

ASWAC

Alberta Status of Women Action Committee

July/August Newsletter

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Special Calgary Edition



095

11/11/76

If God had intended women to think
he'd have given them better
jobs





ASWAC

Alberta Status of Women Action Committee

1987/88 Board Members

Donna Baines - Calgary
Michèle Butot - Calgary
Jane Haslett - Edmonton
Deborah Hollins - Calgary
Margaret Johnson - Edmonton
Anne McGrath c/o Calgary office
Nancy Miller - Lethbridge
Lynn Morelli - Lethbridge
Valda Roberts - Edmonton
Marilyn Seelye - Calgary

1987/88 Regional Reps

Annette Arbo - Edmonton
(h) 437-4938; (w) 432-3359

Gerry Bailey - Westeros
(h) 586-2983

Elin Harlev Barlem - Innisfail
(h) 227-2927

Lori Crocker - Innisfail
(h) 227-1141; (w) 227-3881

Elaine Spencer - Ponoka
(h) 783-4088; (w) 783-7704

Linda Stoddard - Lethbridge
(h) 328-6206

Denise Wood - Fort MacMurray
(h) 791-4634

Joan White Calf - Camrose
(h) 672-2210

The Alberta Status of Women Action Committee gratefully acknowledges the financial support it receives from the Secretary of State Women's Program

All members are welcome to attend the board meetings in their area. Come to the community report session on the Saturday afternoon, or take the plunge and attend the entire meeting as an honorary board member. If you would like to see a board meeting held in your community, contact your nearest regional rep or board member.

Remember these dates:

Meetings up to the AGM are set for:
July 16/17 - Edmonton
Sept. 10/11 - TBA
Nov. 5/6 - Lethbridge
Nov. 18/20 - AGM - Edmonton

ASWAC's mailing address is Box 1573, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2N7. The Edmonton office has moved to its new home at 9930 - 106 St., lower floor, with the rest of the Edmonton Women's Building. Phone 421-0306. Office hours are Monday to Friday, 10 - 4.

ASWAC Lethbridge lives at the Women's Resource centre on top of Woolworths in downtown Lethbridge - #202, 325 - 6 St. S. Phone 329-8338 and leave a message if no one answers.

The Calgary ASWAC office is located in the Old Y Centre for Community Organizations, Room 303, 223 - 12 Ave. S.W., T2R 0G9. Phone 233-0731 and leave a message if no one answers.



This newsletter has been produced in Calgary. Many thanks to the Newsletter Collective: Luanne Armstrong, Donna Baines, Michele Butot, Brian Dyson, Elin Harlev Barlem, Jane Haslett, Anne McGrath, Annette Ruitenbeek, Marilyn Seelye, Shelley Scott. Special thanks to Syntax Arts Society for the typesetting and layout.

Eighteen Hours at a Glance

The following is the record of our last board meeting, Calgary, June 4th and 5th.

BOARD MEETING CHANGE: Jane Haslett will write a letter to Joanna Johnson, explaining why the Board meeting location was changed in July.

NEW MEMBERS POLICY: The Board discussed the setting of a policy for new members who wish to join the Board during the year. It was decided that as a general policy, women wishing to join the Board should attend at least two Board meetings before joining the Board. After attending two Board meetings, they should submit a written letter and brief resumé, stating why they wish to join the Board. The Board has the option of waiving this process where there are extraordinary circumstances or where the Board feels that a woman has sufficient knowledge and understanding of ASWAC and Board process. We would like to welcome new Board members Michele Butot and Nancy Miller.

TABLE (WORKING) BUDGET: The finance committee submitted copies of our proposed working budget for 1988/89. Even with our administrative costs slashed to the bone, the budget is still \$12,000 over our projected income. This leaves the Board with only two options; fundraising, or laying off staff.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS: The job description revision committee submitted its recommendations. The Board had a long discussion on the components of the work that is being done in the Edmonton office, including administrative work, the project work, and the newsletter. It was clear that there are no easy solutions to the problem of dividing up too much work for too few

persons.

The Board decided that it was necessary to keep within the proposed budget outlined, and therefore, it would advertise for a full time administrative coordinator for the Edmonton office, and a half time project coordinator. The present job descriptions include responsibility for the newsletter. The Calgary Project Coordinator's job will be unchanged.

FUNDRAISING: The Board also decided to continue to look at fundraising ideas, including a direct mail campaign. The purpose of such fundraising would be to either be able to offer the half time project coordinator a full time position, or to be able to contract out some of the project work.

Jane, Marg and Luanne volunteered to rewrite the job descriptions, and the advertisements for the job. It was decided that the two new staff people will be hired for August 1. Deadline for applications is July 1.

The hiring committee is Jane Haslett, Marg Johnson, and Anne McGrath. A community representative from Edmonton will also be asked to join the committee. The hiring committee will receive the applications, short list the applicants, do the interviews, and make a recommendation on the hiring to the next Board meeting, which will be July 16/17 in Edmonton.

Annette, Valda, and Luanne will be the hiring committee for the new book-keeper, whose position will begin as soon as possible after June 15.

ORIENTATION: The two previous staff members, Jane Wiley and Luanne Armstrong, will each be

asked to spend a week in August doing orientation. They will be paid a small honourarium for this.

ANNE'S VACATION: Anne McGrath will be taking her vacation from July 18 to August 12. The Calgary office will be closed for these dates.

LAWSUIT: Marilyn Seelye reported that she had investigated the possibility of taxing lawyer's accounts. It was decided that this is useful information, but it will not be followed up at this time.

JESSIE DUARTE: Jessie Duarte is an activist from South Africa, who recently spoke in Calgary. Word has been received that she has been arrested by the South African Secret Police. ASWAC will write a letter to the Canadian Embassy personnel, and it will be forwarded to Prime Minister Botha, and included in the ASWAC newsletter.

LETHBRIDGE UPDATE: Lyn Morelli will be spending her time doing custody and other support work in Lethbridge. Her place as liaison with ASWAC Lethbridge will be taken by Nancy Miller. Lethbridge will be hiring a part time staff person on June 15. The group is continuing to do film nights, and has some new members with lots of energy. They are soon going to be having a second Women and Poverty meeting, and are looking at forming a coalition on the issue of Women and Poverty.

PERSONNEL POLICY: The personnel policy was presented for final ratification. The Board had a long discussion about the mandate and necessity of the existence of the work planning committee. It was decided that we need a policy and procedures manual, in addition to the personnel policy. The person-

nel policy was accepted, subject to some minor changes. Overtime will be limited to five days. After that, it must be discussed by the Board. Overtime will not accumulate past Dec. 31 of every year. Marg and Jane will rewrite the final draft of the personnel policy.

ASSEMBLY: The Assembly will be Nov. 18-21 in Edmonton. There will be a one day political lobby included in this year's assembly. The theme of the assembly will be Women and Poverty. An Assembly committee was struck. The first meeting will be June 19 in Edmonton. Members of the committee are Marg Johnson, Jane Haslett, Luanne Armstrong, Anne McGrath, Lyn Morelli. Interested members will also be invited to sit on the committee. The committee will be given a draft outline of the tasks connected to the Assembly, as well as a list of names of women who have indicated their interest in working in particular areas.

NAC UPDATE: Anne McGrath gave an overview of the NAC Annual General Meeting, which she attended as a representative of ASWAC. Anne is the new NAC Regional Representative for Alberta. The two main issues at the NAC AGM were the Organizational Review, and the issue of the resignation of the staff. The two issues are separate. However Anne reported that despite procedural wrangling, and disagreements over process, there was a high degree of unanimity on almost all issues, including abortion and free trade, and childcare. The lobby on Monday was a phenomenal success, with over three hundred women attending. Caucus members from all three parties attended, and responded to questions from NAC members.

CANADIAN PEACE ALLIANCE: The Board discussed whether we wished to join the CPA. We de-

ecided to join, but to inform them that at this time, we could only pay a small fee, due to our presently limited finances.

WOMEN AND POVERTY CAMPAIGN: We had a discussion about the organization and planning that will lead into the Women and Poverty hearings which will be held in the fall. The Calgary Women Against Poverty group has begun the initial ground work to hold a hearing in the fall. They are writing to high profile Canadians who may be interested in sitting on a panel. There has also been some organizing work done in Red Deer. In Edmonton, the Women Against Poverty group is also excited by the idea of hearings and is doing some discussion on the topic. However, it is unclear at this time how the research component and the planned brief will fit into these activities. PoverTeas are still being held in Calgary and Edmonton, and seem very successful.

THE NEWSLETTER: The next edition of the Newsletter will be published by the Calgary staff and Board members. However, it will still be mailed from Edmonton.

JULY CLOSURE: The ASWAC office in Edmonton will be closed for the entire month of July, until new staff are hired for August 1. Board members and volunteers will still pick up and respond to phone messages.

MEMBERSHIP FEEDBACK: It was agreed that a response to a letter from Julie Anne LeGras would be printed in the minutes in the next newsletter. The response would be a clarification of the minutes in the April issue. The clarification is "It has been brought to our attention that in the minutes in the March issue of the ASWAC newsletter, it stated that 'Four Board members submitted their resignations at the beginning of the meeting; Julie

Anne, Terri Ann, Joanna and Deborah Perret. All resigning Board members expressed personal reasons for resigning, and some expressed dissatisfaction with the priorities and processes of the organization as well.' It has been brought to our attention that this is incorrect. Julie Anne LeGras has stated that her reasons for resigning were political and organizational. We regret any confusion this may have caused."





Jesse Duarte Arrested

*****URGENT***ACTION***
URGENTACTION*****

Jessie Duarte, publicity secretary of the Federation of Transvaal Women, was arrested, together with other leaders of the Federation, on March 22nd by the South African security police.

Jessie visited Alberta in March 1986 as part of a cross-Canada tour organized by OXFAM-Canada. She spoke at many events in Calgary, but her visit to Edmonton had to be cancelled due to security reasons. South African agents were harassing her in Canada during her visit. Groups like CARA in Edmonton and CAR in Calgary assisted with her visit to Alberta.

Please contact Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, asking the Canadian government to intervene on her behalf, with copies to your M.P.

Copies or telegrams can also be sent to P.W. Botha, Union Buildings, Pretoria 0001, South Africa.

Please note: due to the fact that OXFAM-Canada has projects inside South Africa, we ask that you DO NOT use OXFAM-Canada's name in telegrams sent to South Africa.

Film Night at the National Film Board

by Marilyn Seelye

Community Alternatives Project, ASWAC's Women Against Poverty and the National Film Board co-sponsored the first public screening of the first in a series of four films about women and poverty.

The film is called "No Way, Not Me" and features Rosemary Brown bringing the statistics home.

The film addresses how many women can expect to live in poverty and what proportion of the audience can expect a life of poverty for themselves and their children. The film presents evocative pictures of women and poverty from pioneering days to the pres-

ent.

One of the effects of this evening was to open a dialogue for discussion on a topic that has been hidden, silent and lacks public recognition.

Thanks for the contributions made and the interest taken by Lee Fuge of the Community Alternatives Project and by Bonnie Thompson of the National Film Board.

Lee spoke of the Women and Community Economic Development conference in Vancouver where women from the Maritimes made an impassioned plea for women and children experiencing serious hunger and impossible liv-

ing conditions.

We in Alberta and in Calgary have poverty but it is a silent reality. I spoke about ASWAC and the Women Against Poverty Campaign. I described the concept of the Poverties and our plans for hearings, a brief and a mass lobby on the legislature.

Several women stayed to discuss the problems from their own experience and are interested in the Campaign. Bonnie Thompson is interested in premiering other films for us.

The success in co-sponsoring the film night has increased the profile of our Women in Poverty Campaign.

Edmonton News

Office Changes: As many of you realize, in the last several months three staff changes have taken place in the Edmonton ASWAC office.

Jane Wiley finished office work at the end of May, and is enjoying life in Edmonton while looking for work. Jane is a very experienced worker in the feminist movement, and has worked for ASWAC for a number of years both as a paid staff worker and on a volunteer basis. We all miss her work in the office very much, and hope she will continue to be part of ASWAC events, activities and work.

Luanne Armstrong finished office work at the end of June, and headed off to B.C. to return to farming and continue writing. Luanne has worked for ASWAC for two years as a paid staff worker and also on a volunteer basis. Her work in ASWAC, and in the writing and feminist community will be greatly missed. We hope she will be in Edmonton for frequent visits, and some of us will be going to the Kootenays during the summer and dropping in to make sure life on the farm does not get *too* peaceful!

Both Jane and Luanne have agreed to return and do a week of orientation with our new staff women: Jane in early August and Luanne in late August, when she is in Edmonton to work on "Other Voices."

Book-keeper: ASWAC has a new book-keeper, who began working the last week of June. WELCOME TO FIONA MITCHELL, our new book-keeper and Thank You to Gwen for her work during the past months.

Fiona and Judy Elliot, a former ASWAC book-keeper, have met to familiarize Fiona with the intricacies of ASWAC finances, and Fiona has also met with Luanne to further sort out procedures.

Maintenance Enforcement: Sherry Robbins is an ASWAC member who has committed time and energy to work on this issue. She would like to hear from any women interested in working with her. Please call 437-0566.

ASWAC office in July: There will be no paid staff workers in the office until August. Please leave messages on the answering machine. ASWAC members and Board members will be in working and will get back to you as soon as possible.

Lethbridge News

ASWAC-Lethbridge has hired a part time staff person to work at the Lethbridge Women's Resource Centre. Shelley Scott has been hired as the new Office Co-ordinator, and she keeps the Centre open every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday Afternoon between 12 and 4 p.m. Shelley has been a member of ASWAC-Lethbridge for about two years and served on the provincial Board in 1986-87; she has been out of the country, travelling for the past couple of months, and was thrilled to be hired as the Office Co-ordinator when she returned. Please drop by the Centre, located at #202, 325 - 6 Street South (above Woolworths) during office hours for a visit or to browse through our collection of books, magazines and files. Or telephone 329-8338 for more information.

ASWAC-Lethbridge holds regular meetings at the Women's Resource Centre, every Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m. All women are welcome to attend. Some of our upcoming events include further film forums, a Take Back the Night March, a summer social, and on-going work on the Women Against Poverty campaign. The regular meetings are also a chance to visit and socialize and catch up on what everyone is doing.

Other News

ASWAC-Lethbridge is sub-renting some of our office space to another local group, the South Country Community Association (SCCA). They are involved with a variety of projects, especially community development and environmental issues, and will be holding the second annual South Country Fair on July 23 in Fort Macleod. Call Mike, 327-5990 for more info.

And finally, ASWAC-Lethbridge would like to acknowledge the departure of two of our long-standing members: Rita Jandry has moved up to Edmonton and is now working there, and Naomi Ehren-Lis has left us for a new job in Sault Ste. Marie. They will both be missed and we wish them all the best!

Calgary News

Anti-Free Trade Demo

Passersby honked horns and cheered as about 50 protesters picketed Harvie Andre, Federal M.P., Calgary Centre, as part of the June 12 cross-Canada anti-free trade activities.

The protesters gathered from the peace, women's, labour and pro-Canada movements, raised concerns about the unemployment, further alignment of foreign policy and erosion of social services which are inevitable side effects of the present "Mulroney Trade Deal."

The protesters called upon Harvie Andre and Calgary's other M.P.'s to oppose the free trade deal, and demanded that they instead develop multilateral mutually beneficial trade with any countries who would agree to such terms.

Future activity in the anti-free trade area is planned for the Calgary region. Call the office for more information (233-0731).

Voice of Women Work on Ways of Working for Peace

The Calgary chapter of the Voice of Women held its annual Helen Freeman Memorial Event on June 18 in Calgary.

Gathering its members from across the province, the group had the opportunity to listen to one of Canada's most famous peace activists and Order of Canada members,

Kay MacPhearson.

MacPhearson, a long time member of Voice of Women, spoke on the history of the peace movement and its ties and links with the women's movement. The ways in which the movements overlap and link up in both issue content and ways of working was explored in

workshops and discussions throughout the day.

MacPhearson was the unequivocal hit of the event as she rallied the 35 women present to continue these struggles in our homes, offices, streets and on a global level.

WOMEN'S POVERTY

Women Against Poverty Campaign - Edmonton

ORGANIZING MEETINGS TO DATE

1. April 6: information sharing of campaign ideas.
2. May 10: meetings of those indicating an interest in helping organize campaign and discussion of how to implement ideas.
3. June 7: meeting to continue planning campaign events.
4. June 23: campaign planning and striking of committees.

CAMPAIGN EVENTS TO DATE

1. **Fact sheet:** a fact sheet on women and poverty issues in Alberta was prepared by Luanne and Jane in the ASWAC office and copies are available. Call the ASWAC office at 421-0306 if you want some.
2. **Brief:** a brief on women against poverty, written primarily by Lisa Walter, was presented to the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues on May 12th. Hopefully the Advisory Council will pressure the government on the following six campaign demands:
 - a) Raise the minimum wage to double its present rate (to \$7.60 per hour), and extend it to include domestic workers.
 - b) Increase welfare rates to the poverty line for individuals and fami-

lies in Alberta.

- c) Include part-time workers employed by the Provincial Government in the benefits program provided to full-time workers.
- d) Extend the Widows Pension Act to single and divorced women.
- e) Provide a universally accessible, high quality child care program for all Albertans.
- f) Provide fully insured health care, including reproductive counselling services, and abortion services.

A report on the brief is in this Newsletter.

3. **Poverteas:** Kitchen-table gatherings of small numbers of women have been happening these past few weeks and will continue into the fall. ASWAC members are inviting 3 or 4 friends or neighbours over for coffee to talk about women and poverty.

These gatherings are being co-ordinated by Valda Roberts (439-5724). Anyone can have one, any time. Call Valda for pamphlets, fact sheets and post-cards to send to government officials. Poverteas help spread the work about the ASWAC campaign and raise awareness about the issues relating to women and poverty.

FUTURE PLANS

1. **Hearings:** Public hearings, at which women will present briefs, personal stories etc. to panels of community officials, will be held next fall and winter and many continue into 1989. These hearings will take our campaign issues out into the public and bring us closer to effecting legislative changes.

2. **Conference and Lobby:** The ASWAC assembly next November 18-20 will include workshops and keynote speakers focusing on women against poverty. There will be a lobby on Monday November 21st to bring these issues directly to the Provincial Government of Alberta.

The co-ordinating committee will continue to meet and plan coming events. If you wish to assist, or have concerns or information, please call any of the women listed below.

Margaret Johnson	463-3357
Annette Aarbo	437-4938
Jane Haslett	439-1574
Margaret Brackstone	459-1259
Theresa Warenycia	476-8525
Olivia Belcourt	488-7190
Valda Roberts	439-5724
Fran Chuyl	481-5296
Loro Carmen	433-4296
Sherry Robbins	437-0566
(maintenance enforcement)	

WOMEN & POVERTY

"A Long Way from Holt Renfrew to Army and Navy"

by Liane Zimmerman
reprinted from the *Edmonton Journal*, June 19/88

Have you ever really not had enough money?

I don't mean not enough money to wallpaper the bathroom, or buy a new car, but not enough to buy a prescription for your child, or eat something other than toast and soup for supper night after night.

If you answered no to the above question, you're lucky. That's all. Not smarter, not better, just lucky. And you're certainly not immune.

Poverty can still catch up with you. It's a problem that can affect all women — regardless of background.

A nice middle-class lady from a nice, middle-class family can end up at the food bank as easily as a woman raised on Boyle Street. If she has no marketable job skills, a couple of kids, and an ex-husband who defaults on child support, she'll be down at Social Services in her nice navy pumps, filling out the same forms as the 17-year-old girl with a three-month-old baby whose parents have kicked her out.

These facts were pointed out to me when I attended a recent kitchen table discussion about women and poverty — a "pover-tea" as it's called — held by some women from the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee.

There were eight of us. We looked roughly the same, with our neat perms, acid-washed jeans and good grammar. But a couple of us knew about being poor. Sherry, for instance. Her \$125,000-a-year husband up and left her with two sons and no maintenance payments. It's a long way from Holt Renfrew to

the Army and Navy, Sherry jokes, but she's been a regular at both.

And Valda, who came from a "good family." Valda got pregnant during university. She quit to have the baby, and five years later still hasn't been able to land a job that pays her well enough to be more than "one bill away from disaster."

The discussion at the pover-tea centred around why women are the fastest growing segment of the poor population. (The number of women who head poor families increased from 12 per cent in 1961 to 37 per cent in 1985.)

The reasons are many and varied. To me, it boils down to a couple of points: the way women are socialized as a group and the conditions that face us in the workplace.

Like it or not, women are still largely dependent on men. We are raised, still, to believe in that guy on a white horse who will care for us forever. We still don't pursue jobs or educational opportunities that will pay us enough to support ourselves and our families. We aren't taught to have confidence, to be self-sufficient.

And if we manage to break away from the way we are raised, the world we face doesn't welcome our participation. Because women's work is traditionally undervalued, the jobs we find ourselves in don't pay well and offer few benefits.

(Sixty-two per cent of all working women are employed in low paying jobs in the clerical, sales or service sector. Two-thirds of all minimum wage earners are women.)

If we have kids and want to work, we have a hard time finding a safe and affordable place to put

them during the day. (There are licensed child care spaces for only one out of nine Canadian children who need them.)

And if we do find day care, that cost alone can make us poor. If you're a single woman with two kids making \$21,000 a year, you aren't considered poor enough to be eligible for a government subsidy. But your child-care costs are about \$500 a month, roughly 30 per cent of your income. It doesn't take much else — a sick child, a car payment — to put you over the brink.

And so on.

The Alberta Status of Women Action Committee has launched a campaign to make everyone aware of how poverty affects women. The group is pushing for changes that would make things better for women, changes that include extending the Widow's Pension to single and divorced women, and raising the minimum wage to \$7.60.

The group has published a fact sheet on women and poverty, available to anyone. ASWAC is also encouraging more women to host pover-teas so that more people can learn the facts in a comfortable and informal manner.

Then in the fall, ASWAC will mount a series of public hearings on poverty in cities across Alberta. The poverty campaign culminates in a conference and a round of political lobbying in November.

I think the pover-teas are a good first step — as one woman put it — "An interesting way to start a revolution."

ASWAC will help anyone who is interested organize one for their neighbourhood.

WOMEN & POVERTY

Calgary Povertas by Marilyn Seelye

We have had four tea parties in Calgary. I will describe the two I attended and perhaps you can get a sense of our direction.

The first Povertas was held at my home in Forest Lawn. Six women arrived and we had an interesting and lively discussion. Two women told me that the evening had stimulated discussion for several days.

The most recent Povertas was held at Donna Baines' home in Sunnyside. Sixteen women attended.

From the Povertas it has become apparent that several issues affecting women were on our list of demands. Issues like raising the minimum wage, the numbers of older women working at a minimum wage level, raising welfare payments and making social assistance more inclusive, the lack of quality universal child care, the struggle women students raising

children must face, others who are educated are funding themselves working for poverty wages.

We heard about the terror experienced at the possibility of not being able to feed one's children. And of how the maintenance enforcement program holds up, loses or re-directs cheques needed for the necessities of life. It would be good to see women from Povertas connected to our Women Against Poverty Campaign go all the way to ASWAC's conference and mass lobby in November - "From the Kitchen Table to the Legislature."

Our next tea party will be at the University Student Housing at Shannon Connors' in mid-July.

Here's some happy news. A woman who has taken a lively interest in the Povertas since we first began, Helen Pisterzi, has had an eight pound baby boy. His name is Daniel and Mother and baby are doing fine.

Women & Poverty

Fact sheets filled with statistics to support what we know about the issues are now available at all three ASWAC offices.

If you would like to help distribute fact sheets to your friends, or want to work on Women and Poverty issues, call us at:

Edmonton: 421-0306
Calgary: 233-0731
Lethbridge: 329-8338

ASWAC Briefs Advisory Council on Women's Issues

compiled by Donna Baines

Calling on the Council to actively support and participate in ASWAC's 1988 campaign against poverty, three ASWAC members presented a brief to the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues on May 12, 1988 in Edmonton. Although received politely, the invitation to action was simply not reacted to by the Council members present. The following is a series of highlights from the brief (in normal type) and some reactions from the three presenters (in italic type).

"The brief was put together by

three of us - Jane Haslett, Lisa Walter and myself (Marg Johnson, ed). Lisa ended up polishing off most of the work on the final edition. We felt pretty good about it - it was a good piece of work."

At the 1987 ASWAC Assembly more than 250 women from across the province identified Women and Poverty as the number one priority for action. ASWAC takes this mandate for action seriously; we hope the Council will also heed the will of Alberta women and join us in the campaign against women's poverty.

"Poverty isn't the easiest thing to write on. We really wanted to convey not only stats but some of the real experience faced by women in poverty

in this province."

ASWAC has worked on issues that address women before. The Family Law Reform Act changes that we lobbied for in 1972 brought more fairness to the courts when determining property settlements for divorced women. The Maintenance Enforcement legislation added some assurance that non-resident fathers would provide some financial support to mothers caring for their children.

Our campaigning for pay equity raised the level of understanding of the issue in Alberta and led the Human Rights Commission to put the issue on the agenda for research. Our efforts for high quality

accessible childcare and improved working conditions and wages for child care workers also impact on poverty issues for Alberta women. As well, ASWAC has been active on federal issues including free trade, deregulation, maternity leave provisions. We have been active in working for specific pieces of legislative change, but we know that women's poverty is not just created through a series of unfair pieces of legislation.

"It was hard to measure the reaction to our brief. The panel basically didn't react. There was no discussion at the end, no questions, nothing. However, we took it as a good sign that the Council permitted ASWAC extra time to complete our rather lengthy presentation and they were seen to take notes during the proceedings."

Women are still viewed as "pin money" or second income earners in the paid labour force. The wages in some occupational categories are well below living wage values, and these positions are held almost exclusively by women. The labour force is still largely segregated on the basis of gender, and most women work in occupational groups with comparatively low earnings, limited opportunities for advancement, and less favourable benefits. How do we reconcile these attitudes with the fact that 46% of the women who work today are the only wage earner in their family?

"The feminization of poverty is such an important issue and there is so much that the Advisory Council could be doing on the topic that it was a bit disappointing to get no response to anything."

Hard economic times, like the current trends in Alberta, affect women more adversely than men because of our traditional role of caretakers for the disadvantaged, and the dependent members of our society. Cutbacks to services for children, the elderly, and disabled force the traditional nurturers to take on more of the load, without

financial compensation. Similarly, cutbacks in public health care often affect women more adversely, as women are less likely to be covered by private benefit plans. Does privatizing and cutting back public services affect women more than men?

"A number of other groups at the Hearings spoke really well. Jane Templeman, for example, gave an eloquent presentation on abortion rights. I was struck by the fact that all the issues that the progressive women's movement spoke about that day have a clear link to poverty and our unequal access to this society's resources. I was proud to be in the same room with all those women fighting for our equality."

In September and October ASWAC will mount a series of four to six Public Hearings in major centres across the province. These Hearings will provide a focus for public actions on the issues, bringing together ASWAC members, other women and groups in the area working on the issues, and local politicians.

In November in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting, ASWAC will sponsor a major conference and lobby activity in Edmonton. The conference will feature panels of prominent speakers, presentations of recent research undertaken by ASWAC and other groups, and opportunities for discussion to complete the education of our members and the public.

"The audience was composed of approximately 50% supporters of a feminist program and about 50% of the more anti-feminist type. It was rather difficult to sit through some of the unfounded emotional stuff in the anti-feminist presentations and not jump up to challenge their assumptions. It

made it clear to me just how hard we have to work to put forward our solutions in a creative and assertive way."

ASWAC has identified six barriers that face women that can be remedied. These represent the demands of the campaign and we invite your endorsement and action to influence decision-makers on these points: (see page 7, Women Against Poverty report from Edmonton has the six demands listed.)

"This campaign against poverty faced by women has already brought so many women together. We should be proud. We have a lot more to do though, it would be great if we could draw in a really broad cross section of groups to address this huge and tenacious problem."

To these ends, we invite the Council and the public to join us in our campaign. Participate by making your support public: sign a postcard, write letters, indicate that you need to see some change on this issue. Older women and young women with families facing poverty today cannot wait until the economy improves. Empty statements about how "the poor" should learn how to budget better, and hasty accusations about laziness do nothing to relieve the situation. Poverty is, or will be, an issue for many women; waiting to tackle the problems is risking on our futures. The costs of our present system are also borne by all of us. The time for action is long overdue.

For more information or a copy of the brief, please contact the Edmonton (421-0306) or Calgary (233-0731) office. Luanne Armstrong, Jane Haslett and Marg Johnson presented the brief.



CPA WOMEN'S CAUCUS STATEMENT

At our last board meeting we decided that ASWAC should join the Canadian Peace Alliance (See the last newsletter issue for a description of the Canadian Peace Pledge Campaign, facilitated by the CPA). Anne McGrath attended the recent CPA convention in Ottawa. Here are excerpts from the draft statement of the Women's Caucus. If you would like to make any suggestions for changes please contact any of the ASWAC offices. The full text is available at each office.

"There is no greater fallacy than the belief that aims and purposes are one thing, while methods and tactics are another."

Emma Goldman

The CPA Women's Caucus is a working group of the Canadian Peace Alliance. It is open to all women of the Alliance. Here women come together for discussion and support. It provides a place at CPA conventions to examine our role as women in the peace movement and in society. Between conventions, the discussion continues through the mail and in the meetings of the women of the Steering Committee.

Women, Society and Peace:

Women have historically been peacemakers. From the early days of the women's movement when the suffragists spoke against war and conscription, to today, when women are an estimated 70% of the peace movement, women have given both voice and action for peace and justice.

We exist in a society where primarily men hold positions of political and economic power in the public realm, and men are granted the position of leader of the household in the private, family realm. Women have worked for the betterment of the world by raising children, establishing and operat-

ing schools, libraries, food banks, day care centres, cultural centres, and hundreds of other tasks that have been largely unnoticed and for which women are largely unpaid. Our life in such a society gives us a perspective which is unique to us as women. We believe that a result of our experience is a different view of power; that these perceptions are relevant to us as peaceworkers.

The Women's Caucus provides a place to question in safety, become aware of how our personal struggles with power are also being fought by other women, to be exposed to other issues affecting women which we have not encountered or perhaps not yet recognized in ourselves.

History of the CPA's Women's Caucus:

So far the Women's Caucus has played a lively role in the development of the CPA. Both men and women noticed the anomaly that in a movement made up 70% by women, men largely held the leadership positions, public speaking roles and acted as movement policy makers. CPA women gathered at the women's caucus and took measures to formally identify and move to remedy this situation. The result: the CPA has a constitutionally enshrined goal to have gender balance on all decision-making bodies.

Yet even with this rule in place, it was not until November 1987 that a CPA Steering Committee took place at which women attended in equal numbers with the men.

And just getting women to the meeting tables isn't enough. Another project started by the Women's Caucus has been the monitoring of men's and women's involvement at Steering Committee meetings. At each meeting, one session is timed, and the number

and length of speaking contributions by men and women are compared. The results to date have been dramatic, with men contributing many more times than women.

At the November 1987 meeting the figures had shifted: men and women made almost the same number of contributions; yet, men spoke almost twice as long as the women!

Membership in the Women's Caucus:

Some women of the CPA call themselves feminists. Others do not identify themselves with the term feminist, but do believe in the goal of equality between the sexes. Other women have no strong position on the issue. All are welcome in the CPA Women's Caucus. As in the society we are trying to create, the different views of caucus members will be respected, and an exchange of views will be essential to our understanding of our role.

Even if a woman identifies the problem it is difficult to stand up to social forces and sustain that vision alone. Therefore we meet together. Men have an essential role to play in forging a new power ethic of partnership instead of dominance. Men are not invited into the Women's Caucus because there are truths about ourselves as women and peaceworkers that we believe can only be easily explored in the company of other women. Just as regional caucusing of the CPA is not seen as an institution which divides region against region, so too, we believe gender caucusing enriches us rather than divides us.



The Poet's Corner

The View From There
by Luanne Armstrong

This is my last column and farewell letter for a while, anyway. I'm going back to the mountains for a year to write and read and meditate, as well as parent kids, garden, build fences, ride, work on the house, clean, and continue to organize rural and poor women.

It's been a great two years, two of the happiest of my life. I've met many fine, loving, caring women, gotten to do some good political work, started a magazine, done some writing, and in general gotten to do a lot of things I've always wanted to but never had the opportunity.

Along the way, I've continued my hobby of social observation, and I believe I've also seen some interesting and to me, saddening, trends in the women's movement. Some of these trends have puzzled me a great deal. I've done some thinking and talking to friends trying to get some clarity about things I have seen myself and other women struggling with, in the past few months.

For all our talk about process, quite often in the women's movement I believe we are lousy at really listening to one another. So often in my attempts to talk about my life, I have seen it reflected in other women's eyes as either unbelievable, or somehow romantic. It was neither. Most of the decisions I have made in my adult life have been based on economic survival as a single parent with four kids, in a lousy economy with no chance of employment.

But so often we don't hear one another because we make assumptions about each other's lives and about the issues we deal with, without thinking or examining them. And often I believe this is because of one of the least talked about and

least understood issues in the women's movement, that which for lack of a better analysis, we call class issues. Before I came to ASWAC, I had spent most of my life as an extremely poor rural working class woman. I had always heard that the "women's" movement was white and middle class, and that on the whole seems to be true from what I have seen of it. This is not necessarily because of the women in it, but because the values, the language, the ideals, and the assumptions of the organized women's movement in this country are overwhelmingly urban, white, and co-opted into North American capitalist values. Many of our unstated and unexamined goals are to somehow get women into the middle class, with jobs and daycare, and equal wages, which is all fine and dandy of course.

But what ever happened to the idea of transforming the patriarchy? Do we really want to transform the patriarchy, or just mend it a bit?

Not that it matters much. It will fall of its own will, weight and corruption and in its own time, and not without various horrors along the way... while we live in an enlarge, and try to feel better about living in the cracks in the cement.

So, on the whole, at the end of these two years, I am left with more questions than answers (as usual). Main question, how to talk (or write) about these issues while still giving full support and credit to the work being done by women in all parts and levels of society? There is no blame or accusation attached to these musings. Only a desire to keep asking (out loud) the questions that I feel I need to ask at least myself. Can a finally co-opted middle class women's movement transform itself into something different? How much of the hidden bitterness of what has gone on in ASWAC and in NAC in the past year is because of hidden invest-

ments in the opposite polarities in the women's movement, which remain unnamed, but not unmet?

Goodbye. I will miss those of you I have met, and come to know and care about. I will miss the work, and even, in some aspects, the city. My very best wishes to all of you.



**bring in,
mail in,
pony express in,

walk in,
courier in,
jog in,
those
membership
questionnaires!**

Far Out feminists

by Elin Harlev Barlem

Another news flash from the Far Out.

A morning at Alberta Women's Institute Convention.

I went to the annual convention for the Women's Institutes, held in Olds.

Gerry Bailey sent me the invitation forms and the program.

And to my great amazement I spotted Elaine McCoy's name on the list, so tuesday morning 7/6, after work I found myself in a group of senior, singing women... It was "Daisy Daisy" and "A Bicycle Made For Two," I must say a little before my time, so I went about setting up a display of ASWAC "goodies"; The Fact Sheet, the Newsletter, Women know your rights, etc. etc. At this time all the Women were doing the "You put your left foot in, you take your left foot out" — not exactly my cup of tea, and there wasn't any of that either — until later.

Anyhow I scanned the room and seen posters like: "Have you hugged A Senior Today?" "Unicycle-Bicycle-Recycle" and One that I gathered was a Theme Banner "Fashioning the Future". By now ladies in green scottish jackets were gathering the song sheet and it looked like the president (?) behind the mike... Beryl Ballhorn, Weta. (the pre.) lead us true' Oh Canada and read Mary Stewart Collect OKay so I'm not so hot on either of these formalities but I did Stand Up... Beryl continued to read her yearly report more or less a summary of W.I.'s activities over the year. Their involvement in Alberta Coalition Against Pornography, W.I.'s continuous lobbying for a province wide crisis line for the rural areas, dealing with Family violence, Battered Women and Child abuse.

A point which I found very

interesting was W.I.'s involvement and concern for the environment — especially in this dry season. Conservation of Water, the natural resources etc. is of great importance, and I was happy to see/hear AWI's intentions to "set an example of what can be done" in this area.

Beryl continued for a short while telling us about new branches that opened with members in the Calgary area. She finished off by saying, and I quote: "We (AWI) continue as a very vital and 'with-it' organization, touching many bases of study and involvement in social and community issues." And I for one wish them only the best in the coming year, in 1989 AWI celebrates their 80th Anniversary.

Just a little note concerning AWI's age... Well, AWI and ASWAC may be very different in some aspects, but when we look at the 80 years AWI have been working with social and community issues, the hard work, and the many years of "survival" in a patriarch is worth a great deal of respect...

The Agenda was now changed, the main reason I chose to go was to speak to Ms. McCoy, was now was not going to be present, nor was her substitute Hon. Shirley Cripps Ass. Min. for Agriculture, so the Government sent their Greetings by Clara Carefoot, a local rep.

Contrary to any ASWAC meeting I have ever been to, this convention was way ahead of time so we sang another song LA-LA-LA...

The guest speaker, or the keynote speaker as She was described in the program, was Norma Farquharson from Calgary. She was introduced as the founder of Catalyst Education Ass. Ltd., and had numerous other accomplishments in the field of "Assertiveness Training."

Her talk evolved mostly around her own "growth" and ability to

(finally) throw away the "Super Woman" des-ease... (as I call it sometimes).

Norma spoke of the horrible stats that shows how we women have had to almost "trade" ourselves for the minute amount of self-respect that by the way many times are "robbed" by either our beloved husbands (partners) or drained by our lovely children... This was the centre of Norma's talk (summary); We as women have to stop and look at how we treat others, in order to change the ways we are treated... we must let go of the "compassion trap", as Norma explained; even in the Readers in elementary school women are portrayed as "the workers - no play" ... Mom (woman) comforts, heals and kisses everything better... don't we know so well... So let the kids get out of bed on their own, and let his socks lay all over the house, when the drawer is empty, he might notice "Mother" moved out... Another point, which Norma touched upon is the "Excellence Anxiety"... or in other words, "I (woman) should be everything to everybody."

Just as a breather I would like to tell a little story of my own...

A friend of mine told me once how She helped herself to get rid of the "Excellence Anxiety" (to use Norma's word), when ever She felt, or seen a woman "racing" with herself, she asked "Did you Should on YOUr self today?"

That brings it sort of together for me, how about You???

But back to Norma's words. She put out seven points of improvement concerning changes in a woman's life...

"Child Care. Domestic work Must be recognized. Equality starts at home, how we bring up our children, how we are treated, and how we treat

"Social/Economic partners in

society.

Equal access to work...

*Improve social Welfare for Women, and their children.

*Throw Out the "Compassion Trap" and the Guilt, which we all have been more or less spoon fed by Society...

*Raise our children to be responsible young adults instead of forever needing kids...

*Develop "equal" relationships. Maybe even reverse a partner situation into a "room mate" situation, would we pick up after our Room mate? (Likely not).

*Eliminate Role Stress. Look at ourselves, and maybe even say No once in a while... Be assertive and grow strong.

All while Norma was talking away I seen several women doing crafts, either knitting, sewing or even making wall hangings... I'm glad Norma pointed out how many women cannot just sit and listen, or watch TV, they must be doing something. And I ask; "Did You Should on YOUrself today???" I bet one quarter to one half of the really beautiful crafts were not for the women themselves... How can You tell I'm not a knitter. ... and really the observation made me Smile more than anything.

The hour Norma Farquharson talked went by in no time flat. She touched on many more issues relevant to women's situation in Alberta, we are slowly turning more and more sick, dependent on drugs, alcohol etc., all this due to the pressures we are experiencing — trying to be Super Woman...

I left the W.I. convention feeling good, not only because of what I heard, but also because of Who listened with me — Country Women...

I talked to a few members and discussed our Poverteas Campaign with them. Also gave Norma some material from the Poverteas Campaign. The theme of the convention was "Fashioning the Future"

which in the Foreword was explained to reflect what Women's Institute have been doing in their organization. For those of you who might be interested in more information I can only direct you to the President Beryl Ballhorn, Wetaskiwin.

My time is short and there is lots I still need to do, but I do remember not to over do it. Hope You enjoy the little update from Innisfail and what is happening here. Beside W.I. convention, there has been A poverteas at my place, not the greatest attendance but we did talk and brain storm really well. Also I called a Joint meeting with Red Deer Status of Women, mainly to cooperate for a common goal, "Women and Poverty".

They seemed very interested, and though a good goal oriented debate we came up with the idea of

"building up" Poverteas to peek in a public presentation (Sunday Afternoon Tea) in late October... As a goal for each poverteas I try to find key words, expressing the particular group's concerns or recommendations... How the actual Public Presentation is going to happen is still in the works but the "building up" has already started... so if there are rural, central albertan Poverteas going on, please let us know... we might just as well grow together...

These "short" little updates always turn into longer tellings, I really have to cut myself off, or this wouldn't be the End...

Take care, and play in the puddles —

remember be kind to your wetfooted friends.

Elin.

**A MESSAGE FROM
RONALD
REAGAN
TO ALL
CANADIANS
- ABOUT
FREE TRADE**



Our goal must be a day when the free flow of trade... from the tip of Tierra del Fuego to the Arctic Circle... unites the people of the Western Hemisphere in a bond of mutually beneficial exchange.

President Ronald Reagan
State of the Union Message
January 26, 1988

The Canadians don't know what they've signed. In 20 years, they will be sucked into the U.S. economy.

Clayton Yeuter,
U.S. Trade Representative
Washington, October 1987
(Toronto Star, 6/10/87)

June 6, 1988

Dear Friend,

The message to you from Ronald Reagan is that Free Trade is good for you and would mutually benefit all the peoples of the Western Hemisphere. Would he lie to you?

Reagan is saying that what's good for some, is good for all of us. But the Reagan/Mulroney Free Trade Agreement was negotiated behind closed doors by people representing special interests. They don't represent me... and I don't believe they represent you, or your family and friends.

The large multinational corporations backing the deal have a lot of money and power at their disposal. Our silence is all the co-operation they need.

That's why the Coalition Against Free Trade is making your concerns heard on this issue.

If you are a woman, an immigrant, a farmer, a Native Canadian, an organized or unorganized worker, a senior citizen, or a student — then the Coalition Against Free Trade is fighting for your interests. We're a wide range of groups representing hundreds of thousands of Canadians. And we're united for one purpose: to defeat the deal.

We urgently need your financial help to mobilize public response strong enough to stop the deal I believe that if we act now, we can turn the tide. Turn to page 14 for info on how you can help.

COALITION AGAINST FREE TRADE
1260 Bay Street, Seventh Floor
Toronto, M5R 2B5

YES. STOP THE DEAL. Here's my help.

\$20 \$50 \$100 \$250 500 ___ any amount
I want to help as a volunteer

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postal Code: _____

*I'm a dressmaker here.
I had my own shop in the Phillipines.
People are scared in our factory.
They say it will affect our benefits.
They say some garment factory owners will close
plants.
In the Phillipines there's a free trade zone.
They make Levis, Reeboks, Adidas.
Because there's cheap labour.
For the people there it's very hard.*

Cecilia, Garment Worker, Gordon Dress Company



COALITION AGAINST FREE TRADE
1260 BAY STREET, SEVENTH FLOOR
TORONTO, M5R 2B5
(416) 975-9118

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The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women has released the Shocking Pink Paper for women to use in the 1988 federal election campaign. The pocket sized pink pamphlet contains valuable information and examples of questions to ask the candidates. Copies are available from ASWAC or: CACSW, 220 - 4th Ave. S.E., suite 270, Box 1390, Station 'M', Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2L6, 299-6668. Get your copy soon.



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**ALBERTA
COALITION FOR
UNIVERSAL HEALTH
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The Alberta Status of Women
Action Committee
Box 1573
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 2N7



ASWAC memberships run from September to September with a grace period until the Assembly in November. That means that 1988 memberships are now due.

Name: _____

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Postal Code: _____

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Membership: \$ _____
New renewal

Donation: \$ _____

Legal Defence
Fund: \$ _____

**suggested membership fee is \$10, but we will accept whatever you can afford.*

Please make cheques out to: ASWAC, Box 1573, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2N7