



ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE

August 1985

Vol. 6 No. 5



Photo by Sheryl Ackerman of Positive Images: Women By Women

18 Hours At A Glance

Present: Julie Walker, Amanda LeRougetel, Suzn Morgan, Lisa Walter, Janet Beebe and Joan White Calf (guest). The meeting was held in Camrose.

Opening We each provided news of what's happening around the province. See this issue for news.

Recording Our Meetings We decided to stop taping our meetings, as no-one was using the tapes. We agreed instead to take more care in 18 HOURS AT A GLANCE to include background information on each item. The task of recording minutes will now involve a writer and an editor. Our intent is to make this column more informative for members.

New Members Suzn wants to be informed of memberships taken out in Calgary. We agreed to send her notice by mail, so she can contact new members. This will be evaluated at the next meeting, as it could be a valuable tool for improving member networking.

Feminist Funding Lobby NAC (National Action Committee on the Status of Women) has written a second time urging ASWAC and its members to write to Members of Parliament asking for continued support for feminist groups. Right-wing groups have been attempting to make inroads into the limited federal funding now available. The first time ASWAC wrote we received assurance from Mr. Mulroney's office that the present government would continue to fund feminist groups. Board members will write letters similar to Amanda's letter to Bill Lesick (the Edmonton MP who channels our SecState funding to us).

Council on Women's Affairs Sylvia McKinley has written questioning our letter of support. She also informed us of the Council's Annual General Meeting on October 6th. Lisa will meet with Sylvia to reiterate our support with reservations, and try to iron out the problem.

Subscriptions We will be renewing or subscribing to: Network (Saskatchewan Women's Newsletter); the newsletter of the Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography; and The Advocate (newsletter of the Canadian Human Rights Association). We will try to establish better contact with the Saskatchewan feminist groups and in-

Write them to our November assembly. Amanda will write NAC for group member lists for the four western provinces.

Sexuality Conference

This conference to be held November 1-3 in Calgary, will feature Linda Lee Tracy and Makeda Silvera. It sounds great!

Alberta Women's Newsmagazine

Some concern was expressed re the negative comment about ASWAC which appeared on the letters page of the Newsmagazine's charter issue. However, overall we're glad to see the magazine on the newsstands. Lisa will approach the collective to discuss our co-existence and offer our continued support to their collective. We will write a letter to SecState endorsing their continued funding after our meeting. Feel free to send along your own endorsement to: Secretary of State, Main Floor, Harley Court, 10045 111 Street, Box 188, Edmonton T5K 1K4. If you haven't seen the Newsmagazine's charter issue, and would like a copy, phone 433 0063 (Edmonton) or write The Newsmagazine, Ste 213, 8204 104 St, Edmonton T6E 4E6.

"Write a Letter"

This new pamphlet, available from DECCA, c/o Arusha Cross Cultural Centre, 233 10 St SW, Calgary, AB T2N 1V6, promises to make writing lobby letters an easier task. Names and addresses of politicians at both the federal and provincial level are listed. We've ordered 100 for \$15.00. Contact the ASWAC office if you'd like one.

Reclaim the Night

National movers have established September 20 as the date for "Reclaim the Night" demonstrations. Planning is underway in both Edmonton and Calgary. How about Red Deer? Fort McMurray? Grande Prairie? Lethbridge? We'll call the provincial association of women's shelters (ACWS) and the Sexual Assault Centres to see if they are interested in helping to coordinate this event province wide.

ANWA

The Alberta Native Women's Association is recruiting members to strengthen its organizational base. Call the ASWAC office if you are interested in supporting this group in either a member or an associate member capacity. Memberships are \$1.

Budget and Staffing

Now that our funding application is finally near approval by Sec. State, we are adjusting our budget for the 1985-1986 year. Our first priority is to hire a second full-time staff person. The new job, Project Coordinator, will entail coordinating projects undertaken by ASWAC, selective fieldwork, research into additional funding sources, and building membership. We hope to have a new staff person by September 1. She will be based in Edmonton, to provide much-needed support to Amanda, who has been holding the fort alone, since Sheila's kit project ended. The position will be advertised by word-of-mouth and by a flyer to local feminist organizations. The hiring committee will consist of Amanda, Janet, and (tentatively) Lisa or Sheila. Watch for more information on projects in the September and October newsletters.

Annual Assembly

Most of our two-day meeting was spent planning our November 22-24 annual assembly. We have confirmed the location (Westridge Convention Centre in Devon). In the next issue of the newsletter, you will receive a conference brochure/registration form. We look forward to seeing you there.

Employment Equity Legislation

Flora MacDonald has introduced legislation that combines voluntary affirmative action with equal pay measures. The legislation applies to those companies regulated by the Federal Government which employ more than 100 people, and requires mandatory goal-setting and reporting to government. The government sets the standards but the goal levels are voluntary and set by each company. We'll send out a response to Alberta newspapers, with copies to MP's.

Women's Skills Project

This project in Burnaby, BC, has produced material on women's worker co-ops.

Financial Statements

The financial statements for this month were reviewed. We repaid the loan from our operating account with funds from the SecState instalment that just arrives (\$25,515) and invested most of the rest.

Ontario Coalition of Abortion Clinics

The Coalition has written to us advising that a national strategy has been established for 1985-1986. They are hoping for tribunals across the country to hear the "case" against Section 251 of the Criminal Code. Women who have had abortions will be speaking out against the law. We'll aim for at least two Alberta tribunals in January.

Educational Kits

The kits are not yet ready. Only the photocopying remains to be done. Brigitte will follow up on this.

AGT Listings

We have decided to list ASWAC's number in six regional phone directories: Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray. If this seems to be an effective way to reach women, we will consider listing in more directories next year.



ASWAC Board

Brigitte Baradov	1203 Lismer Green NW, Cal.	T3B 2V7	282-9843
Janet Beebe	Box 1566, Camrose, T4V 1X4		679-0268
Marilyn Guille	Box 1941, Whitecourt, T0E 2L0		778-3669
Amanda LeRougetel	9625-76 Ave, Edmonton, T6C 0K4		433-8615
Judy Moynihan	190 Highland Close, Ft. McMurray, T9H 3T5		791-4395
Suzn Morgan	6423 Laurentian Way SW, Cal.		246-8755
Julie Walker	2205 2nd Ave NW, Cal. T2N 0H1		283-0488
Lisa Walter	9759-66 Ave, Edmonton, T5K 2M5		435-8848
Marlene WhiteSun	Box 418, Hythe, T0H 2C0		356-3797

Next Board Meeting

The next Board Meeting will take place on the weekend of Sept 7-8 in Fort McMurray. Please call the office (424 3073) or Judy Moynihan in Fort McMurray (791 4395) if you'd like to attend.

Letters To ASWAC

Choice of words really hurts

I know that the worst thing a feminist can do in the abortion debate is to get "hooked" into defensiveness or anger. What a victory for the 'pro-life' forces!

Well, I am angry! I just read an article in a right-wing, Christian publication. Had I been 'fence-sitting' (which I wasn't) this article would have placed me firmly on 'pro-choice' turf. (Who was it who said they do a lot for our cause?)

What I am angry about is the language they use. I've heard the expression 'inflammatory' many times before . . . in this particular article, which was only 3 pages long, there were no less than 14 inflammatory statements.

I have always been a sincere, honest and caring person, and have tried to make sincere, honest and caring choices. I chose abortion once, long ago and far away, and I made that choice from an unselfish, caring position after much hurt and soul-searching - as have hundreds of other women.

So, when I read the language anti-choices use to describe me and my choices, it hurts - and makes me angry. Here's a few samples . . . "abortion for convenience", "major form of birth control", "(feminists) say, the unborn is just 'fetal tissue', just a piece of meat", "aborting living humans",

Newsletter appreciated

Dear Sister(s)

First, I must congratulate you on a very newsy piece of work. As one who volunteers some time in typing for the newsletter, I know how much work you do in collecting and collaborating information so that it can reach the membership quickly.

Although I find the occasional article to be rather empty of any real content, by and large, I think you are consistantly putting together an up to date and sensitive publication.

Thankyou for your continuing efforts.

Sandi

"to kill her own unborn", "kill the defenseless baby", "pro-abortionist" . . .

I have no more patience. I cannot any longer attempt to respond to these words in debate. When they say these things, they are not talking about me - but they claim to be, and thousands believe it. That is inflammatory.

In the first place, I take life much more seriously that they can ever imagine - and that includes the choice to have an abortion.

Besides, all the arguments have nothing to do with anything. It

is becoming more and more clear to me that we are talking about choice. Each individual woman **MUST HAVE THE CHOICE WHETHER TO REPRODUCE OR NOT.** Straightforward and simple, uncluttered by the other garbage that distracts us from our goal. If women shouldn't have that choice, who should? Men? Gimme a break! . . .

That is the only issue for me now, and my stand has more clarity than ever before.

Marilyn Guille

I'm a feminist, but . . .

Dear Madam:

I am writing in response to your April 85 request for feedback re ASWAC's involvement with lesbian issues or gay rights.

I feel very strongly that ASWAC should dissociate itself from this area for several reasons.

1. Primarily - I do not consider this a "women's" issue. Homosexuality is a peoples' issue - a human rights issue for both males and females. As such it is inappropriate for men or women to lobby separately regarding the matter. It really muddies the water to do otherwise.

2. It decreases the credibility of ASWAC to lobby in this area - it is destructive to ASWAC's public image because the idea of lesbianism is so radical to so many people. It can't help but spill over and affect society's attitude toward other issues ASWAC is dealing with and have a negative impact on issues that are truly women's.

3. I believe your involvement re gay rights affects the support you get via memberships. I certainly consider myself to be a feminist and, because I supp-

ort your activities in other areas, I take out a membership. I could not at this time become active in your organization because I would feel personally embarassed to be associated with your public image because of ASWAC's involvement re lesbianism. I have no strong feelings positive or negative regarding homosexuality - but I strongly feel that it is inappropriate to be dealing with it in your organization.

Yours truly
Lois Tomlinson.



Education des femmes

Thanks for your support

Dear Board Members of ASWAC:

First of all, let me thank you for your support of my fast in trying to get the government to move on the Bablitz case last fall. For your information, the Minister has informed Mrs. Bablitz that she may come into the Social Services offices to review her files (the files he told Mrs. Bablitz, me and the press were "dead" last year)! However, Mrs. Bablitz has also received a letter from legal aid officials saying that she will not be covered for any legal actions by legal aid because her actions may include suing a government agency! Talk about catch-22 conditions! We are at a stalemate as far as Mrs. Bablitz is concerned for lack of money to get her the legal help she needs! Meanwhile her little girl still suffers from the beating she received in a foster home 11 years ago when she was three and a half!

Enclosed in this letter, please find a copy of my petition against corporal punishment being used on foster children in the province. I am soliciting the support of as many groups as I

And the petition . . .

Nancy Leavitt's petition reads:

We, the undersigned, do petition the Social Services and Community Health Department of Alberta and Hon. Neil Webber, Minister of the Department, to reconsider your stand on corporal punishment for foster children in the Province of Alberta. By virtue of those recommendations made in the Thomlinson Report (on Richard Cardinal), the Ivany Report (on the foster care program) and the Cavanagh Report (on the Child Welfare system), we petition you THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA to recognize the status of children in our society. Corporal punishment is not used on criminals in our society, neither should it be used on society's children.

If you wish to make your own copy of the petition to circulate remember that each person must print her name, give her address and her signature. Edmonton members may wish to come and sign the petition at the ASWAC office.

can get. If you have any questions about the petition, please feel free to call me (469 1459). I am asking that it be returned to me by early September.

Thankyou again,
Sincerely,
Nancy Leavitt.

Response to Sec. State

This is a copy of the letter sent by ASWAC in acknowledgement of the first instalment of our Secretary of State grant for this year. It was sent to Bill Lesick MP for Edmonton East, with copies to the Prime Minister, NAC, and the Regional Director for Secretary of State.

Dear Mr. Lesick:

We were pleased to finally receive the first instalment of our Secretary of State grant for the year 1985/86 last Friday. This first amount of \$25, 515.00 will enable our organization to continue functioning adequately for the time being.

While the Board members of the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee were disappointed with the lengthy delays involved in our application process to the Secretary of State Women's Program, we were pleased to receive an increase in funding from last year. We hope this is the trend of the future!

Recent meetings with the regional office of the Secretary of State indicate that we are being recommended for a total of \$81,000. for the year 1985/86. We are, of course, hoping that the Honourable Walter McLean will see fit to approve this recommendation and that more cheques will be forthcoming through you in the not too distant future.

Should the full amount be approved then this organization will be more assured than ever before that the Progressive Conservative government is committed not only to the principle of equality for women but is also committed to the practical support of those organization which serve to improve the status of women in Canada.

NEWS ITEMS:

Indian Act falls short

Though the changes to the Indian Act somewhat vindicate women's long-standing demand for equality, there are still "grave inadequacies", says Chaviva Hosek, president of the National Action Committee (NAC).

The new bill still discriminates against the women's children who may gain Indian status but have no automatic right to live on their mother's reserve except during their years of dependency.

According to NAC, the government bill, in an effort to strike a compromise between the human rights of non-status Indian women and their children on the one hand and self-government demands of the bill's opponents on the other, has failed to recognize the desire of mothers to preserve family relationships and the right of individuals to live "in community with other members of their group..." as provided by a U.N. covenant ratified by Canada in 1976.

Photography project grows

In the fall of 1984, Pamela Harris produced a photographic series of 25 portraits of Toronto feminists and feminist collectives, paired with text supplied by the woman or group photographed. This project is currently being exhibited in the Toronto area.

With the aid of a Canada Council grant, she now plans to expand this project to cover women in other parts of Canada. She would like to hear from women around the country concerning their and others' work as feminists. Her focus is on women and collectives who have been an active part of the women's movement over a period of years.

She needs contact people in centres across Canada. Please contact her by writing:
Pamela Harris
306 Glenn Road
TORONTO, Ont.
M4W 2X3

Unity in diversity a focus



ASWAC Annual Conference
November 22-24 1985.

Planning for the conference is going well. The site, Westridge Resort outside Devon (which is just outside Edmonton) has been booked, the fee and budget confirmed and the workshops finalized. Promotion materials are going out soon.

We're expecting 150-200 women to come and spend a weekend talking about issues, re-thinking old positions, examining new dilemmas and enjoying the entertainment. We'll have the site all to ourselves so the spaces outside and inside will be open for displays, talk among sisters and ad hoc caucuses and workshops.

The workshops are organized in four streams: Issues, Ideas, Organizing and Arts/Culture. In the Issues stream, workshops on Older Women's Issues, Health, the Charter of Rights and Alberta Women, and Legislated Poverty are planned.

In the Organizing stream, Getting the Message into Mainstream Media, Launching a New Service, Funding For That Project, and Organizing in Small Communities will be featured. In the Ideas stream two workshops look at the world: Work for Wages, Work for Love, Work for the Cause, and Reproductive Technology and Women's Lives, and two workshops look at the women's movement: Building Bridges with Ethnic Women and Lesbian Feminism: Fighting for Visibility.

The Arts/Culture stream will in-

clude Songwriting; Jam Session which will prepare a presentation for everyone's Saturday night enjoyment, Poster Art; Theatre: Come Play with Us, and Women as Peacemakers. This stream offers practical how-to's as well as some time to do what the title suggests.

Other planned programming includes a Friday evening panel discussion of the end of the UN Decade for Women. Panel members will be women who attended the governmental and non-governmental conferences in Nairobi, and a woman who attended the Nairobi/Alberta weekend.

Saturday evening we will be treated to a banquet, singers/songwriters and performers, dancing and socialising. Bring your instruments, cards, poetry or whatever you do for entertainment and relaxation.

The site offers great walking trails, bush, streams and country roads. We hope women will take time during the conference to enjoy the fall air and the beauty of turning leaves.

Sunday morning offers several options for spiritual expression, with both a traditional but women-focussed service and a time for new/old women's spirituality to be celebrated.

The annual business meeting of



The Call to Action

And from the young, it will come.
And from the new, it will come.
And from the tried, it will come.
And from the true, it will come.

-- Ann Forfreedom
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by Ann Forfreedom. Wise Woman



Communiqu'elles

the society will be split by Sunday lunch. Important tasks to be done in this time include the Board's report from last year, decisions about mandate for the coming year and selection of new board members for the coming year. Bring your counsel on what has and hasn't happened, your wisdom for the coming work and think seriously about your commitment to Alberta's provincial feminist organization.

Accommodation is available on site. We recommend sharing rooms dorm style among 2-6 women, and the cost to you will vary. If you'd rather stay in hotels in Devon, drive out from Edmonton or billet in Edmonton that's fine too. Meals are all provided, except Friday night, and the food is very good.

The fee for the conference has been set at \$25.00 for the weekend (excluding accommodation) and we will reimburse your travel and child-care costs. Packages for parts of the weekend are also available - watch for the pamphlet in our next newsletter, or our poster. Registration deadline is firm at November 1st, so plan to come now.

Advertise —
in the ASWAC
Newsletter

Pays attention to women

The federal government's Canadian Jobs Strategy (CJS) pays special attention to the needs of women and their effort to be an integral part of the work force.

The new strategy is a blend of training, employment development and challenge to the imagination. If a woman wishes to re-enter the workforce after working at home, needs to have her skills upgraded or requires training and can't afford it, the CJS is the answer.

Many women devote years to building a home life. Those who want to get back into the work force find themselves at a disadvantage. They may feel unsure of themselves and underestimate their abilities. They may also feel intimidated by employers who want "real" employment experience.

Job Entry Program can help. Through Job Entry, women (and young people) having difficulty making the transition into the labour market, will receive training and practical work experience in projects lasting up to one year.

These training projects will be organized by "Managing Coordinators", many of whom will be women's organizations.

The Skill Investment Program trains employees so they can keep up with changing technology and skill requirements. Three training options are available:

1. Employers can be reimbursed for a percentage of employees' wages during on- and off-the-job training.



Communiqu'elles

2. Employees can be paid a percentage of wages (jointly by Skill Investment and the employer) if they go on to full-time training leave.

3. Unions or employee associations can establish training trust funds to pay for members'

future training and skill development.

The Job Development program is designed to provide employment and training opportunities for people who haven't worked in 24 of the last 30 weeks. Projects can last up to one year and combine on- and off-site training as required. Employers will receive wage subsidies and funds towards training costs.

Canada Employment Centre (CEC) counsellors will assess individual training/job experience needs and place people in projects that best suit their needs.

Employers wishing to train staff in skills of high demand will now be able to do so through Skill Shortages. Participants can take full- or part-time training both on and off the job. Employers will receive wage reimbursements and funds toward training expenses.

The Innovations Program provides funding for projects that test new solutions to labour market related problems. These solutions aim to be of long-term benefit to everyone. Ideas or approaches that address employment equity will receive particular attention.

cont'd. page 13

Help for re-entering the job market

One of the six programs in the new Canadian Job Strategy (CJS) is of particular relevance to women. The Re-entry program is designed to assist women entering or re-entering the workforce after having worked primarily at full-time homemaking for a minimum of three years.

Through an integrated combination of on and off site training, these women can acquire skills and experience to bridge the gap between home and the paid workforce.

Over a period of up to 52 weeks, participants spend time at (a) worksite(s), training under the supervision of a Training Place Host (employer), as well as time

off-site, acquiring new skills. These include specific skills directly related to the occupation or industry the participant is working in, as well as the generic skills useful now and in the future, including communications, computer literacy and job-search techniques.

Re-entry participants will receive either a training allowance or unemployment insurance, depending on their eligibility. More information is available at your nearest Canada Employment Centre, or, in Edmonton, Options for Women.

CEIC is also looking for coordinators interested in developing a training proposal for re-entry women. The coordinators must have

the ability to plan, implement and monitor a quality training program, have an understanding of women's needs and concerns as well as previous experience in dealing with the proposed participant group. They will receive financial reward through a contractual agreement with CEIC, as well as a feeling of satisfaction for their contribution towards helping solve Canada's unemployment problems.

If you are interested in becoming a coordinator, being involved in the off or on site elements of the program, or acting in an advisory capacity, contact Aura Rose, Program officer for the Re-entry Program at 420 2419 (Edmonton).

Seminar explains new act

By Doris Wilson

Three seminars to familiarize people with their rights under the new Alberta maintenance enforcement legislation were held July 16, 18 and 20.

Sponsored by ASWAC, the seminars attracted a thoughtful and interested group of women, and a few men. Doris Wilson and Margaret Coates, Edmonton lawyers working in family law and collections, facilitated the seminars. Also on hand as guests were people from the attorney general's department which will be responsible for implementing the collection system.

The biggest changes to come with this new law are:

- 1). the onus is now on the person owing the maintenance payments to see that his/her obligations are met (in the past the person entitled to receive maintenance has often had to take extraordinarily time consuming steps to collect;
- 2). there are some legal presumptions to assist in collection--for instance, it is presumed there is an ability to pay unless proven otherwise (studies have shown that in most cases there is an ability to pay but it is the desire to pay that is lacking);
- 3). the government takes the responsibility for enforcing maintenance orders.

This last point is an excellent change in the law because it means the government is given such powers as garnisheeing wages of the non-paying spouse and obtaining information from other government bodies, such as Alberta Health Care. This type of information is not available to individuals.

There is room for further improvement in maintenance collection, particularly in cases involving more than one province. Federal legislation has been introduced, but not passed yet, to make UIC and tax records available to the provinces to assist in locating spouses who have crossed provincial lines.

The only catch with the new Alberta act is that it does not come into effect until February 1 1986 for already existing orders, and December 31 1986 for any

new maintenance orders. Jack Basey of the attorney general's department explained that the delay is due to having to create a completely new computerized system with a large capacity; he is expecting 16,000 new orders to be placed in the system in the first year of operation.

If you are not receiving social assistance, you will be responsible for placing your own order in the system after February 1 1986. Forms will be available at Family Court, and after you fill out those forms, collection becomes the responsibility of the Director of Maintenance Enforcement. Ten days after the first payment is missed, or immediately if there are already arrears, the Director will take steps such as the continuing garnishee of wages or bank accounts, until the order is brought up to date.

In the Manitoba experience, collection went from a 15% success rate before the computerized system was in place to an 85% success rate now.

Until the Maintenance Enforcement Act comes into effect on February 1 1986, what can you do? You can collect maintenance

that is in arrears using the same execution remedies available to ordinary creditors (such as finance companies or banks). These remedies include seizing and selling assets belonging to the non-paying spouse, garnisheeing debts owed to the non-paying spouse by third parties, and garnisheeing salaries or wages.

The exemptions granted to a debtor by provincial legislation do not apply to collections under a maintenance order, so that a spouse can seize assets and garnishee wages that are not available to ordinary creditors.

Education des femmes



Helpful and depressing participants' responses

Comments from participants ranged from "The new information was helpful - I found that my situation wasn't as bad as I thought" to "It made me very depressed- there's no incentive for the government to do anything".

Some women had specific concerns. "We can only go back three years for what's owed us and then only at the discretion of the Director (of Maintenance Enforcement). Some of us are owed money for 10-15 years. A debt is a debt!" "The new legislation will give us a better system, but we're not convinced that it has to take so long". Others reported new insights into the system under which we've all been operating- "I learned that the capability of a man to support his family is taken for granted by the courts

unless he can prove otherwise. If he pleads poverty or unemployment he could be made to sell property in order to meet his responsibilities". "It's good to hear what I used to think of as "individual psychological messes" so clearly delineated, placed in a wider analysis of the system we live in".

The overall reaction seemed to be: it's good to attend a seminar such as this, to increase our own knowledge of the legislation and policies that affect us; the new legislation will make things a whole lot better for many women. At the same time there was an overall lack of trust that the predominantly male system in which we operate is either willing or able to make the deep-rooted changes in thinking which would give us legislation truly supportive of families and fair to women.

Federal plans flawed

"There is a major flaw in the (federal) government's new Family Orders Enforcement Assistance Act," says Sylvia Gold, president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

"The proposed legislation only offers increased access to information on spouses who default on support and custody orders. It should provide enforcement of these orders," she says.

CACSW is again calling for a federal enforcement agency which would initiate the enforcement process when a spouse defaults on payment.

"The federal government's reliance on provincial enforcement is insufficient," says CACSW. A federal agency would also have the authority to garnish wages and other income sources.

And now for . . .

The good news . . .

What the new system will do:

- put the onus for chasing after ex-spouses behind on maintenance payments on the government instead of on the individual person
- put the onus on the ex-spouse to see that he pays up instead of on the woman owed to go after it
- operate on the assumption that the one owing maintenance is capable of paying until proven otherwise (in most cases the arrears payments result from unwillingness rather than inability to pay)

The bad news . . .

What the act won't do:

- is come into effect sooner than next year for some and 1987 for others
- be very effective outside the province of Alberta until the federal government co-operates
- be automatically available to women owed maintenance money from more than three years ago



JOB! JOB! JOB!

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

Alberta Status of Women Action Committee.

ASWAC IS LOOKING for an energetic and conscientious woman to fill the position of Project Co-ordinator.

THE POSITION WOULD LAST 7 months, from September 1, 1985 to March 31, 1986. The salary is \$1583.33/month; some benefits are covered.

THE POSITION INVOLVES three main areas of focus:

- 1). co-ordination of current and planned projects; also, selective fieldwork
- 2). research of funding possibilities with a view to developing this seven-month position into a permanent job
- 3). help provide basic services to the membership

THIS POSITION WILL BE BASED in Edmonton at the ASWAC office located in the Edmonton Women's Building (110 St. and Jasper Ave.), but will also include some province-wide travelling.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED in any way, please call us or submit application to:

ASWAC

Box 1573

Edmonton, AB T5J 2N7

Phone: (403) 424-3073

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS

Monday, Aug. 26, 1985

Harassment case a long battle

By Joanne Kolmes

When a woman decides to speak out about sexual harassment happening to her at work, she could easily find herself facing a long battle. Bonnie Robichaud of North Bay, Ontario, knows this all too well. Her battle started in 1978 - and now, after having been through tribunal inquiries and court appeals that held her complaint to be justified, she has been suspended from her job with no explanation.

In 1977 Bonnie Robichaud started as a cleaner at Canadian Forces Base North Bay. A year later she applied for a supervisor's job - the first woman to apply for that job at CFB North Bay. She placed first in the competition and was appointed to the job. However, the appointment involved an initial six-month probation period. During that time the foreman of cleaning service, Dennis Brennan, started demanding sexual favours and threatening reprisals if she did not cooperate.

Her first reaction was to reject his demands. Then, in fear, she gave in. She soon realized the terrible situation she was in, rejected his further demands, and told her husband and her physician about what was happening. And she lodged a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

The Commission investigated her complaint and substantiated it. A one-person tribunal was appointed to hear the case. R.D. Abbott, the person appointed, believed Robichaud's testimony over Brennan's. But he dismissed the complaint, stating that Robichaud had agreed to the sexual activity. The decision came in June 1982.

The Commission refused to appeal the decision. So Robichaud decided to appeal to a review tribunal at her own expense. In February 1983 the review tribunal found not only that Brennan had harassed Robichaud, but that both Brennan and the Defence Department were liable. The Department had failed to investigate what was happening and had in fact punished Robichaud for complaining about the harassment she was subjected to, the review tribunal said.

The federal government appealed this ruling to the Federal Court of Canada. The Federal Court upheld the review tribunal's finding that there was sexual harassment, but the justices split on whether the Department of National Defence as employer was liable. Two of them took the view that the employer was not responsible; one held that it was.

Robichaud is appealing the issue of employer liability to the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court agreed this past spring to hear the case.

She is also in the process of filing a claim with the Ontario Workers Compensation Board for days of work missed because of stress stemming from the harass-

ment. Last April the Quebec workers' compensation commission made a precedent-setting decision that sexual harassment is a compensable work-related injury. It was the first provincial workers' compensation body to recognize sexual harassment as an occupational hazard.

her choice, in preparation for a possible arbitration hearing before the Public Service Commission (to whom she has also made a complaint).

Bonnie Robichaud's case makes several things clear:

- * Employers can go to great lengths to protect harassers rather than take even minimal steps to put a stop to harassment in the workplace.
- * Notwithstanding some inspirational policy statements on sexual harassment, the federal government has a terrible track record as an employer on this issue. (Note the case of Kristina Potapczyk, harassed by former MP Alistair McBain, and the recent revelations of widespread harassment on the Hill).
- * When a woman decides to take a stand on sexual harassment, she will need a lot of support from her sisters and from her union to help her through the bureaucratic, legal and job-site difficulties she may face.

Alberta women can provide Bonnie Robichaud support by writing to Minister of Defence Erik Nielsen to reinstate Robichaud, remove Brennan permanently from his supervisory position, and to take responsibility for providing a harassment free workplace for Robichaud and all women working for the department.

Support funds can be donated to (and more information obtained from):

Bonnie Robichaud Defence Committee
218 Forest Lawn
North Bay, Ontario
P1B 7P6

Hard on woman

A committee studying wife assault in the North West Territories was told by a group of native women in Yellowknife that the white culture's boom in sexually violent movies, videos and pornography is eroding native values and contributing to the sudden increase in wife-battering. "When we watch videos with our boyfriends, they want to take us and do to us what they have seen" stated one woman from a small Inuit community.

from CCAMP newsletter.



But only days after the Supreme Court announced it would hear Robichaud's case, she was informed she was suspended from her job. DND spokespersons have refused to state publicly why she has been suspended. However, one possible reason is that the base management has demanded that she submit to a psychiatric examination. Robichaud has refused to do this, making clear that the demand is simply part of the reprisals she has experienced for having brought her complaint forward. She says she will agree to an examination by a doctor of

WOULD YOU EVER HAVE GUESSED???

that Hallmark Cards is ranked as the second-best company for women

based on employment opportunities and financial rewards?

MediaWatch updates

the following items have been taken from the MediaWatch Newsletter, May/June 1985

Founded in 1981, MediaWatch is a national women's organization dedicated to improving the portrayal of women and girls in the media by eliminating sexist and pornographic images and encouraging the creation of images that reflect the changing and diverse roles of women in Canadian society.

MediaWatch has recently completed and published a study of sex-role stereotyping in the Canadian broadcast media. Copies of the complete report are available or you can order a synopsis of the report. The synopsis is available in both French and English, however, the complete report is available only in English.

SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING: A Content Analysis of Radio and TV Programs and Advertisements can be ordered in the following ways:

- i) for the full report, send \$25.00 plus \$3.00 postage (4th cls.)
- ii) for the synopsis of the report send \$12.00 plus \$2.50 postage (1st class)

-mail your request to MediaWatch

BADGLEY, FRASER

Response to reports sought

We've just learned, from an official at the Department of Justice, that meetings, in several centres across the country, are being planned to solicit citizen response to both the Badgley and the Fraser Reports. Mr. Crosbie wants to have legislation in place by Christmas to address child pornography, child abuse and child prostitution but wants to hear from the public views on the form this legislation should take. These meetings are being planned for

209 - 636 West Broadway
VANCOUVER, BC
V5Z 1G2
tel: 604-873-8511

MISOGYNY IN ROCK VIDEOS - a pamphlet which explores the anti-woman trend in this new form of entertainment, discusses content, programming, audience demographics, current research and how to effect change.

It has been prepared by Evelina Kane and can be purchased for \$2.50 from:
Women Against Pornography
358 W. 47th Street
NEW YORK, New York
10036 U.S.A.

MediaWatch rep in Alberta

Lori Egger is the new MediaWatch in Alberta. She lives in Calgary and can be contacted at her work number 296-4574.

MediaWatch Board member and past National Director, Sylvia Spring, is one of the women who attended the End of the Decade conference in Nairobi, Kenya. She went there to film a documentary of the conference for the Status of Women, Canada.

the summer months. We've expressed concern that the timing is not good, especially for voluntary organizations, but advised Justice that we would be equally

concerned if the meetings were delayed to the fall thereby forcing a delay in the tabling of the legislation. It will be very important that as many of us as possible appear at these meetings and insist that strong legislation to address these issues be implemented without delay.

According to an article in the June '85 issue of Mother Jones the following ten companies are ranked as the best for women based on the above-mentioned criteria:

1. Campbell Soup Company, Camden, New Jersey
2. Hallmark Cards, Kansas City, Missouri
3. Dana Corporation, Toledo, Ohio
4. People Express, Newark, New Jersey
5. Herman Miller, Inc. Zeeland, Michigan
6. W.L. Gore and Associates, Newark, Delaware
7. Public Supermarkets, Inc. Lakeland, Florida
8. North American Tool & Die, San Leandro, California
9. Kollmorgen Corporation, Stamford, Connecticut
10. Levi Strauss & Co., San Francisco, California

NOTE: The study was done only in the States. Which Canadian companies do you think would rank where if such a study were to be done here??



Women confronting work hazards . . .

REPORT: WOMEN CONFRONTING WORK
HAZARDS: A HEALTH AND SAFETY
CONFERENCE

(July 4-6, 1985; Chateau Lacombe)

This conference was organized by a group of approximately 20 women ably led by Janet Bertinuson, Health and Safety Director of the Alberta Federation of Labour. Attending were some 250 (mostly women) participants from across Canada. There were many people heavy in union credentials and both traditional and non-traditional forms of labour were exceptionally well represented. Since the success of the conference depended on participation, these ranges of experience were crucial to rich, dense discussions throughout the weekend.

Initially, I attended out of an academic sort of interest. I am concerned with how women work, what careers they have and how they integrate being women with being workers. However, once the conference began, it soon became evident that I would also be exposed to women who worked to stay alive, women who were sexually harassed, women who were just as upset about overbearing and directive group leaders as I was; women who cared about the quality and safety of their working lives. I was also the recipient of the largest package of pre-conference reference materials I have ever received. These materials are now located in the A.S.W.A.C. office if you would like to look at them. Some were pamphlets and brochures that I had seen previously but others were new, specially bound for just this conference. It was obvious that Janet Bertinuson had done an excellent job of pulling together the pre-conference questionnaire results and surrounded herself with some able and experienced helpers.

Conference Overview:
Thursday evening: Registration

was smooth, efficient and inexpensive. Union people on some occasions had their conference fee covered. Others, like me, are unwaged and were recipients of a conference scholarship.

Welcome: Janet Bertinuson—a commanding speaker, pleasant, firm and very welcoming. Dave Werlin (Pres. A.F.L.)—usual welcome remarks in the usual way.

Guest Presentation: Dr. Linda Murray, Director, Occupational Medicine, Meharry Medical College... she presented the tone-setter speech for the weekend. It covered the profile of women workers and occupational hazards. Some hazards are specific to an occupation (Waitressing: temperature changes, trips and falls, burns.....). Others occur in many or all occupations (stress, automation....). It is clear from her presentation that although the conference focusses on the occupational health and safety of women, the concerns apply, in many ways, to all workers.

Friday day:

Plenary session: a panel of three women defining Health and Safety Hazards on the Job.

Kathy Kadyk (A.U.P.E.), Linda Bennett (United Mineworkers) and Julie David (C.U.P.W.—postal work) presented very personal and enlightening talks about the nature of the jobs they do, the safety hazards and what they have managed to change. For most of these women, it was the first public talk to a group larger than ten...how empowering. Julie David, for example, talked

about working in cramped spaces at excessively repetitive tasks in which a production quota had to be reached. Often, noise, heat and spills would intensify worker discomfort. Frequently too, safety routes out of the building would be blocked by portable machinery. Despite all the union action, only rotational patterns and new chairs have helped.

The session was followed by

discussion which needed some defusing by Janet after the legislators and the workers got into some conflict about whether or not the protective legislation in the province places the onus on workers to make sure they are safe (workers can be fined for working in unsafe places).

Occupation Specific Workshops: I chose non-traditional work from the selection of clerical workers, services work-waitresses, services work-health care-givers, and non-traditional workers. Our session task was to identify our own specific work hazards (I chose sport-coaching as my non-paid, non-traditional occupation. Then, we listed the barriers to correcting the hazards. The summary of each sessions top two hazards and barriers are as follows:

clerical: air quality; stress.
haz= apathy of those you complain to
=lack of awareness of what constitutes a problem

non-traditional:
competitive stress (supervisory harassment);
chemical hazards.

haz= production rather than safety
= lack of education...where to go to get changes made.

service workers:
lifting and back strain;
unidentifiable chemicals in cleaners.
haz= funds
= understaffing

Hospital and health care workers:
chemicals; infectious biological diseases.
haz= ergonomics (machines not designed for people or places where they are used)
= layout

Plenary session: group reports.

cont'd. page 13



ISIS Kinesis

... lots to talk about

LEAF seeks \$20 million

The best part was that women and men making their group reports were all novice speakers and carried much weight because of their grounded work experience.

Plenary session: a panel of three women about the common concerns: Stress, Sexual Harassment and Violence on the Job.

Cynthia Wishart (C.U.P.E.), Jo-Anne Kolmes (Alliance Against Sexual Harassment) and Susan Ruffo (A.U.P.E.) presented interesting and very informative talks on the above common concerns. These concerns cross all occupations, although some more than others. Violence on the job, for example, was a discussion about health care workers and service workers who suffer from patient abuse or customer abuse. (airline hostess and drunk and abusive passenger; mental health care worker and physically active patient) Excellent discussion followed about who should shoulder the responsibility for these problems. The conclusion was that, at this time, the victim of the problem usually bears the weight of the problem and the consequences afterwards.

Friday evening: Dinner and a performance by the Feminist Theatre Group in Edmonton, Hecate's Players. The script was entitled

Women's Work...Never Done
It was well received; a powerful presentation of women in repetitive and mindless work, sexual harassment, low paying or non-paying work, and strategies for change.

Saturday day:

Small group sessions on common hazards were continued from Friday afternoon and presentations were then made to the plenary session on Saturday afternoon.

Plenary Session: Reproduction and Work by Lynn Kaye (Lawyer/ Consultant) and Reproductive Health in the Workplace by Dr. Meritza Tennessee (Chief, Medical Advisory Service, Canadian Centre for Occupational and Health Safety).

Lynn Kaye, among other things, discussed the TAKING ACTION story in the Healthsharing, 1985 summer edition. Here, a woman named Saskia was pregnant when she went to work for English Plastics. Now she has a son who is blind, physically deformed and unable to speak. Saskia and her lawyer are preparing to fight their case again after the Ontario Ministry publically excused English Plastics.

Dr. Tennessee discussed how legislation which makes pregnant

women take different jobs or leave work as soon as their are pregnant, discriminates against women. The reproductive hazards in the workplace affect both women and men's reproductive capacities and thus, a workplace unsafe for a pregnant female is UNSAFE FOR ANY WORKER!

Plenary: Taking Action to Eliminate Work Hazards. This was the reporting of the Hazard Specific Workshops. A Conference wrap-up followed where women from the plenary had one final chance to thank the organizers, make their pleas for action, and generally make any comments. Those who worked so hard on the conference were presented with the new edition of OUR BODIES, OUR SELVES and given a standing ovation.

I thoroughly enjoyed the conference. The political organizing that occurred during the free time was encouraging. \$400 was collected in a "pass the hat" for the Montgomery Legion Strikers. Much discussion about the Bonnie Robichaud Case occurred (see article elsewhere in this newsletter) and a telegram was sent to the Prime Minister showing solidarity with Bonnie. Janet Bertinuson did, I think, a tremendous job in pulling together such diverse and differently political people into one conference.

Sandra Kirby

The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) has put in a request to the federal government for \$20 million. The endowment would allow LEAF to sponsor strategic court cases that will advance women's equality now that the Canadian Constitution is in force.

"Women played a major role in formulating the language of Canada's equality rights guarantees and have a stake in ensuring that these new equality rights can be exercised to advance women's equality," says LEAF.

LEAF asks interested women to show their support for the request for the \$20 million endowment by:

- Writing or phoning your local Member of Parliament;
 - Writing, telephoning or sending a telepost (\$4) to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Minister of Justice John Crosbie and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Walter McLean.
 - Send any copies of your correspondence to LEAF and to Opposition leader John Turner and New Democratic Party leader Ed Broadbent.
- LEAF's address is:
347 Bay Street, #307
Toronto, Ont.
M5H 2R7
phone: (416) 868-0979

JOB STRATEGY CONT'D

Employment equity important

The whole concept of Employment Equity plays a large role in the Canadian Jobs Strategy. The new programs are specifically designed to ensure that target group members are provided with a greater share of employment opportunities through them than ever before.

Measures are being taken to make it easier for women to take advantage of training opportunities. The financial requirements of people with dependent children or disabled dependents are being taken into account. Trainees now get a dependent allowance based on the number of dependents (even if they're collecting unemployment insurance). It doesn't matter if they're married or not, either, for anyone who demonstrates a need will receive a dependent allowance, whether they

are on full- or part-time training.

There is also an increase in training allowances for those in CEIC-purchased courses who are not collecting Unemployment Insurance. People who have to move to get training will get an increased living-away-from-home allowance as well. This increased funding means that training opportunities once considered out of reach are now possible.

The CJS also calls for the establishment of community based Local Advisory Councils as an approach to solving local labour market problems. They'll also assist in establishing target group participation levels for each program and help ensure that these levels are achieved.

ANWA launches p.r. campaign

The Alberta Native Women's Association has launched a major public relations and support campaign which will run till September 15th. ANWA's major goals for this campaign are to greatly increase the public visibility of native women's issues and to create a network of widespread support in order to put the organization in a stronger position for increased governmental support.

ANWA is taking its issues to the public sector in all areas of the province and is conducting a membership drive for both native and non-native people who are interested in actively supporting this cause. The six specific issues that they are working on are Education, Health, Women's Shelters, Land Base, Training and Jobs, Housing and Daycare.

ANWA has produced a support kit that contains fact sheets, bumper stickers, "I Support Native Women's Rights" buttons and contribution and membership applications. These packets are being distributed to team leaders throughout the province and will be available to any

CARAL PLANS ACTION

Focus on access

Holding a series of tribunals across the country focussing on the problems of access to abortion was one of the plans of action to come out of the annual general meeting of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL).

It is hoped the tribunals would

one who is interested in working with the ANWA. If you are interested in supporting this work with an individual membership, donation or distributing information please contact:

LORO CARMEN at 484 1631
or 484 1635

be sponsored locally across the country and would put pressure on the federal government rather than the individual provincial governments.

More detailed information about the tribunal plan of action is available at the ASWAC office. Phone 424-3073.

Alberta singer to perform

Many Alberta women were delighted by the spirit and quality of the First Canadian Women's Festival, which was held last year in Winnipeg, and will be making the trek east again this year.

Calgary's Jennifer Berezan will be performing this year - many of you will remember her fine performance at the ASWAC assembly two years ago.

Tickets for the whole weekend are ONLY \$25.00, and are available from the address on the ad, and also from Common Woman Books in Edmonton and A Woman's Place Bookstore in Calgary.

Winnipeg women have done a fine job of initiating and establishing the festival but it is not their intention that it always remain in Winnipeg. How about here in Alberta one year soon? Edmonton women who would like to work on this dream are invited to call Carol Johnson at 428 8159.

The Canadian WOMEN'S FESTIVAL '85

LE FESTIVAL DES FEMMES
CANADIENNES

•POETRY•PROSE•THEATRE•MUSIC•
•DANCE•VISUAL ARTS•KIDS AREA•

**AUGUST 30,31
SEPTEMBER 1
KILDONAN PARK,
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA**

For more information contact:
Canadian Women's Music and Cultural
Festival/Le Festival Culturel des
Femmes Canadiennes
3D-161 Stafford Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 2W9
(204) 477-5478

Announcements

Resources

Edmonton

The annual conference of the Provincial Committee for a Council of Women's Affairs will be held in Edmonton on October 6th, 1985.

For details, contact Sylvia McKinley at 469-1254.

Hecate's Player's held five performances of its hardhitting play *Too Much for Any One Woman* at the recent Fring Festival in Edmonton.

Hecate's Players has produced "plays with a difference" for

Red Deer

The first meeting of the Red Deer SWAC will take place on September 5 at the Red Deer and District Museum from 7:30 - 9:30 pm.

The topic will be **WOMEN AND POLITICS** with Rosemary Gerdts as the guest speaker; Ms Gerdts is a City of Red Deer Council Woman.

Dessert and coffee will be served.

The second meeting will take place on November 7 at 6:30 pm. The topic will be **WOMEN AND THE MEDIA**, the film "Killing Us Softly" will be shown and there will be a guest speaker (to be announced).

A conference entitled **WOMEN AND YOUR RIGHTS** will be held in Red Deer on October 19, 1985 from 8:45 am to 4:30 pm at the Great West Inn, Red Deer.

For details contact the Red Deer SWAC at 347-2480, Suite 109, 4818 - 50th Avenue, Red Deer.

Calgary

A Women's Sexuality Conference, sponsored by the Calgary Status of Women Action Committee (SWAC) will be held Nov. 1-2 at Calgary. For more information on the conference contact:
Calgary SWAC
124-320-5 Ave. S.E.
Calgary, AB T2G 0E5
Phone: 262-1873

two years and performed solely by request usually for women's groups. The Fringe was the first chance for the public to see a performance.

For more information contact:
Anne McGrath 429-3388
Amanda LeRougetel 424-3073

The second annual Maternal Health Fair will be held Sat., Oct. 26 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Lister Hall at the University of Alberta.

For more information contact the fair's sponsor:
Association for Safe Alternatives in Childbirth (ASAC)
Box 1197, Main P.O.
Edmonton, AB T5J 2M4
Phone: 437-0187



Education des femmes

Wonderful women's house for rent as of Sept. 1. Norwood--trees, trees, trees! Four bedrooms, real hardwood floors. \$600 a month plus utilities. Contact 479-0623.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) is carrying out a petition campaign aimed at getting the federal government to not follow through on its plan to reduce the cost-of-living increases in family allowances.

Copies of the petition are available at the ASWAC office (10055-110 St.).

"Unless something is done very soon," says NAC, "all mothers are going to see the real value of their monthly benefits decrease by 3 percent a year starting in 1986.

Issues in Sentencing: *Gratuitous Comment from the Bench* is a brief to the Canadian Sentencing Commission by ASWAC that makes up one of the few pieces of existing documentation of the violence women are facing in Canadian courts.

Prepared by Kim Service of Calgary as part of her practicum work with ASWAC for her Bachelor of Social Work degree from the University of Calgary, the brief is a fascinating document. Not only are the woman-hating comments of some Alberta and other Canadian judges quoted, but the implications and context of their statements are lucidly, concisely, and sometimes wittily dealt with.

Copies of the brief are available at the ASWAC office.
Contact: 424-3073 or
ASWAC
Box 1573
Edmonton, AB T5J 2N7

Cost: \$2.50 each

WomenSkills, a Burnaby, B.C.-based group sponsoring a project to encourage the participation of women in planning and operating co-operative businesses, as independent structures or as enterprises sponsored by a community group or centre, is offering its resources to interested women.

For more information on WomenSkills' Economic Options for Women Project, contact:
WomenSkills
9-4443 Irmin St.
Burnaby, B.C. V5J 1X8

Donations

Carol Ogston
Jean Crozier
Loro Carmen
D.M.Cooper
N. Dobrolige
Pamela Perdue
Ceinwen Cumming
Elizabeth McCullough

Advertise!

We invite you to advertise in future issues of the ASWAC newsletter. Please call the office (424 3073) for rates and deadlines.

STAR ON YOUR LABEL? READ ON!

ASWAC's membership year runs from conference to conference, November to November.

This means that if you bought your membership BEFORE November of 1984, it is now out of date and you need to renew for the 1984/85 year (the current membership year). The 1984/85 membership year will then "run out" at our next conference in November of 1985 (this November) at which time it will be necessary for all members to renew for the 1985/86 membership year.

We continue to send the Newsletter to members who are only one year behind in their membership dues because we know how difficult it is for some people to keep track of their many and varied memberships and the renewal dates for each and every one. Besides, we don't want to lose track of old and valued friends simply because of an oversight!

So . . . if you have a star on your label, please take a minute to send in your renewal to the office or, if you no longer wish to receive the Newsletter, simply forward a note to the office to that effect.

We suggest \$10.00 per year for a membership but will, of course, accept less from those who cannot afford the fee. (Donations are received with yelps of joy!!)



Alberta Status of Women Action Committee Supportive Membership/Donation

NAME: _____

MEMBERSHIP

ADDRESS: _____

DONATION

PHONE: _____ (office)

_____ (home)

Please make the cheque payable to:

Alberta Status of Women
Action C'ttee.

PO Box 1573, EDMONTON, Alta
T5J 2N7

telephone: 424-3073

*We suggest \$10.00/year membership fee.