



ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE

VOL. 5 NO. 3

**SEX
DISCRIMINATION
IS
ILLEGAL**

A sign at the Dublin train station in Ireland.
Photo by M. Barber.

15 Hours at a Glance...

Round Table	At the beginning of each meeting we usually do a round and each woman talks about what she has been doing since the last time we came together. At this meeting we had a lot of lively discussion during the round which lasted for a couple of hours.	U. of A. Playboy Subscription	Diana Chown discussed her plans to challenge the library, where funding for acquisitions has been severely cut, over subscribing to Playboy (see article).
Fiscal Autonomy, Funding, Survival	The stoard has begun to hold 'hearings' around the issues of funding, autonomy and survival. At this meeting we had representatives of the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter and the Calgary Women's Health Collective come to talk with us. The stoard will be holding similar hearings in Grande Prairie, Lethbridge and possibly Red Deer and Medicine Hat in the next month and, at our next full meeting in May, we'll be inviting women's organizations in Edmonton to meet with us.	Equal Pay	Meaghan brought our attention to a U.S. court order that directs the State of Washington to pay \$800 million to \$1 billion in back pay to women who have not been paid the same as men for work of comparable worth (see article).
Miss Universe	We discussed the pageant that will be held this summer in Calgary (see article).	DES Action Group	(see last newsletter) Frances suggested that we exchange newsletters with DES rather than buy a subscription because we have very little money in this category.
Pregnancy	Many women are fired because they become pregnant. Discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy is not prohibited under human rights legislation in Alberta nor in any of the other provinces other than Quebec. Frances Adams, Amanda Le Rougetel and Donna Gibbons will be doing some work on this and invite interested members to assist us in this reproductive rights issue.	Student Maintenance Grants	Allison Morrow, a single parent student at the University of Calgary, came in to brief us on the issue and action that she and other students have taken (see article).
Women's Secretariat	We decided to do some work in consideration of how we will relate to the new Women's Secretariat. We would like to talk to some of the other action committees where government advisory councils have existed for several years to gain from their experience.	Hiring	Frances, Office Manager, will be taking a leave of absence this summer and a woman will be hired to replace her for this period (see article). A hiring committee (Suzn, Mair, Amanda, Frances and Marilyn A-S) was formed. We will be advertising the position in the newsletter only.
Next Meeting	We decided to hold our next meeting, May 5 and 6, in Edmonton. The June meeting will be in Fort McMurray.	Staff Reports	Frances and Mair both gave staff reports and discussed several questions with the board.
International Feminist Forum	Suzn Morgan brought us up to date on plans for this event (see article).	Pornography	We decided not to prepare a brief to the Fraser Committee and we discussed a couple of large potential projects on the same issue.
Women's Research Centre	Marilyn Assheton-Smith told us of the plans for a research centre where women academics and other women could collaborate on research on our issues (see article).	Fundraising	Diana Chown and Donna Gibbons will work together to assess ASWAC's uses for a computer and prepare possible fundraising strategies.
		1984/84 Budget	Marilyn Assheton-Smith informed us of the meeting she and Almira Nicol had with Karen Schwartz, Secretary of State, Women's Programs, where our budget submission was reviewed (see article).
		Voice of Women Peace Conf.	tabled to next meeting
		Newsletter	tabled to next meeting

Notes From A Sister

I will be quite honest with you - I feel compelled to write this article for the Newsletter partly because I did nothing for the last one and partly, and far more importantly, because as a member of this year's Stoard I live in fear of having hurled at me the same question that was hurled at last year's Stoard members: Yes, but what did you do last year????

Well, I am doing some very concrete work with a couple of other Stoard members on Pregnant Women in the Work Force. And while this is important work and work that will be quite easy to report on in a very tangible way I have come to realise that the Stoard is involved in an on-going way in some other kind of work which is equally important though not nearly so tangible.

Let me set the scene: thirteen women sitting around several card tables arranged in a sort-of-circle, food spread out in the kitchen, coffee ready in a big urn, some women have binders and other types of papers spread out before them, some do not, a tape recorder sits in the middle of the circle and as we begin "to meet" someone switches it on so that a record is kept of what transpires during the day(s).

We start off by talking about what has happened to each of us since the last meeting - this particular time it takes the better part of the morning and this is not bad since we have learned not only about who attended what workshops and said what to the press on behalf of ASWAC but also what is happening in our minds, in our souls and also what is happening to our bodies as we grow older and as we experience life. Self-indulgent? Touchy-feely? Useless? Not relevant to ASWAC's work? I have wrestled with these questions and concerns too, and it was not until I attended a very different kind of meeting that I realised just how much last year's Stoard accomplished and how important that work is to me and to ASWAC and to women everywhere in Alberta who are concerned about developing new ways of living, new ways of working and new ways of shaping the world.

The second scene looks something like this: fifteen or so women and some men (guests) are seated around a very long board-room like table. The chairman (a woman) is seated at one end, the honorary chairman (a man) is seated at the other. The agenda is printed and everyone has a copy before them, the chairman runs the meeting according to the agenda or as she sees fit. The setting is quite formal, food is served to us during the 'food break' and people have titles and are addressed by them by the other members. By the end of the meeting the entire agenda has been covered - business has been dealt with - but I know nothing about the inner workings of these people, nothing about their hopes and dreams. They use a structure which is imposed upon them by years of tradition and practice and what seems important to them is to work within that structure rather than working in the way which best suits them as individuals working together as a group.

Am I making any sense at all? Yes, it is important to me to do something, to accomplish some very tangible tasks which will hopefully work to change some wrong in society and it is impor-

tant to me to work in a way that I have chosen for its rightness for me, to work with people who respect my way of doing things even if it is not theirs, to work in such a way as to be able to respect and enjoy not only WHAT I do but also HOW I do it.

In order to create a new and better world (which is what I am presuming we are all working towards) I believe it is necessary to give equal time to discovering new ways in which to work, to play and to live and I see this year's Stoard trying very hard to create a balance between working in order to have done something and working so that we have good, healthy, viable ways with which to work in the future.

I urge all of you who find this concept interesting, exasperating or simply confusing to attend one of the Stoard meetings between now and the Assembly to discover for yourself the kind of potential that exists when dedicated women commit themselves to work and to change through participation on the ASWAC Stoard.

In Sisterhood,
Amanda LeRougetel

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, Calgary T2N 2W6	283-2924
Diana Chown	10935 85 Ave. Edmonton T6G 0W3	433-1525
Meaghan Dean	11227 93 St. Edmonton T6G 1B9	479-0623
Donna Gibbons	11908 93 St. Edmonton T5G 1E5	479-4684
Marilyn Guille	Box 1984, Whitecourt TOE 2L0	778-3669
Amanda Le Rougetel	9625 76 Avenue Edmonton T6C 0K4	433-8615
Suzn Morgan	6423 Laurentian Way SW, Cal. T3A 4N2	246-8755
Judy Moynihan	190 Highland Cl. Ft McMurray	791-4395
Almira Nicol	809 10145 109 St. Edmonton T5J 3M5	424-6088
Marty Whitesun	Box 418, Hythe TOH 0C0	356-3797

Position Open

Frances Adams, ASWAC Office Manager, will be taking a 2 1/2 month leave of absence this summer. We will be hiring someone to replace her for this time period (May 28 to August 10). We are looking for someone who is:

- .an ASWAC member
- .knowledgeable of the women's community in Alberta
- .experienced in clerical skills (typing, filing, etc.)
- .full of initiative.

The staff ensure publication and distribution of the newsletter every six weeks, liaise between women's groups, ASWAC members and the board, provide information and resources to women, arrange and attend meetings, and so on.

A hiring committee has been formed and applications are invited in the form of resumes or letters. We will be hiring in May. If you would like further information, please call Frances at 424-3073.

Have fun in Europe Frances! (I will thanks.)

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the ASWAC Stoard will be held in Edmonton (not Fort McMurray as indicated in the last newsletter) on the weekend of May 5 and 6. Please contact the ASWAC office if you would like to join us for all or part of the meeting.

Following the May meeting, the line-up is as follows:

- June 16/17 - Fort McMurray
- July 28/29
- September 8/9
- October 20/21
- November 2/3/4 Annual Assembly

Autonomy Discussion

As part of my involvement in the Stoard's 'hearings' about money, autonomy, etc., this year around the province, I have prepared a discussion paper titled 'To Fund or Not to Fund'. This paper is available at the ASWAC office; \$1 will cover the cost of copying and mailing.

Marilyn Guille

\$

A hearty thanks to our members who sent ASWAC a total of \$165 in donations in the last month. Donations were received from Marlene Rankel, Elaine Sanders, Leslie Churchill, Joyce McKinnon, Gloria Filax, Sylvia Dubrule, City Limits Bookstore, Kathy Penner, Deena Cooper, Olga Kraatz, Pamela Perdue and Janet Miller.

\$

Reproductive Work

A few of us starting to work on an issue that we'd like your help with. The federal government and the province of Quebec are the only two jurisdictions in Canada that include pregnancy as a prohibited ground for discrimination under human rights legislation. This means that women who are fired or not hired because they are pregnant have no recourse through law or legislation in Alberta and most of Canada.

As part of our work on this issue we would like to gather stories/information from women who have been penalized for being pregnant. If you have been personally affected or know someone who has been, please contact Amanda at 433-8615 or Frances at the ASWAC office, 424-3073.

Will the Real Miss Universe Please Step Forth!

Planning is under way to have the 1984 Miss Universe Pageant held in Calgary. ASWAC -- as do many women around Alberta -- has some strong objections to this. ASWAC wants to share her concerns and thinking on this issue with as many women's groups as possible.

One of the ideas to come out of the last ASWAC stoard meeting was to draw up some basic clear statements about the pageant and why we object to it. This will then be circulated among women's groups which may want to use the ASWAC statement as a model or guideline to any action they might want to take around the issue.

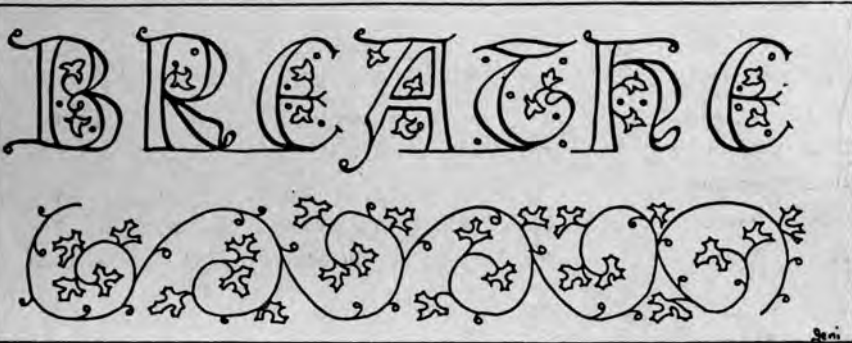
One of ASWAC's main concerns in wanting to do this is to urge women to keep in mind it is the pageant concept not the pageant contestants that needs to be the focus of our concern. It is important to make a clear statement about the proposed Miss Universe Pageant which includes our support and solidarity with the contestants who -- like many women -- are being victimized by a sexist system.

ASWAC feels it is also important that as many women as possible make it very clear that the whole concept of beauty pageants is contrary to any notion of true equality among human beings. Beauty pageants are one of the many ways a sexist society continues to limit and degrade women through the imposition and glorification of a narrow, exploitive, male-fantasy-defined concept of "beauty".

In addition to a copy of ASWAC's statement, the information package will also include some relevant newspaper clippings, a copy of an article about the Miss America Pageant protests from Robin Morgan's book "Going Too Far" and some ideas for possible actions women's groups might want to take around the Miss Universe Pageant coming to Calgary.

We hope to make the ASWAC information available to as many women's groups as possible. However, if you want to make sure your group gets a copy, contact the ASWAC office.

Meaghan Dehn



Letters

Dear Sisters,

HIStory has been made again, and as yet the women of Alberta have not been heard giving voice to objections. On March 8, for the first and last time I attended the Calgary Y.W. "Women of the Year Dinner". The very name belies the fact. The Y.W. gave no significant mention to the purpose of the event, International Women's Day, and the focus of the evening was as POLITICAL as a Conservative Rally. Awards were given, except in one case, to those women who were the wives, sisters, daughters of the old boys. Yet women who have a proven record of contributions to the status of Albertan women were ignored. To top off this charade, "Mrs. Wife of Ambassador Gottlieb" droned on about being married off by her father who considered the accomplishment to be "getting a hump off his back". The entire event held a sincere air of a 50's fashion show, and clearly that was the most important aspect for a great many of the women

who attended. It was more than discouraging to watch almost 700 women nod in dull acceptance of the most appalling drivel I have ever seen or heard spoken at a women's gathering. For a few moments I thought I had been propelled back to a time when women were better off to pretend that they were dumb. I was ashamed to be there and will never again attend this function. Next year I will send my hard earned \$50 to a worthy group such as the Birth Control Association.

Is A.S.W.A.C. going to let this continue; can we, the women of Alberta, expect our views will be put to the Y.W. by the one group which has spoken out regarding the status of women? If not, you will have kept the silence of the Y.W. and not heard the women who walked out on an event that humiliated contemporary women and all women of Herstory. What little respect we have had earned. We cannot afford to have the Y.W. assume the responsibility of this day. What I witnessed on March 8 left no doubt that the

Y.W. has failed women and deserves no role in the affairs and most serious and important work of improving the status of women.

In sisterhood and hope,
K. Lanz, Calgary.

Dear ASWAC -

I have decided after some consideration to renew my membership with ASWAC.

The reason I had to spend some time considering whether I wished, by my membership, to indicate support of ASWAC is as follows: I am, or like to consider myself a feminist but have not been able to convince my staunch and stubborn conscience that abortion is morally acceptable. I have such compassionate and empathetic feelings for women with unwanted pregnancies, and thus it is not without difficulty that I cannot support their decision to abort. However, much as I wish I could give all women, myself included, the ultimate reproductive freedom which abortion represents, I cannot shut out my own conviction that abortion, by its nature, is both violent and oppressive.

Although the image of the poverty-stricken, exhausted woman with several children and another unplanned, unwanted pregnancy will always be a haunting one, and will keep me from supporting Campaign Life in its effort to criminalize women caught in a distressing situation, the other image - that of an unborn, unformed but undeniably human life being ripped apart, will keep me forever silent when the prochoice position is being defended.

Having said all this, I still wish to continue my membership with ASWAC, continue to lend my support to other important women's issues, and by so doing, to not close the door to discussion, to debate, and hopefully to a greater understanding among women of varying social/political beliefs.

Monica Albanese
Edmonton

A Response to "k"

Dear K.:

I want so much to respond to some of the points in your letter. At the same time I am having difficulty finding the words. I suppose it is because my response is rather more complex than simply saying "yes, I agree" or "no, I don't". It seems to include a bit of both.

On the one hand, I want to validate your anger and frustration over what you experienced at the awards dinner. I understand some of what you feel for in previous years I too have left the dinner feeling most unhappy. On the other hand, I need to say "hey, wait a minute" to what feels like your decision to lash out sweepingly and indiscriminately at other women/women's groups with your anger (we get enough of that from patriarchy, right?).

Not agreeing with the tone, structure and concept of the YWCA awards dinner does not necessitate implicitly or explicitly belittling and condemning the

YWCA as a whole or the women who, for whatever reason, choose to be drawn to the awards dinner. I do not like the awards dinner and all the vestiges of patriarchy it perpetuates; I do admire the many other woman-supporting services and efforts of the Calgary YW. As a radical feminist I am angry that we still emulate the patriarchal habits and structures; as a woman still trying hard to break free of my own patriarchal conditioning, I can understand why an awards dinner would be attractive to some women. There must be a way of working with rather than against the YW in making the changes around the awards dinner.

You assume that "as yet the women of Alberta have not been heard giving voice to objections". Since coming to Alberta four years ago I have heard many women expressing their concerns about the awards dinner--some privately, some publicly. Don't despair "K", women are aware and are talking and being heard about it.

Cont'd p. 7

Women Mobilizing For Power

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women held its Annual General Meeting at the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa, March 16-19th. Over 400 delegates and observers attended, from some 285 member groups across Canada. ASWAC is one of those member groups, and I went as a delegate since Trudy Richardson, our nominee for NAC Regional Representative, couldn't attend.

Friday night opened the conference with a talk by Doris Anderson, who stepped down as President this year. She is succeeded by Chaveva Hosek from Toronto.

A panel discussion followed, on the conference theme 'Women Mobilizing for Power', largely focused on women's involvement in the political process. As someone who does not necessarily see federal politics as a solution to anything, I was intensely relieved when a woman from the audience took the microphone at the end to say "I have a lot of respect for women who take the risk of being battered in the House of Commons - however, that is not the only way to mobilize for power!"

One member of the panel had been asked to speak only four hours earlier, as a substitute. That was Maudie Barlow, President of the Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography and personal adviser to Trudeau, who provided for me another 'most memorable quote' when she said "The awesome amount of pornography in our country is a preparation for war."

Friday evening wrapped up with a lively skit called 'Ladies Against Women', performed by a Sudbury street-theatre group called 'Sticks and Stones'.

Most of Saturday was taken up by business sessions to deal with regional and committee reports, candidates' speeches, constitutional amendments and resolutions. Robert's Rules were out in full force (who is this Robert, anyway?!) and I found the whole process tedious at best, and outright damaging at worst. While the procedure allows things to 'move right along', it also silences many, many women who have vital things to say. (Having said that, I must add that I can't suggest an alter-

native - how would it be possible for 400 women to reach a consensus decision?!)

Saturday afternoon I attended a workshop called 'Grass-Roots Funding' which was one of the weekend's high points for me. I believe that this is a crucial issue for all of us, and welcomed the chance to share and receive some ideas. As a result of that workshop, a small group of us, by the end of the weekend, put together a resolution for the new NAC executive to consider the whole area of funding for women's groups. (More about this later!)



The banquet speaker Saturday night was Jill Vickers, political scientist and author of the book called 'But Can You Type?' Her theme was 'The Politics of Sex and Power', which was a clever disguise for an intriguing talk about creating 'feminist institutions'. (I know, I know, those two words sound contradictory - but it was an interesting concept and one that I would like to expand on in another newsletter perhaps!)

Sunday morning was taken up by two main events. The first was a major debate about a proposed move for the NAC office from Toronto to Ottawa. After much rousing debate (and good points for either position!) the resolution to move was defeated, and the office stays in Toronto for another year!

The other main event Sunday morning was a press conference with the manager of the hotel news stand to protest the pornography on the shelves. This was an exciting process to be part of, and everyone there was in support of the action, I'm sure - but I was

furiously on returning to Alberta to discover that the only part of the weekend covered nationally by the press was this event. It occurs to me that if this had been a national convention of Rotary Club delegates, there would likely have been hourly coverage of the entire event on the national news! There was certainly no lack of reporters and cameras throughout the weekend - and it was 'jam-packed' with things to report on. I am not naive about the 'selective perception' suffered by mainstream media - but it infuriates me, anyway.

Sunday evening we were invited by the 15 women MP's to a tea and wine social at the House of Commons. They had apparently been expecting about 100 women and well over 200 showed up, which threw them off a little! So the wine ran out early but the conversation went on and on ... I was introduced to a few of the MP's but I mostly hung out on the sidelines a lot. It was just a little too polite-bordering-on-formal for my taste!

On Monday morning, 225 of us left through the revolving doors of the hotel (...one by one by one ...) to walk up Parliament Hill for the lobby session at the House of Commons. On Friday evening, one of the speakers had said 'when NAC comes to town, the MP's shake in their boots', and I thought 'Oh sure'. But when I stood on the steps of Parliament looking two blocks down the hill at a two-block long procession of women, I knew it must be true.

This newsletter is too short to deal with the details of all the questions put to the politicians that morning, but I know that I came away from that lobby with an immense sense of pride in our ability as committed women to organize, question, analyze and articulate our concerns clearly and strongly. Any doubts I may have entertained about our ability to 'mobilize for power' vanished as I listened to us presenting questions and positions to those politicians, and felt the bond between the women in that room.

Another high point for me was a midnight visit to the peace camp

Cont'd p. 7

Response cont'd

I am concerned about the assumptions about ASWAC's role you must hold in order to be able to ask, "is ASWAC going to let this continue?". ASWAC is not some great, all-powerful, centralized monolith which dictates what women and women's groups can and cannot do (upon such power assumptions are awards dinners conceived). ASWAC has neither the capability or, more importantly, the desire to "let" the YW do or not do anything. What women can do is give the YW some honest, caring feedback about the situation. Also, we are not the "one group" speaking out on the status of women--there are many groups around the province working on this as well. To suggest ASWAC is complicit in keeping silent around the YW because we are not saying what you need to hear right now is, to say the least, unfair. It also reveals a rather low opinion of the intelligence and uniqueness of the women and the work of the YW and ASWAC.

There is so much more to be said and done about all this. I hope you will see fit to explore it further, whether through ASWAC or with other women in Calgary. Whatever you choose, I think it is important to recognize that the YW has and does "deserve a role in the affairs and most serious and important work of improving the status of women".

Meaghan Dean
Edmonton

Help Needed Fast

A young girl in our women's community will die if she doesn't get to Stockholm, Sweden, for a much needed brain operation very soon. Her name is Brandy Halushka, and she is suffering from Arteriovenous Malformation of the brain, which is a developmental abnormality of blood vessels in the brain. Although present from birth, the onset of symptoms of A.V. malformation, brain hemorrhage, is most common between ages 10 and 30. Brandy is ten years old and in the past few months has twice been in a critical condition in the U. of A. hospital with severe brain hemorrhage. She surprised the medical staff by surviving both of these hemorrhages but her doctor predicts that she will not survive another one.

There was little that could be done for people with Arteriovenous Malformation of the brain in the past but a new technique of proton-beam radiation is being researched and performed in Stockholm. There is a real urgency for Brandy to go to Stockholm for this operation; her doctor and family would like her to be there in early May 1984 as there is no warning given when she will have another, probably fatal brain hemorrhage.

You may not know Brandy herself; perhaps you know her mother Rita Derkson, an active feminist in our community, a member of ASWAC, Every Woman's Place and a Friend of Common Woman Books. At the moment on welfare, Rita needs to pay for much of the expenses

for this operation herself. The government will pay return fares for herself and Brandy and some of the medical expenses but not all, nor for the living expenses of Rita who needs to stay with her young daughter in Stockholm for one month. Rita doesn't have this money, do you?

This is an opportunity for the women's community of Alberta to support in a practical manner, a sister.

Andrea Ansbacher and Kathie Moules from Common Woman Books are organizing a fund raising campaign for Brandy, and your practical help of money donations is needed. Please send cheques to the "Brandy Halushka Fund" c/o Common Woman Books, 8208 104 St., Edmonton T6E 4E6. Mark the envelope "Attention Andrea". For more information, feel free to phone Andrea at CWB, 432-9344.

A CHILDREN'S BENEFIT FOR BRANDY HALUSHKA

Bring yourself and your family to the Centennial Library Theatre.
Saturday, April 14th from 1 - 3 pm

Admission Fee:
\$1.50 12 and under
2.50 over 12 years
5.00 "family" (3 persons or more)

Mobilizing cont'd

on the House of Commons grounds. Judy, from Fort McMurray, and I sat under the tarp for a half-hour chat with two young men who were huddled in sleeping bags. One of them was ill, yet they still welcomed the chance to talk with us about their purpose. I know one thing for sure - after only half an hour in that make-shift tent, I was cramped and cold. And they have been there, around the clock, for nearly a year now. I have always thought

that I am someone with the 'courage of her convictions' but after talking with those people, and hearing and reading about life in other peace camps, I'm not so sure anymore. I came out from under that tarp onto the snow and into the cold night air with a lump in my throat (and the question 'why?' stuck there), and my heart went out to all the brave, brave people around the globe in peace camps. I don't know if I could ever join them.

All in all, spending four days with over 400 women working to change the world was a 'once-in-a-lifetime' experience. The many, many conversations I had with women from right across Canada were incredibly motivating for me, and I am back in Alberta with a renewed sense of our personal and collective power to set this old, tired world on its heels! Thank-you ASWAC, for sending me to Ottawa!

Marilyn Guille



Playboy Subscription Challenged

The recent discovery that the University of Alberta supplies its students with pornographic material led to the following letter being sent.

Dear Mr. Peter Freeman, Chief Librarian,

As you are possibly aware, the University of Alberta's Periodical Library includes, among its learned journal holdings, the well-known pornographic magazine, Playboy.

I realize that my personal feelings about this (nor, I understand those of some of the female librarians) are not of interest to the library administration.

However, I am interested in trying to understand what the library sees as the educational purpose of subscribing to this magazine. In the view of most thoughtful people, it depicts women as playthings whose only object in life is to be sexually pleasing to men. This seems to be the main point to the magazine's publication.

I understand that, due to the budget restraints, the library must have a priority policy as to what periodicals it will carry. Therefore, I would like to know what the priority policy is that encourages the subscription to American pornographic magazines yet cannot afford other American periodicals.

Yours sincerely,
Diana Chown

No More Objectivity

Recently, someone said to me, "The trouble with you feminists is that you can never be objective!" I became, first, furious (after all, I'd been insulted, hadn't I?), and then frustrated because I felt I had no answer.

Last night, watching "60 Minutes" on the CBS network, I got my answer. It came from Andrea Dworkin. The story was entitled "The Politics of Pornography" and discussed the recent attempt by Ms. Dworkin and a feminist lawyer to create an ordinance in the city of Minneapolis that would challenge pornography as a civil liberties offence, as opposed to a criminal offence, thus allowing a citizen to charge a seller/pimp of pornography for threatening their civil rights. The City Council passed the amendment, only to be later vetoed by the Mayor.

During the report two men, who I believe were psychologists, said categorically that pornography lent general credence to the subjugation of women, and created a breeding ground for increased tolerance of violence against women. However, when asked what the solution was, they stated that not only did they NOT have a solution, but they felt it was their role to remain objective.

"Objectivity, as I understand it, means it does not happen to me", said Andrea Dworkin. It does not happen to me.

But it does happen to me. It happens each time I enter a store that sells pornography. It happens each time a pornographic movie is shown on television. It happens each time I pass a movie theatre playing pornography. It happens each time a thirteen year old boy picks up a sado/masochistic magazine. Each time a man/men rape a woman. And each time a child is sexually abused. Oh yes, it happens to me.

And I am not objective. I can not be objective. I don't want to be objective. I will not be objective.

Now I have my answer.

In Sisterhood,
Deborah Stupnikoff
Edmonton

You Can Take the Initiative

This is a sample letter prepared by Jeni Ellman that you might use to make initial contact with a store owner who sells pornography. Jeni feels that it is very important to identify yourself in the letter and leave a number where you can be contacted.

To Whom it May Concern:

I am taking this opportunity to voice my concerns about the pornographic materials you are carrying for sale in your store.

In order that you can identify the offensive materials, I would like to share a definition with you: "Pornography is that which violates a woman's human rights through the abuse of her sexuality."

I want to make it clear that I am not upset by the depiction of nudity or healthy sexuality. However, I strongly protest the availability - to adults and children alike - of written or visual materials that contain sexual violence, degradation, ridicule and/or misinformation about the "appropriate" sex roles of women and men in our society.

I am giving you one week to remove this hate literature from your store. After this time I will be involving other community members in a potential boycott and calling the police about the possibility of charging you under the existing obscenity laws.

Please do not see this as a "censorship" issue. Personal freedom stops at the point where it infringes on another's well-being. I'm asking you to take some responsibility in bettering our community - a place where violence against women is an all-too-frequent happening.

If you want to speak further to me about my concerns, feel free to call me at (your number)

Sincerely,
A Customer

I Am A Woman

I am a woman.
I am sitting tall on the cool summer earth.
My hair blows long, wild, and split (as it is now)
in the wind among the stars.

My arms reach out to both sides - heavy at
the top, tanned forearms, thin wrists,
thick fingers, as they are now.

Hands outstretched.

My breasts swollen.

Full moon rising in the early evening sky.

My trunk is short and thick.

My buttocks heavy and muscled.

My thighs spread apart, They are heavy and
strong, as they are now.

Between my legs a mountain range, then
beyond, treed foothills reaching to
green plains as far as I can see in
the sun's last light.

My calves are powerful, as now.

My feet stable and big as they always
have been.

Relaxed and strong I rest.

I remember.

I think.

I see.

This is my world.

My life.

I am a woman.

I am a big woman.

I hunger for life.

I long for pleasure.

I have a huge capacity to create
to make songs.
to sing.
to dance.
to be part of the shaking of the world.

My temper.

A thunderstorm blowing in as I remember
how I learned to hate myself; as I
remember only yesterday the fat
woman in the window display dressing
the headless, inanimate, female manikin
in latest fashion.

Storm passes over me thunder rolls into me.

My body tenses with the power.

I hold myself in the tension.

I press the earth with the tension.

I see.

I finally see.

Other big women with lands between their
thighs holding the earth.

I reach my hands to touch the hands
of women reaching, touching.

We who have been hated as we have hated
ourselves, we touch each other.

I shake with the power.

I am strong in the tension.

We catch each other's gaze and we laugh.

Until we cry.

Until we cry no more.

But the earth, the earth we love begins
to tremble.



The Myth of Mental Illness

Consider
the glamorous life
of the melancholic.
Alone, tortured,
yet
intense, driven and creative.

Consider
the romanticizing of mental illness
so fashionably liberal in some circles.

Sure,
some people express powerful feelings and ideas
in (usually bad) poetry.
Some draw fascinating abstractions
of what they know, and what they fear.

But most remain
isolated,
handicapped and uncreative,
agonizingly fearful of the real
and the not-so-real world.

It doesn't seem like a good time to me.

©1984 Kathleen Palm
Edmonton

Jeni Ellman
January 22, 1984 3:30 a.m.

Armies For Peace

Dear Diana,

I've been wondering of late what "to do" about our discussion of peace and Voice of Women and then realized that I too felt most comfortable jotting my thoughts in the form of a letter. Also, I quit my job which I find makes things much more conducive to finding the time and energy for more peaceful pursuits...

Good grief-- do you think that could be IT? Just get everyone in the world to quit their jobs and VOILA global commitment to peace? I wonder what would happen if everyone in the world had nothing else pressing to do except think and talk and work on peace ...

Wouldn't it be interesting if there were as many jobs, industries, governments, interest groups, soldiers, rituals, religions whose sole existence depended on the existence of peace as presently depend on war?

Think of it... whole "armies", "navies" and "air forces" of people whose sole headset, training and work was finding and nurturing peace. Not only would they be paid for such work, but be greatly honored and admired and wear beautiful uniforms of every color in the rainbow--and they would be an integrat part of every important public occasion...

"Problem" children would go to highly respected Peace Schools where they would get a good healthy dose of freedom, listening, hugs, caring, good food and all the time and space they need to do what they want. Make real men out of them...

And there would be the draft--into a kind of New Age Peace Corps, complete with bootcamp. Six weeks of rigorous, highly intensive training in the skills of non-violence where they would be expected to forget everything they've ever been taught about hate, violence, mistrust, nation-

alism, national security, enemy, right/wrong, them/us. And once loved and encouraged into basic shape they could go on and :specialize":

"Army"--to protect and love the land--and teach this by example



NORTHERN Q

"Navy"--to protect and love the oceans. Find out what the dolphins and whales are saying--and teach this by example

"Airforce"--protect and love the air we breathe--and teach this by example

And instead of border guards, border openers--then no borders at all. Instead of "intelligence agencies" dedicated to the preservation of lies, fear, secrecy, manipulation and death--what--everybody talking to everybody all at once about anything and everything--a marvellous, vibrant, life loving shattering of all the silences...

The possibilities go on and on...

And eventually what would happen for those who still want war and hate and death? Well, maybe they would be the ones who have to do the picketing: "We want death--we want war", "Give us a bruise--give us the cruise", "Arms are for killing", "Destroy the planet and everything on it". And they'd *

sing "We are hating, frightened people"...They would be the ones having to justify why they want to die...

And in this world though, the war-niks would not be met with violence--beatings, arrests, rape, ridicule, epithets, fearful uncomprehending hatred. No, they would be understood as the pained, damaged humans that they are. We would weep for their pain and we'd lovingly but firmly refuse to do to them what they wish upon us. We would always offer warm food and gentle talk...

And maybe eventually they'd get tired of trying to fend off all the gentleness around them. And gradually, one by one, the caring world would envelope them and they'd give up--find a soft, safe embrace and at last let themselves cry--howl out their pain. Cry and cry and cry until--as the last shuddering sobs subside--find peace...

Meaghan Dean

Healing Images of Women

I'm getting sick of pornography. I'm sick of it surrounding me, of course. I hate it in the corner store and on TV as much as anyone. I've done my bit of complaining and protesting, and I've certainly done my bit of reading and listening to others who have developed analyses of pornography - many of these analyses I agree with, wholeheartedly. I've done my bit of looking at the stuff, the magazines and the films, in order to know 'what I'm talking about', so I can explain-to-men what pornography is! And I'm sick of all of it. I'm glad many women and a few men have stronger stomachs than I because we need all the work we can get on this, and all the issues - BUT I'M TAKING THE SUMMER OFF!

That is, I'm going to be looking for healthy, healing images of women and children, and enjoying them, and sharing them with as many people as I can. I can't wait till we've sorted out the distinction between porn and erotica before I start celebrating strength and beauty and freedom in women.

Help me! Instead of 'merely' protesting the pin-up calendar at work (no, I'm not belittling this - it's very hard to do) put up your own pictures of powerful, free women. Take pictures of women unbound, and unafraid, and send them to all the places you can think of for publication. Stick them on billboards, telegraph poles, fridges! Look for writing which celebrates women who are actors in their own lives rather than the objects of others' fantasies. Write your own! Then read it to friends, lovers, children; send it to everyone

Social Change

Burn out or survival? Anger is destructive, isolating, emotionally depleting. Risk taking by openly sharing feelings builds bridges of support, understanding, healing, where both survival and achievement becomes possible in a warm circle of feelings and sense of purpose, well being, self worth - where social change will occur without burnout.

Almira Nicol

you know who can read. Talk about beauty and strength and freedom in women as well as how we have been demeaned by a sick society.

Find art which celebrates women, such as the recent "Hillmother" exhibition at the Edmonton Art Gallery. Drag your friends along.

Listen to women's music; songs about peace and freedom and caring, and make up your own rental videos to go with them.

Support others who are promoting positive images in women, as well as protesting the images we hate so much. Don't just boycott the bad stuff - buy and borrow books, pictures, records of the good stuff and share it around as much as you can.

And you - you beautiful, strong, powerful, free woman who probably will never make the centrefold - are you out there visible and audible or are you hiding at home, or in a job which imprisons you, or in clothes which are uncomfortable, just because you think you don't meet the cultural standards for beauty and have a hunch that's probably your fault? Well, look at how those standards are arrived at - and get out there to increase your communities' awareness of what women really look like.

If the Miss Universe Pageant is going to come to Alberta this summer, we'll hear even more than usual about some pretty stereotyped notions of beauty. We're going to need to work hard between now and then to broaden Alberta's concept of what a beautiful woman is.

Mair Smith

Peace Coffee House

The Voice of Women are organizing a "Peace Coffee House" which will be held on the evening of Sunday, April 29, 1984 at 8:00 p.m. Ascension Lutheran Church, 8405 83 St. (across from the Bonnie Doon Mall) has been kind enough to allow us to use their facilities downstairs. Please use the rear entrance.

We look forward to sharing with you good music, good coffee and goodies all at a nominal fee. The admission charge will be three dollars at the door. Please tell everyone possible. Contacts are Juliette at 435-7633 and Betty at 439-0445.

Wrinkle

I've got a wrinkle. I found it a few nights ago while checking my face in the car mirror. (I go through phases of checking my face; sometimes for blemishes, sometimes to admire, sometimes for something more nebulous that I can't quite name.)

Anyway, this wrinkle irritates me. It runs down the left side of my mouth - a mouth I like a lot - and heralds the arrival of many co-wrinkles.

Just when I've come to terms with the way I look, come to enjoy how I look to others, come to feel good about my body and face ... Now, it seems I have to adjust to change (which is not my strongest point) and get to know a whole new physical me.

Of course, my Feminist intellect accepts - nay, welcomes - Ms. Wrinkles and Co. I'm looking forward to being a crazy old lady; just think of what I'll be able to get away with on account of the "element of surprise"! But my not-so-simple gut tightens in apprehension. Not so long ago seem the days when I liked to make love flat on my back; apart from being less work, it offered me the concave stomach I knew I "should" have.

Now, just as I'm comfortable, I'm going to have to re-adjust. Luckily for me, all the women I know are changing in the same direction and we can explore this one together.

Jeni Ellman

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ASWAC Speakers List

ASWAC receives many requests from women's groups for speakers, workshop facilitators, and so on. We also get a lot of calls from media people who are looking for information or feedback on specific women's issues. Our speakers' list is outdated and we would like to be able to recommend more women who are interested in doing this kind of work.

Please complete this questionnaire and return it to ASWAC, Box 1573, Edmonton, T5J 2N7.

I am available to speak to groups _____ and/or media _____

Usual times that I am available (ie. evenings, weekends, weekdays; only after work to media, etc.) _____

You can give my name and phone number(s) out _____ or I would prefer that ASWAC pass on the request to me first _____

I will only deal with particular media (ie. only newspapers or anything but the Alberta Report or Sun!) _____

I require an honourarium/fee/mileage costs ... _____

These are the issues I am prepared to speak about (Please be specific - ie. microtechnology not work)

City Limits



In the struggle to provide a source of alternative women's publications, books mostly, I read all the women's newsletters and papers, dig through hundreds of catalogues yearly, and talk to as many women (and men) as are interested in what is available. We carry feminist theory, women's history, and then all the run-of-the-mill stock like psychology, mythology, health and some of the wonderful anti-sexist children's books. But I know that there are people out there looking for books and who certainly have favourites that we're missing. If only I knew about them ...

In the meantime, we're expanding our section on wife-battering and child abuse. Many of you will be glad to know that Lenore Walker's new book, *The Battered Woman Syndrome* will be here in late August. It will be available only in hardcover for the first year or so. The publisher has not as yet told us what the hardcover price will be.

The Powers of Desire, the Politics of Sexuality edited by Ann Snitow et al is in stock now and generating interest.

In *A Different Voice* by Carol Gilligan reveals the rejection of feminine psychology in the establishment of norms for the developing adolescent, and why this has been done.

Silent Knife, Cesarean Prevention and Vaginal Birth After Cesarean by Nancy Wainer Cohen and Lois J. Estner is one of the most important books on childbirth in the past few years. Gena Corea, author of *Hidden Malpractice*, says of this book "Birth belongs in women's hands and *Silent Knife*, a painstakingly researched and passionately written book, will help put it back there." CAPSAC (Calgary Association of Parents and Professionals for Safe Alternatives in Childbirth - ASAC in Edmonton) has information on this

Property Rights Not Motherhood Issue

The Ontario Committee on the Status of Women is a voluntary organization of individuals and groups involved in work on issues affecting the status of women. We would like to inform your group of our concerns regarding the proposed amendment to Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The amended section reads: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty, security, of the person, and the enjoyment of property and the right now to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

It would entrench property rights in the Charter, in the same section as the basic rights of life, liberty and security of the person. There has not been much publicity concerning this proposal, and as a result, very little discussion has taken place. This is a problem. The possible effects of this amendment's adoption have not been fully examined

subject as well as other child-birth issues.

Our lesbian fiction section continues to expand. Virago Press is coming out with a few new titles in May/June. I'm also hoping that Rita Mae Brown will have a new book this fall. Her last book, *Sudden Death*, lacked the humour of her other books but kept her acute sense of perception and emotion. It's just out in paperback and we have it in stock.

Sometime in October, Bronwin Wallace, a Toronto feminist poet, will be reading in the bookstore. We'll keep you posted.

Come in with your booklists, for coffee and a browse. The more support we get from you, the better selection we will have, and therefore will be available to you.

Jill Seldon
City Limits
Calgary

and most people are not aware of the problems which could arise from it. The amendment may jeopardize legislation in such areas as family law, labour law and many of our social welfare programs. For example, at present most legislation in the area of family law gives wives who have been physically abused, have small children and have no alternative place to go, the right to apply for exclusive possession of the matrimonial home. If that house is registered in the husband's name alone, an order for the exclusive possession will obviously interfere with his enjoyment of property. It is expected that husbands will resist a wife's application and ask the Courts to strike down the provisions of exclusive possession as offending their property rights under the charter.

This amendment must be adopted by two-thirds of the provinces, which together constitute at least 50% of the total population of Canada, as well as by the Federal government before it becomes law. It has already been adopted by New Brunswick and British Columbia, and has been introduced in the federal parliament once at the time of the introduction of the Charter. However, it was then defeated.

We are uncertain as to when it will be re-introduced for consideration at the federal level, but we are quite certain that it will be. It is our fear that this will happen with no notice, and that little time will be provided for debate. It may also be introduced at any time in a provincial legislature.

We are writing to you because we feel that you should be concerned with this issue. Public awareness is crucial at this point, so please discuss the issue with your members and monitor the press for further developments. You may want to take action similar to ours and write your M.P. and member of the provincial legislature or the caucus of each political party, asking what their position on the issue is.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like further information on the subject please contact us c/o Leah Taylor, OCSW, Box 188, Stn. Q, Toronto M4T 2M1.

Exciting Equal Pay Ruling

After more than 20 years of legislation, women may finally have won their most important victory since Title VII of the Civil Rights Act expressly outlawed sex discrimination. Last December a federal judge ordered the Washington state government to fork over almost a billion dollars in back pay and wage increases to women workers who had been systematically underpaid.

Though it has been illegal to pay women less than men for the same work since the 1963 Equal Pay Act, as of 1982 women working full time still earned an average of 62 cents for every dollar paid to men. One problem in redressing the inequity has been that, by and large, men and women do different work: certain types of jobs (secretary, nurse, librarian) are almost exclusively "pink collar" ghetto work, while others (janitor, driver, electrician) are usually done by men. Thus, objective wage comparisons have been difficult, a matter of apples and oranges—that is, until the introduction of the "comparable worth" concept, which goes beyond equal pay for equal work to the same pay for different jobs of comparable value.

The Washington state suit was the biggest comparable worth claim since a 1981 Supreme Court ruling legitimized the formula. It also yielded by far the most sweeping settlement: Judge Jack E. Tanner ordered the state to pay its women workers a whopping \$800 million to \$1 billion to compensate for its "direct, overt and institutionalized discrimination." He based his ruling, in part, on a job evaluation study by an outside consulting firm.

Ironically, the state had supplied the evidence of its own guilt. As far back as 1974 state government—prodded by the Washington Federation of State Employees—had begun commissioning detailed evaluations of its job classifications. By devising a point system for such factors as qualifications, skill, and responsibility, the outside consultants were able to assign comparable values to jobs as different as librarian and electrician, secretary and fork lift operator. When the points were added up, the lag

in women's wages became apparent. And the state acknowledged the gap by attempting, on several occasions, to legislate corrective action.

By 1981, though, the union had decided that the state's good intentions were too little, too late, and it went to court with the government's own studies as evidence. Even as the state legislature was considering a \$15 million authorization under a new

attorney for the women employees, insists that any claim of financial hardship is "irrelevant". The state took money that didn't belong to it by paying women less. It's like robbing a bank and then saying you can't afford to pay back the money."

Both Gov. John Spellman and state attorneys say they plan to appeal the decision; the case may go as far as the Supreme Court. If upheld, the ruling "could well



Gail Geltner

bill to bring women's wages up to parity by 1993, Judge Tanner ordered more substantial and more immediate action. As he remarked to the Wall Street Journal, "I can't find any case where, once discrimination is found, you can take ten years to correct it."

Tanner has also called for new pay formulas which will raise women's wages about 31 percent.

State officials have warned that such a large settlement could have a "devastating" impact on the state's economy. But Winn Newman,

break the back of sex-based wage discrimination", claims Newman, because it affects "virtually all" public and private employers.

By some estimates, it could cost employers across the country \$150 billion a year to raise women workers to the same wage levels as men who do work of comparable worth. After twenty years on the books, the Equal Pay Act may actually acquire some bite.

Lee Aitken, from:
New Age Journal
March 1984

**“Why Do They Say
We’re Militant?
We Don’t Even Have A
Helicopter!”**
(Flo Kennedy)

Winnipeg Women's Festival

A Canadian women's music and cultural festival is happening in Winnipeg this September 1st and 2nd! As the historical silence of women breaks down, a great wealth of artistic and cultural expression is emerging. 'Our Time is Now' is a festival to celebrate this process.

'Our Time is Now' will bring together women performers and writers from diverse cultural and regional backgrounds to present our experiences in a vital and creative way. Featuring many of Canada's excellent performers, the Festival will offer the audience the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of musical styles from folk, rock, blues and jazz to traditional.

Rainbow stage theatre, at Kildonan Park in Winnipeg will be the main stage where programming will take place throughout the weekend. Under cover of a tent, a smaller stage area will be set up for workshops and children's entertainment. Local artists and craftswomen will display and sell their work.

Kris Anderson and Joan Miller, Festival organizers can be reached by writing to the Canadian Women's Music and Cultural Festival, 745 Westminster Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 1A5, phone 204: 786-1921. SPREAD THE WORD!

Hecates Players

Hecates Players, the Edmonton Women's Theatre Group, will be performing their play, "Taking Back Our Own" on May 4th at 7:30 at the Unitarian Church, 12530 110 Avenue. The provincial executive of the NDP Women's Section is sponsoring the performance and tickets will be \$3 payable at the door.

"Taking Back Our Own" is a play about issues facing Alberta women, past and present and specific issues dealt with are prairie women, pensions, poverty, pornography and violence against women.

For further information, contact Starr at 453-2854 or Terry at 465-6906.

Edson Health Conference

A women's health conference is being organized in Edson for Saturday, April 28 at the FCSS Family Centre, 50th Street and 6th Avenue for 9 to 4:30.

The theme of the conference is taking responsibility for our own health and four workshops are planned for the day. They are:

- .Self-care and the self-care movement - Jeannette Boman, Faculty of Nursing, U. of A.
- .Women and the Aging Process - Kay Dyer, Faculty of Nursing, U. of A.
- .Optimum Nutrition for Health - Hester Elliot, Nutritionist
- .Reproductive Health - Jeni Ellman, ASWAC

In addition to the workshops, information on various health issues will be available. The conference can hold a maximum of 60 people and the cost is \$10 for the day. A lunch will be provided and childcare will be available if there is a demand. For more information and to pre-register, contact Barbara Prescott during the day at 723-4338.

Vancouver Health Collective

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective has recently received a grant to do a women's health education project, which will include a major November conference in Vancouver. The women involved will also be able to visit Edmonton for up to a full day to present a mini-workshop, and leave free information packages on women's health issues.

Workshop topics could be breast health, vaginal/cervical health, pre-menstrual syndrome, menopause and DES.

If anyone out there is interested in helping to organize this Edmonton event, please call the ASWAC office for more information.

Slave Lake Network

At the ASWAC Assembly in November a few members said that they would like to see more success stories in the newsletter. So, for some good news ...

I attended a dinner meeting of the Slave Lake Women's Network on March 12. There were 103 women out to this event, the greatest number the Network has had to date! Every six weeks or so the Network organizes a dinner or wine and cheese and combines the social with a presentation on a particular issue. This evening the topic was women and work, options for the future and many high school women were in attendance at the special invitation of the Network.

The Network's priority right now is establishing a women's emergency shelter for the area. If you can help the network with information or support, contact Wendy Beacock, Secretary, Box 918 Slave Lake, TOG 2A0.

F. Adams

Edmonton Meeting

Donna Tink, one of the two Alberta women on the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, is organizing a meeting with Edmonton women for April 16th, 7:30 pm at the Centennial Library Theatre. She would like to talk about CACSW and get input from Edmonton women into the coming year's work. She wants our concerns to be part of that work.

Dr. Lindsay Nieman with Status of Women Canada (Judy Erola's department) will be attending the meeting to talk about the role of non-governmental women's groups in the 1985 UN Conference on women that will be held in Nairobi. This conference marks the end of the UN Decade for women.

Also coming to the meeting is Dr. Sheila Wynn the newly appointed Director of the Women's Secretariat. This meeting will give us a chance to discuss the new government structure, what it means for the government and for the women of Alberta.

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.



Jeni

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ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE