

WEBSPINNER
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15 April 1985.

Dear Subscriber:

You may have been wondering what has happened to WEBSPINNER lately, as there hasn't been an issue since early last December. Those of you who've recently subscribed, in particular, may be feeling that you're getting nothing back for your money and expressed interest.

In fact, WEBSPINNER is in an unusual state of crisis at the moment, and the three of us who form the sustaining link between issues feel it's important that we communicate this crisis to you in the hopes that you can, at best, help, and at least, understand.

It isn't any of the "usual" things. It isn't lack of money. WEB has never been rich, but has never been broke either. At present we have more than enough money to put out the next issue. It isn't lack of general interest in the paper. We get enough new and renewed subscribers, feedback, letters and articles submitted, to keep us generally convinced that there's a need for a paper like WEB. It isn't lack of specific interest by groups who wish to put out an issue. We know of 3 communities/groups who are interested in hosting a WEBSPINNER workshop in the next year; that's as many as we've ever had. It isn't even, any more, disappointment that WEBSPINNER isn't stimulating and

supporting the birth and growth of new women's publications. We heard very recently about the birth of a new women's publication in Golden BC, and we know that WEB played an important part in this.

WEBSPINNER does not produce the "usual" burnout either, but rather a brand all her own. One has plenty of energy, ideas and optimism - except when it comes to working on WEBSPINNER. Saying "yes" to WEBSPINNER tasks becomes a trap for it seems to mean being expected to undertake all kinds of tasks and responsibilities one never really contracted to do. Working on WEBSPINNER becomes a seemingly inexorable chore and DUTY about which one must be PREDICTABLE, RELIABLE and of course CONSCIENTIOUS. The symptoms of the burnout, of course, become the increasing hunger to be SPONTANEOUS, UNPREDICTABLE and, heaven forbid, VAGUE. It's a kind of burnout where one knows WEBSPINNER isn't dead, just very heavy.

So, the problem is with the core energy. Meaghan, Suzn and Mair have met a number of times since the last issue to plan for the next one. We had decided to produce the next issue ourselves, to give us a chance to upgrade the quality in several ways; we've been becoming increasingly aware that the workshop process is so hectic that we sometimes cut corners, and we don't like that! The idea was that we would put out an issue where we had time to be "fussy", and where we could learn and try some new techniques. This would make us better able to share good skills in future workshops, and would improve the quality of the paper in the future.

However, it's not happening. When we get together, each of us has been feeling an immense weariness, and at the same

time has been unwilling to express this in fear that we will find we have to let WEB die. Finally, over Easter weekend, we met to do "our" issue, and realized very clearly indeed that we just don't have what it takes at the moment. Our first decision was to announce to you that WEB was gone, sunk without trace in an ocean of burnout. Then when the dust settled on that one, we found ourselves talking about the parts of the WEBSPINNER experience that were not dead for us. We could still do production workshops with groups, we said. We are still very committed to networking, and sharing information, we said. We have endless ideas for writing we want to do, and know that this is true for many other women. Finally we realized that, if we can allow ourselves to receive whatever we need in order to replenish the energy, WEB may not have to die, and neither will she be produced over our dead bodies.

There was one very specific element in all this. We feel enormous pressure to "produce", and it comes from our subscription structure. Try as we will to be "alternate" and non-bureaucratic, the very fact that there are people who have paid for future work is enough to keep us from recognizing the need for a break. Now we realize that while we do not wish to rip anyone off, we don't want to rip ourselves off either. We need to trust ourselves as much as we have been able to trust the many other women we have dealt with since WEBSPINNER began.

So, we are asking you for three kinds of help. First, to join us in a collective belief that if WEBSPINNER is to continue, she will receive the energy she needs both through the three of us and through others. Secondly, to be aware of our need to release ourselves from the tyranny of the subscription list, and to help us do this. Thirdly, to

make us aware of leadership energy you may have for
WEBSPINNER at this time, that is, if you are prepared to
pick up a piece of the action and run with it, eg. making
decisions about where to go from here, to make the most of
WEBSPINNER's resources - her money, her tools, her network,
her experience and her goodwill.

Well, it's been an experiment from the beginning, and an
interesting one! Maybe this phase will break yet more new
ground.

Please write to us at the above address, or call us, Suzn at
246 8755 in Calgary, Mair and Meaghan at 479 0623 in
Edmonton.

In sisterhood

Meaghan Dean

Suzn Morgan

Mair Smith.