

News From Regina (Briarpatch July/Aug 79)

250 Regina Marchers Oppose Nuclear Power

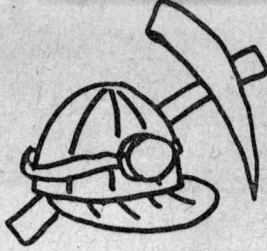
During the Great Plains Environmental Festival (the first weekend in June), 250 persons marched through downtown Regina to protest the uranium policies of the provincial government, organized by RGNNS (Regina Group for a Non-Nuclear Society). One of the speakers, Fred Knolman, environmental consultant and author of the book Nuclear Energy - the Unforgiving Technology said plans to develop a uranium refinery at Warman by Eldorado Nuclear (the federal crown corporation) will become the rallying point of opposition to nuclear power in Canada. Another speaker, Simon de Jong, recently elected MP for Regina East expressed dismay at the sale by Canada of candu reactors to South Korea and Argentina.

♀♀♀

Native Women Opposed to Uranium Development

Five native women participated in a panel discussion during the Great Plains Environmental Festival (Regina) in opposition to uranium development. One speaker, Susan Deranger, representing the Save the North Committee, said her group hopes to educate northern native people about the dangers of uranium development and to make them aware that uranium companies, not native people will benefit from this development. The committee has a newsletter and is planning to present information to people through slides and by talking to them directly about uranium development.





INCO WIVES

.... "AND ANGER MADE US STRONG...."

The Sudbury Inco strike had a major impact on the trade union movement. Arja Lane, one of an organized group of strikers' wives spoke at a meeting held in Saskatoon on June 24, sponsored by Saskatchewan Working Women about the role women played in the strike. Her tour through Saskatchewan was intended to raise money to complete a film by three independent Montreal film makers, which was shot during the strike. The film, tentatively titled *A Wives Tale*, will deal with, "the effect that organizing has had on these women's lives, the questions that they're going to have to start asking about their roles and just their effectiveness as a group of women in a situation like this." Arja Lane spoke at fund-raising events in Regina, Swift Current, Prince Albert and North Battleford as well. *Prairie Woman* is reprinting excerpts of the talk she gave in Saskatoon.

Maybe I should just fill you in a little on what led up to a lengthy strike in Sudbury. Inco had a stockpile of nickel which they claimed they could provide to their customers for up to a year, and they were using this stockpile as an excuse to lay off workers. They laid off 2200 workers in the spring of 78 which was followed by a six week shutdown in the summertime, followed by an 8½ month strike.

I think the offer Inco made to the workers was one they couldn't accept; I don't think the workers had any choice but to go out. Now that we've depleted the stockpile they had, we've got job security and we've got bargaining power the next time we go to the bargaining table--that's the most important thing.

We were out 8½ months and we've got the best contract that industrial workers have in Ontario.

Of course money wasn't the most important

thing in this case--I think it was that the workers were willing to take a stand against the company that's been exploiting Sudbury and has started exploiting third world countries--that's the main issue we won.

I've come here to tell you a success story of a different kind--it's a workers' success which doesn't happen very often. When it does, it gives you a really powerful feeling.

One of the distinct differences between this strike and a lot of strikes that happen in Canada, is that the women organized to publicly and very actively support their men and workers generally in Sudbury. And I'm one of the wives involved in a group called Wives Supporting the Strike Committee.

Most of us aren't employees of Inco, we're just wives of employees. We're very isolated from their workplace, in that we don't know what goes on. I didn't realize what the bargaining procedure was all about. We were ignorant and it really scared me. I didn't know if we should go for the union at times or if we should go for the company at times. There were very basic issues like this that weren't clear in our heads. So we thought, let's get together at least and find out. Maybe as a group we'll have more pull, and we can go and demand answers to these questions.

So that's what we did. We decided that we'll get together with other women who are facing the same problems and we'll talk about them. When you get together with a group of women, you brainstorm and you come up with all sorts of ideas.

Some of the problems that women will have organizing is that there's children involved. And who looks after the children while you go to meeting? We solved that problem by setting up babysitting co-ops which worked very effectively. We also encouraged women to bring

their children to the meetings. There's no reason why children can't be involved in this kind of a struggle--the more people you have learning about this, the stronger you'll be.

One of the things that really slowed us down for a while-- a lot of the men didn't want their wives to get involved. They didn't want them to become women's libbers. The irony of course in that was that we were organizing to support the guys, and they weren't being very supportive about supporting us. So a lot of us had to bring kids to meetings, but you learn to work around little problems like that, when there's a big multi-national like Inco intimidating everyone.

People in the community were suspicious about why the wives were organizing because of what happened in 1958. I don't know if any of you are familiar with that strike. The women were blamed as strike breakers; they were blamed for the failure of a very poorly-run and

poorly organized strike to begin with. This is not very well recorded in the newspapers or anywhere but there are still women around Sudbury who are called strike-breakers. We've talked to several of them just to find out what happened in 58. Apparently a strike was called--there was very little money in the strike fund to pay for vouchers and stuff like that. Also there was no support from the community for the strike itself. People like the mayor, and also the Church, played a very large part in not supporting the strike, and - I think - forcing the men back to work, more than their wives.

What ended up happening was that the mayor called a meeting at the Sudbury arena. 2000 or so women showed up and he put the question to them - those women who don't want their men back at work come and stand out on the ice. I'm sure if you were asked that question, you'd think, yeah, I do want the guys back at work, but not at any cost.



It was a twofold question, but it wasn't put to them that way. So nobody went down onto the ice, and assuming that everybody wanted their men back at work at any cost, the mayor turned it into a back-to-work rally. These women got suckered really good. They went to find out information about the strike and they got blamed as strike-breakers. A week or two later the strike ended, because of all kinds of things - the Church was on the workers' backs, business wasn't supportive - so the strike broke up. There was a lot of red-baiting going on at that time. The communist scare was very real, and very scary to a lot of people - so that just divided everybody, but the women were blamed for it.

The Wives Supporting the Strike Committee organized a number of really big activities, including a Christmas party for over 10,000 Sudbury children, to help everyone through the hard times. Another major activity that we did was a bean supper. We were going to make the point, the company

gets the gravy and the workers get the beans. So we had a free bean supper for everyone - all the strikers. We ended up feeding 5000 strikers and their families.

Another interesting thing we did was put on a play. There was going to be a meeting of INCO shareholders in Toronto sometime in March. Some of the wives went and attended the shareholders meeting themselves, but we wanted to get something going in Sudbury, so we thought we'd put on a play. It was a mock trial of the board of Directors of INCO. That was really powerful. We had a cast of about 20 people. I was one of the board of directors who went up and I stated who I was and which organizations I belonged to, and how much money I made a year. We had witnesses come up - pensioners, and we had wives coming up, we had people from the community - one of our NDP candidates came up and gave testimony about how INCO operated in Sudbury and affected the lives of everyone. The audience was going to be our jury.

Of course you can imagine what kind of verdict they got - unanimously guilty. But these sorts of things served a real educational purpose. It makes us realize who the enemy is, who is responsible for disrupting our lives, and who's responsible for some of the hardships we have to face, and the way we have to fight for just the basics.

One way of educating children - we made up a comic/colouring book called "What is a strike?" and this was given out at Christmastime and explained, in very simple terms, what a strike was and who was responsible for some of our problems.

This group of women that I work with, we went from being a scared group of housewives to getting very angry and very hateful. And when you get angry, you get very strong, and you get determined. There's nothing wrong with getting angry, there's a

lot to be angry about in this world. And anger made us strong. So we grew very determined and we weren't going to give in. We stuck together, we worked together with the union. And we gained confidence - we've got the power.

The union is the only weapon that the working class has. People have to start realizing that. Local 6500 is guilty of that too. People take unions and that kind of tool for granted. I didn't realize what kind of work and what kind of hardships people went through in the early 1900's to get unions organized. And now that we're in 1979 we just tend to say, oh well, we've won all those things. The union is here to stay, but it needs your participation to make it work.

The working class are the ones who make the wheels go round. We're the ones who do the work. We're the ones who make the profits. We make this country rich. That's what we realized in Sudbury - we're the ones who make it. We stopped for 8½ months, and we brought that company to its knees. And it gives me a lot of pleasure realizing that. And that company can't ever intimidate me anymore. And that means a lot to me because my husband is probably going to work for INCO for the rest of his life.

Through this strike, along with gaining a very good contract, we gained a lot of dignity and pride. And it's important to have those kinds of feelings when you have to go to a workplace like a lot of these men have to go to, where it's hazardous to their health, not pleasant..

Wives supporting the Strike don't exist anymore as a group because there's no strike to support. But I think we're probably going to regroup and start doing other actions around INCO. I've been told by people I've met in Saskatchewan that the INCO strike has had an effect on the whole

labour movement. The whole union movement took on our struggle with us when we went on strike - the kind of support we received and that. It wasn't just our fight. We did it at this time but I'm sure all of you if you're employed will probably go through something like this on the future.

I'm sort of saying, here. you take the baton and carry it on now, please don't let it end here.

We're very high in Sudbury, we're feeling very high and good

Transcribed and edited by Debbie and Rosemarie

Saskatchewan Working Women

Announcing...

Saskatchewan Working Women's Association
Founding Convention September 14-16
Landmark Inn, Regina

If you make it a practise to keep in touch with women's politics in Saskatchewan you will, no doubt, have heard about the Saskatchewan Working Women's Association. SWWA has been active over the past year doing labour support work and has sponsored International Women's Day Activities and fund raising benefits for the Inco Wives' film. SWWA came into being as a result of two women's conferences sponsored by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour in 1977 and 1978. Those involved in forming SWWA believed (and still believe) that there is a need for working women to become more organized and more active in fighting for changes in the situation of working women.

Since its inception in February 1978 active locals of SWWA have been formed in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert. We have been working towards our founding convention which is now scheduled to take place on September 15 and 16 at the Landmark Inn in Regina.

In keeping with the original intention of SWWA our founding convention will be a working conference to help develop our organizational skills. The theme for the convention will be "Government

about what happened and what we've accomplished, but it can't stop there. For us it's the end of a long strike, but it's the beginning of a fight that's going to go on the rest of our lives. And the people here and the people across Canada have to realize that it doesn't end just when a strike ends. There's a lot to be improved. There's a lot wrong with our system. And no-one is going to make it change except you. And you've got the power - collectively, you've got the power.

Agnes Ruest

Convention Planning Committee
SWWA, Saskatoon

cutbacks and their effect on women" both in the home and in the paid workplace. The issue of cutbacks is of particular importance to women, as we are usually the first to suffer as a result of cutbacks in staffing, wages, unemployment insurance, and social services. The conference will feature workshops which examine the issue of cutbacks as they affect women in the areas of: health care, education, daycare and the effect of cutbacks on private sector jobs such as clerical and service occupations.

In addition to dealing with the theme of the conference and its implications for SWWA, participants at the conference will discuss the future of SWWA, its aims and objectives.

All women with an interest in women's issues in the workplace are invited to join us at our founding convention. Memberships is open to all women - employed, unemployed or students.

For more information about the conference or to pre-register, please write to: Sue Smee Box 4154
c/o SWWA Regina, Sask.

Billets will be available in addition to the rooms at the Landmark Inn. Childcare will be available throughout the conference. Registration for the conference is \$10 which includes \$5 for membership in SWWA.

Hope to see you there...

BiNATIONAL LESBIAN CONFERENCE

" Magic Women of all our countries
It is our turn
To let us
Speak of love to each other"

"Fée du pays
C'est notre tour
De nous laisser
Parler d'amour"

quote taken from the binational
Lesbian Conference Workshop pamphlet

Toronto, May 19-21 1979 marked an indelible achievement in the herstory of the lesbian movement in Canada. The cast included over 400 women from across Canada and Quebec and the content was both excitingly varied and pertinent to the political struggles in which we engage. S.W.L. subsidized a delegate to attend--in all ten women represented Saskatoon.

The aim of the conference was to build a binational lesbian movement with not only a social but also a political base.

Congratulations to LOOT (the Lesbian Organization of Toronto) who "slugged their guts out" to take the initiative at a ripe time. These women did much to organize a solid complement of workshops ranging from personal dilemmas associated with lesbian lifestyles (eg. lesbian relationships, ageism, lesbisn mothers, lesbians and welfare) to skill sharing (eg. self-defense, simple car maintenance and repair, how to start a newsletter, self examination) to lesbian culture (eg. lesbian film makers, poetry, photography, percussion) to lesbian politics (eg lesbians and the Gay Movement, lesbians and the women's movement, Anarcha-Feminism, lesbians and the trade union movement, socialist-feminism). Yet the praise does not end there: the social events during the evenings included a coffee house, dance, and banquet, which were all sheer delights to the Amazons attending.

But don't let me lead you to believe that the conference was but a pleasurable trip away from the reality of lesbian oppression.

Many topics crucial for defining the specific need for an autonomous lesbian movement were discussed within the workshops. There was also the goal to more effectively bring forward lesbian demands within larger social and political movements, (eg. gay movement, womens's movement, trade union movement and the left).

By the final plenary, concrete results of the three day conference emerged. A binational French and English Lesbian magazine coming out of Kitchener-Waterloo was endorsed.

A lesbian bill of rights was proposed. The objectives of this bill would be to clarify the demands and consolidate the lesbian movement. Such concerns could also be fought for within the women's movement, the gay movement and the trade union movement. Several categories of demands would be represented: job security, custody rights, childcare, non-sexist education, age of consent laws, immigration laws, caucus rights within other movements.

The conference participants agreed overwhelmingly to take this proposal back to their respective groups and organizations to promote discussion around the specific content of such a bill. It would then give direction for next year's conference, with the aim of further clarifying the bill and voting on it.

The success of this conference attests to the fact that the lesbian movement can be a unifying force within the overall struggles of all oppressed peoples.

LOCAL NEWS

by Debbie Woolway

The Women and Drug Use Society of Saskatoon has recently published a booklet entitled Drugs, Depression and You. The Society is a group concerned about women's use of prescription drugs, particularly tranquillizers, anti-depressants and sedatives. The booklet's introduction reads, in part, "As women, we wish to control our lives and take responsibility for ourselves and our health. The purpose of this booklet is to discuss alternatives to drug use and to inform people of some of the issues surrounding the use of tranquillizers and prescription drugs so that they can make informed and responsible decisions about their health."

A film on the same subject, entitled Tranquillity, which was produced and directed by Janet Schimtz of Saskatoon, is available for distribution to groups and persons with access to videotapes. The film focuses on the dangers women face taking potentially addictive prescription drugs. In particular it deals with one woman's story of addiction and her struggle to overcome it. The film is 25 minutes long, and will appear on Cable 10 in the fall.

Address inquiries regarding the film, the booklet and its publishers to the Women and Drug Use Society, P.O.Box 321, Saskatoon.

♀ ♀ ♀

The 2nd Annual Prairie Woman Benefit Dance was held June 22nd at the Legion Hall on 19th Street, and a lot of credit is due the organizers for putting together a really enjoyable evening. Bar and ticket sales brought in approximately \$550.00 and subscription renewals have been coming in at a consistent rate since then. One of the evening's highlights was the auction of five feminist posters, all donated by women in Saskatoon. (One suffra-

gette poster went for over \$120.00.) We'll see you all again next year.

♀ ♀ ♀

March 31st seems a long time ago, but we haven't forgotten that day, and our part in the International Action for Abortion, Contraception and No Forced or Refused Sterilization. Over 100 men, women and children took part on that cold Saturday, chanting and singing as we marched through the downtown area. Later on, we listened to speeches by Shelley Gavigan, from the organizing committee of I.C.A.R., and Margaret Mahood, a psychiatrist at the Community Clinic. The struggle around this issue will continue. We'll keep you posted.

Incidentally, Father Bob Ogle has been appointed the NDP's new Health critic. Need we say more?

♀ ♀ ♀

The Women's Directorate, University of Saskatchewan is conducting a study of single-parent families in Saskatoon. The single-parent family experiences problems in daycare, financing, housing and education. Kandace Windsor and Linda McCann are studying these problems as they pertain to single-parent families in Saskatoon, with an emphasis on the educational aspect, its accessibility and the difficulties experienced by single-parent students.

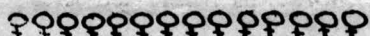
Such a study has been long overdue. In 1976, 11% of the families in Saskatoon had single-parents, higher than the 9.8 national percentage. Single-parent families are increasing at the rate of 28% a year. These realities are not reflected in policy and development in government agencies and institutions.

At this point in the study, a questionnaire is being distributed. Responses from single-parents are still required to establish a viable sample - the single-parent sample is a difficult one

to reach. If you are a single parent, you could help by filling out a questionnaire. Call Kandace or Linda at 343-3747, Ext. 28, or drop in at Room 14, Lower MUB.



An Ad-Hoc Committee, composed of different groups and individuals in and around Saskatoon is sponsoring an Anti-Nuke Rally and Picnic supper and Supper Picnic on Wednesday, August 29th, between 5:30 and 8:00 p.m. in the Kiwanis Bessborough Park near the Bandstand. While everyone is encouraged to bring their supper, the organizers are aranging for a food booth. Several speakers will address the rally, and Janet Knowles and others will be along to entertain you. Bring your frisbees. (The last Gallop Poll stated that 23% of the Canadian public approve of Nuclear development, 14% are undecided, and 63% oppose Nukes.)



Report from WACH

by J. and C. Eichhorst

The Women's Action Collective is still political and well and living in Regina. A steady group of 15 to 20 are meeting this summer and although holidays etc. have slowed us down in terms of action, we can't live without each other's support and keep on having those meetings!!

Although burnt out after the ICAR demonstration in March, we kept busy from April to June. ICAR continued to exist and was busy before the federal election distributing an informational leaflet at union meetings, rallies, etc. We also attended all candidates meetings and spoke on several issues including the abortion law. Our purpose in doing this was to educate people about our point of view--certainly we had no illusions about convincing candidates to fight for our rights.

During this time we also supported and attended the Human Rights march on May 5 in Regina protesting the new Saskatchewan Human Rights legislature with its glaring omissions (gays, women, handicapped, etc.)

During May WACH went through a lot of brain storming in preparation for our workshop "The Politics of Reproduction" which we held at the Great Plains Environmental Festival June 2 and 3. We were forced to deal with a lot of ideas regarding our choices (or lack of!) in child-birth and child-raising and the history and politics of societies' reaction to reproduction. We managed to pull something half-baked together; possibly it could be used to start discussion with other women's groups as no one else is going to develop our theory for us.

Members of the Women's Action Collective were also among the 250 demonstrators against nuclear development held that weekend--a very energizing demonstration.

In June we held several study sessions, at two of which we invited speakers from leftist organizations in the city and discussed their politics with them. Some members felt this clarified these group's positions on women, gay liberation, etc., while other members of WACH were left with more questions!

At our most recent meeting several ICAR members along with WACH decided to hold a benefit in mid-October to raise money to print an informational pamphlet about abortion and birth control (an answer to the "Anti-Choice" one which was distributed door-to door before the election). We'll send more information later--hope to see you there!!

Any women interested in being involved in the Women's Action Collective PLEASE COME to a meeting any Thursday at 7:30, College Building, 2nd floor, Old Campus or phone 352-7564, Regina.



The High Cost of Living, Marge Piercy

by Cindy Devine

To be quite honest, the first time I read Marge Piercy's latest novel I didn't like it. I was looking for adventure. Woman on the Edge of Time set a high standard in adventure for Piercy. (That book is now the latest hit for socialists and feminists in Saskatchewan, if not in the West.)

I have skimmed The High Cost of Living a second time. I like it. It is not an adventure but an account of real people living their unadventuresome lives - Leslie, a lesbian history student who has just lost her lover of two years; Bernie, a gay man just dropping out of the school of hard knocks; Honor, an "intellectually precocious" seventeen year old virgin woman all at once meeting and becoming a rather unconventional triangle.

All three characters pay the high cost of living while seeking some security in today's capitalist male-dominated society. Leslie studies history under an assistanceship to George her supervisor. George, a political activist in the 60's is now the classic sellout with a finely furnished "artsy" house in suburbia along with a wife and two children, a brand-new Cordoba, all financed by a local family of capitalists whose archives he is researching. Leslie finds classic comfort in her arrangement with George at the history department. He knows she is gay. "I'm his loyal dependant, and as he says, I won't get pregnant or married in whatever order." She works for him, is on call to him on Thursday nights when he has a get-together at his house for his other students,

and she must help his wife prepare. "What did he offer her besides security a well-paying job eventually, work she wanted to do?...She was not ready to give him up." Leslie turns her back on other feminists in favour of this bit of security from "George, the lord who'd given her a job, her powerful protector and friend." This feeling still holds true for Leslie even after omnipotent George devastates her Honor.

Honor, or Honorée (she is in her French stage) cannot relate to high school, to peers and to "normal" teenage activities. She is a young eccentric; her older sister Cam says "Instead I have a kid sister who offers to write my paper on Ibsen so I won't flunk out..." Honor is trapped by a doting "Mama", equally trapped by the classic middle-aged wife syndrome. She spends all her creative energies and money on Honor to keep her in lovely gowns, jewellery and in the house. Honor accepts this while Leslie and Bernie struggle to give the young woman more independence.

Bernie, a student, a punk, a hustler clings to Leslie and Honor for a friendship like that incestuous one he and his sister once had. A wandering hardened waife, he opens to these two women, becomes a part of their lives, complicates them, and then vanishes. He is a closet gay who left a relationship with a man who loved him, a man very active in the gay community, because "he put political pressure on me; he wanted me to be proud of being gay." Bernie is lost and that seems to be his security; he cannot be comfortable in comfort.

Piercy does it well this time. The confusion of these three "misfits" and the tale of their interrelationships is set before us to examine. It is not adventuresome; it is real life and it forces questions to be answered about our own sexualities and lives.

PRAIRIE WOMAN is a newsletter of Saskatoon Women's Liberation. Contributions in the form of articles, news items, poetry, graphics, cartoons, and photographs are welcomed from women. Interested men are invited to contribute letters or funds. Because the newsletter is put out by voluntary labour, financial donations are encouraged.

PRAIRIE WOMAN is run as a collective. Writers have had their efforts acknowledged with their articles. Others working on

Angie Bishoff
Sheila Crampton
Rosemarie Rupps

Debbie Woolway
Susan Woolway
Maylynn woo

Original graphics by Maylynn Woo.

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