

# ACTION



MANITOBA ACTION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN NEWSLETTER

June 1992

Volume 19 No. 6

- Survey on sexual abuse by service providers
- June Menzies honoured
- Starhawk comes to Brandon

---

## About MACSW

The Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women is a volunteer-based, non-profit feminist organization working through political action, public education and personal growth in order to improve attitudes, raise issues and remove inequalities affecting women today.

MACSW was formed in 1971 by a group of women who presented a brief to the federal Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1967. MACSW has branches in Brandon, Dauphin, Thompson and Winnipeg.

## About ACTION

*ACTION* is published 9 times a year by the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, with the assistance of the Secretary of State Women's Program. The purpose of *ACTION* is to inform MACSW members about MACSW initiatives, to encourage members to take action on a personal and political level, and to serve as a forum to discuss all issues affecting the changing status of women. Articles express the views of individual writers and do not necessarily reflect MACSW policy.

## Submission Policy

News and feature-style articles, profiles, reviews, essays, letters to the editor, illustrations, cartoons and photographs are all welcome! Written submissions should be double-spaced and typed (2 pages max.) Material may be edited. Sorry, submissions will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. **The deadline for the September issue is August 15, 1992.**

Send stuff to:

*ACTION* Newsletter  
MACSW  
16-222 Osborne St. S  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3L 1Z3  
Phone 453-3879



This issue brought to you by MACSW staff and Marion Foster, Marjorie Turton, Pat Sadowy, Doreen Wuckert, Holly Ferguson, Pam Jacubec, Lavonne Garnett and Newsletter Co-ordinator Penni Mitchell.

*ACTION* is available on audiotape.  
Call MACSW 453-3879.

## This Issue

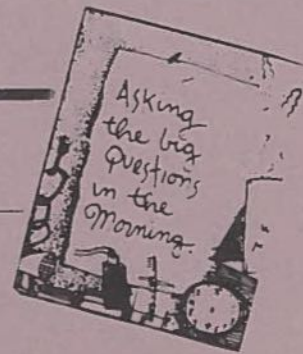
After thoughts on the Clinic Bombing .....	1
MACSW Staff Reports from across the province.....	2
Credit Union Board votes for parity.....	8
Subcommittee Report-Civic Politics .....	8
June Menzies honoured for feminist dedication .....	9
New clause on equality adopted at MACSW AGM .....	11
Bulletins and Announcements .....	12

## Thank you New & Renewed Members!

Patricia Rawson	Diane McGifford	Doreen Salmon	Ingrid Makus
Jean Snow	Northern Women's	Angie Stach-Gaber	Elizabeth Rose
W. Bosek	Resource Service	Nancy Grant	Betty Jean Seeland
M. Fenster	Gwen Pratt	L. Yager	Rachel Henry
Terri Kaufmann	Sheila Rainonan	Eleanor Cristall	Ann Booth
Mary Martin	Jan Rodgers	Lavonne Garnett	Pat Hrabok

# EDITORIAL

## After thoughts on the clinic bombing



Penni Mitchell

The bombing of the Morgentaler Clinic in Toronto last month reminds us of the pitiful acts of terrorism that those who have no power and nothing to lose are willing to perform.

Imagine the moral vacuum one must live in to plant a bomb to stop women from having an abortion when so many children are starving, abused and warehoused. Imagine how purposeless one's life must be if bombing a health centre gives it meaning. Imagine the veneer of self-aggrandizement this act created.

Maybe it isn't a very feminist way to look at it, but I think that knowing your enemy, if we can call it that, is a good political strategy. We tend to avoid this kind of thinking because we don't want to think we have anything in common, we want to continue to think of them in that alien "other" way. But this "other" thinking is a dangerous, unproductive trap. It is also the way soldiers are trained — to dehumanize the enemy before the kill. But it is, after all, the way of thinking that has to change, not just the laws.

Call me tired, call me post-you-know-what, but I think we have to get away from thinking that the pro-life people are our enemy. After all, they have no real power over us — other than the power of lobbying, demonstrating and moral suasion — same as us. They aren't even the majority. And blowing up a clinic isn't an demonstration of power, but an expressed lack of it.

I think those who picket clinics and threaten women are, for the most part, fearful, unintelligent people who must be consumed by their own guilt and past transgressions to feel so strongly certain (after all these years) that their earnestness could keep our uteruses chattels of a zygote.

I have to stop myself here, because I was starting to get into that "other" vs. "us" thinking — its so, so easy to do. What is harder to do is to listen to an intelligent anti-abortion view, because there are a few otherwise progressive-minded anti-abortion women out there. (Not those who picket or block entrances or speak on behalf of Alliance for Life.) For instance, could we both agree to work on ways to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies, say by half? Both of us know that having an abortion is no picnic.

This pro-life-as-enemy thinking also gives these folks a lot more credit than they deserve, as if there really are two "sides" of this issue. I mean, pro-choice means if you want to, you should be able to have one, and if you don't, no one should make you. (This goes for children too.)

Pro-life picketing, threatening, bombing is probably not going to stop as long as there are abortion clinics, especially private ones, where the government has nothing to lose by not enforcing the law. Maybe it's time to look at pushing harder for reproductive health clinics, not just abortion clinics. Wouldn't it help to frame the issue of abortion within women's reproductive lives? Could the pro-lifers tell the difference between women carrying pregnancies to term, those choosing abortion and those being tested for STDs? Would they hound the babies of the mothers entering the women's clinics to be fitted for a diaphragm? Would they bomb a clinic with a birthing room in it?

I was only 10 when birth control was legalized, but I think it's time to consider a more integrated, less segregationist way of providing services. Then maybe we could all get on with our lives....

\*\*\*\*\*

*A FOND FAREWELL This is my last issue as ACTION newsletter co-ordinator. Having this part-time job has been a goddess-send for me this last year as most of my time focussed on the re-launch of Horizons.*

*I want to thank the regular newsletter committee members, who make my job so smooth-running and fun. —Pat Sadowy, who pours laboriously over every reference, phone number and date, even at 11:00 at night — Doreen Wuckert, who makes sure we laugh at least as much as we work at each meeting — Marion Foster, who has an innate editing skill that regularly steers us clear of superfluity — Pam Jacubec, who challenges us with her wild wit — and Marjorie Turton who faithfully comes to mail-out nights to take part in the idle chatter and envelope licking. I'd also like to thank the MACSW staff, especially Jenny and Andrea in the Winnipeg office, who welcomed me and sometimes even got their staff reports in on time..... And finally, I want to offer congratulations to Andrea and her partner Murray, who are getting married in July!*

# LETTERS AND JOB POSTINGS



## ACTION



• Women of Achievement  
• MACSW Winnipeg - George Sife  
• Women's Leadership Program  
• Women's Choice

*job opportunity*  
*MACSW requires a*

## NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR

### Responsibilities:

1. to coordinate the volunteer newsletter collective in the production and distribution of the **ACTION** newsletter;
2. to input & layout the newsletter, using word processing and desktop publishing programs;
3. to solicit/write editorials;
4. attend PCC meetings held four times a year in various locations around the province, the first to be held September 28th in Thompson.

### The Job

The position involves 15 hours work per week (erratic, flexible hours!) at a salary of \$12.04 per hour plus benefits. Nine issues a year will be published.

If you are interested in this position please send a resume highlighting your qualifications and related experience to:

**ACTION Co-ordinator Applications  
Personnel Committee  
c/o MACSW Winnipeg Branch  
16-222 Osborne St. S.  
Winnipeg, MB., R3L 1Z3**

*Starting date for this job is July 27, 1992.  
Deadline for applications is June 19 1992 at  
4:00 p.m. Applicants who applied for this  
position last year and want to have their appli-  
cations reconsidered are asked to call Andrea or  
Jenny at 453-3879.*

### Dear MACSW:

I just wanted to acknowledge Sheila Doig's editorial in the Jan/Feb. newsletter "Income Tax Rules Unfair?"

I've just recently completed my mother's income tax form. Her income last year, based on OAP, CPP and some interest on Canada Savings Bonds (3 years' worth, thanks to those new rules) has resulted in a payment to Revenue Canada of \$1,000. How can this happen? Where is a person on a fixed income supposed to get such a large sum of money?

What a silly question - obviously she's supposed to cash in a savings bond, the interest on which is the only thing that allows her to pay her insurance, medication, glasses and dental bills.

I do realize that we all have to contribute to the upkeep (these days I think that "downfall" would be more apt) of our country, but shouldn't there be a level below which one doesn't pay taxes? What is happening to retired women who never worked outside their home and thus have very little pension income? How on earth are they surviving? I shudder just thinking about it, and am too frightened to know the answer.

*Miriam Fenster,  
Winnipeg.*

**MACSW is also hiring**

## A PART TIME BOOKKEEPER

**Duties:** Payroll; bill payment,  
employment and tax records.

**Hours:** Approx. 10 hours per week

**Salary:** \$3,300 per year.

**Send resumes to:**

MACSW Bookkeeper Applications  
16-222 Osborne St. South  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3L 1Z3

**Deadline:** August 3, 1992.

**Start:** October 5th, 1992

# STAFF REPORTS

## Provincial Co-ordinator

*Jenny Robinson*

The AGM and Orientation are now complete and they were quite a success! Thanks to the women of the Parkland for facilitating the weekend. It was a productive and energizing event.

A group from the Westman Coalition for Equality Rights in the Constitution came to Winnipeg this past month to work with a number of women's groups to come up with a common position on the Constitution to present to the Premier. In four hours consensus was reached and a working document with eleven recommendations was ready to be presented to the Premier. (Joe Clark could use a few tutorials on the tools of consensus building!) The Premier was present for the presentation and did have some comments, however, he was unable to stay for any discussion. This was a disappointment for the group as it was apparent that he would have benefitted from further discussion!

The event of coming together to find common ground for the women of Manitoba was very

satisfying. The work of the Westman Coalition

was appreciated by all the participants and the position of equality rights being entrenched in the 1867 Constitution was unanimously accepted. On the other hand the attention the Premier paid to the recommendation was not satisfying and only proved to the group that there is much lobbying yet to be done and it needs to be done right now!

The lobby card below is a beginning—clip it out and mail it to Joe Clark, make copies, give them to friends and family to send.

As this is the last issue before September, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Newsletter Collective for all their hard work this past year. It's been appreciated!



*Jenny Robinson, a.k.a one of the Welfare Starlets*

**TAKE ACTION: clip and mail today!**



## *I am Canadian and I Vote!*

*This is a list of my concerns for the Constitution:*

- Preserve a strong central government*
- Entrench women's equality rights in the 1867 Constitution*
- Preserve present and future social programs*
- Keep economic union outside the Constitution*
- Equal representation for women in a reformed senate*
- A paramount, enforceable social charter*
- Keep property rights out of the Constitution*
- Inherent right to native self-government*

*Name:*

*Address:*

*Signature:*

# STAFF REPORTS

## Winnipeg Branch

*Andrea James*

*Administrative Co-ordinator*

Happy summer time to all you spectacular women! By the time you get this issue I will have been working for MACSW for a year—how time flies!

The end of April revolved around the Annual General Meeting and Orientation for new Provincial Coordinating Committee members, both held in Dauphin and hosted by a group of amazing Parkland women. I heard many in attendance say it was one of the best meetings ever!

We also had to say a very sad farewell to our bookkeeper Pat Rawson and her teens Ryan and Aimee who visited and fed us often. They will all be missed and we wish Pat the best at *Herizons* and *Contemporary Verse 2*. In May we welcomed Lydia Giles back to MACSW. Lydia is a former MACSW staff person and bookkeeper and we are thrilled that, despite this, she still wanted to return!

There was a well-attended rally and march against violence in May. Jenny, Sheila and I met with representatives from other Manitoba women's groups to discuss the Canadian Constitution and the government's proposals. In less than four hours we managed to cut across our own political differences to agree on eleven recommendations which were then presented to Premier Gary Filmon



and other MLA's. I tell you, the feds should just leave this stuff up to us women; we'd all be done (and satisfied) a lot faster! Thanks go to the Advisory Council for setting up the meeting and to Paula Mallea from the Westman Coalition for Equality Rights who facilitated the whole thing and drafted the final document.

A new fiscal year always brings change. I'd like to thank Joanne Levasseur for her year as Branch Representative, during which she attended the AGM of the National Action Committee in Ottawa, participated in NAC's Women's Charter development, helped to plan the Women of Invention events, and sat on the PCC (hosting the party when the meeting was in Winnipeg). These are only a few of her contributions and Joanne continues to sit on the Winnipeg Branch Personnel Committee. Incoming Branch Rep. is Susan Banks, a long-time MACSW volunteer.

With increased racial tension and the bombing of Toronto's Morgentaler Clinic it promises to be a long hot summer. We must continue to dismantle the many systems of oppression which affect us all and seem to be thriving. Look for the MACSW booth at the Pride Day rally on June 28th and come and say hi. Have a peaceful and relaxing summer.

no  
stamp  
required

**RUSH TO:**

*The Honourable Joe Clark  
Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs  
Room 165  
East Block  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6*



SUMMER Solstice

## STAFF REPORTS

### Starhawk inspiring

by Lavonne Garnett

On the weekend of May 8-10, Starhawk presented a powerful workshop called Powers That Free Us From the Patterns that Bind Us at Gwenmar Farm outside of Brandon.

The workshop saw women sharing their femininity and spirituality in discussion, ritual and ceremony, which provided them with opportunities to support and validate each other.

Starhawk explained that the waxing of the moon relates to new beginnings experienced by the maiden; the full moon relates to the fullness of motherhood, and the waning moon relates to the crone, the one who is respected for her wisdom.

Much of our time was spent outdoors on Mother Earth, surrounded by huge spruce and broad sky. Among Starhawk's teachings is respect of the elements of the earth, body, air, fire and water. Holding hands in a large circle, chanting empowering words to the magical beat of Starhawk's drum, were guided on a journey to find our own personal inner power — picture 50 women performing a spiral dance and a wheel dance on a huge spacious lawn.

The first visualization was for the maidens, who shared their journeys afterward in small groups, where the other women gave them words of encouragement to help them follow through on their chosen journey to greater power in their lives.

The second one, on Mother's Day, was for the women who felt they were primarily in the mothering stage of life. (although we act in all three stages to varying degrees most of the time.)

The third group—crones—was celebrated in a special initiation ceremony, which honoured the women who had knowledge and wisdom to pass on—a remarkable ceremony in a society which relegates old people to care homes, and often a state in life lacking respect and dignity.

Spirituality and our connection to nature were the strong focus of the workshop, underlying the strong role Starhawk has in helping women effect change for themselves.

### Parkland Branch

by Heather Dootoff

Administrative Coordinator

Is there life after the MACSW AGM? Surprisingly, or not so surprisingly, yes! In spite of the tremendous amount of energy spent in organizing and conducting the AGM, the re-energizing that occurs when you get together with so many wonderful, knowledgeable, talented women more than compensates for effort expended. The holiday didn't hurt either!

In addition to being the time of MACSW's AGM, the end of April holds another significance, INCOME TAXES. Two single mothers in Dauphin are even more upset with Revenue Canada than the rest of us! They are questioning the inclusion of child support payments as income for them and as deductions for their ex-husbands. This question has been raised in Quebec by Susan Thibedeau, who filed tax returns for her children which listed the support payments as their income. The government doesn't agree and this case will go the Federal Tax Court on June 22nd. Thibedeau is also launching a class action suit against the federal government. Another woman, Carol Soltesz of Pitt Meadows, B.C., is similarly organizing single mothers in her province. We have contacted her and await information as to how Manitoba women can get involved. Stay tuned.

In the meantime, you can get involved right now, in another issue, choice. A Roblin choice supporter has indicated that the local anti-abortion group will be running a monthly ad advising women to seek out the pro-life pastors if they are pregnant and confused. As Roblin is a small community, it is difficult for people to speak out against this group, as the supporters of the AIDS infoline discovered. Pro-choice advocates are asked to write letters to the editor, Box 938, Roblin, Manitoba R0L 1P0 to offer pro-choice messages to the community.

I also attended the Swan Valley Crisis Centre AGM on May 6th, along with Ellen Wood and Frances Spence, from the Parkland Crisis Centre.

# STAFF REPORTS

## Rural Coordinator

Sheila Doig

The Provincial Coordinating Committee of MACSW endorsed the Westman Coalition for Equality Rights' proposal for a new interpretive clause to be added to the Constitution at the MACSW AGM. The clause, reprinted in last month's *ACTION*, would add an interpretive clause guaranteeing equality rights to be entrenched and paramount within the body of the constitution.

The adoption of the clause, also endorsed by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, is significant because current gender equality provisions are within the *Charter only*, not the *Constitution itself*, which takes precedence.

I'll be attending the NAC annual general meeting in early June where there will be two workshops on the Constitution. All in all, it promises to be a long, hot, political summer. The wheeling and dealing of the back room with the Premiers and their constitutional representatives grinds out what appears to be a "take it or leave it" package for Canadians to vote on in a non-binding national referendum on unity.

The package will go far beyond "unity" and distinct society for Quebec. The complex, interwoven proposal(s) will cover everything from an economic agenda in the Constitution (defined as big business national and trans-national agenda), transfer of powers (the reverse of a strong, central government), inherent native self-government (its definition to be worked out later), opting out of national programs (reasonable compensation and national objectives not defined) and Senate reform.

This is one political exercise the government



does not intend to lose. The legislation to hold a referendum will include no spending limits, no government contributions to either side of the campaign and no limit on the number of committees that can be formed. The *Globe & Mail*, May 13th, says it best: "The lack of federal spending limits, combined with the absence of government funds, would make it possible for corporations, unions, and interest groups to saturate the airwaves with advertisements in support of Canadian unity, and severely reduce the capacity of opponents to a fair debate." The government is spending \$50 million on Canada Day and other millions in other forms of promotion. Will the government message be that anti-unity is anti-Canada?

### Where are Women?

The government has been very clever. It invited equality-seeking groups to act as technical support in the drafting of the final "package" — the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Action Canada, Council of Canadians and the Native Women's Association of Canada. This provides access to, but no power or voice in, the constitutional sessions. To participate risks being co-opted, but to not participate means being invisible.

Equal representation of women in the Senate or even a guarantee of seats for women in the Senate is buried. Native women are struggling to ensure their Charter rights be protected throughout native negotiations for inherent self-government and entrenched in a future native Charter. Meanwhile, native leaders have negotiated new powers to opt out of the charter just as Ottawa and the provinces can do. An interpretive clause entrenching an economic agenda in the Constitution Act of 1867 could override the Charter. How will the anti-discrimination Section 15 or the equality of persons Section 28 in the Charter protect women if the efficient functioning of the economic union is paramount? The provinces' ability to opt out of present social programs, along with future, new, cost-shared programs, will make it virtually impossible for national strategies on a universal child care act or violence against women program. Decentralization, along with decreased federal funding to provinces to carry out social programs will break down the universality concept, competing poor versus rich provinces. If this is the final draft, then the lives of women will be further marginalized.

## Income Tax Services

Maureen Schwanke  
Income Tax Services  
(204) 562-3662

Box 23  
Arrow River, Mb  
R0M 2H0



# STAFF REPORTS

## Brandon Branch Report



Jennifer Howard  
Administrative Co-ordinator

The sun is shining, the birds are singing and all over the country thousands of activists — recycled plastic coffee mugs and document binders in hand — are making their way to community centres, town halls, university campuses, and other gathering places. General Meeting Season is upon us.

April saw the MACSW version of this annual event in Dauphin. Six Brandon Branch members attended the weekend meeting, which saw us finally deal with that pesky quorum by-law, adopt a position on the Constitution and elect a new Provincial Coordinating Committee. The food was great, the weather was nice, and the women attending created an amazing example of feminism at work. Brandon Branch will have its work cut out for it when we host the Thirdly in September. Volunteers for billets, food and social event planning are needed.

The Brandon General Hospital Annual General Meeting will be sometime in September. The good news is that there's still time for pro-choice supporters to buy memberships (\$30 for a lifetime membership bought 45 days prior to the general meeting entitles you to vote) and get involved with the Coalition for Responsible Health Policy to ensure that all medical services remain accessible to all Western Manitobans. Call the office at 725-2955 for details.

Continuing on the health front, the Brandon Branch is currently involved in the National "Keep Medicare Healthy" Campaign coordinated by a national coalition of labour unions and other advocacy groups. Ballots addressed to Brian Mulroney that outline opposition to user fees, extra billing, and private insurance were signed and collected by the Coalition. The results of the balloting will be presented on the "Medicare Show" airing on Vision TV June 18th and 19th.

May brought Starhawk, feminist, witch and

(continued on pg. 8)

## Summer Student Job Opportunity

RESOURCE COORDINATOR  
BRANDON

### Job Description:

1. To undertake a complete review of existing resources in order to update information and compile a listing, on computer data base, of all resources and subject matters covered.
2. To research and compile data on topics for which current data is needed. Examples: Aboriginal Women, Women and Education/Literacy, Women and Poverty.
3. To organize resources into a system which may be easily accessed by the public through establishing complete bibliographies and listings of resources.
4. To establish contacts with other community groups, organizations and businesses for purposes of information-sharing.
5. To participate in the office routine including general office duties, outreach work, creating displays for public forums and assisting in other projects as they arise.

### Qualifications

The successful applicant should possess the following:

- A good understanding of, and a keen interest in women's issues;
- Experience in organizing resource materials.
- Previous experience as staff or volunteer for a non-profit organization and computer literacy would be an asset.

This is a seven week term position, 35 hours per week, \$5.00 per hour, financed by Challenge '92 Program. The applicant must be returning to a high school or a post-secondary institution in the fall.

Applications should be sent by June 17 to:

MACSW  
202-107 7th St.  
Brandon, Manitoba, R7A 3S5

author of *The Spiral Dance, Dreaming the Dark, and Truth or Dare*, to Brandon for a and workshop. Many Brandon, rural, and a few Winnipeg members heard her speak on "Challenges into the 21st Century" and attended the "Rites of Passage for Women" workshop. It was an incredible spiritual experience and has generated interest in forming a group to learn more about the Goddess tradition. We're planning a Summer Solstice Celebration. Members interested in helping should, once again, call the office at 725-2955.

We also managed to secure funding from the Challenge Program to employ a summer student. (see the ad on pg. 7) It never rains, but it pours.

In fundraising news, we are looking into selling those aforementioned recycled plastic coffee mugs. They will be purple with the slogan "Women make policy, not coffee" and MACSW's logo in white. Now, if everyone sells just five mugs...

That's it for this month. I am off to New Brunswick for a week-long Canadian Federation of Students AGM and then one week of glorious vacation on the Nova Scotia Coast, after which I will return, refreshed and energized for a fine feminist summer.



## THE WELFARE \$TARLETS



LIVE  
FRIDAY JUNE 19, 1992  
at the West End Cultural  
Centre 586 Ellice Avenue Winnipeg.

The Welfare \$tartlets are bringing in the summer with a solstice extravaganza

Tickets: \$5— on sale at :  
BoldPrint,  
Into the Music  
West End Cultural Centre  
And from the \$tarlets and most of their  
blood relatives.  
Doors open at 8pm.

## Credit Union invests in women's equality

At its annual meeting, the 50th anniversary of the Assiniboine Credit Union was marked by the election of 3 progressive-minded women to its board of directors.

Five out of nine board members are now women. The new electees include Karen Bell, a council member of the Manitoba Federation of Labour; Addie Penner, a former dean of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba, and Leslie Spillett, a long-time activist and co-ordinator of an aboriginal employment program.

Assiniboine Credit Union president, Jeanette van der Dis told the members that during 1991 the credit union introduced a commercial loan policy to take environmental considerations into account, approved a code of conduct and business ethics, and started to put together an ethical investment fund. The board is also working on an affirmative action plan for women, aboriginal people, people with disabilities and visible minority members.

## Civic politics report

The Winnipeg Civic Politics Sub-Committee met on May 12th, welcoming two new participants.

The committee is currently in the process of identifying objectives and activities that will ensure the concerns of women are represented by the successful candidates in the upcoming Winnipeg election. We are working at holding a town hall meeting of mayoral candidates. This would be jointly sponsored by MACSW and other interested organizations. Shirley Lord of CHOICES is liaising with the subcommittee on this matter. The event will be held about 6 weeks before the election.

On June 3, 1992, Paul Robson of the *Winnipeg Sun* will meet with interested MACSW members in the Winnipeg office to discuss coverage of civic politics, women's issues and the Sun's advertising policy.

By the way, there's lots of room left on this subcommittee for you and your contributions. Whether you are an old hand at political activism or are just wanting to find out more, try Shirley Forsyth at 452-0225 or Twilla MacDonald at 582-8792.

# June Menzies honoured for contributions

by Marie Barton

June Menzies was just a toddler when the famous Persons' Case was won in 1929 on behalf of Canadian women.

Last October, Menzies, one of the founders of the Manitoba women's movement of the 60's, was among five Canadian women invited to Ottawa to be honoured with the Persons Award

— a federal government award to honour women who have made significant contributions to the women's movement.

The 1929 Persons' Case was won in what was then highest court of the land — the Privy Council in London. There, the judges finally declared that women were indeed qualified persons in the full sense of the word

and therefore qualified to be appointed to the Senate.

Until 1929, the term "qualified persons" under the B.N.A. Act applied only to men, and the Canadian Court denied women's personhood status by referring to an English Common law which said "women are persons in matters of pains and penalties, but not in matters of rights and privileges." The Famous Five — Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney and Nellie McClung — had won a victory for the distaff gender.

June Menzies got involved with organizations like the Provincial Council of Women and was vice-chair of the newly formed Advisory Council on the Status of Women in 1973.

"No one is born a feminist. You become one through experience," reflects Menzies after 30 years of activism in women's issues.

As she grew up in Saskatchewan in the 1930s, Menzies saw women teachers and nurses who were forced to quit if they married.



*Menzies and then Governor General Ray Hnatyshyn presenting her Persons' Award*

"How, I wondered," recalled Menzies, "Could I, at 7 years of age, have told my mother that when I grew up I was going to smoke, drive a car and make \$200 a month!"

After working as a translator of Japanese documents during the Second World War, along with Judy La Marsh, Menzies got her B.A. and Masters degree at the University of Saskatchewan, doing research on women in Canada. Over the years, her work took her from Saskatoon to Washington to Vancouver and Ottawa.

In 1958 she joined the University Women's Club and undertook to study Canada's legislation to see whether it lived up to the United National declarations and conventions on non-discrimination against women.

"What I discovered was a shock to me," she recalled. "Rights I thought we had did not exist because we were women. This committed me to work for change in the laws affecting women."

During the next 12 years she did research and led study and action groups, wrote briefs and resolutions and made presentations to the federal and provincial governments about the status of women.

Today, at 66, Menzies is still working to make the world a better place for women. As a member of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, she recently co-authored a report on urban safety for women. She also does volunteer research for the United Church.

Now that she's officially retired, does Menzies plan to stop working for change?

Not a chance. "There is yet more work to be done," she says.



*June Menzies*

## *Women's committee launches abuse survey*

The Women and Mental Health Committee of the Canadian Mental Health Association Manitoba division is launching a provincial survey to determine the extent of sexual abuse by mental health service providers.

The information gathered will be used to help determine the extent and types of sexual abuse by Manitoba mental health service providers; to find out the kinds of services that would be helpful to the healing of women who have been sexually abused and to make recommendations for needed changes in the mental health care system.

Disclosures about sexual abuse that women have experienced while they were receiving help from mental health service providers are becoming increasingly common, and the Manitoba situation is not unique. Recently, an Ontario Task force investigated sexual abuse of patients by physicians. The result of their study indicated that sexual abuse of patients is common.

The Women and Mental Health Committee reports that disclosing sexual abuse experiences is often difficult. It is also aware that mental health service providers, often psychiatrists or others in a position of authority and trust with the female client, violate that helping relationship through their abuse. The women who are abused may feel anger, self-blame, guilt and shame. The Committee stresses that responsibility for keeping the client-service provider relationship non-sexual is up to the service provider.

Questionnaires are being distributed to women's groups and agencies, community mental health offices, and some private therapists and shelters. Funding for the \$15,000 project came from Secretary of State Women's Program.

Responses to the survey will be accepted until the 15th of June, 1992 and a final report will be made available to the public.

*For further information contact: Pat Hrabok, Coordinator, Women & Mental Health Survey: 475-6038 Elaine Bergen, Women & Mental Health Committee: 947-1401*

## *Métis women: living without fear*



*by Holly Ferguson*

The Métis Women of Manitoba has received a grant to host meetings around the province to discuss violence against women. Pat Harper has been facilitating the meetings and a May 3rd Southwest Region.

After the sharing and support we discussed some of the strategies we could develop to help end this vicious circle.

Our ideas were:

1. To host more meetings at the community level with men in attendance, and a separate meeting for youth in attendance. This would boost awareness and knowledge on how women feel — at home, at a shelter, what women can do, where they can turn, what happens when they involve others. The answers to these questions I did not know until some of the women in the meeting shared with us their experiences within the system.
2. We also discussed public education programs to raise awareness and tell others abuse is wrong.
3. At Métis regional and provincial meetings, we would like our spokeswomen to give presentation and boost awareness.
4. We also decided to lobby the government to expand anti-abuse information into the school system.
5. Another idea was to develop community resources by designating a Métis woman in each community to be there to support abused women. This would be someone the RCMP and health officials could refer women to.

In all, I felt connected and hopeful that the women will continue working together to deal with this major concern.

*Holly Ferguson is a Brandon family support worker and advocate on Métis women's issues.*

# AGM opts for more protection, lower quorum

by Heather Dootoff

Remember in the April edition of *ACTION* I told you AGM's are fun? Well, I have to admit, I lied! They are more than fun...they are challenging, empowering, entertaining, thought-provoking, the list goes on...and judging from all comments received, it is safe to conclude that the 1992 AGM was a great success.

The AGM began around noon on Saturday April 25th in Dauphin. In addition to the regular branch and staff reports, there were a few special items.

The MACSW constitution was amended so that quorum is reduced from 30 to 20 members at all general meetings, or 10% of the membership, whichever is less.

Flin Flon's request for branch status was put on hold because of financial considerations and some uncertainty about the process required for developing new branches of the organization. Flin Flon members were encouraged to organize membership and activities.

The Westman Coalition for Equality Rights presented its proposed constitutional amendment for ratification by MACSW, which was adopted.

Maureen Marsh of Brandon agreed to be MACSW's Treasurer for the upcoming year.

Virginia Jamieson, Dauphin's pro-choice Mayor and fellow MACSW member Frances Stewart, gave an interesting presentation on Women and Politics, leaving us with these five points to ponder:

1. You never know all you need to know.
2. You never do it alone.
3. Likely no time is the "right" time.
4. Declare your candidacy early.
5. You can have a feminist campaign.

Whether you are in office, or working behind the scenes, you are making a valuable political contribution.

Judy Hughes and Donna Bear brought us up to date on the Women and Work Project. Progress is being impeded somewhat by a lack of funding.

April 26th was the Orientation for the new Provincial Coordinating Committee members. Thanks to all the presenters and facilitators for helping us start the year off right.

The Parkland Status of Women thanks all the

volunteers who assisted in so many ways. Thanks also to Andrea James for the Bold Print display and to Kathi and Dave who brought a touch of the farm in for the cityfolk to see! We appreciated the presence of Chris Dobbs from Secretary of State.

Finally, we would like to recognize the creative and talented students, Rachel Thompson and Carri Shangreaux, who, along with their friends, provided the entertainment at the social. Their presentation was a mixture of poetry, prose and drama, which ranged from the hilarious to the powerfully serious. It's inspiring to have them involved in our organization.

The weekend didn't go off without a hitch or two. Anyone finding an extra set of car keys, please contact Jenny Robinson — she wants to get back to Winnipeg soon! And whoever left Dauphin without her sunglasses, contact Heather Dootoff.

## Contemporary Verse 2

presents:

RE:VERSE RE:VISION

*Winnipeg's first Canadian Feminist Poetry Conference on June 12th and 13th, at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.*

- ◆ **Friday, June 12th 7:30 p.m.**  
Performance by **Shawna Dempsey** and readings by **Chrystos & Judy Grahn.**
- ◆ **Saturday, June 13th 8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

**Readers and presenters include:**

*Annharte, Himani Bannerji, Di Brandt, Anne Cameron, Claire Harris, Jan Horner, Angela Hryniuk, Emma LaRocque, Tanya Lester, Dorothy Livesay, Erin Mouré, Louise Sweet and Janice Williamson.*

**Cost: Friday \$10.00**  
**Saturday \$45.00**

*Tickets and brochures at Bold Print Inc., McNally Robinson Bookstores and Mary Scorer, Osborne and Graham outlets. For info call CV2 949-0511*

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**PARTNERS OF SURVIVORS OF ABUSE**  
Self Development Workshops presents a conference for men and women who are involved in intimate relationships with individuals who have experienced sexual, physical and emotional abuse in childhood. **June 19 & 20th, \$30.** The workshop will provide a supportive environment to explore the after-effects of abuse on relationships, ways of coping and healing, and ways to develop supports. Contact Sharon Hunter, BHEcol, MSc. (204) 452-8844.

**BOLD PRINT BOOK LAUNCH** Tanya Lester's new novel *Friends I Never Knew* on **June 4th 1992** at 7:30 p.m. Bold Print Books 478 River Avenue, Winnipeg.

## NICOLE HOLLANDER SPECIAL

You've seen her cartoons in print, maybe even owned a **Nicole Hollander** wall calendar. Wear her wit on your **NEW MACSW T-SHIRT**.



White Cotton, XL one size. \$15.00 Drop by the MACSW office nearest you. To order by mail, add \$2.00 for postage and send cheque to MACSW T-SHIRT, 16-222 Osborne St. South, Winnipeg, Man. R3L 1Z3.



**LENI STERN JAZZ QUARTET** performance Saturday June 6, 1992 7 p.m. Winnipeg Art Gallery \$15. Call 780-7328

**THE KALI-SHIVA SOCIETY** Caring for people with AIDS. NEEDS volunteers for driving clients to appointments during the day. No time commitment is too small. Call 586-5222.

**WANTED: RELIABLE VOLUNTEER** to work in the Winnipeg MACSW Office for 3 hours a week. Tasks include filing and other office work that's essential to the smooth-running of the Action Committee. Interested? Come down and we'll talk Call Andrea 453-3879.



**FOR SALE Mazda GLC;** 1981; 4 cyl.; 2 door; hatchback; standard; stereo (always important) sunroof (another essential) 119,000 km. Runs great. Price \$1200. Color: red. Phone Penni 772-0601.

**CALENTURE** is Bruce McManus's latest play, sponsored by Popular Theatre Alliance and runs June 11-20th 1992. Evenings at 8 p.m. Matinees on Sunday June 14 and Sat. June 30th at 3 p.m. Tickets \$12. Matinees are pay-what-you-can Mary Scorer Books has tickets or call 589-8408.



# MACSW MEMBERSHIP FORM

**Yes!** I want to add my voice to the hundreds of Manitoba women who belong to MACSW.

**NEW MEMBERSHIP**

**RENEWAL**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/Town \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

**INDIVIDUALS** Regular \$25  
(or what you can afford)  
Sustaining \$40

**ORGANIZATIONS - \$50**

*Your membership includes a subscription to the ACTION Newsletter, published 10 times a year.*

Make cheques payable to MACSW and send this form to:

MACSW Winnipeg Branch  
16-222 Osborne St. South  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1Z3



I'm interested in getting involved with the following issues: (please check)

## ISSUES

- Childcare/Parenting
- Equal Pay/Workplace
- Family Law
- Farm/Rural Women
- Health
- International Women's Day

- Media Monitoring
- Midwifery
- Aboriginal Women
- Trades & Technology
- Pensions
- Pornography

- Prostitution
- Women of Color/Racism
- Reproductive Health Issues
- Senior Women
- Violence Against Women
- Women & Poverty
- Women/Disability
- Young Women's Group

## ACTIVITIES

- Newsletter
- Office Duties

- Political Action
- Public Education

- Lobbying

## NEAREST MACSW BRANCH

**WINNIPEG**  
16-222 Osborne St. S  
Winnipeg,  
R3L 1Z3  
453-3879  
453-4157

**BRANDON**  
202-107-7th St  
Brandon,  
R7A 3S5  
725-2955

**PARKLAND STATUS  
OF WOMEN**  
118 Main St. S.  
Mail: Box 23  
Dauphin, R7N 2T9  
638-3599

**THOMPSON**  
Box 722  
Thompson  
R8N 1N5  
778-8549

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## JUNE and summer

- 3 **Winnipeg Branch Meeting** at 6:00 in the office (behind Pasquale's). Meet new women, learn new things, volunteer for something great.
- 3 **Winnipeg Sun editor Paul Robson at MACSW's "Meet the Press"**. Bring your concerns about the Sun's content and the advertising to this meeting at 8:00 pm in the Winnipeg office, 16-222 Osborne St. South behind Pasquale's under the big yellow canopy marked MACSW. Join us
- 4 **Tanya Lester**, author (and former MACSW co-ordinator) launches her new collection of short stories *Friends I Never Knew* — at Bold Print, 478 River Ave. at 7:30. Wheelchair and stroller accessible. Call 452-9682 for more information.
- 12 **RE:VERSE RE:VISION Canadian feminist poetry conference** at the Winnipeg Art Gallery Call Contemporary Verse 2 at 949-0511 or get tickets at Bold Print, McNally Robinson or Mary Scorer
- 17 **Brandon Branch Meeting** 7:30 p.m. at the office 202-107 7th St. Topic: Summer Activities Planning.
- 19 **The Welfare Starlets** at the West End Cultural Centre at 8:00. Tickets \$5 at Bold Print, WECC.
- 19 **All or Nothing** Sponsored by Prairie Theatre Exchange, part of Gay Pride Week. Second Space, Portage Place nightly at 8:00 p.m. (except Monday), til June 27th.
- 19 **The Last of England**, sponsored by Cinematheque in Association with The Winnipeg Gay/Lesbian Film Society to be shown at Cinematheque, 100 Aruthur Street in Winnipeg. Nightly at 7:30 & 9:30 p.m. runs until Monday June 22nd.
- 19-20 **Partners of Survivors of Abuse** A conference for men and women in intimate relationships with people who have experienced sexual, physical and emotional abuse in their childhood. Cost \$20. Wheelchair accessible. Call Sharon Hunter, 452-8844 for information.
- 20 **Summer Solstice Celebration in Brandon** Call 725-2955 to help plan and to get details.
- 20 **A Workshop on Internalized Homophobia** subtitled, "Why I don't Want to Go to the Pride March," at the Gay & Lesbian Resource Centre, 1-222 Osborne St., starting at 2 p.m.
- 23 **Images of Lesbian Sexuality from 1850 to present** with Toronto artist Cyndra McDowell at the Muriel Richardson Auditorium, Winnipeg Art Gallery at 8:00 p.m.
- 25 **The Sacred: Initiations.** A conference for men and women interested in stopping violence in our society. Between the walls of St. Boniface Cathedral (in the basement of the hall, if it's raining) at 8:00. Tickets are \$5.00 in advance, \$6.00 at the door. For more information call 237-8295.
- 26 **An Evening Fashion Show**, sponsored by Ms. Purdy's Women's Club. Entertainment and Music.
- 28 **Walk with MACSW in the Sixth Annual Gay/Lesbian Pride March and Rally** at the tent in Memorial Park at 1:30. Social featuring the Wyrd Sisters at Riddell Hall, U of W from 8:00 -1:00am.
- 30 **Winnipeg Branch Meeting** As always, at 6:00 in the Winnipeg office. Wear something cool.
- July 9-11 **Winnipeg Folk Festival at Birds Hill Park** featuring performers like Sweet Honey in the Rock
- July 15 **Branch Meeting Brandon** 7:30 202-107-7th St. Topic: Organizing September Thirdly.
- August 5 **Winnipeg Branch Meeting** 6:00 in the office. Be there or lose feminist brownie points!
- August 8-9 **Brandon Folk Music and Art Festival.** Call 729-9975 for more information.
- August 19 **Brandon Branch Meeting** Topic: Long Term Planning and Budget.

