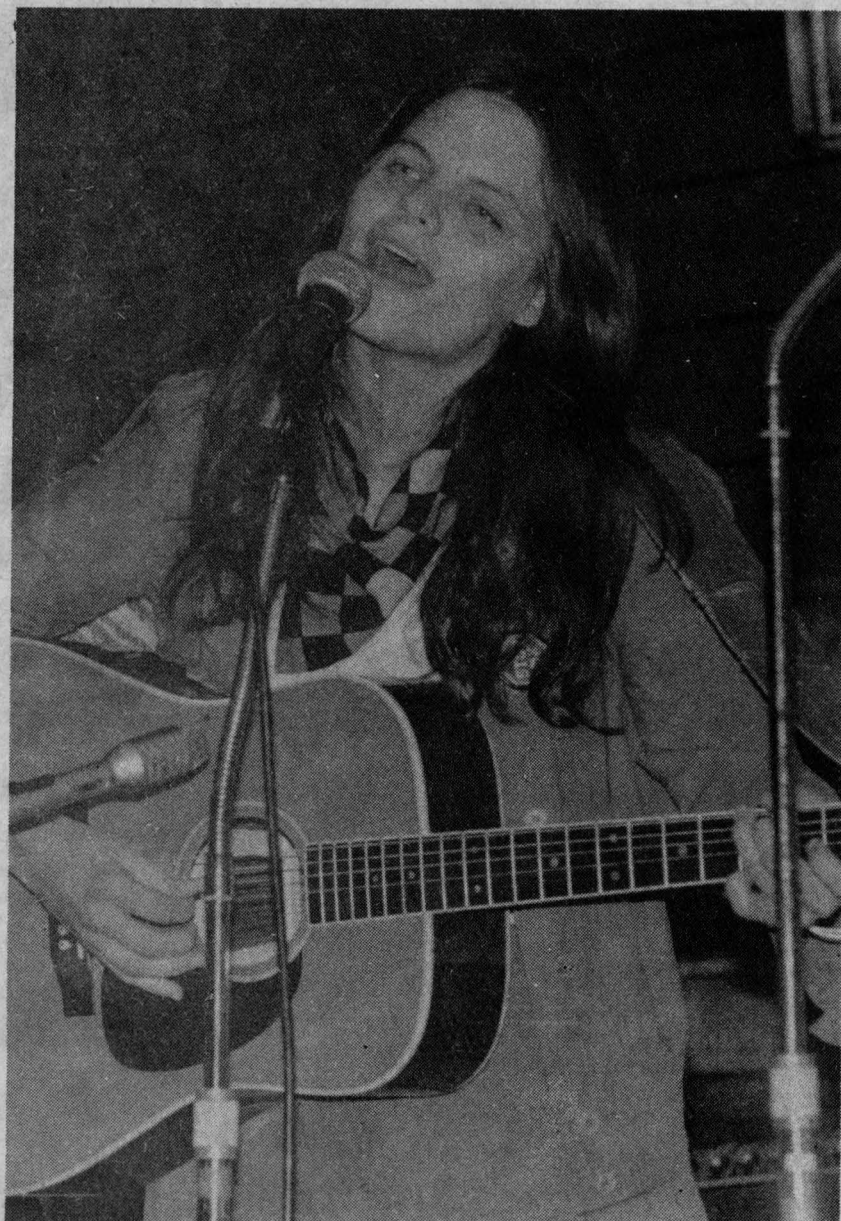




ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE

JENNIFER BEREZAN SINGS



AT THE ASWAC ASSEMBLY

Public Hearings — — Porn and Prostitution

SHREDDED PORN

The Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (appointed by the Minister of Justice in June) will be holding public hearings in Calgary and Edmonton on Monday, January 9 and Tuesday, January 10. They will be held during the day and we have not yet heard where they will be at.

The terms of reference of the Committee are:

- to consider the problems of access to pornography, its effects and what is considered to be pornographic in Canada;
- to consider prostitution in Canada with particular reference to loitering and street soliciting for prostitution, the operation of bawdy houses, living off the avails of prostitution, the exploitation of prostitutes and the law relating to these matters;
- to ascertain public views on ways and means to deal with these problems by inviting written submissions from concerned groups and citizens and by conducting public meetings in major centres across the country;
- to consider, without travelling outside Canada, the experience and attempts to deal with these problems in other countries including the U.S., E.E.C. and selected Commonwealth countries such as Australia and New Zealand;
- to consider alternatives, report its findings and recommend solutions to the problems associated with pornography and prostitution in Canada, as soon as possible, but not later than December 31, 1984.

If anyone or group wishes to submit briefs to this committee, please contact the committee as soon as possible. First priority will be given to those who submit full briefs ahead of time and second priority will be given to those who submit written summaries of their oral briefs ahead of time.

The Committee has prepared a pornography and prostitution issues paper which is available, in Edmonton, at the Canada Service Bureau, 10138 101 Street. Copies are available in Calgary at the Public Library.

The committee can be contacted at (604) 687-8670 or by writing:

Paul Fraser, Chairperson
Box 48720, Bental Centre
Vancouver, B.C.
V7X 1A6

Porn Activist Touring Alberta

Maude Barlow, President of the Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography will be visiting Calgary, Edmonton and Grande Prairie in January. Maude was one of the initiators of the cross-Canada protest last January against pornography on pay-TV. Since then she has been appointed a senior advisor to the Prime Minister and is also a consultant to a House of Commons sub-committee that is studying pornography.

The Canadian Coalition has members across the country, publishes a newsletter, does public speaking, provides resource information and lobbies the government and regulatory bodies such as the CRTC.

The details of public events being organized in the three cities are as follows:

Calgary - Wednesday, January 18

A luncheon at the Delta Hotel at 11:30 a.m. is being organized by the Calgary Committee for a Proposed Council on Women's Affairs. Maude will speaking to major concerns for women in the

Participants at the November "Women and Therapy" conference in Toronto took issue with the pornography on the closed-circuit television screens and on the newsstands at the Holiday Inn where the conference was held.

About 150 women from across Canada took a collection and bought all the porn magazines on the newsstand and, gathered in the lobby of the hotel, they tore the magazines to shreds. The women are officially boycotting the Holiday Inn chain of hotels and are asking for the formal support of all women who are fighting pornography. Support would be most effective by writing your local Holiday Inn and telling the management that you will be consciously boycotting them because of the pornography.

The vice president of marketing for Holiday Inn, John Singler, said he thought there would come a time in the future when women "won't be so sensitive" to pornographic material.

1980's. Invitations to the luncheon will be issued.

At 7:30 in the evening, at the Calgary Public Library, there will be a public forum on issues and actions around pornography and Media Watch. It is being organized by the YWCA Social Issues Committee and the contact person is Janice Thompson (263-1550).

Edmonton - Thursday, January 19

The Every Woman's Place committee on pornography is organizing a public forum on pornography for 8 p.m. at the Main Library Theatre. Contact people are Frances Adams (424-3073) and Christine Kulyk (420-6765).

Grande Prairie - Friday, Jan. 20

A panel discussion on pornography is being sponsored by PACE and the Pornography Action Committee at 8 p.m. in the Grande Prairie Regional College. Prior to this, at the same location, PACE is holding its annual general meeting from 7 to 8 p.m. A \$5 donation for a membership in PACE would be appreciated. The contact person is Mary Clarkson (539-2190).



Blow-jobs at Franklin's



"Could I have a blow-job?" he said with a leering grin on his face. Did he get a deserving response? No, he is the customer, she is the waitress and a blow-job is the newest drink at Franklin's Lounge on 111th Avenue in Edmonton.

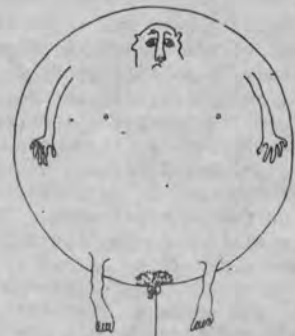
A man who overheard this request called the ASWAC office recently to tell us about it and get some advice on what action he could take.

The Alberta Human Rights Code wouldn't cover it but the customer and the management are guilty of sexual harassment. The waitresses are set up for it, consciously and deliberately. "Serving" people is difficult enough without management condoning this type of harassment.

It is interesting to note the names of drinks that have become popular in this country - dirty mother, screwdriver, harvey wallbanger, bloody mary, between the sheets and so on. Advertisers have long connected alcohol and sex in their commercials and glossy ads. Waitresses face frequent and degrading sexual harassment, probably more than any other occupational group.

If you come across something like this yourself, complain to the owners and managers and tell your friends about it. No one should have to put up with this kind of crap.

Frances Adams



Media Watch



Woman: Sexy, white, young, blonde and beautiful! It's not me and the odds are that it isn't you.

Sex role stereotyping of women creates an environment that encourages the dehumanization, misrepresentation and degradation of women. At present our environment is polluted with messages that tell us that women are powerless, feeble minded, submissive, victims and only valuable if they are young, white and beautiful.

The Public Members of the CRTC Task Force on Sex Role Stereotyping made this connection in

their report, Images of Women, when they stated: Male Dominance and female submissiveness are at the very heart of the stereotypes of men and women. Pornography, or any portrayal of violence against women, is the ultimate expression of dominance/submissiveness, the objectification and abuse of women. As such, pornography or the portrayal of violence against women has no place in the broadcast media.

Media Watch views sex role stereotyping and pornography as a continuum which must be uprooted from our culture. It is insidious, pervasive and dangerous to women and men. The goal of Media Watch is to improve the portrayal

of females in the media and to encourage the creation of images which reflect the changing and diverse roles of women in Canadian society. Its methodology is to provide the public with effective vehicles with which to actively combat offensive materials, and to lobby various government agencies.

If your group wishes to learn more about how to become actively involved in Media Watch through volunteering, monitoring the media, or lobbying, please contact the Media Watch representative for Alberta, Janice Thompson, c/o YWCA, 320 5th Avenue S.E., Calgary, Alberta T2G 0E5, or phone 263-1550, local 348.

Assault Centres

One of the outcomes of a meeting of Alberta Sexual Assault Centres in Lethbridge on November 26 and 27 was a letter to Neil Crawford outlining the role of the Centres in the courts. The representatives asked for a meeting with the provincial Attorney General to discuss and clarify their role which has been criticized and attacked by various judges in rape trials. Earlier this year the Lethbridge Sexual Assault was accused by Judge V.P. Moshansky of coaching the witness, a not infrequent charge.

Emotional support and accompaniment of sexual assault victims has always been offered by rape crisis/sexual assault centres. The trial is usually a terrifying experience for the woman. Seeing her assailant and having to describe her assault publicly is a harrowing experience. The Centre staff and volunteers try to ease some of the stress by explaining the legal system and taking the woman to the courthouse beforehand to show her the set-up and explain who will be in the court room.

Neil Crawford has agreed to meet with Centre representatives early in January to discuss this issue.

The Centres also issued a statement about medico-legal examinations in response to the refusal of certain hospitals and doctors to treat sexual assault victims. The statement read that "medical care for a victim of sexual assault should take priority over the formal, legal gathering of evidence". The need for a medico-legal examination has,

indeed, been removed under the new sexual assault legislation. Several hospitals in the Edmonton and central Alberta region have initiated procedures to ensure that sexual assault victims are not refused medical attention.

The financial situation of the Centres was discussed at length. Lloydminster and Lethbridge are in dire straits and will have to close their doors soon if funding is not forthcoming. Funding for most of the centres is diverse, short-term and meagre. Lethbridge and Lloydminster exist primarily on federal government CCSP and CCDP grants supplemented by fundraising efforts. The Centres can ill-afford the time and energy required to raise money and answers are not forthcoming.

Another outcome of the meeting is that the Alberta Women's Bureau has been approached to compile the statistics gathered by each Centre so that a provincial picture can be obtained of the incidence of sexual assault and child sexual abuse. Uniform call sheets will have to be prepared to enable this and it will probably be some months before the system is in operation.

The Centres have not met regularly in the past and communication has been infrequent. The opportunity to share, learn and support each other, such as happened at this meeting, needs to happen more often, and the Centres are working toward this goal as well.

Frances Adams

Council Dismisses Complaints Against McGillivray

ASWAC recently received a letter from the Canadian Judicial Council in regard to our complaints about Alberta Chief Justice William McGillivray. Earlier this year, in reducing the sentence of a rapist, he 'explained' that a woman who goes to a man's apartment late at night to party with him should not be surprised to be raped.

ASWAC, as part of our action on this issue, wrote the Judicial Council in Ottawa and asked them to investigate and act on McGillivray's judgement. The Council

has replied that "this matter was explained in considerable detail by Chief Justice McGillivray on television shortly following delivery by him of the oral reasons of the Court of Appeal. His explanation in the view of the Council was satisfactory and no further action is contemplated."

The Edmonton Sexual Assault Centre offered, some time ago, to give workshops for the Judges on the whole area of sexual assault. To date no response has been received.

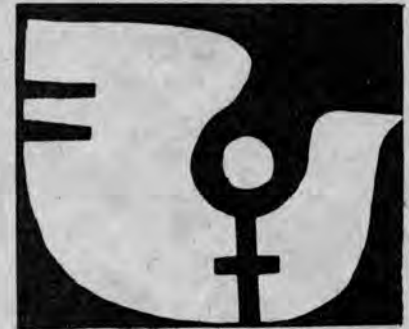
PACIFIER AWARD

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women has apparently decided to discontinue their annual presentation of the National Pacifier Award because it is considered frivolous. This, I found out after finding and purchasing a little golden pacifier at a flea market. We, at ASWAC, had a lot of fun last year in nominating Bill Chmiliar, a former Edmonton city councillor, for the award. Chmiliar didn't win (he did lose his recent re-election bid!) but the award went to another Alberta man, Charles Bevan, who was nominated by Janina Vanderpost.

The nominations and presentation do, in my opinion, give us an opportunity to make a few good points publicly and add a little humour (which is too rare) to our work. We seem to have an abundance of candidates here in Alberta and I suggest that we start a provincial pacifier award, possibly making the first presentation at our next ASWAC annual assembly. We could invite nominations from all of our members and decide, collectively, who is most deserving.

Please let me know what you think of this idea.

Frances Adams



N.A.C.

Janina Vanderpost has been the Alberta/N.W.T. regional representative on the National Action Committee on the Status of Women executive for the past two years. NAC's constitution allows a woman to hold the same position for two years maximum. The position of regional rep will have to be filled by someone new come the Annual General Meeting which is being held March 16-19 in Ottawa. ASWAC has regularly nominated women for this regional position as well for positions at-large. If you are at all interested in becoming a working member of the NAC executive please let us know.

She was a Jewel of a Wife
 ...with just one flaw



She was guilty of the "ONE NEGLECT"
 that mars many marriages . . . "LYSOL" helps avoid this

EVERYONE would admit that Mary was beautiful . . . a perfect housekeeper and mother. Why did her marriage turn out badly?

Even the most tolerant husband finds it difficult to forget or forgive a wife's carelessness about feminine hygiene. Do YOU use "Lysol" for intimate cleanliness?

More women should follow the "Lysol" method. "Lysol" is used by thousands of doctors, nurses, clinics, hospitals. Probably no other preparation has been so widely used by genera-

tions of women for feminine hygiene. "Lysol" is preferred because . . .

- 6 Special features of "LYSOL"
1. Non-Caustic . . . "Lysol", in the proper dilution, is gentle and effective, contains no harmful free caustic alkali.
 2. Effectiveness . . . "Lysol" is a powerful germicide, active under great dilutions, effective in the presence of organic matter (soil, dirt, manure, sewage, etc.).
 3. Spreading . . . "Lysol" solutions spread far over a large surface, and thus virtually ensure complete disinfection.
 4. Economy . . . Small bottles of "Lysol" make almost 4 gallons of solution for feminine hygiene.
 5. Odor . . . The clean, clean odor of "Lysol" disappears after use.
 6. Stability . . . "Lysol" keeps its full strength in water how long it is kept, how often it is rechecked.

Saclean's, Apr. 15, 1940

This ad was printed as part of an article in *Atlantis*, A Women's Studies Journal, Vol. 8, No.2, Spring 1983. The article, "Henrietta the Homemaker, and 'Rosie the Riveter': Images of Women in Advertising in MacLean's Magazine, 1939-50" is a very interesting one particularly in light of the work and analysis being done on this issue today. *Atlantis* is published at Mount Saint Vincent University, 166 Bedford Highway, Halifax, N.S., B3M 2J6.

You Can Say No

The Grande Prairie Pornography Action Committee has published a report of their public education project. The report is entitled "You Can Say No" and it gives a detailed description of the formation of the committee, what it did and why.

educating and raising the consciousness of store owners who sell pornography. The goal was to get these merchants to display pornographic magazines in a less offensive and open manner.

Copies of the report are available for \$3 from P.A.C. at Box 1395, Grande Prairie.

RENEW

We keep growing. Last year ASWAC had more fully paid-up members than ever before (about 800). The membership fee remains the same as last year, at \$10, and we hope to get a lot of renewals right away. All women who have not renewed their membership since 1981 will be removed from the mailing list following this newsletter, so if you suddenly stop hearing from us, you will know why.

We often have difficulty tracking down our members who have moved without sending us a forwarding address. We are willing to follow you around the world (!) if you'll only give us this information.

Our only contact with most of our members is through the newsletter and we would like to have more variety in our coverage. We often don't know what is going on in many communities until the event is over. Please send us your news and views, pictures, cartoons, art, poetry and so on. If we aren't meeting your needs through the newsletter it isn't because we don't want to or don't try.

Thanks to everyone who has already renewed, and we hope to hear from those of you who haven't early in the new year.

FOR 1984

PROVINCIAL PROJECT

The project has ended now, in the formal sense, but the work is continuing. Our regional workers want to share their success stories with you, and they hope you will be as pleased as they are with what was accomplished in the province in just a few short months.

North-East Region

Barbara Hill and Christine Bennet-Clark did a lot of talking with as many women as they could meet in the Vermilion-Lloydminster area, and decided the most useful action they could take would be to provide a continuing source of information about the resources available to women in the region. So, they planned an ACCESS Catalogue - a comprehensive list and description of the organizations and services which can meet one or more of the local women's needs.

The Catalogue is not yet complete. Some of the questionnaires still are being submitted by groups who want their services listed in the Catalogue, and Barbara and Chris do not want to exclude any important information. They expect the Catalogue to be completed in February.

In the meantime, Barbara and Chris continue to talk about other problems and concerns the women have identified individually, and about ways to deal with those problems successfully. They are working closely with women in Vermilion to try to establish a crisis line, and they say that, by participating, they reinforce the need for the ACCESS Catalogue and help to identify the spaces it can fill.

The Catalogue is just one resource, but a valuable one, and it will be made available to people who will work on the crisis line, to battered women's shelters and sexual assault centres, to AADAC offices, to women who move into the area, and to many other places where women turn for information or help.

The regional workers' experience in this part of the province was a successful exercise in community organization and development - by and for women, on the grass-roots level, and with the acquired support of other groups in the community. Their gentle working -



Suzanne Camu

WOMEN of the NORTH

An Observation by Darlene Davies

They took a chance
that day,
cautiously,
a gentle probe,
a question,
a challenge met
silently
flowering into meaningful
discussion

a sharing of dreams.
Faces glowed
in honest pleasure.
Frustration oozed from some
like the thick black oil
where their men worked,
but other willing hearts listened
and tender hands
used to nurturing
refreshed them.

A singer, freckled-faced
with sandy hair and running shoes
caressed her guitar
and suddenly the spotlight
was reinforced
with her smile.
Voice and melody
mingled with courage
to penetrate deep into
the sighs and laughter
of two hundred women there.

In the faces of all these women
I caught a glimpse
of what the world could be.

style resulted, among other things, in the Vermilion Chamber of Commerce asking if it could help to sponsor the Catalogue; and Barbara and Chris will ensure that it is designed and printed locally.

They describe their work on the project as "a good story", and they will tell you more of the tale in an ASWAC newsletter early in the new year - when the Catalogue is printed and in distribution.

FORT McMURRAY

Judy Moynihan began the process of organizing the "Women of the North" conference for Fort McMurray, by writing to local women's groups and individuals inviting them to participate in a planning meeting. Seven women formed a steering committee, assuming leadership and direction roles.

The goals they decided upon for their conference were these: to attract women from all sections of the community; to discuss women's issues on a wide variety of topics in the five general areas of law, health, family, organizing in the community, and personal growth; to use local resource women so that if any participant wanted to follow up after the conference, she could call on a local woman; to sow the seeds for a women's network in Fort McMurray; to reaffirm that women could have fun with, and support, other women; and to give women in the area information which would make them aware of more options they have - more choices they could make - in their lives. Providing good child-care services allowed many women to attend who otherwise could not have done; and offering a concert with local women artists and Heather Bishop contributed crucially to the good feeling among conference participants.

Judy was delighted to report that the event was an unqualified success - both in terms of numbers and the positive feedback she and her steering committee received. More than 200 local women attended, and they expressed the same wish - for more and longer workshops on each topic. Judy said: "They were hungry for more, and that's just what we wanted."

The next step? Judy said a film festival is planned for the near future. She explained that the women at the conference did not want to leave workshops even to attend films, so a number of good films were not seen. She also said that a new collective has been formed in Fort McMurray - the "Women of the North" - and they have plans to carry on future feminist education and actions in the region.



CALGARY

Jennifer Berezan and Suzn Morgan report a terrific turnout at "For Our Own Good", the Calgary conference on women's health. The response was so good that it was completely pre-registered a week in advance, and the project workers are especially pleased that it not only brought together a wide variety of women, but also attracted women who had not previously attended a feminist event.

Barbara Ehrenreich proved to be a very interesting, entertaining speaker, and her address generated a lot of enthusiasm for subsequent workshops such as: the mental health system as violence against women; menses to menopause: health hazards; body image: medical and social oppression; childbirth; women and addictions; abortion; and indigenous women's healing. In evaluation forms completed at the conference, the participants expressed their excitement about the event. They found the experience to be both strengthening and empowering as well as very informative - a well-balanced conference. The physical set-up and organization contributed to its success, and the concluding song and dance reinforced the feeling that the weekend was a powerful, positive intellectual and emotional experience.

With this project, enough interest was generated around the issue that a women's health collective has been formed by the 16 women who worked to organize the conference. Their immediate plans for the new year are to work on the philosophy, structure and process of the collective, and to try to secure funding. They expect to begin by serving as an information and referral agency for women (re. physicians, mental and physical health issues), and hope eventually to establish an active women's health centre. The idea is that the centre would be community based and would provide direct service to women by feminist women - so feminist physicians and therapists, for example, will have an alternative to working in the prevailing institutionalized, non-feminist system.

Through Jennifer, the collective has expressed its thanks to ASWAC for sponsoring, funding and in other ways supporting the conference and its organizers. ASWAC was pleased to be able to do it.

SOUTHERN REGION

Carol Burnett and Dora Marlow have spent most of their time working on a one-to-one basis with women in this part of the province, making initial contact and beginning discussions about the women's concerns around different feminist issues. They shared information and, where possible, resources.

Dora reports that she managed to organize four discussion groups - in Brooks, Pincher Creek, Medicine Hat and west Lethbridge - but says that though the groups got off to a good start, their vitality has declined a little already, and she is afraid the groups will disintegrate unless they get active support and encouragement for a while longer.

Dora also made contact with an established women's group in the area: The United Church's southern Alberta Task Group on Women in Crisis. Their stated purpose is to share information with individuals and groups, to motivate action and to promote education about crisis situations which women commonly experience; and their main emphasis is on domestic and other violence against women and children, addictions and teenage pregnancy. Dora plans to work closely with the Task Group now that this project has ended, and the Task Group plans to continue its contact with ASWAC.

In addition to talking with women individually, Carol has participated in a core working group of Lethbridge women who will continue to become informed about, and take action on, issues which concern feminists. The group calls itself "Women for Women", and so far has focused on such issues as pornography and the situation of women in the third world. Carol expects the group to take some action soon around the problem of unemployment among women.

Especially pleasing to her was the interest generated when she arranged a showing, two nights, of the NFB film "Not a Love Story". She said about 200 people turned up each night and participated in discussions afterward. The discussions were arranged so that, first, women could talk about the film just with women led by a female facilitator, and men could talk with men, led by a male facilitator, and then the two groups could continue the discussion

together after hearing the facilitators' reports. Carol said the arrangement worked very well the first night but not the second. On that night, when the two groups got back together, she said some of the men got very defensive, an argument ensued, and some people walked out. It is information we might want to use when talking about the desirability of showing pornography to, and discussing it with, a mixed audience.

Carol also reports that "Women for Women" will be participating in the Webspinner workshop scheduled for Lethbridge in February, and are now making plans for some activity to coincide with International Women's Day 1984. The group has applied for funding from Secretary of State for the IWD event, but has not yet heard if their application was successful.

girls will be women



Anybody got it?

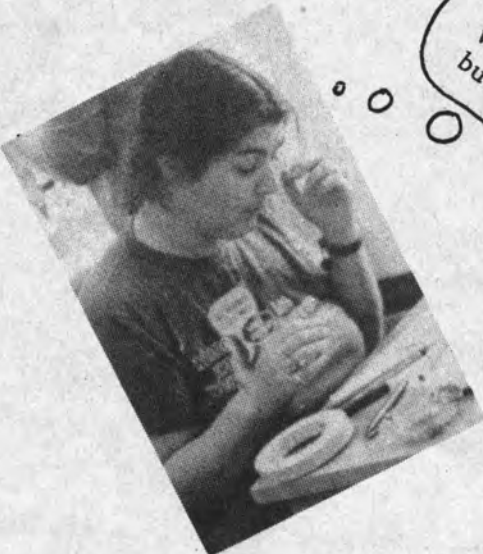
Wanna buy a book?



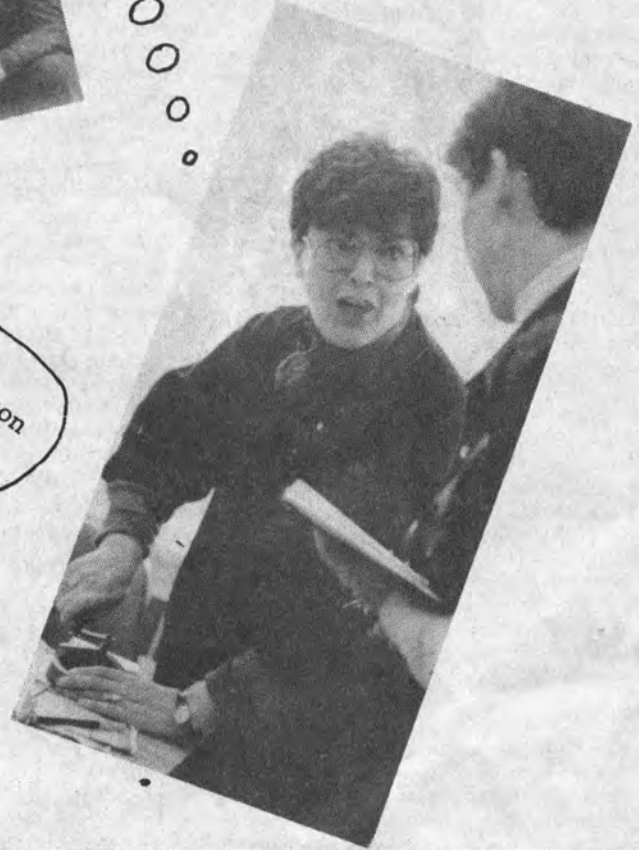
Central Gathering



I GOT it!!



Button, button who's got my button...



I don't
get it



Lights!



Annual Assembly

Action??



Camera!



NORTHWEST REGION

Marilyn Guille planned three small educational conferences in her part of the province. The one in Barrhead was called "From Sun to Sun: Women's Days", and included workshops on: the double day (time management, who raises children, spare time); individual growth and continuing educational opportunities (goals as teenagers, changes in goals, where do we go from here); women's spirituality and creativity; and communication skills (how to get your needs met). The one in Hinton was called "Women Changing the World", and included workshops on: battered women; fears about equality for women; images of women in the media; and nuclear disarmament.

Each of those conferences was attended by about 25 women who, Marilyn said, listened intently to the new information they were offered and to each other as they shared their own thoughts and feelings about the problems, and talked about what they could do to try to solve them. Marilyn is confident those conversations will continue in both places.

The conference planned for Grande Cache was called "From Sun to Sun: Today's Woman", and was to include workshops on: battered women; women's alcohol and drug addiction; coping with stress; and the superwoman myth (unrealistic expectations and appropriate responses). This one was cancelled. A couple of days before it was to begin, notice was given that there were to be lay-offs at the mine, and it became apparent that the women there would not be able to participate in the conference - to take time for themselves. Marilyn said that the ground-work has been done, though, and a conference could be organized in Grande Cache before too long.

Marilyn talked with as many women as she could throughout the area, and said she has learned a lot about rural women, about their concerns, and about organizing and networking over a wide area where the population is scattered. She plans to share that knowledge with ASWAC members soon, as well as what she learned about working as an identifiable feminist for a feminist organization. She reported that the amount of emotional work a person has to do for herself in such a situation

is phenomenal - phenomenal in the amount, in the difficulty and in the importance of sharing experiences in a way which will not cause alienation. The work has to be done with great care, she said, but still done honestly. Marilyn admits it is hard, but she is eager for more.

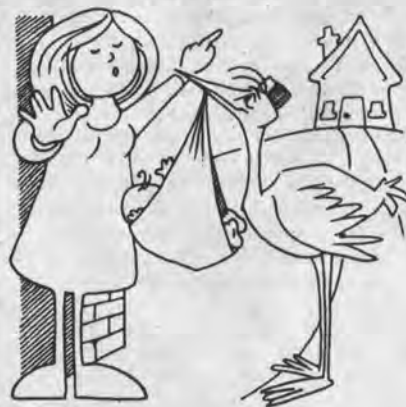
Her favourite quotation from the last few months - for anyone who happens to be discouraged at the moment - came from a European woman Marilyn met in a laundromat in Jasper. The woman said: "The women's movement is not dead. If we could choose a day where each of us would, for instance, wear a green hat to identify ourselves, there'd be thousands and thousands and thousands of us. We cannot be discounted!"

Marty Whitesun did the groundwork and then provided the organizing focus to enable a group of women in Hythe to take collective action on a social problem of urgent concern to women in the area. The group named itself the Save Medicare Action Committee, and during the project, produced two brochures which are being distributed as widely as possible throughout northern Alberta. Preparation of the brochures involved surveying the arguments and proposals which have been made across the country, so Marty now has an extensive collection of newspaper clippings on the controversy, and a healthy file of correspondence with organizations which share the Committee's concern for the future of medicare in this country (e.g. provincial health coalitions, nurses' associations, federal political parties, etc.).

Marty now is preparing information packages on the subject for anyone who is interested. She hopes to reach hospital board members in particular, and already is scheduled to make a presentation to the local (Hythe-Beaverlodge) hospital board in January. She thinks the package is a good one, and said when she made a presentation in early December to the Opposition (NDP) Task Force on Health and Social Services, "they loved it - Grant Notley said he wished he'd had it for the debate in the House."

She also is checking into the funding which Health and Welfare Canada provides for public forums, and if she can secure some of it, will be looking for others to help with the work of organizing forums in that part of the province.

The new Canada Health Act has been introduced in the House of Commons and the politicians will be making decisions which will greatly affect the lives of Canadian women. Marty insists it is important that the politicians "get it right", and she says every Albertan women should be watching the activity carefully. She will be.



CENTRAL REGION

The Gathering in Edmonton was a smaller affair than is usual in this area when the conference is conducted in conjunction with the annual general meeting. Forty to fifty women attended this year's event, which was planned to be less structured than the traditional kind of conference where workshop topics are decided in advance and are led by a facilitator. The Gathering was in the nature of an experiment - to find out if alternative ways of organizing a conference would benefit us personally and in the feminist work we do. This was one variation.

It was experienced quite differently by different women. Lois Willetts contacted most participants afterward to ask for their reactions, and give this report. Some found it comfortable, liberating and more conducive than traditional conferences to discussing issues in depth and for as long as necessary to tell personal stories or to pursue complicated points. Others were less than comfortable and found it difficult or impossible to participate. They expressed dissatisfaction with such things as the small number of working sessions, and their opportunity to participate in a discussion in which others were used to talking with each other about that particular issue. The wide range of reaction should make us think

carefully about what ways of working should be accommodated in a conference which is planned by an organization in a large urban area where there are many, and various, active feminists.

Three of the most exciting results of the experiment are these. First, though some refinements are needed, the process did work well for women who, in the past, have attended a large number of workshops on most of the issues and/or have facilitated those workshops. Unlike a traditional conference, the Gathering afforded them the opportunity to learn and further their own feminist work. Secondly, the range of women's reactions to the event should sharpen ASWAC's thinking about what, exactly, it wants to achieve with an annual conference. And third, work which began at the Gathering will continue. For example: a street-theatre group was formed, discussed the prospects of effecting social change through street theatre, has met since the Gathering, and is planning specific activities for the future;



Notes from a sister

While attending the Annual ASWAC Assembly at Lister Hall this November I was in two minds as to whether to run for the Stoard or not. I arrived late Friday evening, spent all day Saturday with the rest of the women there and listened and watched and thought a lot but still could not make up my mind. Then it was time for the banquet on Saturday evening and after we had eaten there was some wonderful musical entertainment. The voices of the performers were great but the singing all the rest of us did together with them was even more enjoyable for me - there is nothing quite like a room full of women's voices raised in unison to the lyrics of feminist songs! After a full day in the general meeting room it was truly rejuvenating to be a participant at the Banquet: the atmosphere in the room was highly energized, extremely positive and strengthened with the collective conviction that we were women and, together, we were invincible (at least those are my feelings on the Banquet ...). And it was then that I began to think that if an ASWAC Assembly could be this much fun then any work involved with ASWAC and her staff and members certainly couldn't be all that daunting or unmanageable. Once I had attained this realization all it took for me to commit myself to the Stoard was a little needling on the part of Frances Adams, our ever-present-when-you-need-a-push office manager!

And so here I am ...

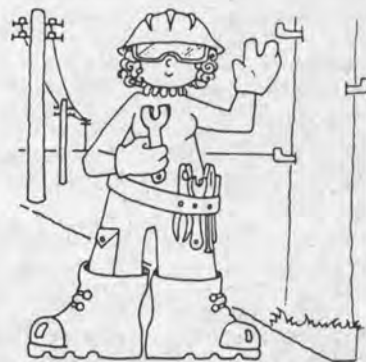
For me, the issue of abortion/choice is of the utmost priority; it is the issue which brought me into the feminist movement and I believe that a woman's right to control her body is one of the most fundamental rights for which we have fought and for which we will have to continue to fight (thanks to the Right Wing out there in full force). I would love to see the Pro-Choice voice in Alberta be on the offensive rather than the defensive for a change.

I am involved with a recently-founded Women's Theatre Collective here in Edmonton. As of yet we have no name but we do have one performance to our credit: we presented a small collection of women's writings to the participants at the Annual Assembly. As a collective we believe that the medium of theatre can be extraordinarily effective in public education work quite apart from the fact that it is a lot of fun spreading the feminist word through drama. I have a lot of faith in women and know that one of the best ways for women to organize (anywhere) politically is for us to focus on the grass-roots approach: cut the political jargon and rhetoric and TALK to one another about the things which we know to be important to us as women, trust our gut reactions to issues such as pornography and support each other in work and in play.

... so spake the Stoard Sister!
May your holidays be filled with warmth and joy and may the New Year bring the Americans a woman president!!!!!!!

In Sisterhood,
Amanda LeRougetel

*Stoard is an amalgamation of Board and Staff!!



**RENEW
FOR 1984**

Women Learning from Women

What is a learning experience? It can be something as simple as learning to tie your shoe, or a young mother learning to change her baby's diaper. For each of us, our life is filled with learning, from the moment we draw breath.

It is the aim of the Women's Educational Research Project to record these learning experiences. We want to document the unique combination of experiences that bring each woman to a particular point of evolution. It is a complex undertaking, but we are of the opinion that statistical data only tells part of the story. The monumental question of 'why' is often left unanswered.

Why do women excell at the university level, but are still relegated to low pay, low skill jobs? Why are so few women employees in the upper echelon, managerial and decision-making positions? Why is it so hard to move from secondary labour force into primary? What particular attitudes and cultural mores shape a woman's life and why is it necessary to address these issues? Why are certain barriers prevalent in women's lives, but do not appear in men's lives?

The answers may lie in many areas, from the way we were brought up, to the attitudes of society. Facts and figures only tell us how many women graduate from high-school in a particular year. Statistics can tell us what their grades were, what courses they took, how many went on to university, but that still doesn't tell us why they chose Home Ec instead of Shop. Why they did well in Math in grade twelve, but steered clear of engineering in university. Why they were an "A" student in school, then opted for the traditional role of wife and mother.



In order to answer some of these profound "whys" we need to talk to many people, from all walks of life, both women and men - young people and old - students, housewives, labourers and professionals.

Everyone's story is unique and special. Personal choices and external forces shape each person's life differently. By analyzing many stories, perhaps we can find common trends that affect a lot of lives. These trends may be ingrained in our society. They may come from within ourselves, because we are women or men, and because we look at the world from the particular perspective of our sex. The more interviews we have to analyze, the greater our collective perspective, and we need to hear from you.

No one's story is too unimportant to matter. No one need apologize for their lack of education, or for choosing to be a mother instead of a nuclear physicist. It is important to discover how and why we are what we are. If you would like to be a part of this discovery process, call us at 488-4459 to arrange an interview.



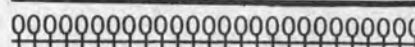
ALTERNATIVE CHILD CARE

The Edmonton Unemployment Action Centre is sponsoring a childcare program called Project Alternative Childcare Edmonton.

Are you unemployed or living on a low income? Could you use a childcare drop-in centre while you look for work, go to the U.I.C. offices, take courses to upgrade your skills, or just get away from the children for awhile? In mid-January a drop-in centre will open at:

Location: 9425 109a Avenue
Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Days: Tuesday - Friday
Hot lunch and nutritious snacks provided.

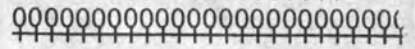
If you would like more information or a registration form please call Debbie (424-1589) or Cindy (481-3758).



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Donations

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$



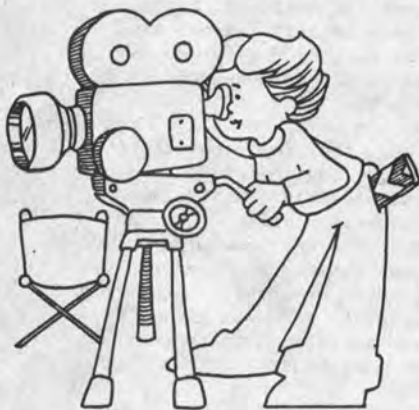
ASWAC has received \$120 in donations this fall. Thanks to Barbara O'Neill, Joan Barnetson, Nola Erhardt, Barbara Gitzel, Donna Anthony, Elizabeth Lefsrud, Karen Schwartz, Patty White, Joan Ryan, Betty Mackie, Gwendolyn Ross and Ruth Barker.

FILMS AND HOW TO USE THEM

Studio D personnel with the National Film Board have offered to give a two-day workshop in Alberta on how to use film for discussion, organizing and lobbying. The workshop would be held for 15 to 20 women.

ASWAC has offered to organize the workshop and it will be held one weekend between the end of January and mid-March, probably in late February. Studio D produced *Not a Love Story and Love, Honoured and Bruised* both of which have been used extensively as tools for learning and organizing.

Please let us know if you are interested in attending the workshop.



Inner City Minds

The Boyle Street Community Services Co-op of Edmonton has published a report on mental health patients living in the inner-city of Edmonton. The report, entitled *Backwards From Back-Wards* discusses drug therapy, the reduction in mental hospital beds and the inadequate services and funding to deal with the needs of patients being moved back into the community.

The report can be obtained from The Boyle Street Co-op at 10229 96 Street in Edmonton or by phoning 424-4106.

WOMEN'S STUDIES

PEOPLE NEEDED

Athabasca University, an open university specializing in distance education, requires well-qualified people to work as external course authors on the following courses:

- . Women and Work
- . Counselling Girls and Women

Successful applicants will normally be expected to work as part of a course team consisting of an instructional designer, an editor, a visual designer and a team manager.

For further information, write to Rebecca Coulter, Athabasca University, 15015 123 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5V 1J7 or phone 452-9990, extension 2436.



Workshops for Women

The University of Alberta Women's Program, Faculty of Extension is presenting a series of workshops on women's issues this winter. The series will be held on Wednesday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 in Room 332, Corbett Hall, 82nd Avenue and 112 Street. The following is the line-up:

- Feb. 8 Issues Affecting the Status of Women in Alberta
Amanda LeRougetel, ASWAC
- Feb. 15 Better Jobs or No Jobs: How Will Micro-technology Affect Women?
Donna Anthony, Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women
- Feb. 22 Does Education Lead To Employment?: Opportunities and Barriers for Women
Women's Educational Research Project, CCLOW
- Feb. 29 New Concepts in Understanding Violence Against Women
Anne Runyan
- Mar. 7 Women and Peace: A Global Perspective
Joan Mercer, Women's Disarmament Campaign
- Mar. 14 How Does P.M.S. (Pre-Menstrual Syndrome) Affect Your Life?
Vicki Davidson, Public Health Nurse
- Mar. 21 Sexual Harassment: An Exploration and Discussion of the Issue
Alliance Against Sexual Harassment

For more information, contact the Women's Program at 432-3093.

Admission is free.



About the ASWAC assembly...

I'm writing this as a veteran; a survivor of all ASWAC's annual conferences so far; an organizer, planner and worker in many of them. I'm also an incurable optimist, accentuating the positive; a sort of feminist Pollyanna. What I want to write about here is the shift of consciousness which I perceived to take place at the recent ASWAC assembly.

In the first place--what a lux-

ury to take a whole weekend to do our work, ASWAC's work, women's work, instead of cramming it into a Sunday morning Annual General Meeting when everyone is exhausted from the workshops and the partying. Even so, the comment I heard most was "There wasn't enough time"...but, there was time to make some beginnings, for us to start talking with each other in a more sustaining way than we have before. Consider this, for example; in the past the board/steering committee has been elected, mostly by people who don't know all the candidates; it's been given a sheaf of "resolutions" or "recommendations" passed at the AGM, some of which were produced by a process of very fast and not always realistic thinking, and then it's been sent on its way to work in isolation for a year with very little feeling of an organization behind it. This time, Sunday morning was spent by about 50 women--old board members, new board members, old and new ASWAC members--discussing Almira Nicol's description of the ASWAC board as "like going to the well". We talked about what we can bring to the well--skills, commitment, interest and expertise in specific issues, time, energy; and we talked about what we needed to take from the well--recognition, support, energy, success stories to inspire us to carry on. Thus the new board members start their year with much more of a feeling of connection with the membership than is usually the case.

Another significant change was in the reporting system used. In the past, the steering committee has written an Annual Report which has included brief details of any staffed projects which

happened during the year. This time in addition to the written board report "Stories of a Year", there was a verbal report from the women who had worked on the Provincial Development Project, 2 of them backed up with a slide-show, which gave everyone present a marvellous sense of ASWAC at work all over the province, not just in Edmonton, and not just by the Board. There was time for discussion of these reports, and of "Stories of a Year", both formally and informally.

In addition, several of the walls were covered with displays about our work. Again the Provincial Development Project was much in evidence; also a wall for other "women's work"--projects which had been carried out during the year, not necessarily under the name of ASWAC. (This was a great idea; I'd like to see this happen again in the future with some advance publicity so that more women would be able to prepare material in advance.

Elections were different, too. By the "deadline" on Saturday afternoon we only had a few women who wished to be on the new board, so the group agreed to continue with the discussion in hand and allow a slate of board members to evolve--as a result, we have a board of 11 members, two of whom were on the board last year and three of whom were employed by the Provincial Development Project, thus ensuring continuity. In addition there are six "new" members; women with varying histories of involvement in ASWAC and women's work; who will bring some fresh visions and enthusiasm to the board's work next year.

For me, the tone and pace of the assembly were much healthier than the usual frenetic activity and confusion of a conference, and particularly of an AGM. Our work was thoughtful; we showed respect for each other even when we might not agree. There is less of a feeling of the conference being a hiatus in our work; rather it is a point on the continuum of our work, an ending and a beginning.

Mair Smith.

As a very new member, I was asked to write a personal view of this year's general meeting. As I was so impressed with what took place there as well as with many of the women who made it happen, I agreed. I apologize for its inconclusiveness.

When the organizers of this year's ASWAC general meeting began to reflect on the concept of general meetings, as well as on what they hoped would take place at this year's meeting, they decided to try something new. What they objected to, as they explained in the September newsletter, were some of the expectations which lay in the words, "annual general meeting". These expectations included a "rigidity of structure and procedure" which, when applied to ASWAC meetings, had sometimes made it "impossible for us to identify and explore the work we need to do together".

Thus, they fell upon the idea of calling the event a "provincial assembly" rather than a "general meeting". They hoped that the new name might change expectations and open the way to more creativity and participations from members. It was an attempt to concentrate on content rather than form.

Whether or not it was a result of this changed focus, an atmosphere of trust and support was evident at the meeting. For example, the reports from regional project leaders were received with genuine appreciation for what had been achieved. There was little feeling that cold assessment was taking place. To a new member this climate of mutual trust was the most remarkable aspect of the entire meeting.

Yet, the achievements of the Provincial Development Project as they were revealed during the reports was also remarkable. They ranged from a popular women and health workshop in Calgary to a conference called Women of the North in Fort McMurray. The enthusiasm and sincerity of the

leaders of these project leaders was an essential part of the general meeting.

During one stage of the meeting strong concern was apparent over the question of whether or not future meetings would be structured according to the rules of parliamentary procedure. It appeared to me that this question was untimely. For what seemed to be taking place at the meeting was, on the part of most members, a willing suspension of the usual structure of general meetings in order that each one might reflect on the real usefulness of such structures. Were these rules the most effective ones for encouraging each member to find her own place in the creative work to be done by ASWAC? This, it seemed to me, would have been the more relevant question. Or, more in keeping with the tone of the meeting, what about looking at the most popular book on parliamentary procedures, written by a Major Henry M. Robert of the U.S. Army, and ascertaining just what usefulness this book might be to ASWAC. Thus Major Robert's rules might be looked at from a different vantage point.

Other aspects of the meeting proved remarkable to a new member used to organizations in which a few people did all the work. One of these took place on Sunday when about twenty members at large sat around a table

and committed themselves to being available for specific areas of work in the future. Another was the sudden and spontaneous volunteering of new board members at a point when it appeared that the board would have too few members.

I hope these few impressions of mine will help to throw light on some of the encouraging elements of the organization called the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee.

Diana Chown.

IN OUR OFFICE ...

ASWAC has resource information on

- . pensions
- . child care
- . economic development
- . education
- . employment
- . feminism
- . financial management
- . government
- . women's groups in Canada
- . health
- . human rights
- . law
- . media
- . immigrant women
- . native women
- . new right
- . reproductive rights
- . social services
- . violence
- . pornography

and much, much more. If you need information on women's issues, please contact us. Its likely that we can help.

Responses to stories

Responses to "Stories of A Year", the annual report of the ASWAC 'stoard' were many and varied. Here are some of them that we've heard or received:

- . boring
- . okay, but what action did the board take? It isn't reported in this!
- . what a wonderful report! I spent a week with it by my bedside reading bits of your collective stories before falling off to sleep. Congratulations! You did it! Believed enough in yourselves to commit yourselves to process and know that action would manifest itself at the right time. I want to know more! How do "the believers/acquarian conspirators" resolve the resistance of the skeptics. Anyone care to share that with me. Help.
- . I would like several copies of "Stories of a Year ..." to share with other MACSW [Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women] members. They would be most useful in our struggle - having some info on how other women are handling/dealing with many of the same issues.
- . I didn't understand it.
- . interesting, but little sense of the whole of ASWAC's work.
- . imbalanced report - a lot of personal growth material but little on organizational or group accomplishments. Glad to see they are taking personal growth seriously but hopefully not to the detriment of accomplishing tasks together.
- . who cares about all this personal stuff.
- . I read it straight through - couldn't put it down.
- . It answered a lot of questions that had been circulating about the board, particularly the interview by/with Ardelle.

???

Whoever made off with my Curfew for Men poster that was on display at the ASWAC Assembly, please return it. Its the only one I have. O.K.?!
Frances Adams

New ASWAC board

ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE 1983/84 BOARD MEMBERS

Marilyn Assheton-Smith	10919 80 Ave. Edm. T6G 0P9	433-9938
Shelagh Bouttell	4924 Valiant Dr. NW, Cal. T3A 1X2	286-9614
Debra Carnat	712 33 St. NW, Cal. T2N 2W6	283-2924
Diana Chown	10935 85 Ave., Edm. T6G 0W3	433-1525
Meaghan Dean	11227 93 St., Edm. T5G 1L4	479-0623
Donna Gibbons	11908 93 St., Edm. T5G 1E5	479-4684
Marilyn Guille	Box 1941, Whitecourt TOE 2L0	778-3669
Amanda Le Rougetel	9625 76 Ave., Edm. T6C 0K4	433-8615
Suzn Morgan	6423 Laurentian Way. SW Cal. T3E5N2	246-8755
Almira Nicol	1101 8220 Jasper Ave., Edm. T5H 4B6	424-6088
Marlene Whitesun	Box 418, Hythe TOH 0C0	356-3797

We, the members of the Board, want to communicate with the membership We don't want to work in isolation. We need your ideas and your support and welcome you to call us at home when you need or want to. Honest we do!

WHAT IS THAT ★ DOING ON MY LABEL?

ASWAC's membership year runs from conference to conference, with a grace period starting from September 1 for new memberships.

This means that if you bought or renewed your membership before September 1, 1983, you are on our records as needing to renew your membership, and will see a star on your mailing label.

Our policy is to send newsletters to current members, and to members as far back as two years. Therefore we are still mailing to those women who took out a 1981/82 membership. We do this generous act because we know that many people find it very hard to remember to renew and we don't want to lose contact with old friends. But, it would be a great help to the office staff if you would either renew or let us know if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter. We could use the money as well.

We suggest \$10 per year for a membership but will, of course, accept less from those who cannot afford \$10. Donations are greatly welcomed as well.



Reprinted from Calgary Women's Newspaper

SUPPORTIVE MEMBERSHIP/DONATION*

Name.....

Membership

Address.....

Donation

Apt. No.

Street

City

Postal Code

Phone.....

Home

Office

Make cheque payable to Alberta Status
of Women Action Committee,
P.O. Box 1573, Edmonton, T5J 2N7
Telephone 424-3073

* We suggest \$10.00 membership per year.

ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE