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WOMEN'S INFORMATION CENTRE

165 SPADINA AVE.,
#27,
TORONTO, ONTARIO.
363-8021

MARCH/APRIL 1975

Dear Sisters:

To work at WIC is to work in the midst of flux and flow - in other words, we're moving again. This isn't the result of mindless wandering or inefficient planning, it's the result of forces beyond our control.

Women's Centres are just barely tolerated in our society. We're allowed to exist, but we have to hang on by our teeth to survive. We're subject to harassment, to sudden evictions, to subsistence level finances. So finding good, permanent housing is difficult.

And, on a more positive note, we're subject to the changing nature of the women's movement itself. Two years ago a large house space for meetings, drop-ins and lots of women was essential for our centre to function properly. Now, because the movement has fragmented and specialized, only office space is necessary. But, on the other hand, office space that is isolated from other women's groups (as is 165 Spadina) makes it hard to gather women together to do the work that has to be done.

So...we are moving to offices on the third floor of the house occupied by Clementyne's Cafe (see page 7) at 342 Jarvis St. (north of Carlton). The move will bring us back into a community of women at the same time as it will remove the problem of dealing with unsympathetic landlords and other tenants. We hope this move is permanent. (more details about it will be in next month's newsletter.)

When we move we will require more women to be involved in our collective. A collective commitment entails working for WIC in some capacity (phone shifts, referral files, newsletter, fundraising, etc.) as well as being part of the decision-making process. It also requires having some background of active work in the women's movement, since our function is to gather and disseminate information about movement activities and ideologies. If you're interested in getting involved with WIC call us, or come round to Clementyne's in May when we'll be fixing up the offices.

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LEGAL CLINIC: Free legal advice is available at WIC from women law students. Clinics will be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 6-9 pm. Call WIC, 363-8021, for an appointment. Advice can be given over the phone only in emergency situations.

CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING GROUPS: Women meeting in small groups to discuss common problems and experiences. Groups are being started now and women of any age, background, interest or occupation are welcome to join. Call WIC.

LESBIAN RAP GROUPS: Lesbian CRs are being started by WIC. If you're interested, call WIC and leave your phone number. When enough women have called to start a group, we will be in touch with you.

FEMINIST NEWS SERVICE (FNS)

Delegates from women's newspapers, newsletters, magazines and presses across Canada met in Winnipeg at the end of March for an FNS organization and policy conference to establish a vehicle for the exchange of feminist news in Canada.

The delegates saw the lack of a reliable communications network as one of the reasons for the fragmented nature of the women's movement. FNS was seen as an important factor in alleviating the problems of geographic, language and cultural isolation, and also as a balance to the bias of traditional news services against women's groups and news.

Among the policy decisions made at the conference were resolutions to support groups struggling against sexism, capitalism, racism and imperialism; to support groups working with a non-hierarchical, collective structure; to support the right of choice in lifestyles, e.g. lesbianism, celibacy, single status; to support native women's rights; and to support the right of women to control our own bodies.

FNS has been set up with 10 regional (provincial) representatives and two national co-ordinators (one in the west and one in the east). Monthly bilingual news packets will be gathered from women across Canada and distributed to FNS subscribers.

Any groups who are interested in becoming FNS subscribers should contact the eastern co-ordinator: Kate Middleton, 25 Dupont St., Waterloo (phone (519)744-7011) or the Ontario regional representative: Pat Leslie, 110 Robert St., Toronto (phone (416)923-1670).

NATIONAL INTERNAL COMMUNICATION NETWORK

For the first time, on March 1 and 2, in Thunder Bay, 47 women's and native women's centres from across Canada met to discuss the possibility of forming a national federation for communication and mutual support.

It was gradually realised by the delegates as the conference progressed that Canadian centres are not yet in a position to federate nationally, but that we must organize ourselves more effectively on a regional basis first.

Agreement was finally reached on the formation of a grassroots communication network which will operate nationally and regionally. This will enable rapid communication concerning pressing issues which relate to women and women's centres (such as the common problem of centres closing due to lack of funds). The network will lessen the sense of isolation felt by centres.

Resolutions were also passed in support of regional & cultural affiliations, the Feminist News Service, & the Clearinghouse for Feminist Media.

Network Nellie, as it's affectionately called is essentially a telephone tree, or more specifically a "string of beads" reaching via Ma Bell, from Nfld. to BC & the Yukon Territories. In the event of an emergency, one centre puts out a call for help to centres on either side along the string. The Network was tested on March 7, eve of International Women's Day, when a message originating from St. John's was passed along the line to the west. It read: "Ahnee (Ojibway for 'hello') Network Nellie is alive and well and marching forward. Equality to all our sisters."

MOTHER-LED UNION

Gazing out of the windows, sobbing our hearts out in the bedroom, waiting for the next man to come along and lift us out of our misery...that's how they want us - on our backs and afraid to fight back.

While we face our problems alone, we end up on pills, in the looney bin, in hospitals, in prison. More than 100,000 of us - single mothers on social security - we're in every street, on every bus, in every launderette, shop, park.

And we're getting more and more ANGRY - with bureaucrats who won't hear, doctors who can't cure, "leaders" who don't care. We've had enough. We know what we want.

We want, for all women:

- a guaranteed adequate annual income
- an end to distinctions between "workers" & "non-workers".

The Mother-led Union formed last summer & has spent the 8 months since then organizing locals of mother-led families all over Metro Toronto. On March 7 it made a presentation to Rene Brunelle, Minister of Community & Social Services as a dry-run for its huge show of strength in May at City Hall. For more information re the show of strength, call Joan Clark: 364-8456.

The MLU demands for women on family benefits:

- 1) Wage parity with foster parents
- 2) Higher permitted earning capacity
- 3) Free universal quality child care

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ROSEMARY BROWN, NDP LEADERSHIP CANDIDATE

Rosemary Brown was elected to the BC legislature in 1972. She came to Canada from Jamaica in 1951 to take her BA at McGill and her MSW at UBC. She has worked as a social worker, a television panelist, an ombudswoman for the BC Council on the Status of Women and in 1973 she won a UN Human Rights Fellowship to examine the role of women in Cuba and Sweden.

She has a strongly feminist platform. She says:

- "To be a feminist in the NDP is to be a socialist. The oppression of women cannot and must not be regarded as an accident of history. It must be understood...as the consequence of the capitalist system."
- "I have no patience for women who say they have made it in spite of their sex. Until all of us have made it, none of us have."
- "Of course I'm going to talk about women's rights. Of course I'm going to talk about the poor, about the housing crisis...these are the reasons I'm in politics."
- "Feminism, like socialism, calls for a new human community based on the creative and co-operative use of power to create new economic social and political forms."
- "It is my intention to run a strong campaign based on a commitment to socialism, feminism, the preservation of our natural resources, the protection of our environment and for the rights of workers and all people."

For more information, write: ROSEMARY BROWN CAMPAIGN,
c/o 2121 St. George St.,
Vancouver 10, B.C.

WIC REFERRALS - MEDICAL

One of WIC's most frequently used services is our referral file. We need to update and expand our list of doctors (particularly gynaecologists) since more and more women are requesting the names of doctors they can trust and whose services are supportive and non-sexist. We also wish to support the practices of female doctors, although our files are not restricted to women only. If you know of a good doctor (GP or specialist) we would appreciate your answering the following questions and returning the information to WIC, 165 Spadina Ave., #27.

1. Name, address and phone number of doctor.
2. Female/male
3. GP or specialist (indicate what specialty)
4. Hospital affiliation and type of facility (office/clinic/hospital)
5. Does doctor take complete medical history including blood relatives?
6. Does doctor take adequate time in examining, explaining, listening?
7. Are explanations freely given or do you have to ask?
8. Briefly describe doctor's attitude to birth control, sterilization, abortion, sexuality.
9. If drug prescribed, was name given, side effects explained?
10. If problem emotional, were drugs (eg tranquillizers) prescribed without full enquiry into physical health & lifestyle?
11. Does doctor want new patients referred to her/him?
12. Languages spoken.

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WOMEN WORKING

- * There is a lot of talk about women's equality today. Yet working women earn half as much as working men.
 - * The current economic crunch will take first toll of those who have no job protection, no power, and no status in our society. Women's position in the home and in the labour force therefore becomes even more vulnerable.
 - * Almost all women have at least one job for which they receive no pay - housework. Many other women are involved in various types of volunteer labour, from organizing church bazaars to running blood donor clinics. So the simple fact is that all women work.
 - * The number of women in clerical jobs, mostly in offices, has increased by 10% in the last decade to the point where women now make up 70% of all clerical workers. [Compare this] with managerial positions, where only 13% of the jobs are held by women.
 - * In 1971, Canadian women employed full-time earned an average income of \$4,755 and men \$8,513. On an overall basis, women earned only 56% of men's earnings.
 - * Despite what advertisers might have us believe, women have not progressed a great deal over the past 100 years. Then, as now...the ten leading "female" occupations were closely associated with household work...Women, of course, received no direct payment for household work, and so it was easy for men to justify low wages for similar jobs.
 - * To the male worker, "equal pay" is seen as meaning less money for him, while "equal opportunity" implies fewer jobs for him.
 - * Not surprisingly, many men put the blame for the predicament of women squarely on the shoulders of the individual woman. This is the part of the ethic of a liberal democracy that says each person has the ability to pull her/himself up by her/his own bootstraps.
- excerpted from "Women Working", published by the Department of Church in Society, United Church of Canada, January 1975.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

Room of One's Own is a feminist journal of literature and criticism due to come out this spring. It will be a quarterly of short fiction, poetry, plays, literary essays and criticism written by Canadian women.

It will be published by the Growing Room Collective, a group of women who are concerned with the problems of beginning women writers and with the development of feminist literature and criticism. As women work at developing new forms of expression, we need access to publication and to this end Room of One's Own will be a forum for the sharing of feminist perspectives. Subscriptions \$5/yr. Contact Growing Room Collective, #9, 2520 Prince Albert St. Vancouver.

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR FEMINIST MEDIA

A national communications and referral centre for women's programmes and interests is being initiated in Toronto by the Clearinghouse. The pilot project will explore the need for such a centre, determine potential users and test methods of providing required services most effectively.

Initial functions will include provision of information about women's activities and resources and the facilitation of exchange of information across Canada.

The Centre will be a catalytic clearinghouse, encouraging groups to co-operate, and to exchange or share experience and skills. Contact: Women's Communication Centre, 392 Markham St., Toronto.

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NELLIE'S SISTERHOUSE

- * cheap and cheerful co-operative housing for women.
- * If you need a place to live and would like to share a house with other women--

Contact: Nellie's Sisterhouse Project, 463-7291, or come to Nellie's 275 Broadview (at Dundas E.).

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TORONTO WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE

- * mail order catalogue - 25¢
- * books, records, buttons, posters, etc.
- * drop in and have a look
- * 12 Kensington Ave (north of Dundas off Spadina) 862-0414

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WOMEN'S PHOTOGRAPHY CO-OP

- * formerly Baldwin Street Gallery
- * holding classes in basic, intermediate & advanced photography for women at the YWCA
- * \$32 for 10 weeks including chemicals
- * For information call 923-1047

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DEMONSTRATE: MAY 10th

For all the hoopla of the official International Women's Year, the government has still refused to respond to women's basic needs. Women unite - join in protest, demonstrate on May 10 for our concrete needs:

- equal pay for work of equal value
- universal access to quality child care
- equal rights for women in family and property law
- safe, effective birth control for all
- remove abortion from the criminal code

For more information, contact YWCA, 80 Woodlawn E., Toronto, 961-8100

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WOMEN IN THE WORK FORCE CONFERENCE

Humber College Centre for Women is joining with the Labour Council of Metro Toronto to hold a conference on May 3 & 4. The conference will include 2 days of workshops concerning women and trade unions. Rosemary Brown (MLA, BC) will speak on "Have Trade Unions Let Women Down?" Other workshop topics include: "Action Out of Anger" and "Is legislation the Answer". A \$10 pre-registration fee is required (by April 25). For further information, call the Centre for Women, Humber College 676-1200 ext. 541; or Labour Council of Metro Toronto 429-3663.

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TORONTO WOMEN'S YELLOW PAGES

The Toronto Women's Yellow Pages collective is re-forming: "We need new women, new energy (& money) to put out the next edition. We have around 100 new listings including a housepainter, a roofer, a plumber, stockbroker, handywoman and several women's collectives or organizations, plus a number which have moved and changed directions.

If we could get more women to start putting in proposals, & getting the next edition together, we'll have an incredible directory!"

Anyone who's interested, call Carolyn 484-4788, Lorraine or Terry 923-9820, Mary-Ann 533-1223 or write Toronto Women's Yellow Pages, Box 153, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario.

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WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

"Internationally, women are demanding money for the work that we all do. Wages for housework, inside and outside the home - nursing, teaching, child care, cleaning, servicing others. As women we work as slave labour in the home and as cheap labour in the work place. Join us for a rally and march on May 2, noon at City Hall, or that evening, 7:30 pm at 342 Jarvis Street. For more information, contact the Wages for Housework office, 922-2084 between noon and 6:30 pm, Monday to Saturday."

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TEMPORARY JOBS -- 3 weeks from April 28th; typing, answering phones etc. Interesting project working with woman coordinator. Call Liz, 367-7475 or 922-7489 (after 6).

BUSINESSWOMAN (50ish) wishes to meet another with car, to share expenses on week-end trips, etc. Phone 766-3006, nights.

WOMEN'S DROP-IN -- West-end women interested in women's drop-in centre and/or CR groups with other women who have been deeply involved in CR groups previously, contact Anu Bose - work: 367-7475, home: 532-5394.

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Clementynes Cafe,
342 Jarvis Street,
Toronto, Ontario.

Dear Sisters,

In November of '74 four women got together over a few beers and decided that we, that is Toronto women, needed a cafe - an idea that had been floating around in everyone's head for sometime. We decided to do it ourselves. We immediately set to work and made a list of some 150 women we felt would share our concern. In two days a letter was off asking these women to each donate \$50 towards the cafe. Many of us were on that original list, many of us responded, and a number promised money in the future.

With this show of strength the collective went ahead and found a space - a beautiful, old, three-storey house at 342 Jarvis St., (at Carlton) for \$300 per month. We have been renovating for a month and it is already becoming a place we can all be proud of. NOW! is the time we need you to come through with your promises. Much of our money has already gone on materials for renovating and prepaid rent.

We need furniture, dishes and kitchen appliances. We may also need to install a fire escape as we have rented the third floor to the Other Woman Newspaper, Wages Due Collective, and the Women's Information Centre, and are planning on the second floor having a meeting room, smoking lounge and, are you ready?, a barbershop. We want a pool table for the basement room, and a good sound system for the cafe. On top of this, operating expenses are going to be especially heavy for this first little while.

Please send your \$50 donations! If you have already promised, come through now - if you are new, please do not hesitate to share. We will have Clementyne's without government grants, and without costly bank loans, if we all contribute. If you are new to the mailing list or new to the idea of Clementyne's and want more information call Chris at 921-9353 or 787-6136. Clementynes will be incorporated as a non-profit women's club.

If you have not seen Clementyne's yet there are usually women working week nights and Saturday. Come around and have a look, - come in your old clothes, you will probably be put to work. If you want to check before going down call Chris. If you have any furniture, dishes, appliances, or pool tables you would like to donate call Chris and we will pick them up.

We want to hear from you soon!

In sisterhood,

CLEMENTYNE'S CAFE COLLECTIVE

P.S.

Please sent donations to:
Clementyne's Cafe,
c/o Chris Lawrence,
30 Sword St.,
Toronto, Ontario.

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 \$10 institutions/organizations

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Erne Zambra
80 Seward St.
Toronto

FIRST CLASS

WOMEN'S INFORMATION CENTRE
165 Spadina Avenue, #27
Toronto, Ontario

