



ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE

April 1987

Volume 8, Number 4



Inside:
**Feature on
Racism and
Sexism**

**We Appear
Silent
To People
Who Are
Deaf
To What
We Say**

— Pages 12&13 —

photo by Suzn Morgan



ASWAC

1986/87 Board members

Darlene Abreu Ferreira - Edmonton 429-1656
 Sheryl Ackerman - Edmonton 424-6889
 Michele Butot - Calgary c/o office 263-1550
 Luanne Armstrong - Edmonton office
 Anne Dobbie - Edmonton h. 464-1087
 Helen Greaves - Edmonton 421-8585
 Karin Goldberg - Edmonton 484-7254
 Sally Issenman - Edmonton 423-1199
 Terri-Ann Marco - Lethbridge 381-1523
 Deborah Perret - Calgary 283-7275
 Shelley Scott - Lethbridge 20-5171
 Kathy Willis - Lethbridge c/o office
 Jane Wiley - Edmonton office

1986/87 Regional Reps

Annette Aarbo - Edmonton
 Home 437-4938 Work 432-3359

Gerry Bailey - Westerose
 Home 5862983

Joan White Calf - Camrose
 Home 672-2210

Lavera Creasy - Coronation
 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 Lethbridge, May 29-31. Phone the Women's Resource Centre in Lethbridge at #202 325 6 Street S. phone 329-8338 for more information. All members or interested women are invited 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 of the ASWAC Newsletter is June 6.

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Donations

Monies have been most gratefully received from the following persons; Dayna Daniels, Janet Miller, Diana Chown, Sylvia Kennedy, Charlotte Webb, Julia Melnyk, Mary-Ann Warunkiew, Kathryn Ivany, N.J. More, Merle Cawood, C. Nelson, Barbara Sykes, Dr. Debra Shogan, Jean Kuijt, Inga Jesswein, Mary C. Moore, Caroline Narin.

Hug these women!

These women deserve hugs and praise for their continued support for ASWAC's numerous undertakings, Cathy Bray, Valda Roberts, Jude Major, The members of the childcare committee, the board and all the regional reps across the province.

Front photo: Makeda Silvera and Dian Denis at Calgary IWD march.

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 April 3-5 in Calgary at the Women's Therapy and Research Centre.

Present: Sheryl Ackerman, Michele Butot, Luanne Armstrong, Helen Greaves, Anne Dobbie, Jane Wiley, Deborah Perret, Shelley Scott, Terri Ann Marco, Sally Isenman. Annette Aarbo: Regional Rep and Jude Major, hiring committee member also attended.

Hiring Committee

There were a number of issues to be discussed re: the hiring of the project co-ordinator's position. The first item that we clarified was the mandate of the hiring cttee. We reaffirmed an earlier decision that the hiring committee was given the go ahead to do the actual hiring by the board.

We discussed for future reference whether or not the hiring committee should be internal or external of the board and what role it should play.

We also talked about the process that the hiring cttee adopted to doing the hiring. Is the process patriarchial? How do we resolve the validation of voluntary women's work as opposed to paid work experience? We also discussed confidentiality and agreed that it was not up to the hiring cttee to let women know who had applied but that we should be open to the women applying to discussing things amongst themselves.

We then talked about trust levels and the kaleidoscope of interpersonal issues that will undoubtedly be involved when a small group does something as touchy as hiring. If we pretend that a relationship does not get in the way, but believe that it does, there there is no basis for trust. Trust takes time, and we tend to assume that it's there. We need to build enough trust so that the work gets done. We learn to trust through the work that we do, trust is not a given.

We discussed what we mean by trust and agreed that trust means; personal agendas wouldn't interfere

with the work we do, being open and honest, if first isn't possible. Whatever, no silence.

Feminist Ethics

The hiring process that the board has been through brought up many questions regarding feminist ethics. We are developing a new culture, therefore we need new ethics. We recognize that this is a struggle and we do not always succeed. Can we trust each other to try to succeed? It is difficult because we have no structures to work with and depend on. Our standards can be too high, in that we expect perfection. We need to look at this issue very clearly in light of threats from the right. We decided that it is better to risk offending rather than remaining silent.

Note: This all sounds very obtuse, but these notes reflect the depth and range of our discussion.

Community Reports

A number of women and women's groups attended this session Saturday afternoon. The Calgary Women's Health Collective sent a rep, the new Network in Calgary sent Ravida to fill us in on what's happening. There was even a woman visiting Calgary from the Manitoba Status of Women Action Committee who let us know what they are up to. Everyone agreed that setting time in the agenda to do this type of work was very worthwhile. (Thanks to Michele and the other Calgary Women for making it happen.)

Direct Line

It was suggested that we look into getting a direct phone line between Calgary and Edmonton to provide some contact for the new staff person.

Budget

We have to wait until June of July before our money may be received from the Secretary of State. Luanne expressed a concern about travelling expenses, but It was decided that there will be enough monies in donations to tide us over.

Secretary of State

Luanne and Deborah gave us a report from the hearings of the Standing Committee of the Secretary of State.

which heard briefs by women's groups in Vancouver recently. Deborah and Luanne wrote and presented ASWAC's brief.

The committee was made up of two women and 4 relatively conservative men. The presentations by the right wing groups were very vicious and painful to listen to, but many widely varied groups spoke in support of funding for feminist groups and support the criteria for equality that is currently in use by Sec State. More on this stuff later.

REAL Women

Concerns were brought up as to how we should handle the issue of REAL Women and funding. Sheryl suggested that the NAC proposal had some excellent and very clear reasons why REAL women should not be funded. Some of them being that REAL Women are against the Canadian Government and the Canadian Charter of Rights.

We talked a lot about reaching out to grass roots women before they are taken in by REAL Women. We talked about how some women are afraid of the word feminist. We agreed to get a working committee together at the next Board meeting to work on strategies to reach out to women in the community. Some strategies suggested were ads in local newspapers explaining what feminists are working on and a large public campaign similar to "I am not a feminist but" campaigns done previously. Sheryl, Helen, Terri Ann Luanne and Michele all agreed to be part of the working groups to look at ways to reach women through grass roots ways.

Abortion Caucus

The Board agreed that \$1000, from the General Account could be used for the public forum and workshop on April 11, 12 for expenses. The Caucus has agreed to become autonomous from ASWAC in the future.

Childcare

Jane reported on the Childcare Campaign activities since the last board meeting. The working weekend and the postcard campaign were both successful in generating interest and public activity. Jane outlined the main points of the Federal Commons Special Committee Report on child care. The major recommendation of the report is that the child care expense deduction be replaced by a child care expense tax credit. This measure does nothing to ensure

the development of a high quality, comprehensive child care system in Canada. Furthermore, the report does in no way represent the real concerns and needs expressed by Canadian and Albertan parents.

We decided to pay for 2 women of the child care working cttee to attend a National conference on childcare in Guelph. We also agreed that the childcare committee should provide childcare at their regular meetings.



Newsmagazine

Subs

It was agreed that we should again purchase 30 subscriptions to the Newsmagazine by Alberta Women to be used as an outreach tool. There should be 10 sent to each office in Edmonton, Lethbridge and Calgary. We agreed to encourage women to purchase their own subscriptions.

Media Watch

Sheryl handed out Media Watch forms, brochures and lovely posters. She suggested that we use them for both positive and negative feedback on how the media is portraying women and send them in.

Personnel Committee

The committee, which consists of Helen, Cathy Bray, and Lorraine has prepared a first draft of a new personnel committee and distributed it to the meeting. We agreed to look it over and discuss it at the next board meeting.

Practicum Student

Michele Butot's methods instructor attended this section of the meeting. Michele presented an update of the work that she had been doing. It was agreed that it would be great if she was willing to carry

on her membership development work, beyond the time of her practicum. Michele felt that the responses she had received from her work on the telephone had been positive. It was felt that the work that still needs to be done with the membership in Calgary is conscious raising work, not specific issue work. She also mentioned that there is an identity problem between ASWAC in Calgary and Calgary SWAC, but she has been working on this.

Lorraine's Job Etc.

After everyone expressed sadness and disappointment over Lorraine's letter of resignation, we discussed job descriptions in the office and the problems with being a paid staff in the movement either part time or full time. It was felt that Lorraine



had been done in by the extreme expectations placed upon her as a paid staff. Self-selection was used to co-opt Lorraine's feelings about the pressure to do a good job. Luanne and Jane also feel pressure from not having clear enough job roles. It was agreed that there should probably be two full time staff positions in Edmonton, rather than 1 full time and one half time. Jane said that in the interim she would be full time, but had to look at how she felt before making a long term decision. Helen suggested that the personnel and hiring committee pool resources to make recommendations of job descriptions at the next board meeting.

In the Interim - Lorraine is leaving April 11. Jane will work part time for two weeks and the full time for the other weeks leading up to the next board meeting.

May 1

Annette, the regional rep for Edmonton agreed to work with Jane on the display for the May 1 celebrations being sponsored by The Alberta Federation of Labour. The table will cost \$50.

NAC AGM

This stands for the National Action Committee on the Status of Women Annual General Meeting to which ASWAC will be sending a delegate. It was decided to book a flight to Ottawa and ask the women who are interested in attending do a conference call to decide who would go. In the future we will put in the Newsletter that women interested should apply and we will draw straws or something.

Lethbridge Rape Case

It was agreed to contribute \$150 to the effort to but the transcript of a horrendous rape trial heard in Lethbridge recently.

Pay Equity

Anne (our new project co-ordinator in Calgary) expressed great interest in working on the issue of pay equity and will start a re-vitalization of the campaign when she begins work.

Thanks

After all the hassle and struggling, Sheryl wanted to thank the hiring committee for their hard work and welcomed Anne Magrath to the board. We are looking forward to working with her and her energy and commitment.

Lawsuit

Terri Ann graciously agreed to go to court as an officer of ASWAC to answer on ASWAC's behalf.

Women's Foundation and Parade

The Board agreed that we would like to be kept informed about what is happening with these two projects, which are the result of one woman in Edmonton's latest project. Jude agreed to contact Halyna.

Women's Building

Annette agreed to be at the Building meeting on Monday to help take the pressure off the staff who are feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of the building's current situation. It was felt that if we could be the building into shape, then we could attract new tenants easier. Right now the work of ASWAC is being taken up by the problem of the building, so we should get members involved to take some of the pressure off the women currently involved.

Double booked in Lethbridge

by Naomi Lis

I moved to Lethbridge from BC in the fall of 1985; a refugee from the BC depression who regarded the treeless "wasteland" east of the Rockies with dismay. The south of Alberta, I had been told, was not unlike the deep American south. I feared and also hoped, that I would never fit in.

March 1987: The large gym at the Lethbridge YWCA filled with women; women staffing displays ranging from computers to music, poetry and art. The ASWAC Lethbridge inviting you to have "Your Photo Taken holding the Placard of your choice" in dashing polaroid style; then to be mailed to the respective MLA or MP. How could they resist?

Women from different organizations and ethnic groups doing what they had chosen to do for themselves and us all, together on this day.

More than 20 women from almost as many women's groups and organizations in the area participated in making connections through the "Think Tank". Perhaps we, women of the South, have more in common with each other as women than we ever thought!

Then the social! Wine, women and song with all the best connotations; with Doreen Healy from Edmonton singing and some talented and beautiful local women poets sharing and giving so much of themselves. Women laughing and crying and dancing together through the great arch of the Chinook. Lethbridge can never be the same.

Of course, every good thing has its "flip side". Even in March 1987! a mere 10 days after the IWD success. Your BC refugee - now New Albertan stands in the midst of downtown Lethbridge. Her dilemma: decision making. On one side of the street, the local



Naomi at the Assembly

photo by Sheryl Ackerman

ASWAC group has filled the library theatre with women and men who are involved in Doreen Indra's presentation On Images - Presented by the Media. On the other side of the street, Marie Laing, NDP MLA is addressing the University Women's Club on Women and the Economy. "EENNIE, MEENIE, MINY MOE". If only she had been available at lunch time when Marie Laing was joining the ASWAC women at their Resource Centre. Can it be that there is TOO MUCH going on? ? ? Thank Goddess, there really is!

It is also becoming difficult to know where to tune the dial on radio and TV. Previously, I would just hit my favorite music station, but now ASWAC members have literally become a familiar sound and sight over the airwaves: unafraid to tackle even those issues that resemble dynamite here in the south.

Terri Ann Marco could even be heard giving a poolside interview at 7:30 am. This same Terri Ann challenged the negative connotations applied to feminism in the so-called post feminist era, during one of the "Lenten Lunches" sponsored by a local church. But in case you missed all this, you can always catch up and "read all about it"

in the Lethbridge Herald. They have been pretty much on the ball with quite extensive coverage and big, clear headlines. Nice!

For many here these might still be unfamiliar sights and sounds among the tumbleweed and coulees; stimulating many questions. So while I have this chance, I would like to extend an invitation to other women in the south who might like to consider becoming a part of this exciting process of growth and development; or just get in touch to ask us some questions. The ASWAC Lethbridge phone number is 329-8338. Do give us a call, or come on over. And for women who might like to see something happen in their own communities even if this is simply some women coming together to talk and share round their kitchen tables - please give me a call. I've become so committed to Southern Alberta I have become the ASWAC Regional Rep. Let's make connections.

Oh, and if you women in Edmonton and Calgary would also like to join us... spring in Lethbridge 1987 looks as if it holds the promise of the emergence of more than just gophers and wheat! Woman power, spring, sun and the energy of the chinook. Who knows?

Report from Calgary office

by Michele Butot

Greetings from the Calgary office of ASWAC. For the past three months, I have, as many of you know, been working with ASWAC as a senior-level social work practicum student. I would like to give you a brief update of what's been happening with ASWAC-Calgary.

Since the Fort McMurray Board meeting, I have been engaged in several tasks, including; -I have begun phoning all members in the Calgary area to conduct a survey. I am asking our members about what they perceive ASWAC in Calgary as - what the strengths and weaknesses are, and what they would like ASWAC Calgary to be doing. I have not gotten as far along with this project as I would have liked - I expect that the survey will be completed by the end of the month. I will bring a report of my findings to the May Board meeting. If you are a Calgary ASWAC member, and haven't heard from me yet, you will be soon. You can also call me, at the Calgary office, 263-1550 ext. 338, Wednesday through Friday.

-I facilitated a section of a workshop for gifted teenagers on Youth and Political Action. My portion of the workshop was on feminism and the peace movement.

-I have been working with the steering committee of Women Looking Forward, a group hoping to form a support and action network among women's groups in the city. The next meeting is on April 9, for more information call Ravida at 269-1144.

-I attended the annual general meeting of the Alberta Coalition Against Pornography at which Dr. Joan Ryan spoke about the politics of activism.

-I met with the group working on the WLF present-

ation to Margaret Leahey and the Advisory Council on Women's Issues.

-I attended the Advisory Council's public forum - I was unfortunately, not very impressed with the proceedings. I have written about the meeting for the Newsmagazine by Alberta Women.

The latter part of the month of March involved preparation for the April board meeting. I organized a Community Reports session where I invited groups of the area

to come to the board and let us know what is happening. I also organized a Coffee House for the Saturday evening of the Board Meeting weekend. This was a long and complicated process, but worthwhile, given the success of both the Community Reports Session and the Coffee House.

If you have any questions, or just want to get in touch, please call me at the Calgary office.

In sisterhood,

Michele Butot

Our researcher's departure

Lorraine Mitchell, our sharp as a tack researcher, resigned her position as staff person in April. She has been working for ASWAC since August, 1986. Lorraine is a long time activist with the women's movement and her contributions to ASWAC were innumerable. Her dry and sometimes cutting sense of humour made working in the office feel closer to sanity, and her ability to clearly summarize reality in a sentence, made complex issues seem easier to face. One of her projects while on staff was to research and write a concise herstory of ASWAC for the last Assembly in November, and we hope that the work that she has done will be used to some day complete a published herstory of ASWAC as an organization.



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

Hard working women never seem to get enough in return for their efforts, but we know what you did, and we will sadly miss you.

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 ●

Hiring from within: the toughest job of all

The ASWAC board recently struck a hiring committee to fill the position of Project Co-ordinator, one of ASWAC's paid positions. The hiring committee undertook the selection of the best woman for the the job in the same or similar way that ASWAC has previously filled staff positions. What follows are two personal impressions of the hiring process and the results. These statements are being printed in the interests of free and open debate, but do not necessarily reflect the views of the ASWAC board or the ASWAC Newsletter.

by Sheryl Ackerman

I ride to the April board meeting of ASWAC full of anticipation. There is laughter in the company of friends, and a feeling that, in spite of the demands ahead of us, we are women of good will and committed spirit, ready for the hard work that all of us face as women/feminists.

Laughter to tears. Upon arrival, we learn that Suzn has resigned from the board in response to the "hiring process". At least one other board member is also upset. This shocks me, having spoken to several members of the hiring committee who felt clear about having done a very, very difficult job the best they could. To my knowledge, they had used a fairly conventional process of shortlisting and interviewing to choose one woman out of twenty applicants for the project co-ordinator's position, newly moved to Calgary. There had been one reservation about the fact that the chosen applicant wouldn't be able to start until July due to pregnancy, whereupon board members were contacted and the choice was confirmed.

Saturday of our board meeting, I cry and cry and cry (nor am I alone). I cry to think that I may have caused others pain, I who cannot endure to offend, who would never, by act or omission, want to hurt anyone. I cry for their pain. I cry for the thrashing I feel by the words of a sister in pain. Most of all, I cry as these questions whirl around and round in my head:

How can women who share values and principles, acting with the best of intentions, end up in such a painful situation?

What is there in the situation or structures (internal or external) that bring us to this pain?

How can we prevent such pain? If we cannot prevent it, how can we learn/grow from it?

We, the board members and hiring committee members, go over the entire process carefully. Later, the hiring committee itself again reviews the process. There has been laborious, sensitive, difficult, sometimes conflict-visited and painful work. There has been, all members feel certain, integrity and love. The board self-examines. All of us (possibly

except Suzn) are so new at this, we took for granted the commonly understood and used process of hiring. It is the same process that has been used in ASWAC for years. (In fact, Suzn herself sat on a similar committee which used this kind of process when Luanne was hired.) I subsequently learned from one of our founding mothers that at one point in ASWAC's herstory, a "group interview" process was attempted, with limited success. I would certainly have been open to hearing about/trying alternate approaches, had if even been mentioned. It truly did not occur to me, nor, I gather, to anyone else.

Now, I am wondering, where do we go from here? I am eager (as are all board members) for suggestions and ideas. I entreat those of you with experience and creativity to offer possible solutions for the future. Here are the problems as I sense them:

When hiring, what process should we use to choose one woman when more than one wants the job? What criteria should be used and how do we weigh/value each of these criteria; skills, amount of volunteer work, commitment, work within/outside ASWAC?

I do not ask these questions lightly or rhetorically, I ask out of a deep sense of need to find ways of working together that will lead us towards our common vision. I ask out of genuine concern for ASWAC and its members. I ask out of love.

Strong words, strong views

Recently the ASWAC board created a hiring committee to do interviews for the position of Project Coordinator. As a member of the board I found not only did I not agree in any way with the actual recommendation of the hiring committee, I also feel the hiring committee was ripe with undeclared conflicts surrounding interpersonal issues. I believe the committee should have declared itself in conflict and should have been reconstituted. I personally am deeply ashamed of the process that has unfolded and the lack of visible commitment to valuing of women's work- as a basic feminist concept. I feel ASWAC has engaged in a process that is clearly patriarchal and contrary to feminist principles. I cannot with sincerity and integrity, support this decision.



A few years ago the ASWAC board made a decision to act in a collective manner, this meaning that all members of the board must be in agreement on all board decisions and if there is dissension, then in-depth discussion would take place until a place was found that all could be in support of. In regards to this hiring

process this has not happened at all. The process has unfolded in a totally patriarchal/hierarchical fashion with at least some members of the board being silenced and discounted after calling "conflict of interest" and "non-support of the action". As a member of the board I am not in support of this process and said so by offering up my resignation from the board should this process continue without serious rectification. Yet the process underwent no significant changes. I will not be a member of the board - representing the interests of the members when the board as a whole refuses to confront it's own patriarchal and violent process. I am ashamed to be a member of the board that has acted in this way. I do resign from this board as long as this process is happening. I have fought hard for the principles of feminist and collective action for all my years as a member and board member. I do not resign lightly.

ASWAC has acted the patriarchal father - praising the women actively involved in the day to day/ year to year running of the organization at its convenience, then when there is a paid position involved it has judged its volunteers not to be quite good enough to actually get paid to do the organization's work. I am shamed by this action. I cannot accept that ASWAC must go outside her active volunteers to fill a position that at least two or three of the job applicants have in fact been doing on a voluntary basis. (in some cases for years) Our definition of who the "best man" is for the job has gotten mired down in



what or who is the "expert" on women's work. I believe the women who do the work are the experts, the women actively engaged in the process of personal and community transformation. It's always amazed me that those who are "BETTER" are quick to want be involved with an organization when a paycheck is involved. And it sickens me that a committee I helped to chose has acted in such a way that has validated that the "experts" must come from outside, that those we see as better qualified to do a job are not those within us but are seen as other. If we look hard enough we can always find someone who is 'better' and who will do the job 'better'. After all we must be FAIR. (But I do not judge this process fair.)

I cannot with personal integrity, sit silent on this issue. I will not. Nor will I silently disappear into the void as other past board members have been forced to do when issues came up that they were not in full agreement on. In the name of all of the women who have dedicated their energy and their lives to feminist principles and the support of ASWAC as it embodies those principles. I do indeed beseech this board and other interested members to raise your voices to rectify this situation. I know that this organization will suffer gravely if this is not confronted now. Furthermore I believe that we can do it and that we will be a stronger organization for it.

Sincerely, in sisterhood

Suzn Morgan

April edition

Where there is a will, the issues can be worked on

by Jane Wiley

My self esteem as a feminist has always been based on a vision of myself as the cutting edge of change: the radical warning of the tidal wave on its way. It was in support of this image of myself that I went to the Calgary International Women's Day Conference titled, "Dialogue Towards a Multi-Racial Women's Movement". I thought that it was time that the women's movement and Alberta feminists confront the issue of racism.

Well, I spent the weekend swallowing water in the wake of the cutting edge and I learned at least three things:

*I thought that the women's movement as a whole wasn't working on racism because my picture of "the movement" consists of a picture of the white middle class women's movement. It is true by and large that the white middle class women's movement has not faced

the issues of racism but the reality is that Women of colour and working class women have been organizing outside of the "white movement" for some time.

*The women's movement as I see it has begun dealing with the issues of racism elsewhere in Canada, and

*Some of the women in Calgary have been learning a lot about racism and the movement and I only have to go there to get a glimpse of the possibility of a multi-racial women's movement.

The conference was the final event of a year long series of workshops on Racism and Sexism and I was sorry that I hadn't attended the earlier sessions. However, the conference stood alone as a well organized and comprehensive event in itself.

The Friday evening of the conference consisted of two keynote speakers: Susan O'Donnell of the Vancouver Status of Women and the co-ordinator of the BC Human Rights Coalition spoke first, and Makeda Silvera, poet, activist, and founding mother of Sister Vision, the first press for Black women in Canada, spoke second.

Susan's speak was, for me, a continual series of "Oh yea!", and "Of course". She told me things that I knew about the women's movement but had never heard articulated before. She explained how the movement has provided a home that is safe for white middle class women and their issues but not for native women, women of colour or working class women. The movement has also seen itself as the rightful voice of all women and has asked unrepresented women to join in and claim its issues as their own. This phenomena is something I have begun to call "feminist cultural imperialism". In order to be a "real feminist", you must see yourself oppressed in these ways, and if you don't it is because you haven't seen the real issues.

The issues that the white women's movement has defined as the feminist agenda do not address the realities of racism in a native women's life, nor the reality that a black woman may feel safer working with her black brothers than her white sisters. Poor women will not have their experiences validated at a feminist meeting when Maureen McTeer, in defending women's equality in the workplace,

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Women unified by protestors

by Suzn Morgan

This year's Calgary IWD events were picketed by 8 anti-abortion/anti-gay and lesbian protesters at the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) Christian Life Centre, where the Saturday workshops were held. The pickets carrying signs of "FCJ Centre - Are you Friends of Jesus or Friends of SWAC?" and "Gay?? No Way!" were protesting the use of the centre by SWAC - a pro-choice organization. One of the effects of this protest was a mad scramble by the centre operators to strip all the conference tables of any literature that carried the word lesbian or abortion and a verbal threat to evict the conference participants during the workshops if any of the literature was replaced. This had the effect of emptying almost all the tables from the Status of Women groups and other pro-choice organizations. In that the conference was more than half finished and in the middle of the afternoon sessions, it was decided to comply with the request. Even though there was a general understanding of the decision to continue the workshops under the conditions, there was a feeling of tension and anger at being silenced at our own conference. An unfortunate incident but one that had the effect of drawing together the women attending the conference and acted as a very real catalyst for a decision to speak out even more in our lives on the issues that affect us all.



Lillian Allen, dub poet from Toronto, performed at an International Dinner following the IWD events in Calgary.

continued from page 10

says that every woman deserves a domestic. (What is a domestic?) As a member of the white middle class movement I think that we have disregarded the experiences of women of colour and poor women for a long time. Susan O'Donnell made very clear to me that if we want to work on the issues of racism and poverty, than we can if we have the will. What we cannot do is invite those women to join us in our work and expect them to do so.

Makeda Silvera began her address by letting us all know that she was nervous standing up and speaking to a predominantly white audience, and by explaining that the risks that she was taking by doing so, were real. She made it clear that what was happening was a dialogue and that white women have to be committed to actively participate in a two-way discussion for the possibility of a "Multi-Racial Women's Movement" to even begin to be envisioned.

Makeda spoke of some of the things that she has learned about her white sisters. White women are threatened by a black analysis and it is a huge step for white feminists to begin to acknowledge our privilege based on racism and class structures. Following from this, white

women have to work with non-white women not out of feelings of liberal guilt but because white women see the ending of racism as being in our own interests. (This sounds vaguely familiar to how feminists expect men to approach women's issues.) Makeda ended her speak with a quote from Audre Lorde, a black, lesbian feminist poet: "Each of us is called up to take a stand... we are sisters and our survival is mutual..."

The Saturday session of the conference consisted of a number of workshops and small group discussions. One of the things that I learned during one of these sessions was that women of colour are not expecting us to renounce our issues and that for us to apologize for the work that we have been doing would be ludicrous. Our guilt is only one more problem for women of colour to deal with. The point of the dialogue is for white women to face the fact that the issues of the middle class women's movement are white middle class issues and that we have a lot of work to do in our own home to make our home truly more meaningful.

Race and the limits of sisterhood

The following is an excerpt of the first part of an interview done with the Guest Collective of Fireweed's Issue on Women of Colour, published in the spring of 1983. The first part of the interview speaks about race, class, community and the limits of sisterhood. We hope to reprint the second half of this interview in the next issue of the newsletter. The women interviewed are Makeda Silvera, Himani Bannerji, Dionne Brand and Prabha Khosla.

MAKEDA: I'm really sick of some of these white feminists when they talk about rape. It's always from their perspective - being knocked down somewhere in a dark alley or a park and being raped. They never mention other kinds of rape, other abuse that women of colour and immigrant women experience, like men hassling you on the bus or train at night, calling you names, the day to day social rape...A couple of nights ago I was waiting for a train and this drunk guy, big and redneck, came up and started shouting, "Bitch! Bitch!" There was me and two other guys waiting for a train and he's shouting out "Bitch, Bitch!" I'm really frightened because this guy is really big and I'm wondering what would happen if he came up and attacked me physically. What was I going to do? This white woman walks up on the platform and he starts up again. We kind of look at each other in solidarity and I feel less scared because at least there is another woman. But the, this drunk started calling out, "Nigger! Nigger!" and looking directly at me. That woman, she just looked right through me and there wasn't that kind of connection, that solidarity, anymore. It was really frightening. I didn't know what to do. I was angry, I was filled with rage, I wanted to attack the man, I wanted to cry, and suddenly I felt really embarrassed. I didn't know why.

DIONNE: I know how it is, I know that feeling.

HIMANI: So, while the whole thing was about women, when he was calling you "bitch" she was ready to relate to you. But as soon as your race came into focus, she too went over to the other side and didn't identify with you anymore. So, in some sense, the women's movement in Canada is mainstream and does not seek to identify with women of colour.

DIONNE: It doesn't address other issues that concern women of colour.

HIMANI: There is also the whole question of the book STILL AIN'T SATISFIED! Canadian Feminism Today (Women's Press 1982). It

**We Appear
Silent
To People
Who Are
Deaf
To What
We Say**

reprinted from Fireweed, Issue No. 16, Spring 1983

claims to anthologize the experiences of women in the movement for the last ten years in Canada, but actually leaves women of colour and immigrant women under-represented ... We are made invisible in the mainstream. And there is talk about "coming from the women's perspective", "coming from the woman's standpoint". It seems to me very empty, this standpoint, because I do not know who this woman is that they are talking about. It never comes down to a specific group of women. They talk about women as an empty category. They will not talk about women as class, about a particular type of woman, about woman as race, so it leaves you very empty at the end.

DIONNE: In IMMIGRANT HOUSEWIVES IN CANADA: A REPORT (sponsored by the Immigrant Women's Centre, 1981) they link the struggle of immigrant women to struggle in the house, to the husband taking away her right to speak and so on, which is bullshit.

Class and the limits of sisterhood

HIMANI: Vast numbers of immigrant women work outside of the home all the time. Even in terms of house work, they do this in other people's houses as domestic workers.

DIONNE: If one were to identify immigrant women, black women, women of colour with the aspect of domestic work in the home, it would perhaps represent 25 per cent. The other 75 per cent would be...

PRABHA: ...struggles of living within this society.

HIMANI: I'm concerned with the emptiness of that concept "woman." It has nobody in it. If you want to pin it down to anybody, it is a very middle class woman - a graduate student dropping out of graduate school with some prospect of intellectual or other employment - if not now, at some point - a woman living alone with a particular life-style that is highly cultured, who has access to what is denied most people.

MAKEDA: Even then, there is no voice of working class white women. It's all very middle Canada.

DIONNE: Precisely. I was also wondering if there is any representation of white working class women in the book, STILL AIN'T SATISFIED.

PRABHA: There is stuff around the clerical workers, the bank tellers.

MAKEDA: That is what they always classify as working class and that is where their working class consciousness stops.

DIONNE: What about the piece workers in the factories, what about the labourers?

MAKEDA: What about women of colour, immigrant women in factories and the difficulty of organising unions there? Nothing. It's like our experiences are not valued. Our experiences in organising and becoming part of unions are varied, particularly because of our being immigrants, where the fear of deportation is ever present - and the other immigrant women in factories, whose first language is not English.

HIMANI: They are always saying - and I think Immigrant Housewives in Canada

HIMANI: They are always saying - and I think IMMIGRANT HOUSEWIVES IN CANADA is a good example of it - that immigrant women are silent. I don't think that immigrant women are silent. You appear silent to people who are deaf to what you say.

PRABHA: They have their own idea of what we should be saying and until we say those things they pretend to be deaf.

HIMANI: So, if you don't fit into that, than as far as they're concerned, you're not saying anything. And, they have a particular way of deciding what they'll count as "saying" and that "saying" is not how we speak.

DIONNE: As a matter of fact, I think they like us like that - not saying. They like us to join with them and struggle with them - but just as a symbol. We don't even have to say anything. It's worth it to them if we are completely illiterate or at least appear that way. You don't have to say anything as long as they can get a few women of colour and immigrant women out to a demonstration. That's wonderful, because symbolically we've always meant some kind of radical idea.

HIMANI: But, also, we've legitimised what they are doing by going there. But, I think the other question about even illiterate people is not that they don't say things, it's how they say it. There is only one way of "saying" that counts. In that sense, they are forcing all the most middle class, the most male bourgeois ways of speaking and doing things on us. And if you don't do things that way, then you're not doing it, you're not "saying" it right. What I challenge is the whole notion of the silence of people.

Calgary organizes against racism

The Committee Against Racism was formed in 1974 in Toronto to work in defense of immigrant and minority rights. In 1979 a chapter was set up in Calgary to support the nation-wide campaign of the Seven Jamaican Mothers, domestic workers whom the government wanted to deport because they had not stated they had children in Jamaica when they came to Canada. Since 1979 the Calgary Committee Against Racism has worked in many different areas.

The Committee Against Racism is organized in 5 groups in Calgary. Three are based in the city around the issues of Aboriginal Rights, South Africa and Immigrant and Minority Rights; and two are based on campuses - University of Calgary and Mount Royal

College. The Committee Against Racism also has members in Lethbridge, Gleichen, Lacombe and Hobbema.

Each Calgary city group has a Co-ordinator and each Campus group has a full executive. All groups send two representatives to a city co-ordinating council which also include from the membership a large: a co-ordinator, a

treasurer and individuals responsible for communications and membership.

For further information about the Committee Against Racism, its work, or in order to reach any of the subgroups please phone 282-6845 or write:

Committee Against Racism
PO Box 3085, Station B,
Calgary, AB.

Transparent walls divide us

by Valda Roberts

On February 28, I attended a meeting of about forty women who gathered at the Mayfield Inn in Edmonton to discuss the topic of Racism in the Feminist Movement. The Canadian Council of Muslim Women hosted the event with guest speaker Dr. Ida Graff, Dean for Women at Victoria College. If of T.

Dr. Graff was a delegate to the End of Decade of Women conference in Nairobi, Kenya. She began her speak by relaying the experiences of middle class white women who were a minority among the 1400 women in attendance. Quite a role reversal for many!

She dais that women of colour are reaching further and working harder in their struggles and yet they encounter transparent wall within the feminist movement due to lack of communication and networking. She spoke about the closed caucuses that had been set up at the International Women's Day Celebration in Toronto last year for black, chinese, native, lesbian and white women to name a few, and how the discussions in those caucuses revealed the need for strategies and articulation fo the problems in order to break these transparent barriers.

Racism is not a new issue for women. As women working on women's issues we need to articulate and pool common experiences to extract some framework to feel strong and secure and foremost active while dealing with the problems of racism.

It is very important that racism to become a feminist priority issue. I commend the Canadian Council of Muslim Women for extending the invitation to open the pathways of cross cultural networking among feminists.

Someone's Old Favorite

by Sylvia Hamilton

I don't remember

the first time I was called it

how old I was, what day it was,

who said it and why.

Only that it happened enough other times

the first doesn't matter any more.

and now, on my twenty-sixth birthday,

out of the anonymity of the night

came the familiar sound from a passing car

(N-I-G-G-E-RRRRRRR)

which once again accompanied me home.

reprinted from Fireweed, Spring 1983

Federal report betrays parents

by Barb Sykes of the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, Diana Salomaa, Edmonton Coalition for Quality Child Care, and ASWAC

We are writing to express our disappointment and frustration with the Parliamentary Special Committee Report on Child Care, released this week in Ottawa. If this report is any indication of what we can expect from the Federal Government with respect to child care policies, Canadian families are in serious trouble. While the Committee recommends increased federal spending on child care, it fails to direct this funding appropriately and



Karin Goldberg tells it like it is.

photo by Andrea Waywanko

Send a card to Connie

ASWAC's Child Care Committee recently completed a successful post card campaign. Over 1000 signed cards were presented to the office of the Minister of Social Services, the Honourable Connie Osterman.

The cards were sent to protest possible cuts to operating allowances and other funding sources of child-care. The actual wording of the cards was, "Albertans need child care services! Cutbacks will mean reduced access to these services and lower standards of care for the children in our communities. I support continued and improved funding for childcare."

The presentation of the cards went very well, and we received a lot of media coverage of the event.

If you know of someone who may still have cards to send in, encourage them to do so. We will be sending Connie her second installment soon.

consequently does nothing to alleviate the current child care crisis.

The recommendations contained in the report do not reflect the views of Canadians regarding child care. Transcripts of the public hearings held across Canada by the Special Committee last year showed that most Canadians:

-want public funding directed to child care services rather than to individual parents through tax measures,

-feel that for-profit child care should not receive public support,

-believe that child care funding and services should be universally accessible,

-feel that support should be given to a comprehensive child care system.

The Committee's major recommendation is that the Child Care Expense Deduction be replaced by a Child Care Tax Credit. This measure does nothing to create a comprehensive, accessible, good quality child care system and, as a result, fails to provide parents with appropriate and realistic choices. Nor will it improve our present inadequate system in which only 7.5% of children who require child care have access to licenced spaces.

Of major concern is the Committee's failure to deal with the existing lack of child care standards. In Alberta, where standards are deplorably low, where monitoring is almost non-existent and where at least 75% of licenced child care spaces are under profit-making auspices, this oversight is particularly distressing. Where are the choices for Alberta parents?

Child care in Canada is currently treated as a market commodity, to be bought and sold. Such an approach assures neither good quality care nor accountability of public funding. The Special Committee offers no recommendations to encourage non-profit child care; in fact more funding is to be directed to private operators. This is totally unacceptable as a policy direction. Instead, the goal must be to create a comprehensive system of non-profit child care, in which accountability for public funds is a priority.

The work of this Special Committee seems to have been an exercise in futility. Their report must be viewed at best as a misdirected effort and at worst a travesty which makes a mockery of the public hearing process. Canadian children and parents deserve better.

This article was sent out as a letter to the editor to many papers across Alberta.

April edition

Abortion rights in Edmonton

The Abortion Caucus held its first public activity on Saturday, when Lynn Lathrop an organizer with the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, and Dr. Nikki Colodny, who works at the Morgentaler Abortion Clinic in Toronto, spoke at a public forum at the University of Alberta. The forum was the first part of a workshop to look at setting up an abortion clinic in Alberta.



photo by Jane Templeman

Unfortunately, part of the forum was disrupted by noisy anti-choice demonstrators, (where ever did they learn manners?) but the people who had come to listen were impressed by what Nikki and Lynn had to say.

The meeting was facilitated by Aura Rose, and a brief background on the Abortion Caucus and the situation in Alberta to date was presented by Luanne Armstrong.

The evening was the opening session for a workshop with Nikki and Lynn to look at the feasibility of setting up a free standing abortion clinic in Edmonton.

What we want defines what we do

by Donna Anthony

If the public forum on Abortion Rights on Saturday night left us a bit shaky, Sunday's workshop left us revitalized and eager to get on with our work. Nikki Colodny, Lynn Laythrop and Cherie MacDonald act and speak with such courage, clarity and assurance that everything seems possible. "You are where we were four years ago", they kept reminding us. We were flooded with information and ideas. Their every contact with media, anti-choicers, organizers, and participants was a how-to demonstration. Lynn told us they've used the best of the feminist and labour movement's strategies and approaches to organize for abortion clinics in Ontario.

The workshop focussed on the implications of a free-standing abortion clinic. We discussed fundraising, the media, and dealing with anti-choice groups such as the Alberta Government and Campaign Life. We need to be clear about whether the goal of the Abortion Caucus is increased access or repeal of the abortion law which is an act of the criminal code, Nikki told us, because that will deter-

mine what actions we take and how we will work with other pro-choice groups.

For example, if we decide to pursue a clinic, we are challenging the abortion law, if we decide to put our energies into supporting the Royal Alex Hospital clinic proposal we are focussing our energies on gaining increased access, since abortion is currently legal in a hospital setting where a Therapeutic Abortion Committee meets. If a clinic is the goal, a key demand would be to have the Attorney General declare the abortion law unenforceable, as the province of Quebec has done. If we want a hospital clinic, a key demand would be to have the Royal Alex clinic funded.

Lack of clarity on this issue will limit our ability to build a strong organizational base and leave us vulnerable to being bought off by small gains. Manitoba is a good example of how the pro-choice movement was co-opted; the Morgentaler clinic was shut down; abortion access increased in hospitals, and the stuffing was knocked out of the movement. Only a few dedicated feminists are left to lobby individual

MLA's for repeal of the abortion law and for reproductive rights.

In contrast, Ontario's broad base of public support has been sustained in part because the various pro-choice elements (CARAL, Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, Labour, Gay and Lesbian groups etc.) were clear about where they stood on the access/repeal of the law issue, worked closely, supported each other's efforts, and resisted government's attempts to fragment the movement.

What we do depends on local conditions. In Alberta, the immediate issues are the proposed de-insuring of abortion services and access to abortion. The Coalition for Access to Abortion, is circulating a petition calling upon government to ensure that abortion remains an insured service under Alberta Health Care and to provide equitable regional and financial access to abortion services. Tubal ligations and vasectomies are also under review by the AMA as de-insurable services. The heat is on, sisters, we need your help. Call the Abortion Caucus via 455-5777

MediaWatch conference

by Sheryl Ackerman

The conference entitled "Adjusting the Image" was historic in the sense that for the first time representatives of women's groups, the broadcasting and advertising industries were brought together in a spirit of consultation to discuss the portrayal of women in the media, and the status of women in these industries vis a vis employment. This was also a very timely conference, as the government is presently preparing to draw up a new Broadcasting Act. I attended this conference, sponsored by MediaWatch, on behalf of ASWAC.

There were, then, three major groups discussing two major issues, the latter being:

- 1) The Misrepresentation of Women ie: How women are portrayed in the media, and
- 2) The Under-representation of Women ie: What proportion of women are there in all of the jobs and at all the levels of employment, be that in front of or behind the camera, or in the decision-making bodies of broadcasting and advertising.

As you have probably already guessed, women's groups showed that the portrayal of women is still very sexist, narrow and stereotyped, although in some cases, progress has been made. In the second area of concern, although statistics are difficult to gather, women again are shown to be extremely under-represented in terms of employment, particularly at the "upper" levels of decision making. In short, employment equity does not exist for women.

Flora MacDonald, Minister of Communications, was responsible for providing the funding for this conference. She was the keynote speaker Friday evening, at which time she made some interesting observations. She noted that although there is now in place legislation regarding employment equity, in order to prove systemic discrimination, we must have statistics, and this legislation enables the gathering of needed information. She also decried the noticeable lack of women leaders, stating it is "critical that women be in decision-making positions to ensure the advances made are never lost." Finally, she assured us that "the findings of this conference will play an important role in determining future broadcasting policy."

Broadcasters and advertisers have gone through a two year self-regulatory period and the results have been completely inadequate in improving the portrayal or employment equity of women. In general, these representatives came across as being "good guys" concerned about the status of women, wanting to have our input and ideas, but not particularly wanting government legislation to force them to address the issue.

After three days of meetings, workshops, speeches, plenary sessions, information sessions, awards and entertainment, and infinite energy and talk, the women of the conference had one final plenary at which we decided, by consensus, on several resolutions to be put forward to the government. I was very impressed by the process as well as the product of this session. When a woman representing black women spoke urgently of the need to include them in the phrasing, she was heard. When a writer spoke strongly against a resolution that could be used to censor us, and no consensus was evident, the resolution was dropped. I felt proud of the work we had all done to arrive at these important resolutions. A copy of them will soon be available at ASWAC.

It is ironic but consistent that the mainstream Edmonton media had almost no coverage of this historic event, and that the one article I did manage to glean from the pages of the Edmonton Journal gave space to the opinions of two men! Let me assure you, this event was bursting with the kind of woman energy we know so well, and that the incredible dedication and spirit of the women who organized the conference, as well as of the delegates - this spirit will stay with me.

With my appreciation comes a renewed commitment to bettering the portrayal of women in our world. I plan to use the MediaWatch forms more regularly, and to encourage others to do so. I also intend to continue creating positive images of women with a passion that inspires my vision of a better world.

Note: MediaWatch forms are a way to document both positive and negative experiences that you may have with the media and its portrayal of women. They are available at the office.

It's budget time

That means it's time to tell your Member of Parliament how much you appreciate ASWAC's work toward your liberation.

Write your MP now, before the right rears its ugly head — and poisoned pencils.

Searching for the unlucky ones exposed to DES



Thousands of women and men in Canada between the ages of 16 and 46 may still not know that they were exposed to the drug D.E.S. (diethylstilbestrol). The drug, given to women during their pregnancies, has been linked to various health complications in themselves and their children. DES Awareness Week April 20-25 is being organized by DES ACTION Canada, here and in other countries, to educate both women and men to the potential effects this may have on their health. The project's goal is to reach 1,000 people who are still unaware of their exposure to DES.

DES, a synthetic hormone, was supposed to help women with a previous history of miscarriage carry their babies to term. The drug was used around the world, in Canada between 1941 and 1971. Estimates set the worldwide DES exposure well into the millions. In Canada, it has been suggested that between 200,000 and 400,000 women were given the drug.

When DES first appeared on the market, it was touted as a wonder drug. Both doctors and expectant mothers used the drug in good faith. The story of DES does point to larger issues related to the pharmaceutical industry and drug approval in general. Although early studies did link DES to cancer in lab animals, testing during the 1950's indicated that it had no measurable effect on

ASWAC Newsletter

carrying babies to term; the drug remained available until a direct link to human cancer was made. Even then, DES was only banned for use by pregnant women.

DES is still used as a Morning After Pill and as a treatment for various types of cancer. Although the drug is now rarely used at all in Canada, it continues to enjoy widespread use in under-developed

“
The point is not
to panic, but to be more
cautious and aware.
”

countries. In some, it is still listed as an essential drug for preventing miscarriage. "Even if you weren't directly touched by DES, it is an issue that touches everyone in Canada," said Lise Laporte, a Board member of DES Action Canada, "because the story could repeat itself."

For those who were directly exposed to DES while in utero, the effects range from the benign to the severe. These complications tend to concentrate around the reproductive organs. Daughters may develop a variety of uterine and cervical abnormalities. Most of these are benign, although they result in a significantly higher rate of fertility problems and mis-

carriages that those faced by unexposed women. The most dangerous among these problems is the greater risk of ectopic pregnancies. A rare form of vaginal cancer has also been linked to DES exposure. Sons are also more prone to benign testicular cysts and abnormalities, as well as fertility problems. The high incidence of such complications has prompted DES Action to produce a Fertility Guide for children exposed to DES. Finally, the women themselves who took DES run a higher risk of developing breast cancer in their later years.

Many of these complications will respond to treatment, particularly if caught early and understood to be related to DES exposure. "The point is not to panic, but to be more cautious and aware," said Laporte. This is important since the majority of DES exposed daughters and sons are still young. It is still uncertain whether further effects may develop as those who were exposed grow older.

DES Awareness Week will be a co-ordinated campaign launched by DES Action Canada and its ten groups across the country. The primary focus will be on alerting those who may have been exposed about what they can do to be certain and the steps they should take afterwards. It is often difficult to trace DES use. The drug was

What is endometriosis?

Do you have painful menstruation, difficult or painful intercourse, backache, painful defecation or do you suffer from infertility? If so, you could be suffering from endometriosis. The Endometriosis Association estimates that one and a half million women are sufferers in Canada.

Unfortunately, at the present time, the only way this condition can be positively identified is through a surgical procedure known as laparoscopy. This procedure involves using a laparoscope, an instrument composed of optic fibers, which is inserted in a cut made above the navel. Through the laparoscope, the surgeon can examine the abdominal cavity and detect the implants of endometriosis

What is endometriosis? The name is derived from the word endometrium, the tissue which lines the uterus. If there is no fertilization following ovulation, a hormonal change occurs, causing this endometrial tissue to break down and menstruation results.

Endometriosis occurs when pieces of this tissue have migrated outside the uterus. They can become implanted on other organs such as the external surface of the uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries, bowel walls, bladder, and various other areas. Pain can result from the endometrial implants that are situated near nerve endings. The big-

gest danger with endometriosis, apart from the continuous pain it can cause, is that it ultimately leads to infertility. There is no guaranteed cure for this "disease" at this time. Various treatments are available, the more common being divided into two classes: surgical and pharmaceutical. With surgery, there are two choices. Firstly, there is the option of a hysterectomy which obviously may not be a desirable choice, especially for younger women. The surgical removal of the endometrial implants is the second possibility sometimes recommended by doctors. This however does have serious



drawbacks, as there is a very high recurrence rate. Pharmaceutical treatment involves the use of hormonal therapy, to simulate either pregnancy or menopause. A "pseudo-pregnancy" is achieved by a continuous ingestion of progesterone-estrogen complexes or birth control pills. Prior to 1957, DES was used in this fashion for endometriosis.

The Endometriosis Association provides information for those interested in finding out more about this affliction, and provides a crisis call service. It also keeps members abreast of medical research and development. For those who are interested in the creation of an Edmonton Chapter, please contact Pascale Daigneault, PO Box 11184 Edmonton, T5J 3K5.

DES — continued from previous page

marketed in Canada under dozens of brand names and in various forms.

Those who think that they may have been exposed to DES should first ask their mothers if they had a history of miscarriage or if they took any medication during their pregnancies. The next place to check is with your mother's doctor or pharmacist. This often proves difficult. Doctors are under no legal obligation to keep medical records more than five or ten years after a patient's last visit. This time period is often too short since DES related

complications will appear well after this time. DES offices located across the country can help in this process. DES ACTION maintains lists of the different brand names DES appeared under. Offices also keep current lists of doctors who are aware of the issue and the appropriate ways of testing and monitoring DES exposure. For more information, contact the office nearest you.

Ms. Joan Hollenberg
DES ACTION ALBERTA
2340 1 Ave. NW
Calgary, AB
T2N 0B8
phone 270-7478

There has been one book dedicated to this condition, written by Julia Older, entitled "Endometriosis". It is recommended reading for anyone interested in finding more about this disease.

The poet's corner

by Luanne Armstrong

We have come prepared, all of us, as we meet in the lobby of the Hotel Vancouver, dressed in our best, some of us in skirts and real shoes. Outside, the sun is hot along Robson Street, hot on trendy restaurant after trendy restaurant, on Duthie's Books, which has a lousy women's section, on the bright landscaping in Kitsilano, flowers and artificially green grass, on all the new pink and blue condominiums going up along False Creek, on the androgynous beings moving dreamily in the midst of this, smug to just be here. Inside the vast lushness and vague snottiness of the Hotel Vancouver, elevator doors so quick we keep getting caught in them, potted palms and acres of carpet, we clutch our briefs and are casual. After all, we are feminists, and equal to anything, have worked for years to ignore these pretensions to wealth and inequality. We are here to present briefs to the Standing Committee on the Secretary of State, which this morning is composed of four very conservative men, and two intelligent women... here to discuss the Women's Program, to read our intelligent, sincere, often brilliant words, to tell this committee about our work of years, our hard won programs and philosophies, to tell them who we are, and what the money from the Women's Program has achieved. It's pretty fascinating and downright impressive. There are women from women's centres in Northern BC, and a woman from Unifarm in Alberta, and from Victoria and Vancouver and Edmonton. We sit together, comfortable, networking, ex-

changing feminist shoptalk. Then AFWUF comes on and introduces themselves as Alberta Feminist Women United for Families. HMM. They demand that the Women's Program be dismantled, but if not, they want money too. They don't say what for. They are against many things, against feminists, against equality since, they insist, we already have it, against the Canadian Charter of Rights, against the National Action Committee of the Status of Women (NAC), against marriage counselling which "hurts men's egos". We listen, puzzled, as they are congratulated on their great good sense and wonderful brief by one of the committee members. The world turns upside down, briefly. That's not what we've been listening to.

Outside, a break for supper, time to breathe and talk and assess the day, and then back again for the evening. This time the room is more crowded.

It's their turn, the RWs self-termed, the real women, which doesn't make the rest of us feel unreal, only bemused. They begin. It's a familiar enough diatribe by now, it's them, the feminists, ruining the country, destroying the family, running up the government deficit, all their fault. The same litany. Take away their money but if you don't give us some. It gets worse. They seem to have one answer for every problem. Battered women? Support the family. Abused children? Wouldn't be any if we would support the family. It seems to have escaped their notice that battered women and abused children come out of nuclear families. What do they want, for such women to be legislated back, forced to stay home and be nice to abusive husbands?



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

I begin to feel nauseous, like someone is pouring slime on me. And underneath that, I realize, is a lot of hurt, and pain. I look at my friends and they are feeling it too. Shameful, sorrowful, hurt, that these women can so easily discount ignore, twist, all the work we have done, all the pain we have gone through, all the families we have fought for, the children, mothers, sisters, fathers and friends we have nurtured, cherished, loved. A deeper anger that we should even be listening to this, that anyone could take this garbage seriously. It's a little akin to being black and hearing the Klu Klux Klan demand going back to the days of segregation.

Once again, they are congratulated on their wonderful brief. And in answer to questions; no they don't support the Canadian Charter of Rights. No, they don't support the UN Declaration on Human Rights, because it's a Soviet document. No, they disagree with what Brian Mulroney has to say about equality for women. But they want money, just the same.

But I am relieved, as I stride out into the warm Vancouver night to walk back to my daughter's apartment. They are not bogey women, these RWs, only confused, and sad. I realize that having heard them, I no longer fear them. Their accusations are hollow; the

continued on next page

Fear of feminism

Facing our own mythology

by Cathy Bray

In preparing to facilitate the "Fear of Feminism" workshop at the Women's Centres Conference in Canmore, I thought of one reason, obvious to me, for this very real fear: we might be afraid of using the word feminism because it might limit funding to women's organizations. In retrospect, this 'obvious' fear is the fear of a feminist already working within feminist organizations. It must be contended with, especially in hard economic times. However, participants in the workshop articulately outlined various other fears. I was reminded forcefully that workshop facilitators are there to assist in process, not to impose, create, or even contribute much content. It is probably more important to deal with the fears of Everywoman than with fears associated with government or other funders. Here are the participants' comments

Why does fear of feminism exist?

1) Fears related to the unknown: -people don't want to look at the situation, -I don't want to identify myself as a feminist before I understand it

The poet continues

work we do as feminists, which benefits all women, will and must continue. Surely, I think, surely no one could take what I have just heard seriously. But I could be wrong.

In the meantime, tomorrow, it's back to work, back to ASWAC, board meetings, phone calls, decisions, friends, back to Edmonton, which isn't full of flowers or pink condominiums, but is a pretty warm place anyway, or so I have come to think.

2) Fears related to myths about feminism:

-feminists are castrating bitches; radical lesbian feminists (only); manhaters; not nice
-people have prejudices

3) Fears related to the realities of feminism:

-fear of loosing traditional power
-fear of loosing ability to manipulate men through sexuality
- a little power is better than none at all- women have a quiet power now
-feminism might mean "out of the frying pan and into the fire"
-fear of power in general
-fear of isolation from society
-fear of class divisions within feminism
-fear of peer pressure and submersion of individuality

I think that modifications can be made within three aspects of our feminism, in order to overcome fear. We can modify 1) our issues, 2) our strategies, and 3) our processes. All issues, processes and strategies must be chosen with social situation (people concerned, place and time in history) in mind. Modifications can occur in any or all categories at any one time, or over time.

Modifying our issues might mean turning from a focus on pornography to a focus on childcare, (or racism, or classism) or broadening the focus of a groups to include reproductive rights. It is imperative that the issues

selected express real needs of women, wherever community feminists work and that working feminists are comfortable with these issues.

Strategies such as media campaigns might give over to coffee groups in order to overcome fear. On the other hand, a celebratory street parade including leading women and lots of kids might break the ice in some communities. Timing and creativity seem crucial in selecting an appropriate strategy.

In Canmore, we discussed altering group process as a means of enlivening a women's group and overcoming fear. Using a video about how ASWAC changed from a hierarchic structure to a collective structure as a point of departure, the pros and cons of changing to a collective process were discussed. I think that, by changing our processes, we address many of the fears identified in part three above. If we operate in a true collectivity, class pressures will be alleviated, while at the same time individuality will be encouraged. Isolation is not felt if we build a living sisterhood which is more important to us than some abstract "society". And by using our process to empower ourselves, we show ourselves that the meagre power we give up is returned to us a hundredfold by the inner strength and power we build, give and receive through our feminist collectivity.

**Can you type, file,
or answer the phone?**

**We'll make the coffee
phone 455-5777**

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Childcare concerns? — Come to a meeting

The ASWAC Childcare Committee will be meeting regularly throughout the year. If working towards non-profit, accessible childcare interests you, then phone 455-5777 for meet-times. Free childcare is provided.

Gifted girls and women

May 25 to 27 there will be an International Symposium entitled "Girls, Women and Giftedness" held at the University of Lethbridge. Two days of gifted programs, research and theory and a one day Research Institute which will "seek a new agenda for the study and support of gifted girls and women." Sponsored by the Gifted and Talented Project at the U of L and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Featuring an original one-act play on Emily Carr by ASWAC Leth. member, Debby Letourneau.

Also coming up in May ... the ASWAC Board meeting will be held in Lethbridge, May 29-31. For more information contact the Women's Resource Centre at 329-8338.

Lesbian caucus

The ASWAC Lesbian caucus will be meeting in Calgary, April 26, following the "Just for Us" provincial lesbian conference in Calgary. For more information about the caucus meeting phone 283-7275. For more information about the conference phone Calgary SWAC at 262-1873.

Building beautiful

There will be a clean up and painting party for the Building, May 9 all day. Bring your brushes and rollers and rags and come to 10226 124 St. For more information call 455-5777.

Control of birth

Due to a general concern about the rising cesarean rate and a need to look at alternatives such as Vaginal Birth After Cesarean, (VBAC) a conference is being sponsored by the Edmonton VBAC Association, and Edmonton Childbirth Education Association in cooperation with Grant MacEwan College. The conference will be held June 12-13 at Grant MacEwan College - Millwoods 7319-29 Ave. Participants will include Childbirth Educators, Maternity Nurses, Midwives, Physicians, and the general public.

To register contact the Registrar's Office at 483-2390 before June 1, 1987.

Come meet with the Abortion Caucus

The Abortion Caucus will be meeting regularly in Edmonton. If you are concerned about women's eroding reproductive rights in Alberta, get involved. For times and location phone 455-5777.

Herstory project

Do you have some of ASWAC's herstory tucked away in a drawer or box? Old photos (or new), journal scribblings or memories. Poems? Memorabilia? Anything that would help us to 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 on what you send as possible. For example, include dates, 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, let us know.

Now, clean out those cupboards and boxes!

Women Unlimited present:

Karen Howe & Tracy Riley

IN CONCERT

Saturday, May 2 — 8 p.m. — Edmonton Public Library
Tickets: \$10 at Common Woman Books

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<p>Grande opening The Edmonton Women's Building is having another Grande Opening, May 23 at 8 pm. There will be live entertainment, an Art opening and refreshments. Childcare will also be provided, for which donations will be solicited.</p>	<p>Film nights in Lethbridge The next film night in the ASWAC-Lethbridge Film Series will be Thursday, April 23, at 7:30 pm in the Lethbridge Public Library. The NFB Studio D film "Abortion Stories North and South" will be shown. Speaker is TBA. Admission is free, everyone is welcome.</p>	<p>Association forms The Women's Centres Association of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, was formed as a result of the Women's Centres Conference held in Canmore on the weekend of March 21. After much discussion on the need for a Women's Centres network, representatives from various regions volunteered to form a Steering Committee for one year. During this time, some of the objectives of the committee will be to determine the future structure of the body, define the guidelines, research funding alternatives, network with women's groups and plan for the Third Annual Women's Centres Conference next March. The first Steering Committee meeting is planned for May 2 in Calgary. Anyone interested in participating on the committee is welcome to call Kathleen Sacht (Banff) at 762-5922 or Florence Ellis (Athabasca) 675-6392.</p>
<p>New coalition forms A new coalition known as "The Coalition for Access to Abortion" has been formed to address the growing crisis in access to abortions in Alberta. The Coalition has brought together various groups from a variety of areas for a single purpose: "To address and to work towards resolving the current crisis in access to abortions in Alberta." As of this date confirmed membership is at sixteen and is growing daily.</p> <p>The Coalition has adopted a statement of philosophy which reads as follows:</p> <p>"We believe in reproductive rights including: -full access to safe abortions, -access to all forms of family planning resources, - removal of abortion from the Criminal Code of Canada. We believe that abortion should be a woman's choice.</p> <p>The Coalition will be seeking support from other groups in Alberta and will lobby for a resolution of both the current access crisis and the ongoing problems for women in obtaining abortions. The Coalition will address all aspects of the access issue including the tremendous problems that would be faced by many women if abortions were no longer insured by Alberta Health Care.</p> <p>For more information please call Sheila Bailin 429-6015 or Elaine Roberts 465-4906 or 438-1326 or write: Coalition for Access to Abortion c/o 11936 100 Ave. Edmonton, AB. T5K 0K5</p>	<p>Writer's retreat From August 14-21, the Canadian Women's Writing Retreat will be held at Far Hills Inn Val-Morin, Quebec, Women writers of English fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction prose, and translators working from French to English, will be able to take intensive workshops. Well-known Canadian women writers will conduct morning writing workshops and afternoon discussion groups. There will also be a panel discussion led by representatives of the Canadian publishing industry.</p> <p>The Retreat will not be devoted solely to work. As well as readings over the week, there will be time for recreation. In the Laurentians, the well-appointed inn offers hiking, swimming, boating, tennis, squash, billiards, and just plain relaxation.</p> <p>For further information, contact Debra Martens, c/o Centre for Continuing Education, Dawson College, Victoria Campus, 485 McGill St. Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 2H4 or phone 514-931-8731 local 6102.</p>	<p>What's happening? Tell us: 455-5777</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Need an engineer? Core belief engineering basic workshop June 12-14. Learn basic steps in therapeutic process that examines and transforms conscious, and sub-conscious beliefs which underly phobias, fears, compulsions illness. Cost, \$275. For more information, call New Age Center at 488-5720.</p>	<p>Pillow talk We have recently acquired a new Macintosh computer for the ASWAC office in Edmonton. If you would like to make a donation to buy the computer toys, it would be greatly appreciated. If you have some software for use, that may also be warmly welcomed. Call Luanne if you want to talk computer talk.</p>	

1987

Women & Business Conference
'Taking The Next Step'

Friday May 29th and Saturday May 30th

Four Seasons Hotel, Edmonton

The 1987 Women and Business Conference is aimed at women who wish to gain greater insight into personal development, managerial and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Plan to attend !

Registration fee only \$95.00 includes:

- two plenary sessions
- two luncheons and one dinner featuring guest speakers
- workshops on a variety of topics such as:
 - financial management
 - marketing/advertising
 - business law
 - leadership skills

For registration form and further information call:

420-2277

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