

# ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE

March 1987

Volume 8, Number 3



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

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**What about  
our children?**

Reports from  
child care  
weekend and  
listing of child  
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organizations  
across Alberta

# ASWAC



## 1986/87 Board members

Darlene Abreu Ferreira - Edmonton 429-1656  
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Anne Dobbie - Edmonton h. 464-1087  
Helen Greaves - Edmonton 421-8585  
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Sally Issenman - Edmonton 423-1199  
Terri-Ann Marco - Lethbridge 381-1523  
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Kathy Willis - Lethbridge c/o office  
Jane Wiley - Edmonton office

## 1986/87 Regional Reps

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Gerry Bailey - Westeros  
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Home 578-2211

Lori Crocker - Innisfail  
Home 227-1141 Work 227-3881

Naomi Lis - Lethbridge  
Home 381-8727

All members and interested women are invited to attend any or all of our board meetings. Come to the one nearest you! If you would like to see a board meeting held in your community, phone the office or let your nearest regional rep know. The next board meeting will be held in Calgary, April 4,5. Phone the Calgary office at 263-1550 Ext. 338 for more details. All members are welcome to attend.

If you have any articles, comments, artwork or features you would like to see in the ASWAC newsletter, send them in! Letters should be marked, NOT FOR PRINT, if you do not want them in the newsletter. The deadline for the next issue is April 8.



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## Hug these women!

These women deserve hugs and praise for their continued support for ASWAC's numerous undertakings; Anna Pellatt, Valda Roberts, Jude Major, Cathy Bray, Brenda Erskine, Rene Spence, Joanne Auger, Judy Moynihan, Leslie Stewart, Marnie McCall, Sue McGowan, Elaine Miklos, erin graham. We love you!

## Donations

Monies have been most gratefully received from the following persons; Pauline Hoskin, Jane Wiebe, Fort Garry Women's Centre, Tracey Mcloskey, Ida Horn, Sheila Johnston, Laura Pehrson, Leslie Stewart, Florence Ellis, Virginia Thurgood, Jocelyn Brown, Linda Costello, Isabel Smith, Jeanette Raby, Laurie Blakeman, Lori Crocker, Vicki Vaitkunos, Nancy Leavitt, Joanne Auger.

ASWAC's mailing address is Box 1573, Edmonton, AB, T5J 2N7. Telephone 424-3073. ASWAC's new home is at 10826 124 St., in Edmonton. ASWAC Lethbridge resides in the Women's Resource Centre phone 329-8338. ASWAC Calgary resides at the YWCA 320 5 Ave. S.E. Calgary. Phone 263-1550 extension 338.

## Our board meeting minutes

# Eighteen hours at a glance

The following is our record of the board meeting held February 20-22 in Fort McMurray at the Peter Pond Community School in the office that is shared by the Sexual Assault Centre and the Women's Resource Centre.

Present: Board members: Luanne Armstrong, Sheryl Ackerman, Suzn Morgan, Kathy Willis, Karin Goldberg, Darlene Abreu Ferreira, Jane Wiley, Frances Adams, Shelley Scott, Sally Issenman, Michele Butot. Honourary Board member, Jude Major.

### What we want: Board Process

We spent a lot of the weekend - most of Saturday and Saturday evening discussing ways of building support and reinforcement of each other and our work into the board meetings, and attitudes that acknowledge that support time as valid and important. Some of the ways we came up with and plan to start incorporating are:

- using the round as time for a weather report about how we are doing personally, and leaving the business we are doing and the agenda items that need discussing for the written report. We will make sure to begin meetings on time, and to schedule time to read the written reports and to prioritize and set time-limits on the agenda items we bring in.

- respecting the circle. This means acknowledging the women who enter and leave the circle, setting aside time for women who want to join the meeting for a short time only, and making the women who choose to join us for the entire board meeting "honourary board members."

- recognizing the need for us to have time and space alone during the weekend.

- making the breaks 15 minutes long: 5 minutes for time alone and 10 minutes to be together stretching, singing, massaging, taking time to process the feelings that our work generates.

- telling our stories. Making time at the next meeting to get to know each other better.

### Project Coordinator

Frances' job as project co-ordinator is coming open, as she is leaving us for her new job. Many

options for ways to define, divide up, and locate this position were discussed, but it was decided that the job description as it stands now, revised and approved, will be retained and that the project coordinator will work out of the new Calgary office.



**Luanne and Fort Mac member Sue Halferdahl**

The hiring committee is made up of Luanne, Sally, Jude and may expand to include a regional rep or member of the personnel committee. One or more days of interviews will be held in Calgary. The position will be advertised in the newsletter, posted at the office, and a letter will be sent out to all members. Resumes will be sent in to the office.

Orientation for the new project coordinator will include extensive reading on priority issues in the resource room, meeting with past board members and spending time with the office staff and Frances. Frances will provide a list of contacts for helping with orientation.

Frances' salary and benefits for March will be divided in half. Jane agreed to work full time for the month of March, and the other half of the one month's salary can be used for special projects.

**March edition**

## Childcare

Karin explained our postcard campaign to protest impending budget cuts. The postcards will be collected at the ASWAC office and delivered to Connie Osterman during the budget debate in March. Sally, Jude and Sheryl are doing a drop-off and pick-up from mailboxes in their neighbourhood. Kathy agreed to be in charge of distribution and collection in Lethbridge. Valda Roberts is coordinating distribution of the cards in Edmonton, so if anyone has any questions about the cards, they can contact her.

Frances explained the means test. The day care centres will administer the test, which will measure all possible means of income and assets and so cause fewer people to be eligible for subsidies. It's a move by the provincial government to reinforce privatization (since only non-profit centres will be subjected to this testing as they receive the subsidies through the Canada Assistance Plan) and will make things hard for low and middle-low income families.

Every centre has an operating allowance, based on the age of the children there, and these allowances could be cut or removed entirely in the next provincial budget. (Rumour has it that infant care allowances will be the first to go. Estimates of a 50 to 75% fee increase have been guesstimated and staff lay-offs and centre closings would surely result if the allowances were cut. This would affect both profit and non-profit centres.

Karin will replace Frances as an interim representative on the Edmonton Coalition for Quality Childcare, and will look into someone from the childcare committee taking over at a later date.

## Abortion Caucus

Representatives from the abortion caucus have met with some groups, primarily Abortion By Choice, who are attempting to set up a coalition. Anne Dobbie is a member of the caucus and is attending the coalition meetings. The caucus has yet to decide how it will participate in the coalition. Caucus members will be at and will show "Abortion Stories North and South" an NFB film at International Women's Day in Edmonton.

The caucus is also planning to bring in two guest speakers to participate in a fundraiser and a workshop on how to set up a free standing abortion clinic. The caucus may get funding from



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

## Sally visiting with Joanne Auger

the University of Alberta Women's Centre and campus pro-choice. The Abortion by Choice Coalition will be contacted for support.

## After Lunch

After lunch we set some time aside in the agenda to meet with some women and press people from Fort McMurray. Two reporters came as well as ten women from the community.

One of the local women discussed the situations of native women in the area. Native women are faced with the same issues that we hear about all the time. Violence, poverty, surviving as single parents, recovering from alcohol abuse and the need for high quality childcare were all issues that were discussed. It was also said that native people are sick and tired of "experts" coming in to their communities and "helping" them, and that native communities want to have the resources to help their own, in their own ways.

We also discussed some of the educational opportunities and job retraining options for women in the area.

Business and Professional Women's Club - we heard about what the club has been doing. There has been interested expressed in the club in having someone come and speak about pay equity. It was said that ASWAC is associated with sensitive issues like abortion.

More after Lunch

Following the discussion about the Business and Professional Women's club we got into an interesting discussion about day care. One woman expressed the opinion that she gave up her salary to stay at home with her children so why should she pay taxes to fund a universally accessible publicly funded child care system. We discussed the issue of choice as far as child care is concerned and tried to make the point that ASWAC supports women's right to choose high quality child care whether at home or at an organized centre.

We also had a short but stimulating conversation about right wing women and how our work relates to theirs.

Women's Resource Centre - a few representatives from the centre let us know what is going on. They have recently elected a wonderful new board and they are looking forward to defining their goals and future plans at their next board meeting.

NB: at this point in the meeting most of the visitors left and we resumed our normal agenda.

Newsletter:

We agreed that we need to have a regular discussion at board meetings about the newsletter as a way of giving staff feedback and to take responsibility as a whole for what the newsletter looks like.

One woman mentioned the fact that it was really important for her to continue receiving the newsletter when she was broke and hadn't renewed her membership. We don't want to cut women off for not being able to pay but at the same time we don't want to keep sending to women who don't want to receive it any longer. It was during this discussion that Joanne Auger was acknowledged as an honorary board member.

Lesbian Caucus

The caucus is getting organized, and has set up a chain letter list as a way of keeping everyone in touch.

Three members of the caucus have been asked to do a workshop at the Women's Centres Conference in Canmore March 20-22 on lesbian issues.

The caucus will be meeting in Calgary the day following the provincial lesbian conference. There will be a workshop at the conference on lesbian feminism, and it is being organized by members of the caucus but not by the caucus per se.

Budget

We briefly reviewed the budget proposal for next year, and it looks great!!

Women's Building

The Collective of the Women's Building meets the first Monday of every month. ASWAC needs a regular rep on the collective. Lorraine, Jane and Luanne reluctantly agreed to share the position until May, at which time Darlene may be able to take over.

Justice?

We discussed the absolutely appalling details of a recent rape trial in Lethbridge and have agreed to do some serious research on the case. It seems that we may be able to co-ordinate some provincial action on the case and others related to it. (More details later.)



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

**More than 10 Fort McMurray women attended the board meeting**

Right Wing Backlash

We discussed two different aspects of this phenomena. We decided that we have to find ways to reach the women that the right is supposedly speaking for and make clear our positions to them. We also discussed meeting with the Alberta caucus of the federal Tories to let them know what we are all about and to make clear our position on the family.

Luanne suggested trying to get some space in the mainstream media to combat myths about feminism hating families.

**March edition**

# Where are our priorities?

by Lorraine Mitchell

Our children deserve the best. How many times have we, as feminists made this statement when arguing for good, accessible childcare? Yet, so often we fail to practice what we preach. How many times have you or your women's group held an event and failed to provide childcare? And even when childcare is available, what form does it take?

The fact is, the women's movement rarely offers little more than a babysitting service to women and their children. What we usually provide doesn't even closely resemble the high quality universally accessible childcare we demand from society as a whole.

Yet, the beauty of the women's movement is that we are open to criticism and flexible enough to change. At the last assembly, members of ASWAC pointed out the contradiction between ASWAC's policy on childcare and the low quality of care available at ASWAC functions. It was recommended that the provision of childcare at the working weekend held February 7-8 in Edmonton, be designed as a model for the kind of childcare we feminists would like to see in society as a whole.

I think most would agree that this goal was very nearly accomplished. Two board members, (Sally Issenman and myself) volunteered to organize the childcare for the weekend. We decided that our first step would be to hire two professional childcare workers, (Jan Scammel and Mary Stewart). We also decided to pay them \$10 an hour in line with our policy that childcare workers should be adequately compensated for the work that they do. We all met twice to discuss the theme of the weekend, view the facilities, and discuss games, programs and activities. Our excitement about the weekend grew as we realized that what we were doing could revolutionize the way the women's movement and perhaps other "progressive" groups dealt with this issue.

The weekend itself was an amazing success. We had fourteen children in the childcare on Saturday and twelve on Sunday. Their ages ranged from 2-8 years. The theme for the weekend was Central America. Along these lines we played South American music, made tortillas, did some weaving, and watched a slide tape show about Nicaragua. Along with this "play", we discussed the situation of children in other parts of the world; how difficult life is in other countries and why people are so poor.



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

We had a large range of other activities for the children to choose from. We had sand play and water play. There was a "quiet area" in front of the fire place with books, cushions, and stuffed animals. We had a house/tent area with dress-up clothes and kitchen utensils. A large sheet of newsprint paper covered one wall and children were encouraged to put on old shirts and "paint the wall". Several tables were set up with paper, pencils, markers, assorted materials, glue and paper plates. From these, an amazing variety of creations appeared throughout the weekend. We made paper hats, pictures, masks, binoculars and morrocos. Since the weather was nice, the children were also able to spend time outside playing in the playground. But, without a doubt, the high point of the weekend was making and breaking the pinata.

To me, the weekend was a revelation. It made me realize how, with a little time and effort we can create a safe and creative environment for children to spend time in. So perhaps they won't grow up resenting the time they were stuck in daycares while their mothers were attending feminist events. Feminist childcare also means that childcare workers actively attempt to address sexism in children's play. Jan, Mary and myself attempted to be aware of sex-role stereotyping in the childcare and tried to encourage different types of behaviour or activities. While this was not always successful... it was at least a start in reinforcing the values that feminists attempt to teach our children.

There are those who will argue that this kind of childcare is wonderful but that women's groups simply cannot afford to provide such high quality care. While this may sometimes be the case, I think we have to be careful that we aren't simply using money as an excuse. For example, the weekend cost about \$450. ASWAC's previous policy was to offer a \$50. subsidy (for a weekend conference) to women to make their own arrangements. Had everyone claimed their subsidy at the child-

what about the children?

# Working weekend on child care

by Jane Wiley

It was at our Annual Assembly's childcare workshop that "a working weekend" on childcare issues and strategies was proposed. It was felt then that there was a need for membership involvement in ASWAC's childcare campaign and that the staff and board needed ideas and energy to plan for future strategies.

The working weekend was organized and was held February 7,8 in Riverdale Community Hall in Edmonton. Overall, the weekend was quite successful, even though it had its low points. One of the high points was the very high quality childcare that was held on site, and we enjoyed a wonderful vegetarian Moussaka for lunch on Saturday, catered by our own Sally Issenman. The low points were reached when we faced the huge range of issues surrounding childcare services, and the amount of work that has to be done.

Interested members, parents, childcare operators, workers and childcare educators from all across the province (Grande Prairie to Medicine Hat) were invited and altogether thirty women came.

The Saturday morning consisted of a brief history of childcare funding in Canada and Alberta presented by Karin Goldberg. Following this, we attempted to do a survey of the service available to families across the province. This session opened up many questions from the group. The childcare system is very complex in Alberta. All three levels of government are involved in funding and licensing in different ways. Further to this mess, each community in Alberta offers a different range of services; infant care, family day home programs, day care, out of school care as well as private for profit, private non-profit and municipally funded centres. Each community has its problems, and it was difficult for us to get a clear provincial picture of day care services.

The Saturday afternoon session was spent brainstorming issues. It turned out to be a negative experience because the list was endless. We looked at funding problems and the lack of staff training standards and the special needs of sick families, shift workers, french and immigrant women. We had planned to break up into small working groups following the brainstorming session, although we had trouble doing this because there were so many questions and so few answers. We were also overwhelmed by the work that obviously needed to be done.

Sunday everyone felt the need to do something so we set an action agenda and I think we were quite productive. We organized a postcard-to-Connie Osterman-campaign, and agreed on a press release protesting impending cuts to the provincial operating allowances given to day cares and the proposed implementation of a means test. If the province agree to implement the means test, the federal government will provide monies to private centres through the Canada Assistance Plan. The means test would require families to declare both their income and assets, whether those assets were liquidifiable or not. This test would result in hardship for middle and lower income families by reducing their subsidies. We also agreed to form a childcare working committee that will meet monthly. The first meeting will be held Monday, March 16 at the new Women's Building at 7 pm. There will be childcare provided.

Hopefully, the committee will be able to do more long range planning. However, working for a high quality childcare system means facing the contradictions between short term crisis management and long term principles. For example, 80% of childcare spaces in Alberta are in for-profit centres. ASWAC supports the development of a publicly funded, not-for-profit, universally accessible childcare system. However, if all the private centres were closed tomorrow, many Alberta families would be in crisis.

Some activists have decided to lobby for higher standards as a way to bring about a better day care system. Personally, I believe that the profit motive and high quality care are completely incompatible, regardless of attempts to enforce high standards. It will be a challenge for us to come up with a strategy that allows for short term gains without sacrificing our long term goals.

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## Continued from page 6

care working weekend, this would have cost us \$700. So, in fact, the weekend saved the organization money.

It could, however, be argued that not all women's groups have as much money as ASWAC. I think the basic question is one of priorities. Most women's groups have some money and they spend it on a variety of different things. For example, is the provision of high quality childcare as important as hosting a free wine and cheese?

Note: If you would like more information on the childcare, contact the office.

# Working towards staff training

by Kathi Ayers, President  
Alberta Association for Young  
Children

For the past fifteen years, the Alberta Association for Young Children has been concerned with issues related to young children and their families in this province. The AAYC serves in two primary capacities - advocacy and networking. The major vehicles which provide support for individuals involved in the lives of young children are the annual conference and the newsletters. The Edmonton Convention Centre is the venue for this year's conference to be held September 25, 26. An upbeat theme, "A Celebration of Childhood", has been chosen. Two days of workshops related to all aspects of dealing with children from infancy to school age will appeal to parents, early childhood professionals and other individuals who work with children in a variety of capacities.

Our quarterly newsletters keep our members, particularly those who live in rural areas, updated on what is happening at the Board level as well as current happenings in other parts of the province. In a field where wages are low and working conditions poor, the knowledge that a larger network exists of people who do care about young children is especially needed.

Past advocacy efforts by this Association have been widely diversified. However, this past year the focus has been to educate the public about the need for competent, trained professionals to work with young children. The Alberta Association for Young Children recommends "for each maximum number of children in a group there be

a minimum of one child care staff educated in early childhood education from an accredited post-secondary institution." To this effect a position paper was developed, meetings were held with government groups and a poster with this message was designed and distributed in various communities in Alberta. A five year phase-in period has been recommended.

If the area of staff train-

ing for child care personnel is a concern of yours, please write not only to the Minister of Social Service, Connie Osterman, but to your local MLA. If you would like further elaboration of our position, please contact myself, Kathi Ayers at 539-2040 or 539-1951, or write to us at our mailing address at PO Box 4935, 10465 80 Ave. Edmonton, T6E 5G8. We want to hear from you.

## Better child care A directory of groups concerned about the issue

There are a number of groups working on child care issues across the province. Here is a list of groups that we know about.

Edmonton Coalition for Quality Child Care  
contact Reene Day at  
418 10010 105 St.  
Edmonton, AB T5J 1C4 or phone 423-2033

Alberta Association for Family Day Home Services  
Kitty Brennan  
Little People's Community Family Day Homes  
5025 23 Ave. S.E.  
Calgary, AB T2B 2J7 or phone 273-8383

Calgary Association for Quality Care  
Liz Simmons  
6617 Centre Street North  
Calgary, AB T2K 4H5 or phone 274-2335

Early Childhood Professional Association of Alberta  
Box 631  
Spruce Grove, AB T0E 2C0  
or  
Frances Bannister  
1319 Cabot Street SW  
Calgary, AB T2T 3S2

Day Care Society of Alberta  
Gertrude Deweel  
Box 12, Site 7, S.S.1  
Calgary, AB T5H 4N3

Edmonton Director's Meetings  
Marilyn McCord  
Lansdowne Day Dare  
12332 51 Ave,  
Edmonton, AB T5H 0M6



# On-site child care obtained

## Good news!

The new federal building in Edmonton will house a day care centre thanks to the efforts of the Canada Place Day Care Society, a group of federal public servants. Following lengthy negotiations and lobbying of the federal MPs, the Treasury Board reversed its earlier decision and agreed to meet the full costs of setting up. Many local MPs and childcare advocacy groups, including

ASWAC, lobbied to get the centre approved.

The centre will be self-sufficient in that it will not receive operating costs from the federal government.

Monies for equipment, toys and so on will have to be fund-raised. The Society intends to apply for municipal approval and receive additional funds from the City.

Scheduled to open in '88, the centre will accommodate 70-75 pre-school children including 12 infants. According to Carol Buchanan, a member of the Society's board, the centre will be a model project for other federal buildings. She also stated that there has been a push from the feds for higher wages for the future staff.

## Good child care means this:

The Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association says that there are four key elements to a good Canadian Child Care Policy:

1) High Quality Care - Will children across Canada be assured of services which reflect the best current knowledge about early childhood development within our multicultural society? Important prerequisites for quality care are that parents have an active role in determining the child care environment, and that caregivers are trained, and receive adequate compensation and recognition.

2) A Comprehensive Child Care System - Will a wide range of well-planned, coordinated, regulated services be developed, offering parents real flexibility and choice in their child care decisions?

3) Equitable Access - Will all Canadian families be able to access and afford quality care regardless of location, family income or employment?

4) Public Accountability - Will the taxpayer be guaranteed that public monies spent on child care actually bring about quality care and support for children and families.

Early Childhood Education Council  
Marian Pawlivsky  
c/o Barnett House  
10010 142 St.  
Edmonton, AB T5N 2R1

National Association for the Education of Young Children  
1834 Connecticut Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20009 5786

Canadian Association for Young Children  
50 Regan Crescent  
Georgetown, ON L7G 1B1

Southern Regional Director's Association  
Karen Charlton  
1721 21 Avenue, SE  
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 2C3 or phone 527-9444  
Medicine Hat and District Child Care Organization  
Mary Hope Call  
109 Broadway East  
Redcliff, AB T0J 0L0 or phone 548-3094

Medicine Hat College ECD Advisory Committee  
Lois Bourassa  
Box 411  
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 7M5 or phone 529-2784

Quality Care Evaluation Committee  
Susan Costea  
580 First Street SE  
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 8E6 or phone 529-8316

Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association  
323 Chapel Street  
Ottawa, ON K1N 7Z2 or phone (613) 594-3196

Canadian Child Day Care Federation  
PO Box 6370 Station C  
Victoria, BC V8P 5M3  
or  
Pam Taylor (Alberta Contact)  
7503 110 Ave  
Edmonton, AB T5B 0A2 or phone 471-1753

# The poet's corner

by Luanne Armstrong

I attended a very interesting meeting the other day. It was "feminist colloquy," or discussion, which brought together four main groups of feminists; women in the church, women in politics, women in the university, and women involved in direct political action or service. We spent a day discussing out commonalities and differences, and discovered, not very suprisingly, that we had much more in common, especially in terms of our feminist convictions, than we had differences.

But then we were all white, reasonably well educated, well-fed, and working feminists. I couldn't help but wonder how different the discussion might have been if I had been in a room full of native women, immigrant women, women on welfare, and other women of that rather odd bureaucratic phrase, "visible minorities."

Don't get me wrong. The feminist colloquy was a wonderful idea, and one we need more of. As the feminist movement continues to grow and spread, we run the risk of working in fragmented areas, and not paying enough attention to what our sisters are doing somewhere else.

But the efforts towards building a multiracial, multiclass, multicultural women's movement is one that has barely begun, but is absolutely essential. The Calgary Status of Women, for example, has been running a series of talks on Racism and Sexism, with excellent response. The theme of the International Women's Day this year, is "Towards Building a Multiracial Women's Movement." At

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the thought provoking discussions centered on

racial Women's Movement." At the ASWAC assembly this year, one of the most emotional and thought provoking discussions centered on the women who hadn't come, who couldn't afford it, couldn't bring their children, felt excluded and intimidated by the very process. As just one beginning towards making such activities less exclusive, ASWAC decided to provide quality child care at whatever events we put on, and to make membership development a priority issue.

But all of this is a bare beginning. In the Fort McMurray board meeting, we heard from a native woman, who works as a social worker in small communities in the North, how difficult it is to even bring up such topics as feminism, or abortion. Such topics, she said, are taboo in the male dominated native society. Wife battering, sexual assault, and child abuse go on, but are never talked about. The word lesbian is almost unheard of. And the last thing these women want is more interference from well meaning "outsiders." How do we make connections there?

## A NOTE OF SO LONG FROM FRANCES

I am leaving ASWAC to take a job with the Secretary of State at the northern Alberta office in Edmonton. The department includes the Women's Program, Multiculturalism, Disabled, Native, Official Languages, Youth, Human Rights and Voluntary Participation programs. I will be promoting the programs and working with community groups.

I can't really write a goodbye letter. I tried but I already had two pages written



Feminism, as a word, has scary connotations attached to it these days for some women...connotations it doesn't deserve but which exist. Even as we do the same work on the same issues; childcare, poverty, wages, wife battering, child abuse, it is too easy, still, to let our differences divide us, rather than finding our commonalities.

Yes, its difficult, and requires effort on both sides, but in particular, it requires the willingness and understanding of white, middle class women to take time to listen and to hear. Yes, it will take effort, but its also absolutely necessary, in, for example, our discussions on childcare, to include the issue of childcare for native women, for immigrant women, for rural women. Its necessary, when talking about pay equity, to also talk about poverty, and welfare, and indignity. It's necessary, but its not easy. That's no reason not to do it.

and hadn't reached my first day on the job yet. It's almost 4½ years since I was first hired and my story of these years is too full and too rich and varied to describe in a few words. I feel really good about making this change in my life although it will be a major adjustment to leave ASWAC. The song that the board sang for me, "Good where I've been...good where I'm going to", is really true. Much love to ASWAC and see you around.

# Alberta feminist hits the big time

by Terri-Ann Marco

It was a very special thing for me to be invited to attend the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) conference in London, Ontario in January. Personally, it was an otherwise inaccessible trip to see far-flung friends and family. It was, more importantly, a rewarding feeling to be a little piece of my beloved Southern Alberta on the "National Scene". It was also a real privilege to be there on behalf of ASWAC.

The mid-year meeting is really a conference, whereas the end year meeting is where policy, resolutions, etc. are formulated. The process of the mid-year meeting was more networking, undating and information sharing. Major discussions occurred around the cost and effectiveness of the mid-year meetings, with the other alternative being some kind of regional meetings. The experience of hearing women talk about issues from all across the country was very energizing for me; however, there is little of that I can bring back. Regional meetings could involve more women and involve more regional unity, so I support the move in that direction.

One of the major themes of the conference was making NAC more representative of all of Canada. This issue has been a focus of activity for the women working on the NAC reorganizing committee. It is quite obvious that NAC is

dominated by Central Canadian groups, and a bit more connected with the Maritimes. However, I felt they were sincere in their efforts to reach out to the "outer regions."

The plenary sessions developed the spectrum of the theme of violence against women. The information, while not for the most part new, was moving and thought provoking. Of special concern were the moves of legal defense people to disqualify attempts to adapt testimony rules for children in sexual abuse cases; particularly reports that mothers set children up to lie in (most, often?) custody cases.

Another theme throughout the conference was the "New Right." These people seem particularly active and high profile in Middle Canada. I know they seem to make their presence felt in Alberta. The general strategy, as expressed by Louise Dulude, was that it is time to be pro-active. It is time to set out agenda and let them react to it, instead of the other way around. Also, it was felt that it was now necessary to confront them and expose their fallacies, rather than nicely and politely ignoring them.

The issue of abortion access seems to be chronic everywhere, and evidence seems to suggest that we are losing some ground. In Alberta the crisis is being stalled until it dribbles away.

Toronto people spoke strongly of the issue in terms of free standing clinics vs. Therapeutic Committees in

hospitals. I believe that what is the most effective strategy in one community is not necessarily the right strategy for another. Access, not format, is the issue that we have in common.

The dinner and dance was wonderful. We were entertained by some London women's music groups and my very first experience of a feminist comedian. She appeared several times in a delightful impression of Queen Elizabeth as a feminist, and stole the show at the dance with an incredible monologue on women valuing their anatomy. She was dressed as a giant vulva and the effect was quite outstanding. With the Yuk-Yuk craze (a chain of nightclubs) dredging up some of the worst misogynous humour, I couldn't help but feel that we must have some Albertan talent worth developing and getting on the circuit! Another interesting experience for me was that two men attended the dance. I watched carefully, because as some of you are aware, I have had great debates over the pros and cons of men attending feminist events.

What happened was that one man blended in very positively. The other made quite a spectacle of himself and managed to dominate and destroy the harmony for at least a half an hour. The result of this experience is that I am still having a roaring debate with myself!

**March edition**

# Update from the women of the south

by Shelley Scott

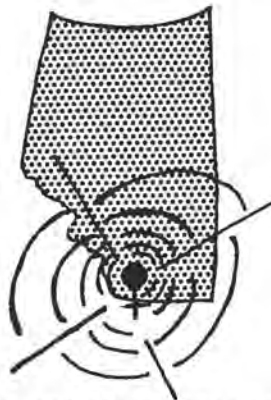
This is the first in a regular series of updates on what is going on in Lethbridge and the surrounding area.

International Women's Day will be celebrated on March 7 at the YWCA. From 2 to 6:30 pm there will be displays, films and activities sponsored by and celebrating local women and women's groups. We are trying to have more participation this year, so all the areas will include things to do as well as see. Starting at 6:30 there will be a wine and cheese social, with entertainment and poetry reading.

The I.W.D. Committee is made up of representatives from ASWAC Lethbridge, YWCA, CUSO, Women in New Directions, and the World Citizen's Centre. Our theme this year is "Making Connections", between individual women, between women's groups, and between women in Canada and in other parts of the world. As part of the connection between women's groups, there will be a "Think Tank" with representatives from at least twelve women's groups. Out of the "Think Tank" will come a structure for a year long series of events, with each group taking a month to hold some sort of activity (a film night, a workshop, whatever), so that at the end of the year we will have some networks and connections between us. There has been a real need felt by many local women's organizations to establish these kinds of contacts, so hopefully this will be a first step towards an on-going process.

ASWAC Lethbridge and the Lethbridge Public Library are co-sponsoring an evening on images of women in the media,

entitled, On Images, to be held March 16 at 7pm at the Library. We will be showing the film "Killing Us Softly", the slide presentation "Positive Images: Women by



Women", and the speaker will be Dr. Doreen Indra of the Anthropology Department of the University of Lethbridge. This is the second in a series of film nights, the first being held in November when we showed "No Place to Hide" in conjunction with anti-family violence month in Lethbridge. The next film night is scheduled for April 23 and will probably be on abortion.



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

Other activities have included: briefs on pay equity to trade union hearings, briefs on free trade to city council, and the on-going work of setting up and maintaining our Women's Resource Centre. We now have a well-organized office space, a library, a magazine subscription system, plus an answering machine and our very own stationary. There are women staffing the centre almost every afternoon, and we are beginning to establish a presence down here in Lethbridge.

That is for this time...love and sisterhood from the coulees!!



Dear Friends,

In your January newsletter, you were asking for notes of interest, for news.

I wish to report that a group of women in the High River area, have a group and have been meeting since 1916. I have belonged to this group since I moved here, 42 years

ago. We have much the same aims as the Alberta Status of Women. We do have some policy on farm issues, but all our concerns pertain to all women in Alberta.

We are affiliated with other groups; Associated Country Women of the World, Canadian Association for adult education, Consumers Association of Canada, Alberta Farm Safety Program, REDA Youth Programs and Alberta Farm Women's Week. The name of our group is Women of Unifarm.

My dues are due for ASWAC this month, I will enclose my cheque. Wishing you a good year, sincerely,

Helen Murray.

# Regional reps meet in Calgary

Although the benefits of being an ASWAC Regional Rep are many and varied, more contact with the office, and more information, would help break any sense of isolation they feel.

This was the overall consensus of the first provincial ASWAC Regional Rep meeting of 1987 held in Calgary on February 15.

The meeting began with a discussion of the Kitchen Table Papers, a new ASWAC project which will present one page discussion papers for use at "Kitchen Table meetings." Regional Reps also stated that more information from the office, particularly new facts and statistics, would be helpful.

A long discussion was held on about the identity of regional reps. A brainstorming session pointed out that regional reps are members who: --spread the word, increase membership, provide a local contact in their area, meet with other members, are visible representatives of ASWAC, provide orientation to new members, are a "place to go", extend outreach, do local work on local issues, get info from the office, and back again, are familiar with resource material, feel connected with the women's movement and help break the sense of isolation other women might feel, are supportive to other feminists, make friends, know the contradictions between urban and small town existence, act as a focal point for people to ask questions, and have feminist organizing as part of their reason for being. Regional Reps can help each other by working out structural guidelines for Regional Rep work together, co-sponsoring events with one another, acting as each other's guest speakers scheduling regular Regional Rep meetings, and holding further discussion on membership development.

Other suggestions put forward included being informed by

the office of new members in their regions, as well as being given more opportunity to attend skills training workshops. Easier ways to keep track of expenses would also be helpful, since Regional Rep organizing often flows into community organizing, it is

difficult to keep track of expenses.

The next meeting will be held June 6, in Coronation. Anyone interested in attending, could contact their local Regional Rep, the ASWAC office, or Annette Aarbo, at 432-3359.

## Insisting on respect

by Marnie McCall

"We only get the respect we insist on," Maureen McTeer told about 250 women at a recent meeting sponsored by the Library Association of Alberta, adding that women "have been willing to be second-class citizens for too long."

"Education, experience and seniority don't explain the differences in income" between men and women, McTeer said. A 1986 study of librarians showed that, except in community colleges, male librarians at every level earned more than their female counterparts, even where education and years of experience were identical. The only possible conclusion, McTeer said, was that "gender caused it the number of degrees didn't."

This situation continues to exist, she says, because it is assumed that women "will take it," that they're taught to be nice, not strong. "Fear of

the consequence of speaking out in the face of persons of authority over you is a powerful deterrent," said McTeer, "and social ostracism is also a consequence of being strong and ambitious."

McTeer urged women to challenge unequal pay situations where they work, directly with the employer, or through provincial employment standards or human rights legislation requiring equal pay for equal work.

Women shouldn't forget the political route, McTeer said. "Go to the health minister and ask him, 'Why are you publicly funding hospitals which discriminate against women (in administration) and hire less-qualified men?'" she urged. "Lobby education ministers -- schools and universities use public funds. No one will think more of you for doing the ladylike thing, which is turn the other cheek."

## Join ASWAC and work!

Become a member of

- child care committee ● abortion caucus ● lesbian caucus

participate as a

- regional representative ●

or volunteer in

- Edmonton - 485-5777 ● Calgary - 263-1550 ●
- Lethbridge - 329-8338 ●

# happeningshappeningshappenings



## Submit your art

The Women's Committee of Latitude 53 Gallery requests submissions (slides, resume) from women for a juried photography exhibition. The theme is "images of women". This exhibition will be a part of "The Works". Submission deadline is April 15, 1987. For more information call Coral Peterson at Latitude 53, 439-1985.

## Womospace

Womospace is the lesbian organization in Edmonton and meets in The Women's Building in Edmonton. A general meeting is held the second Tuesday of every month and dances are held the third Saturday of each month at Bonnie Doon Hall in Edmonton. For more information phone 424-7040.

## Herstory project

Do you have some of ASWAC's herstory tucked away in a drawer or box? Old photos (or new), journal scribbles or memories? Poems? Memorabilia? Anything that would help us preserve our stories for women now and in the future?

If you do, and are willing to share these, please send them to ASWAC. We are hoping to find some grant money to eventually publish our herstory in some form. Please put as many details, names, occasions on the backs of photos. If you are sending a copy of some personal writings, make sure your name is on it in the event that we use it in the future publication. Also, if you are willing to be interviewed about any aspect of ASWAC's story, please let us know.

If working on such a project interests you, or if you have ideas that would help, please contact Lorraine at ASWAC.

Now, clean out those cupboards and boxes!!!

## Third annual lesbian conference

"Just for Us" is the title of this year's lesbian conference to be held in Calgary April 24 - 25. There is a wide range of workshops in the planning stages including coming out, parenting, massage and many, many more.

The Friday evening of the conference will feature entertainment and there will be a dance the Saturday evening.

Registration is \$20 before March 21 and \$25 afterwards. There will be a sliding scale, but because the conference is very tight for funds, those women who can afford to pay should. There will be free childcare available and the to-be-announced premises will be wheelchair accessible.

The conference is being organized by the Lesbian conference Committee and is being co-sponsored by the Lesbian Mothers Defense Fund. For more information call SWAC at 262-1873 or The Lesbian information lines at 265-9458.

## On immigrant women

Women and Film is the title of a film event on Immigrant Women sponsored by the NFB in Edmonton March 31, 87. The films will be shown at the NFB office at 10031 103 Ave. There will be a discussion about the issues that immigrant women deal with in Canada.

## Filmmaker tours Alberta

Kathleen Shannon, filmmaker and founder of the NFB's women's studio, Studio D, will be in Edmonton, April 1-3. Kathleen is a member of the Order of Canada and has worked diligently for years on women and culture and the media. She has presented numerous briefs to several government committees on these issues.

April 4, Kathleen will be present at a screening of her films. This event is being co-sponsored by the UofA Women's Studies Association, the Academic Women's Association at the U of A and the Women's Program Dept of Extension. For more information as to place and time, contact the NFB or the Women's Program at 432-3093 for details.

## Calgary Film series

ASWAC and The Women in Social Work Association in Calgary are co-sponsoring a film series beginning in February. The series' focus is on national and international women's concerns.

"With our Own Two Hands" will be shown March 24. This film looks at women's lives in post-revolutionary Nicaragua.

"Mother of Many Children" is the title of a beautiful film which looks at native women's issues and those of their children. It will be shown April 28.

# happeningshappeningshappenings

## Anniversary bash

The Women's Program and Resource Centre at the U of A is celebrating its second anniversary in its home at 11090 90 Ave. Come for birthday cake and fun, 3:30 pm Thursday, March 12, 87.

Heather Bain is re-offering her very popular workshop, "Women: Healing Ourselves", through the Women's Program Dept. of Extension, U of A. Friday, March 27-29. Friday 7:30-9:30, Saturday and Sunday, 9:30-4:30. The fee for the weekend is \$70, and there are some subsidies available. For more information call 432-3093.

## Facilitation workshop

The board and staff of the Alberta/NWT network of Immigrant women would like to invite you and your group to a workshop on "Facilitation Techniques". The workshop will be facilitated by Barb Thomas of Toronto. Barb is an educational consultant, and has written several books, amongst them is "Combating Racism in the Workplace". The workshop will be held March 17, 9-4:30 pm at the Redford Inn on Whyte in Edmonton. RSVP to Christine Lassalee at 426-6252 or Surinder Dhol in Calgary at 270-7670 before March 4 if possible.

## MediaWatch

MediaWatch is a national organization that monitors the portrayal of women in the media. Pauline Belanger is the Alberta representative and has forms for anyone who is interested in recording what they see. Kathryn deBree is the Board member for the prairies. For more information contact Pauline at 424-6889 or Kathryn at 437-5164.

## Support is work!

The Lesbian Mother's Support Group will be hosting a potluck supper, Sunday, March 15 from 4-7:30. This is a new group that has just formed in Edmonton. The dinner will be at 10525 80 Ave. Bring your children. This will be a social, although there will be some discussion of the group's objectives and directions. Phone Denise or Anne at 483-1615 for more information.

## The poor in Canada

There are more poor women than poor men in Canada. What circumstances have led to this feminization of poverty? Many women, especially seniors, experience poverty in their daily lives. This forum includes a locally produced film about women and poverty in Alberta, and a panel discussion about real, day to day events for poor women. Panelists will discuss ways to end poverty. Thursday, April 2, 7:30 pm. Humanities Lecture Theatre 1 U of A.

## Abortion workshop

The Abortion Caucus in Edmonton is organizing an exciting event for the month of April. The event will be titled, "Building for Choice" An Abortion Clinic for Edmonton. Dr. Nikki Colodny, psychotherapist and general practitioner, who has been performing abortions in the Morgentaler clinic in Toronto will speak at the forum and be present for the workshop. Lynn Lathrop, paid organizer for the Ontario Coalition For Abortion Clinics will also be present. The Forum will be Saturday, April 11, at 8 pm in Room 2115 Education North, U of A. The workshop will be held on Sunday, April 12, at 1 pm. There will be free child care provided on site.

## New newsletter

The Indo-Canadian Women's Association has published their first newsletter! The newsletter was made possible thanks to funding from The Women's Program, Secretary of State. If you would like a copy or more information about the group contact 5316-89 St, Edmonton, AB. T6E 5P9 or phone (403) 468-7170.

## Health network

The first meeting of the Canadian Women's Health Network was held in Toronto, February 6 and 7. Twenty women from all across Canada met for the first time to become the Coordinating Committee for the formation of the network. The regional representative for Alberta was Joan Hollenberg from the Calgary Women's Health Collective.

The purpose of the network is to build on the enormous amount of work which has been done across the country by dozens of local, regional, and national organizations over the past decade on women's health.

The priorities of the project are to strengthen the existing women's networks and to consolidate the important work on women and health that is being done across Canada.

The process envisioned for the network is one that will ensure participation of a broad range of groups representing women from all geographic areas. For more information, contact the Calgary Women's Health Collective, 2340 1 Ave. NW, Calgary T2N 0B8.



The Alberta Status of Women  
Action Committee  
Box 1573, Edmonton, Alberta  
T5J 2N7

## *Yes, you!*

Your label still says "86"!?  
That means you haven't  
renewed your membership  
yet — and you know what  
that means!

But don't despair. You still  
have one more chance.  
Fill out the form below to let  
us know you still exist.



ASWAC memberships run from September to September with a grace period from September until the Assembly in November. Our suggested fee is \$10, but we want you more than your money so we will be happy with whatever you can afford. (Loto 6/49 winners: this does not apply to you!)

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

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