

WOMEN'S INFORMATION CENTRE

PO Box 189
Station A
Toronto

MAY 1975

Dear Sisters:

At the end of this month WIC will be moving to its new offices at Clementyne's. We've decided to rent a post office box (see above) since we've been moving a lot lately and the resulting changes of address have become confusing. The post office box will remain permanently located, even if we don't.

We're doing more than moving at the end of the month, we're changing our functions in response to changes in the needs of women and the women's community (and the lack of funds to fulfill all those needs). We'll be dropping our referral service and concentrating on the newsletter and written information.

Our decision to give up the referral service wasn't taken lightly. It entailed a lot of soul-searching over the past few months. In the end we've come to realize that the referrals could best be handled by a group with the time and money to expand them to an excellent service, leaving us to concentrate on providing services we're better suited for. We aren't just "dropping" the referrals -- we'll be handing them over to the Women's Resource Centre (which can be reached temporarily at 961-8100).

As for what WIC will be doing in the future: our newsletter will be expanded over the summer -- we hope to do more reporting and analyzing, have full length articles, graphics, a new format; we will be preparing a Toronto women's "survival guide" based on our referral files and community contacts; an updated C-R Kit; pamphlets, fact sheets and information packets on women's issues and the movement in Canada.

To implement our plans, we will be enlarging our newsletter/publications collective. Any woman who's interested in working on the newsletter or our other publications, has had some related experience and has been actively in the women's movement in Toronto, is invited to an open meeting on Monday, June 2 at Clementyne's (3rd floor, 342 Jarvis Street north of Carlton) at 7:30pm. For more information call Philinda Masters at 363-8021.

CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING: CR groups are being formed to discuss common experiences and problems. Women of any interests, age, occupation are welcome to join. Just write down your name, address and phone number and send it to: CR Collective, c/o WIC, PO Box 189, Station A, Toronto.

LEGAL CLINIC: WIC will continue to provide our free legal clinic, staffed by women students from U of T law school. For an appointment, call 363-8021. (If you get our answering service, please indicate what your call is about, and we will get in touch with you.)

OUR HERO?

Dr. Henry Morgentaler has been convicted of performing an illegal abortion and sentenced to 18 months in prison. He was acquitted last year by a jury, but the Quebec Board of Appeal reversed the decision. On March 26 the Supreme Court of Canada upheld that reversal.

Morgentaler admitted to performing thousands of abortions out of moral obligation to women, and called Justice Minister Otto Lang "one of the great oppressors of women in Canada" for his anti-abortion stand.

Dr. Morgentaler is fast coming to be considered a hero of the women's movement, a champion of women's rights. This raises a serious point for feminists. First, it is questionable that a hero of the women's movement should be a man, or that we should have heroes at all. Second, it is highly unlikely that one person can effect any great change, given the nature of our society.

The whole Morgentaler issue is one of civil liberties, not of women's rights or abortion per se. That a jury acquittal can be reversed is a serious threat to our judicial system. A dangerous precedent has been set, despite Lang's unconvincing assurance that it isn't likely to happen again. The point is that it is likely to happen again, whenever the people's wishes go against those of the Justice Minister.

CLEMENTYNE'S CRISIS

A few months ago a group of women took a 2-year lease on a 3-storey house in downtown Toronto in order to open Clementyne's Cafe. The house, at 342 Jarvis Street, was in a commercially zoned district although the house itself had previously been residential. Normally this would present no problems, but recently the city passed a by-law restricting institutions (like a club) or commercial establishments (like a cafe) in the downtown core.

Clementyne's is caught in the middle. The by-law was intended to restrict the growth of body-rub parlours -- an admirable idea. But Clementyne's has no intention of turning into a body-rub parlour. It intends to be a place where women can relax, talk, enjoy music, eat, hold meetings. Nothing exploitive or immoral about it.

Clementyne's needs your support to get City Council to change its mind and allow Clementyne's to open. Everyone can help by writing to Mayor Crombie, Aldermen Heap and Sparrow, expressing support for Clementyne's; or fill in the form below and send it to City Hall.

Meanwhile, Clementyne's is having a benefit party (the rent still has to be paid). All women welcome -- June 14, 8pm at Bathurst Street United Church (south of Bloor).

Mayor David Crombie,
Mayor's Office, City Hall,
Toronto.

Dear Mayor Crombie:

I wish to express my support for Clementyne's, a recreational and cultural centre for Toronto women, and my hope that the city will see a way to allow a by-law exemption in order to let the centre open in the near future.

Sincerely,

WOMEN IN THE WORK FORCE CONFERENCE / WOMEN and UNIONS

"Have trade unions let women down?" That was the subject of discussion at a weekend conference on May 3 & 4 sponsored by Humber College Centre for Women in conjunction with the Metro Labour Council.

The answer, from all sides, was yes. The 300 women attending the conference, most of whom were union members, agreed that although the trade union movement pays lip service to women's rights, nothing much of concrete value has occurred.

Rosemary Brown (MLA, BC), keynote speaker, suggested that the trade union movement is like any other institution -- it will not change until forced; and that since the movement reflects social trends, most union organizers and male union members still think woman's place is in the home. For this reason, women's rights have not been given top priority within unions, and not much emphasis has been put on organizing non-union women workers.

As an alternative, the conference delegates voted to form a coalition of labour union women, to break down the isolation among union women, to encourage organization of non-union women and to present a united front in fighting for women's rights within the trade union movement.

Unfortunately, it was voted that women who are non-union workers be excluded from the coalition. While it is understandable that the labour union women want to meet to discuss common problems of a fairly specific nature, the exclusion of non-organized women (paid and unpaid) reinforces the false distinction between the struggles of union and non-union women. Rosemary Brown said that women's rights can best be won through contract negotiations, but this ignores the fact that the vast majority of women are not organized into collective bargaining units. At best, the trade union movement can only contribute to the overall fight for women's rights.

An incident from the early days of the labour movement in Canada provides an interesting comparison to the situation of union women now: a group of Quebec printers in 1883, attempting to obtain wage increases, were quick to give assurance that they wouldn't strike and that they would be grateful for any increases forthcoming.

Women now are quick to assure men that equality for women in the work force won't hurt men a bit. But although in the long run men will benefit from the changes, in the short run they must lose. To male workers, "equal pay" often means less money for them, "equal opportunity" fewer jobs. And they're right. Women have been exploited as a cheap, reserve labour force for too long, and men will have to pay for it (the government won't, even if it should).

For that reason women's issues are low priority in contract negotiations, and are usually traded off for more "important" items at the bargaining table. Women are in a poor position to push for change for at least one very good reason. Union meetings are usually held after work -- but most women hold two jobs, one in the work place and the other at home. So they can't stay for meetings and they can't, therefore, be part of the bargaining process.

Even if women were better represented within unions, it's debatable whether this works to their advantage. Generally, unions serve best those with greater individual collective bargaining power (ie, skilled workers with high responsibility and low replaceability). Women as a group are highly replaceable, unskilled and poorly paid workers with low individual collective bargaining powers.

It is no wonder that the labour union movement has been unresponsive to women's needs. Women in the unions are at the low end of the stick, with little leverage to gain their rights. The alternative to working within the male-dominated union movement is not only for women to form their own union coalition, but for organized women workers to join the rest of us and fight the real issue: that women are exploited wherever we are.

- Philinda Masters

FEMINIST NEWS SERVICE (FNS)

FNS exists to publish news and news-related material about Canadian women from a feminist viewpoint. News and information can be submitted by any interested woman or women's group for consideration. The service will provide monthly news packets to all individuals or groups that subscribe.

FNS is a national news service with regional offices right across Canada. It is completely owned and run by Canadian women, and will carry only information written by Canadian women. To submit material, send your copy to the office in your province. (In Ontario, send material to: Pat Leslie, 110 Robert Street, Toronto.)

If you or your group wishes to subscribe to FNS, write to: FNS, Kate Middleton, 25 Dupont St., Waterloo, Ontario. Individual subscriptions cost \$7/year for a 10-page monthly news packet. Group subscription rates vary (depending on the type of group). FNS packets are produced in both English and French so indicate which you prefer.

FNS needs your support. Donations are greatly appreciated. A receipt will be sent for any donation over \$5.

FESTIVAL OF WOMEN and the ARTS

The Festival is planned for June in Toronto as an International Women's Year celebration. Its aims are to promote women and the arts as essential forces in creating the climate necessary for social change and to celebrate the achievements and creativity of women -- with special emphasis on the often ignored and undervalued grass roots elements of women's lives.

The Festival plans to: (a) publicize the efforts of women in the arts and their work; (b) advance names and art works for a talent pool; (c) develop channels of communication between women in various fields of the arts; and (d) encourage and support individual creative women.

Events of the festival include a month-long exhibition of the Visual Arts, a historical display of women and the arts in Canada, craft demonstrations, book exhibits, events in the performing arts, workshops, panel discussions, lectures and seminars.

For more information, call Gloria Heller, 366-0331, or write: Festival of Women and the Arts, 21 McGill Street, Toronto.

NETWORK

The Toronto Network of women's groups will be meeting on Wednesday, May 28, 5:30pm, at OISE, room N301. The meeting will be chaired by Chris Lawrence of Times Change Women's Employment Service.

The agenda (to be approved at the meeting) will include, first, reports from a number of groups: the Feminist News Service, the women's March on May 10th, Clementyne's, the women's credit union, and the Women's Information Centre.

Following the reports will be a discussion on the future of the Network. Perhaps the best way to handle this would be to have the general topics outlined, break into small groups, then have reports from each group and a general discussion.

The topics to be covered are: whether we want the Network to be strictly information-sharing or issue discussion; whether we want or need a permanent co-ordinating body; the various responsibilities of member groups; and a number of small items, including the taking of minutes, WIC newsletter subscriptions, the time and frequency of meetings (and whether we should continue to meet over the summer), and an updating of our membership mailing list.

This meeting will be very important for the future of the Network, and all members are urged to attend. A light dinner will be provided.

CORA - WOMEN'S BOOKMOBILE

CORA is a travelling women's centre and bookstore. Women outside the cities are isolated from each other and their movement, and the Bookmobile is attempting to break down that isolation by bringing to small communities a variety of feminist material: books, pamphlets, tapes, films, newspapers dealing with law, her-story, the arts, politics, sexuality, wages for housework, etc.

The Bookmobile is starting its second venture around Ontario this spring, going as far west as Kenora and as far north as Kapuskasing. In the fall it will go to the Atlantic provinces.

The bus will be parked in a main site in each town. The Bookmobile staff (4 women) will have meetings with women from the community, and with community groups, and will hold public showings of films and video-tapes.

If you would like more information or can offer help, contact: The Bookmobile, 342 Jarvis St., Toronto; phone (416) 922-2084.

WOMEN'S COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT CENTRE

A group of immigrant and Canadian women are working together to set up an employment centre for immigrant women in downtown Toronto. Their aim is to answer the real needs of women who are looking for work.

A questionnaire has been prepared in different languages to find out what kinds of jobs immigrant women want and what are their interests and skills.

The Centre soon hopes to provide jobs and counselling services for immigrant women (as well as free babysitting while women use these services). But at this stage, the staff will be talking to employers, employment agencies and unions to determine existing employment opportunities, as well as talking to women who are experiencing employment difficulties.

Drop in to the office at St. Stephen's church hall, 103 Bellevue Ave., (near College & Spadina) or call 922-1819.

TORONTO RAPE CRISIS CENTRE - 368-8383

During the year the RCC has been open, more than 200 women who have been raped or assaulted have called the Centre and received support and assistance during the crisis.

This support has been given, sometimes anonymously over the phone, often by meeting with the woman and being available to her until the crisis is over.

The RCC works with a volunteer body of about 30 women. The number of staff members has fluctuated according to the Centre's financial situation. At all times the RCC relies heavily on donations to continue the crisis line to victims of rape. (All donations are tax-deductible.) If you wish to give a donation or pledge, please fill out the form below.

RCC DONATION AND PLEDGE

To help financially support the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre and its support to victims of sexual assault:

I pledge \$ _____ a month for a period of _____ months

and/or

I donate \$ _____.

Phone # _____

Name: _____

Date _____

Address: _____

Mail to:

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre
PO Box 6597, Station A
Toronto, Ontario

Cheque(s) enclosed _____

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DIMENSION: a special woman's issue

To mark International Women's Year, Canadian Dimension has published a special women's issue of their magazine, bringing together a collection of original articles written by Canadian women. These articles provide a diverse outlook on matters of importance to the women's movement. Contributors include: Gwen Matheson writing on Nellie McClung; Kay Macpherson comparing the movement in the 50s, 60s and 70s; Claire Culhane describing her experiences in Vietnam; Dorothy Livesay on women as poets; and Margaret Randall on the situation of women in Cuba. To obtain a copy, send \$1.00 to: Canadian Dimension, PO Box 1413, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

CHAT - WOMEN'S NIGHT

- meet every Thursday night at 8:30pm
- Discussions
- Women's Dance every third Thursday of the month
- Community Homophile Association of Toronto, 201 Church St.
- For more information call 862-1544 or 862-1169

INTERVAL HOUSE

Interval House for Women and Children is moving from its location at 173 Spadina Rd. to 596 Huron Street (across from Huron Public School).

You are invited to an open house at the new address to help celebrate the move.

Sunday, May 18, between 12 noon and 4pm. Mothers, bring your children!

MASSAGE THERAPY

- licenced woman massage therapist
- makes house calls
- \$12 per hour
- cheaper for sisters (mention where you read this)
- Alex Pollock, 221-4025

WIC NEWSLETTER EXCHANGE

We would like to exchange our newsletter with other women's centres, resource centres or publications across Canada.

If you would like the newsletter free and have a publication to send in return, or know of someone else who would like to get in on the exchange, write: WIC, PO Box 189, Station A, Toronto.

WOMEN'S INFORMATION CENTRE
A STATION, 981, BOX 189,
TORONTO, ONTARIO

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRINTING COURSE

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Amazon Press will be giving a course in offset printing this summer for women. Space is limited so priority will be given to women who are likely to be interested in working with the press in the fall.

The first class will be held on Wednesday, May 21, 7pm at 12 Kensington Ave. (north of Dundas off Spadina). Times for future classes will be arranged then. A small donation may be requested to cover material costs for the course. Call the press at 862-0414.

ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

The first issue of Room of One's Own, a feminist journal of literature and criticism, has come out. It's a quarterly of short fiction, poetry, plays, literary essays and criticism written by Canadian women.

It is 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 to Room of One's Own are \$5 per year, \$1.50 per issue. The institutional rate is \$8 per year. Write to: Room of One's Own, #9, 2520 Prince Albert Street, Vancouver, BC.

TORONTO WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE

The bookstore is moving out of the Amazon Workshop in June to a storefront location at 85 Harbord Street (between College and Bloor, west of Spadina).

- mail order catalogue - 25¢
- books, records, buttons posters, etc.
- bulletin board with women's events
- drop in and have a look

CLASSIFIED ADS

FEMINIST HOUSE

A room available immediately in a feminist co-op house. \$60/month. 68 Beverley Street (south of Dundas, east of Spadina). Call 366-0576.

WOMAN MOVER

- 1/2 ton truck
- \$ 7 per hour: driver and truck
- \$ 10 per hour: loading and driving
- Call Carol, 534-8124.

COMPANION WANTED

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

RAPE CRISIS CENTRE - VOLUNTEERS

The RCC needs volunteers for the summer months. Duties include: answering crisis phone line, community education, direct contact with and support to rape victims. If interested call the RCC at 368-8383, weekdays.

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