

WINNIPEG
WOMEN'S LIBERATION

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 77

\$ 1.00



Woodcut by Anne Quigley

Inside:

M.A.R.N.
Family Law.

WAGES FOR
HOUSEWORK.

Gay Conference.
SPORTS.

and more!

*If women were paid for all they do
There'd be a lot of wages due*

- from China 1940's.

The Winnipeg Women's Liberation Newsletter comes to you from A Woman's Place, 143 Walnut St. All contributions, letters, poems, graphics and thoughts are eagerly sought after by the Newsletter Collective. In fact, you can be part of the Collective if you want. It's the ideal way (except that no-one gets paid) to learn lay-out, writing skills, editing, graphic scrounging and a variety of other indispensable talents.

This particular newsletter was brought to you by a terrific team of wonderful women; Editor: Sara Berger, who also gave us writing workshops and was tremendously encouraging.

Brigitte Southerland, Marlyn MacDonald, Debbie Robinson, Angie Bordnik, Lynda Barker, Allisa McDonald, Heather Fletcher, Kathy McIlroy, Bev Banks, Sandy Lechner.

And thanks again to all those friends and cohorts who did our housework for us while we wrote and typed and layed out.

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WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

You will probably notice as you read through this newsletter several references to Wages For Housework and Wages Due Lesbians. More coverage of the activities and ideology of the international Wages for Housework Campaign will appear in future newsletters. In the meantime, if you wish further information, write Wages for Housework Group, Woman's Place, 143 Walnut St. Wpg. or phone Lissa at 453-0311 or Marlyn or Allisa at 783-5343.

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WOMEN'S LIBERATION NEWSLETTER
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Winnipeg, Manitoba

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LETTERS

Hello Sisters-In-A-Common Cause:

I have enjoyed each and every publication of yours and they are worth many times their value in dollars, direction and dedication! It pleases me that you are still so active in so many directions & here is ten dollars to help you continue your most worthwhile activities.

The date of the cheque is the first night I was able to get together with the Penticton Women's group. Unfortunately, there is no monies available and only a dozen or so women very interested in continuing. We do have a place we can meet (a Drop-In Centre), not as large or as luxurious as your meeting place but it has been renovated and seems well-equipped in many areas.

From personal experience, I feel just as discriminated against in all (or as many directions) as I was six years ago. Previous job was underpaid - you see I'm fortyish

and married and female so I get a few bucks more than a secretary or receptionist tho' as the assistant-accountant I had and needed more experience and had more responsibilities and deadlines. I ran the Accounts Receivable Dept. but no recognition in finances, prestige or privileges as was the opposite of rest of departments which were run by men!

Their (males) job courses & expenses (in or out-of-town) were 100% paid by company and mine 50%. Club affiliations that were career oriented fell in same category - MCP - all the way. My new job, again, no frills, low pay, no authority, and no prestige -- so why did I change? Anyway, I still find it a cold and cruel world in my career aspirations and I still resent the "closed" doors. But maybe - some day.

I know Liberation is alive and surviving & that it's doing so elsewhere is better than nowhere.

Best regards, Vi R.G. Senior

*/who are you to move me
as though I were a chessman
shove me into the stiff pattern
of a knight
frustrate me with the position
of a pawn
who says that it can't be
I who is Queen
is that beyond the realm of
possibility
that I might move where
I
please!*

Dear Madam;

As you might know, our country, URUGUAY, suffers the dominion of a dictatorship born on our people's back, through a coup d'etat in June 1973. It is known and internationally denounced what government is doing since that date. More than 6000 political prisoners; 50,000 people have been in prison because of syndical or politic reasons; more than 500,000 had emigrated during the last years. These data turn our reality into a national catastrophe, if we take into account we're only 2.700,000 inhabitants.

But behind these ciphers we must think what they mean; pain, affective and economic anguish and that with them comes the destruction of the basic union of civilization: family.

Among political prisoners there are lots of fathers of babies and children, whose wives are working to feed them, themselves and pay for the visits to prison, which are generally far from the city, the pain of separation, the difficulty of explaining what is impossible to explain when children ask why their father, a good sweet and patriotic man is in prison.

Among those 6,000 political prisoners there are many cases, as that of Dr. Hector Siris and Caroline Seade, who have got small children, both are imprisoned, and the children are under the care of their grandmother who has 4 children, one of whom is a refugee and 3 are imprisoned.

Among those political prisoners there was a young pregnant woman to whom they introduced hot needles under her fingernails so as to obtain the information they wanted: where her husband was. They put her on a dirty mattress when she aborted. And everything for knowing afterwards her husband was imprisoned since long ago in another jail.

Among those political prisoners lots had to be present, as (did) a newspaperman when hangmen tortured his son.

Among those 500,000 emigrated people of whom a great proportion are refugees, the best of our land has left: young people, qualified working men, professionals, artists. Dictatorship has deformed our land's population scheme, and it is crowded now by old people and children. Our country has grown old.

Behind those 500,000 refugees we must see small children that had to leave their homes, their loved places, their toys, friends, grandparents; we must see small children that have as a re-

membrance of their country soldiers with guns hitting their father, fingering their mother, destroying everything they find in the house; in other cases they have as a remembrance of their country the visits to their father or mother or to both in prison.

They will remember the sad physical conditions of their parents when they came back home from prison. They will remember repression to working men and students' meetings. And this explains a generalized phenomena in refugee children: the terror a uniform inspires, to which they associate everything they saw in Uruguay. That explains their generalized aggressiveness, their psychological disequilibrium.

At the age Uruguayan children must be receiving their parents' sweet attention answering their questions, rambling with them in the zoo, cinema, helping them with their homework, talking with their father or mother about sexual problems, they find their parents in prison or having to hide as if they were criminals, or one day they deliver them their parents' tortured corpses.

It is very difficult, almost impossible to express in a letter what women and Uruguayan mothers have lived, they are situations that can only be lived, suffered, but cannot be easily written.

Yours sincerely,
Sonia Bialous de Dutrenit.
Mexico

Sonia asks us to join the international campaign in solidarity with the Uruguayan people's struggle; make public the Uruguayan emigration problems and talk about this to your friends and the organizations you belong to.

IN THE NEWS

New Family Law Code

W I F E S T I L L N O A C C E S S T O W A G E S

MARRIAGE - AN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP

The new Family Law Legislation received Third Reading in the dying moments of the 4th Session of the 30th Legislature and will come into effect January 1, 1978.

Marital settlements, contracts or agreements made before May 6, 1977, will be effective under the new law--any such agreements since then must coincide with the provisions of the new law.

The tendency of the legislation is to recognize the value of housework and child-care as an economic asset to the family, and to society, which it was not previously recognized to be. The general thrust of the changes will be to provide for an equal division of what could be called the profits of the marriage in an economic sense, and including assets that are built up in the husband's name, such as businesses and pension funds.

The Government intends to publish a "readable" brochure simplifying the complicated provisions of the bills. These will be distributed upon request.

WHAT WE HAVE GAINED

Bill 60 - The Family Maintenance Act:

- Spouses have the mutual obligation to each other's support and maintenance: this includes the right of a spouse to reasonable amounts for clothing and other personal expenses and the right to free discretion in the use of these amounts.
- Housekeeping, childcare or other domestic service are included as financial contribution and are to be regarded as equal to gainful employment.
- mutual obligation to provide each other with information and accounting of financial affairs of the marriage.

- woman who has lived with a man for one year and who is the father of any child born to her can, within the period of one year from ceasing to live with him, make application for support for both herself and the child.

- Each spouse has the obligation to provide reasonably for that child's support, maintenance and education until the child reaches the age of 18.

Bill 61 - The Marital Property Act:

- This bill applies to all marriages solemnized before or after the coming into force of the law; except where a legal marriage contract exists or both spouses mutually agree in writing to opt out of the standard marital regime within six months of the commencement of the new law.

- joint ownership of the marital home; where only one spouse is registered as the owner, the other spouse is entitled to be registered as a joint owner thereof.

- one-half share in surplus money of sale of marital home after deduction of any mortgage, encumbrance, charge, or lien against the home.

- equal sharing of assets acquired during the marriage; excluding any gift, inheritance or trust benefit or any interest accrued thereof.

- the consent of both spouses in order to dispose of any jointly owned assets.

- deferred sharing of commercial assets, eg. businesses or farms (shared only upon dissolution of marriage).

- demand of accounting and equalization of commercial assets on grounds they are being "dissipated".

- judicial discretion will be permitted only in "extraordinary circumstance" or "extraordinary imbalance" that would make a 50/50 split unfair.

Grain Grower's Guide

Nov. 4, 1914



To make clear the demands of women the Coalition took presentations to the Government law amendments committee' hearings that were held in order that the public could present their views to the politicians. Thus, the Coalition was instrumental in having a number of their demands incorporated into the new legislation.

It is for this reason alone that the law now goes further than the original recommendations of the Manitoba Law Reform Commission. In effect, this law will give women in Manitoba greater equality in their marriages in that it recognizes marriage to be operating under the principle of equal partnership, and will deal more justly with those marriages that dissolve.

It will be necessary for all of us to watch how these laws are applied in the courts and continue to press for amendments to be incorporated in the legislation that will answer the needs of women and children that are still not being met.

Fifteen years drifted along and at the end of that time John Tightwad owned two sections of land, clear, many head of stock, a splendid barn, a fair sized house and six children. All that Jennie owned of this was her rather dowdy wardrobe. She hadn't even a legal share in the children. When she wanted money she had to beg John to let her have it and there was always a scene and a wrangle. He made it very clear to her that the money, and the house and the family were all his, tho she had grown horny-handed in working for them.

Jennie at last declared that she wouldn't stand it and consulted a lawyer. She found that her husband was quite within the law. She had no legal claim on anything. She discovered, to her chagrin, that her position in the home of her husband all these years had been that of an unpaid domestic.

DEMANDS IGNORED BY LEGISLATORS

A number of the demands women made were ignored by our legislators: The exclusion of salary as an asset ignores the fact that in the majority of marriages wages are the only asset and to deny equal participation in spending decisions of that income is to undermine the partnership concept.

FAULT WAS ELIMINATED FROM THE FAMILY LAW LEGISLATION--PROPERTY IS TO BE DIVIDED EQUALLY AND MAINTENANCE AWARDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH NEED.

WOMEN FIGHT FOR REFORM

Women, working together against the injustice and inequities in the family law that produced the now famous Murdoch case, have won this victory. In June of 1976 the Manitoba Law Reform Commission released a report of recommended changes in family law. At that time about 20 women's groups began to work together to evaluate the recommendations. They found many of them good, but also found serious shortcomings and omissions.

Representatives of the various groups formed the Action Coalition on Family Law. The purpose of the Coalition was to ensure that just laws addressing the needs of women would be passed in the next session of the legislature. They took the recommendations to the public in order to familiarize women with the issues.

There was no significant change with regard to maintenance provisions. The responsibility for collecting the monies awarded by the court still lies with the person with the least resources for doing so. The suggestion for the setting up of a special agency that would maintain a registry of all maintenance orders, collect and enforce them and make payment to the single parent regularly, whether or not the full amount is collected, was not acceptable to our elected representatives. And this even though seventy-five per cent of all maintenance orders are uncollected and unenforced, and make it impossible for any kind of security for the single parent family. Of these families 90 per cent are headed by women and more than one-third

live in poverty.

Women demanded instant community of property but this was not extended to commercial businesses, property, and family farms. These can be shared equally only upon marital break-up.

The bilateral opting out clause was amended to no longer require consultation with independent legal counsel for both spouses. Women should make sure their interests are represented by obtaining independent legal advice.

Section 4 in Bill 60 which puts the onus of becoming "financially independent" after separation on the dependent spouse discriminates against women. The brief presented by "The Group in Support of Wages for Housework" details how. (The brief is reprinted in its entirety in this issue of the newsletter).

The Coalition will continue working towards these reforms. Contact Alice Steinbart c/o Woman's Place for more information or meeting times.

by brigitte

WOMEN ON STRIKE

TWO MONTHS

Nurses supporting the clerical staff of the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses (M.A.R.N.) demanded to sit in at their recent board meeting. After several hours of other business, board members decided to hold the discussions with regard to the strike of the clerks 'in camera' and the nurses were turned away.

MARN is the licencing body for all Manitoba nurses: in order to work they must be registered with MARN. The Association also administers the testing of student nurses and the retraining and testing of nurses who have been away from the work force for a number of years.

The executive council of the Manitoba Organization of Nurses' Associations (MONA) has sent a telegram in support of the secretaries urging the parties to resume negotiations immediately or refer the dispute to arbitration. MONA is the elected governing organization for 55 bargaining units of nurses in Manitoba.

Joyce Gleason, executive director of MONA, said the situation will be watched closely to see what support can be given to the strikers.

The clerical staff of the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses (MARN) have been on strike against their employer since May 25. The four women,

Local 308 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) are asking for a 15% wage increase over two years.

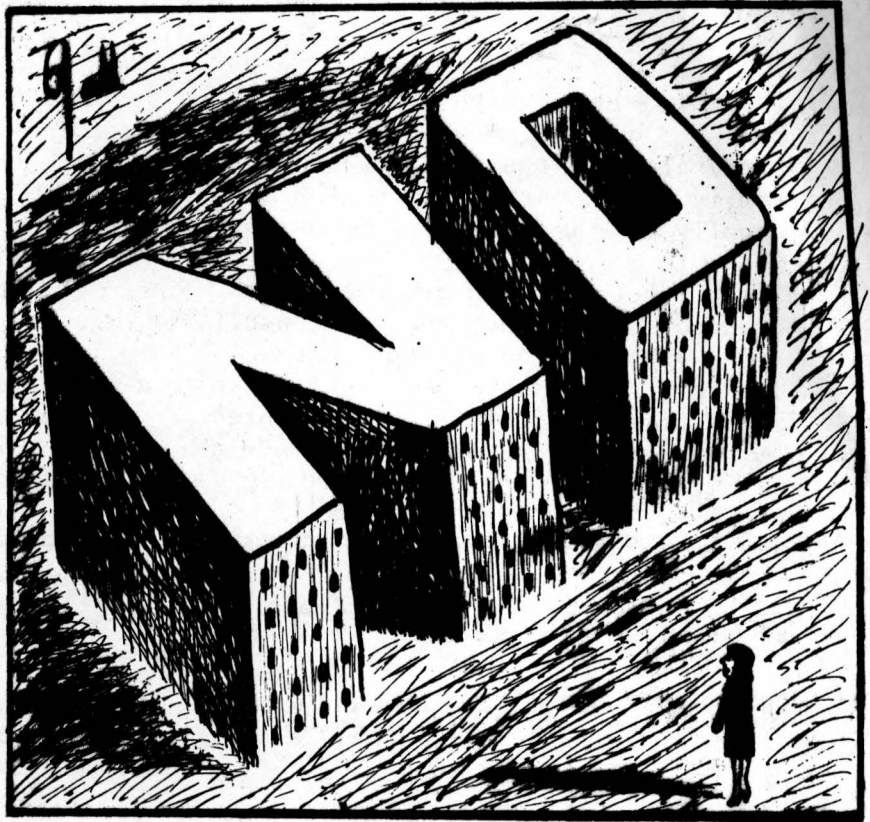
The last management offer of 7 and 8% respectively for the two years to be paid upon the successful passing of a management set proficiency test was made three days before the employees went on strike. Doris Holmes, a seven-year employee at MARN, said a proficiency test would never be acceptable to the staff. She said MARN, same as any employer, has the recourse to dismiss any employee that can be proven to be incompetent at her job.

The starting salary of \$562/month is about \$100 less than comparable positions in other organized clerical components in industry or provincial or municipal governments.

The employees offered to go to arbitration but this was refused by MARN's executive director, Louise Tod, and president, Marvella McPherson. Both women left Winnipeg two days after the start of the strike to attend a conference in Japan. Miss Tod is not expected to return to Winnipeg until July 4 and did not designate anyone to bargain with the striking employees during her absence.

Two weeks into the strike MARN employees tried to bring scabs through the picket line. They were turned back by the expert wielding of a picket sign in the close proximity of a head. The four women have been picketing the MARN office at 647 Broadway daily between 8:30 and 4:30, and have received some picket support from nurses from the Misericordia Hospital.

At time of printing, the clerical staff ended the strike (effective July 25) with the decision to quit their jobs and find work elsewhere. The executive director of M.A.R.N. has continued to refuse to negotiate and the women can no longer survive on \$65 per week strike pay.



Nurses In Conflict With MARN

What happens when an organization is run by a small "elite"? If the present situation in the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses is any indication, the interests of the "elite" are promoted, at the expense of everyone else.

The strike of four secretarial employees against M.A.R.N. brings to public attention discontent with M.A.R.N. management that has been simmering for some time. The secretaries carry a picket that reads: "Nurses, where is your money going?", a question many nurses want answered immediately.

Apparently, it is not easy to find answers. "If we phone for information, they are often rude and nasty to us," said Debbie Hurrell, a nurse from Misericordia Hospital. "M.A.R.N. offers us no job protection, and no financial assistance if we want to go back to school. I would like to find out what it actually does for us."

In a recent letter to the Tribune, Jeanne M. Hurd outlined what M.A.R.N. does do, "In MARN's recent position paper on nursing education the management elite have attempted to limit the title of 'professional nurse' to only those nurses holding university nursing degrees. All other nurses are considered by the elite to be merely 'technical nurses'. The irony of this so-called progressive step is that currently only a little over 8% of Manitoba's nurses hold university degrees. The other 92%, responsible for \$345,008 of the \$375,009 that represents MARN's total membership fees for 1976, have been rewarded for their support by being told that they no longer qualify as professionals in their own professional association."

Many nurses were angered both by the contents of that position paper and by the way it was handled. Passed by the MARN executive in March 1975, the paper wasn't released to members until May 13 of the same year, two days before the association's annual meeting.

"It gave us no time to study its contents," said Joyce Evans, another nurse from Misericordia Hospital.

That position paper has since been canned, due to opposition from the registered nurses and hospital administrations. But the grumblings have not stopped.

"All I get for my \$70 a year is a little piece of paper telling me I'm registered as a nurse in Manitoba," said a nurse from St. Boniface, who asked that her name not be used. "I have to pay or I can't work as a registered nurse." The Manitoba registered Nurses Act of 1913 gave exclusively to MARN the power to register nurses, and set standards of registration and nursing education for the province.

Asked if registered nurses could get upgrading courses through MARN, she replied, "it's pretty well impossible. I don't know what MARN does with our money," she added, "except buy new carpeting for the office, send their officers on trips to Japan and generally keep the bureaucracy going."

She said these problems are not a new thing. "Nurses have been pissed off with having to put out all this money every year for a long time." And it doesn't happen just in Manitoba. In British Columbia, where there is a similar structure, the fee is \$100/year plus 1/2 of 1% of monthly pay to "cover bargaining costs".

What's the alternative? Some nurses are suggesting that there is no need for an organization like MARN. "We have our bargaining unit, the Manitoba Organization of Nurses Association (MONA)," the St. Boniface nurse said, "The only other thing we might need is a small provincial unit just to keep track of registrations, like the College of Nurses in Ontario."

Obviously, MARN is not popular. It seems the major mistake it made was imagining that serving the interests of the "university" nurses, those nurses at the top of the nursing profession, should in any way be its priority. "Everybody who bargains in a hospital," said a nurse, "knows that you don't sign a thing until the lower-paid people, like the housekeepers and nurses aides, have finalized their bargaining. The more they get, the more we get. That's just the way it works -- here and everywhere."

by Marlyn M.

Poem by Margarida Redondo

Translated from the Portuguese
by Eloah F. Giacomelli

ASTRAY

RECIPE FOR A HAPPY HOME

Take one medium
size women.

Coat to taste in virginity.

Dip in love
faintly seasoned
pain and motherhood.

Fry in religion oil
with a chunk of extra
work very fresh.

Preserve in a lacquered tureen.

Baste with three
R's dressing and
top with minced lace.

(Serve colonized
with a subterfuge salad)

or, Who is fighting whom, and for what?

By: Juliet Schafer

In this article I will attempt to make some sense of recent events at our neighbourhood elementary school, and to point out their significance in terms of the role of parents in schools.

RESOLUTIONS

A group of women with children at Grosvenor School met to discuss some areas of dissatisfaction with certain school practices and policies. Out of this we formulated a number of resolutions to put before the Association (parents and teachers). These resolutions were all concerned to promote, and put into school policy, equality of opportunity for all children in such areas as physical education, team sports, choir etc. Some of the resolutions were specifically aimed at getting rid of unequal treatment of girls and boys.

(See resolutions p.11)

PRESIDENT HOSTILE

We sent the resolutions to the President of the Association, asking her to call a general meeting of parents to discuss them. She (like us, a mother of Grosvenor students) required us to collect 20 signatures to show support for such a meeting. We collected well over 20 names, so she reluctantly agreed to call a meeting. (We later learned that the constitution requires the President to call a meeting on request of 4 people - she simply made up the 'rule' about 20 signatures).

HEATED MEETING

By the time the meeting took place, the Principal and several staff had openly expressed anxiety and defensiveness about the resolutions. Rumours were flying round about "radical feminist socialists" trying to take over the school. It was a large meeting by Home-and-School Association standards - about 50-60 people, including the Principal, most of the teachers, one area superintendent (who had expressed hostility both to the resolutions themselves, and to the idea of parents presenting policy resolutions) and one school trustee (called in by the original group

of women, authors of the resolutions).

The meeting was heated, to put it mildly. Those people (including the President) who had earlier described as "apathetic" the parent body, and doubted that the meeting would draw more than 20 people, were certainly proved wrong. Each resolution provoked strong feelings and heated debate, and battle lines were very clearly drawn. The results of voting were favourable to us, the infamous "radical feminists", but narrowly in most cases (although we had made certain to urge our friends and supporters to come to the meeting, so had the hostile opposition - the arch-enemy of equality for women, Peter Warren of CJOB, is amongst the Grosvenor parents, and he lost no time in arguing against us).



TIRED OLD ARGUMENTS

Discussion on a resolution calling for "affirmative action" to ensure girls equal chances to get on school teams for all sports brought out the way in which women can be each others' worst enemies. Mother after mother stood up to declare that she had never been discriminated against in all her school career, or that she wouldn't want her daughters playing on hockey teams with boys, or that it was discriminatory and a put-down to give girls special encouragement in sports usually excelled in by boys only. I, for one, was quite stunned

Resolutions for Grosvenor
School Association

1. Music

Whereas the goal of elementary school musical education should be to develop the musical ability of all children, not merely of those with apparent natural musical ability,

Be it resolved that participation in the school choirs be on the basis of desire to do so.

2. Health and Physical Education

i) Whereas individual differences among children are more apparent and meaningful than differences between the sexes,

Be it resolved that all physical education and health classes be coeducational.

ii) Whereas physical fitness is desirable for everyone,

Be it resolved that each classroom teacher be strongly encouraged to involve her/his class in the 'accelerated physical education program.

iii) Whereas more interest and status have traditionally been attached to sports for boys than for girls, and whereas individual effort and ability should be considered, rather than the sex of the child,

Be it resolved a) that all teams be open to both boys and girls, and

b) that girls be actively encouraged to try out for school teams, even though this may require an initial period of accepting girls with less developed skills than has previously been accepted for boys.

iv) Whereas the concept of 'spares' on school teams involves a great deal of unfairness, and results in smaller numbers of children being allowed to develop their skills,

Be it resolved that team members play in games on a rotating, equal-time basis, and that the concept of "spares" be eliminated.

3. School Program

i) Whereas each classroom teacher has his/her individual approach to teaching;

Be it resolved that each teacher inform the parents at the beginning of each school year of their goals and priorities for that year.

ii) Whereas moving a child from one room to another once the school year has begun can be a big upheaval for the child;

Be it resolved that parents be consulted about any such changes before they take place.

iii) Whereas it is desirable for children to get along with a wide range and variety of other people,

Be it resolved that a) classroom composition reflect a range of attributes, including social skills, ethnic backgrounds, etc., and that streaming by academic criteria alone be avoided, and b) an attempt be made to have roughly equal numbers of girls and boys in each room.

iv) Whereas parental involvement is already accepted as a desirable aspect of the Grosvenor school program and whereas the parent body, like any other similar group of adults, reflects a wide range of particular skills, hobbies, interests and abilities,

Be it resolved that teacher be strongly encouraged to make use of these skills etc. to enhance their program and to help bridge the gap between the school and the world outside.

by the low level of understanding of the issues of equality between the sexes. I had naively supposed that things had changed since I first became involved in the Women's Movement in 1970.

PRESIDENT'S DEFENSE OF TEACHERS

Throughout the evening the President kept making clear that she dissociated herself from the resolutions, and that she disapproved of them. This was curious, since in private she had seemed to be a progressive parent who wanted a say in what goes on inside the school. She seemed at the meeting to be motivated by a (typically feminine ?) desire to avoid conflict and to avoid making any of the teachers feel in the least bit criticized. The Principal (also a woman) saw all the resolutions, even those which simply put as desirable policy

things which she already practised, as criticisms of her and her staff. She spent much of her time irrelevantly and embarrassingly defending her staff and herself.

ON WITH THE STORY

A second meeting took place soon afterwards to deal with the rest of our resolutions. This was almost as well attended as the first, with similarly strong feelings being expressed. The Association's executive later met, and, ignoring all the debate and the results of the voting on the resolution by parents proceeded to vote on them themselves.

This undemocratic move will almost undoubtedly keep some parents away from future meetings: what's the use of expressing views if they are ignored? The executive's voting reflected, again, an acute anxiety about parents asking or telling teachers anything about school policy. Some of the resolutions were actually defeated on the grounds that they were already school policy! I speculate about whether, again, all this anxiety has anything to do with female conditioning to keep things peaceful, not to rock the boat and not to risk upsetting anyone in a position of authority.

ELECTIONS FOR OFFICE

Perhaps somewhat naively or foolishly, after seeing what fears and hostility we "terrible women's libbers" aroused amongst the school community. 3 of us ran for President, Vice-President and Treasurer of the Grosvenor School Association. Again, a big crowd turned up for the meeting, and, predictably we were defeated, albeit fairly narrowly.

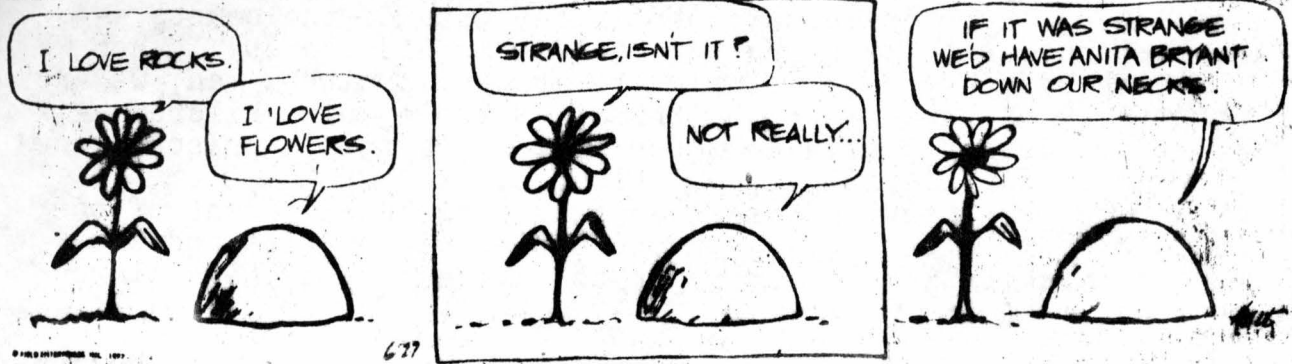
FOOTNOTES

An interesting psychological phenomenon: the President, the same woman re-elected, approached more than one of us to act on her committee, claiming that she didn't want to see our energy and enthusiasm lost to the school. [Her attempt to conciliate (another thing women are prone to do?) was met with the declaration that we couldn't possibly work within such an undemocratic structure with people like her].

However, the battle is not over. Next year we will have a new Principal, who is reported to be well-disposed towards equality, yes, even for females. We have still some parents who are tough enough to try and have some influence on what goes on in our children's school. And we even won over some parents to our side during the course of the battle.



B.C.



LESBIANS POWERFUL IMPACT AT GAY CONFERENCE

Approximately 65 women led the more than 200 homosexuals in a gay march through the streets of Saskatoon, July 1. This was a visible indication of the collective strength of lesbians at the 5th annual National Gay Rights Coalition (NGRC) Conference, June 29 - July 3, 1977.

"We women would like to march together," said Francie Wyland, of Wages Due Lesbians (WDL), Toronto, at the rally before the march, "And, furthermore, we would like to march at the head of this march". She explained why it is important that lesbian concerns be a priority for the gay movement. "Gay men will benefit from us being able to reject sexual servicing of men as 'natural'", she said. "They can then reject their servicing of other men as 'unnatural'." Women are doing just that all over the world, she added, by refusing the work and by demanding wages for all housework, work that is supposed to be a 'natural' attribute of women.

Six resolutions from the lesbian workshops were tabled at the Plenary Session on Sunday. Four were passed by both the NGRC delegate vote and the vote of the Conference as a whole. These were 1) general support by the NGRC of the women's movement; 2) a restructuring of NGRC to be presented at next year's conference to reflect regional needs and the fact that 50% of the gay population is female; 3) at least 50% of all decision-making and voting power to be controlled by lesbians, regardless of our numbers, at all future NGRC functions; and 4) endorsement of the Wages Due Lesbians picket in front of the Supreme Court of Ontario to protest child custody injustices. (see below)

Two other resolutions, a statement from the San Francisco Lesbian Women from the Wages For Housework Campaign in response to Anita Bryant and Save Our Children, and a statement from a conference "Toward a Strategy for the Lesbian Movement" held in Toronto '76, were voted for by the majority of women, but were not endorsed by the delegate or Conference vote.

Winnipeg Lesbian Society was well represented at the Conference with 16 enthusiastic members.

THE CHILD CUSTODY DEAL ISN'T FIT FOR US

Anita Bryant and her campaign to 'Save our Children' have gotten a lot of publicity. This attack against homosexuality comes at a time when many lesbian women are fighting for custody of their children, and shows just how powerful that fight has become.

More and more women -- straight and lesbian -- are losing custody of their children, both in and outside the courts -- to husbands, relatives and the Children's Aid Society. When we are without money or a 'stable' relationship with a man, we are especially vulnerable to the threat of losing our children -- if we are lesbians, single mothers, immigrants, in prison, mentally or physically ill, or prostitutes.

Wages Due Lesbians is organizing a picket in front of the Supreme Court of Ontario to protest these injustices and the forced invisibility of our fight to have and keep the children we want.

* WE REFUSE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN OUR SEXUALITY AND OUR CHILDREN!

--Sexual preference should not be a criteria for judging the 'fitness' of a parent. What the courts deem to be in the 'best interests' of our children may not be what we or our children want for ourselves. That decision must be in our own hands.

* HANDS OFF OUR CHILDREN!

--No custody judgement is ever final. We can lose custody at any time, if we are said to be lesbian, prostitutes, or 'unfit' for any other reason. No one has the right to snatch our children when we are the ones who invest our lives in raising them.

* A PARENT'S INCOME SHOULD NOT BE A CRITERIA IN COURT FOR A CUSTODY DECISION!

--Until the Government guarantees women money for our work in the home beyond present welfare levels, and parity* with men's wages outside, we cannot compete with men in the courts. Using these criteria, the majority of husbands will win hands down.

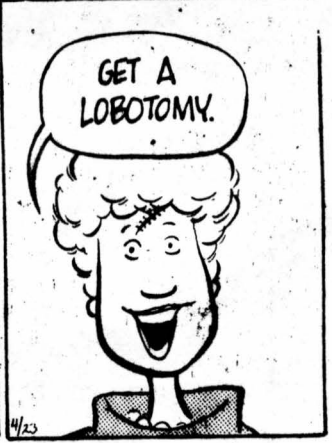
*(on the average, women earn 55% of men's wages in the paid labour force)

* WE REFUSE TO BE PENALIZED BY OUR POVERTY!

--Women's general level of poverty forces us into many forms of separation from our children. Immigrant women, for example, who come to Canada from the Third World, often face long periods of separation from our children and must work years before we can afford to bring them here.

A SUCCESSFUL PICKET WAS HELD JULY 13TH AND WAS COVERED BY THE CBC NATIONAL NEWS.

TANK NAKAMARA



Lesbian Movement

Active In WPG

The Winnipeg Lesbian Society (W.L.S) established the principle of lesbian autonomy at the first Manitoba Gay Conference, May 7, at the University of Winnipeg.

The discussion of lesbian autonomy, in theory and practice, followed an overview by six people on WLS including history, objectives, goals and the activities of the organization.

"We are an autonomous lesbian organization", Sue W. said to the other dozen, predominately male, gay organizations represented at the conference. "We participate in the women's movement and in the gay movement on our terms only, because as women and as lesbians we have less power in this sexist society than either straight women or gay men. We will not have our energies sapped for causes that do not directly benefit us."

The lesbians successfully demanded a women's meeting during the Conference, and suggested that all further conferences have time and space for women's caucusses built into the agenda.

"We need to talk among ourselves," Marlyn M. said. "Men, even gay men, are conditioned to dominate discussions and undervalue women's contributions. We refuse to put up with this any longer."

"But you're leaving us out!" one man cried from the audience. "We need communication between gay men and women, not separatism. You have formed your own organization outside the Club (a mixed gay bar) and now you want to have your own meeting within this Conference. When are you going to talk to the men?"

"Autonomy does not mean separatism," the women replied. "We meet separately to define our own concerns and to increase our collective power as lesbians. Only when that is done can we begin to communicate productively with gay men, as we are doing here today."

And communicate they did. Pat C. outlined the history of the Winnipeg Lesbian Society. "We began as an alternative to the Club," she said. "We wanted to meet our needs as women more specifically, needs we felt the Club was ignoring." She said the Club, while serving an essential function for the gay community of Winnipeg, is basically a male-oriented hustling scene. "It is not a comfortable atmosphere just to sit and talk, or to meet women."

"The objectives of W.L.S.", said Heather G. "are to meet the social and educational needs of Winnipeg's Lesbian community". Angie B. reported on W.L.S.'s informational phone lines for new women coming out into the community. Debbie R. described the activities for the past year, which included: three all-women socials; the formation of a Lesbian Speaker's Bureau; the starting of a library of lesbian literature; the picketing of CBC for discrimination against gay public service announcements; and the Thursday night meetings which are open to all lesbians.

The Conference, as a whole, was very supportive of W.L.S. and the women were enthusiastically applauded when they returned to their seats.

The men's groups participating in the Conference offered a variety of perspectives on the gay movement in Manitoba. Gay Men's Discussion Groups, which began in January 77, have given gay men the unprecedented opportunity to interact on both a personal and political level. The groups have discussed topics such as gay oppression, self oppression, men's liberation and sex roles, and gay relationships and youth sexuality.

Two religious groups gave reports at the Conference. DIGNITY, an international Catholic gay organization, believes "that gays can express their sexuality in a manner that is consonant with Christ's teaching, and that sexuality should be exercised in an ethically responsible and unselfish way".

The Council on Homosexuality and Religion works with people from all religious denominations, counselling homosexuals, as well as providing churches and related social agencies with information which might enable others to do more effective homosexual counselling.

A new organization is Winnipeg Gay Youth (W.G.Y.), formed in order to provide services to gay people under 21. "There have been many problems organizing and providing services to young gay men and women", said W.G.Y. "Older gays just didn't want to get involved in legal hassles and delinquency laws, the clubs and socials have usually been licensed and hence closed to anyone under 18, and often parental pressure alone has prevented us from getting together."

Two out-of-town groups attended the Conference, Gay Friends of Brandon and the Thompson Gay Group. Both groups described the difficulties of organizing in smaller cities, where discrimination against homosexuality is often more blatant.

Bill F. represented the collective of six men who founded "After Stonewall", a critical journal of gay liberation. He urged all present to participate by writing articles, letters and subscribing to make this new publication a genuine forum for discussion for gay people.

Gays For Equality, the oldest gay organization in Manitoba, is "working to achieve full civil rights for homosexual Manitobans". Chris V. reported on G.F.E.'s educational, counselling and social programs. As well as organizing coffeehouses, and educating through speaking engagements and printed literature, G.F.E. brought John Damien, a man fired because he is a homosexual, to Winnipeg and organized fund-raising and political education activities around his visit. They also participated in the CBC demonstration with the Winnipeg Lesbian Society.

MID-POINT

She stored up the anger for twenty-five years, then she put it on the table like a casserole for dinner.

"I have stolen back my life," she said.
'I have taken possession of the rain and the sun and the grasses," she said.

'You are talking like a madwomen," he said.

"My hands are rocks, my teeth are bullets," she said.

"You are my wife" he said.

"My throat is an eagle. My breasts, are two white hurricanes," she said.

"Stop!" he said.
"Stop or I shall call a doctor."

'My hair is a hornet's nest, my lips are thin snakes waiting for their victim."

He cooked his own dinners, after that.

The doctors diagnosed it common change-of-life.

She, too, diagnosed it change of life. And on leaving the hospital she said to her woman-friend
'My cheeks are the wings of a young virgin dove. Kiss them."

Kathy Kozachenko
Ann Arbor, Michigan

HELP!

I have swallowed and retained enough of this society's socializing garbage to dwarf my soul and forever restrain me but I am working through trying to free myself.

See you on Wednesday, July 20 at 7:30 pm at the City Hall Council Chambers.

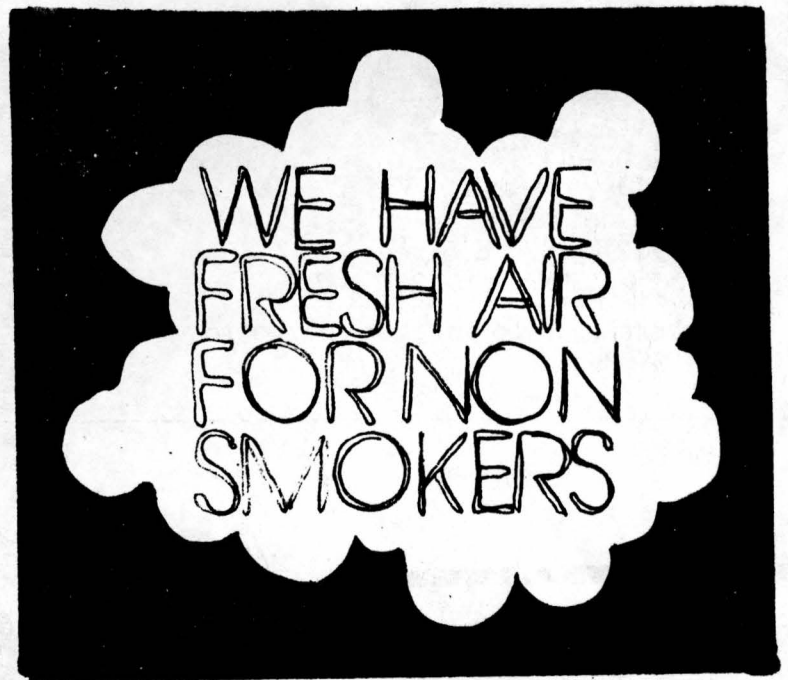
-- Joyce Krenz

For sometime I have been doing so privately. Why do I feel I have been forced to adapt the ways of a hermit? Having developed an allergy and sensitivity to smoke-filled air I can no longer move about freely. Before I can go anywhere I must first ask, "will there be any non-smoking areas?" The answer is usually "NO", so I find myself turning down, one after another: job situations, social situations, and any other human contact situations.

I WANT TO COME OUT.

Councillor Brian Corrin will introduce at City Council's July 20 meeting a motion asking the city solicitor to draft a bylaw restricting smoking to clearly marked areas in public places. The idea is not to completely ban smoking in public but to protect non-smokers clean air rights.

To support this motion, people must come to this meeting - as many as possible to show that they care to breath smoke-free air in public places. If enough people come and fill the gallery, the councillors will see that Winnipeg too should follow the example set by Ottawa and Toronto to prohibit smoking in public areas such as restaurants, stores, waiting rooms and offices. Further action may be taken by writing to Mayor Juba and your councillor on this matter and urging them to support this motion.



WOMEN IN TRADES ASSOCIATION

A new association has recently been formed to assist women who are in trades or interested in going into trades. The objectives are:

- to exchange information on job training opportunities;
- to promote the concept of women in trades through the media, government, business and unions;
- to speak to schools, associations and groups interested in knowing more about women in trades;
- to identify problems of women entering or going into trades, and make recommendations to the appropriate government authorities.

Regular Memberships are open to women in trades, in trades training or interested in going into trades.

Associate Memberships are open to people interested in supporting the objectives, such as private individuals, business people, or unions.

If you are interested in being a member, please fill out this form and return it to:

Rosalyn Carr
Secretary/Treasurer
WIT Association
7 - 722 Maryland Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 1W2

A membership card will be mailed to you.

Regular Member

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Present _____

Trade _____

Skills: _____

Trade you would be interested in:

Fee: \$1.00

Associate Member

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Organization or Business Represented:

Fee: \$5.00



Jim Berry
"Why, yes, I am a 'little homemaker'—I'm in the construction business and I build small homes."



NELLIE McCLUNG THEATRE GROUP

The Nellie McLung Theatre Group has received a grant this summer to present Women's theatre in rural Manitoba. The feminist group has been performing for the past six years at schools, conferences, socials, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Museum of Man and Nature, and the Manitoba Theatre Workshop, also trade unions, and women's groups. The skits, songs and poetry created by the theatre group are based on the history, problems, goals and experiences of the women of Manitoba.

The group's summer programs are very flexible and can be adapted to fit either an evening's entertainment or a series of sketches of out-of-doors. In addition, it likes to encourage local musicians, dancers and dramatic artists to participate in the entertainment.

When preferred, their performance can be broken up by discussions about the ideas they present. When there is an interest, they are willing to conduct theatre workshops for local enthusiasts. They also present skits based upon local interests and issues.

One of their current goals is to have some of their plays (Canadian content, of course) published for use by high schools and other community groups.

The group is holding a social on July 22, which will include the performance of some of their favorite material. Proceeds will aid in transportation costs for their rural and northern tours this summer. Hope to see you there!

Persons interested in scheduling performances of the Nellie McLung Theatre Group or social tickets may contact Sharon Lundviler at #1-269 Church Ave., Winnipeg, Man. R2W 1B9 Phone #586-4610.

M.A.C.S.W. ON THE GO

The Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women is a group of concerned women working together to improve the rights and status of women in all spheres of activity. The broad objective of the Action Committee is to promote the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Within this guideline, the Action Committee pursues two main functions: public education and lobbying.

The Action Committee is currently in the process of planning activities for Fall/Winter '77, and Spring '78. These activities include political lobbying of MLA's and candidates on their positions on various issues, a seminar series based on topics of particular interest to women, a conference for rural women, and research into sexism in the media. In addition, the following sub-committees are in operation: i) newsletter; ii) membership - we are attempting to expand our membership base and draw in many different groups of women; iii) finance - we are involved in some innovative and exciting fund-raising activities.

Membership in the MACSW can be obtained by sending in the membership fee (regular-\$5, sustaining-\$20) to :

MACSW
c/o YWCA
447 Webb Place

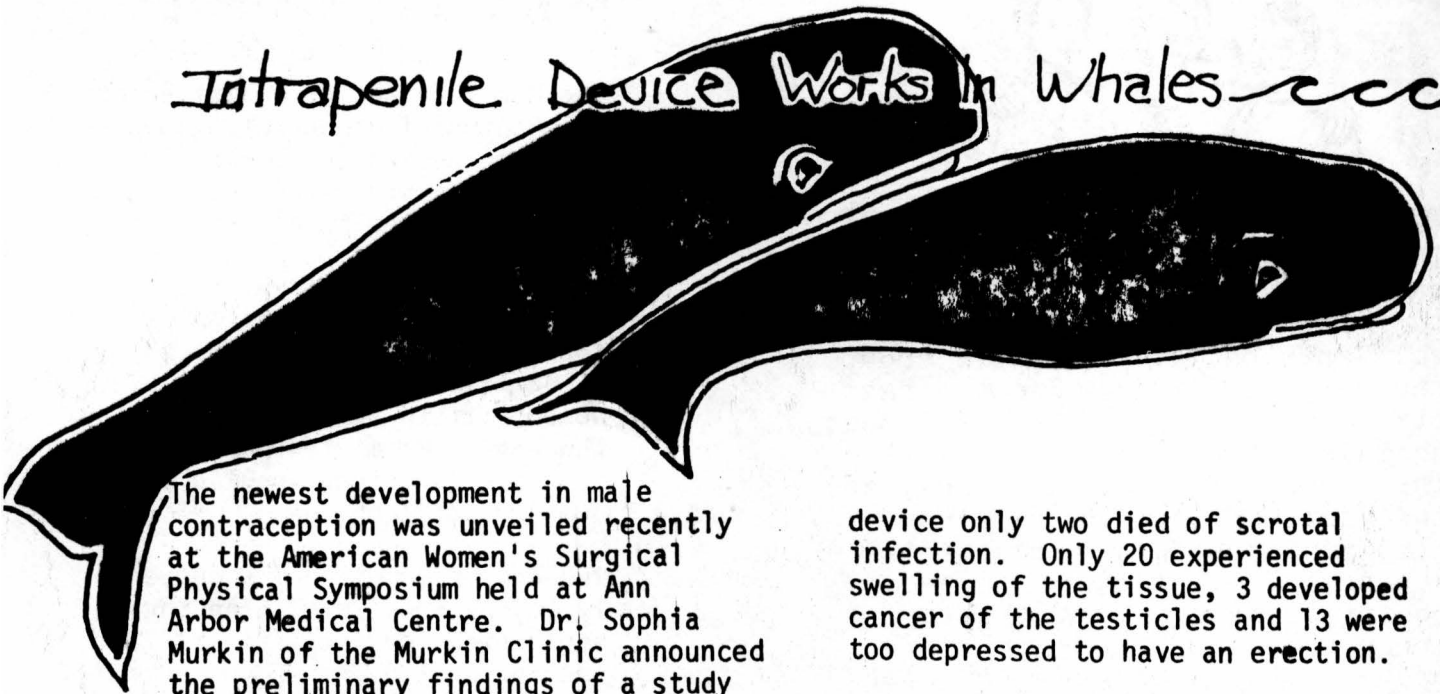
The membership includes a subscription to our newsletter, "Action".

If you are interested in participating in and carrying out any of our activities, please call:

Carole Swan 453-8180(home)
or 284-8220, ext 157
(work)

Annalea Mitchell 956-1308
(home)
or 947-3371
(work)

Intrapeuile Device Works In Whales



The newest development in male contraception was unveiled recently at the American Women's Surgical Physical Symposium held at Ann Arbor Medical Centre. Dr. Sophia Murkin of the Murkin Clinic announced the preliminary findings of a study conducted on 763 unsuspecting male grad students at a large Mid-Western University. In her report Dr. Murkin stated that the new contraceptive, the I.P.D., was a breakthrough in male contraception. It will be marketed under the tradename "Umbrelli". The I.P.D., which is "intrapeuile device" resembles a tiny folded umbrella which is inserted through the head of the penis and pushed into the scrotum with a plunger-like instrument. Occasionally there is perforation of the scrotum, but this is disregarded since it is known that the male has few nerve endings in this area of his body. The underside of the umbrella contains a spermicidal jelly - hence the name Umbrelli.

Experiments on 1,000 white whales from the continental shelf, whose sexual apparatus is said to be closest to man's, proves the Umbrelli to be 100% effective in preventing production of sperm and eminantly satisfactory to the female whale since it doesn't interfere with her rutting pleasure.

Dr. Murkin declared the Umbrelli statistically safe for the human male. She reported that out of 763 grad students tested with the

device only two died of scrotal infection. Only 20 experienced swelling of the tissue, 3 developed cancer of the testicles and 13 were too depressed to have an erection.

Murkin stated that common complaints ranged from cramping and bleeding to acute abdominal pains. She emphasized that these symptoms were merely indications that the man's body had not yet adjusted to the device. Hopefully the symptoms would disappear within a year.

One complication caused by the I.P.D. and briefly mentioned by Dr. Murkin was the incidence of massive scrotal infection necessitating the surgical removal of the testicle. But this is a rare occasion, says Murkin, too rare to be statistically important.

She and the other distinguished members of the Women's College of Surgeons agree that the benefits far outweigh the risks in any individual man.

- read by Phyllis Cooksey,
Director of Human Resources
for Planned Parenthood,
Minnesota, at the Family
Planning Council Conference
in November/76.

FEATURES

INSIDE A CONSCIOUS- NESS RAISING GROUP

by Linda Barker

Six months ago, at the first meeting of our consciousness raising group, ten women sat in a circle and listed their needs, goals and expectations.

Now we are six; four of us are living together and before I even began to write this article I met with all the members at hand to talk about it. That's the way the group works. It has become integral to our lives and to our relationship with each other.

We started out with a guide: the chapters on conducting a CR group in Rape: The First Sourcebook, by the New York Radical Feminists. And with some more or less common thoughts:

- We didn't want a therapy or encounter group. We were hoping to develop our politics, not our psyches.

- We wanted to make our feminism strong and active in our daily living, to turn theory into practise.

- We wanted to develop a basic support system for our lives. That meant not only giving us the assurance of our convictions but developing a supportive group of women (that "bonding" supposedly so exclusive to men.)

- We needed to learn how to become comfortable and happy in our feminism, and how to save our feminist skins, ie. how to survive all the battles we could see stretching into the endless future, with ourselves, lovers, bosses, wafflers and die-hards. Here we are, feminists and no turning back. Let us cope.

That list of wants was resurrected from memory and I don't entirely trust it. I think I've left things out, for it fits what we have and are working on now, and we've gone through some great changes and have lost some members along the way. I'm sure the perspective has changed, and so certainly must some of the goals.

I do know we have worked toward our goals in a very different way than we first envisioned, or than how we imagined CR groups operated. Being feminists already, most of us had formulated some sort of analysis or understanding of sexism and the position of women in our society.

The format proposed in the Sourcebook (the traditional format?) is discussion of a single topic, eg. adolescence, with each member talking about her own experiences and the group then developing a political/cultural analysis based on these common experiences. Although this was necessary for learning about each other and developing trust, we found the procedure chafing and redundant and soon gave it up.

Recognizing dissatisfaction and unhappy at the loss of some members who had found our meetings had little application to their lives, we re-examined and re-structured the group. We dropped the round-the-circle, in turn talking for freer discussion. We decided we didn't need the step-by-step investigation of our development and



left off looking for common experiences in favour of examining subjects of immediate interest, eg. monogamy, anger and ways of dealing with it, woman's role as nurturer (which led to discovering ways of nurturing ourselves.)

We realized that much of our discussions had been centred around men, as lovers, bosses, lovers, powers, lovers... And while this was valid discussion, and necessary, we felt that in our group the focus should be on women (us).

Any group of women is a multi-talented, multi-skilled group. We are all committed to, and excited about, sharing our skills with each other. Along with the discussion of chosen topics, we hold workshops. We teach each other, strengthen each other, sketch, dance, exercise, do body-work etc. One woman is a trained medical advocate. She is planning to teach us how to do self-examinations and what proper medical techniques are. That will give us power. We will have understanding of our bodies. We will have knowledge to use when dealing with doctors.

Another woman can teach us basic self-defense, and soon we begin wrestling lessons. We will therefore gain body control and assurance.

The sketching lessons give us a different way of seeing the world and ourselves. Voice analysis lets us see how we present ourselves and allows us to change it somewhat.

We see this sharing as a strongly political, or radical act in the context of our society. We are not selling or buying. We are working cooperatively. We are not depending on men. We operate from, and develop, our own (woman's) perspective. We are sharing what we value and by doing so recognize and increase that value. WE affirm ourselves and each other, and the work we do. And we are growing strong inter-dependently, and independent of traditional means. We use the group to develop what we like and are proud of in ourselves. This is a practical application of our feminism.

Incidentally (actually, it's not incidental at all) we also increase our power. A discussion which leads us to see that the role of a nurturer is or can be a trap which leads to self-denial, martyrdom and the giving of our strengths to everyone but us allows us to re-examine one of the basis of our self-worth, and begin to rework our self-worth so that it stems from a realistic personal assessment. The development of a supportive community of women means that we are not alone in our struggles, or our growth. It also means that we can see the possibility of, and indeed create, alternatives specifically valuable to us. (This gives me hope for when I cut the apron strings and move east. It also gives me a continuing source of pleasure, strength and hope.)

As probably implied in what I have written, the group is flexible, adjusting to our moods and needs. Those of us who are living together are, in part, trying to live our CR group on a daily basis. It's working out fine. And it's part of a dream of a community of women, centred on women, growing with women.

We're not a political discussion group and haven't formally discussed political ideologies or political action much (except for personal politics at work in our lives.) However, we see political analysis and our own political development in the larger sphere as important, and have specific topics on slate. We feel it necessary to formulate a personally valid and acceptable definition of feminism. We must decide if the

group will work in support of specific issues, eg. the Griffin strike or equivalent, Gay rights. We must understand and develop our unstated ideological base.

I suspect such discussion and work will develop as our strength increases and we begin to see our future and direction more clearly. Presently, we are focused internally and are all viewing our own development as major political work. We're also comfortable hedonists, learning sketching.

Resources: Ourselves

Getting Clear, Anne Kent
Rush

Our Bodies, Ourselves, Boston Women's Health-Book Collective

Female Psychology: The Emerging Self, Sue Cox

Rape: The First Sourcebook, New York Radical Feminists

OH DEAR. I HAD PLANNED TO WRITE SUCH A BRILLIANT AND CONCISE ANALYSIS OF MY WORK BUT I FIND IT QUITE IMPOSSIBLE.

INSTEAD, HERE IS A DRAWING. IT'S ENTITLED "READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?"

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SEEING MORE OF MY WORK, LET ME KNOW AND YOU CAN COME FOR TEA. THE ADDRESS IS 29 PICARDY PLACE, R3G 0X6. AT PRESENT I'M WORKING ON: A SERIES OF DRAWINGS OF PEOPLE IN BED, COLLABORATIVE DRAWINGS WITH TWO FRIENDS, A SERIES OF COLOURFUL HEADS, AND TEA-TRAYS AND PLATES DECORATED WITH CATS. I HOPE TO BE CONTRIBUTING MORE DRAWINGS IN FUTURE ISSUES.

AND THANKS FOR THE RESPONSE YOU'VE GIVEN ME.

SHERRY LEE



PROSTITUTION: The Oldest Oppression

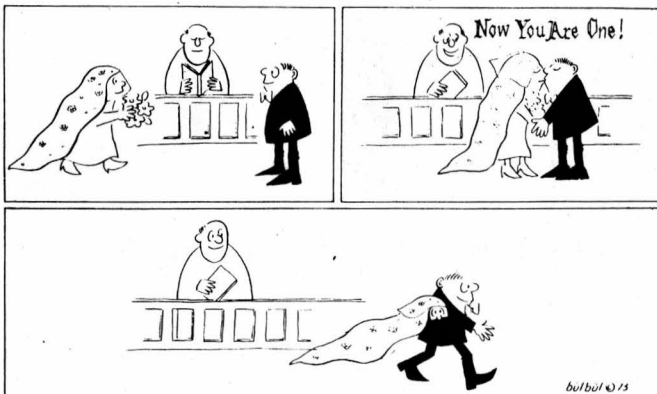
by Debbie Robinson

Prostitution is known as the oldest profession in the world. Perhaps we should call it the oldest "oppression" in the world.

It is one of the many roles in women's sex role conditioning. By ignoring the prostitutes' struggle, we are ignoring the attack on all women. For too many years women have been kept in a position of powerlessness. This is obvious when you look at the economic position in which most women have been placed. These women are the most dependent, and therefore should organize in order to obtain some form of power.

What I am saying is that the majority of women who are prostitutes are women who are forced economically, to sell their bodies. And don't kid yourself, because women are servicing men every day, for little or nothing, whether it be on the street, in the home, or elsewhere. Women are prostitutes in marriage, and at work. It is our conditioning, that is so subtle, in so many instances, that we may just think it is expected of us.

As it stands right now, prostitution is a very degrading job. There is no job security. The prostitute encounters many problems, such as



police harrassment, and their oppression by the pimps, who dominate this field of women's work.

Where do we start? Well, there are now several sister organizations, in the U.S.A., who are fighting for the rights of prostitutes. They include C.O.Y.O.T.E., P.O.N.Y., A.S.P., and D.O.L.P.H.I.N. There is also a union called the "GOLDEN GATORS".

These organizations are stiving for decriminalization of prostitution rather than legalization. If prostitution were legalized, it would give the government an opportunity to make money, and in effect turning the government into legalized pimps. Right now the government already takes money in the form of fines. While the prostitute has to pay a fine, the "John" usually gets away scot free.

If prostitution were decriminalized, however, then the prostitute could operate as an independent business, rather than being controlled by the government. Through decriminalization the prostitutes' working conditions would also improve. The working conditions at the present time are in dire need of improvement. The prostitutes' organizations seem to take into consideration, the actual struggle of the prostitute, and her need to make a living. However I was somewhat appalled at the attitude of the prostitutes' union "GATORS".

I can agree with them as far as abolishing pimps and police harrassment, but I found that they were exemplifying class distinctions between women. "The union is choosey. They pick their members carefully". They have a definite opinion of what kind of women they want. "We don't aim to haul in

superwomen, but we want women who don't have that crippling whore mentality; the one which limits them and degrades them; even before they set foot in the bedroom."

It seems to me that if this union is at all interested in the freedom of prostitutes as women and as workers, then they should have all prostitutes in mind, not just the fortunate ones who have been able to rise above the streetwalker. In other words why limit the union members to only the exclusive type prostitute who can more or less pick and choose her clientele. What about the minority groups of women, who are working on the streets for less pay.

Why is there such a controversy about women being paid for the sexual act or any other service, for that matter. The biggest problem, it seems, is the fact that prostitution, or any other service that we do for men, is not considered, or recognized as work

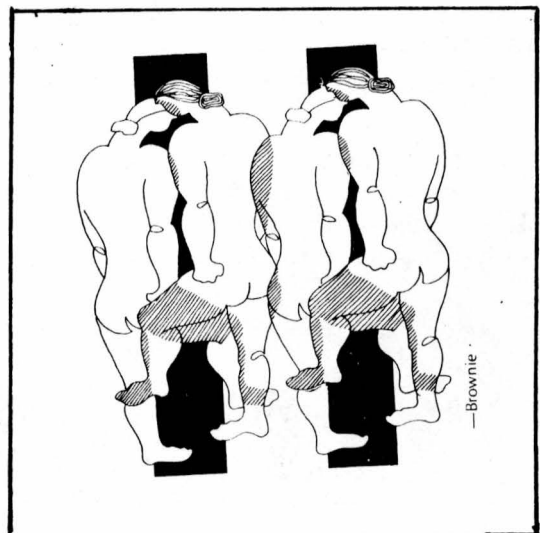
Only through demanding payment, for these services, will people start recognizing the fact that it is work, and we deserve to be paid for it. Prostitution is the oldest profession in the world, and it includes much more than just selling our bodies. It is all of the services that we provide for men, and we should be paid for it.

C.O.Y.O.T.E. is demanding an end to the harrassment of all prostitutes and the abolition of all laws against prostitution. They feel that since business makes money out of women's sexuality, then why shouldn't women make a business out of it?

It is about time that men stopped exploiting women, and that women can instead benefit, for a change. Prostitution is one way of them getting the wages they deserve."The line between paid and unpaid sex is a question of what we get in return."

Although these changes that we've been talking about are far from the answer, it is a step forward. As a lesbian-feminist, I can support the prostitutes' struggle, as it is part of our struggle as women. But I do not feel it is the answer. It is about time that women were allowed much easier access to jobs where they do not HAVE to service men. It is time that all fields were open to women, so that we have more freedom to choose for ourselves, what we want. Because of my lifestyle, and my decision to live independently of men—emotionally, physically, and financially, I have refused to service men in any form. Prostitutes have refused to service men without getting paid for it. So, whatever a woman decides to do, she should have

the right to make that choice; the choice about what we do with our bodies, and the right to refuse these services. Only with our services being recognized as work, and our being paid for it, will we have the power to refuse prostitution in it's many forms.



" The pimp thinks he owns you "

The following is a personal account of a prostitute's life and profession in an interview with Winnipeg Women's Liberation Newsletter.

WHEN DID YOU START WORKING AS A PROSTITUTE?

I started working as a prostitute when I was seventeen.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO WORK IN THIS PROFESSION?

I got started in it for the money. I had no means of support. I couldn't see working for minimum wage, when you can make money much quicker, and tax free. It seemed like easy money at the time. I quit for a while, then I was back in it by the time I was nineteen.

WHY DID YOU GO BACK INTO IT?

Well, I had an eleven month old baby to support, so I went back for the money, again.

WERN'T YOU GETTING MONEY FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE?

I was getting Welfare, but on eighty dollars a month, I didn't even have enough to buy milk for the baby. My welfare worker told me that the baby didn't need milk, but I knew different. Then I got married. That wasn't the answer either, as I was separated within a year.

WHY DID YOU GET MARRIED?

I was at the point where I didn't know what else to do. I was pregnant, and I had my other son staying at my mother's. It was either that, or give up the baby, which I didn't want to do. It was the only alternative I could see at the time.

DID YOU GO BACK INTO PROSTITUTION AFTER YOUR SEPARATION?

Yes. I was stranded in Vancouver, at a time when jobs were hard to get.

"Aren't they always." Any way I worked the bars in Vancouver, for some time. By the time I was twenty-seven, I had become a call girl. Being a call girl is somewhat better than working the bars or the streets, as the pay is better. It's a better situation as you operate from your own phone. It's somewhat classier.

DID YOU FIND YOUR CLIENTS TO BE OF A HIGHER GRADE IN YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A CALL GIRL?

Well, you have a little more say in your choices for clients.



It's like any other business though, as you have to please the customer, since they are the ones who put the bread on the table. I found the higher paying customers to have a slightly higher perversion rate than that of the street "john".

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER "PERVERSION"?

I'd say sadistic and masochistic tricks, but there's also some guys that have even different trips, even more way out than what I have mentioned. I found many of the higher paying customers to have masochistic tendencies, which is not as bad as the prostitute has more control over the situation. You worry about the chances of getting a real sadistic guy who could really hurt you.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING A CALL GIRL AND BEING ON THE STREET OTHER THAN WHAT YOU HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED?

I think that the prostitute on the street has more of a fear of getting busted than does the callgirl. On the street, you usually know the police and often they will sometimes demand a free screw, in return for not busting you. Of course you never know if they are going to keep their promise or not.

DID YOU EVER GET BUSTED?

Yes, but I beat the rap. The john didn't show up in court. The only way they can get you is if they see the guy pay you. They sometimes send out a cop to pay you. They pay you and screw you and then they frame you. That is another danger of the job. You've got to be really alert.

WHO HAS MORE POWER: THE JOHN OR THE PROSTITUTE?

I think the john does in most cases. He is paying for a good time, and you have to give it to him. Of course there are times when you have to draw the line. Some tricks are just not worth it.

WHAT IS THE JOHN BUYING, IN YOUR OPINION - SEX OR POWER?

He is paying for the sexual act but he is also buying power. Power over you as the prostitute. He pays for you and uses you in whatever way he sees fit. You have to be an

actress, and make every customer feel that you're enjoying him as much as he is enjoying you.

DID YOU EVER HAVE A PIMP?

Yes, for three days. That was long enough. I didn't expect that all my hard earned money should go to a guy who wasn't really doing it. Also it's really horrible how pimps usually treat their women. The women get beaten up and of course they do what they're told, or else. The pimp thinks he owns you. I couldn't see staying in this kind of an arrangement.

WHAT OTHER PROBLEMS DOES BEING A PROSTITUTE ENTAIL?

Besides the fears of being busted, pimps, and the fear of sadistic customers, there are certain psychological problems that result from being in this business. Most of the other prostitutes that I know, have a very poor self image. They don't have much respect for themselves. I think that it's because prostitution is a degrading profession, that this happens. You lose the value of self worth.

DO YOU FEEL THAT IF WORKING CONDITION IMPROVE, THAT THIS ATTITUDE WILL CHANGE?

Well I think it might change a little but all in all, what you're talking about is morality, and when a person is demoralized, they usually lose their self worth, regardless of the pay or working.

DO YOU HAVE CREDIT PROBLEMS?

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission is interested in the experience of men and women who have applied, either successfully or unsuccessfully, for credit, loans, mortgages or other financing.

This information is requested for statistical purposes only, to assist the Commission in conducting a survey. It will not be used for the purpose of commencing an investigation.

200-323 Portage Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba.
R3B 2C1

Please write or phone:

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission,

Phone: 944-3007

Lesbians Want Wages Due

Speech made by Francie Nyland, of Wages Due Lesbians, Toronto, at the Gay Pride Rally in Los Angeles, California, June 26, 1977.

Today, in the streets, it's been easiest to see how many lesbians aren't here, compared to our real numbers, and compared to the number of men. There are tens of thousands of us in Los Angeles, and every big city, millions upon millions in the world, but very few of us can march.

We are invisible. The lesbian woman is a married housewife working 18 hours a day -- cooking, cleaning, raising children -- in isolation from other women, with no money of her own. She sleeps with her husband -- it's another chore -- because if she says no too often, he might beat her or leave, and she'll be stuck with 2 children and a welfare cheque, and no prospect of rest. She loves her neighbour, or her sister-in-law and they're seeing each other some afternoons.

The lesbian woman is a welfare mother. Her lover left her children with her husband. She knew he'd remarry, he had more money, he could give the children more of what they need. She had to leave them to come out. The two women moved to another city. But they had to hide their relationship from the welfare worker, from their neighbours, from their parents, and from the children, because if word got around, the welfare might take her children away. As it is, they haven't got much time together, because making ends meet is a full-time job.

The lesbian woman is black, chicana, phillipina and asian. She has the lowest paid jobs. Sometimes she has children who are living for years with her mother

back home while she saves enough to bring them to her. Her work is endless, inside and outside her home.

Self-sacrifice and servitude to others (housework) are supposed to come "naturally" to women. But we know it's our poverty and dependence on men that force that work on us. It's our wagelessness that makes our work invisible and deprives us of free choices in every part of our lives. It's our lack of money and our overwork that prevent most of us from "coming out" as lesbians, and forming the relationships we want.

The lesbian woman is a nurse, or a bank teller, or a teacher, or a typist. She's "out" to another lesbian at work, but if the other women knew, she'd be looked at as a "freak" and might lose her job. She earns half of what a man's wage is, and goes home after work to another shift, shopping, cooking, cleaning her clothes to get ready for tomorrow morning. She and her lover get to let loose one night a week at the bar. It's the only place, and she's tired. She might like to have children some day, but how could she support them and still have a life of her own? She won't depend on a man again.

The lesbian woman is a prostitute. It pays better than waitressing, and that money means independence. But if she ever gets arrested -- and the police are stepping up harassment -- her friends and family will find out, and her children might be taken away. You're only supposed to sleep with one man, as part of a whole package deal that includes doing his laundry, for a roof over your head. If she's arrested her record will follow her from one end of the country to the other.

The economic crisis - inflation, cutbacks in wages, welfare and social services is a direct attack on the independence from men we've fought for. We women feel the effects most because we have the least to begin with. And now we're supposed to keep ourselves and everyone around us in one piece with less money than ever, through yet more work. Lesbian women are having to stay in marriage we hate, because we can't afford to leave with our children. We're being pushed back into the closet on the job, because jobs are scarce.



Gail Falk, New Haven, Conn.

Last weekend women from the Wages for Housework campaign circulated 5,000 copies of this statement at the California state International Women's Year Conference. On the final day straight and Lesbian women passed this resolution, to be taken to President Carter's National Conference in Houston. It read:

WHEREAS our poverty and social pressure force too many lesbian women to choose between coming out as lesbians, and having and keeping our children,

BE IT RESOLVED that we demand wages for housework from the government for all women so that we have the power to freely choose whether or not to be lesbian, and whether or not to have children,

BE IT RESOLVED that we support our children's fight for their own right to sexual choices.

We're fighting as lesbians to defend our money and our homes, our bodies, and our power to have and keep our children, in every situation in which we find ourselves. And to extend those gains by putting back together the pieces of our different fights.

Every issue is a lesbian issue. At the heart of every struggle, in the community or in the factory, the school or the hospital is our fight as women with no time and no money and the least visibility. And until we are strong, everyone is weak.

Straight women in the campaign for Wages for Housework are making common cause with us because they want what we want. We're fighting for the power to determine our own sexuality, our own lives. We're fighting to be able to live independently from men, without paying the price of poverty, isolation, overwork and forced childlessness. We're fighting to double and triple the number of lesbian women on parade next year, in California, Canada, Italy, England - everywhere.

We're being closeted in a gay movement, where the men speak for themselves and we do most of the housework. We have less time to be with our lovers and our friends. We put off for one more year the possibility of having a child.

But we're pushing in the opposite direction. Everywhere the Lesbian movement is emerging millions of women strong. How great an impact we have had can be measured by crusades like Anita Bryant's against us. The written statement many of you have seen today, "Lesbian women have rights and so do our children!!!!", is our response to this attempt to deprive us and our children of our right to sexual choices.

No one, gay or straight - will be free until we women have won back into our hands the money we have earned. "Human Rights" begins with the power of lesbian women.

MOTHERHOOD LESBIANISM and CHILD CUSTODY



FRANCIE WYLAND

"... We are demanding not only the power to choose to be lesbian without losing our children, or the possibility of having them. We are also demanding the power to be with those children *in a way that is not work*. And we will apologize to no one for rearing children who are -- like their mothers -- making a ferocious fight for the power to determine their own lives."

Francie Wyland

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PO Box 38, Stn. 'E' Toronto M6H 4E1 Canada
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PO Box 8858 Washington, D.C. 20003 U.S.A.
\$1.20 *Bulk Orders* from Falling Wall Press
79 Richmond Rd. Bristol BS6 5EP, England





LAW REFORM:



MAKING MORE WORK for WOMEN

Following is a brief presented by the GROUP IN SUPPORT OF WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK to the Law Amendments Committee of the Legislature who were sitting in order to hear from representatives from the public on the proposed family law reform before the House. Over 40 briefs were presented.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to speak with you today on this important Bill. We think many provisions of this Bill are commendable improvements in the field of family law and we applaud the effort that you are making to enhance the conditions of women's lives. However, there are sections of Bill 60 which our organization, the Group in Support of Wages for Housework, would like to examine and offer suggestions for change.

We feel strongly that Part I, "Spouses" of Bill 60 is unclear and can be misleading, especially as it affects the wife. We are concerned with subsection 4(1) that states, "...a spouse has the obligation after separation to take all reasonable steps to become financially independent of the other spouse." Our group wholeheartedly supports financial independence for women. However, we feel the Bill: (1) incorrectly assumes that women have "reasonable" access to financial independence, and (2) fails to attach monetary significance to women's work in the home.

What reasonable steps can a woman take to gain her financial independence in a sexist society? If a woman wishes to take on a job in addition to her work in the home and raising children, what support systems does society offer? What support systems will assure her that her children will get proper care? What support systems will train a 40 year old woman, with no so-called job skills? What society will hire a 50 year old woman with in its eyes, is "just" a housewife with no job experience?

Let's take a realistic look at our society. What do women do? According to Women in the Labour Force: Facts and Figures 1975, 80 per cent of all women in the labour force work in four categories: Sales, Services, Clerical, and Medicine & Health. What does this mean? It means -- minimum wage, no unions, force part-time work without unemployment insurance and other benefits, and no job security. And it means, if a women complains about her wages or working conditions, there are many other desperate women to take her place.

In clause (g) of the guidelines to the judge, some of these problems are noted. For example, subclause (i) considers "...measures available for the dependent spouse to become financially independent of the other spouse" and subclause (ii) considers how "...the learning capacity and financial status of either spouse has been impaired during the course and as a result of the marriage". But then subclause (iii) states that the judge must also consider "... the length of time and cost involved in taking the measures referred to in subclauses (ii) and (i) into account".

We maintain that the cost and time involved in creating the opportunities for women to participate in the work force without damage to their home life, will be enormous for the women involved. Therefore, we feel that the onus cannot be on the woman to become financially independent even if she chooses to enter the paid work force.

We recommend that:

The onus for a dependent spouse becoming financially independent in the labour force be on the state and not on the dependent spouse. And that, in helping a spouse to become financially independent in the labour force, the state assure:

- (a) adequate parent-controlled and state-funded daycare and lunch and after school programs;
 - (b) adequate wages;
 - (c) paid upgrading courses;
 - (d) full employment so that all women who want second jobs can get them.
- These criteria should be incorporated into "factors affecting the order".

Section II - Woman's unpaid work in the home.

One of the guides [5(i)] that Part I gives judges when determining spousal maintenance and its extent says: "...whether and to what extent the dependent spouse is complying with the requirements of subsection 4(i)", that is, whether the spouse is taking -- again -- "reasonable" steps to become financially independent.

This criteria makes a basic assumption that our group vehemently opposes. It assumes that up to the point of separation, what a woman has done to build and maintain a home has not really been work. Even though she has been cooking, cleaning, nursing, shopping, advising, babysitting, maintaining her husband sexually and emotionally, and reproducing workers for the benefit of society, she has been doing nothing toward gaining her financial independence. And if she continues to do these many jobs, minus the servicing of her husband, she is still doing nothing towards gaining her financial independence. Consequently, spousal maintenance is only a stop-gap measure, until a woman can find a second job outside the home.

So, are we to presume that if a woman is not beating the pavement looking for a job, she will not be regarded as taking all reasonable steps towards financial independence because it does not regard a woman's work in the home as worth wage labour and therefore, does not pay her.

What it does not recognize is that even if a woman does go out into the work force, her first job, that of homemaker, does not cease, but still must be done, especially if she has children. And that if the Act states that the onus is on her to become financially independent, she has no choice but to enter the work force. You see, she has not the choice of staying home and doing her first job with the support of a regular paycheck.

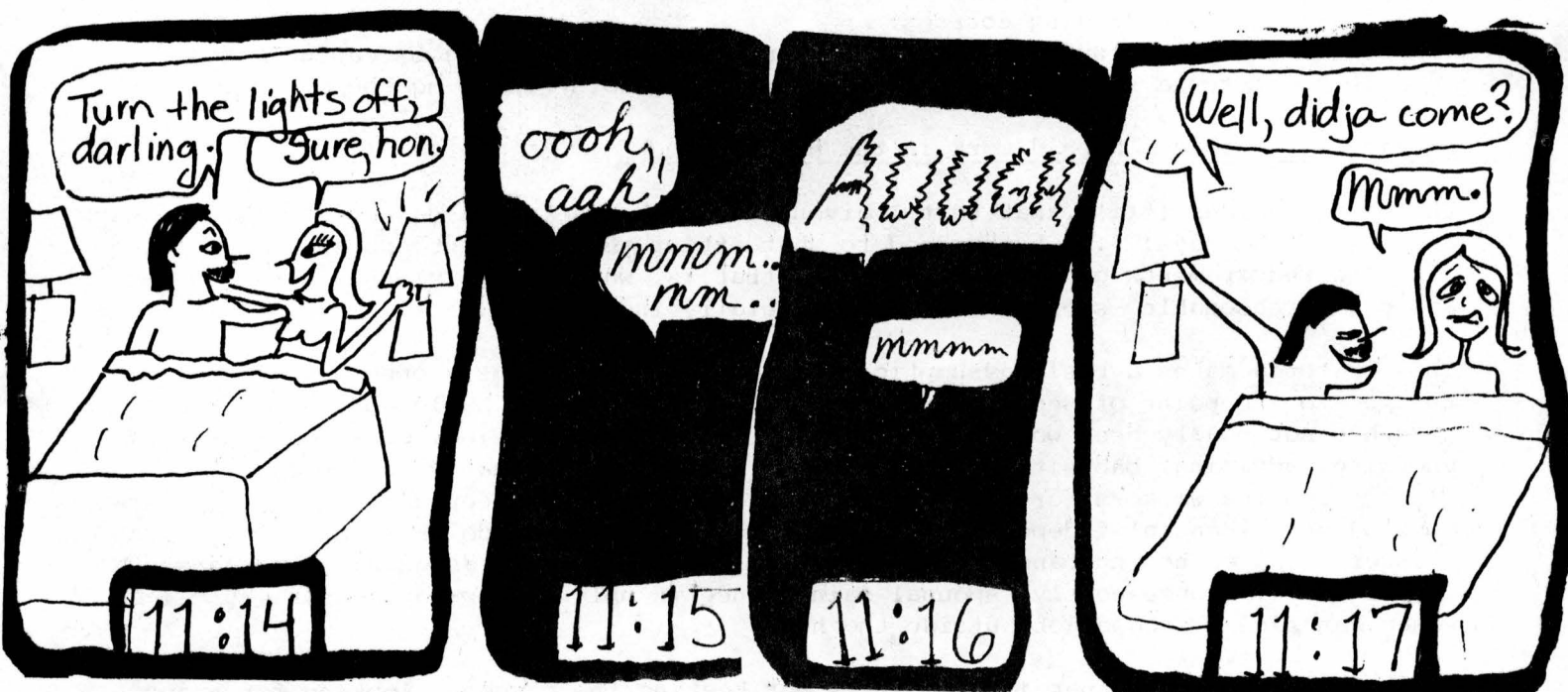
We are certainly not against a woman obtaining a job outside the home and becoming financially independent. But we are against the assumption that a woman's work in the home is not worth any financial remuneration, and that going into the work force is the only mechanism toward financial independence. Whereas the work of a spouse maintaining the home should be recognized as wage labour.

We recommend that:

1. After separation, if the dependent spouse chooses to remain a homemaker or has been a homemaker with a family in the past, that spousal maintenance be paid to the dependent spouse in a basis determined by the length of marriage.
2. The state should take responsibility for collecting and paying of maintenance and if it cannot collect maintenance then the state should pay it out of public funds.

There was strong reaction, especially from N.D.P. M.L.A. Saul Cherniak to the notion that a woman's sexual and emotional service to a man was "work".

As a result of some of the submissions the final draft of the bill did concede it was not always easy for a woman to become financially independent. Originally it said a spouse could stop alimony three years after the other spouse became financially independent. That was dropped. Also due to submissions, an amendment conceded that what a spouse did in the home could be considered financial contribution to the home in the same light as earnings brought into the home from a job.



An Old Need

I have never before loved a woman
Older than myself
A Platonic ember minus bonds.

Two decades between us
Divisions of thought and deed
But not of goals and cares.

I would have given anything
For veiled support, scant encouragement
Or just a soft word or two.

The new generation.
The new hope.
An old need.

Susan Foley Currie
June, 1977



.... more on Gay Conference

by M. M.

LESBIANS BUILD STRENGTH

The Lesbian Workshops

There were five lesbian workshops: lesbian culture, lesbian autonomy, Wages Due Lesbians, lesbian sexuality, and child custody.

Sandy D. and Bev S. (Regina), co-ordinators of the culture workshop, emphasized the need to develop a communication network for women musicians, artists and artisans on the prairies. The group decided to reserve a few pages in a new publication, "Prairie Women", for this purpose. One of the women in the workshop offered to pay costs for those pages as her contribution. Musicians, artists, teachers, students, backers, and others interested in women's culture, please contact "Prairie Women", 438 8th St. Saskatoon, Sask.

(See end of this article for reports on the great lesbian culture at the coffeehouses and dance)

Lesbian Autonomy Workshop

Winnipeg Lesbian Society arrived en masse at the lesbian autonomy workshop half way through it, due to a very successful dance held the evening before. It appeared that there were some fairly serious arguments going on as to the nature of lesbian autonomy.

On the one hand, there was the view that gaining power as lesbians is neither necessary nor useful, that together with the men, we can fight for gay rights which will liberate us all.

On the other side of the question were women who felt that lesbian autonomy is a recognition of the relative powerlessness of lesbians in this society and a struggle, therefore, to gain power as lesbians, by deciding among and for ourselves, what our needs and priorities are. "Only to the degree that we develop our own power will we be able to set the terms of the support the men give us."

Francie Wyland explained how Wages Due Lesbians organizes autonomously within the Wages For Housework Campaign internationally. WLS explained how lesbian autonomy works for us, how by organizing together as lesbian women, we have built a good-sized organization that attempts to fill some of our social and educational needs. The 'gay rights' men and feminist women in Winnipeg, we pointed out, support our autonomy and maintain good communication with us.

We also explained that our organization was originally formed as an alternative to a mixed gay club which we feel is male dominated. It is partly because of this that we are leary of joining any mixed gay organizations unless we can be assured that the power we have built for ourselves will not be threatened or our energies ripped off.

A discussion followed on how we, as lesbians, could best relate to NGRC, a predominantly gay male organization. Some people felt they should by and large be ignored, except for these conferences which give us a chance as women to get together with one another. NGRC, they said, does little or nothing for lesbians, but instead uses women as workers for activities that do not directly address our needs. The NGRC women, those who were delegates or belong to groups affiliated with NGRC, argued that we ought to "get in there and work" to prove that we are worthy of having power within NGRC.

We finally decided that since NGRC does speak nationally for gay rights, giving the impression that it speaks for lesbians, and since in many towns the only place lesbians can contact each other is in mixed gay groups, and since NGRC has many resources we could use, it might not be a bad idea for lesbians to have a good chunk of power within NGRC. From that discussion came the 'at least 50% power' resolution which was passed by a large majority.

Many women were curious about Wages Due Lesbians after viewing the Wages For Housework film "All Work and No Pay", which ended with shots of the Iceland Women's General Strike in 1975 which shut the whole country down.

Francie Wyland talked about why so many lesbians are in the Campaign. "There are millions of lesbian women who cannot come out", she said, "because we stand to lose what little money we have - access to a husband's wage or our own low-paid second job". Wages for the housework that we, as women, do inside and outside the home would enable many more of us to come out - and stay out, if that's what we want.

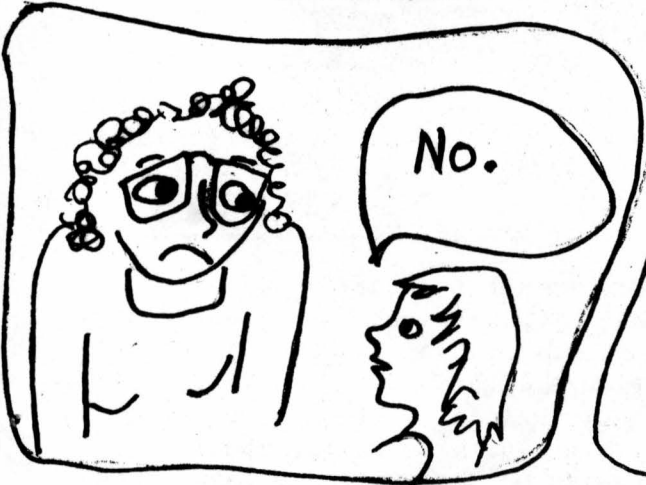


What you need is a job.

"Wages for Housework helps me personally to connect with the struggles other women are making," said another woman. "For instance, I, as a lesbian, identify very strongly with the struggles of the prostitute women. I refuse to do the work of servicing men sexually. Prostitutes demand payment for it. All of us are saying that sexual servicing of men is not a "natural" function of womankind. This is a power to straight women as well who are fighting to have genuinely equal sexual relationships with men."

The workshop ended with a proposal to bring the lesbian statement in response to Anita Bryant (written by some Los Angeles lesbians in support of the Wages For Housework Campaign) to the plenary session to be endorsed. This was passed.

Gay Conference '77' with
WMA LESBIAN
 ♀♀♀



SEXUALITY WORKSHOP

The sexuality workshop was a great success, according to participants. Sue W., Joyce Q. and Marilyn H. from WLS began the workshop, rather nervously, by passing out packages with poems, graphics, articles and a long list of topics and questions to stimulate discussion.

The forty or so women in the workshop decided to stay together in one large group rather than divide into small groups for the discussion. In spite of, or maybe because of the fact that we all hardly knew each other, people opened up very honestly about our sexual experiences and problems.

We discussed approaching other women, how inadequate, shy, bumbling, and generally insecure we all feel sometimes, and the importance of being honest about our feelings with ourselves and with other women. People told funny stories, spoke of embarrassing incidents and of painful moments. We alternately laughed, commiserated and sympathized. The group as a whole was incredibly supportive and anxious to share experiences with each other.

It was a lovely feeling to know that we're all nice people, trying to give ourselves and our lovers sexual pleasure and satisfaction, never having as much time as we would like to do that, feeling unsure of ourselves sometimes, and having very good times often. It strengthened each of us to find women willing to get together with other lesbians and share our collective knowledge and energy so we can help each other reclaim our bodies and our sexuality.



We read "The Coldwater Dyke" by Kate Middleton, which stimulated a discussion about orgasms, or lack thereof, and masturbation. A doctor from Saskatoon explained the physiological process of orgasm and gave some helpful suggestions on masturbation. Many of us contributed our own "discovery of orgasm" stories and/or pre-orgasmic sexual feelings. An important benefit of this exchange was that we all began to realize the wide range of sexual activity that women participate in. Many of us were relieved that most real-life lesbians do not fit the stereotype of a super-sexual "Hotwater Dyke".

LESBIAN CUSTODY WORKSHOP

This workshop, coordinated by Mallory N., a lesbian mother from Regina, explored various aspects of being a lesbian mother. We talked about what it is like to be a lesbian with children to raise, about lesbian mothers who have been forced to give up their children to ex-husbands or to the courts, and about those of us who would like to have children but don't because we can't afford them.

Mallory and several other women who have children or are having relationships with lesbian mothers exchanged experiences and advice on how to tell children that their "Mothers" are both lesbians, and how to prepare children to deal with questions from their classmates and teachers. "Our children learn to be independent at an early age," said Mallory. We don't have money for babysitters so they must go with us most places. They also learn to take care of themselves alone at home for a few hours much earlier than other children."

It is partly because children raised by lesbians lack the discipline of a father that society chooses to label lesbians "unfit mothers". "Those kids know what school is all about," said Sandy, "They have the system all figured out. They know just exactly what they have to do to get by, and they won't put up with people trying to manipulate them to do more work, or be better kids."

Many women are losing custody of children in the courts because custody is being decided more and more on the basis of who can best provide financially for the children. This is, more often than not, the man. Lesbians suffer the most from this new attitude because we are not likely to remarry, thus eliminating any expectation the courts may have of us latching onto a "good provider" some time in the future.

If a lesbian mother is open about her lesbianism, or worse yet, belongs to a lesbian organization, she is considered to be "crusading for homosexuality", and thus, a bad influence on her children. "I used to worry about that," said Mallory, "until I realized that every institution in this society is crusading for Heterosexuality."

"I want my children to grow up knowing the alternatives, and being able to choose their sexuality themselves," she stated. Obviously, that is not the way society views the situation, as only heterosexual parents are considered "fit" to raise children.

We talked for awhile about those of us who would like to have children but feel that we just don't have the time or the money to raise them. For many of us, it has been a choice between our sexuality and the possibility of having children. A choice that was not easily made. A choice we would prefer not to have to make.

We decided to bring a resolution to the Plenary that a group of lesbians wrote at a conference called "Toward A Strategy for a Lesbian Movement" in Toronto in 1976. It reads, in part, "No lesbian or any other woman should face the blackmail of losing custody of her children in court, through social pressure or through poverty. We demand from the government the money we need to keep our children without being forced to depend on a man."



Good Times Are Important, Too!

by Allisa M.

While the workshops were fascinating and informative, the real grist of the Saskatoon conference for me came "after hours" in the informal and often hilarious times between sessions. Some of the greatest solidarity-builders were the entertainment events during the evenings of the conference.

Unfortunately, Winnipeg Lesbian Society didn't arrive in Saskatoon in time for Thursday night's Lesbian Coffeehouse but the Friday and Saturday night events were highlights of the entire weekend.

At Friday's dance, Motherwit, an all-women band from Regina, played an outstanding variety of songs which the whole crowd enjoyed. Motherwit is another addition to my theory that the lesbian culture is bringing forth music and musicians which don't fit into any category yet defined by the (largely male-dominated) music industry.

Motherwit did a broad spectrum of material, all the way from the count-rified "Hurts Like the Devil" by Chris Williamson to some good old rock 'n' roll, but it was all done with a certain twist (the woman's touch?). Listening to "our" music made us feel comfortable with ourselves and each other and, needless to say, a good time was had by all.

Good times isn't exactly what Ferron was singing about at the coffeehouse on Saturday night, but her music brought us together, too, in a somewhat different way. Ferron is a woman from Vancouver who sings the blues to a poetry that is both tough and tender. Her music wasn't exactly fun but it was a powerful sharing for all who had the courage to really listen to someone singing about so many things we've all been through.

A lot of the hilarity mentioned above came from Lorna Boschman both at Saturday's coffeehouse and at the after-parties on both Friday and Saturday nights. Lorna "lesbian comedienne & jester extraordinaire" who pulls her humour straight out of her life with a clarity which tempts you to take her seriously sometimes. I can't say enough about Lorna. Suffice it to say she was one of the several women I fell in love with that weekend.

And isn't that what it's all about anyway? Having great times together, loving each other and learning just a little bit more about the incredible strength available when we manage to win some time to be free. I can't help but feel that the energy generated by our good times together will do more to make real changes in our society than all the plotting and planning in the world. Here's to the A.N.P! (the All Night Party!).



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roy thomas (contemporary native songs)

Peña

PEÑA : CHILEAN ARTS paintings, drawings, woven work by O. NIETO - leather handcrafts by MIGUEL FERRER - knitted coats by P. NIETO - native crafts - mural by THE NIETO'S
music by **hugo torres** (contemporary chilean songs) & **THE CHILEAN ASSOCIATION**

Women's Perspectives

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Women's Access to the Law by Alice Steinbart

This column will deal with some common questions and problems about the law that interest women. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to write.

1. *If I leave him, do I lose the house?*

No, if your name is on the title, you cannot lose your home. If your name is not on the title, then you will only have dower rights to the family home. If you leave your husband without good reason in the eyes of the law, then you may lose these dower rights.

Dower rights mean you can live in the family home for so long as you wish and your husband cannot sell the home without your consent. Next year, the law will change so that even if your name is not on the title, the home will still be half yours if it was bought during your marriage or with marriage in mind.

2. *My husband says that he will take the children unless I agree not to ask for maintenance. Can he?*

This is a common form of blackmail which some husbands use. While each parent has the same right to apply for custody of the child, the Courts more often give custody to the mother. If your husband's attitude is that he will not pay maintenance, then it would seem he is not that concerned about the children's welfare. If the Court becomes aware of this, your husband will be less likely to get custody. Also, if you give up maintenance for your child, the Courts

will not just OK your decision. The Courts will not accept your husband's threat that he will not pay maintenance and may order him to pay even if you do not ask for it.

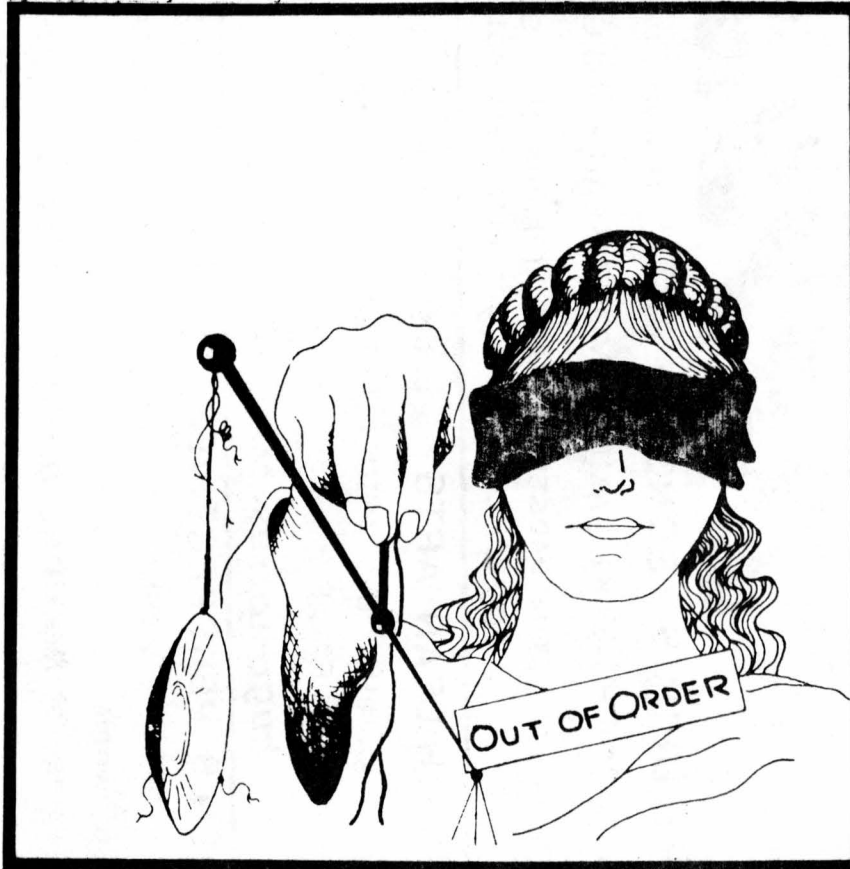
3. *My husband says if I leave him, I can't take the children. Is that true?*

Each parent has an equal right to have custody of the child, although generally the mother is given custody. The Courts make their decision by looking at what is

in the best interest of the child. This can mean a lot of things, such as whether one parent has a serious problem like drinking, the concern for the children each parent has shown, whether one parent just left or abandoned the children, whether during the marriage little time was spent with the children, whether the parent can take care of the children after the separation and particularly what arrangements for child care the parent has made if that parent is working. If the child is older

(usually at least 12) then the child may be asked who he or she wishes to stay with.

But you have as much right to take the children when you leave as he does to stop you. Your decision should be based on whether he will take care of them when you leave or whether he will neglect them, and on whether you can give them proper care if you take them. You must decide what is in the children's best interests. And you must be careful not to confuse what you want with what is best for the children.



SURVIVAL

COLUMN

by Dawn Bramadat

Women are now working in many ways to regain control over their bodies. Self-defense courses, books and workshops on bodywork, abortion on demand groups, and feminist sexual therapy are all manifestations of this movement. Another, less organized, aspect of this trend is the growing realization that male physicians can often be injurious to a woman's health. Women are switching to female gynecologists, pediatricians, and to a lesser extent, general practitioners.

Most of us, however, are still woefully unliberated with respect to our bodies. It's those troublesome daily douleurs that get us down -- a headache sends us grasping to the Aspirin, 222's, or Sinutabs; Bromoseltzer is the cure for all gaseous rebellions on the part of our stomachs; and at the slightest snuffle, the Dristan appears. We are chained to our medicine cabinets!

How free can one be when one must rely on the products of pharmaceutical corporations (male-dominated, of course), just to make it through the day?

There are ways of avoiding the regular round of pills and sprays and ointments. Using simple techniques, drawn from what is loosely termed 'oriental medicine', one can relieve oneself of those pesky everyday ailments, and free oneself from the grasp of the medicine cabinet.

Alice Steinbart is a lawyer for Zuken, Penner & associates. She was an active member in the Law Reform Coalition, which was instrumental in bringing about the latest family law reforms.

You can address your letters to Alice Steinbart, c/o Women's Liberation Newsletter, 143 Walnut, Winnipeg.

The system of oriental medicine, upon which this series of articles is based, has at its core the belief that the body is strong



and will, if treated with respect and care, work from within to heal itself. Foreign agents are not required to "protect" the body from the myriad wee buggies which "invade" it -- a happy, well-adjusted body will be able to fend for itself in all but the most exotic of instances.

Those who follow the practices of oriental medicine believe that the most effective medicine, or the most debilitating poison, can be the food we eat. It is amazing, for example, the number of bodily ills which can be alleviated simply by removing sugar from the diet. Any long-term treatment of a particular ailment, and any preventative approach, therefore, must include a change of diet. Short-term treatments for most maladies are provided through shiatsu (or acu-pressure), moxibustion, or acupuncture. These techniques are all based on an intricate energy model, the effectiveness of which the West does not yet understand.

Future articles in this series will deal with nutrition-based ailments (Eg, headaches, indigestion, lower back problems, menstrual cramps), and how to remedy them, both by long-term methods (altering the diet), and short-term approaches (shiatsu).

Be watching next month for "Headaches - Who Needs Them?".

PHYS. ED. - A SPORTS TURNOFF

by sharon brickman

As a young girl I played baseball, football, skated, ran and fought. None of these activities were organized. I could run a bit faster and catch better than my friends and was proud of this. Like many children I had endless enthusiasm for all my activities, never really classifying myself as good or bad. It was just a part of my life.

When I got to junior and senior high school, any pride or enthusiasm I had for my physical abilities faded, as did my physical abilities. Schoolwork and puberty took up much of my time and physical education in schools did little or nothing to encourage me. Physical education was a tolerable bore, what with exercises, game skills, gymnastics and field day preparations. All these components had no relation to my childhood activities and had still less to do with possible physical activities for an adult. How many hurdles have you jumped this year? Our program at that time was, to my thinking, unrealistic, and therefore, not particularly appealing.

WINNING WAS EVERYTHING

In the long run physical education at school turned me off from sports. The implicit goal in the program I experienced was to produce "winners", whether for field day or for the basketball team. It was partly because of the highly competitive nature of the entire program that my interests in physical activities dissolved. I felt less confident and somewhat inferior regarding my abilities.

It seems to me now that much of the program was an offshoot of the ultimate competitive event, the Olympics. In any case, the women followed the male lead without a backward glance. If you weren't an ace, well, too bad. I can recall "making" our school's girls' volleyball team and despite our solid losing streak, my teacher never played me. Winning was everything in that instance and in general served to discourage participation.

The high school program then, and in many schools now, ignored real fitness for girls. First of all we were segregated from the men. Without doubt this was harmful, since demands on women became less stringent than on the boys. Remember "women's" pushups? Real pushups and other activities that require strength, stamina, and will-power were, and are, discouraged for women and girls in our schools. It took a long while for me to manage even one "male" pushup, but I did it.

EXERCISE 30 MINUTES DAILY

When I took a standard fitness test I was informed that pushups, to develop strength, was a necessary part of any woman's fitness program. It wasn't an "extra" but an integral part in staying fit. An absolute minimum of 30 minutes daily of physical activity is necessary for the maintenance of good health says the Manitoba Medical Association. Other tests for fitness include rate of oxygen uptake. The greater the maximal oxygen uptake (or maximum aerobic power) the healthier your heart is. Before age 12, the values in aerobic power between girls and boys are much the same. After puberty the maximum aerobic power of boys is greater than girls. Women's mean values are 25-30% lower than men's. Regular training can counteract the decline in maximum motor power, thus strengthening the heart. Half of Manitobans will die from heart attacks and for women, the incidence of heart disease increases after menopause.

By the time I entered university middle age had set in. I was totally inactive. However, by a lucky chance I heard of a women's hockey team and joined it out of curiosity. I spent my first year valiantly propping myself up on the ice with my stick. I also began to frequent the local ice rink playing pick-up hockey with whoever happened to be there. I was terrifically self-conscious, but soon became confident enough not to get



too bothered when playing with guys.

CLOSE TO WOMEN

With my women's hockey team I got more than I bargained for. For the first time I wound up feeling really close to women, both as individuals and as a group. Also, we had a great time on and off the ice independently of any men. Another new experience for me -- team spirit is a wonderful sensation, win or lose.

In general I'd like to prescribe strenuous team sports for women and girls. One develops an aggressiveness that requires constant stamina and willpower during the game. You have pride in individual and team accomplishments and in continually honing and developing certain skills.

There is good comradery and a kind of spiritual uplift to be experienced as well, that's unique to a sport's team. The most important thing about such sports is that they're fun and very exciting.

COERCE LOCAL CUMMUNITY CLUB

In hockey, particularly, there are few female models to encourage a young girl to participate. What's more, she's more often than not discouraged from it if she does show interest.

The most practical way of getting the ball rolling for little girls, in any sport that freezes out women, is to enlist voluntarily or by coercion, the aid of your local community club. They spend a disproportionate amount of time and money on certain boys sports. They also spend time advertising and encouraging participation. Therefore, they should be obliged to recruit girls in separate or integrated leagues.

In my own case I received a 100% response when I asked to set up girls' hockey teams at our local community centre. The club will also help recruit and equip the girls. It will be "House League" hockey. Everyone participates equally, and there are no

scores kept and no hitting. The basic purpose of the game will be having fun. In the long run, sports like hockey and soccer will, hopefully, be a real option for Canadian girls.

Swimming, jogging, cycling, skiing are all good activities to keep a woman physically fit and healthy. Strenuous sports like hockey and soccer are fine pastimes as well, although they should be accompanied by some other regular exercise routine. The important point is that women and girls have a real choice, and that they be effectively motivated to be out doing at least one or two activities throughout the year to maintain fitness and to feel personal satisfaction from participation.



Village Nov. '74

HERSTORY

Wages for Housework was a definite part of the pioneer farmwoman's philosophy. Read the following letters written to the Graingrower's Guide in 1913 & 1915.

May 14, 1913.

WIVES CHEAPER THAN HOUSEKEEPERS

Dear Miss Beynon:--May I chime in and say a few words? This is my first letter so I feel rather nervous, there are so many skilful pens writing you each week. I am glad you approve of girls homesteading. I think the only drawback would be loneliness. I cannot see why a woman that understands farm life and has to earn a living for herself, and often the home ones as well, should not be allowed to earn that living and receive wages for her labor as well as a man.

I for one will herald the day when woman will have her rights, be on equal footing with man and instead of being his slave be his helper, his partner and co-laborer. Nowadays most men marry because they can get a wife cheaper than a housekeeper, usually bounded on all sides by home duties and children.

I feel sorry for a "North West Woman." Someone was saying we should not air our troubles. What are we here for if it is not to better ourselves and how can we do so unless we help others. I think if there was more sympathy and love and help given the ones who are in trouble, instead of so much criticism, this world would be a heaven compared to what it is. If we make a mistake usually we are laughed at, or "serves us right, we should have known better", is the judgment poured upon us by an unsympathizing public. I really think most girls are to blame a great deal for their troubles. They will rush in where angels fear to tread and marry in haste and repent at their leisure. If mothers could only realize the great responsibility that rests on their shoulders in bringing up their girls, we would have nobler womanhood and less sorrow.

I am not married, but only twenty-two so think there is lots of time. I always admired a great big push-the-world-aside sort of a man, but shouldn't like him to push me aside. I think "My Husband's Wife" should be happy, she has an ideal husband. I think if all the girls made a resolution not to marry till they were thirty it would be good for most of them perhaps. Then if they got a good man he would be worth waiting for; if a bad one they would have long enough then to live with him. I am keeping house for my bachelor brother this summer and should like the recipe of brown bread "Mother of Six" said she would send.

I think I must close as I should not like Miss Beynon laughing at me for filing the W.P.B. Wishing the Country Homemakers every success.

MYRTAL



June 9, 1915.

HAS TO ASK FOR EVERY PENNY

Dear Miss Beynon:--I thought I would pick up courage to write to your page. How many dear sisters have to ask for every little thing they get for the benefit of the household even. It goes against the grain. I wasn't used to it. I had all I wanted before marriage and didn't have to ask for it, providing it was reasonable, and I thought I could do the same after. Had I only known this would be the way I would a hundred times rather have stayed single. A person never knows, they act so nice before, but it doesn't take them long to change. If I knew any young girls who wanted advice I would say beware of the bachelor who has his nose in everything, to see if you cook it right or not, and you have to do it his way every time to save a quarrel. Now I am not saying every man is like this and I don't mean for this letter to be criticized at all by the licky ones that have the good husbands. This is not meant for them, but the ones that have the bad ones can feel for the unfortunate ones like myself. How many husbands knock their pipes full of ashes on the floor

and even spit around for the servant, which is supposed to be his wife and helpmate, but is nothing to him at all, to clean up. Only for the dear little child that came to us nearly a year ago I would be out working, but it is hard to get a place with a small child and one has to look for its future welfare, so I just have to be quiet and take everything or quarrel all the time and make life not worth living at all. Would like if someone would answer this letter thru the page to cheer up a poor lonely woman away out on the prairie.

DISCOURAGED.



August 7, 1915

ADVISE FOR "DISCOURAGED"

Dear Miss Beynon: - I have read with interest the many letters in the Homemakers' page. I want to say a few words to "Discouraged." Do you try and please your husband? Study his ways, love and cherish him, meet him with a smile and a kiss. I have learned from experience a man does not like to be hen-pecked. We can get along much better by being loving and affectionate. Learn to cook his way, never mind if he tells you of some things you do. If we want happiness in the home, we must learn the wishes of others. Men as a rule are more selfish than women and we can make happiness by using love and persuasion. We wives cannot expect to always have our way; we must go half way or more if necessary. There is nothing like harmony in the home.

A MOTHER OF EIGHT



September 22, 1915.

MARRIAGE IS SLAVERY

Dear Miss Beynon:--There are circumstances when "even the stones are crying." I read your last copy, August 25, yesterday, and the letter signed by "Mother of Eight," supposed to be addressed to "Discouraged," made me so sad, if not sick, that I cannot sleep this night, you see.

Where are we? In which age are we living? How can a self-respecting woman talk the language of a serf? "Kiss the hand which is beating you" -- this maxim the "Mother" suggests to "Discouraged".

My poor lady, before you try the preaching of home-made advice, you have to ask yourself: Am I able to teach? What do I know about the psychology of the woman of the 20th century? What do I know about her sufferings, struggles and aspirations for life?

I can and dare tell you that you don't know our modern woman with their complicated psychology. You look at the man as the master and, according to your conceptions, the woman is made of "man's rib" and is something inferior, good to obey, to serve, to be the "comfort" of the master. Well, I tell you that you went back two centuries at

least. You are living in a dream-land, which cannot be called human life, but just serfdom. Your tactics are not advisable at all, if you want to be respected by the modern man.

A modern, well educated man, wants a wife-comrade, but not a wife-servant. Why to marry if we have to be a servant? According to the custom of Canada, you cannot get a divorce, you have to "serve a merciless master until you die." To improve his humour you have to look in his eyes, as a devoted serf, and kiss him (oh, the horror!), when your heart is crying from its depth. Never shall I kiss a despot, a small undertaker, a greedy master, who is keeping his wife, his comrade, the mother of his children just as the big undertakers their hired slaves - workers: a sweat shop (you call it home!); long hours of work, low wages, good enough to get food and some rags to cover the body. Right to the wealth you have produced with your hard work.

All products of your work belong to the master you see! The women are in the same position in regard to the man as the workers to the masters. One difference: no modern master dares to hope that the workers who are toiling to produce wealth for their masters can love them. The big masters are frank: they say - give me your life, I'll give you some food and clothes to keep you alive with the sole purpose of forcing you to work and to raise children - my future workers. Slaves! Such order (disorder?) is called the capitalist system. Under this system, while it lasts, there is not and cannot be any happy marriages, unless you call servility happiness.



DO YOU LOOK
LIKE THIS BEFORE MARRIAGE



AND LIKE THIS AFTER?

The marriage of today does not mean love only. It is a partnership for business in the best case and slavery in the average case. How can a question of sincere affection and the money question, the business question be combined with the economical,

social and political dependence? What is called love in the marriage of today is merely blunder, disguised mutual selfishness. Marrying, she hopes to get a protector and a home. He hopes to get an unpaid help and cheap pleasure in his home, where he is the master.

I am 53. I was married twice. My first husband was a university man. My second husband is a wage-slave, but for me there is very little difference. I do not speak about furniture, surroundings, I mean my personal, intimate spiritual life is just the same now as it was before. Economical dependence makes me suffer badly. I feel I am a "thing," not a human free being. There is enough to be unhappy even when your master is so good as my husband is good. I imagine I would be as obedient and servile to "kiss the oppressor," as the "Mother" advised us. My good man, under present conditions of economical system, would change quick and get despotic, as the servility always spoils the people, demoralizing the masters and their dependents too. I fight. I never obey his will, I obey the rightness only. He respects in my person a self respecting human being and is sure that I will rather die than be a servant of the man who pretends to be my husband.

My dear "Mother of Eight," to educate, to teach the children to be free, noble people, we have to be not only mothers, but self respecting, high spirited human beings, unless we want to raise wage-slaves and "cannon-fodder," or the meanest kind of people--masters.

Yours in the struggle for better times,

MARY NICOLAEFF.



Appointment
Calendar

JULY - SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
			U.L.S. WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP	U.L.S. GIFTING CAMPFIRE WEEKEND	JULY 29 THEATRICAL GROUP SAT 10 L 992 BARRAS	30
31	1	2	3	4		5
	AUG.	Cinema # Dialogue 1:30-4:30 - Planetarium "Fear Eats The Soul!" Ali" \$2.00	U.L.S. WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP	Native Drums // Songs + ARTX LIBERATION BOOKS 160 Spence 8:00 pm.		6
7	8	9	10	11		12
		Cinema Dialogue 1:30-9:30 - Planetarium "Attica" \$2.00	INERA CENTER REPORT ON ALCAN ROUTE			13
14	15	16	17	18		19
		Cinema Dialogue "April in Vietnam in the Year of the cat" \$2.00	U.L.S. WATER COMPOST			20
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
TOER CENTER DISCUSSION		Cinema Dialogue "Les Ordres" \$2.00	U.L.S. WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP	Peru: Chilean Arts LIBERATION BOOKS 160 Spence 8:00 pm.		27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
		Cinema Dialogue "Harlan County U.S.A." \$2.00	INERA CENTER REPORT ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS WORLD	SEPT. 1		4
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Cinema Dialogue "The Battle of Chile The People without Arms" \$2.00	U.L.S. WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP			11
11	12	13	14	15		16
			U.L.S. WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP	WOMEN'S PASTORAL TRUSS - ARTS MUSIC - LIBERATION BOOKSTORE 160 Spence 8:00		17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
			U.L.S. WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP			25

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