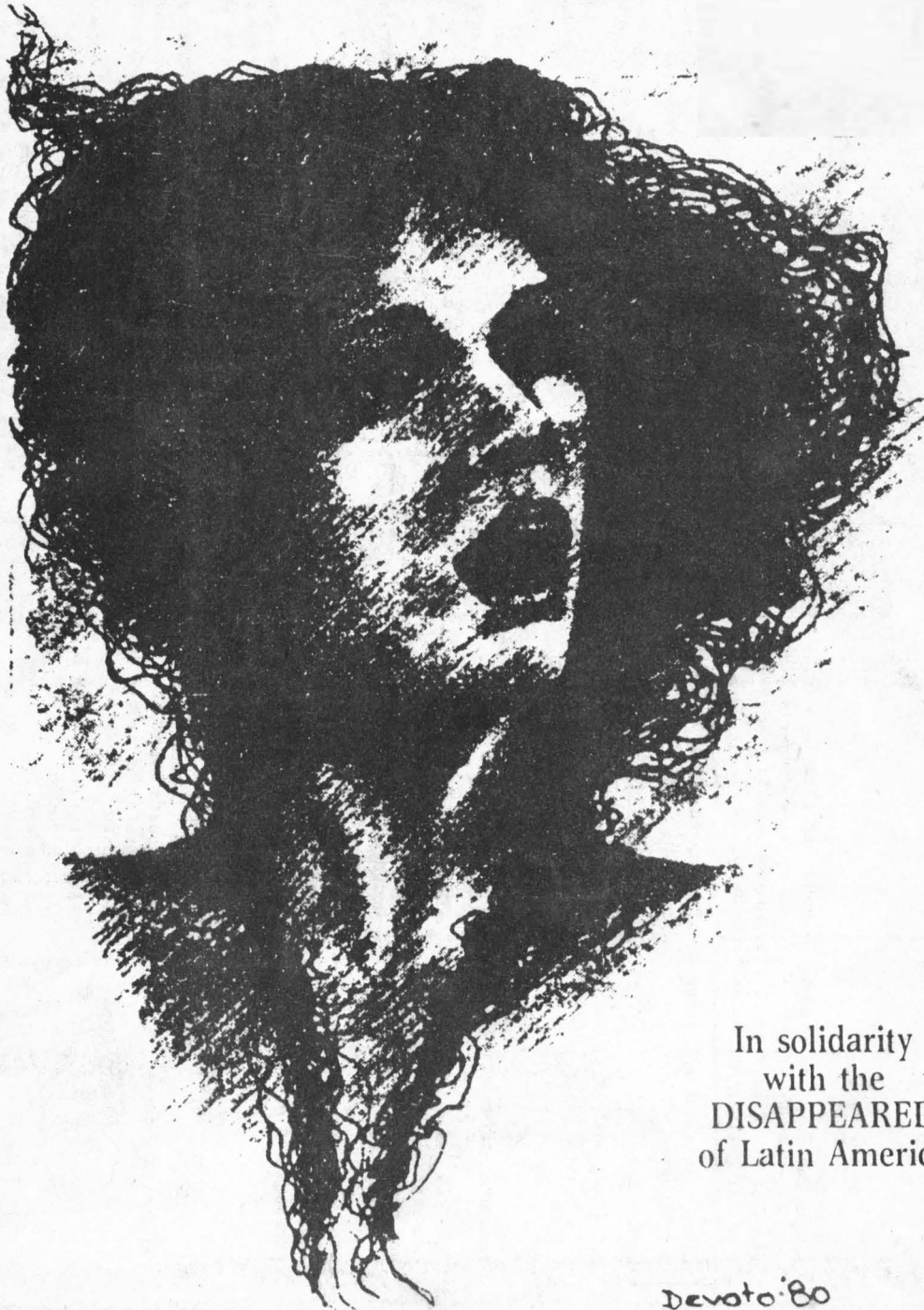




ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE

VOL. 5 NO. 1



In solidarity
with the
DISAPPEARED
of Latin America

Devoto '80

ASWAC PORTRAIT OF A STOARD MEETING

Before any work can be done in any given relationship, that relationship must be established - that is what we did this weekend. The women of the Stoard spent time talking, getting to know each other; developing links and bonds between us.

In amongst all the talking we also mapped out a lot of work for ourselves:

Agenda Item

Conclusions/Results/Plans

recording what we do

include in the Stoard meetings a working session during which we "write-up" the meeting for publication in the newsletter

meeting dates and locations

alternative ways to raise funds, small amounts could be raised through bumper stickers, buttons etc. Mair and Marilyn Guille will look further into this

Feminist Forum: Suzn Morgan's idea of international forum to coincide with Calgary Winter Olympics was discussed

* set them for entire year including the November annual assembly

treasurer information

decided to hire a part-time book-keeper

Braff/Staff reports

brief this time round as much of the content of Frances' and Mair's had been touched on in other discussions

communication - network and newsletter

* expand content of newsletter to include more of the personal side of women's news
* IWD project conceived by Julie Walker

Mair's discussion paper

was discussed under lobbying item

lobbying as a means of pressure and profile

* began to explore a philosophy on this topic which would fall comfortably within rejecting traditional forms of lobbying completely and developing 'radical' new ways for women to work/lobby/empower

Health & Welfare

Marilyn Guille's 3-year proposal for a women and alcohol addiction project was discussed. ASWAC will sponsor the project.

penalizing women

* lengthy discussion (very lively) on this new trend to incarcerate women for not testifying.

information items

new Alberta student loan policy: full-time status of single parents changed from 3 to 5 courses

pornography and prostitution

hearings in Calgary and Edmonton to be monitored. ASWAC may make written presentation before end of hearings

NAC position open for Alta/NWT rep: Judy Moynihan, Suzn Morgan, Marilyn Guille and Trudy Richardson had all expressed interest

disarmament and Dept. of Education

both were postponed due to lack of time

* Women's Assn of El Salvador: Donna and Frances will organize Esther Ramirez' tour in this region and ASWAC will donate \$200 for travel costs

Creating the Agenda - We each bring our own topics to the meeting, write them on the board, allot time to each item, arrange them and then start from the top. This worked very well and gives us both the responsibility and 'control' over the work we do (rather than having things like agendas and rules of order rule us).

Fundraising: must further explore

* The asterisks indicate that articles expanding on these items have been included elsewhere in the newsletter.



Women's Resources

ASWAC 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 Chow	10935 85 Ave., Edm. T6G 0W3	433-1525
Neaghan 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
Judy Moynihan	190 Highland Close, Ft. McMurray	791-4395
Almira Nicol	1101 8220 Jasper Ave., Edm.T5H 4B6	424-6088
Marlene Whitesun	Box 418, Hythe T0H 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!

This ASWAC stoard must be unique in that it waxes instead of waning. You'll notice that Judy Moynihan of Fort McMurray has now joined the stoard. She is most welcome.

You will remember that Judy worked as a regional worker last year, and delighted us a the Assembly with her report of the Women of the North conference which took place as a result.

IWD is for All of Us!

On March 8, 1984, women around Alberta can be united by a single action. We have this idea that, on that day, every members of every woman's group in Alberta will spend part of that day talking with three complete strangers (women) about their lives, their family, and what being a woman means to them.

In this process women (you) who are involved in working with and for women, have the opportunity to reach out directly to individual women "out there". All the women who participate in this massive reaching out are invited to write an explanation of their experience and the response of the women they spoke with. This you can send in to the ASWAC Newsletter.

This event will take place on International Women's Day (give or take a day according to your schedule). The interesting part of this idea is that the means is the end. Have you ever wondered what that woman shopping at Eatons feels about feminism? What her reality is? And how does your work reach her? (If it does.) This is an opportunity for you to talk to that woman on the bus and pass on your experience to the ASWAC Newsletter and everywhere you can. Pass the word to your friends and sister organizations. Sharing our life experiences and listening to those of other women can be the most effective way to reach out to women and spread the celebration of International Women's Day.

Julie Walker

VISION OF AN EXPANDING NEWSLETTER —

WHY NOT YOU?



The more I work -
The more I know -
That what's important
Is to talk . . .

And by talk what I really mean is communication with each other in any form: telling our story and retelling our story is absolutely vital to the well-being of our health. We all have knowledge of what life is like for women - because we ARE women.

Telling our story validates our experiences, for ourselves, gives us a sense of legitimacy in a world which would have us live and behave as second-class citizens. How many of us have kept diaries because it feels good to put into words what is going on in our minds, in our lives?

The step between a diary and an

"article" for the Newsletter is not very big at all. We've been sucked into believing that the only people who can "REALLY" write are the authors of our society - well, I put it to you that we are all authors simply waiting for the right place to put our writings. And that right place is ASWAC's newsletter (and do not forget Alberta's women's paper, the Webspinner)!

Write a short paragraph, write an essay, write an epic - write whatever you want to write but WRITE - write about what you KNOW, what you FEEL, what you BELIEVE...

I have a vision of all women talking with each other to help create a better world - what better place for this to happen than in the ASWAC Newsletter!!!

Amanda LeRougetel

Board Meeting Schedule

January 7/8 - Edmonton
February 18/19 - Edmonton
March 17/18 - Calgary
May 5/6 - Fort McMurray
June 16/17
July 28/29
September 8/9
October 20/21
November 2/3/4 - ANNUAL MEETING

Revealing the Stoard

How I see me, us, individuals working together as a group - "my own work" this weekend, paid work. Health Collective in Calgary, taken aback by an approach to be part of the board, initially intimidated but now realize I'm OK, it's OK, it will all work out. Women's issues, conflicts painful, bury my head,



god the others are already so far ahead of me, school and board, can I handle those two areas, I feel pretty good, we will figure out and get done some things this year.

Assembly, excitement vs. awe of "Mahogany Row", OK I'll make myself visible, task oriented, job problems, overwhelming feeling of what I am doing, adding more to my problems, but now I feel the support of the group, jumping in with both feet OK. I've done it in spite of other problems and I feel good about it. Felt like the lone ASWAC person organizing a conference, task oriented, learning something, being in and out of different things. Re-defining continually, it is OK to be doing this, focussing and becoming clear.

What follows is the new Stoard's gift to the members - a sharing of feelings at the beginning and the end of the first meeting. The first part is notes made by one member as we did our introductory round; the second is writing from several of the women at the end of the 2 day session.

Colour that is menopausal, it's wonderful that we can relate more openly, less discussion of smoking, various differences. Feelings about youthfulness, feminism, marriage or not, support of women's ideas that are not your own but can feel support for theirs if any presumptions old or young the sensing of differences, the old messages that tend to overpower. The feeling of being really met as one of a group of women. Meeting with the Attorney General, allowing feelings to show instead of burying them. Quick but necessary exits - I feel OK about myself and what's going on, no fears of what and how much I can and will do, none of the previous feelings of inadequacy.

As we gathered around the table for our first Stoard meeting, Marilyn Assheton-Smith encouraged us to give voice to our inner feelings. Here we were, mixed wonder and awe, my own (women's) power, wanting assignments, being task-oriented, seeing extension of my own work on '83's Provincial Workshop projects. See all kinds of stuff I can share, media experience, organizing pamphlets, films. I wonder about fund raising?

Promise the world, god I hate meetings but go, excited, empowered, the old messages carry over, excitement in spite of feelings inside, glad not to have stayed at home with a book. Mild depression (of last year) to relaxed excitement of things that were explored at Assembly.



These and more were our expressions of inner messages and varied emotions all running together, separate, mutual.



Then, after 2 days of meeting and working together, Almira Nicol asked us all to write how we were feeling now.

I am exhausted. And very pleased. Exhausted after 2 days of talking with these women, and very pleased that we have spent 2 days talking. We came together out of the Assembly - women with energy and ideas and a common love for women. We have talked about issues (a euphemism for the horror in our lives) and we have talked about process. We have agreed and we have disagreed - but what is really important is that we really talked with each other. I look forward to our next gathering.



Full. Like there's so much work to do, encouraged by the group and where we've gotten so far.

I came with the expectation of being drained and leave with the feeling of being energized. I arrived with indecision, I leave with strong resolve.

The process of the past 2 ASWAC meetings has been open, direct and very creative. I came to this first board meeting hoping to receive more energy and knowing that I could share my ideas and feelings with the women involved. Now it is Sunday afternoon and I have for the first time found myself. I had to think about my feelings and deal with my confusions about justice or rather a feminist process and my own needs, opinions and skills. It has been a very strong meeting of women with very united goals yet broadly different methods of attaining those goals. The environment here is very workable, the women want to see progress and create concrete methods of reaching out to women to instigate change in our thought process in society. It is very inspiring.

I've been working with this group of women for less than 48 hours, yet at the end of our two days together I feel as though I've known them for a long time. I am relieved and delighted to feel such trust of every woman here -- trust that I can express my joy, my frustration, my riskier ideas without being judged or silenced. A rare gift in any circumstance -- but a gem with a working group that is so new.

I'm feeling tired at the end of this first board meeting, yet invigorated at the prospect of the next meeting. If the courage, vitality and caring of this first meeting is any indication, ASWAC is going to FLY-Y-Y even higher this year!



My heart's not beating with fear now

the fear of talking in a group
Rather in excitement and anger and frustration

Excitement - of women working together
reaching out sharing

Anger - of rape violence injustice hatred

Frustration - of never having enough time to deal with it all.

An overwhelming feeling of ideas zooming around in my head - too many for one day. I think I must go home and digest some of them.

I arrived in Edmonton for the board meeting with no clear goals or expectations, beyond acquiring a better feel for the board as a whole and as individuals. My source of personal direction has been very vague since completing the project - a real sense of not knowing what next. Over the weekend new thoughts and ideas have been stimulated. Although I am still not clear, I will be returning home re-energized and much more in a position to get something going.

I am feeling somewhat drained from the energies expended over the past 2 days - they have been strong. At the same time I'm feeling energized from our group effort and dynamics. We have dealt with some major issues - of substance and process - have had conflict and differences and have remained tight together. Such positive experiences have, for me, said that we will be able to deal with any and all matters that we need.

How am I feeling now?

Tired, of course. Hurried, frustrated. Want to take myself off to a quiet space and do some writing. But - if I can get out of the immediate and take a longer look back over the past 2 days--- I feel excited by the potential of this board. We seem to be amazingly "in the same place". I feel like I've been very quiet this weekend, and I feel like I've a whole lot of words stowed inside me, but that feels OK. I believe there will be time for them all to come out.

It was an honest feeling caring dialogue. I have never seen so much dedication, willingness to work and share information and expertise on women's issues, glad to be a part of it. "They" will never be able to bury, deride or ignore the issues again! Women have learned to trust themselves, and each other.



Christine Workman



To Lobby or not to Lobby

Not surprisingly, in our first day of our first board meeting, we had a lengthy discussion about lobbying as a tactic for ASWAC. We left the term very loosely defined to include such things as government briefs, maintaining a media profile, public education and marches which helped to further complicate the issue.

We examined the frequent negative consequences of formal lobbying, and the backlash experienced; the frustration of being so commonly distorted in mainstream media. To a large degree the discussion boiled down to the transformation/reformation debate: do we continue to put our energies into trying to change the present system, of which one effect is continuing its existence, or do we boycott this system in our attempts to create another. Do we support women's actions as individuals but refuse to engage in lobbying as an ASWAC body? Are we just trying to educate women and/or to change society? "I want to do more than just know that its a shitty world", said one of our members. ("And once knowing, stop saying its all my fault", responded another.)

While we are more than aware of the negative repercussions, we also acknowledge changes that have been gained through formal lobbying, and the information and support that it has provided for many women - "the power of raising women's awareness and providing a voice". We chose to avoid making blanket, absolute policies around lobbying, but rather to examine the value of various forms of lobbying around specific issues and deciding upon their merit.



WHAT NO DEMO?

Many women's groups across Canada joined the Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography (CCAMP) in protest on January 18. The protest against the CRTC decision to minimize their regulation of Pay-TV programming (specifically racist, sexist and pornographic content) was held on the anniversary date of last year's demonstrations against Playboy on First Choice.

ASWAC is a member of CCAMP and joins this national group in protesting pornography. Over a year ago, following the CRTC's Task Force on Sex-Role Stereotyping report, the Commission decided to give the broadcast media two years in which to prove that through self-regulation, they would 'shape up'. What can we expect from this now that the CRTC has turned a blind eye toward Pay-TV because of their financial difficulties. When profit is at stake, anything goes!

The CRTC had considered including a prohibition against "the distribution of any program containing comments of pictorial representations which, when taken in context, would be abusive of any race, religion or creed, or of either sex" but has now stated they think the prohibition could be challenged under the charter of rights. Given whose rights are being violated in the name of profit and entertainment, this statement is unacceptable. The CCAMP has said that the CRTC should have included this prohibition in the regulations and put the onus on Pay-TV firms to challenge it.

ASWAC chose not to hold a demonstration due to the work we had

The value of this decision became apparent on Sunday, as we struggled with the need and means of responding to the situation of victimized

women being jailed for refusing to testify against their assailants (see centre-fold). We examined many 'responses' and chose a multi-faceted approach. Perhaps our danger lies in trying to trap ourselves into one homogenized perspective; rather we must approach each situation openly and creatively. The subject was difficult; our process, however, was one in which everyone had opportunity to speak,



already committed ourselves to. The profile of the pornography issue is quite high right now with the hearings that were held in Calgary and Edmonton this month and the public forums featuring Maudie Barlow of CCAMP in the same cities.

We endeavoured, unsuccessfully, to find another group in Edmonton to organize a protest and we also contacted women's groups in several other cities to advise them of the protest.

To voice your protest, you can write to the CRTC at:

1 Promenade du Portage
Hull, Quebec K1A 0N2
and/or Francis Fox at:
Dept. of Communications
300 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C8

and be listened to. We worked hard and I believe came up with a perspective with which we can all live.

Debra Carnat

OOPS!

We used a wonderful photograph on the cover of our last newsletter and didn't give credit to the photographer. She is Julie Walker, and up-and-coming Calgary photographer.

LETTERS!



CONTEMPT

Dear ASWAC Women,

I'm enclosing my cheque for membership renewal and would like to take this opportunity to comment on your newsletter and a few other points.

With regard to the tone and presentation of the newsletter, I'm very pleased and excited by the directions you have taken in the last year. I find it to be a well-balanced publication with useful information about a variety of issues of concern to myself and other women I know. The format is consistently attractive and easy-to-read (I would like to see more "original" graphics - maybe I'll get it together to send you some in the near future...)

Frances, you asked for response to the idea of an ASWAC Provincial Pacifier Award. I like it! As you say, humour can be a welcome uplifting addition to the way we communicate ... let's encourage as much "appropriate" humour as possible. I, for personal example, laughed, cried and learned a great deal from my book of "Feminist Humour" (I'm not sure of the exact title). And anyway, I'd like to make a few nominations for the Award myself.

In conclusion, I'd like to wish us a very good 1984 with a fair measure of progress, peace and fun for all. Ongoing best wishes for the continued growth and success of the newsletter.

In Sisterhood,
Jeni Ellman

(Note: some of the cartoons in this newsletter are "originals" sent in by Jeni with this letter.)

Dear ASWAC,

I read with empathy Frances Adams' article "Blow-jobs at Franklin's" in the December 1983 issue. I have been similarly disgusted with a drink called "Abortion" ("with or without foetus") - it looks as bad as it sounds.

I feel I am a liberated male and try to keep abreast of issues and controversies in part by reading feminist publications such as yours.

At the same time that I appreciated the article, I found the cartoon that went with it to be at least as sexist, obscene and pornographic as any I can remember seeing in "Penthouse" or "Playboy". It is degrading to men and calling it satire or humour doesn't change this.

If we are to elevate men's respect for women and women's rights, we must do it together. Polarization does not help. Degradation of men certainly does not help.

Sincerely,
Ma Fletcher



Jeni

No doubt everyone has read or heard about the recent court cases that resulted in three women going to jail for refusing to testify against their assailants: the woman from Ottawa who was raped and sentenced to seven days, the pregnant woman who was beaten by her boyfriend and sentenced to three months, the 12 year old from California who was sexually abused by her step-father and put in isolation for over a week.

While this trend has not yet hit Alberta, women face a similar form of penalization from the police force. Women who have reported rapes and then decided they don't want to go through the court proceedings are often threatened with public mischief charges. They are 'encouraged' to undergo a lie detector test (or face a public mischief charge) as if the only reason they would wish to back out was because they were lying about the rape.

The police and courts are frustrated when, after doing a lot of work on a case, their prime witness decides not to testify. Their response, however, is only counter-productive. Fewer women will report rapes or beatings if the threat of a public mischief charge or jail sentence seems possible.

In the recent ASWAC board meeting the move by police to lay charges in battering cases, long lobbied for by women, was discussed in the context of the Orillia case. Will women be forced to testify against their will? Can a general advance not be made without penalty and suffering being inflicted on individual women? Following rigid policy or rules, within any system, is not necessary and does not work.

The lack of compassion on the part of the judges in these three famous cases is what is most astounding. To put a woman who has been through a lot of personal hell through even more of it may fit within the legal concept of law and order but it has no resemblance to justice.

Mark MacGuigan, Minister of Justice has promised to bring in legislation to curb the discretionary power of judges to cite contempt. While this has apparently been promised in reaction to these recent cases it is not yet clear how the new legislation will take effect.

Ombuds who?

The Alberta Government is looking for a new ombudsman and the selection committee has asked ASWAC, along with other organizations, to identify appropriate candidates.

The ASWAC office also has some background material, including a detailed description of the kind of person the committee is looking for. We will forward a copy of this to anyone interested.

Who do you know who would make a find ombudsperson? Let the ASWAC office know.

DONATIONS

ASWAC has received \$451.00 in donations since our last newsletter!!! Membership renewals have been coming in fast and furious as well! Thanks to all of you who sent a little extra: Pat Comeau, The Calgary Women's Health Collective, Erica Wuensch, Dorothy Constable, Isabel Smith, Jennifer Wolfe, Pat Leginsky, Doreen Pirie, Jeannette Raby, Penny Young, Violet Honert, Winnie Tomm, Barbara Prescott, Dee Mary Hyde, Carol Johnson, Maria Iaquina, Shirley Myers, Mary Ross, Colleen Cooper and Dianne Oberg.

WE ARE IN CONTEMPT OF COURT

WE ARE IN CONTEMPT OF COURT

WE ARE IN CONTEMPT OF COURT

- We hold nothing but **CONTEMPT** for a court which jails a woman who has been raped.
- We hold nothing but **CONTEMPT** for a court which jails a pregnant woman who was beaten.
- We hold nothing but **CONTEMPT** for a court which jails a 12-year-old girl who is the victim of incest.
- We hold nothing but **CONTEMPT** for a police and judiciary which insists on blaming and punishing the victim.

Nicaraguan Women: A Revolution..

I had heard a lot about the Nicaraguan revolution both in favor of the process and also against it. I've been involved in the Edmonton Support Committee for El Salvador and Central America, so when I heard about a Study Tour to Nicaragua, needless to say I was very excited. I put in my application form and then began the long wait. I began to read various books written by people who had gone, to get a better understanding of what I could expect if I was accepted on the tour. I was one of the 17 people from various backgrounds that went to Nicaragua at the end of October to the middle of November.

We arrived in Nicaragua with 45 boxes of much needed material aid, typewriters, office supplies, medical supplies, school supplies, sports equipment, tape recorders, tools and toys. I also had a letter from ASWAC to the women's organization along with pins, t-shirts, and literature regarding some of the concerns of women here in Alberta and Canada.

When we met with the Nicaraguan Women's Association Luisa Amanda Espinosa - AMNLAE - I presented the letter and the pins to them. Yvonne Siu, the Secretary of International Affairs for AMNLAE, thanked us for the show of solidarity. I was amazed how much these letters meant to them and with how much gratitude these small tokens of solidarity were received. She said the letters we brought tell them that they are not alone in their struggle, and that we appreciate their reality. The struggle and reality that Yvonne spoke of isn't just the struggle of women but also of all the people in Nicaragua against the aggressions of the Reagan Administration. It is within the desire for peace and the creation of a new society that all organizations are working. AMNLAE has an important role to play in this creation of a new society. Women make up

half the population and have been historically the most oppressed sector.

Women have been organized in the revolution 23 years ago by the FSLN. Since that time they have slowly become more active. Women took an active role in the revolution and they fought side by side with men as equals. Many women



Spoke by Betty Goshue
1st issue/October 1983

were chosen as commanders and leaders within the revolution. The contribution of women in this whole revolutionary process could no longer be ignored after the victory. The participation of women has begun a revolution within a revolution ... the revolution of women. Women are working towards equality, changing the traditional view of women as submissive and second class citizens.

AMNLAE sees the problem of women as a social and economic one. It is the product of a system of domination. It isn't a struggle between men and women but rather with the system. There is a campaign to change the mentality of the society, a society that carries with it all the baggage of male domination and women's submissiveness from the Somoza era where women had no rights. Little by little they are changing the role of women from being solely a housewife in charge of the children and other home duties to becoming a person involved in the development of the country. Men are beginning to realize that they must share the responsibility for children, that this is a social responsibility. For example, Yvonne mentioned that AMNLAE was creating daycare centres where men and women work together. This is seen as a way of making men aware of their responsibility for children. It is also one of the ways we confront women's problems to get a total understanding of the root causes of these issues said Yvonne Siu. This ideological work isn't done only with women but also with men.

During the revolution, the struggle of women advanced some in opening discussion between both men and women, putting women in new and different positions, but this process takes time. Now they are encountering new difficulties where women need to be prepared ideologically, politically, culturally and socially to be able to confront these situations. One of our greatest concerns, said Yvonne Siu, is that women participate in the distinct political and social activities of the country.

Because of the economic situation, housewives still have a lot of work within the home, but they must take time to participate in more outside activities. This is the only way to achieve their liberation. Women are becoming active within their distinct organizations, schools and workplace to discuss the problems they are facing from their perspective as women and as members of the Nicaraguan society. In this way women's problems will be better understood by the society at large.

The Council of State is composed of representatives from seven political parties, seven labour unions, religious groups, universities and women's organizations. AMNLAE represents the concerns and desires of women in the Council of State where laws are discussed and passed. The discussion of laws takes place not only in the Council of State but also at the grass roots level of the organizations involved, for the changes needed. AMNLAE is using the law as an educational instrument. They go to their grass roots organizations and ask what are some of the changes you would like to see in the existing laws.

cont'd



...Within a Revolution

The first law women wanted to change referred to the responsibility of fathers for children. There were 900 assemblies held in regard to this issue and 25,000 people participated and thus came to know the original law and how it affected women. As Yvonne Siu said, it was a good learning experience and it struck a spark in men as well. An understanding of the concerns came about and suggestions and proposals were put forth to the Council of State for further discussion. Unlike before, where men took no financial responsibility to help raise the children they fathered or played an equal role in the upbringing of the child, the new law states that children are the responsibility of both parents, not just the mother. Also, if the couple is not married the man must assume some financial responsibility for his children.

There have been other changes in the laws concerning women and how they find themselves legally in a different position. One month after the triumph of the revolution, a law was passed prohibiting the use of women's bodies for commercial use such as advertising. They have also achieved equal pay

for equal work as well as laws for the protection of women workers.

While in Nicaragua we saw many women holding important positions. Most of the organizations we visited had women in charge of international relations. The massive health campaign was organized with the help of women and 80% of the volunteers for this campaign were women. But there is still much work to do, especially in the rural areas to change the role of women from being kept in the home to being able to participate in other organizations. Women are still doing the bulk of the housework, which in Nicaragua is a full time job because all tasks are done manually. One of the most difficult discussions on women's issues in Nicaragua centered on the women's role in the home, and its economic importance. It had never been discussed before because it wasn't seen as important. Yvonne Siu said that they didn't want this role put on a pedestal, but did want its importance through the centuries recognized. Domestic work is a matter of society and belongs to all, was the feeling of Nicaraguan women. This caused a lot of commotion in Nicaragua

especially among the men. Women wanted cooperation not confrontation. They wanted time for other work. Women's participation in the revolution is through their work and their organizations.

We all returned to Canada deeply moved by what we had seen and experienced. We noticed the genuine sense of solidarity among the people and the real desire to cooperate toward a common goal. We were made aware of the spirit of liberation that is still alive, not just the liberation from a dictatorial regime, or the liberation of the peasant from an absentee landlord but also the liberation within the family unit which was all very exciting and evident for us. There is no doubt that women will have a great impact in the building of a new social order in Nicaragua. I think it is important for us to realize what is happening in Nicaragua and support the Nicaraguan women and their organization in their determination to defend their achievements against the aggressions of the Reagan Administration. The victory has cost them a lot and the Nicaraguan women want to defend it.

Theresa Zyp

El Salvador: Women Struggle ...

Esther Ramirez, a representative of the Association of Women of El Salvador (A.M.E.S.) will be in Edmonton at the beginning of February on her way across Canada. Part of her schedule here includes a public forum at the Garneau United Church. The forum, sponsored by ASWAC, starts at 8 p.m. on February 2nd. The church is at 11148 84 Avenue.

The following information about the Women's Association is taken from a pamphlet produced by the Interagency Committee on Women and Development, a project of the Canada Council for International Development:

Women Working

Many women work in the field along with their entire family. Rural women whose families don't have any land are migrant labourers. Women travel, caring for children, from plantation to plantation for three to four

months of the year. In this system only men are under contract, with the right to wages and a daily food allowance. Women and children are not officially at work (although they are always there), so they have no such rights.

Given this situation, many people go to the cities looking for work. Yet there is little choice for women in the cities. Some work as domestics for upper class families. They are treated like slaves, some working 16 hours a day, six days per week. As one Salvadorean woman said, "It's just expected that an "empleada" will service her boss and the sons of the family sexually as well. If she refuses she loses her job.

Other women find work in the factories in the free trade zones, areas which are not subject to local laws or taxes. Here, transnationals like Texas Instrument

and Maidenform prefer to hire women workers because they believe that since women are trained to be submissive they are less likely to unionize and will work for lower wages than men.



... on Many Fronts

Street vending is another way of making a living. Women buy fruits and vegetables and go from one place to another trying to sell them. They must take their children with them and find space on the streets in all kinds of weather. Street vending is illegal. The government and upper class claim it is an eyesore and discourages tourism. Police hunt these women, beat them, confiscate their goods and jail and fine them.

There are still other women who cannot find work whose only alternative is prostitution.

All women must, on top of their paid work, do all the necessary work for the family. This ranges from collecting water (only 30% of the people in the countryside have access to safe drinking water), to grinding maize for tortillas, to caring for their children.

An increasing proportion of women are single heads of households. The traditional extended families have been severely broken up by the economic crisis. The death of family members and the need to migrate for work or political activity also contribute to this. Also, the carnage in El Salvador has created a nation of 720,000 refugees, mostly women and child-

ren, who live as displaced persons in El Salvador and neighbouring countries.

Women in the Revolutionary Movement

Salvadorean women have participated throughout this century in the political movements that have



opposed the oligarchic domination and the miserable social conditions. Women are subject to the same grisly torture and assassination as men, with the added atrocity of rape. Women from all backgrounds are targeted.

Pants have become a symbol of the revolution. Any woman wearing jeans is immediately suspected of being a guerilla and harassed.

AMES

Although those women who participate fully in the struggle feel they are succeeding with their demands for equal rights, this is not enough. Women felt that an organization had to be created which would achieve those demands for all women of the country, whether they were organized or not. AMES is an organization of Salvadorean women that began in 1978 and was officially founded March 8, 1979. It organizes all women - peasants, shanty-town dwellers, workers, students, market vendors and housewives. AMES, through education attempts to eradicate established traditional feminine and masculine values. This provokes much discussion.

AMES is a democratic organization which fights for basic material needs and human rights. Some of their projects for women include vocational training, establishing production collectives and workshops, assistance to refugees and care of orphans, health care, self-defense training and mass demonstrations.

Right now in El Salvador, a fight for national liberation is being fought. Women's struggle for their rights is integral to this process.

SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE NEWS

Lisa Lough from the Lloydminster Sexual Assault Centre reported that the Centre has received sufficient funding to remain open for another year. With \$24,000 received from PCSS, \$2,000 from the Kinsmen, \$1,000 from Nelson Lumber Foundation and various amounts from the Kinettes, Native Friendship Centre and private donations, the threat of closing is over, at least for this year.

Sylvia Kennedy and a group of women from Red Deer are attempting to set up a crisis line in the city. The Red Deer Status of Women Action Committee has given the project use of their office space. According to Sylvia, some of the groundwork has already been done in terms of proving the need for a crisis line. RCMP statistics for the area leave no doubt that the need is there. Sylvia can be contacted at 346-5152 for further information.



The cruise missile is to be tested in Canada on the Cold Lake Air Weapons Range. This range of 1.6 million acres straddles the Saskatchewan-Alberta border.

In this photo, four women (including the one taking the photo) are

sending a peaceful winter message to other parts of the country. This message was left on the border of the bombing range, on the road to Dorintosh (about 23 miles from Cole Bay).

Special Committee Hearings:

Following are excerpts from a few of the many presentations given to the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution, which heard public submissions in Edmonton and Calgary on January 9 and 10.

ASWAC has not yet made a formal presentation. Several staff and board members attended both hearings in order to watch the committee at work and get a feel for the quality and openness of its approach, and also to hear the material presented and identify important gaps. Written submissions can be made up until May 15, 1984 so ASWAC's formal response may be made in this manner.

Will you help? Let us know what you felt was omitted or incompletely dealt with. Give us your response to the media coverage. Tell us your stories about what the people around you were saying about pornography and prostitution while they had a high media profile and were up in people's minds. We have heard one story of a woman being more than usually harassed at work as a direct result of the hearings; are there more?

Also, let us know if you want to be involved in discussing, researching, and/or writing a brief from ASWAC.

From the Ukrainian Women's Assn. of Canada

Definition of Pornography:

The Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada defines pornography as a representation of sexual behaviour, often combined with hostility and violence, which is demeaning and degrading to one or more of the participants in such a way as to recommend the degradation. Pornography is produced by males designed to dehumanize the female sex; it violates the human rights of women.

How Pornography Denies Women Their Human Rights

1) Women constitute approximately 50% of the population but pornographic materials on billboards, posters, magazines, newspapers, Red Hot Video tapes, on TV and on Pay TV constantly use the female body as a commodity. Male bodies

are used peripherally and only in a winning or dominant situation, never as victims. This is clearly a discrimination based on sex.

2) The Playboy philosophy is based on the ridicule of normal family life and relationships among men, women and children. In thousands of repetitions, women are depicted as devalued wives, as ridiculed mothers, as playthings. The male readers are conditioned to treat women as dehumanized, inferior specimens, to be used and abused. This attitude is damaging to the honour of women and affects the way women are treated in all areas of society.

Whenever women raise their voices against pornography, they are immediately attacked as prudes, man-haters and neurotics.

3) Whenever women raise their voices against pornography, they are immediately attacked as prudes, man-haters and neurotics. This is a stereotyping of women and their reputations deserve better treatment than the deliberate distortion of their normal human reactions.

4) Pornographic magazines and materials express male power and domination while showing females in subordinate and degrading positions. This is treatment of women as inferior beings and contrary to human rights.

5) It is impossible for a billion-dollar pornographic industry to be supported solely by sales to male perverts and to emotionally crippled individuals. So-called "normal" men must have been convinced into purchasing the pornographic materials for whatever rational reason they have chosen to accept. This is a tremendous offence to the worthiness of the women in their lives. This affront to the human dignity of women is against human rights.

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Conclusion

It is 1984. In his novel, Nineteen Eighty-Four, George Orwell devised a Ministry of Truth in which falsehoods were contrived to mislead people and to train them in doublethink, as expressed in the three great slogans of the State; "War is Peace", "Freedom is Slavery" and "Ignorance is Strength".

What would George Orwell have to say of the Ministry of Truth as devised by the hustlers of pornography; "Incest Is Home and Family Love", "Women Enjoy Being Tortured and Mutilated", and "Water Works Is Clean Fun"? What would he say about these films; "The Driller Killer", "Cannibal Holocaust" and "I Spit on Your Grave"? What would he say to the fact that all these media materials are called "Men's Entertainment"?

Recommendation

The Ukrainian Women's Association recommends that the legislators of the Parliament of Canada enact and/or amend nationally our laws on pornography in a manner that is consistent with the spirit of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.



Prostitution and Pornography

From Every Woman's Place Social/Political Action Committee

We have observed directly the ways in which pornography harms us:

- by the image of women that it presents;
- by the way that image is so readily accepted (and acted upon) by many men and even by other women;
- by the distorted image of sexuality--in particular, of women's sexuality--that pornography presents;
- by its representation of women as creatures or objects to be freely abused and humiliated for the entertainment of others;
- by its false and defamatory assertion that women enjoy that abuse ...

Its time to stop asking for proofs of additional harms -- such as so-called "links" between pornography and violence. Its time to start recognizing that pornography is itself a form of violence against women and children.

It's time to stop asking for proofs of additional harms--such as so-called "links" between pornography and violence. It's time to start recognizing that pornography is itself a form of violence against women and children, and that that inherent violence in pornography itself is sufficient cause for doing something about it.

Our group does not believe that legal sanctions are the best way of dealing with the problem, in the long run. They are, at best, only a short-term solution. Legal restrictions can too often become a repressive force directed at the wrong people, rather than a protective force.

We find it disturbing that your Committee, in being delegated to deal with both pornography and prostitution, seems to be placing primary emphasis on sexual morality, according to your "Issues Paper". There are indeed close connections between the issues of pornography and prostitution--the major connection being that they are both wide-spread forms of violence against women and children. It would make more sense,

There are indeed close connections between the issues of pornography and prostitution -- the major connection being that they are both wide-spread forms of violence against women and children.

therefore, to focus on finding ways to protect women and children from the abuses of pornography and prostitution, rather than on subjective questions of individual moral beliefs relating to sexuality.

The Criminal Code amendments proposed by Mark MacGuigan, dealing with current obscenity legislation, would probably be an improvement over the current laws. But several problems with the legislation



ASWAC does not have copies of the other, many excellent briefs that were presented and would appreciate obtaining them.

remain to be dealt with. In particular, the notion of "obscenity" should be removed, and replaced with a new word and a new guiding principle, one which would focus on abusive, violent, or sexist images and material rather than on sexual explicitness.

From Suzn Morgan, Calgary

While reading about prostitution I came up against some incredible statistics. 95% of female prostitutes and 99% of male prostitutes were victims of child sexual abuse. The majority of child sexual abuse are incest of adult/child situations. The vast majority (96%) are perpetrated by men.

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I have, right now, four female friends who share some common experience:

- a 12 year old, grade 7 student
- a 16 year old single mother to be
- a 19 year old college student
- a 27 year old divorced mother of 3

The experience they all share is that they are all victims of incest and they all prostitute themselves.

- the 12 year old on the downtown mall
- the 16 year old (whose child was conceived when she was raped while working at a local hotel) who looks forward to when she can get back to work (hooking) so she can buy her baby new things (welfare refused any support as she doesn't qualify under the new guidelines)
- the 19 year old college student usually works 2 nights a week for a local 'agency' and she has also traded her services for a better grade, as she is trying for a honours program (scholarship)
- the 27 year old mother of 3 trades rental costs over the social service guideline, for services to her landlord.

All four of these women also say that they have been requested to emulate masochistic behaviour depicted in various porn media.

Community Development Research

Most single industry or resource-based communities are planned and built without the needs of women in mind. Often, the development and ongoing management of the town is concerned with the well-being of the company and the workers, because of the effect on productivity. The needs of the rest of the community - namely women and children - are often ignored.

Marilyn Guille, formerly one of our Provincial Development Project workers and now a members of the ASWAC board, has compiled an information-gathering questionnaire and survey for community development research. Marilyn's idea for the project was conceived following a trip to Fox Creek, a single-industry town.

Copies of the Community Development Research survey may be obtained through ASWAC. Please send \$3 to cover the cost of reproducing and mailing the survey.

Working Women, Know Your Rights

Grace Hartman, President Emeritus of the Canadian Union of Public Employees will be the featured speaker at a conference planned by Calgary Working Women and Calgary International Women's Day Committee. The conference will be held Friday evening and Saturday, February 24 and 25 at the Parkdale United Church, 2919 8th Avenue NW. Between registration (which starts at 7 p.m. on Friday) and a reception, Ms. Hartman will speak about the effects of the recession on working women.

Saturday morning at 9, Ms. Hartman will speak about the value of women's work. Following this there will be workshops. In the morning the workshops will be:

- . sexual harassment/unjust dismissal and
- . immigrant women.

In the afternoon there will be:

- . unemployment/welfare and
- . technology and health.

Time has been allocated following the afternoon workshops for small groups to discuss action and planning.

For further information, contact Doris at 286-2820 or Rosemary at 282-6845.

Attention Working Women

EDMONTON WORKING WOMEN is planning a weekend series of workshops around the fruits and pitfalls of women organizing in the workplace. The workshops will focus on women's successes and failures in combating economic inequality both in and out of the organized labour movement.

WHEN: Fri. March 2 6:00-10:00pm
Sat. March 3 6:00-9:00 pm
Sun. March 4 10:00-4.00pm.

WHERE: Edmonton YWCA

Watch Every Woman's Place and Common Woman Books for brochure!

For more information, call:
Lorraine Mitchell 424 0803
Christine Conley 432 7991

This project is sponsored by the Secretary of State Womens Program.

FILM WORKSHOP



Here are some more details about the National Film Board, Studio D workshop on using film as an organising tool.

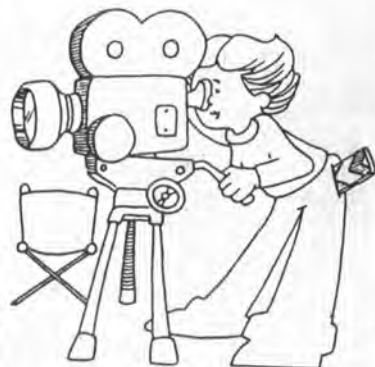
Time: March 3 10 am - 5 pm
March 4 10 am - 1 pm

Place: Every Woman's Place
9926 112 Street
Edmonton

The workshop is open to a maximum of 20 women and there is no registration fee.

Saturday will be theory, with discussion of the role of facilitator/animateur, and some hands-on work with film projection equipment. Sunday morning will be role-playing of various styles of facilitating discussion.

ASWAC has no extra money for this event, but would nevertheless like to encourage women from around the province to attend. If you would like to come, but would find it difficult to pay your own way, please let the office know and we will see what can be done.



Women's Resources

FRIENDS
LOVERS
MOTHERS
SISTERS

Canadian Women's Movement Archives

The Archives has grown out of, and is part of, the women's movement in Canada. It is ours. It belongs to all of us engaged in every struggle which gives us more autonomy in our lives.

It is an organized archival collection maintained through consultation with other archivists, and is accessible to all unless donations have specific conditions to be closed to the public. Send us your material (clippings, photos, documents, posters, buttons) and use the resources.

Office hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
or by appointment
P.O. Box 928, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1P1
Tel. (416) 597-8865

RESOURCES

Helping Ourselves: A Handbook for Women Starting Groups is an easy-to-use practical book for women who want to share and solve problems with other women. It is published by the Women's Counselling Referral and Education Centre of Toronto, a non-profit organization committed to providing alternative mental health services for women. The book is available at a cost of \$5 by writing to: W.C.R.E.C., 348 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1S4.



Northern Woman

The CRIAW Bank of Researchers is an ambitious project undertaken by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women. It is a national computerized data base of resumes of researchers committed to the advancement of women. Its purposes are to:

1. promote feminist researchers and their research;
2. identify speakers, resource persons for conferences, workshops and panels;
3. identify researchers for research contracts and projects in the government, the public and private sectors, as well as in unions and community organizations;
4. establish a network among researchers doing similar work.

To contact the Bank, write to CRIAW at Suite 415, 151 Slater St. Ottawa, Ont. K1P 5H3.

We also have extra copies of the pamphlet, including the application form, at the ASWAC office.

'As Things Stand - Ten Years of Recommendations' is a report by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women which reviews selected recommendations made by the Council during the first ten years of its existence. For most topics covered, a summary of the situation which led to the CACSW's recommendations is followed by an account of the changes that have been made (or not, as the case may be) since that time.

'As Things Stand' will interest all of us who like to find some measurement of how far we have come. It is also interesting to look back over ten years and see how our issues have changed.

The booklet is available free of charge from CACSW, 66 Slater St., 18th Floor, Box 1541, Stn. B, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5R5.

DANCE THE WINTER BLAHS AWAY WITH THE TRANSISTERS



Feminist New Wave Women's Music
Saturday, February 25
Hazeldean Community Hall, 96 Street and 66 Avenue, Edmonton
Doors open at 8 p.m.

A benefit for EREWHON BOOKS

Tickets \$6, available at Erewhon Books (10815B 82 Avenue), Common Woman Books (8208 104 Street), or at the door.
Food and Fun



The poster on the cover was made for a conference held in Lima, Peru, in December 1982, at which women gathered to talk about the people in their families who have disappeared.

Copies of this poster (18"x12") can be obtained from the ASWAC office for \$3.00.

GIVE A GIFT OF FEMINISM FOR IWD.

It'll be a while before International Women's Day will be declared a national holiday, but let's not let that stop us from using it as a day to recognise in our personal lives as well as on the streets! Why not start the custom of giving a gift to the important women in your life which will give you some more shared experience in the coming year, such as a membership in your favourite organisation or a subscription to your favourite periodical.

Common Woman Books

Saturday, February 4th, 10-5 p.m.
WHITE DUCK SALE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Slashing prices on hundreds of items

Saturday, March 3rd, 8 p.m.
A BENEFIT DANCE WITH
THE TRANSISTERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Women only at this dance
\$7 admission
Hazeldean Community Hall
9630 66 Avenue

Saturday, March 10th, 10-5 p.m.
BREAD AND ROSES SALE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
In celebration of International Women's Day everything in the store is 10% off. Refreshments will be on hand.



Optimist

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.



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