

ACTION

MANITOBA ACTION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN NEWSLETTER

April, 1994

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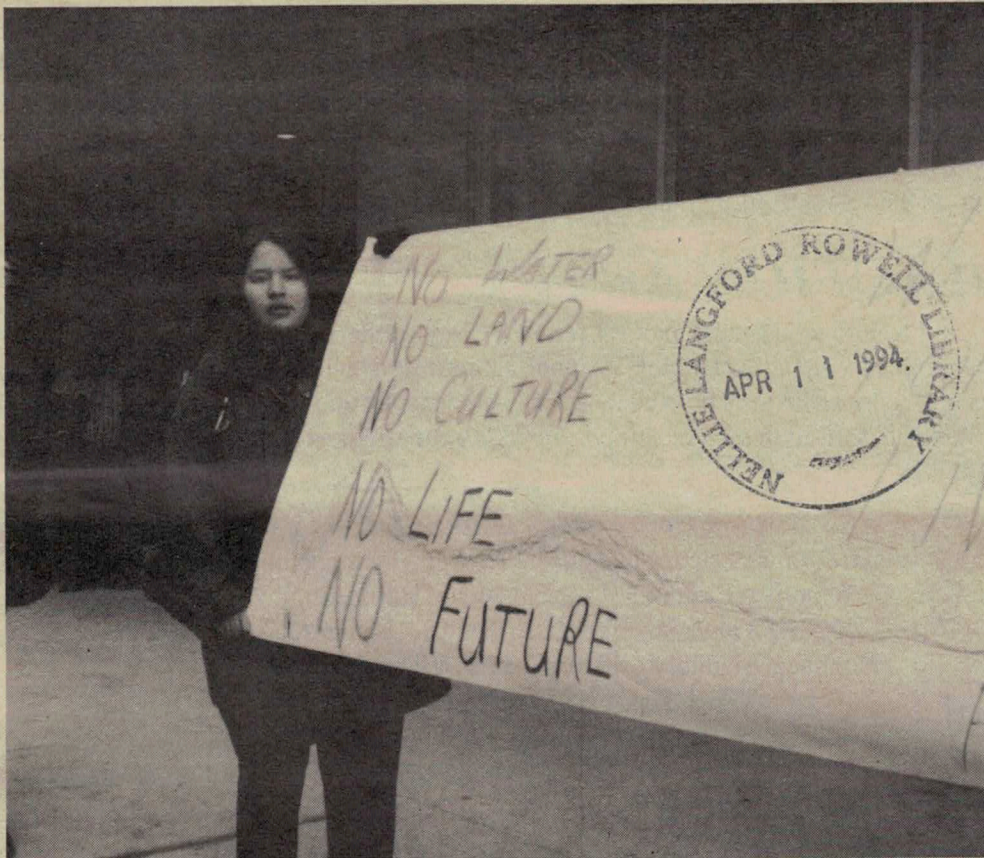


Photo: Fiona Muldrew

Respect Your Mother... The Earth

Inside: Aboriginal Women Criticize Abitibi Price
The Marvels of Midwifery
Goddess Art & Lillian Allen

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.

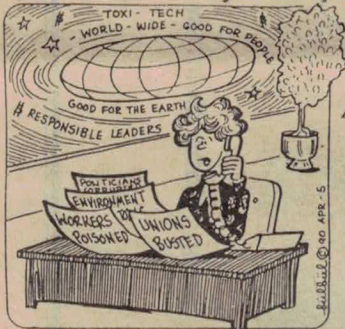
MACSW was formed in 1971 by a group of women who presented a brief to the federal Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1967. MACSW has branches in Brandon, Dauphin, Thompson and Winnipeg.

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.

About ACTION Articles

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. **Deadline for the next issue is the 15th of the month.**



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ACTION Newsletter
Winnipeg Branch
702- 70 Arthur St.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 1G7
Phone 946-5049

This issue: MACSW staff, Pat Sadowy, Marion Foster, Allison Dewar, Pam Jakubec, Marjorie Turton, Kelly Logan, Christie Harris, Suzy Waldman, Shannon McKenty, Darlene Searcy, Linda Goossen, Sandra Shapiro, Joan Turner & Newsletter Coordinator Fiona Muldrew.

Cover: Dawn Roache holding banner at protest for Abitibi chemical spill (see p. 9) *

Thank you New & Renewed Members!

Sandra Shapiro	Ceridwen Collins-West	Barbara Wicktorowicz	Mary Kardash	Lawrence Brenn
Kathi Callen	Tennille Collins-West	Ruby Reske-Naurocki	Rosemary Miguez	Cindy Stewart
Claudia Franklin	Nellie Langford Rowell	Stephanie Bloodworth	Julie Friesen	Cindy Hanson
Bev Peters	Library, York University	Marlene Schellenberg	Marnie Andrews	Janet Smith
Marlene Maykut	Red River Community	Laura Crookshanks	Karen Johnson	Ruth Stewart
Gwen Trip	College Library	Joyce VanKoughnet	Donna Camara	Julie Leefe
Pam Jakubec	Wpg Labour Council	Dinah Ceplis	Jackie Sproule	Elaine Mathieson
Brenda Gregory	Women's Committee	Betje Jacobs	Cheryl Stunick	Janet Napier
Maureen Miller	Sandra Koch-Gensiorek	Muriel Adams	Roxane Langelier	Darlene Searcy
			Maureen McIntosh	Marj Rogosin
			Irene Grant	Laurie Crowe
			Dan Jardine	J.H. Kaminsky
			Frances Spence	Lottie Culham
			Margaret Koscielny	Lynne Oreck-Wener
			Judy Hughes	Diane McGifford
			Verna Menzies	Norma Drosdowech
			Allyson Watts	Jackie Saltzman
			Winona Pierce	Pat Sadowy
				Linda Hogue

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New advertising rates:

1/4 page ad	\$30/\$25 for non-profit groups / MACSW members.
1/8 page ad (business card)	\$20/\$15 for non-profit groups / MACSW members.

For info ph. 946-5049.



Winnipeg Branch Report

Susan Banks, Administrative Coordinator

March was an incredibly busy month for the Winnipeg Branch. On March 6 we set up a display table for International Women's Day Celebrations at the University of Winnipeg and were able to sell 120 raffle tickets! If you haven't sent in your raffle tickets yet that were mailed out with last month's newsletter, please send them in before June 21 (cheques to be made out to MACSW), or let us know if you would like to sell more. The first prize is a beautiful hand-stitched quilt which was on display at IWD and is presently on display at Winona's Coffee and Ice, 761 Westminster Ave. All prizes will be awarded on June 21 at our Summer Solstice Party. Thanks to Shannon Reschke, Tanja Hutter, Canda'ce Cross, Lora DiBernardo, Allison Dewar and Fiona Muldrew for helping out on IWD with ticket sales and organizing.

On March 16, MACSW and 11 other groups (mainly women's groups) met with Sheila Finestone, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, to discuss women's priorities for the Federal Government. Rosemary Miguez and Fiona Muldrew prepared a list of concerns which Fiona presented as follows: stable funding for the Women's Program; a timetable to address the issue of violence against women and stable, adequate funding for women's groups dealing with violence issues; ensuring women's input for Social Security Reform (childcare, jobs for women); and implementation of recommendations of the Gender Equality in the Justice System report as well as the Court Challenges Program. Other women recommended more appointments of women as judges, more appointments of women of colour to government and social service positions and changes to the immigration act to ensure that women who are sponsored by a family member are eligible for social services like other Canadian citizens. Currently, sponsored immigrants are not eligible for social assistance for 10 years even though they are eligible to be Canadian citizens after living here for 3 years.

Ms. Finestone let us know that there will be a 0% cut to the Women's Program for this year which means no cuts for MACSW! There was a vicious rumour going around that we would be cut by 20% but this is not the case. She did not know, however, what will happen next year. The Minister reported that as part of their job creation program, the government will build child care

facilities so that they will be ready for when the Gross Domestic Product increases by 3% in a year (when the Liberals promise to offer 50,000 child care spaces).

So far the Women's Task Force on Violence has met twice since February. We are still in the process of establishing a mandate and goals for the Task Force, since priorities range from lobbying the government for improved services to women who are abused, to youth violence and public education on violence. The next meeting will be held on April 6 at noon at the Social Planning Council, 412 McDermot.

Heather Dootoff was on a panel and Fiona presented a workshop on MACSW at the Feminist Research conference at the UofW in early March. See page 12 for more info about the proposed feminist research centre.

I met with some interns at the Legislature who were interested in learning about MACSW's activities. When asked what lobbying strategy is most effective they said that writing letters to your own MLA has the most effect!

The MACSW Annual General Meeting has been set for May 13-15 in Winnipeg. Please call the office if you would like to help with the planning and organizing.

If anyone is in need of office space dividers we have three lovely dividers that we would be more than willing to trade for office rugs.

A big thank you goes to Ruby Reske-Naurocki who made a presentation to a school in Beausejour on the history of the Women's Movement.



Brandon Branch Report

Jennifer Howard, Administrative Coordinator

March saw the culmination of a year's worth of organizing in our Gender and Development Conference-- "Questioning the Answers." By all accounts, we had a successful conference attended by over sixty women and men from all over Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Keynote speakers, a panel presentation and workshops brought forward the message of the importance of gender in community and international development and the challenges in keeping this issue at the forefront. Thanks to our wonderful volunteers: Cathy, Donna, Veronica, Alison, and everyone else who contributed time and energy. A report is forthcoming and can be attained by calling the Brandon office at 725-2955.

In February we presented a brief to the City's Forum on Poverty. We attempted to address some of the underlying causes of poverty for women, such as the



wage gap, lack of accessible child care and the devaluation of women's work. Our recommendations included the establishment of a Social Planning Council that would be representative of the community and responsible for coordinating services, monitoring policy and developing strategies to eliminate poverty. This recommendation was echoed by the many organizations and individuals who presented at the Forum.

One of the positive aspects of the Forum on Poverty was the number of people with direct experience of poverty who attended and presented their views. The strength and honesty of these people carried forward the most important message, particularly in relation to the stigma that society places on the poor. There was a lot of interest in continuing some community action on poverty.

MACSW also had a booth at the Brandon Career Symposium, where we distributed information to thousands of high school students, as well as their parents and teachers. The highlight of the three-day event was when local massage therapist, Roxanne Northcut, demonstrated her career on me. Everybody should start their day this way! Thanks to Mary, Inga, Donna and Dana who helped out with the Symposium.

On April 19 Vision Quest, Brandon's Healthy Communities Project, will be hosting a workshop for women at 7 p.m. at the New Careers Office at 153-8th Street. This workshop will involve visioning a healthy community for women and talking about ways to achieve this. Childcare is provided, but you must call 725-2955 to register by April 12.

Amnesty International will be holding a coffee house on April 16 at Knox United Church at 7:30 p.m. Amnesty's campaign this year is to draw attention to the "disappeared" victims of political torture and death. In keeping with this theme, local activists and politicians will be imprisoned until a certain number of letters are signed calling for the release of political prisoners. I will be one of these prisoners, so please come and set me free!

It's time to raise some funds, so if you're interested in helping with our annual garage sale please call 725-2955. If anyone has any other get-rich-quick schemes (no infomercials please), please call the office.

MACSW's Annual General Meeting is taking place in Winnipeg, May 13-15. If you want to meet other fabulous feminists, eat yummy food and experience the magic of consensus first hand, call the office.

Spring is a time of rebirth and renewal as in renewal of your MACSW membership. Your voice and support have never been more important.

Parkland Branch Report

Heather Dootoff, Administrative Coordinator

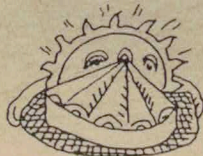
International Women's Day is a day to celebrate achievements won and once again Parkland members in Dauphin have something to celebrate. Virginia Jamieson was elected as a councillor to the Dauphin Town Council in a by-election March 2. Congratulations to Virginia and all who worked on her campaign.

In Dauphin, International Women's Day itself was something to celebrate. We were wonderfully entertained by the works of two women from the Parkland area who developed plays in a "Writing for the Stage" workshop. Bev Delmage of Grandview wrote "The Purple Dress" based on the poem "I Shall Wear Purple." Bev, her son and two other women from Grandview gave an excellent performance. The second work was a character "Madelaine" created by Germaine Jacob of Ste. Rose, about a French Canadian woman whose monologue was skillfully adapted to fit with our IWD theme. Both works had a wonderful message of empowerment delivered by characters whose age and experience tells us **it's never too late!** The evening started off with a potluck supper--there was a good turnout and a great time was had by all!

Over the last month we raffled a piece of stained glass to raise money for Ann Justice. We were able to raise \$230. Thanks to all the volunteers who sold tickets and to Kathleen Baleja for donating her time and talent. Winner of the stained glass piece was John Plohman (our MLA for those of you who don't know). Ann also learned this month that her case was successful at the Supreme Court. She now has the right to sue the provincial government for their failure to intervene through Child And Family Services and Brandon Mental Health Centre. Another accomplishment to celebrate!

Parkland Wellness Promotion Network organized a workshop on Women and Body Image on March 11. Lucille Meisner spoke to a group of thirty women (and a few men) on where we get our ideas about body image from, how this affects us and what we can do about it. I think everyone would agree that three and a half hours were not enough. As I listened to Lucille speak I was aware that Marilyn Roe of Parkland Family Counselling shares these same ideas and information so if anyone requires follow up to the workshop, Marilyn would be a good local resource.

Cheryl Kinney-Matheson has been invited to attend the April meeting of PSW and share more information



about the conference she attended about women and theology. We are hoping to start a women and spirituality group, so if you are interested and have not signed up, please let me know.

Two groups are meeting at our office. Survivors (of sexual abuse) is meeting Wednesday nights and Compassionate Friends is hoping to meet the third Tuesday of every month. Compassionate Friends is an organization for parents and grandparents who have had a child die.

Thompson Branch Report

Hari Dimitrakopoulou, Administrative Coordinator

In March women in Northern Manitoba saw two of the biggest International Women's Day celebrations ever. TACSW spearheaded the IWD Committee and along with the Thompson Crisis Centre, YWCA, Immigrant Women's Association and Business and Professional Women's Club organized a luncheon of 70 women on March 8. Molly Robinson, CEO of the YWCA spoke on the theme of "Bread and Roses"--feminism and what it means to Northern women. It was an empowering time for all of us and a confirmation of the fact that yes, there are feminist women in the North and quite a few of us! It was also testimony to the hard work done by staff and volunteers of groups such as TACSW over the years.

TACSW also participated in the evening IWD potluck supper celebration in conjunction with the International Year of the Family and the Year of Indigenous Peoples. It was exciting to celebrate IWD in different ways with so many women in the North.

Needless to say, the excitement IWD brought overshadowed all other aspects of our work a bit. Well almost...March was also the time we found out about our funding from the federal government. It was good to hear that MACSW is receiving for this fiscal year the same funding as the year before. However, the establishment of core funding or at least adequate funding, for women's organizations such as MACSW, still remains unresolved.

Our work here in Thompson has picked up significantly on the advocacy and resource services we provide to women. We have been able to provide information to groups and individual women on IWD, issues of personal concern and to assist other women's groups with planning. In regards to our own programming, the next TACSW monthly meeting will be on April 6 at 7 p.m. "When Women Kill", a recent NFB

video on women who are victims of abuse, will be shown. Discussion will also take place on the Renewal Committee's final paper.

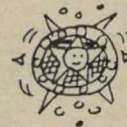
Leah Passler and I, as co-chairs of the MACSW Renewal Committee, have been busy coordinating its activities. We would like to thank all members who participated at the branch level in the renewal discussions and in particular Susan Prentice, Margaret Laurence Chair of Women's Studies, for her input and her help. We are in the process of putting together the final document and looking forward to its discussion at the AGM in Winnipeg in May. If you have any questions on this issue please call us in Thompson at 778-8549 or the branch in your area.

The Northern Women's Development Network, of which TACSW is a founding member, is currently preparing a video on "Northern Women and Work/Economic and Community Development" (working title). We hope to have it ready for the Conference on "Women and Sustainable Economic Development" in Vancouver in May and for the International Circumpolar Conference "Northern Women, Northern Lives" in Fairbanks, Alaska in June.

We are also in the process, along with other Northern women's groups, of establishing a Northern Women's Development Corporation. Some TACSW members were also able to travel to other northern communities, meet the women there and discuss economic development issues with them. The assistance and information received from the women in Saskatchewan and St. Paul, Minnesota, who have worked in similar projects, has been extremely helpful. It is an exciting time working towards a new beginning in terms of economic development for women.

Even better news is that, thanks to TACSW and NWDN's organization, by the time you are reading this, the two groups of the Thompson Community Kitchen will be in operation. Thanks to the donors of kitchen space, food and services as well as the support of Healthy Thompson and the Thompson community, women and their families in Thompson have another option in regards to healthy food.

April is the last month Darlene Merasty will be with TACSW as a third year Faculty of Social Work placement. TACSW members and myself in particular have enjoyed and appreciated the tremendous work and input Darlene has provided. Darlene's enthusiastic work towards the establishment of the Thompson Community Kitchen has been invaluable and we hope she continues to work with us. Thank you Darlene.





Birth: New Choices, New Decisions

Linda Goossen

Women in Canada have made it clear to their governments that they expect to have some real choices about the kind of care they get during pregnancy, birth and the post-partum period. Manitoba will soon follow the lead of Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta in establishing midwifery care for its mothers. How will it look? Will midwives, as Manitoba doctors and nurses have recommended to our government, be nurses who work in hospitals under the supervision of physicians? Will they practice according to a medical model of pregnancy as a disease, which presupposes problems requiring intervention and "management?" Or will they, as in Ontario, be a professional group in their own right, with the same powers as those organizations representing doctors and nurses, to set standards of care, working independently and attending births both in and out of hospital? Will the midwife with whom we develop a relationship during our pregnancy be the midwife who attends our labour and delivery, and visits us at home afterwards? What about the strong, skilled group of midwives currently providing excellent care outside of hospital? Will their unofficial expertise, gained through years of apprenticeship and practice, be recognized in the new order?

Bringing midwifery into the fold of mainstream health care in Manitoba is a process which has just barely begun. Answers to the questions consumers have asked about how midwifery will look have yet to be decided. "It's a crucial time for consumer input", said Madeline Boscoe of the Women's Health Clinic at a meeting of the Birthing Network this spring. "We're making history now, and it's a chance for us to shape the outcome." The group convenes monthly and welcomes new members.

Food for thought. Let's imagine what woman-centred care looks like in the context of a political and social reality where the pregnant labouring woman has traditionally been viewed as a medical patient...

1. We recognize that the pattern of maternal health care over the past 50 years has been based on unproven assumptions about the applicability of a medical model of care. The New England Journal of Medicine published a study of 35,000 labouring women in which the authors concluded that electronic fetal monitoring increased the chance of a woman having a Caesarean section by 20% without increasing her chances of having a better outcome. Manitoba hospitals continue to buy fetal monitors for their labour units and Manitoba physicians and nurses continue to monitor ALL labouring women routinely in spite of evidence that this leads to increased interventions without improving the health of mothers and babies. Woman-centred midwifery care would be based on the knowledge that, for most women, a quiet, supportive environment with access to food and fluids and the freedom to assume any position during labour and birth are the key ingredients for an uncomplicated birth.
2. Research compiled by Klaus and Kennel and published last year in Mothering and Mother, found that the continuous presence of a doula (a woman experienced in childbirth) at a woman's birth significantly increased her chances of having a natural birth and reduced the numbers and kinds of interventions such as episiotomies, epidurals, C-sections, instrumental delivery, induction of labour, and the use of narcotic painkillers. In our hospitals today, half of the labouring women will receive an epidural and fully 25% will undergo a Caesarean section (Canadian statistics). Midwives would provide for continuity of care throughout pregnancy and childbirth. They would not go "off shift" or "off call."
3. The House of Commons Health Committee in Britain concluded that "the policy of encouraging all women to give birth in hospitals cannot be justified on grounds of safety." Marjorie Tew is a British statistician who has researched and written extensively about childbirth and safety. She found that the safety of birth increased outside of hospital with attendants other than



physicians for every category of risk. Midwives and their clients would work together to decide where and how the mother is most comfortable giving birth.

4. In the area of post-natal care, midwives will be well placed to anticipate special needs of new mothers; having visited the mother in her own home both before and after the birth, they are able to take full account of the whole family's social needs. For example, they would be immediately available to help solve breast-feeding problems.

We've been doing birth badly in North America for the last half century. The past two generations of women were told, and many believed, that their bodies were not competent to bear children, that they needed technology and medicine to ensure good outcomes. Two generations of mothers overcame their basic good instincts about their abilities to birth and care for their children and looked to the "experts" to make the decisions. We have since become empowered. We insist that the trust we place in others must be earned, not given on blind faith. Perhaps midwifery, if we help define it, will prove to be a worthy repository for that trust. The choice has been a long time coming.

Linda Goossen is the editor of Motherwork, a quarterly publication of thoughtful articles and personal viewpoints that give new life to old (wise woman) ideas. For subscriptions (\$12/year) write: Motherwork, P.O. Box 23071, Wpg., MB, R3T 2B0.

Celebrate International Midwifery Day, May 5 at the Legislature, at noon. Find out more about midwifery at an evening info session. See p. 13 for details.



See the rooms.
Smell the odours.
Hear the sounds.
Feel the touch -
 that touch, unasked for and unwanted.
Can't escape.
The feelings of wanting to cry, scream,
beg.
I just want to get away, but
his grip is too tight.
His hand on my breast just won't
go away.
I pray for someone to come upstairs, but
no one does.
No one saves me. I am alone
with him.
He lets go and I run
but
I can never run fast enough or far enough, because
I know that next week
I will have to come back
 to my grandfather's house.
These memories won't leave my mind.

Now grown with a daughter,
I still feel the fear.

He's dead and buried, but
the feelings buried within me
for so long are back.
I was just a child - my parents never knew
What about my child?
What if I never know?
The fear still paralyses me.
I can't trust.
Will I ever be able to?

by Sandra Shapiro

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Goddess Art

Interview by Darlene Searcy

Winnipeg artists Pat Courtnage and Jo'Anne Kelly will be presenting a joint show of their work based on the theme of "The Goddess". Craftspace Gallery at 100 Arthur Street is the site of the June 23 opening which is slated to run for three weeks. Action had an opportunity to talk to both artists about this upcoming show.

Action: Tell me about the theme, "The Goddess," and how it has come together for both of you.

P.C. Over the years each of us has made use of feminist imagery in our work that has touched on the goddess theme. I do other work, but when Jo'Anne and I started talking about this show we were both researching the idea and it was something that interested us. When we looked back at the work that we'd done over the years, this imagery was there in our work so we wanted to explore it a little farther and do a show.

As you've experimented over the years, the same theme kept coming up?

J.K. Oh yes, definitely. You can see in this piece where I have two areas of media that I have chosen to work in and develop. I have done a number of pieces that are similar to this in that they encompass a mask image and combine it with an entire body. The mask is clay and the body is painted silk. But it is without a doubt a snake goddess, which is a particular theme I am interested in. I've done other images of this nature that refer to the goddess. I have a particular weakness for the snake goddess, I think partly because I find that our society has come down on snakes and the snake goddess pretty hard. Originally the snake goddess was a very strong being in mythological terms. If you research goddess mythology you will find a reference to snakes and the goddess going back thousands of years.

What do the snakes represent?

J.K. Well, the snake coils and refers to regenerative life. The snake sheds its skin which is also life regenerating and renewing. The snake burrows into the ground and into dark places signifying, in a sense, the womb. So for that reason the snake has always been very important in terms of symbolism connected with the goddess.

What influenced your work?

J.K. In my work I am deliberately contrasting three dimensions and two dimensions with the figure itself. When I do this they tend to come out very hierarchical and saint-like in a sense. That probably comes from my



"Untitled" by Pat Courtnage (clay)

background. I was brought up as a Roman Catholic and I had a strong religious upbringing. I have a lot to say about it, a lot of it negative. I think one of the reasons I pursue this whole goddess imagery is because I feel that the church and the Christian religion denied women a god. In making God male, women were denied a support and I feel very strongly about that. Women have not had a divine role model.

A lot of societies were based around matriarchies and eventually this changed.

J.K. But certainly Christianity hasn't. It made a deliberate effort to stamp out any vestiges of goddess-based religions, all through Europe.

P.C. And I think the goddess imagery is one of celebration. Most of the Christian religion is negative towards women.

J.K. So we're dealing with forms and symbols and images that people have turned their backs on.

The goddess has been portrayed not only as a great creator but also as a great destroyer.

J.K. Yes, I have dealt with that--life, death, regeneration and so on. I've experienced death within my own family and I find that I've become more and more interested in this whole concept of death, but death with regeneration. I don't mean resurrection in the Christian sense.

P.C. Death as a natural course of life.

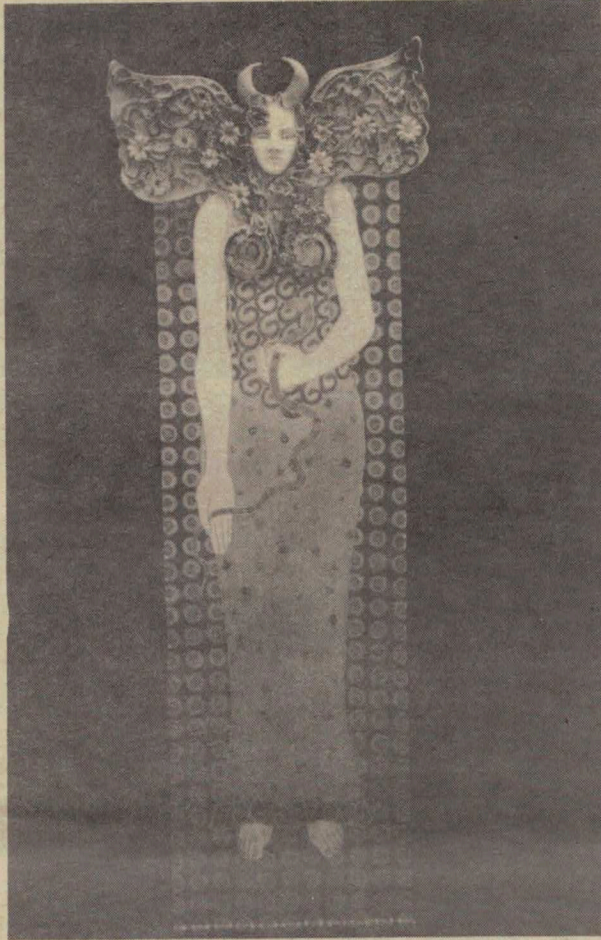
Can you tell me something about the breastplates, Pat? Have you done other parts of the body?

P.C. Oh yeah, I've done them all (laughing). I've done breastplates from art school days and I keep coming back to them. It's a powerful female image, an identifying female force. When you work with clay you relate a lot to the earth, to life forces and to the body.

Your work is very closely tied to the earth, Jo'Anne?

J.K. Well, that's right. And maybe this is the kind of idea that we would like people to walk away with.

P.C. It's a reflection of our life cycles, of what we are, of what we have experienced, how we experience living. The things that are part and parcel of the way we see



"Snake Goddess" by Jo'Anne Kelly (clay & silk)

the world. When we went through art school, there was not much recognition for women artists and you were working in isolation (without recognized role models). This was a very restricted sort of a situation.

J.K. The expectation was that we would get married and have kids and not become artists. Getting older is making me think more about the cycles of life and trying to come to terms with my own life. That very definitely has a lot to do with my interest in the goddess theme. It's a search that employs the use of symbols and the use of this particular theme as a kind of a tool to help find out what is significant in my life and within myself.

We are the authority of our own experiences.

J.K. Yes, and that's all you have when it comes down to it, that's my material. It's what we know.

P.C. It's subconscious. It's something that happens in your work and in retrospect you have to look back and examine what it is you've been doing. Feminist imagery is relating back to ourselves again.



Lillian Allen: Definitely No Door Mat

Fiona Muldrew

Lillian Allen uses her passionate voice like an instrument of liberation so it's no wonder she was reluctant to let her poetry be pagebound in a book. At a reading at Bold Print on March 3 her words came alive and danced in us. She said "poems are not meant to lay still. Writing a book is scary because it makes the words final but the creative process continues. Always a poem, once a book."

Lillian grew up in the African oral tradition and in the late 70's got interested in dub poetry which uses Jamaican dialect often to a rhythmic reggae beat. Luckily for us, dub poetry freed Lillian from her job as a legal worker which she described as a prison of security. She wrote to get herself out of a hole and supporters encouraged her to work on her art full-time. For the past 10 years she's been "working on her life," performing at conferences, folk festivals and wherever people realize that poetry is essential to the spirit of resistance and social change.

Her frustration with the system led her to the belief that you can't be a social worker for more than a year--you become something else. Here's part of her poem "Social Worker":

*" i ' m just doing my job. i like you
people
whose side are you on
we don't have a policy to deal with you er...r
request
whose side are you on
i like you
people
if only life could conform to policy manuals
oh yea?
the system would work just fine if some persons
weren't human..."*

Lillian's poems talk about resistance and joy in the Black community past and present. In "Limbo Dancer" she speaks about the roots of limbo dancing--how it was created on slave ships where slaves found a way to make joy by creating a dance they could do even while in shackles. They were between continents--in limbo: "Limbo in limbo/you limbo like me/you limbo in limbo/you limbo to be free"

People are encouraged to take risks and break unjust laws in Lillian's poem "Nothing But A Hero" which celebrates Harriet Tubman and her work with the

Photo: Darlene Searcy

underground railroad:
 "a real cool super duper
 visionary revolutionary shero...
 they coulda charged you with treason
 but freedom and justice your reasons
 nothing was gonna hold you down
 nothing coulda hold you down..."

When Lillian talks about street people she stresses the importance of living your principles and educating on the issues of poverty. Here's a segment of the poem "Without A Home":

"...I sat in my office looking at the snow
 see it piling high
 thinking I need a much warmer coat
 to face the great outside
 saw a man pulling a mountain
 society's cast off load
 no job, no social security, no permanent abode...
 Went to the mall the other day
 shopping with vengeance and greed
 oh we're so unbothered
 all filling our needs
 so much to choose from shoppers
 so much to pick and feast
 so much to buy on credit
 so many no basic needs..."

The poem "Unnatural Causes" deals with the growing apathy and contempt in Canada towards the poor:

"...Indifference passes through the wind
 the wind, it rains a new breed
 breeds a new passion
 the passion of inaction
 the inaction of politicians
 the art of avoiding issues
 the issues of culture
 the culture of exclusion
 the exclusion of the "political"
 and the powerless.....
 Can you spare a little social change, please?..."

In the poem "Dark Winds," Lillian talks about how the police, in looking for a Black man in a robbery case, harassed Black people at parties throughout the Jane and Finch area of Toronto. Unfortunately, this story is all too familiar to Aboriginal people in Manitoba:

"...and the p'lice them outside
 couldn't stand the noise
 that the heat and the beat and the mystic mists
 was a blowing winds of glory
 in a reggae creation story
 and BAM!

them kick down the door
 put everyone pon the floor
 face down flat, face down flat
 It was a brutal attack
 pon the spirit of survival
 pon the culture and the spirit of revival
 pon de youth of Jane & Finch
 cause them black, cause them black..."

Here's a segment from another all-encompassing resistance poem "Born To Log":

"legend of broken treaties
 wounded trees
 wounded land
 chaka
 lumberjack(al) iron paws
 corporate arm(ies)
 wages war on sacred territory..."

Lillian's poems of liberation, transformation and celebration of difference were summed up in her succinct poem "Feminism 101":

"instead of being the doormat
 get up and be the door"

Lillian will be performing at the Michigan Womyn's Festival this August and might come back to the Winnipeg Folk Festival someday. To get more of her work check out the following books/tapes at Bold Print, the Women's Bookstore, 478 River Ave., Wpg.: Women Do This Everyday, Why Me? (children's book), "Conditions Critical" (tape), & Nothing But a Hero (tape & book of poems for young people). **Photo: Joan Turner**



Dammara Kovnats Hall & Lillian Allen

Our Lifeblood Shot Up With Chemicals

Fiona Muldrew

Aboriginal women sang for hours outside the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs' office in Winnipeg on March 18 to show their concern for our lifeblood--water. They were protesting a major chemical spill into the Winnipeg River by Abitibi Price and were in solidarity with Milton Born With a Tooth, an environmental activist who led the fight against the Oldman River Dam in southern Alberta. It was fitting that Aboriginal women led the protest, since in Aboriginal tradition, women are considered the water carriers and water protectors--symbolic of women's power to create life and carry water in the womb to protect the baby. Chickadee Richard, one of the organizers of the protest, said "Water is how we survive. It's a God-given right for all people. This environmental destruction is not only affecting me, it's affecting you and it will affect our grandchildren."

On March 11, 828 kilograms of Busan 52 (pesticide used to control bacteria in paper making) spilled into the Winnipeg River from the Abitibi Price Pine Falls pulp and paper mill. The 3,000 residents of Sagkeeng First Nation were not informed of the spill for 4 days, even though their drinking water and washing water comes solely from the river just downstream from the mill.

The chemical manufacturer says the spill is not a health threat but government regulations from as far back as 1984 say that if Busan 52 spills into water it should be dammed immediately and even small doses of about 50 grams are dangerous for humans to ingest. Mill employees are supposed to be informed of these regulations which were not followed. Mill employees are in the midst of taking over the mill and have received another 2 year reprieve from complying with federal environmental regulations, even though the water downstream from the mill has failed the drinking water standard. The employees have also received a \$30,000 loan from the provincial government to buy the mill from Abitibi Price. It seems like governments value the jobs of Pine Fall residents more than the health of Sagkeeng residents and the health of Mother Earth. According to the Free Press, one Sagkeeng woman complained of sores on her arm after she took a bath the night of the chemical spill. Another woman took her 2-month old daughter to a Winnipeg doctor because she was throwing up on the weekend after the spill. This is nothing new to Sagkeeng residents.

Banners at the March 18 protest read "No Water, No



Photo: Fiona Muldrew

Pamela, Chickadee and Judy at protest
Land, No Culture, No Life, No Future". While the women played a drum and sang, a building manager tried to get the women to move what he called a "blockade" (people could enter the building freely). A Sagkeeng woman remarked "This is what we have to live with daily. We sing peacefully about the destruction of our lives and they complain that we're blockading their building."

The women who organized the protest have been active in environmental concerns of First Nations people across Canada and in other countries. They are supporters of Milton Born With a Tooth who was sentenced on March 18 for firing a gun into the air to protest the Oldman River Dam. The dam was supposedly created to help farmers irrigate their fields but the federal licence for the dam was denied by the Supreme Court of Canada until a public environmental assessment and review is done. The Alberta government has refused to comply. It is widely believed that the Oldman Dam is part of a series of dams built to sell water to the States (made easier by the passage of NAFTA). Chickadee said "We've got to teach our kids right and wrong and what to fight for. Money is not going to buy life."

To support Milton Born With A Tooth's appeal please make cheques payable to **Karen Gainer, Legal Council**, 225, 604-1st St. SW, Calgary, AB, T2P 1M6 (write on cheques "for Milton's Legal Defence"). To protest the failure to enforce environmental regulations and drinking water standards at the Abitibi Price mill please write: **Sheila Copps, Minister of the Environment**, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6 (no postage required), fax (613) 992-2727. To protest provincial support for the mill without complying to environmental standards please write: **Jim Downey, Industry Minister** and **Glen Cummings, Minister of the Environment**, Legislative Buildings, 450 Broadway Ave., Wpg., MB, R3C 0V8.

Pornography: Effects of the New Laws

Kelly Logan

A clearer understanding of the Supreme Court's latest ruling on obscenity laws and a general enlightenment about laws involving pornography was gained at last month's pornography committee meeting. The meeting, which was co-sponsored by MACSW and the U of W Women's Centre, featured Karen Busby speaking on "Pornography: Effects of the New Laws." Karen, a lawyer, teaches at the U of M Faculty of Law and is a member of the Legal Education and Action Fund's (LEAF) own pornography group. For the dozen or so women who attended the event it was an opportunity to not only learn more about the specifics of the Supreme Court's decision on the Butler case, but to gather this insight from a feminist perspective.

The case, which had garnered so much of the media's attention, is often pointed to as a dividing issue among feminists, lumping them as either pro- or anti-censorship. But, as Karen's talk and the following group discussion revealed, the issue is not so simple.

The talk began with a brief background: how the case reached the Supreme Court on the argument that the obscenity laws (which Butler had been charged under) infringed upon the Canadian Charter's Freedom of Expression clause. While the court agreed with this argument, it found reasonable justification to uphold these laws. However, this ruling has significantly changed the ways in which these laws are to be interpreted. The court found that sexually explicit material is permissible and that material would no longer be judged on a moral basis (for example, the amount of sex), but rather on the damage or harm it may create for women and children. So, while this judgement is a victory in that it acknowledges the connection between pornography and violence against women, at the same time it should result in less material being censored. This point opened up the discussion to the question of censorship, its effectiveness and alternatives.

It was disturbing to learn that Canada Customs has not been enforcing the new obscenity laws taking into consideration the potential harm to women and children. Customs officials continue to ignore the Butler decision and judge material by old standards of morality or sexually explicit material (they mainly target Gay and Lesbian bookstores).

Overall, the discussion provided much food for thought for the committee to plan its next action.

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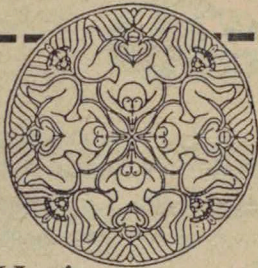
Workshops for groups, confidential counselling, information and referral services are also available.

For further information, to arrange an appointment, or to purchase the above materials:

Call (204) 947-1276

or

Write: Age & Opportunity, Retirement Planning Services
304-323 Portage Avenue
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MACSW MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

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MACSW Winnipeg Branch
702-70 Aruthur St.
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1G7

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|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare/Parenting | <input type="checkbox"/> Media Monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Prostitution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equal Pay/Workplace | <input type="checkbox"/> Midwifery | <input type="checkbox"/> Women of Colour/Racism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal Women | <input type="checkbox"/> Reproductive Health Issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farm/Rural Women | <input type="checkbox"/> Trades & Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Women |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Pensions | <input type="checkbox"/> Violence Against Women |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International Women's Day | <input type="checkbox"/> Pornography | <input type="checkbox"/> Women & Poverty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesbian Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Women/Disability |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Women's Group |

ACTIVITIES

- | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Political Action | <input type="checkbox"/> Lobbying |
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702-70 Arthur St.
Winnipeg, MB
R3B 1G7
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946-5051 | <input type="checkbox"/> BRANDON
202-107-7th St.
Brandon, MB
R7A 3S5
725-2955 | <input type="checkbox"/> PARKLAND STATUS
OF WOMEN
8 Memorial Blvd.
Mail: Box 23
Dauphin, MB R7N 2T9
638-3599 | <input type="checkbox"/> THOMPSON
Box 722
Thompson,
R8N 1N5
778-8549 |
|---|---|---|--|



Astounding Announcements

MACSW AGM and Revisioning Workshop, May 13-15, University of Winnipeg,

Tentative Agenda:

May 13, 4-6 p.m.: Revisioning Workshop--analysis of the **effectiveness of MACSW's work**, brief historical review, member & organizational input.

6-7 p.m. supper

7-9 p.m.: **Priorization/revisioning of MACSW's goals.**

May 14, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Revisioning Workshop--**analysis of MACSW structure** considering 0% increase in funding and previous discussion on MACSW's effectiveness and prioritization of MACSW goals; **decision-making for '93/'94 budget, long-term planning regarding potential cutbacks.**

6 p.m., supper, entertainment

May 15, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.: **MACSW AGM**, approval of budget, appointment of auditor, elections for new Provincial Coordinating Committee.

If you are interested in attending the Revisioning Workshop or AGM please phone your nearest branch or the Winnipeg office at 946-5049. Please register by May 6 for free childcare.

April 5, **Walk for Peace Planning Meeting.**, 10:30 a.m., Project Peacemakers office, 2nd fl., Westminster Church, Wpg., Theme: Celebrating our Diversity, ph. 775-8178.

April 6, **Herbs and Healing** with Jan Gordienko, part of the YM-YWCA Women's Resource Centre's Brown Bag Lunch Speakers' Series, 301 Vaughan St., Mtg. Rm. A, 12:10-12:50 p.m., free admission.

April 7-9, **Welfare Starlets** play at the Bella Vista Restaurant, Maryland & Westminster, Wpg.

April 12, **Traditions and Transitions: Families at the Heart of the Matter**, a luncheon with speaker Robert Glossop from the Vanier Institute of the Family, sponsored by the Manitoba Women's Institute, International Inn, Wpg., 10:30-1:30 p.m., \$20, ph. 945-8976 for more information.

April 15, 8 p.m., **Clayoquot Sound Benefit**, with The Wyrld Sisters, Helen, Richard Moody & Friends, Members of the Dance Collective and Ether City, \$10/7. Stop Clearcutting in Clayoquot Sound, B.C. For info ph. West End Cultural Centre, Wpg., 783-6918.

April 20, **Assiniboine Credit Union's Annual General Meeting**, Winnipeg Convention Centre, 7 p.m. Become a member--help the Greening of the Assiniboine by supporting community input for progressive social change in our credit unions.

April 22-June 19, **Winnipeg 1919: A City in Crisis**, exhibit at the Manitoba Museum of Man & Nature on the history of the Winnipeg General Strike., ph. 943-3139.

April 24, **Earth Day**, all day at the Forks, Wpg.

April 24, 2-4 p.m., **Book Launch of We're Still a Family** by Frances Arnold, Illustrated by Lori Broadfoot, 145 Maryland St., Westminster Housing Co-op Multi Purpose Room, ph. 783-6318, published by JEM Books, Box 26144, 116 Sherbrook St., Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4K4. Available in most Winnipeg bookstores.

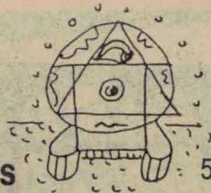
Interested in expanding and spreading Women's Knowledge in our Community??? Come to a meeting on April 25 to discuss setting up a **Feminist Research Centre**. Feminist research could be interviewing your grandmother, finding out what teenage girls think about dieting, seeing how theatre motivates a community for change, finding out how laws affect women. Research could be anything that helps us understand ourselves better and promote solidarity and understanding between communities. You don't need a Ph.D. to get involved. Say what you would like to see at a feminist research centre on **April 25, 7 p.m., at the Pluri-elles office**, 184 Goulet, Wpg., ph. 474-6233 for info.

April 28-30, **Sexual Harassment: In Search of Solutions**, a conference by MB Association Against Sexual Harassment, Delta Hotel, Wpg. Topics: awareness & prevention, policy management, future planning, reporting of sexual harassment, the legal system, etc. For info contact: Frontline Associates, 100 DeBourmont Bay, Wpg., R2J 1K3, 254-2293 (ph./fax).

April 29, **Celebrate the End of Apartheid!** On the day after South Africa elections. Dance with live music & speakers, Whispers Night Club, Wpg. For info ph. MB Coalition Against Racism and Apartheid, 775-9170.

Stalking Support Group - Women who are harassed by stalkers are invited to join a support group that meets monthly. For more info ph. MACSW-Wpg., 946-5049.





More Amazing Announcements

April 29-May 3, **Counterparts VI: Gay & Lesbian Film & Video Festival**, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m. plus Sun. matinee at 2 p.m. and Sat. Late Nite Lesbian Erotica (women only), Cinematheque, 100 Arthur St., Wpg., \$5/4, \$35 festival pass (doesn't include late nite erotica show). Passes & programs available at Gay Lesbian Resource Centre and Winona's. Highlights: Thank God I'm a Lesbian, Gertrude & Alice in Passing, Came Out, It Rained, Went Back In Again, Girlpower, I Never Danced the Way Girls Were Supposed To, Lesbian Impress Card, The Gathering (1990 Gathering of Two-Spirited people held at Bird's Hill Park), Body of Dissent (world premiere of this video about Lesbian & Gay Mennonites), Queer Across Canada, Homoteens and more!

May 5, International Midwives Day, rally at noon at the Legislature, **Midwives: A Choice For You**, 6-10 p.m., Crossways, 670 Broadway Ave., Wpg., a free evening of information about midwifery.

In-Visioning Women: Valuing Our Wisdom, help raise awareness of women's visibility at the University of Winnipeg. Fill out a survey with your opinions on representation of women at all levels of the university: students, faculty, & administration; course curriculum; experiences of female students in classrooms, etc. Surveys available from MACSW (946-5049) or the UofW Women's Centre (786-9788).

Manitoba Women in Trades and Technology (MBWITT) will be holding a **Job Raffle** this spring. Services such as exterior window cleaning, yard cleaning, 2 hours of carpentry and eaves cleaning will be up for auction. Sale of tickets starts March 14. The draw will take place at a **Garage Sale** on Saturday, May 14 at 580 Ingersoll St. Donations welcome. For info please phone 774-2288.

Lesbian Avengers! A Manitoba Chapter is forming. This direct-action group started in '92 and has 17 U.S. chapters. One chapter is in motion in Ontario. The idea is to use playful/humorous approaches to combat lesbophobia. The critical role is to teach lesbians how to organize, how to think politically, and to have the confidence to move ahead with political expediency. All ages, ethnic backgrounds and classes welcome. If interested, call the Gay Lesbian Resource Centre at 284-



5208, leaving your name and phone number and a contact from the group will call you.

International Perspectives: Women & Global Solidarity, National Action Committee on the Status of Women Conference and Annual General Meeting, June 10-13, Ottawa. Workshops on global democratization, global violence against women, new reproductive technologies, ecofeminism and environmental justice, Aboriginal women, religious fundamentalism, and preparing for Beijing-Fourth World Conference on Women. Conference includes international speakers and a "lobby day" on Parliament Hill. For more info contact your nearest branch or ph. (905) 984-8777 or write conference coordinator Rachel Gillooly, 18 Tasker St., St. Catharines, ON, L2R 3Z8.

Progress Through Partnerships: Independent Living National Conference, Winnipeg, August 24-27, Policy, Research and Action to Promote Independent Living for people with disabilities. For info ph. 989-2317, TTY 947-0194. Organized by the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres and the Independent Living Resource Centre of Winnipeg.



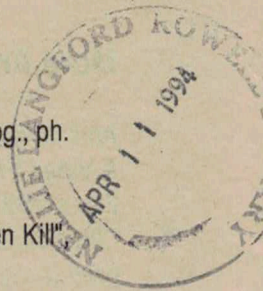
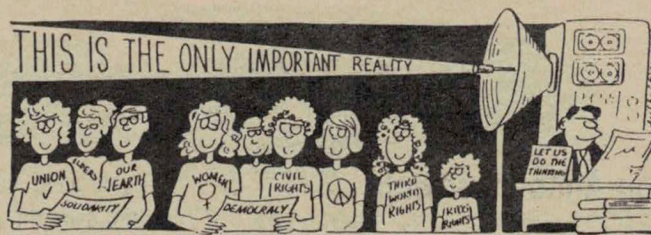
When are you going to win the MACSW Quilt or three other fabulous prizes? After you hand in your raffle tickets to the Winnipeg office, of course. You will be the lucky winner on June 21 when we have our MACSW Summer Solstice party and Raffle Draw. Please send in money and ticket stubs from tickets that were sent out to you with the last newsletter. Cheques can be made out to MACSW. We have tons more raffle tickets if you would like to buy or sell tons more. We could mail them to you in a large envelope s.w.a.k. Ph. 946-5049 to order now! To catch a glimpse of the quilt you are about to win, head down to Winona's Coffee & Ice, 761 Westminster Ave. Ponder over its warmth and beauty while sipping cappuccino. Just don't spill anything on the quilt or the Quilting Avengers will be after you.

Income Tax Services

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Income Tax Services
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R0M 2H0

Calendar of Events - APRIL



- 6 **Women's Task Force on Violence Meeting**, noon, Social Planning Council, 412 McDermot Ave., Wpg., ph. 946-5049 for info.
- 6 **TACSW Branch Meeting**, 7 p.m., MACSW Renewal Discussion, NFB Video showing "When Women Kill", TACSW office, 23 Nickel Rd. (YWCA Bldg.).
- 7 **MACSW Winnipeg Political Action Committee Meeting**, 1 p.m., MACSW office, ph. 946-5049 for info.
- 12 **Gender and Development Network**, 7:30 p.m., 60 Maryland St., Wpg., for info ph. 946-5049.
- 13-16 **Sorrow and Strength: The Process**, 4th annual conference about childhood sexual abuse for survivors, therapists, counsellors, teachers & healthcare professionals, International Inn, Wpg., with Elly Danica (Mar. 13), Lillian Green, Shirley Turcotte & Colin Ross, M.D., ph. Learning Networks, 786-1971.
- 14 **Parkland Branch Meeting**, 5:30 p.m., 8 Memorial Blvd., Dauphin, Carri's list brings supper. Cheryl Kinney-Matheson returns as guest speaker.
- 14-15 **Mental Health: Family, Society and Culture**, a conference by Promoters of Mental Health Continuing Education and Canadian Mental Health Association, Westman Region, featuring Maude Barlow and Sue Johansen, Brandon. For more info call Heather Kirkham at 726-6191.
- 14 **Winnipeg Branch Meeting**, 6 p.m., University of Winnipeg, Room 1C10, ph. 946-5049 for childcare.
- 15-17 **"Balance"**, a magical workshop at the Yoga Centre, Wpg., with Marni MacDonald, Montreal artist, theatre teacher & witch, ph. Arlo at 788-4650.
- 16 **Amnesty International Coffee House**, 7:30 p.m., Knox United Church, 18th Street and Victoria Ave., Brandon, National Day of Presence to draw attention to victims of disappearances. Come and sign a letter and perhaps set symbolic prisoners (like Jennifer Howard) free. Local performers, no admission cost.
- 17 **MACSW Winnipeg Volunteer Appreciation Decadent Dessert Party**, 1-4 p.m., 28 Dundurn, ph. 946-5049. Join your sisters in the strudel!
- 19 **Visioning a Healthy Brandon for Women**, a workshop sponsored by Vision Quest, Brandon's Healthy Communities Project, 7 p.m. New Careers Office, 153 8th Street. What would make Brandon a better place for women and children? Childcare provided if you register by April 12. For more information, call 725-2955.
- 28-30 **Future Directions, Child Care For All**, 17th Annual conference sponsored by the Manitoba Child Care Association, International Inn, Wpg., ph. 586-8587 for a registration package.
- 28-May 1 **Woman Healing for Change Spring Gathering**, Gull Harbour Resort, Hecla Island, MB, a four day healing retreat open to all women, balancing our emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual selves. For more info ph. 284-0679 or write: Woman Healing for Change, P.O. Box 2406, Wpg., MB, R3C 4A7.
- May 1 **May Day Parade**, join the floats to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, 1 p.m. at James & Lily (behind Concert Hall). Parade will go to the Union Centre for exhibit of art work.