

# ACTION

MANITOBA ACTION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN NEWSLETTER

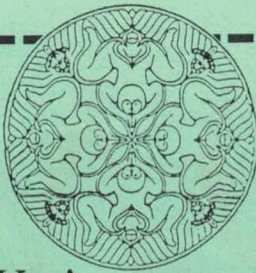
November/December, 1994

Vol. 21 No. 6



## Women Making Sense of Social Policy





# MACSW MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Please indicate if you want to receive the MACSW newsletter in a plain envelope without the MACSW identifier. \_\_\_\_\_

**NEW MEMBERSHIP**

**RENEWAL**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

**ORGANIZATIONS - \$50**

*Please sign up, even if you can't afford the membership fee. Your membership includes a subscription to the ACTION Newsletter, published 9 times a year.*

Make cheques payable to MACSW and send this form to:

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

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

## ISSUES

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <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 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office Duties | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Education |                                   |

## NEAREST MACSW BRANCH

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> WINNIPEG<br>702-70 Arthur St.<br>Winnipeg, MB<br>R3B 1G7<br>946-5049<br>946-5051 | <input type="checkbox"/> BRANDON<br>202-107-7th St.<br>Brandon, MB<br>R7A 3S5<br>725-2955 | <input type="checkbox"/> PARKLAND STATUS<br>OF WOMEN<br>8 Memorial Blvd.<br>Mail: Box 23<br>Dauphin, MB R7N 2T9<br>638-3599 | <input type="checkbox"/> THOMPSON<br>Box 722<br>Thompson,<br>R8N 1N5<br>778-8549 |
|---|---|---|--|



## 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.

## B-RING B-RING ))) YOUR IDEAS !!

'CAUSE THERE'S A CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ACTION NEWSLETTER IN THE FORM OF ...

☛ written articles (can't get too many!)

☛ art work, graphics, cartoons or suggestions

AND if you like to edit ... OR if you are interested in joining the newsletter collective at MACSW call us at 946-5051 or 946-5049 (messages)

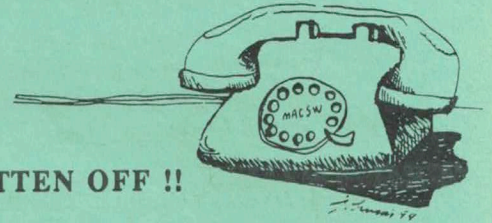
**YOUR ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM WILL NOT BE WRITTEN OFF !!**

**NEXT ISSUE:**

**REFLECTIONS ON 1994**

**International Year of the Family and The Year for Racial Harmony**

**DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS : December 21, 1994**



*Send stuff to:*

*ACTION* Newsletter  
MACSW Winnipeg Branch  
702-70 Arthur St.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3B 1G7  
Phone: 946-5051  
or 946-5049 messages

### *This issue:*

Barb Abramchuk, Kristin MacMorran, Marian Yeo,  
Fiona Muldrew, Evie Rawluk, Allison Dewar,  
Marjorie Turton, Marion Foster

**Special Thanks to:** Corah Williams, Beatrice Watson  
and Thandiwe Motsisi

**Graphic Artists:** Karen Johnson and R. Durrant

**Newsletter Coordinator:** Paula Prime

## Thank you New & Renewed Members!

### June - November, 1994

|                                  |                                       |                                |                                    |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Carol Popiel                     | Joan Turner                           | Debra Hathaway                 | Cecily Phelan                      |
| Carolyn Turner                   | Tracey Braun                          | C. Krebs                       | Stella Crozier                     |
| Metis Women of Manitoba<br>Globe | Meire Mercer                          | Joyce Harrison                 | Connie Cohen                       |
| Cindy Charette                   | Marcelle Marion                       | Karen Binding                  | Clarice Oldcorn                    |
| Jean Snow                        | Shelley Wray                          | Shannon Coss                   | Jan Anderson                       |
| Shar Lynn                        | Fort Garry Women's Resource<br>Centre | Sandy Millen                   | Donna Kennedy                      |
| Lou Erikson                      | Margo Charlton                        | Sheila Somers                  | Allsion Campbell                   |
| Mareena Yusishen                 | Jenny Sharpe                          | Wanda Bosek                    | Lynne Bingham                      |
| Sandra Shapiro                   | Melanie Bejzyk                        | Tammy Scott                    | Rosemary McVicar                   |
| Laura Atkinson                   | Bob Dunkield                          | Sylvia Wise                    | Thompson Crisis Centre             |
| Therese Koturbash                | Paula Mallea                          | Irene Kuhtey                   | Winnipeg Public Library<br>Serials |
| Rhonda Wiebe Warkentin           | Jennifer Mierau                       | Linda Asper                    | L.J. Condo                         |
| C. Badnaruk                      | Judy McLean                           | Cary Brown & Amethya<br>Weaver | Yvonne Peters                      |
| June Lee                         | Nori Korsunsky                        | Diane Sabourin                 |                                    |



## MACSW HIRES PROVINCIAL COORDINATOR!

Paula Prime is the new Provincial Coordinator for the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women. She brings to MACSW, a store house of experience in community organizing and a knowledge of non-colonial tactics for resistance. Paula is also Co-founder and Managing Coordinator of SISTERS OF SOJOURNER.

She believes that racism and classism are forms of violence that feminism can no longer afford to minimize.

Paula sees the practice of what is spoken truthfully, as an art form and believes that voice is the beginning of what is possible in freedom. Of her work she says, "I do not write to be read but primarily to be heard and listened to."

Currently, she is published in, Women Changing Academe and is one of many black women featured in a pictorial biography entitled: Outstanding Canadian Black Women Artists, soon to be published in Toronto.

### MACSW ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR REQUIRED

MACSW has an opening for an ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR in the Winnipeg office. We are looking for a flexible, well-organized feminist with initiative and good interpersonal skills to work half-time (20 hrs/wk). Some evening and weekend work required plus occasional travel. Starting salary \$11.76/hr plus benefits.

#### DUTIES INCLUDE COORDINATION OF WINNIPEG-BASED EVENTS AND ADMINISTRATION:

- coordination of special events and political action projects in Wpg. area (i.e. display tables, public forums, etc.)
- networking & liaison with coalition groups
- recruitment & orientation of new members & volunteers
- responding to phone, walk in and correspondence requests
- answering media requests
- general office maintenance (i.e. postage & photocopy accounts, office supplies, postage machine, petty cash account, etc.)
- supervision of summer & project staff
- preparation, attendance and follow-up of monthly Branch meetings

- attendance at provincial meetings (3 times annually)
- overseeing finances of Winnipeg Branch

#### QUALIFICATIONS:

- a thorough knowledge of women's issues, feminism and community development
- excellent organizational skills
- excellent written and oral communication skills
- ability to work cooperatively with others
- self-motivation, with a strong sense of responsibility
- experience in media relations an asset

MACSW encourages applications from aboriginal women, black women, women of colour, women with disabilities, immigrant women and lesbians.

Please send resume by December 2, 1994 to: MACSW Personnel Committee at 702-70 Arthur St., Wpg., MB, R3B 1G7.

#### *Advertise in ACTION!*

*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. 946-5051 or 946-5049 messages |  |



# Social Policy

## *The "Ax"-man Cometh*

*by Liz Sarin and Esther Fyk*

On reading Lloyd Axworthy's discussion paper about the proposed changes to Canada's social safety net the rationale seems, well, rational. Let's dig a little deeper.

According to a Statistics Canada Study released in 1991, only 2% of the national debt can be attributed to social programs. Tax breaks and loopholes for the wealthy and the corporate sector account for a whopping 44% of our national indebtedness. (Action Link October 1994). The richest members of society are taxed the least. Women (members of the work force) have traditionally been among the lowest paid and we comprise the largest number of casual/part-time employees. Therefore, we are often the first to be laid off. (These and other factors contribute to the increasing feminization of poverty).

Divorce, another major player, often precipitates a plunge of women's family income—on average 39% (men's increases, on average, 7%). These statistics are from a few quoted in the Green Papers.

Axworthy has described proposals to address many of these issues. One suggestion involves replacing parts of the Canada Assistance Plan with a Guaranteed Annual Income, which would be available to the poor—working and non-working. Axworthy hastily adds the condition that any more than a token amount would mean "sharply" raising taxes.

As mentioned earlier, the corporate sector in Canada enjoys a rather privileged tax status. In 1992, 93,405 corporations paid no tax on \$27 billion in profits (stats from The Council of Canadians). Of particular interest is the fact that in 1990, Hon. Paul Martin's company, the CSL group, made a pre-tax profit of \$19,700,000, paid no income tax and received tax credits equalling \$400,000. Is there a clear picture developing here? If we taxed corporations fairly there would be

adequate, nay, over-abundant, funding for the Guaranteed Annual Income. Other proposals include the creation of 150,000 "new" child care spaces. According to the Council of Canadians, this "new" funding is being diverted from the Canada Assistance Plan. Robin Hood needs to re-teach the lesson—you don't rob the POOR to pay the poor.

Adequate support payments and the enforcement of family support payments would address many issues of child poverty. Yet another study is scheduled to report this fall. We need action, not more studies that put money into the pockets of consultants (read—the friends of government).

The Green Paper describes the proposed integration of Provincial Social Assistance payments with Child Tax Benefits to provide combined support closer to the cost of raising a child. This, we can support, as long as funds are not diverted from other essential programs such as CAP.

Women must be made aware of the proposed threats to the social safety net. Issues of most concern to women are child poverty, single parent families, the wage differential between men and women and the impact of these changes on women of colour, immigrant women, disabled women and older women. There is a relatively new phenomenon that was discussed on CBC Radio on October 17th—that of highly skilled women having to retire early to care for elderly or sick members of their family. Women who choose to remain at home to raise families have their own unique concerns. All of these concerns must be addressed by any proposed changes—in consultation with women's groups.

To illustrate the urgency of the crisis, a message was circulated in Chrétien's cabinet indicating that \$7.5 billion would be cut from Canada's social programs no matter what any discussion with the public produced. What can be done?



*Push the Petition:* See Attached.

**PETITION**

**Standing on Guard for Canada's Social Programs**

To:  
 The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister  
 The Honourable Paul Martin, Minister of Finance  
 The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy,  
 Minister of Human Resources Development

WHEREAS I have the right, along with every Canadian, to health care if I am sick, to affordable education if I am training or studying, to a pension if I am a senior, to insurance against joblessness if I am a worker, to assistance if I am poor or homeless, to daycare services if I am a parent working outside the home, and to access to those cultural institutions, like CBC which bind us together as a nation;

WHEREAS these social programs form the very fabric of Canada, defining us as a civilized and compassionate nation;

WHEREAS the struggle to build universal health care, old age security and other valued institutions is a proud part of Canada's heritage;

WHEREAS deep cuts to social programs will hurt all Canadians and have a profoundly negative impact on the three million adults and children living below the poverty line, including many who visit food banks or are homeless;

WHEREAS cuts to social programs are not necessary, since tax breaks and subsidies to wealthy individuals and profitable corporations have caused close to half the debt, while social programs have caused less than six percent; THEREFORE

I JOIN THE PEOPLE OF CANADA in petitioning the federal Liberal government to maintain and enhance the social programs that are our right and heritage.

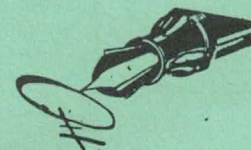
*Press your politician.* Write to Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, carbon copy to Hon. John Chrétien, Hon. Paul Martin, the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee and opposition critics and your own MP, MLA, and Premier Gary Filmon— provinces are getting involved.

*Maximize the Media:* Keep your local newspapers informed with letters to the editor. Phone in to talk shows.

*Get Heard:* A Parliamentary Committee will be holding national hearings. Phone your MP or the 1-800 info line to find the closest one.

*Get the 1-800 Feeling:* Phone the Review toll free talkback line or if you want a copy of the discussion papers—call the Human Resources line.

  
**Woman  
 ♀  
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## EDUCATION PROPOSALS RESULT IN DECREASED ACCESSIBILITY

Jennifer Howard

Forty years ago post-secondary education in Canada was the right of only the privileged few. Students were predominantly white, male and upper class. Accessibility was unheard of, the function of the University was to preserve the privilege of the ruling class, by offering education to those who could afford it.



Many would say that the face of Canadian post-secondary education has not changed much. For the most part, universities and colleges are still dominated by white men, at least in terms of administration, faculty and curriculum. However, since the middle of this century "non-traditional" students such as women, people of colour, aboriginal women, people with disabilities and the working class, have enrolled in post-secondary institutions in increasing numbers.

According to Statistics Canada's 1993 Profile of Post-Secondary Education in Canada, in 1951 91,443 students were enrolled full-time in colleges or universities. By 1993 that number had increased tenfold to 950,265. In 1991, 54% of full time and 62% of part time students were women, Statistics were

not collected on numbers of students of colour, aboriginal students and students with disabilities.

One of the main reasons for increasing enrollment has been enhanced financial and geographic accessibility. Federal/Provincial Government programs such as the Canadian Student Loans Program (CSLP), Vocational Rehabilitation Development Program (VRDP) for students with disabilities and Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) for status aboriginal students, were developed with the goal of creating an accessible Canadian post-secondary education system.

Lloyd Axworthy's discussion paper on social security reform (Improving Social Security in Canada) proposes eliminating the federal Established Programs Financing (EPF), the cash transfer to the provinces responsible for partially funding post-secondary education, and implementing an Income Contingent Loan Repayment Plan (ICLRP). These proposals represent a fundamental shift in the philosophy of funding post-secondary education from accessibility to elitism.

These proposals would shift the burden of paying for post-secondary education to the users of the system, students. Currently student user fees make up about 25% of institutional budgets. Under Axworthy's plan these fees would likely double by 1997 and eventually increase by as

much as 500%, from approximately \$2,500 per full-time year to \$10,000.00.

To enable students to pay these fees, the government proposes setting up an ICLRP program. ICLRP means that students would borrow money to pay tuition and living expenses and would repay these loans through the income tax system as a fixed percentage of the student's income. While an income-sensitive loan repayment plan may sound attractive, it will result in decreased accessibility, particularly for women, and market-driven education.

As women with university degrees working full time earn 71.7% of what men do, it would take more time for women to repay their loans and they would end up paying more due to interest charges. In Australia, where an ICLRP program exists, it is expected that, on average, men will have paid 75% of their loans by age 34, while the average woman will be age 52 before she has repaid three-quarters of her loan.

The prospect of carrying large debt burdens acts as a barrier to participation for poor and working-class students, especially in a climate of high unemployment and underemployment. The poorest of the poor are marginalized students such as single parents, women, aboriginal students, students of colour and students with disabilities.

Programs such as the PSSSP for aboriginal students

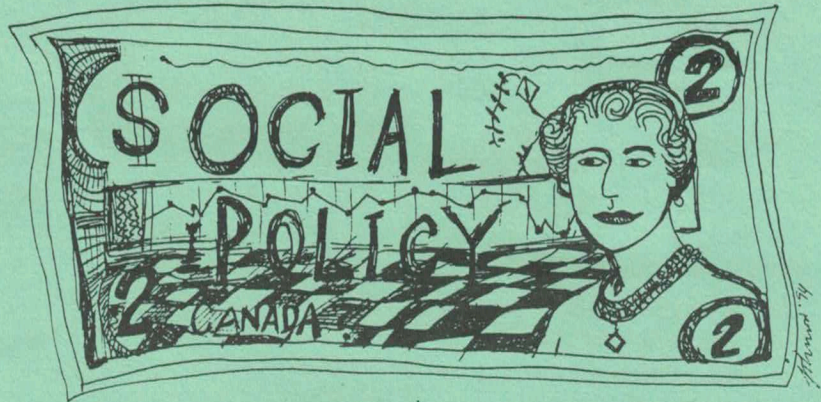


and the VRDP for students with disabilities receive funding from the federal government to sponsor students' tuition and living expenses. As tuition increases, there is no indication that funding for these programs will increase, resulting in fewer sponsored students.

In order to repay their loans over the shortest amount of time with the minimum of interest, students will be forced to choose programs that are more likely to result in employment. Progressive programs such as women's studies and lesbian/gay studies, fine arts and humanities would be faced with decreased resources and program development would become market-driven.

The Canadian Federation of Students, a national advocacy organization representing over 400,000 students, has long supported a universally accessible post-secondary education system. This could be achieved through a progressive taxation system which would include an education tax on corporations, who derive benefits from a well-educated workforce, and a national system of student grants.

Post-secondary education funding reform should enhance accessibility, not return us to a system of elite institutions whose function is to preserve the status quo and protect power imbalances. Education must be viewed as a public good and a right for all, not a private commodity and a privilege for few



### **THE PERVERSIVE ATTACK ON THE POOR**

*by The Welfare Action Line  
Coalition*

The Welfare Action Line Collective is a group of activists and advocates committed to ensuring welfare recipients receive assistance, respect, dignity, and fairness from a system that attempts to deny individuals the services and resources that they are entitled to.

Increasingly, the poor are being viciously attacked by the government and the mainstream media. The creation of the Welfare Fraud Line is but one example of this attack on the poor.

The Welfare Fraud Line was created by the provincial government to "provide for those who need help the most." The citizens of Manitoba are encouraged to call the Fraud Line if they suspect their neighbours of "abusing welfare." As a result, there has been an

increase in community breakdown as welfare recipients become isolated in fear of being reported for "doing something wrong." The government has chosen to create a mechanism which forces us to police our own neighbours and to place judgement on whether they are "deserving" or "not deserving" of assistance from the state. In addition, women continue to be falsely reported for having men living in their homes. Individual women are often denied social assistance until a worker is allowed to investigate. Only after visiting the home and being satisfied that they are in fact not living with a man will the investigator allow the woman to be granted benefits. It has been reported that workers have gone to the extreme of sorting through a woman's laundry in an attempt to "prove them fraudulent." Recipients have little recourse to appeal as it is often their word against the word of the welfare worker. If recipients are disqualified from



assistance they have the "right to appeal", however, the process of appeal is misleading. The Welfare Appeal Board consists of government appointees who share the views of a government which has chosen to create the Fraud Line.

There are many problems associated with the Welfare Fraud Line. It has not saved taxpayers any money and it has created definite divisions between welfare recipients and the working poor. The Fraud Line ideal appeals to well meaning individuals who come to believe that the money saved by catching the bad folk will free up money to be given to the good folk. There is no evidence of any increase in resources for any welfare recipients. In fact, recipients are finding it more and more difficult to access assistance for anything other than the bare essentials. Recipients are told to purchase special needs items with their GST and Child Tax Benefit cheques. As a consequence, they are often forced to utilize food banks to put food on the table.

By misleading the public into believing that fraud is the problem and that poor people are bad people, the government has managed to avoid addressing the real issues. Job creation, finding alternative sources of revenue, and looking at the fraud that exists among high income earners and corporations who avoid paying taxes as a result of our regressive tax structure are the concerns that need to be addressed.

The government with the generous support of the media has created a system that vilifies the poor. As long as the public continues to be fed this false perception, welfare recipients will continue to be marginalized within a society which creates policies that favour the rich and punish the poor.

### MANITOBA WOMEN'S COALITION ON SOCIAL POLICY

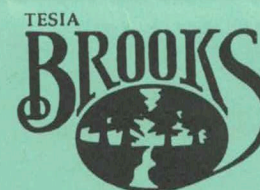
A coalition of women representing different organizations has come together to work on social policy issues.

We want to ensure that women are full participants in the Liberal government's social policy review, therefore we applied for and received funding to bring the views of the women's community into the consultation process. We will write discussion papers and conduct outreach to educate women about social policy and listen to their views. We will also hold a provincial working conference in early January which the coalition believes will mobilize women to take action on issues such as social assistance, IU, child care, workfare and student loans. Copies of the government's discussion paper "Jobs and Growth: Improving social Security in Canada" are available through the MACSW

office at 702-70 Arthur St.

If you are interested in participating in consultations about social policy you can:

- attend the Parliamentary Committee's hearings in Winnipeg on November 25-26
- come out to our conference Women and Security: Taking Action on Social Policy, which will be held January 6-8, 1995 at the Union Centre
- call us at 946-5053 for more detailed information and to be placed on our mailing list.



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# Action Action...Read All About It

## Calendar of Events -

November—January

**Nov 28** Weight Preoccupation Workshop, sponsored by the Women's Health Clinic, 202-419 Graham Ave., Wpg., 7-9 p.m.

**Nov 29, Dec 6,13** 'Being Intimate/ Staying Safe: Talking about women's sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS risk reduction. How our values affect our work with clients. Planned Parenthood, 206-819 Sargent Ave., 9 a.m.- 12 a.m. Call 947-1517 for more information.

**Dec 6-7** ' Working with Victims of Domestic Assault': a workshop designed for helpers & counsellors with prior experience in generalist counselling, at Klinik Community Health Centre, 807 Portage Ave., Wpg., 9 a.m.- 5 p.m., sponsored by Evolve, Cost \$50. Call 784-4070 for more information.

**Dec 8-9** 'Unity in Diversity: Human rights in our corner of the global village', Community Legal Education Association's 6th annual conference on

human rights issues, Holiday Inn South, Wpg., 1330 Pembina Hwy. For more information contact 943-2382.

## Announcements

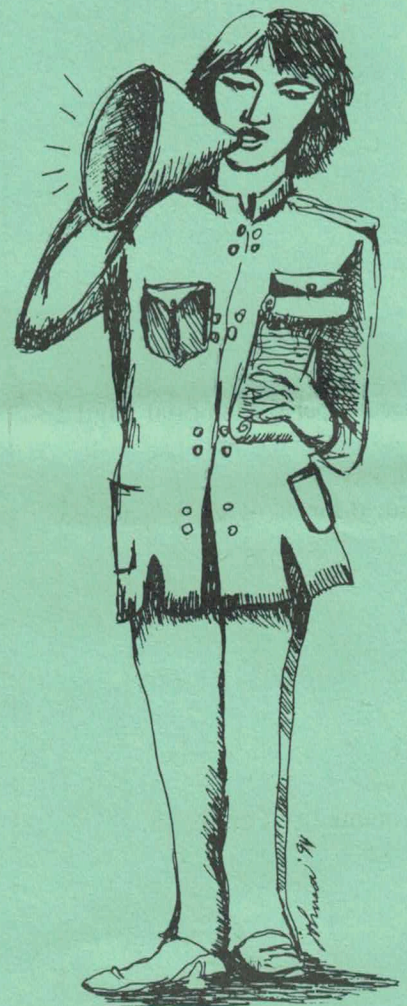
Workshop on Sexual Assault being conducted by Lorraine Parrington at Klinik, Monday November 28, 7:00-9:30 pm Pre-registration is required. Call 477-1123 for more details.

Independent documentary film maker, (Kris Anderson) is looking for women, groups, organizations who would share their experiences of child custody in Canada. Call 786-2433.

IWAM (Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba) is:

1. relocating to 290 Vaughn Street (Old YM-YWCA building) on the Mezzanine floor, effective December 1, 1994.
2. offering multilingual counselling for immigrant women in abusive relationships.

The Winnipeg Gay/Lesbian Resource Centre is looking for volunteers for the Lesbian Social Discussion Group For more info. call 474-0212.





The Women's International Travel Club welcomes women who: travel regularly, prefer affordable bed & breakfast accommodation and enjoy networking with other women. If interested call, 224-4558.

YM-YWCA Women's Resource Centre offering Women's Spirituality Workshop Series: "Healing Our Creativity" December 9, 7-9 pm & December 10, 10-5 pm. Cost \$35.00 Call 989-4140 or 774-1042, for details.

December 6 Memorial: 12 noon in the mingling area of the Knowles Douglas Student Union bldg., Brandon University. For more info. call 725-2955.

December 6 Memorial Vigil : Monday, Dec 5th, 12:30-1:30 in Psych. Student's Lounge, 4th floor, U of W. Women's Centre events will be scheduled from Dec. 5-9. Ph.786-9788

Dec 17th is DYKE NITE: A woman's only Fundraising Social for: The Lesbian Avengers. Broadway Community Centre, 185 Young St. 8pm-1am. Tickets \$8 and \$10 at Winonas and the Bars. Ph. 284-5208

**FORT GARRY WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE EVENTS:**

Drop ins for women ages 45 plus, the 1st Monday of every month starting December 5, 1:30-3:30, Rm 104, 3100 Pembina Hwy.

Next Community Drop in for Single Moms: Dec 6, 9:30-11:30, Rm 104 3100 Pembina Hwy.

Community Drop in for Mothers, Thursday mornings: 9:30-11:30 am

Clothing Exchange (women & children): every 1st Thursday of the month, 9:30-11:30 am & 6:30-8:30 pm , Rm 104 3100 Pembina Hwy.

**OUTDOOR WOMEN'S NETWORK EVENTS:**

Nov.27: Grand Beach Ski. Call Carol 775-9810

Dec.10-11: Ski Weekend in the Whiteshell. Call Monique & Mo 284-2596

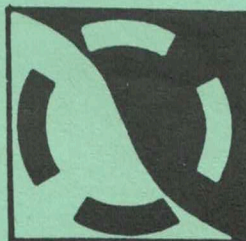
Dec.21: Wednesday evening Solstice Skate. Call Laurie 453-3637

Dec.27: Tuesday Ski at Birds Hill Park. Call Laurie 453-3637

Jan.15: Sunday Day Ski at Pinawa. Call Mo 284-2596

Jan.22: Day Ski at Sandilands. Call Gerry 786-7522

Jan.29: EL GRANDE BEACHEARO SALSA SKI. Call Carol 775-9810



**THE WELFARE ACTION LINE**

**942-0732**

The Welfare Action Line exists to help people on City or Provincial welfare. Our aim is to insure that you receive the assistance, respect, dignity and fairness that is your right.

We will help with appeals, housing and health issues, and general concerns people face when confronting different agencies.

The Action Line is staffed mornings from 9-11 Monday to Friday. The Line is also on Voice Mail and we pick up messages throughout the day.

*The Welfare Action Line is staffed by volunteers and they are not associated with any social service agency. All calls are confidential.*



## **SUPREME COURT SETS DANGEROUS PRECEDENT**

*By Barb Abramchuk*

Womens groups across the country are outraged by a recent Supreme Court decision which has allowed two men to beat assault charges using drunkenness as a defense.

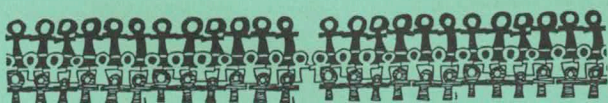
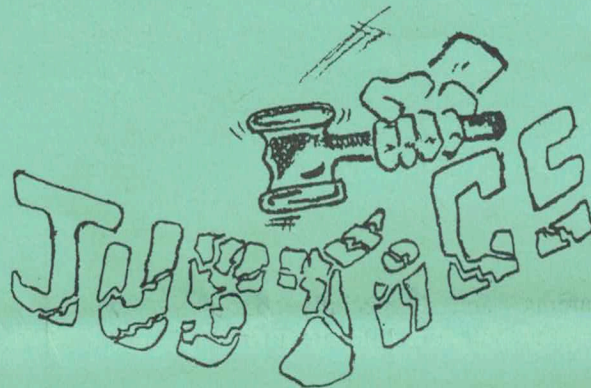
On September 30, 1994, the Supreme Court of Canada, in a 6 - 3 decision, overturned Henri Daviault's conviction of sexually assaulting a woman. The Court ordered a new trial and instructed the judge to allow Daviault to argue that he was drunk to the point of insanity when he dragged his 65 year old acquaintance from her wheel chair and sexually assaulted her. Daviault, of Montreal, argued before the Court that he should be acquitted of the assault charge because he was so drunk he blacked out and therefore, he could not have formed the necessary criminal intent.

A few weeks after the Supreme Court of Canada ruling, a Court of Queen's Bench judge in Alberta cited the Daviault case when it was determined that Carl Blair was not responsible for the severe beating he inflicted on his wife in November 1993. The Alberta man successfully used the excuse of a 30 hour drinking and prescription drug binge to beat an assault charge.

The Court ruling has tremendous ramifications on assault cases and other criminal acts. What the Supreme Court's decision does is to take away responsibility from people for their actions. More specifically, the ruling takes away men's responsibility for male violence against women.

Although the Court expects only a slight trickle of claims of drunkenness, it is obvious that the Court has set a precedent that is being felt by women across the country. Even the government is looking at all means possible to minimize the effects of what has been called a major Supreme Court decision. Justice Minister Allan Rock has made it clear that there must be accountability for drunken behaviour. The government's planned update of the Criminal Code expected to be announced in the spring will likely include changes that will make it harder for people to use drunkenness as a defense.

Women across the country are actively responding to what has been described as an unacceptable and despicable ruling. Indeed, drunkenness is no excuse for rape or any other violent abuse of power. Individuals must take responsibility for their actions. This is the message that must be directed at the Minister of Justice and his Department. Please write to the government officials concerned and make your outrage known - women's lives are at stake.



### *Income Tax Services*

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Income Tax Services  
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**CHILD ADVOCACY MOVES FORWARD!**

by Susan Prentice

Manitoba now has a provincial coalition devoted to childcare advocacy. The new group is the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba.

The Coalition grew out of last year's well-attended and high-profile "Partners in childcare" conference, hosted by the Manitoba Child Care Association. That conference brought together nearly two hundred childcare advocates and sparked the organizing which eventually led to the new coalition. The MCCA, a professional association of early childhood educators, deserves a big round of congratulations for helping to start the new association.

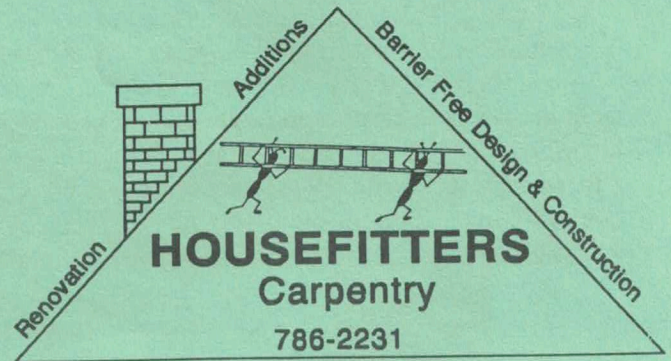
The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba is made up of groups and individuals from labour, women's groups, community associations and the child care community. The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba believes that all parents need and deserve help and support around child rearing, and that society has an obligation to provide such assistance. We are committed to a fully accessible, publically-funded, non-profit system.

Parents—and especially mothers, who perform the bulk of childcare in most homes—need a range of different kinds of services, depending on the age of their children and their personal circumstances. Our vision is of a coordinated system of services, including licensed full and part-time group and family daycare, parent-child drop-in centres, nursery schools, resource and toy-lending libraries and other support full and other childcare supports for children aged 12 weeks to 12 years and their parents. We support full and part-time group and family daycare, as well as drop-in centres, extended-hours care and serviced for shift workers (including evenings and weekend care). In particular, the Coalition argues that the childcare system must be responsive to the special needs of aboriginal and rural parents. In addition, the Coalition advocates for public and private policies which support child rearing, such as optional extended parental leave and family-sensitive employment policies.

The new Coalition has a Steering Committee, which can be contacted through Cecile Cassista at 633-3344, or Susan Prentice at 474- 6233. The Steering Committee is currently planning an

election campaign to make sure the next provincial government is supportive of childcare.

Historically, childcare work has been devalued, whether it has been done by mothers in the home or by others. The Childcare Coalition of Manitoba is working to change this.



**FAREWELL & THANK YOU TO SUSAN BANKS !**

After two years of dedicated participation on MACSW staff as Administrative Coordinator for the Winnipeg Branch, Susan is leaving MACSW to extend that famous Manitoba Feminist spirit to our sisters on the B.C. coast. Susan's contribution to Macsw is greatly appreciated and she will be missed. We will especially miss her quiet and efficient manner. At times when all around appeared chaotic, Susan managed to stay calm and work on problems as they arose. In the great feminist tradition, Susan took responsibility for her words and actions to actively promote the best interests of women. We all wish you the best, Susan. Keep in touch !



**AND NOW A MESSAGE FROM OUR CORPORATE SPONSOR...**

*by Kristine Barr*

Having recently attended the National Women's Conference on Social Policy in Regina, the content ranged from what the government proposals meant for women to challenging the right wing framework in social policy. It was during a panel presentation entitled "Guaranteed Annual Income or Guaranteed Poverty: Workfare, Child Benefits and Social Assistance" that I seriously began to question my support for a Guaranteed Annual Income program.

Originally, I had heard many arguments advocating a Guaranteed Annual Income (GAI) which would essentially eliminate poverty, allow people to get off welfare and create a feeling of worthiness since those formerly on welfare would be allowed to contribute to Canadian society through paid or volunteer work. GAI would also allow the underemployed to top off their wages, which at first appears to be beneficial for women because women still earn 67 percent of what men earn.

However, according to Jean Swanson, President of the National

Anti-Poverty Organization and one of the speakers on this panel, the Liberal "Social Policy Review" is part of a strategy to promote cheap labour in Canada. This "cheap labour" would allow Canadian businesses to remain competitive on a global market and appears to support the working poor.

A "big business" version of a Guaranteed Annual Income would look something like this:

- the "guaranteed" amount would be kept low
- it would destroy all existing social programs
- minimum wages would remain low, and pay equity efforts would become ineffective
- GAI would be used as a wage "top-off" so that multinational corporations could pay low wages and remain competitive on a global level

Even if we could ensure that the amount guaranteed under a GAI was adequate, it would still be disastrous for us to support such a program, because billions of dollars in revenue and wages, currently paid by employers, would be shifted onto the backs of the taxpayers. For example, Unemployment Insurance as we now know it would end, or at least be significantly reduced and business would have to contribute little or nothing. GAI programs would also serve as an alternative to increasing minimum wages, alleviating the employer's responsibility to pay workers decent wages. Since a GAI is being promoted as a wage top-off, the taxpayers would be paying once again. Furthermore, such a program would probably require participants to find some employment, or at the very least take training or do community/volunteer work, in order to receive benefits.

Manitoba Women's Coalition  
on Social Policy

Working Conference  
on

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from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women

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*Kristine Barr Continued*

This version of a GAI is very possible. The Liberal's Macdonald Commission in 1983 made such proposals. Recent statements by Lloyd Axworthy concerning the need to avoid duplication, rationalize services, and increase program efficiency suggest that a GAI will more than likely be one of the reforms coming out of the Social Security Review.

Many women's groups are voicing their opposition to a Guaranteed Annual Income. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women opposes a GAI (as proposed by the Liberal's Macdonald Commission) which would replace the existing income support programs. The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women also gives examples of the limitations of GAI proposals in relieving poverty and providing economic security:

- A GAI plan is not an adequate alternative to employment and as such CANNOT be effective in reducing poverty and economic insecurity. A broad policy framework in support of full employment and a high-wage structure, whose priorities are to fight unemployment and create jobs, is the best guarantee against poverty.
- GAI proposals in Canada have used family status to limit payments and cut costs. Linking benefits to family income, rather than individual income, is problematic for women.
- GAI's have potentially negative effects on wages and the structure of employment. Downward pressure on wages would occur, there would be growth in low-productivity industries.
- Poverty would become institutionalized within GAI programs, increasing women's economic insecurity.

As Jean Swanson stated, "Right now in Canada, people have the RIGHT not to work, the RIGHT to remain home with their children. All RIGHTS are now on the chopping block in this review."

We need to create our own version of social policy which focuses on real jobs, pay equity, higher wages and job security. We must speak out and unite against proposals like a Guaranteed Annual Income which threatens to further impoverish many Canadians.

## **SOCIAL POLICY AND THE DEFICIT THE REAL CHOICES**

*by Hari Dimitrakopoulou*

The Federal Liberal Government recently released two major documents that could have a profound impact on social policy in this country. In many ways, the debate associated with these reports is as important as the Constitutional debate and the Free Trade debate because women have so much to lose if the proposed changes are implemented.

The first document released by Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Human Resources Development, is "Improving Social Security in Canada." This so-called green discussion paper outlines a clear agenda which includes drastic changes to Unemployment Insurance (UI), post-secondary education, and the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP).

The proposed changes to UI include either, (a) setting up a two-tiered system with lower benefits for "frequent users" or (b) lowering

benefits, reducing the maximum length of claims, and increasing the number of qualifying weeks required for all claimants. Indeed, UI has been targeted for cuts of up to Two billion dollars.

With respect to post-secondary education, the government proposes cutting transfer payments to the provinces and altering the Canada Student Loan system to include repayment on an income contingency basis.

The CAP proposals reject the idea of setting up a Guaranteed Annual Income system and suggest redirecting CAP payments into the area of child benefits.

Even more ominous than the green discussion paper is the government's so-called purple fiscal paper. The paper presented by Finance Minister Paul Martin recommends the implementation of over \$ 9.4 million dollars in new spending cuts over the next two years to reach the goal of a deficit that represents 3% of the Gross Domestic Product. Martin states that "the bulk of our savings should come through cuts in program spending."



*Hari Dimitrakopoulou continued*

The purple document specifically targets fiscal issues but also attacks a whole series of other issues that affect Canadians. It blames our unemployment problem on "payroll taxes" and labour regulations. The proposed changes will affect everything from the Canada Pension Plan, UI payroll deductions, employment standards, and plant closure legislation. Essentially, the purple document seeks to deregulate and dismantle the employment market.

Underlying the government's current agenda is the suggestion of a fiscal and unemployment crisis. The federal government sees deregulation and cuts to social spending as the only answers to the crisis.

Virtually everything under discussion is linked to the deficit and focuses on social program spending. What is missing from the debate is the fact that Canada has an operating surplus. Revenues have exceeded program expenditures for most of the period 1987 to 1994. The deficit is almost entirely the result of interest payments on the existing debt. One of the reasons for the high interest payments is the high real rate of interest (the difference between the interest rate and the rate of inflation).

Although the Axworthy document talks of modernizing social programs other Liberals are taking direct aim at social spending. The fact is that Canada's social spending is not out of line with other countries such as Great Britain, Germany, France, and Sweden. The amount Canada spends on individual social programs is not out of line with other countries either. UI provides benefits that are 55% of lost wages, this is far less than any other European countries. In addition, UI is not financed through taxation, but through employer and employee contribution.

A more plausible explanation for the deficit lies in the impact of the recession, high unemployment, and lower government revenues from taxation. The proposed cuts to social programs would actually further aggravate unemployment. An economic forecasting agency has projected that the actions taken in this year's federal budget will cost a further loss of 20 000 jobs.

On the question of taxation, the government dictates that Canadians do not want tax increases

yet does nothing to establish a fairer individual and corporate tax system. A study by statistics Canada published in 1991 illustrates that half of the deficit from 1975 to 1991 was due to tax breaks. These tax breaks benefited corporations and high income individuals. In fact, 44% of the deficit was the result of high interest rates and 6% from program spending cuts.

It is obvious that the real debate should be much broader in focus than the government's current discussion papers allow. Is the deficit as big a problem as some have made it out to be? Even if we accept the need to reduce the deficit should this come at the expense of social programs? What about our social deficit of poverty and inequality?

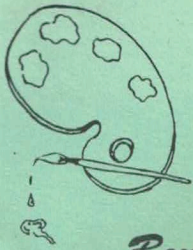
Here in Manitoba, the Women's Coalition on Social Policy is organizing a province wide consultation on the social policy review. If women do not participate in the debate we will continue to allow others to control the agenda. We have much to gain from real social policy reform and a lot to lose from social cuts. It is up to all of us to make sure that we shape the kind of Canada that we want and need.



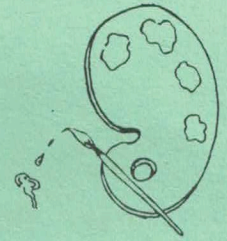
#### **SPEAK FROM YOUR SOLE !**

Women across the country are being encouraged to send their old shoes to the House of Commons. Just remove the shoelaces and attach a note explaining that women cannot afford new shoes because we are living on **shoe-string-budgets**. State that women need social programs that reflect our realities. Help make womens' voices heard and give Finance Minister Paul Martin the boot!





# Artforms



Bev Pike: INTIMATE EMBODIMENTS

by Monika Sormova

Pleasure. Loneliness. Safety. These sensations touched my mind when as I entered a room with seven large paintings in the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba. The exhibition "Intimate Embodiments" presents works by leading Manitoba artist Bev Pike. The pictures are detailed, large scale and all focus on a single subject - bedrooms, specifically their principal part, the bed.

Bev Pike of Winnipeg is an artist, an art critic and an educator. For many years Bev has been active in Manitoba Artists for Women's Art (MAWA), which is a Winnipeg-based artists' association. She started painting bedrooms in 1987.

As a subject, beds are nothing new in art. Throughout the centuries beds have been used as a part of a background for the erotic spectacle in which a female nude occupies the bed! It was a site for the voyeuristic gaze of the audience. In contrast, the beds in Bev Pike's work are empty. The female nude is absent. The bed itself acts as a screen on which the viewers project their longings; the voluptuous layers of covers and quilts serve as a reminder of an event past. Devoid of a human occupant, Pike's beds describe human experience from a woman's point of view. Glenn Allison, (Director of the Southwestern Art Gallery of Manitoba) states, "The artist ...creates the possibility of womens' pleasure, passion and sexuality finding both space and voice outside of patriarchal definition."

Through the use of colour and detailed pattern, the artist effectively communicates a wide range of emotions. Sensuality is the word that enters the mind of anyone who views her work. More specifically, Pike's images carry a woman-defined sensuality. Although narrative is not an

overt component of her paintings, each picture suggests a story.

In my opinion, Pike's paintings are primarily about pleasure because they tickle our senses. While the paintings are visually satisfying, they leave us hungry for a fuller sense of gratification. The paintings are intimate, self-absorbed and yet call out for our attention with their monumentality. And so, they are like the deepest secrets, finally disclosed to the public. By projecting our own dreams and desires onto the paintings, we the viewers, do not lay dormant but become active participants in Pike's images.

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# SPEAK UP

## Nursery Rhyme:

would you walk into my parlour said the spider to the fly  
 'tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy  
 the way into my parlour is up a winding stair  
 and I have many curious things to show you  
 when you're there.

## A BLACK WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE ON SECURITY IN A COLONIAL NET OF FEMINIST STRUCTURE

by Paula Prime

### YOU

#### (on) security

YOU will ask me to jump and tell me YOU will catch me  
 and I am expected to believe YOU because YOU have promised  
 but YOU want me to fall so I will black myself out of the  
 picture and YOU can call it suicide  
 why would I jump with no guarantee of a safe landing?

#### 2 gather?

what colour is consensus when the circle is all but white  
 and the difference between YOU and me needs to go un noticed?  
 I am told it's so that we can work 2 gather for the sake  
 of comfort but I who am as black as I am woman will not  
 compromise the difference just to close a circle in which  
 all of me is not welcome  
 and so I stand

YOUR silence is the gap  
 "oh let's just sit in a circle"

why sit face to face now when later  
 words will empty themselves from YOUR mouth  
 behind my back



YOU (continued)

**privacy**

the key to entrance is not bought but earned in  
 a currency that is a wave-length from YOUR understanding  
 YOU talk "social policy"  
 but in my world  
 the social po-lice see me as a black-bug deserving only  
 of their swat team and in this flood light environment of  
 florescent only I am an easy target

**not doing enough**

productivity is a notion defined by the master  
 those of us who seek freedom  
 know that his house is a prison  
 and YOU are on guard

**property tax**

I am on contract for a no-strings-atta ched policy  
 where there is nothing YOU can offer me to leave  
 because I am already living on the edge of what YOU  
 no longer want amidst a desert indebted to YOU  
 who has taken everything I ever owned with interest

**home?**

in this land of red leaf on white background with no soil?  
 and YOU think I haven't noticed  
 but I see what colour guards the surface on  
 which we stand and I can hear YOU stomping

**safe.**

I've been watching  
 you build your net  
 so carefully-inviting  
 with slippery white  
 string that makes its  
 way even through teeth  
 tightly pressed together  
 and you, the spider  
 waits while smiling  
 wanting me to loosen up  
 let go a little

(k)NOT I says the fly  
 (k)NOT I