

BRITISH COLUMBIA

NEWSLETTER

volume 1 no. 1

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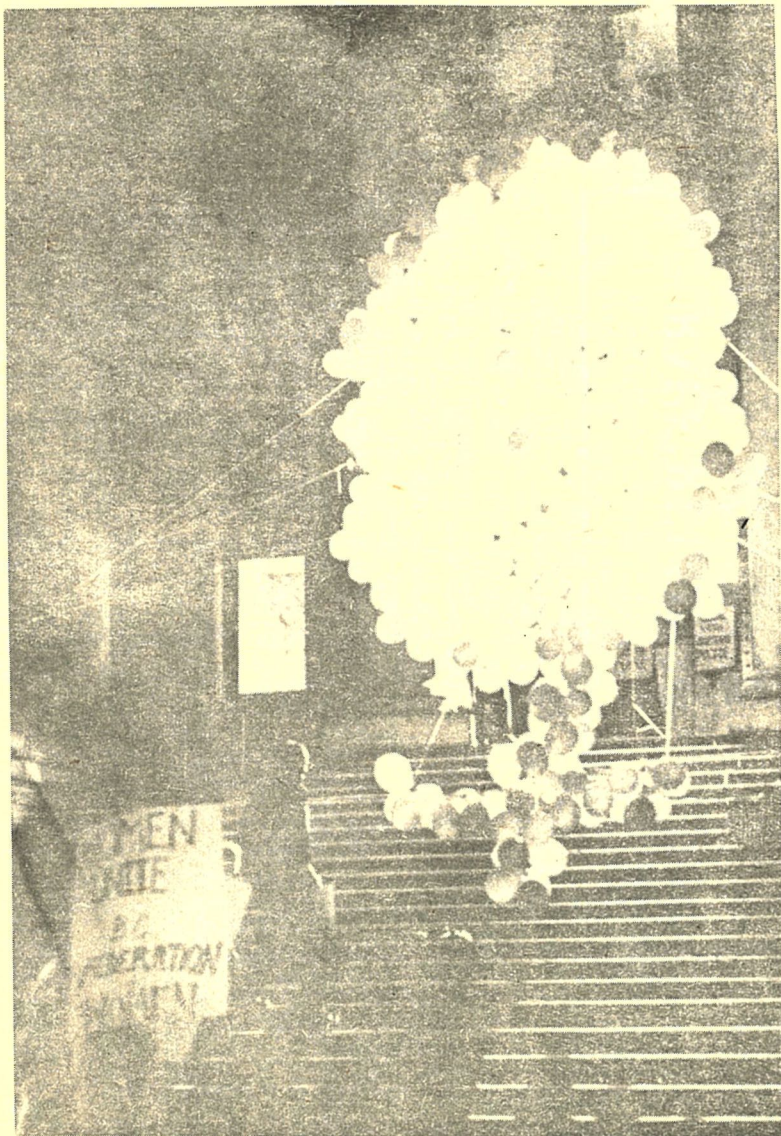


PHOTO BY CAROL GORDON

On the second day of the BCFW
Founding Convention, a rally was
held at the Vancouver Courthouse...
Highlighted by an aerial theatre
demonstration.

EDITORIAL

The experience of the 40 women's groups in B.C. has demonstrated that women alone or groups working in isolation from each other have not achieved enough in terms of real change in the face of government inaction/immobility. By pulling together the knowledge, experience and strength of the women's organizations in B.C., which though diverse in aims, methods and political directions have many common goals, the B.C.F.W. can focus on crucial areas for change in legislation and initiate action in policy areas.

The BCFW does not aim to supersede or replace existing organizations, to substitute its work for theirs or for their activities which are irreplaceable; without them the women's movement would cease to exist. The aim of the BCFW is to perform a new function, additional to these: to act as a focal point bringing together organizations and individuals for the better utilization of the strength of the movement and for the mobilization of efforts and strengths, for education and for communication of struggles and solutions.

The BCFW recognizes that women in this province differently perceive the sexism and discrimination that shape our lives. We realize also that many women are stretching very tentative hands towards the movement, as they know something is wrong, yet don't know what that recognition means. We hope our newsletter will facilitate awareness, and that we in turn will not forget how important yet difficult the process of increasing awareness is and how painful the learning. Those who have progressed through this pain must be encouraged to use their anger, experience, and knowledge to pressure society to eradicate sexism and discrimination. We hope that the BCFW will be a means through which they can act; indeed they have a responsibility to do so.

Women in all parts of B.C. have common problems: discriminatory treatment under law, medicine and employment. But the way these problems surface and are approached varies greatly between regions. Because of a good network of communications and transportation women in urban areas have many opportunities to face and combat their problems collectively. The oppression of rural women (those in the far north, the Cariboo and Kootenay regions) is greatly increased by their isolation created by weather, geography and poor communication systems. The BCFW recog-

nizes these added handicaps and is committed to trying to overcome such drawbacks. To this end the BCFW will financially assist regional and rural representatives to attend meetings, and has created this newsletter to have their ideas known and accomplishments recognized. Regional reps and rural organizers will facilitate communication between rural and urban women.

The BCFW faces many problems and difficulties. Because the women's movement in B.C. has never attempted anything like this before, we do not even know what all the questions we must ask are, let alone how to answer them. Our aim is to reach and involve women all over B.C.; to mobilize women from all parts of the province in action; to provide information and resources exchange that will be of value to women's groups and individual women of all kinds. Finances, distance, geography, weather and time conspire against us, as of course do a multitude of social and political institutions.

However, there are also several factors on our side. At our Founding Convention, we adopted clear and strong policy in four important areas (fully reprinted on pages 4-7). The fact that it was possible for such a diverse group of women to write on these goals and demands says a lot about the potential strength of our new organization. We were able to work out at least the beginnings of an internal structure, one designed to help the BCFW be a real organization all over B.C. We decided that our first major action would be to present to the government in Victoria, in a public and strong manner, these demands. (See article on page 6-7). We were able to make these important decisions because of the strength of the women's movement of which we are a part, in which we are confident, and which we know has the power to achieve its aims.

This newsletter hopes to contribute to that process. We cannot expect accurate coverage from the existing press, which tends either to distort the activities and purposes of the women's movement or to ignore them. From the beginning of the women's movement, over a century ago, the need for a press which will tell the truth about our movement has been recognized. The many newsletters and journals of today's movement in B.C. continue this tradition. We therefore hope that readers of this newsletter will feel a responsibility to provide copy for it, because if you don't do it nobody else will.

Write us about your struggles, your defeats and your victories; about events in your area which you'd like to share with other women; about what you think the BCFW should or shouldn't be doing.

We see the functions of the newsletter as:

- 1) printing news of BCFW activities
- 2) providing a means of communication between interest groups
- 3) printing letters from readers
- 4) informing BCFW members on the activities of the Standing Committee
- 5) providing reports on the work of member organizations and individual members
- 6) circulating news of the women's movement in general, in Canada and world-wide
- 7) contributing to our knowledge of the history of the women's movement in B.C.

MAY THIS BE THE FIRST OF MANY ISSUES !

IRENE MURDOCH TRUST FUND

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women wishes to publicize that a trust fund has been set up for Mrs. Irene Murdoch, who has become a symbol of the inequalities of Canadian matrimonial property laws. After working with her husband for 25 years to build up a farm business, at marital breakdown she was awarded only \$200.00 per month support and no share in the farm property.

Presently Mrs. Murdoch owes in excess of \$5,000.00 for medical expenses, for court costs and for legal fees incurred in her unsuccessful struggle for her rights.

A letter has been sent on behalf of the BCFW to the Trust Fund, saying that we would publicize it and urge women in this province to send donations.

The Calgary Council of Women has set up the Trust Fund, and donations, payable to the "Irene Murdoch Fund," may be sent to:

Mrs. E. Schmidt
5120 Veronica Road, NW
Calgary, Alberta
T3A 0T3

Please note that no receipts are sent: the fund has not been registered as a deductible tax exemption, and mailing receipts back would require taking money from the fund.

BCFW STANDING COMMITTEE MEETS

Dear Sisters:

The first meeting of the Standing Committee of the BCFW happened in Campbell River, courtesy of the Campbell River Women's Place, on October 25-27. (See Minutes for all details.) Fourteen members of the Standing Committee attended, plus representatives of four interest groups -- Health, Education, Lesbian Caucus and Employment. We met Friday evening around oyster stew made by Membership Co-ordinator Jay Stewart, and proceeded to talk, talk, talk.

That evening we devoted to getting to know each other by sharing our perceptions of the BCFW, our understanding of its function and our aspirations for its future. Because we were billeted in large groups -- 5 and 6 in each place -- the discussions continued after we left Women's Place. For our first meeting this was good for us, but we all feel that in future, in addition to arranging a specific time on the agenda to exchange reports with the local women's group, we would prefer to be billeted individually with the women in whose area we are visiting so that we can learn more about their concerns and activities. We are most grateful to the women of Campbell River, who did so much work and saw so little of us.

Saturday we spent in meeting from 9:30 am to almost 6 pm, doing just what the BCFW was founded to do: defining areas of agreement where women of many persuasions can meet and plan concerted action. The day was well-spent discussing the mechanism through which we will work towards consolidating the movement we are all part of. We discussed finance, structure, membership and relations with other organizations. In the evening we shared a wonderful pot-luck supper provided by women of Campbell River; picked up Linda from the airport; and drafted the pamphlet and part of the newsletter.

Sunday we worked until mid-afternoon, discussing the pros and cons of International Women's Year, the next Convention and the Victoria Action. We left Campbell River knowing each other and the BCFW much better, and full of high hopes for the future. We are all looking forward to the next meeting in Abbotsford on December 7 and 8.

Kate Swann
Co-ordinator

MINUTES

Present: Kate Swann, Joyce Bradbury, Pat Buckley, Leslie Dixon, Mary Barretto, Cynthia Flood, Stephanie Barker, Helga Jacobson, Joyce Hamilton, Susan Belford, Gerrie Alborg, Anne Bain, Morgan Fox, JoAnne McNevin, Jay Stewart, Nicky Phillips, Gillian Smith, Esther Phillips.

Membership & Structure

- I. A. Discussion addressing **problem** of Lower Mainland **having** only one rep. Meeting recognised that Lower Mainland would operate differently from other areas and that unspecified members plus volunteers would act with regional rep. to coordinate activities in Lwr.Mnld
- B. Discussion of delegate structure. M/S/C (moved, seconded, carried) that we strike a sub-committee to look into the problems of structure of BCFW. This ctte is to be composed of a rep. or reps. from BCFW Standing Ctte, plus reps. from any other interested women's groups in B.C. This Ctte to be instructed to look into (1)membership (2)delegate representation (3)responsibilities of regional rep. from Lwr.Mnld (4)role of interest groups and their rep. on Stg.Ctte.
- II. Report from Convention
M/S/C report from Convention be adopted.
- III. Internal Organization
 - A. Internal Communications. Due to resignation of Maureen Elston and unavailability of Diane Clarke, it was decided to phone Linda Hancock and ask her to fill the position. She accepted and flew out to join us that evening!! Linda was asked because she ran before the convention for another office and received obvious support from the women present.
 - B. Vacancies in Regions 1 & 7. Leslie Dixon will try to contact women in these regions.
 - C. Interest group contacts. Kate Swann will publish in newsletter names etc. of women who signed up for interest groups and request that they select a contact person whose name will be on file.
 - D. Reaching new groups - newsletter seen as solution.
 - E. Volunteers to assist Standing Ctte. Newsletter seen as solution.
 - F. Interim meetings: Ctte recognized that for practical purposes, i.e. finance, time, distance, interim meetings necessary.
 - G. Interaction interest groups & Standing Ctte: M/S/C that minutes go to St. Ctte and interest grps, that interest groups advise Kate by certain date if interested in next meeting (being at it).
Next Standing Ctte meeting in Abbotsford Dec. 7/8
Interim Mtg Nov. 18
Vancouver Ms, 2089 W. 4th,
8 p.m.
 - H. Open/Closed meetings.

As in structure of BCFW space provided at all meetings for members - voice but no vote: special invitation to hosting area.

- IV. External:
 - A. Fast responses to media, political situations, etc. Through External Communications whenever possible. Any group taking action in the name of BCFW to advise Joyce Bradbury. When interest groups developed this problem will diminish.
 - B. Beginning new interest groups: newsletter seen as solution.
- V. Newsletter.
 - A. financing: by subscription.
 - B. organization: by Internal Communications and many volunteers.
- VI. Victoria Action: It was decided, because of the time, money and effort involved in organizing on a provincial scale, to combine the Victoria Action with the next convention. Early April was chosen to allow time for the organization and to avoid winter travelling. M/S/C that a committee be struck to research and plan a 3-day convention/demonstration/festival in Victoria in early April. The terms of reference to be (1)location (2)time (3)costs (4)general logistics. Mary Barretto as coordinator/organizer.
- VII. International Women's Year: Joyce Bradbury to send convention resolution to Ottawa: the decision was reached that BCFW would not solicit IWY funds for itself but would urge that the monies be granted to grassroots women's groups to finance service ~~service~~, not discussion. BCFW seeks to unite women's groups and sees IWY monies as tokenistic and potentially divisive.
- VIII. Finance
M/S/C that BCFW hold a small raffle.
M/S/C that Pat Buckley be empowered to request pledges for support.
M/S/C that BCFW donate six issues of Branching Out to Campbell River Women's Place in thanks for their hosting the Standing Committee meeting.

November, 1974 No. 1 Vol. 1
Editorial Committee

Ann Bain	Linda Hancock
Mary Barretto	Nancy Ryan
Cher Curry	Suanne Speed
Cynthia Flood	Kate Swann

Due to limited space, all articles are subject to editing.

EDUCATION

The EDUCATION INTEREST GROUP has met twice, and through discussion has delineated several priority areas of activity. Our feeling is that our main role should be that of support for the activities of existing groups/organizations. Duplication of effort is already apparent among the various organizations concerned with women and education, and for us to start in on these as well would be wasted energy. What we can do is to offer support and assistance to these activities, in what ever form seems most needed. Also, we can perhaps perform a liaison role--keep the various groups aware of what the others are doing so that work may be more effectively co-ordinated. We therefore examined each area of the BCFW policy on education with these aims in mind.

1. Sex Discrimination in Public Education: Reva Dexter, special advisor to the provincial committee on sex discrimination, has compiled a pamphlet called "Guidelines For Educational Material on Equal Treatment of the Sexes." It is available from Dept. of Education, #301-1595 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver. The pamphlet covers a wide range of curricula and courses, and includes suggestions for avoiding stereotyping and sexist language. Reva asks that teachers interested in countering sexism in the educational system contact her at the above address, so that she can develop links and connections on a province-wide basis.

2. In-Service Training on Sexism: Linda Shuto of the BC Teachers' Federation Status of Women Task Force has a large quantity of information suitable for the preparation of kits for in-service training programs. At present, this material is too bulky and insufficiently organized; it needs ordering to be made effective and concise. We could be really

helpful here, if we can make contact with teachers who have writing and organizational skills, and a good working knowledge of in-service sessions. Once the kits are finished, Linda can move to get the sessions going. Any interested teachers should contact her at BCTF, 2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver, 731-8121. Please let us know too.

3. Organized Support For Students: Our student representative, Caroline Wuscke of Point Grey High, is planning to write a form letter to all high schools to try and get a rep from each school. Thus an organized chain of support, backed by the BCFW, could act as a body to receive student complaints and act together to counter discrimination and achieve change. Reps could work to make birth control information available, for example, and perhaps to set up CR groups. Linda Shuto has developed a women's studies program for high school use; interested students and teachers should contact here (see #2).

4. Library Research: Here it seems that a good way to work would be via liaison with the newly-founded BC Women's Studies Association

(see article on page 10). Its plans for a research centre and a publications program clearly merit BCFW's support and involvement.

5. Sex discrimination against women employed in the educational system; childcare; alternative structures: We are interested in publicizing any work being done in these areas, and in providing support if we can.

Any individual or group wanting our support or assistance, or wishing to have the BCFW present its policy or provide input on women and education, please contact the BCFW Education Interest Group by phoning Leslee at 681-6891 (Vancouver).

ISHTAR

ISHTAR WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

Ishtar was a Babylonian goddess: She was nurturant and compassionate, goddess of fertility and home. But she was also strong and aggressive, an avenger of wrongs. She was, infact, a whole person.

Background

Ishtar Women's Resource Centre and Transition House opened June 1, 1973 after several months of hard thinking, discussion and groundwork by a small group of women in the Central Fraser Valley. We were originally funded by OFY to be a multi-service centre for women. After OFY ran out in August '73, five of us (the original staff was 12) continued on, without funds until DHR picked up the funding. After ups and downs, funding cut-backs and other like catastrophes, we continue to exist, one and a half years later, with four of us sharing three full time salaries, and many of us working voluntarily.

Services

Throughout the 1½ years of our existence, Ishtar has provided the following services to women:

- Transition House
- Lay/feminist counselling
- Abortion information, counselling and referral
- Legal Advice
- Feminist Library

- Women's Studies Courses
- C-R groups/discussion groups

We also publish a monthly newsletter, and have been working to organize childcare centres in the Aldergrove Area.

Ishtar is a collective. The staff, paid and unpaid divide specific areas of work (ie. abortion referral childcare) among themselves along loose lines of interest/experience. Those responsible for a specific area make decisions, carry out tasks on a day to day basis, keeping the rest informed about what's going on, getting feedback, and so on. All major decisions are made collectively in staff meetings, and all work not covered by specific areas (Transition House shifts, counselling) is shared equally.

Because our funding is specifically for the Transition House, our main energy must go into that--phone shifts, counselling shifts, arranging job or welfare appointments for

women staying in the house, arranging transportation, accompaniment to family court, etc. There is little time or space for all our other activities--the women's studies courses, facilitation of other resources for women-- which, as feminists, we are committed to doing. As the load increases, we have been finding ourselves getting more and more locked into 'doing services', and putting our feminist work aside for "when there's time".

So--we are making some changes. Instead of allowing our funding sources to dictate what our activities will be, we are spending a lot of time focusing on our long term objectives, and then approaching funding agencies which will meet our needs. Part of this, is the separation of the Transition House from the Women's Centre--something we are thinking about but have not yet finally decided to do. We are also using a committee-type framework more and more to get things done. Groups of volunteers form around a specific issue, or work-areas and develop that area, do whatever needs to be done. The

newsletter is now run by such a committee, the Abortion service will be forming a committee later this month to do the development/lobbying kind of work that badly needs doing in this community.

Ishtar recently decided to affiliate with the B.C.F.W., and we are looking forward to meeting with its Standing Committee at the December meeting in the Fraser Valley.

IWY

Sisters, after almost 2000 years we've finally been recognized! The United Nations has declared 1975 to be International Women's Year -- a year to focus attention on improving the status of women, to promote awareness of the changing role of women in today's society: an occasion for recognition, encouragement, and, hopefully, consciousness-raising.

Like too many other things that have been done for women, the IWY offers no immediate action. What it does offer is a chance to display that women do exist, and to discuss and to organize women's events. We need tangible changes in laws and attitudes, not just elaborate displays of what women can do. It is women who must create the opportunities to understand, acknowledge and organize against the oppression of women, not the patriarchal governments under which ALL people are oppressed.

A few plans have been established for IWY: a national educational and promotional media campaign aimed at influencing attitudes; regional and national conferences designed to create an awareness among Canadians of the changing attitudes towards women; removal of barriers to equality in existing legislation and regulations; making funds available to organizations for projects related to IWY; implementation by government departments and agencies of special programs to promote equal opportunity for

cont. P. 10

REPORT ON THE FIRST HEALTH
CONFERENCE OF THE B.C.F.W.
HELD AT THE VANCOUVER PUBLIC
LIBRARY ON NOVEMBER 2, 1974

The conference started with opening remarks from the Interim Health Coordinator. It became clear that most of the women who were attending the conference had not been present at the Founding Convention of the BCFW, and so we spent the first hour or so talking about the Convention, the aims of the BCFW, how health policy decisions had been reached. Morgan Fox gave a summary of the Standing Committee meeting which had taken place the previous weekend at Campbell River, B.C.

About 40 women attended the conference and we made it as comfortable and informal as possible with a lot of questions and discussion.

We decided together that we would begin by working on the three policy recommendations:

1. Comprehensive program of health education in school curriculum starting in kindergarten including mental and physical health, sex, VD, birth control, nutrition, and breast self-examination.
2. Governmental responsibility for ensuring that abortion is acceptable and available in their area to all women in B.C. regardless of geographic or economic status.
3. User-controlled mental and physical health clinics as outlined in the Foulkes Report, staffed with paraprofessional as well as

professional personnel (preferably feminist) which would include mobile units for the interior and regional provincial laboratories.

We used the time as an education/information day, with those women who were already working in one of the above health areas giving a presentation and overview.

During the morning Bonnie Leedes, from the Committee To Defend Dr. Morgentaler, spoke on abortion and there followed a question and answer period when it was decided that a sub-committee would be formed to organize and compile an abortion action package. (The people who will work on this are Connie Guldemond, Judy Cooper and Claudia MacDonald). The package will contain notes regarding the law on abortion, a sample letter supporting the removal of abortion from the Criminal Code, and a list of names and addresses

es to which protest letters should be sent. It was felt that this is a very important first step on the matter of abortion. The people who oppose abortion are very organized and are busily making their views known by writing continually to the Government which at present indicates to government people that the majority of the country are opposed to abortion. Thus we saw a great need to make our views known too, and the package, which will be distributed as widely as possible, will be urging women to take action and write.

Apart from this plan, other ideas of action were:

- 1) to get information to more women about where/how to set about getting an abortion under the current restrictions - we were all very concerned about the number of women who are either unaware that they can get a safe abortion or otherwise cannot find a sympathetic doctor to perform it and therefore are having illegal abortion;
- 2) to put pressure on the health units to get services such as birth control counselling clinics, abortion counselling and referral.

Both these ideas are going to be left for a while as it was felt that the abortion action package took priority.

The afternoon was spent on the Foulkes Report. Melanie Conn gave a presentation on her interpretation of the Foulkes Report, particularly on the recommendations for better health care for women. We discussed different ideas and came up with the decision that if we are to have any effect on the health care system, it is vitally important for us to have a voice in the planning of health services. We discussed different ways of doing this which included:

- getting onto hospital boards
- going to Board of Education meetings
- making complaints about your doctor to the College of Family Physicians and Surgeons, rather than to your best friend, etc.

A list of women's health services and ways to infiltrate the systems will be circulated at the next conference

The last section which was to be a presentation and discussion on health education was not dealt with as we ran out of time, but hopefully will be done next time.

The energy and enthusiasm for the conference started quite low but happily improved during the day and we began to find a pace which was agreeable. It

will be a very long and arduous process for the BCFW to have any effect on our health care system and one which will require a lot of energy and sustained effort. Thus it seems we must be prepared to wait for those results which we are all so anxious to see.

The next conference will include a report from the sub-committee on abortion about the state of the abortion package, a review of health services and how to penetrate them, a presentation on health education in B.C. and elections of the health group coordinators.

It will be held on Saturday November 30th from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (the address will be forthcoming). We decided to hold it at one of our homes as we feel this would be more comfortable and also would avoid money hassles for renting a hall.

If there are any queries, the coordinator for the month is Lynne Citroen: 732-7708

THE ACTION REPORT

By
Mary Barretto

The Action Group, as it exists at present, consists of Joyce Hamilton, Pat Buckley, Leslie Dixon, Gillian Smith, Susan Belford, Nicky Phillips, and myself as coordinator. We would welcome anyone else who wishes to join us: the only qualifications needed being enthusiasm, energy, ideas and time.

We have a dream. In the Spring of 1975, the Year of the Woman, every woman's thoughts will lightly turn to Victoria. And hopefully, her feet will, too. For in that winsome city will be held a Women's International Festival that will utilize all the talents that women in B.C. have to offer. There will be a craft fair, an international food fest, cultural activities, a conference, and a demonstration. Women of all ages, creeds, races and economic background will rub shoulders together. There will be song and laughter, a mingling of minds, an opportunity to meet old friends and forge new ones, to discuss your problems and air your concerns, to link arms and walk up the steps of the legislature. That is where the Big Brothers make the decisions that affect us little sisters. We hope to show them collectively that we are ready, willing and able to shoulder some of the responsibilities of decision-making that have so long burdened their manly shoulders. We would like to be considered as partners rather than as dependents; that far from being a threat we would be an added strength to the economy of this nation.

In order to demonstrate this strength, we ask you to volunteer your skills/talents, as well as

B. C. F. W. HERSTORY

In August 1973 a conference on women and education was held at UBC, sponsored by the Women's Action Group there, which was attended by women from many different parts of the province. The idea of a province-wide feminist organization surfaced here for the first time (at least as far as I'm aware). It seemed a very new and intriguing idea. A group of women from the conference circulated letters about this idea around the women's movement, describing the concept and inviting ideas. (This group-ing was called The Mothers of Confederation!) Then in September, at a women's conference sponsored by the NDP Women's Committee, which featured an impromptu demonstration for women's rights legislation against Premier Barrett, the idea was proposed again of trying to form an action coalition to unite the women's groups around BC.

For one reason or another neither of these attempts got off the ground. But the idea was in the air, and by the spring of 1974 it was being talked about some more. Several factors combined to make the creation of a united women's group very attractive.

First was government inaction on women's rights legislation. Although the NDP's election platform had included good women's rights planks, no significant measures had been introduced as legislation. Rosemary Brown's private member's bill on affirmative action was obviously slated for a slow death on the order paper. Governmental response to letters, briefs, delegations, etc., from women's groups was either polite and indifferent, or just indifferent. Many women felt that they had had the right to expect better treatment from an NDP government than from its predecessor, and were increasingly frustrated and angry at the lack of governmental action.

A second factor was the recognition of a remarkable degree of unanimity among women's groups during the Hearings put on by the government on Legislative Priorities for Women's Rights. The Commission heard briefs in many, many places and from many women's groups in BC in the late fall of 1973, and the same demands, the same arguments, the same declarations came up again and again. Further, these Hearings showed that women were not interested in fighting each other for top place on any legislative agenda. One spokeswoman after another indicated that all demands were important, and that all deserved priority attention.

Third--from the point of view of one who lives in the Lower Mainland--was the fact that several exceptionally well-attended women's conferences were held here in the early months of 1974. At these ga-

therings, participants would express interest in the matters under discussion, but would also say, "This is not enough--we must do something. We know what the problems are, and we know what we want done about them. We need some action. We need to get together."

The questions then were How? When? To do what?

In early April, representatives of the NDP Women's Committee--itself extremely dissatisfied with the treatment it received from government--contacted women's organizations throughout the Lower Mainland to discuss the idea of holding a major Strategy Conference of the women's movement in B.C. The response was universally positive, and a loose steering committee of women from a dozen or so groups began working on the project. Preparations were severely hampered by the mail strike, but letters went out to a list of over 700 individuals and groups--the list was a sort of composite of all the mailing lists of all the groups involved in the steering committee. Reaction was slow, again because of the mail strike, and for a while there was much despondency; but then the mail clog cleared up, and word began coming in from all over the province that women thought this was a fine idea and wanted very much to come. Brochures were prepared, more mailings done, childcare arranged, and finally on 25 May the Action For Women Strategy Conference was held at Capilano College in North Vancouver, with over 300 women attending.

Nobody knew exactly what could or would come out of the conference. As noted above, the vague idea of some sort of umbrella group was in the air, but no one had a clear idea of what that could mean, and no group came prepared to make such a proposal. The morning plenary heard women from half a dozen groups describe the strategies they had used to try to win governmental action--Women's Health Collective, Committee to Defend Dr. Morgentaler, Women In Teaching, Status of Women, NDP Women's Committee, BCFF--and there followed a fascinating though inconclusive plenary discussion of strategy from many points of view. In the afternoon workshops, however, everything started coming together. As one group after another reported back to a second plenary, it was clear that there was virtual unanimity on the need for some sort of federation, and also on the need for a manifestation to the government of the strength and unity of the women's movement. Decisions were taken to try and form a federation and to hold a women's parliament in Victoria, and a steering committee was formed by volunteers from a great variety of groups to get these two big projects off the ground via organizing a founding convention for the federation.

The Steering committee met as a full group for four or five weekends over the summer; a full account of its activities would make a fascinating study in group dynamics, in the ability of women to overcome personal and political difficulties, in efficiency, in inefficiency, and in many other things. Most of our work was done in subcommittees--structure, finance, policy, publicity, etc.--and these groups reported back to the main meetings. We had to figure out what the federation was supposed to be--which meant that each one of us had to figure out what it meant to her first, and which led to many searching and sometimes contentious discussions on structure--and then plan a convention which would allow both for individual input and group decision-making, for business and celebration, for policy discussion and decisions on the Victoria Action, etc., etc. As those of you who attended the convention know, we won some and we lost some. Our agenda was clearly unworkable, and that caused major problems; but the convention participants coped very well with the problems we created and with others too, and we felt that on the whole the convention at UBC provided a good base on which to build our new organization, the B. C. Federation of Women.

Cynthia Flood

structure

Introduction

A unique structure was required to create a B. C. Federation of Women if it were to: appeal to individuals and groups; be responsive to the needs of the whole province; be able to address itself to the dual roles of service and action without conflict; and be responsible to the Convention, acting on its direction. The following are the recommendations on structure which were adopted by the BCFF Founding Convention in September.

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee is the elected body of the BCFF. It is responsible for specific functions and tasks; representative, yet small enough to make monthly meetings feasible; not hierarchical; and, above all, responsible to the Convention and acting on its direction. The Standing Committee consists of 22 members, 12 of whom are designated regional representatives and 10 members-at-large.

Regional Representatives

Regional representation is of the utmost importance -- linking all parts of the Province with the BCFF. The regional representatives are responsible to their areas (it should be noted that the regions are not definitive areas but rather focal points) through regional elections to be held at Convention. Their responsi-

bilities include: seeking out of new members, receiving membership fees, organizing their area for Provincial action, organizing in their area around local issues, providing liaison between members within the area and between areas.

At-Large Representatives

The total convention elects women who are responsible for specific functions within the Standing Committee which would affect the work of the BCFW on a province-wide basis. It was adopted that such elections be on the basis of accepting specific tasks, as the nominee is held responsible for that task and is therefore accountable. The specific positions adopted were as follows:

Co-ordinator: contact for chairwomen of ad hoc committees and interest groups; arranger of meetings; provides channel for requests for information, speakers, resources, etc.

External Communications: public relations, correspondence, distribution of minutes and agenda to newspaper.

Internal Communications: direction of newspaper, contact for interest area editors, organization and maintenance of internal communications.

Finances: raise, distribute, record finances of BCFW.

Membership: keep record of membership of BCFW, recruit new members (groups and individuals)

Rural Organizer: encourage the development of regional chapters, act as an ombudsperson for rural women, research rural needs, act as rural contact

Action Organizer: organize and co-ordinate Victoria Action, organize other activities recommended by Convention, liaise with regional representatives for regional actions.

Unspecified (three positions): act as floaters, giving assistance where needed; could assume that initial task would be assistance with Victoria Action.

Many of the functions of the Standing Committee are too heavy for one individual, and therefore where necessary Standing Committee members will act as chairwomen of volunteer sub-committees. If disagreement on a general or specific issue arises between the chairwoman and any member or members of such a committee, the matter shall be referred to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee was requested to investigate grievance procedures as part of its evaluation of BCFW structure prior to the next Convention.

Accountability and Voting

If a Standing Committee regional representative cannot attend, an alternate may cast a proxy vote, and if no alternate can attend then voting may be done by mail, telephone or other means of communication.

6 The agenda of the Standing Committee

meeting is to be published as far in advance as possible.

If recall of an elected member is thought necessary, it is to be based on a two-thirds vote of the full Standing Committee by resolution of any five members of the BCFW. Notice of such resolution must be given one month previous to a decision being taken, and any such motion must be placed in the newsletter. The Standing Committee must report its decision to the subsequent Convention, and a two-thirds vote at Convention would negate the Standing Committee decision.

Interest Area and Ad Hoc Committees

It is expected that Interest Groups will become the major area of activity for BCFW members. At the September Convention, groups on health,

education and labour were formed, and a lesbian caucus was organized. Some of the tasks of these and of groups which will undoubtedly form in future will be: to elect one person to co-ordinate communication with the Standing Committee and the newsletter; develop full and detailed policy to present for future Conventions; to prepare material for publication in the newsletter; to provide information and other resources for existing organizations which focus on the same issue; to hold public meetings on issues related to their interest area.

Membership

The Convention decided that at this time the method whereby a group joins the BCFW should be as follows: submit a simple declaration of support, along with a donation of whatever amount the group wishes. Individuals may join by simply making a donation of whatever amount they wish.

Structural Review and Change

It is recommended that a mechanism for review and change be an accepted part of every Convention. A period of time should be set aside for committee reports, and for constitutional and structural changes. Changes will require a two-thirds vote, and every effort should be made to give notice of proposed changes so that the membership can be informed well in advance of the Convention.

P O L I C Y

To unite all women:

The purpose of the BCFW is to draw together the strength of the women's movement throughout B.C. in order to achieve the liberation of women. This aim reflects our belief that through the power of united numbers we can achieve more than as individuals or individual groups. We believe that an injury to one woman is an injury to all, and therefore we must act as a group.

To represent a wide range:

The oppression of women is manifested in every aspect of life in this society. Therefore, for many years, women have organized in

a variety of ways to change our situation. Since the emergence of the women's liberation movement, there has been a sharp increase in the number and range of women's groups, with a correspondingly wide range of aims, methods and political directions. This diversity of organizations signifies the great potential of the women's movement, and its capacity to speak to the needs of women from every walk of life and from every part of the world.

To work on common goals:

Even with the diversity, it is apparent that there are a number of goals on which women can agree. However, our efforts have been diffuse and scattered. It is clear that new and stronger methods of political organization and action must be developed. The BCFW is a step in this direction. It is an attempt to unite the collective strength of the individuals and groups which compose the women's movement throughout B.C. on a basis of a program outlining concrete and specific goals on which we can agree.

To perform a new function:

The BCFW does not aim to supersede or replace existing organizations, to substitute its work for theirs or for the activities of individual women. These organizations' work and activities are irreplaceable; without them, the women's movement would cease to exist. The aim of the BCFW is to perform a new function, additional to these: to act as a focal point bringing together organizations and individuals for the better utilization of the strength of the movement and for the mobilization of efforts and strengths, for education and for communication of struggles and solutions. In addition, the BCFW aims to attempt to draw particularly oppressed minority groups of women (for example, the young, old, poor, and ethnic groups) into the women's movement, to speak for themselves and organize.

Education Policy

Unless and until we have full access to education it is impossible for women to become full and active participants in every aspect of society. Women presently are channelled into certain educational areas and are restricted from entering others. These pressures are in some cases subtle and psychological, in others direct and overt. The present structures and facilities of educational institutions limit women's access to them. The content of educational curricula is biased against women, and ignores our role in societies past and present. Women employed in the educational system suffer from many forms of discrimination.

The goal of the BCFW is therefore to achieve an educational system which enables women to develop to full potential, and thus enables us to make real and effective decisions about the course of our lives.

Removal from all levels of the education system of sexist curriculum materials and practices which restrict both sexes and the development and use of materials which accurately portray the accomplishments and potential of women.

Since the education system as it exists cannot currently meet all the needs of women, alternate programs, options and opportunities should be made available.

Special encouragement for women to enter fields from which women have traditionally been excluded.

Employment Policy

Women do not have an equal role in the Canadian work forces, nor are homemakers recognized as legitimate members of the work force. We face discrimination of every sort when even attempting to enter or progress through any part of today's labour force. Women are being systematically relegated to low paying, low status jobs. This discrimination severely limits the tremendous potential of women. Governments and employers have done little to reverse this situation. The BCFW calls on the foregoing to end disregard for the tremendous potential of women, to end the discrimination which can only cast women in so few molds.

The goal of the BCFW is to achieve an employment climate in which women can exercise their productive capacities--mental, physical, organizational, artistic, managerial, creative, to the fullest extent.

The BCFW supports government training programs to train women, particularly in fields from which we have been excluded; to train women entering and returning to the work force in their middle years; to consider the special needs of native and immigrant women who are in or entering the work force.

The BCFW supports equal pay for work of equal value, to include upgrading of traditionally female type of work in terms of pay and status.

The BCFW supports recognition of unpaid and/or volunteer work experience in hiring criteria.

The BCFW supports the requirement that every B.C. institution, organization, person or company which is a direct or indirect recipient of provincial government monies must develop and implement an affirmative action plan.

Childcare Policy

Women's role in this society has been seen primarily as that of child-bearer and childrearer. Children in turn are seen as the possessions of their parents; society takes little responsibility for their care; and further denies them many rights and freedoms. The oppression of women is closely linked to that of children, and demands made on behalf of one group have implications for the other.

The BCFW rejects current social attitudes towards childcare which tend to see childcare centers as babysitting facilities for neglected children rather than as essential facilities for the benefit of children and their parents.

We will work towards the elevation of the status of childcare workers in terms of wage scales commensurate with those paid elementary and secondary school teachers with corresponding training and the inclusion of men into this field. We call on the provincial government to make childcare a priority, in terms of releasing funds, acquisition of land

and buildings, and simplifying regulations, in the interest of making quality childcare the right of every child.

The goal of the BCFW is the creation of high-quality, non-sexist, 24-hour-a-day childcare, available and accessible to all children from infancy onwards, in all parts of the province.

Health Care Policy

Both women and men suffer under the present medical hierarchy; however, women, both as workers and as patients, are particularly affected by the sexist attitudes which prevail in the health care system no less than in the rest of society. Women's specific health care needs cannot be met by a system whose emphasis is on sickness not health, on curative not preventative care. A system which denies control, individual responsibility, and self-knowledge, and which perpetuates an "expert" mentality and an authoritarian doctor-patient relationship does not operate in the interests of women's health.

The goal of the BCFW is a health care system which enables women to exercise control over our physical selves, through having the knowledge and the decision-making power to make the choices which affect our lives.

To that end we want guaranteed input by a committee from the BCFW from all geographic and interest areas into any changes being proposed in mental and physical health care in the province.

The BCFW supports a comprehensive program of mental and physical health education including information on sex, venereal disease, birth control and nutrition to be introduced in the school curriculum beginning in kindergarten.

The provincial government shall be responsible for ensuring that abortion is available to women regardless of geographic or economic status.

User controlled mental and physical health centres as outlined in the Foulkes report, staffed with para-professional as well as professional personnel shall be made available, as well as mobile units for the interior, and regional provincial laboratories.

o o p s . . . l b o o b e d

E D U C A T I O N P O L I C Y C O N T . . .

Recognition of part-time study on an equal basis with full-time.

Full availability of childcare facilities at all educational institutions.

Institution at all levels of women's studies courses under women's control.

No prejudicial treatment of women teachers and all education personnel for reasons of maternity.

Equal status, benefits, etc., for part-time teachers at all levels.

Mandatory in-service training on sexism for all present educational personnel, and in all training courses for educational personnel.

interest groups

Please refer to 'Interest Area and Ad Hoc Committees' in the structure statement. The following women signed at the convention in September expressing interest in the following areas. Please get in touch with one another, select one woman to be the contact and send her name etc. to me. As new members join the BCFW they can then be put in touch with women who share their particular approach to furthering the women's movement. As new groups arise details will be published in the newsletter. Please keep me informed if two or more of you become an interest group so we can tell women around the province and work towards unifying our efforts. Divided we are dismissed.

Women who did not sign up at the Convention can send details of their interest areas to me or with membership to Jay Stewart, BCFW Box 119, Heriot Bay, B.C.

Kate Swann, 209-2005 Pendrell St., Vancouver, B.C. V6G 1T8

ALREADY FORMED INTEREST GROUPS

EDUCATION: Leslee Moscovitch, 206-1144 Haro St., Van. (681-6891)

HEALTH: Lynne Citroen, 3270 W. 15th Van. (732-7708)

EMPLOYMENT: Wanda Tilley, 1090 Aubeneau Cres., West Vancouver (926-1842)

CHILDCARE: Colette French, 1410 Odium Drive, Van.

LESBIAN CAUCUS: Write to Lesbian Caucus, 2089 W. 4th, Van.
Drop-in: 804 Richards, Van.
Mon. evening 8--10 (684-0523)

PROPOSED GROUPS

1) ACCESS TO CREDIT, LOANS, MORTGAGES

Morgan Fox, 1087 W. 7th, Van. (736-4084)

Corinne Angell, 1-1996 W. 41st, Van. (266-9923)

Lee Grills, 3533 Princess, N. Van., (980-9650/682-5515)

Sherry Laing, 2573 W. 5th, Van. (736-9384)

Helen Read, 3737 W. 37th, Van. (261-0338)

Lynn MacKenzie, 201-1221 Burnaby, Van. (689-9722)

2) CHANGES IN THE LAW-- SEXUAL OFFENCES AND RAPE

Corinne Angell, 1-1996 W. 41, Van. (266-9923)

Pat Buckley, 1353 W. 64, Van. (266-0981)

Caroline Wushke, 3492 W. 39, Van. (263-3458)

Leslee Moscovitch, 266-1144 Haro, Van. (681-6891)

Johanna den Hertog, 3270 W. 15, Van. (732-7708)

Sandra MacDonald, 1654 W. 6, Van. (738-4145)

Marion Allan, 3265 W. 67, Van. (263-0627)

3) CHANGE OF NAME, PASSPORT, ETC.
Morgan Fox, 1087 W. 7, Van. Health Coll. (736-4084)

interest groups (continued)

Judi Cooper, 135 W.13, Van.
(873-2990)

Jane Waldhaus, c/o 10455 River Rd.,
Delta, (581-6237/224-1056)
Marion Allen, 3265 W.37, Van.
(263-0627)

(4) CITIZENSHIP

Susan Underwood, 409/1333 Haro, Van.
Helen Read, 3737 W.37, Van. 13,
(261-0338)

(5) CORRESPONDENCE COURSES FOR RURAL WOMEN--all levels

Jay Stewart, Box 116 Heriot Bay, B.C.
(285-3475)

Bonny Cooke, 35 S. Hythe, Burnaby,
(299-9606)

Marcia Braundy, Winlaw, B.C. VOG 2J0
Joyce Hamilton, 2706 Keremos Ct.
U.B.C. Van., (224-5762)

Deborah McNevin, R.R.2, Gibsons, B.C.
Lynn Lennig, General Delivery,
Courtenay, B.C. (338-8847)

Frances Burstein, 755 Egmont Ave.
Coquitlam, (937-5180)

Debra Wilson, 6111 Rumble, Van.,
(434-2173)

(6) ENCOURAGEMENT OF TRADE UNION ORGANIZING

Joan Green, 312 Osler, Van.,
(721-4420)

Bonny Cooke, 35 S. Hythe, Burnaby,
(299-9606)

Mary Barretto, 2210 W.12, Van.
(736-6621)

Jane Perks, 7767 216 St., R.R.5
Langley, (530-1429)

(7) ENCOURAGEMENT OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS

Morgan Fox, 1087 W.7, Van.
(736-4084)

Bonny Cooke, 35 S. Hythe, Burnaby,
(299-9606)

Elizabeth Zimmer, 12/1250 W. Broad-
way, Van., (732-8180)

Marjorie Clark, 3561 W.5, Van.,
(733-7751)

Pat Buckley, 1353 W.64 St. Van.
(266-0981/733-9151)

Caroline Wuschke, 3492 W.39 St.
Van. (263-3458)

Joyce Hamilton 2706 Keremos Crt.
UBC (224-5762)

Mary Barretto 2210 W.12 St. Van.
(736-6621)

Frances Burstein 755 Egmont Ave.
Coq. (937-5180)

(8) FAMILY LAW

Jay Stewart Box 116 Heriot Bay,
B.C. (285-3475)

Corinne Angell, #1-1996 W.41 St.
Van. (266-9923)

Judi Cooper 135 W. 13 St. Van.
(873-2990)

Caroline Wuschke 3492 W.39 St.
Van. (263-3458)

Nancy Ryan 1240 Doran Rd. N.Van.
(987-8028)

Berry Pickles, 10660-130A St.
Surrey (598-7021/525-4376)

Mary Barretto 2210 W.12 St. Van
(736-6621)

Cherry Laing 2573 W. 5 St. Van
(736-6621)

Anne Howarth 38-6 St. New Westminster
(525-4376)

Joan Saxton, 5781 Newton Wynd,
Van. (224-7020)

Sandra MacDonald 1654 W.6 Ave. Van.
(738-4145)

Marion Allan 3265 W 37 Van.
(263-0627)

Anne Torchuk 85 Jane St. Comox, B.C.
(339-4942)

(9) HOUSING

Mary Barretto 2210 W 12 St. Van
(736-6621)

Gloria Onley 3506 W 28 Van.

Janet Lawton 2-3435 Commercial Dr.
Van.

(10) INCOME SECURITY FOR HOME- MAKERS

Lee Grills 3533 Princess, N. Van.
(980-9650/682-5515)

Helen Read 3737 W37 St. Van.
(261-0338)

Nina R. Bates 921 Evergreen Pl.
N. Van. (987-4945)

(11) MEDIA TREATMENT OF WOMEN

Joan Green 312 Osler, Van.
(721-4420)

Susan Underwood #409-1333 Haro St.
Van.

Elizabeth Zimmer #12-1250 W.
Broadway Van. (732-8180)

Marjorie Clark 3561 W5 Van.
(733-7751)

Judi Cooper 135 W13 Van. (873-2990)

Leslie Moscovitch #266-1144 Haro St
Van. (681-6891)

Margaret MacKay 3663 W 2 Van.
(732-6960)

Nancy Ryan 1240 Doran Rd. N.Van.
(987-8028)

Linda Hourie 1595 Whitsell, Bby.
(299-4503)

Mary Barretto 2210 W12 Van.
(736-6621)

Debra Wilson 6111 Rumble St. Van.
(434-2173)

Joan Saxton 5781 Newton Wynd, Van.
(224-7020)

(12) FEDERAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Bonny Cooke 35 S. Hythe St. Bby.
(299-9606)

Corinne Angell #1-1996 W 41 St. Van.
(266-9923)

Sharon Hirt 1306-7 Pr. George
Lee Grills 3533 Princess, N. Van.
(980-9650/682-5515)

Suzanne Fournier 431 W22 Van.
(876-3726/683-4844)

Karen Kurtzrock 2065 W 8 St. Van
(732-0242)

Joan Saxton 5781 Newton Wynd, Van.
(224-7020)

(13) PROSTITUTION

Bonny Cooke 35 S. Hythe, Bby.
(299-9606)

Sharon Hirt. 1306-7 Pr. George

(14) RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN

(15) RIGHTS OF LESBIAN WOMEN

Lesbian Caucus 2089 W4 Van.
(738-5821)

(16) RIGHT OF NATIVE WOMEN

Judi Cooper 135 W 13 Van.
(873-2990)

Helen Read 3737 W 37 St. Van.
(261-0338)

Frances Burstein 755 Egmont Ave.
Coq. (937-5180)

Joan Saxton 5781 Newton Wynd, Van.
(224-7020)

(17) RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN PRISON

Joan Green 312 Osler St. Van.
(721-4420)

Jay Stewart Box 116 Heriot Bay, B.C.
(285-3475)

Bonny Cooke 35 S. Hythe, Bby.
(229-9606)

Judi Cooper 135 W 13 St. Van.
(873-2990)

Pat Buckley 1353 W 64 St. Van.
(266-0981/733-9151)

Sharon Hirt 1306-7 Ave. Pr. George
Claire Culhane 3965 Pandora St.
N. Bby. (299-7178)

Lynne Citroen 3270 W 15 St. Van.
(732-7708)

(18) TRANSPORTATION

(19) UIC BENEFITS

Lyn Lennig Gen. Del. Courtenay BC.
(338-8847)

(20) WELFARE

Anne Howarth 38-6 St. New West.,
(525-4376)

Debra Wilson 6111 Rumble, Van.
(434-2173)

Sandra MacDonald 1654 W6 St. Van
(738-4145)

(21) FOULKES REPORT

Morgan Fox 1087 W 7 St. Van. (736-
4084)

Norma Roberts 4014 W 33 St. Van.
(263-7752)

Margaret Mackay 3663 W 2 St. Van.
(732-6960)

Mary Barretto 2210 W 12 St. Van.
(736-6621)

JoAnne Butler Gen. Del. Courtenay
(336-2141)

Lynne Citroen 3270 W 15 St. Van.
(732-7708)

Melanie Conn 1932 W 7 Ave. Van.
(733-9377)

Gloria Lipton 1-2994 E 22 St. Van.
(438-4532)

(22) MEDIA

Robyn Gould, Reel Feelings, 3005
Cambie St. Van. (874-6822)

Marjorie Clark 3561 W 5 St Van.
(733-7751)

Linda Hourie 1595 Whitsell, Bby.
Mary Barretto 2210 W 12 St. Van.
(736-6621)

Bonnie Barton 637 W 18 Ave. Van.
(879-2100)

Karen Richardson 2029 W 4 St. Van.
(736-3746/681-3698)

Suzanne Fournier c/o Van Co-op Radio
333 Carrall Van. (684-8494)

(23) AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Mary Barretto 2210 W 12 St. Van.
(736-6621)

Sophie Drache 1308- West 46 St. Van
(261-6122)

Anne Torchuk 85 Jane St. Comox
(339-4942)

(24) AGEISM

Judi Cooper 135 W 13 St. Van.
(873-2990)

Mary Barretto 2210 W 12 St. Van.
(736-6621)

Sophie Drache 1308 West 46 St. Van.
(261-6122)

(25) WOMEN IN SPORTS

(26) RIGHTS OF OLDER WOMEN

(27) CHANGE IN TAX LAWS

(28) RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN MENTAL HOSPITALS

Nicky Phillips RR#2 Courtenay
(338-5763)

Lynne Mackenzie 201-1221 Burnaby St
Van. (689-9722)

(29) DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN BUSINESS

(30) PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AND LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

(31) WOMEN AND THERAPY

Jane perks 7767-216 St. RR#5
Langley (530-1429)

that of your men. at the Women's International Festival in

Victoria. Can you sing, dance, read poetry, relate a story/joke? Can you produce an article (sculpture, painting, sewing, etc. etc.)? Can you cook? If you can't, or don't have the time, perhaps you know someone who can and will. There are many women who have never had a chance to exercise or display their talents. There are women from other lands whose food and culture we would love to taste. Language will be no barrier - there are some among us who are familiar with tongues other than English. Most of all, we are anxious to meet those of our sisters who have holes in their pockets but love in their hearts, whose days are heavy with care - we would like to give them a day to remember. To remember that ~~under the skin we are all~~ sisters, sisters born to better things that now exist. Join with your sisters who are fortunate to have the time, the freedom and the willingness to struggle for the basic rights of all women: in the field of daycare, health education, equal salaries, rape relief, abortion. Come and voice your opinions on any or all of these issues (or others) that preoccupy you. MAKE OUR DREAM COME TRUE !

If you have any comments, opinions suggestions, offers to participate in the Women's International Festival, please contact :

Outside Vancouver: Leslie Dixon,
Rural Coordinator

Within Vancouver :Mary Barretto,
Action Organizer

LESBIAN CAUCUS

The policies instated at the founding convention of the B.C.F.W. completely over-

looked the rights of lesbians.

We feel omissions were not intended but occurred due to a lack of consciousness about lesbian oppression. Those of us who were aware of the omissions were hesitant to articulate our feelings of how present laws and attitudes oppress lesbians. Hence a lesbian caucus formed to raise consciousness and to collectively draft policy amendments and proposals for discussion at the next convention. Our particular concerns include:

- the rights of lesbian mothers
- ending employment discrimination
- changing immigration laws
- inclusion of sexual orientation in the human rights code
- positive information and counselling in the schools on women's

sexuality including lesbianism and celibacy.

These issues are not isolated concerns of lesbians. Laws and attitudes oppressive to lesbians are used to threaten and control all women. Every woman must have the right to choose for herself a lifestyle suitable to her needs as an individual.

FOR INFORMATION

write LESBIAN CAUCUS 2089 W 4th Van.
drop-in 804 RICHARDS 8-10 p.m. Monday
684-0523

The next Lesbian Caucus meeting will be held at Vancouver MS. 2089 W 4th Sunday Nov. 17th, at 2 p.m. The meetings are held ~~every~~ other Sunday.

Dear Sisters:

During a discussion of the structure of the BCFW at our first Standing Committee meeting in Campbell River, several problems became evident: the role of the interest groups and their representation to the Standing Committee needs to be clarified, as well as the misunderstandings which exist over group and individual membership. The responsibilities of the Vancouver Representative are proving untenable and need to be reassessed, and finally, resolutions need to be developed with respect to delegate structure as requested by Convention.

A resolution was passed to strike a sub-committee to resolve these problems. This letter is the first step in that process.

Accordingly, I invite all the women's groups in BC to select someone to represent the views of their group on the sub-committee, and to act as a channel for information discussed at meetings. If personal representation is not possible, groups are very strongly urged to make their opinions known either through their regional representative or personal correspondence.

I would also be very willing to meet with any group (within reasonable driving distance of Vancouver) which wishes further explanation of the structure of the BCFW.

I look forward to receiving the name and address of your representative, as well as any indication of the points you would like to have discussed, so that a tentative agenda may be mailed out before the meeting, to which you are all invited, on **Sunday 15 December**, at 7:30 pm, at 2485 West 14th Avenue, Vancouver.

In sisterhood,

Stephanie Barker
Structure Subcom-
mittee Co-ord.
BCFW
2485 W. 14th Ave.
Vancouver

FUNDING

There is growing dissatisfaction among women's groups in B.C. with the process of constant applications to government agencies, government departments and private organization for funding. A critical look at what it means to apply for and accept these grants often reveals several problem areas:

- 1) The amount of time and energy spent in applying for a grant, is it worth it?
- 2) The occasional necessity of molding or shifting the goals of the group, especially in the area of

- research, to qualify for the grant.
- 3) The necessity of competing with other women's groups for available money which may emphasize competition rather than cooperation among women and women's groups.
- 4) The possibility that grants like OFY and LIP act as short term pacifiers which defuse energy directed toward long term concerns and goals women have.
- 5) Why would any level of government or a private organization want to fund a women's organization? Is there any possibility the information a women's group shares because of receiving a grant and being obliged to submit reports and so forth could be used against them or in a manner contrary to their goals?

It may be that after considering these problem areas a group decides not to apply for a grant, but it still needs money. What are the other alternatives?

The possibility I want to explore in the rest of this article is the idea of generating enough monetary support among ourselves to continue and expand the work we have begun. There is a great deal of strength, power and freedom in deciding to support ourselves from our membership. If the BCFW wants to put pressure on the provincial and/or Federal government to change laws which affect all women, our commitment to criticize and act would not be hampered by any worry that we might lose our funding. Also, no predominately male-run organization would be able to say they were the people who funded the BCFW. Another point is the fact the BCFW is growing out of an expressed need of women and women's groups to coordinate and assemble our resources. The BCFW will not exist unless women's groups decide to join and support us. If the Standing Committee of the BCFW were to write a funding proposal this could contribute to developing the BCFW as another separate women's group instead, as would be the case if monetary support came from the women's groups which compose the federation, of developing as a coordinating and communicating body composed of all women's groups.

By setting up the BCFW as funded from its members there will be:

- 1) a clear indication as to how committed women and women's groups are to the idea of a BCFW
- 2) possibly a stronger recognition that the BCFW is the women's groups of which it will be composed and therefore more involvement from women's groups to help develop the BCFW.

I realize that money is almost always a problem with women's groups and individual women, but a pledge of a certain amount of money each month is something which can be worked into budgets fairly painlessly. A pledge for a certain amount of money each month from each group which joins the BCFW is one possibility. The amount of these pledges could depend on how many women are in that group, but something like (to be discussed) \$10--\$20 a month for a year. Individual women could also contribute money, either as a

(cont. page 10)

monthly pledge or as a donation.

These are beginning ideas, please feedback your thoughts to the Standing Committee. There may be better ways of coming to some comfortable and working arrangements about funding, part of the excitement of working with women's groups is the capacity to explore in new directions
MORGAN FOX

IWY CONT FROM PAGE 3

women: holding an international seminar of experts, hosted by Canada, for the United Nations, to elaborate a model of government "machinery" to improve the status of women, which could be used by other countries.

These are impressive statements of intent, but from past experiences I can't help but ask a few questions:

With the removal of barriers to equality, what other barriers will take their place?

Will only politically "safe" projects get funded?

Is this fund meant to assist women's groups, or is it the "divide-and-conquer" principle of the competitive system?

Does "promoting" equal opportunity for women mean "implementing" it?

To what degree will IWY be successful in getting grass-roots participation?

Elitism has always been a problem within the women's movement, as we have learned from the suffragettes. I do not see IWY altering or even trying to alter this situation. At a glance I saw that the women on the organizational committee for IWY are from an elite middle-class background. There must be more than an educational media campaign, or the selecting of a few grass-roots participants to attend a couple of conferences: we need to reach all women, to contact women who do not know of or understand the women's movement. I do not overcome my fears and misconceptions by reading an advertisement, nor would I generally attend a conference that I did not believe concerned me. These are the problems we face in uniting women.

Education is our ultimate form for unity. Relating our understanding of the women's movement, and our personal experiences, has been the most effective way of ending our isolation. It is this type of communication that needs to expand. We need to over-emphasize the importance of the individual woman to counteract our historical conditioning which makes us see ourselves as second-class citizens. Solidarity needs personal contact in order to develop, and personal decisions have to be made to try and do that. We as women are worth the time this process will take.

It is not the women organizing IWY whom I question, but their employers, the government. It is this same government, which is offering five million dollars or more to women's groups across Canada for IWY,

which is at the same time spending a phenomenal amount of money to prosecute Dr. Henry Morgentaler. What does that tell us?

The BCFW is not satisfied with IWY as it stands. As a political group, we question the potential of IWY for ending the oppression of women. BCFW will not be applying for IWY funds, for several reasons. We do not want to compete with our sisters for anything, especially money. We hope that groups providing services which can intervene directly in women's lives will be successful if they apply. BCFW's position, as decided at the Founding Convention, will be to call upon the federal government to honour IWY by removing abortion from the Criminal Code, so as to show the sincerity of its support of the United Nations' aims for IWY. We hope that you will join us in this effort, and urge members of government at both federal and provincial levels to legislate for women's rights, not just talk about them. We want changes, not more discussions and promises.

Linda Hancock

B.C. Women's Studies Association

B.C. Women's Studies Association

Women from 3 universities and 9 community colleges gathered at Capilano College in North Vancouver on October 19th to discuss the problems and potential of women's studies. Some women were instructors in established credit or non-credit courses, some were students, some in administration, and some were simply interested in discussing how to get things started on their own campuses. The first decision made by the whole gathering, after small workshop discussions of various aspects of women's studies, was to form the B.C. Women's

Studies Association. The basic aims are to establish a communications network among women involved in women's studies, to make it possible to act collectively on issues of shared concern and to pursue various educational and publishing goals. The next decision was to affiliate with the B.C.F.W. The conference also drafted a brief to the government urging it to act on the needs of campus women in terms of child-care facilities on campuses and support services of many kinds. A letter of application for International Women Year funds was written to B.C. government officials for the purpose of hiring a full-time co-ordinator and secretarial staff to develop and direct the Association's activities.

A second conference is planned for the first week-end in February 1975. Among subjects for fuller discussion and planning will be: a woman's research centre, holding of colloquia, a publications programme, a journal, information exchange and communications. For further information on the B.C. Women's Studies Association, please contact CENE SCURRY, Dept/ of Psychology, Vancouver Community College 190 14th, Van. 15 324-5257

campbell river !

Campbell River Women's Place

(first in a continuing series featuring women's groups throughout the province)

On the Island Highway in Campbell River is a special old house filled-as an outside sign modestly declares- with "Community Resources!" Walk through the front door, down the hall, (duck your head as you descend to the basement) and you are in a small, chilly room. It is furnished with books and pamphlets, a crowded notice board, and a few pieces of cast-off furniture-This is the Campbell River Women's Place.

There is nearly always a woman there to greet and counsel those who drop in, in spite of a staff schedule depending on dedication, not government dollars. She answers queries on the phone, and tries to keep the paper work under control. She is rarely alone- and that cramped room is often filled with the easy talk and laughter that makes it so thoroughly a women's place.

The C.R.W.P. is more than a drop-in centre. At weekly meetings, information and ideas are exchanged, special activities are planned, campaigns are plotted.

In order for local women to be better serviced by Canada Manpower, there have been films and speakers in an attempt to establish a direct and working relationship between the community and that government organization.

As well, C.R.W.P. has organized with the community, a push for better daycare in the area. A Women's Day is going to happen - a one-day potpourri of activities. Sometimes the dream of a transition house - which started all this - is once again considered.

To many women in Campbell River, their one contact with the Women's Place is enough. To others, it is a sporadically intense involvement; to a few it is an integral part of their lives. Divided in so many directions the C.R.W.P. seems directionless. The C.R.W.P. is incredibly difficult to describe or define. But - like the women for whom such places mean the most - the Campbell River Women's Place is still in the process of becoming.

Cheryl Curry

SUPPORT US!
SUBSCRIBE
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B.C.F.W.
NEWSPAPER
DETAILS ON BACK PAGE.

INEZ GARCIA

The recent court case of Inez Garcia is an illustration of the kind of "justice" women can expect from our sexist and racist legal system.

On 19 March 1974 Inez Garcia, a 30-year old Cuban/Puerto Rican migrant farmworker, was in the Soledad, California apartment she shared with a friend, Fred Medrano. Two men came to see him, and while waiting for him to return they drank and began insulting her. When Medrano came back, they beat him up; Inez tried to get them outside in order to stop the beating. The two dragged her into an alley. One, 300-lb. Miguel Jimenez, held her down while Luis Castillo raped her. In shock, she dragged herself back into her apartment. The men phoned her, with taunts and threats of killing her if she didn't leave town. She and Fred went out to find them, Inez with a .22 calibre rifle. Five blocks away, she came upon them, again beating up Medrano, who had gotten to them first. Jimenez had a knife; as he turned and threw it at her, she shot and killed him.

Inez was arrested along with Medrano, and charged with first-degree (premeditated) murder. During her trial she freely admitted killing Jimenez, which she considered justified self-defense. She had no regrets, and said she only wished she had shot Castillo too. She was made to testify for hours on all the details of the rape, and to answer such prosecution questions as, "Did you take off your bra? Did you take off your panties? Did you like it?" By striking out at her attackers and showing no remorse, Inez

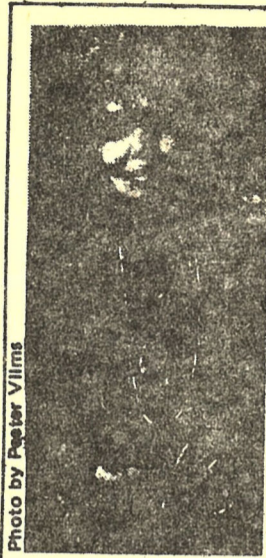


Photo by Peter Vilms

'...my conscience is clear for having fought and killed at least one of the two men who violated my honor.'

violated the unspoken rules of female passivity, and the male myth that every woman secretly wants to be raped.

Inez has been given a 5 years-to-life sentence, and is now under 4-mos. mandatory psychiatric observation, in hopes that she will "repent" so the judge can "leniently" reduce her sentence and give her LIFE probation.

Castillo has not even been charged.

Before and during the trial, feminist groups in the Bay Area organized support for Inez, forming the Inez Garcia Defense Committee and organizing demonstrations all over the U.S. The Committee is asking women's groups to recognize October 21, the date of her sentencing, as an annual strike day in support of women's right to defend ourselves against rape.

Inez's case is just one example of the treatment of women by legal, judicial and social systems throughout North America. Consider the recent Vancouver case of Alfred Magnall, convicted of manslaughter on 15 March 1974 for shooting his wife after she revealed a secret love affair with a family friend. Magnall's original sentence of 3 years & 9 months was reduced via an appeal to 2 years less one day; said Justice H.A. MacLean, "I can hardly imagine anything much more in the way of provocation than what this woman offered her husband."

Rape is the most frequent violent crime in North America, yet only about 1 in 10 cases are ever reported, because of the "second rape" faced by victims at the hands of the police and the courts. We are not protected by the law and we are not allowed to protect ourselves; moreover, as Inez's case shows, we will be punished even further for trying to do so.

Funds for Inez's appeal and for Defense Committee costs are urgently needed. Send donations and letters of support to: Inez Garcia Defense Committee, No. 101, 722 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland, California, 94609.

If Inez wins her appeal, it will be a political victory for all women. There must be no more cases like hers. She is a political prisoner in a system within which all women are imprisoned to some degree. Her only "crime" was that she fought back.

Jane and Star from the Vancouver Women's Bookstore

RAPE RELIEF

Vancouver has become known lately as the "rape capital of Canada". The number of sexual assaults here has risen frighteningly in the last two years.

In response to this situation, three women formed the Rape Relief Centre in Vancouver last October. This Centre offers support to rape victims, whether or not the woman wishes to report the rape to the police. If she doesn't wish to report it, they will give emotional support, information and referral to medical facilities. They can also file a third party report. If she does wish to report it, workers are available to accompany her to police, hospital, and through court proceedings.

They are also trying to generate wide-spread discussion on rape and the social conditions which encourage rape. They would like to see more discussions in schools and public forums on the topic. Currently, they are making submissions to the B.C. Police Commission (a sub-commission in the Attorney-General's Department), and plan to prepare proposals for the Federal Government's Law Reform Commission, especially in the areas of evidence law.

It is a standard tactic in rape cases for the man's lawyers to go thoroughly into the victim's sexual history, implying if she was not a virgin before the rape that she was "promiscuous" and had provoked the rape. At the same time, the man's sexual history, including past charges of rape or sexual assault, is not admissible evidence in court.

Before any woman can be free and truly have control over her own body, these laws must be changed, along with the whole sexist society in which they can exist.

Rape Relief has affiliated with the BCFW.

RAPE RELIEF

4197 John Street
Vancouver

24 hr crisis line

874-7911

D. E. A. P.

The Development Education Animateur Programme is a cross-Canada network of seven animateurs whose job it is to create more awareness and involvement of Canadians in international development. DEAP plans a special focus on Women and the Third World, and has a wide range of films available on this theme. Subjects include the Mozambique Frelimo movement, the building of a co-operative in Chile, a village development in Tanzania, and the effects of multi-national corporate activity in India; all these focus on the roles and contribution of women. In addition, DEAP has NFB films on the status of native and Third World women in Canada.

Any group which would like to have a film showing or educational session on this theme should contact Kathryn Anderson, DEAP, 2524 Cypress Street, Vancouver, for further information.

PAMPHLET

More copies of the BCFW pamphlet enclosed in this newsletter are available. Write or call Joy Bradbury, #65-445 SW Marine Dr., Vancouver, 327-0345. As always, contributions for postage and costs appreciated.

JOIN BCFW!!

TO JOIN THE BCFW, please write to: BCFW, Box 119, Heriot Bay, BC. Membership for both groups and individuals is by donation. Groups with set memberships are requested to include the names and addresses of members so that they may receive membership cards. Large donations will be gladly accepted! FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE BCFW, write to: BCFW, Box 46233, Station G, Vanc.

Articles, letters, responses-- YOUR contributions to the NEWS LETTER--must be received on or before 7 JANUARY 1975 for inclusion in the next issue. Send them to: BCFW NEWSLETTER, c/o 1240 Doran Rd., North Van.

THE BCFW NEWSLETTER will be published once each month. Sub rates are shown below; the paper will be sent free to women on welfare and to residents of mental institutions and prisons. We are making this arrangement on a trial basis, because we want the Newsletter to be available to all women who want to read it. However, because our funds are very limited, we hope that women who are in financially OK situations will be generous with donations over and above the official sub rate, in order to help us achieve this goal.

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