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# ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE

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April/May 1994

Volume IV, Number 4

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SATURDAY, MAY 7TH, 1994 EDUCATION NORTH, U OF A, ROOM 2-115

PLEASE NOTE CHANGES - SHEILA COPPS WILL **NOT** BE ATTENDING

12:00 - 1:30 pm - Panel discussion - *How The Budget Cuts are Affecting Women* -  
Featuring: Merrill Copper, Susan Ruffo, Jayne Nicol, Syliva Waller, Hazel Willson. Co-sponsored with the Women's  
Program, Faculty of Extension, U of A.

1:30 - 1:45 pm - Refreshment Break - Sponsored by LEAF

1:45 - 2:30 pm - Small group brainstorming - Women Mobilizing against the cuts

2:30 - 3:00 pm - Reconvene to large group for idea sharing

3:00 - 3:15 pm - Refreshment Break - Sponsored by LEAF

3:15 - 5:00 pm - ASWAC Annual General Meeting - Nominations - Business, etc

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8:00 pm - 12:00 am Social - Wine & Cheese Details to be announced at the Meeting

*There was no requests for on-site childcare. Travel and child-care subsidy forms will be available on May 7th. You must  
be a member in good standing to qualify for subsidies.*

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We would like to hear from you. What parts of the newsletter do you think we need to continue or  
discontinue? What should we be including in the newsletter? Do we need more articles or graphics?

Would you like to write articles? Please send your suggestions to: Newsletter - Box 1573,  
Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2R7



# ASWAC

Alberta Status of Women Action Committee

## 1993-1994 Board Members

### Calgary

Laurie Anderson

Nancy Miller 233-0731

Corrine Younie

### Edmonton

Janet Blond

Debbie Bryson

Moyra Lang 421-0306

Christine Leonard

Bev Palibroda

Sharon Reiner

### Fort McMurray

Nicole Balmer

## Regional Representatives

### Edmonton

Aine Humble

### Fort McMurray

Patti Lepoidevin

Francine Wilson

### Innisfail

Ruth Bergeron

### Jasper

Sharlene Lundquist

### Ponoka

Liz Wetheral

### Westerose

Gerry Bailey

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#### ASWAC Edmonton:

Box 1573, T5J 2N7

Located: #10, 9930-106 St.

Fax: 425-3293

Phone: 421-0306

#### ASWAC Calgary:

#303, 223-12 Ave. SW

T2R 0G9

Fax: 269-2012

Phone: 233-0731

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*ASWAC receives a portion of its funding from the Secretary of State Women's Program and gratefully acknowledges the financial support from its members.*

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## From the Newsroom

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We welcome your thoughts, ideas, concerns and/or submissions and ads.

The next newsletter deadline is **May 27th**, publication date is June 10th.

Our newsletter is an ideal way to advertise your event or services to the women of Alberta as well as supporting ASWAC.

This issue has been produced on 8 1/2 x 11 instead of our regular 11 x 17 to save costs. We are currently seeking ways to reduce costs of the newsletter production. Please call Moyra if you have any cost saving ideas.

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Have a wonderful Solstice 1994!

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Female consumer of medicine, 40's wishes to make contact with other females 35-60, who like myself have suffered serious consequences to their health, physically and/or emotionally as a result of improper medical care, misdiagnose, abuse at the hands of a physician. The purpose is to try and establish a support network in this area. If you are interested please leave your name and number at ASWAC Edmonton, 421-0306.

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### Employment Opportunity

ASWAC needs a fundraiser to help ensure our continued work. We need a woman who is interested in feminist collectives and can raise funds. The pay would be based on commission from funds raised. Please apply in writing to: Personnel Committee, ASWAC, Box 1573, Edmonton, AB., T5J 2N7.

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#### EDITORIAL POLICY

The ASWAC Newsletter is published by The Alberta Status of Women Action Committee, a non-profit organization. The newsletter is produced by, for, and about women in Alberta. The newsletter was created to share information with our members and women's organizations, as well as interested women.

The views expressed and the events publicized are not necessarily supported by ASWAC. We neither endorse nor recommend; we seek to inform.

ASWAC News is produced on a collective, consensus, volunteer basis by the newsletter collective and ASWAC staff. We welcome submissions-written or photo/graphic. All submissions may not be included; we reserve the right to edit to ensure that the content is not in opposition to our mission statement. We encourage women to tell us when we do not meet our own standards.

#### ADVERTISING POLICY

The ASWAC newsletter seeks advertising that is women positive to help defer publication costs. ASWAC does not necessarily endorse products or services offered. We reserve the right to refuse ads. Rates and sizes can be requested through the Edmonton office, please call for more information.

#### MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee is to advance the status of women in Alberta by providing a forum for women's voices, raising awareness and sharing resources to effect change.



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# ASWAC Information

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Hi! My name is Jayne Nicol. I'm one of the new women at ASWAC working under the Alberta Community Employment Program. I'll be here until August working to organize and enhance our resource center. At present, much of the material is filed chronologically and this can make it very difficult for our members to locate specific bills or briefs. It is my aim over the next few months to read and catalogue what we already have, enter them into a data base for easier access and try to fill any large gaps I find.

I would love to hear from any of you that have questions or suggestions. The best times to call me are Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:00-3:00 pm at 421-0306.

Hi! My name is Rosemary Putman and I've recently been hired through Alberta Community Employment for 6 months. My job is volunteer development and organization. On Thursday, April 14 I met with Sharon Pangman at the Volunteer Action Centre and she suggested some excellent ideas on how to get things going with volunteers. I have also phoned some organizations to get information on their volunteer programs. If anyone has any concerns or input, I would love to hear from you. The best times to call me are Tuesday 9:30 - 1:30 pm and Wednesday 9:30 - 2:30 pm at 421-0306.

## Conference on Violence Against Women: Women Against Violence

In mid-December, on behalf of ASWAC, I participated as a Canadian delegate in an international Canada-India Conference, organized by the SNDT Women's University in Bombay. The objectives of the Conference were:

1. To study the problem of violence against women and sexual abuse of children;
2. To consider the impact of cultural norms on universal patriarchal assumptions regarding gender relations;
3. To compare the experience of the two countries in the campaign against violence, and the role of women's organizations in particular, how they:
  - create awareness among women regarding their legal rights
  - assist women subjected to, or threatened with, violence through pressure on the perpetrators of violence, legal redress or the provision of shelters

- assist trauma victims
  - run shelters and empower women to take charge of their lives
  - conduct public campaigns and demonstrations
  - take measures to sensitize the police force
  - involve men in the campaign against violence; and,
4. To share successes and strategies and to develop useful and productive links.

Twenty Canadian and twenty Indian delegates participated in the Conference, the aim of which was to bring together front line workers and grassroots organizers working for women's organizations.

This also included some academics who have carried out significant studies or are themselves activists.

A more detailed report will be available at ASWAC's May AGM.

Laurie Anderson, Board Member, ASWAC

## A SMALL REVOLUTION

A wonderful thing happened in February when a group of Calgary women dropped by RazzBarry's, their favourite Kensington cafe. As usually occurs with this group, feminists and socialists all, the conversation soon turned to politics, in particular the Tory's war on the poor. This evening, though, the discussion went beyond the philosophical, the partisan political. Soon personal stories emerged, stories of the devastating impact of the cuts on real women - friends, relatives and indeed, women seated at that very table.

We shared stories of women with disabilities, living on subsistence incomes for whom essential medication was no longer being provided; aging mothers whose meager standard of living couldn't bear the added burden of health care insurance premiums, women on A.A.I.S.H. and Social Assistance, long separated from indigent, absent spouses, forced to obtain divorces at their own expense, under threat of suspension of benefits. The list went on and the sense of outrage grew.

And the wonderful thing that happened was that a small revolution began. And this small revolution has gathered momentum and supporters. Having started with a somewhat diverse group of women, it has drawn support from feminist organizations, anti-poverty groups,

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# More ASWAC Information

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concerned parents, local businesses, labour groups, the arts community, seniors groups and many more. It started with the idea of a small demonstration at the usual venue downtown and evolved into what is hoped to be a mass protest on Mother's Day preceded by a colourful march organized by local artists.

We've had moments of doubt (the protester's worst nightmare - what if you started a revolution and nobody came?). Government response to and media coverage of other events has been offensive. A gathering of nearly two hundred at the Tory convention in Banff was greeted with derision by the media, arrogance by the Tories. Well, this group's answer to that is simple: if they think two hundred is amusing, let's give 'em two thousand! It can be done!

When citizens and organizations realize that they can't continue to fight their battles in isolation, that only by recognizing common goals and forming coalitions can they force this government to see the devastation they are creating, the human cost of their economic policies, that this is not a fringe group, this is not a special interest, partisan effort. These are the people of Alberta and they must be heard.

So join us when we "mobilize on Mother's Day" or put a notice in your newsletter or tell a friend. Or, next time you're sitting around with your friends, talking about politics and feeling outraged, do something outrageous - plan a little revolution.

Corrine Younie, Board Member, ASWAC

## STUDENT SUMMER EMPLOYMENT (CALGARY)

### THE POSITION: RESEARCHER - THE JOB:

Researching community issues affecting young women in Alberta through consultation, networking and utilization of ASWAC resources. The job involves producing popular language materials from the resulting research which will be distributed throughout Alberta.

### THE CANDIDATE:

Willing to work closely with ASWAC staff and board within a feminist collective and have highly developed communication skills in order to coordinate the project with other women's organizations. The successful candidate will have some computer skills, experience with volunteer organizations, writing and research background and a strong sense of community. Priority will be given to visible minority women, aboriginal women, and women with disabilities.

### THE JOB WILL ONLY BE OFFERED TO A STUDENT WHO IS RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Salary: 40 hours per week 5.00/hour (SEED Position)  
SUBMIT RESUME TO: THE HIRING COMMITTEE,  
C/O THE ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION  
COMMITTEE, #303 223 12TH AVE. S.W., CALGARY,  
T2R 0G9 BY MAY 6, 1994. THE POSITION WILL  
COMMENCE IMMEDIATELY AND RUNS UNTIL  
SEPT 2. PH. 233-0731 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

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## Women, the Economy and the Government Agenda

Women and poverty is ASWAC's current focus, as economic issues are the largest barrier facing women's progress in today's society.

ASWAC's Women Against Poverty report is now over two years old and the situation for women has not improved. Tirelessly, with limited resources and several small grants, we have been plugging along at getting closer to producing the long-awaited second edition of the report. Statistics and government policies affecting women seem to change daily, so we are taking the time to be sure to reflect an accurate picture of these changes in the next edition.

You will be happy to learn that the project is now in its final phase. With the help of a grant from the federal government's Human Resources Department, ASWAC should have the second edition ready to go to print in a couple of months. The report will still feature the personal stories of women living in poverty, but they will be supplemented with new (and sometimes alarming) material. The 2nd Edition of *Women Against Poverty* will also serve as the foundation for a paper ASWAC will submit to the federal government on Canada's Social Policy Review.

The Social Policy Review is being conducted by a new Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, under direction of the Minister, Lloyd Axworthy. Under review is funding for: social assistance (welfare), Unemployment Insurance, student loans, job retraining, child tax benefits, literacy programs, and social development programs (eg, Sec/State Women's Program grants). ASWAC is taking participation in this process seriously so that the government of Canada recognizes the need to create a much stronger social safety net and to ensure its permanent existence.

We hope to coordinate this effort with other women in Alberta, especially in areas outside of the major centres and have applied to the federal government for some financial support. We will work closely with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women who are developing a national campaign and strategy for reform of the social safety net. Be sure to watch for information sessions and workshops in your area. Let's all work together to save and strengthen social programs in Canada!

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# Alberta Feminist Calendar

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## CALGARY

May 1 International Workers Day - Everyone welcome! 2 pm rally at McDougal Centre (455 - 6 St. SW), 3 pm march to Carpenters Hall (301 - 10 St. NW). Entertainment and presentations from 3:30 - 5 pm followed by international supper and dance. For more info. call Gordon Christie at 262-2390. Sponsored by Calgary May Day Coalition.

May 5 The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary invites you to our Annual General Meeting and the second annual... "Our Stars Are Out Tonight" Volunteer recognition ceremony from 4 - 7 pm #204, 1009 - 7 Avenue SW. R.S.V.P. to Michelle or Candida at 294-0737.

Women's Gifts - A Spring Fair and Craft Sale runs from 10-5 on Saturday May 7 and noon-5 on Sunday May 8 at the Bragg Creek Community Centre. Proceeds from the \$1 entrance fee will be forwarded to a women's charity group.

MOBILIZE ON MOTHER'S DAY Sunday May 8 meet at 2 pm at Princes Island or join the M.O.M. parade at 1 pm at the Firehall parking lot on Memorial Dr. and 10 St. NW. Bring your placards, your banners, your agit-prop, your drums, your street theatre, your voices to march along the north side of the Bow River to join the M.O.M. demonstration on Princes Island. Call 283-2536 for parade information or 283-5910 -270-2074.

May 11 Calgary Poverty Focus Group Meeting 7 pm at John Howard Society, 2 floor, 1010 - 1 St SW. Edmonton social planning council members will be in attendance to discuss possibility of taking Alberta Government to court for denying Albertans their basic needs. For more information call Marilyn at 235-1339.

May 13 Calgary Birth Control Association fundraising auction and dance. Bridgeland Riverside Community Association, 6:30 pm - cash bar, complimentary hors d'oeuvres. 7 pm Live and silent auctions, 10 pm dance tickets \$15 each or 2 for \$25. From C.B.C.A. 283-5580.

May 18 Action Canada Network Meeting 7 pm at #307, 315 - 10 Ave. SE. For information call Amy Anderson at 286-1058.

June 26 Gay and Lesbian pride week rally, parade and barbeque, starts 5 pm at City Hall Plaza. Everyone is encouraged to attend and support equal rights for gay men, lesbians and bisexuals. For more information call the Calgary Lesbian and Gay Political Action Guild at 266-5318.

'94 Committee for Take Back The Night meets every fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Old Y, 223 - 12 Avenue SW. For more information call Peggy at 283-7650.

## EDMONTON

Endometriosis Association has a meeting Thursday, May 19, 1994 at 7:30 pm in Room 2J4.04, Classroom F, Walter C Mackenzie Building, Health Sciences Centre, 8440-112 Street. For more information, please call Maureen Hill at 458-9431.

Take Back The Night organizing committee is meeting May 4 at 7 pm. Please call Debbie or Lenore at 488-4949 or Rosemary at ASWAC at 421-0306 if you are interested in attending.

Combining Work & Spirit. In this week-end process we will: reflect on highlights of our spiritual history; draw out our key beliefs and values; apply them to our workplace; identify areas where they are welcome, identify areas where they are left at the door; transform obstacles to opportunities. Instructor: Patricia Dunnigan. Date: Sat. & Sun. July 23 & 24, 1994 from 9 am - 4 pm Fees: \$125. For further information, contact Women's Program Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta. Call 492-3093/3116/3109.

Family Health "Home and Away Safety for a Lifetime." Serious injury can happen anywhere, but most injuries happen close to home. Learn more about protecting your family from household, playground or active lifestyle dangers. This community session is a great way to celebrate Canada Health Day! Thursday, May 12, 1994, 7 - 9 pm located at Community Services Lounge, School of Nursing, Royal Alexandra Hospital, 10404 - 111 Avenue. Advanced registration required until session is filled! Call 491-5465.

Northern Light Theatre presents Howard Barker's WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN, May 8, 1994. Call 471-1586 for tickets and information.

Alberta Status of Women Action Committee (ASWAC) Annual General Meeting - "Discover Our Voices: Imagine The Power" - featuring a panel on the effects of social service, healthcare and advanced education cuts on women: discussion and strategizing sessions to follow. May 7, Noon to 5pm in Room 2-115, Education North, University of Alberta, Edmonton. For details call ASWAC at 421-0306 or leave a message in Calgary at 233-0731.

Menopause Support Group meetings are held the Third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm at the Royal Alexandra Hospital-Womens Centre in the Out-Patient Diabetic Clinic. For additional information call Joanne Symonds 939-3699, Barb Rocchio 454-3133 or Gladys Roth 477-4829.



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# Events/Information

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## **The Alliance of Canadian Second Stage Housing Programs**

The mission of Alliance is to provide an information network specific to second stage housing programs, as well as a forum for social and political action. All second stage facilities with a mandate to provide safe and affordable housing exclusively to assaulted women, with or without children, are invited to join the Alliance. Contact Rosita Hall, The Alliance of Canadian Second Stage Housing Programs, Suite 255, 7-981 Wellington Road South, London, Ontario N6E 3A9, telephone (416) 577-1173.

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### **Call for Nominations**

Nominations are now being accepted for the 1994 Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case. Nominations for the Awards may be submitted by individuals, groups and others. The deadline for submitting nominations is May 15, 1994. For more information about eligibility criteria and nomination procedures, contact: Communications Directorate, Status of Women Canada, 700-360 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1C3, telephone (613) 995-7835, TDD (613) 996-1322.

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### **NAC AGM**

JUNE 10-13 National Action Committee on the Status of Women Conference and Annual General Meeting in Ottawa. This conference, open to all NAC member groups, will have the theme of "Women Take Back the World: The Global Fightback." Phone 1-800-665-5124.

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### **SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE FOR CALGARY EXPECTED SOON**

Ten months after the Calgary Sexual Assault Centre closed its doors, proposals for a new service are finally being reviewed. The City of Calgary and The United Way have received 5 proposals to provide services for victims/survivors of sexual assault. Local activists hope an announcement regarding a new centre will be made by June.

An ad hoc committee of women has worked with the City and United Way since the Calgary Sexual Assault Centre closed last June. The Community Committee in Support of Sexual Assault Services negotiated with the funding agencies and coordinated a community consultation

process which was used to develop criteria for new services. ASWAC initiated the first meeting of this Committee and was involved throughout this process.

The lengthy negotiations resulted in criteria for service that includes "crisis services, individual short-term counselling, group counselling and preventative education, advocacy and social action." It must also "accommodate the needs of a diverse population," and "assure safety, accessibility and confidentiality."

The most contentious part of the negotiations involved whether the service needed to "feminist." It was eventually agreed that services should be based on "a philosophy that recognizes sexual assault as an issue of power and control; in analyzing the causes and consequences of violence against women there must be recognition of women's economic, social and political inequality."

Copies of the Community Consultation Report and the proposal criteria are available through the United Way of Calgary (263-0720). A limited number of reports are also available in the Women Looking Forward office (269-1144).

There are still some concerns that City Hall bureaucracy will delay the opening of a new centre. Phone calls to aldermen/women (268-2430) may remind them that this process has taken far too long already, and encourage them to ensure services are quickly re-established.

ASWAC would like to thank all the women and organizations, including many ASWAC members, who were involved in bringing us this far. We would also like to thank all the former staff and volunteers of the Calgary Sexual Assault Centre who spent years providing feminist-based services and support.

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### **Gathering and Celebration!**

Celebration of Women in the Arts (CWA) presents **OUR VOICES IN CHORUS - June 3, 4 & 5**. You are invited to come and celebrate the work of women who work in all the arts as we sing, paint, dance, write, perform, show our films and video, and create in all media. For more information, or to register, call CWA at 424-0287. Tickets are available in Calgary at •Truck an Artist Run Centre •Sandpiper Books •Tickets, in Edmonton •The Paint Spot •Volume II Books •CWA - office #905, 10136-100 Street, Edmonton.

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# News From NAC

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My term as your Regional Representative is almost over and our next Regional Rep. will be Pam Krause. Pam was elected by acclamation and will take over the position at the Annual General Meeting in June. Congratulations Pam! I am sure you will enjoy your work on the executive and will represent us well.

Some good news for women who thought their chance to attend the AGM was gone. **THE DEADLINE FOR EARLY REGISTRATION AT \$160 AND THE TRAVEL SUBSIDY APPLICATION HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO MAY 10, 1994.**

I hope this will allow some of you to make the necessary arrangements to go. If you would like to attend but your group is already sending a delegate, call me. There are several groups who are not sending anyone and you may be able to represent one of them.

The bad news about the extended deadline is that registrations are down and we need more people to come to the AGM. This is important for financial reasons as well as having good representation to deal with all the important business on the agenda.

Let me know if there is anything I can do to help anyone get there who would like to go. It is an opportunity to meet and work with women from across Canada and help NAC speak with a strong voice.

Some Alberta member groups have not renewed their membership. While you have until the AGM to do so, if you are able to pay the fee, I would encourage you to renew as soon as possible. NAC needs the support of feminist groups to carry on the work and survive financially.

The Action Fund is also a major source of income and I would encourage all women who are able to do so to sign up. You can join the Action Fund for as little as \$5 a month and you would be helping to make NAC stronger while receiving all the latest news on a regular basis. It has been a privilege being part of the NAC executive and representing the women of Alberta. It has been a learning experience for me and it has been a lot of work. It is not an easy role to play and I hope you will support Pam when she takes over.

Thanks and hugs to all the women who have helped and supported me in the past two years.  
In Sisterhood, Dorothy Mandy 451-0933.

Dear NAC Member Groups:

I am very excited to be your new NAC Alberta Regional Representative. I look forward to meeting all of you, and the challenges we'll face together in the next two years.

First of all, let me give you some of my background. I have been active in the Calgary feminist community for the past three years. I am currently on the board of Women Looking Forward, and the steering committee of the Calgary Lesbian and Gay Political Action Guild. I also volunteer for the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee and the Calgary Birth Control Association.

I have a degree in political science and have mostly been employed in mainstream politics as an executive assistant and in the areas of communications and outreach.

I am looking forward to working with women in urban and rural areas from across the province over the next two years. I want to encourage the participation of Alberta member groups in NAC to ensure that our regional concerns are addressed at the national level. I hope to attend some of your meetings, and undertake outreach activities into smaller centres to gain a better understanding of the diversity of issues facing women in Alberta.

My other goal is to increase the presence of NAC in Alberta by encouraging more groups to become members. I want to ensure the resources and materials NAC produces are widely distributed and that member groups are kept up to date on national activities.

At the last NAC regional meeting, a steering committee was set up to support the work of the NAC Regional Representative. If anyone in your organization can help or wants more information, please have them call Anne McGrath at 269-3755 (OXFAM-CANADA).

Please delegate one of your members to be a contact person for NAC and call me with their name, home phone number and fax number, if available.

Feel free to contact me at any time if you have feedback or ideas for me. You can phone me in Calgary at 245-0641 or fax me at 269-2012 (ASWAC). I look forward to meeting and working with you and your members in the coming year.

In Sisterhood,  
Pam Krause

# Write On !

The Board of ASWAC urges all members to write to the following politicians with your concerns about the cutbacks. It is important to send a copy of your letters to our office. We have found that individual letter writing is the most powerful form of lobbying. Please speak out now, to ensure a future for our children.

## LIBERALS CONDEMN WOMEN TO GREATER INEQUALITY

The Federal Budget brought forward by Paul Martin furthers the inequality, unemployment and poverty of Canada's women and children. While cuts in defence spending are a positive step, the nominal sums allocated to women's health, prenatal nutrition, the reinstatement of the Court Challenges Program and commissions on Law Reform and Race Relations, will not end the economic disparity. Despite Liberal promises of a democratic consultation process, this budget will freeze spending on social programs at 1994 levels. Women's groups will face cuts of 5% in 1994-95; there may be no funding for 1995-96 and the work to end male violence against women and children will go without the promised funding at all.

Major cuts were made to Unemployment Insurance, reducing benefits to 55% from 57%, increasing the work weeks required for eligibility and reducing the length of claims, which further punishes the unemployed, many of whom are single mothers. Only the very poorest will be eligible for the increase in benefit to 60%, but they will have to open their lives to regulation by UIC administrators.

Salary freezes for federal government employees continue. Most of the lowest paid civil servants who will be hit the hardest are women. More government jobs will be cut to save 1.5 billion by 1996 and \$6 billion will be spent to create jobs mainly in traditionally male occupations.

Money is allotted to create new childcare spaces from 1995-97, but the continuing freeze on transfer payments to provinces will affect the childcare program. New spaces depend on shared funding, and if the provinces cannot provide their share, the program will be jeopardized. Write Paul Martin Room 515-S Centre Block, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ont., K1A 0A6.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

Write to the Hon. Mike Cardinal, Minister of Alberta Family & Social Services at 104 Legislature Bldg., 10800-97 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6 telephone 427-2606 fax 427-0954. Express your concerns about the cuts to Social Services (Supports for Independence).

Women and children are hardest hit. Shelter allowances, drug benefits, maternity clothing, child car seats, school transportation/expenses, diaper allowances and other supplementary benefits have all decreased or been cut entirely. Also, under the new reforms, women are now considered employable when a child is six months of age (as opposed to two years). This is a "cost-saving" initiative which is completely

insensitive to the needs of many women and children in our province.

## HEALTHCARE

Write to the Hon. Shirley McClellan at 127 Legislature Building, 10800 - 97 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6, telephone 427-3665 fax 429-5954, about the health care cuts. \$100 million is being removed from the acute care areas in Edmonton and Calgary and shifting to home care and community care funding before the regional hospital boards are even in place. This has resulted in a loss of health care jobs and perhaps worsened conditions for both employees and patients.

Cost saving measures are also taking place in prescription payment proposals for seniors and non-group...subscribers. This will increase the out-of-pocket costs paid by seniors.

## EDUCATION

In March 1993, 57% of Albertans surveyed by the provincial government indicated that they thought the Government "should be spending more on Education".

Since 1971, the Alberta Government has gradually reduced its spending on Education. The Government's portion of the revenue of Alberta School boards has declined from **82.8%** in 1971 to **58.1%** in 1991. In 1991, Alberta ranked fifth in spending per capita on Education.

Edmonton Public Schools spends less per student than all provinces except P.E.I. These stats are very disturbing, plus the fact that kindergarten will now be cut in half. Write The Hon. Halvar Jonson 324 Legislature Building, 10800 - 97 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6, telephone 427-2025 fax 427-5582.

## SENIORS

All seniors will/are affected by the recent cuts. All seniors will have to pay for all dental work, eye glasses, and prescriptions. Subsidized housing will be increased from 25% of income to 30% over the next 14 months. Seniors live in a lower income bracket already, these latest cuts are not acceptable. These are our mothers and fathers who are greatly affected. Act now - write Gary Mar at 227 Legislature Building, 10800-97 Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2B6. Fax-427-0188. Phone-427-4928.



Please remember to send a copy of your letters to ASWAC Edmonton. See page 1 for complete mailing address.



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# Sources & Resources

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## **FINAL REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES**

The 293 recommendations have important social, legal, ethical and health implications for all Canadians, particularly women. \$20 Contact: Canada Communications Group (CCG) Publishing, 45 Sacre-Coeur Blvd, Hull, Quebec K1A 0S9 (819) 956-4802

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women released two new publications: **Sharing Our Experience**, which is a collection of letters by racial minority and Aboriginal women and **Expanding Our Horizons**, which marks the Council's 20th anniversary and reviews the work of the organization. Copies of the free publications are available from the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Distribution Centre, Box 1540, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5R5, telephone (613) 992-4976, fax (613) 992-1725.

Labour force profiles called **Women in the Labour Market: Focus on Aboriginal Women; Women in the Labour Market: Focus on Women with Disabilities; and Women in the Labour Market: Focus on Racial Minority Women**, examine the social and economic factors that influence the employment status of these groups. Information about the labour force participation, occupational representation, education and earnings are presented in easy-to-read tables and charts. All three profiles are available free-of-charge, from the Ontario Women's Directorate, 12 Floor, 2 Carlton Street, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2M9, telephone (416) 314-0292, fax (416) 314-0254.

**Where Once our Mothers Stood, We Stand** explores the history of women's suffrage in Newfoundland. Written by Dr. Margot I. Dudley, cost \$12.95 (plus tax, shipping and handling) from the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Newfoundland and Labrador, 131 LeMarchant Road, St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 2H3, telephone (709) 753-7270.

Planned Parenthood is offering two new educational pamphlets: **The Morning After Pill** and **Teenage Girls and Acquaintance Assault**. Copies are \$.25 and bulk rates are available at Planned Parenthood of Toronto, 36B Prince Arthur Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5R 1A9, telephone (416) 961-0113, fax (416) 961-2512.

**Sexual Assault** examines sexual assault as a private and personal experience, with practical advice on prevention and ways of dealing with the legal, medical, and psychological aspects of sexual violence. Single copies are priced at \$4 (bulk rates available) & can be obtained from Montreal Health Press, P.O. Box 1000, Station Place du Parc, Montreal, Quebec H2W 2N1, telephone (514) 282-1171.

In November, Canada pledged to contribute \$400,000 to assist Somali refugee women who have suffered sexual violence in camps along the Kenya-Somalia border. The funds are being used to improve security in the refugee camps where a total of 192 cases of rape have been reported and many more are suspected. Funds are also being used to provide the victims with legal assistance, counselling, medical supplies, replacement clothing and household goods, as well as to support a public awareness campaign.

On January 13, 1994, Statistics Canada released the results of another survey that constitutes a one-day snapshot of residential facilities for abused women. If you would like more information about the surveys, please contact the regional Statistics Canada office in your area.

### **Are you unemployed?**

Interested in taking part in a support group for unemployed women to address both our individual and collective issues?

I am a Social Work student from Grant MacEwen College working on a pilot project for the Alberta Federation of Labour. I hope to design a support group package which will be used province-wide to provide a forum for women to meet and discuss the impact of unemployment in our lives and what actions we can take to deal with the current economic situation. We will explore coping measures, personal and community resources and grassroots action. If this interests you, please contact Karen Newmoon at 483-3021. I look forward to hearing from you.

The Women's Program, U of A, Faculty of Extension has several courses of interest to ASWAC members. Beneath The Page: Journal Writing for Women-with instructor Eunice Scarfe starts June 15. Women's Self-Defense: Basic Wenlido and Intermediate Wenlido courses are being offered in May and October. Please call 492-3093 for more information or to register.

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# More Sources & Resources

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## COURT RULES AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

A ground-breaking April 12 court ruling means gay men, lesbians and bisexuals can now legally fight discrimination through the Alberta Human Rights Commission. A court of Queen's Bench judge ruled that Alberta's human rights legislation is out of step with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Justice Anne Russell said sexual orientation must now be "read into" the Individual Rights Protection Act (I.R.P.A.). The government has 30 days to appeal the court decision.

The ruling came over 3 years after Delwin Vriend was fired from his job at King's College in Edmonton because he was gay. The Human Rights Commission refused to investigate Vriend's firing because discrimination based on sexual orientation was not covered under the I.R.P.A. Vriend decided to challenge that decision in the court system.

Judge Russell said discrimination against homosexuals is such a "notorious social reality" that it doesn't have to be proven. She also said "the decision to deny homosexuals recognition under the legislation (I.R.P.A.) is to reinforce negative stereotyping and prejudice."

Since the ruling, many Tory MLAs have continued to insist this will give homosexuals "special rights" and have even suggested these "special rights" will now have to be extended to pedophiles. Premier Ralph Klein and many other MLAs have chosen not to comment at all.

If the government chooses to appeal this ruling, it could mean hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars and many years before the possible appeals are completed. Similar situations across Canada seem to indicate the government would lose this appeal. However, the Alberta Human Rights Commission would again be paralysed by political interference, and Delwin Vriend would have to spend a lot more than the \$30,000 he has already spent on legal fees.

We understand that community development minister Gary Mar received over 140 calls opposing equal rights for homosexuals within the first 24 hours of this ruling. ASWAC encourages you to call his Edmonton office at 427-4928 and express your support for the ruling and opposition to an appeal. (After all, the Tories claim to "Listen...and care!")

## Women In Active Recovery

We are writing a guide for women recovering from dependence on alcohol or drugs who may want to set up a group like Women In Active Recovery. It will provide an example of what women can accomplish in an all-women's group and it will present a new and unique avenue to recovery. Written in clear language from a recovering women's perspective, it will provide practical information, and will include stories, drawings and poems. It will inspire and guide recovering women and others who are in contact with them and it will affirm women's experiences and knowledge. It will be a learning and teaching tool for recovering women's groups, as well as a resource for the community.

If you would like to be informed when the handbook is published, contact: Women In Active Recovery, P.O. Box 964, New Glasgow, Nova Scotia B2H 5K7 telephone (902) 755-4647. Publication is scheduled for June, 1994.



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# REFLECTIONS

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Laurie Anderson, Board Member, ASWAC

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It's been several months since my return from "heaven and hell" in India. I was accepted to a Study Abroad Programme set up by the University of Calgary and was one of 26 students from various disciplines and universities across Canada selected to attend Pune University in Maharashtra, India from September to December, 1993.

The "heaven" was the beauty, tastes and scents of India, the scholastics, the networking, the living and learning. India, as I discovered during an earlier trip in 1990, is a country of pluralism, of diversity, a country of vibrancy one cannot begin to describe. To have the opportunity to be in India for more than a cursory visit was a wonderful experience. The opportunity I had to liaise with women activists both in Pune and with both Canadian and Indian activists at a conference in Bombay also proved to be a wonderful privilege.

The "hell" was partially the sense of helplessness after the devastating earthquake that hit the state of Maharashtra while I was there, killing some 25,000 people who had been living in substandard housing. While our small financial donations were of some minimal help, knowing the disease and despair the survivors of the earthquake must be facing was traumatic. Our ability to provide any other assistance was restricted by the fact that we couldn't speak the local language and had little or no medical knowledge. Emergency workers on the scene deterred all but those with specific skills from assisting at the front.

The "hell" also included the experience of dealing with my fellow Canadians. I felt constantly challenged as a feminist but held my ground and tried to deal with questions in a non-confrontational, open manner. Discussion around issues such as why women stay in abusive relationships, why women need access to abortion, and the fact that rape is not an issue of sexual attraction but one of power, were but a few of the questions that were raised. I was startled by the ignorance of the students who came from a variety of academic disciplines. Many were fourth or fifth year students whose basic knowledge of women's issues was extraordinarily limited. (So call me naive!). Some welcomed the new information while others simply dismissed it.

Another difficulty was the realization that many of my fellow Canadian students were not only anti-feminist, but were also racist, ethnocentric, sexist and homophobic. Constant battles were waged on these fronts and the question of privilege was yet another. On occasion I tried to share with them my sense of shame at our blithe acceptance and (more often) demands for privilege as guests of this Indian university while being fully aware of an entirely different set of stumbling blocks for the local university students. While many of them seemed to feel "entitled to privilege," others could not even grasp the concept.

Despite the fact that affirmative action programs are in place to encourage lower caste, lower class, students to participate in university education, the Indian students with whom I had an opportunity to interact were overwhelmingly upper caste, and upper class. Further, most of the professors were also upper class, upper caste. As in Canada, affirmative action programs are

opposed by many students and professors who suggest that "these programs restrict the opportunity for those of lower castes and classes to compete fairly." On more than one occasion I suggested that if an even playing field ever becomes a reality, perhaps this will be an appropriate argument to put forward.

As part of an anthropology project, I was able to spend some time with women in three slums around the city of Pune and to better understand their day-to-day struggles. I also had an opportunity to meet some Devadasis-women who are selected as children, married to a Goddess in a ritualistic marriage ceremony and become socially and religiously sanctioned prostitutes. I spent very limited time in a caste village, and visited a hill tribe to see the realities faced by women there.

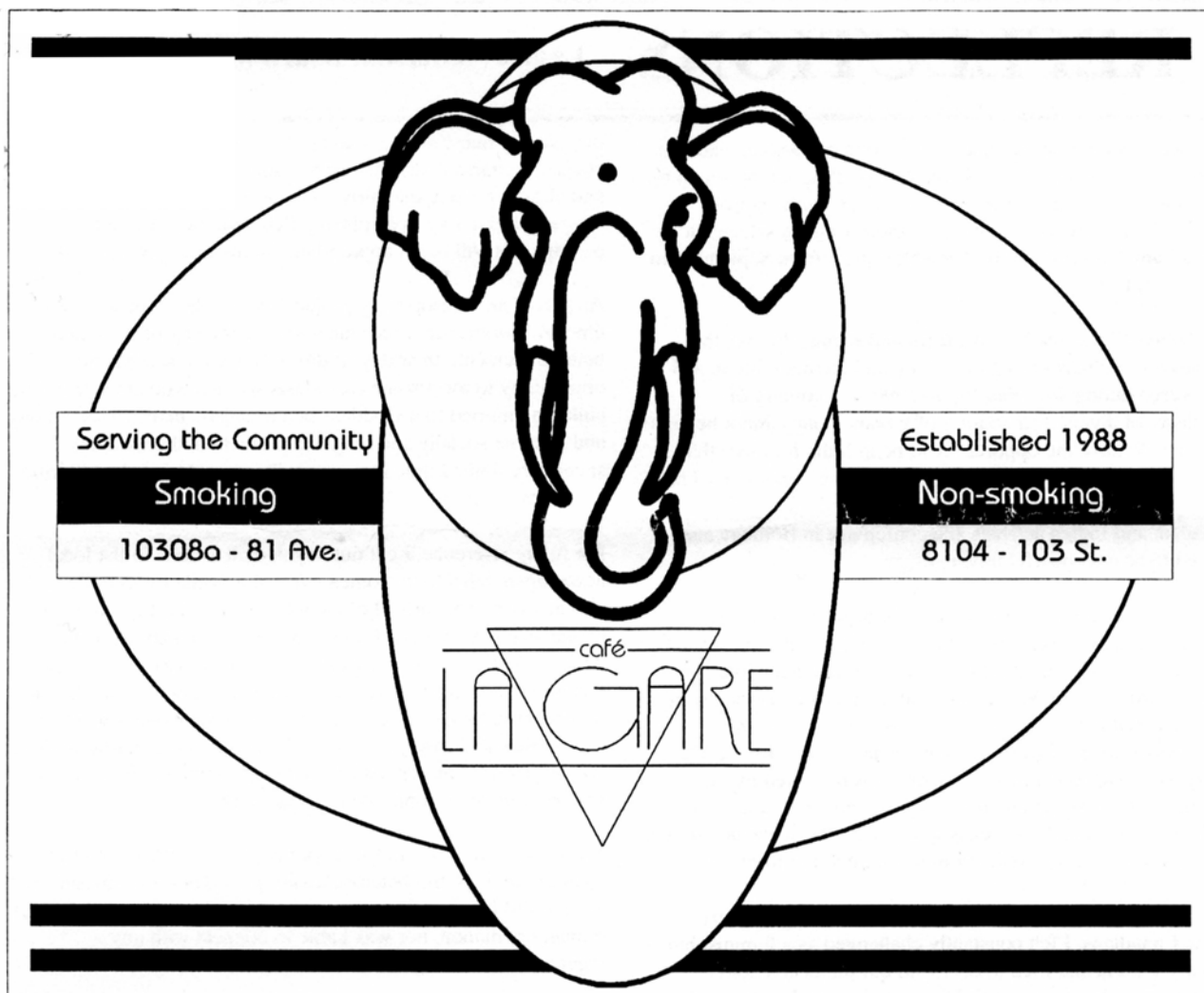
For future reference, I cut out any and all articles in the local newspapers relative to women every day while I was in Pune. I was anxious to absorb all of the information that I could and to obtain as much material for later projects and analysis as I could. At one point, I was barred from accessing government reports relative to the status of women in the local library. I was told it was because I was a foreigner. This made me wonder what the real barriers and safety issues are for Indian women who wish to access government reports and statistics on the issues they face and the atrocities committed against them.

My awareness of the access to privilege that my colour, class, physical abilities and heterosexuality provides was constant. At no time did I encounter anyone who felt safe enough to divulge a lesbian orientation, nor was I able to connect with any organization working on behalf of gays and lesbians.

At the end of my formal scholastic program I went to Bombay to participate, on behalf of ASWAC, in a Canada-India Conference which connected 20 Canadian activists with 20 Indian activists to discuss issues of violence against women. It felt good to be in a safe space at a women's university, with women united in the effort to work towards the improvement of the status of women. There were some contentious issues and there was some consensus. Certain groups of women were clearly marginalized or absent altogether and I was somewhat relieved to see this duly noted and acknowledged by the attendees from both countries.

I was overwhelmed by the challenges faced by my Indian sisters, their bravery, their commitment to face the stark realities of oppression that the women of their nation face. I was humbled by their openness and their invitation to share some small part of their reality. Unfortunately, insufficient time was left to discuss strategies for change, but a commitment was made to forge links of solidarity among those 40 women, and to continue to work towards a better reality for all women. As we linked arms to sing "We Shall Overcome" in both Hindi and English, the Conference was closed.

Thus, with new eyes and new knowledge I returned to Canada at the end of December, committed to playing whatever small role I can in the struggle for the emancipation of women and with hope for both safety and success for my sisters in India.



Membership fees are an important source of ASWAC revenue, but more importantly, your membership means a vote in support of increasing the status of women in ALberta. Whether or not you can afford our suggested fee of \$20, it is important to keep your membership up to date (check your address label for renewal month). Renew early. Don't wait for the membership renewal invoice to send in your fee. All mail, and now our business reply mail, costs ASWAC one dollar which could be put toward programming, lobbying and advocacy work. As it is now, ASWAC is operating 9 months out of the year, due to continued cutbacks in federal funds. If we can double or triple our membership, we can keep operating all year. Please sign up new members, buy memberships for your friends, and make donations if you can.

***ASWAC's membership base is our most important resource.***

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