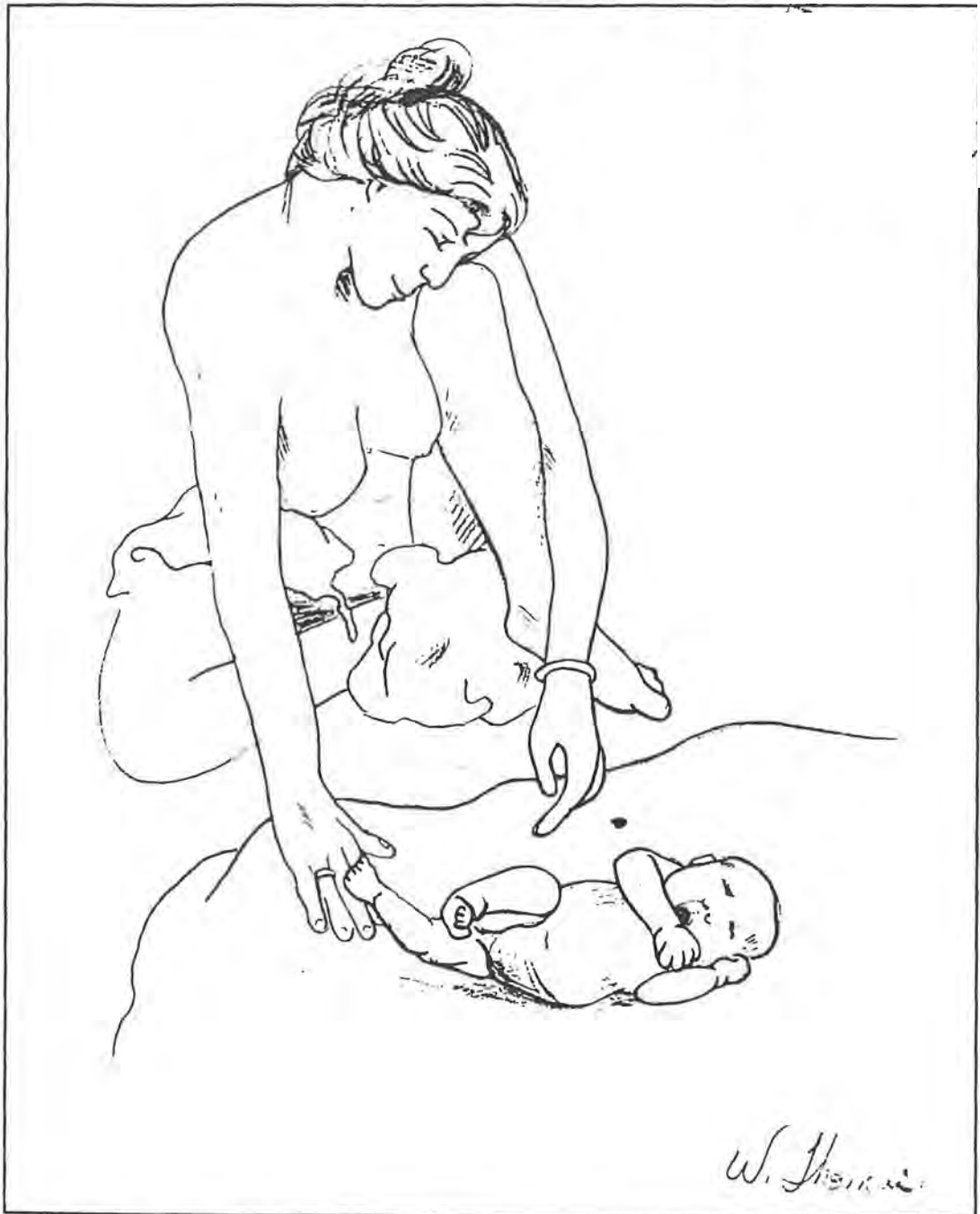


ASWAC

Alberta Status of Women Action Committee

APRIL/MAY NEWSLETTER 1989
Volume 10, Number 3



INSIDE: Motherhood, Employment Opportunities, Unionization



1988/89 Board Members

Annette Aarbo - Edmonton
Noreen Bell-Geekie - Edmonton
Maria Seeber - Edmonton
Jane Haslett - Edmonton
Helen Greaves - c/o Edmonton Office
Shelley Scott - c/o Edmonton Office
Phyllis Jackson - Bawlf
Jean Munn - Calgary
Marilyn Seelye - Calgary
Jacqueline Preyde - Calgary
Anne McGrath - c/o Calgary Office
Nancy Miller - Calgary
Debbie Foster - Lethbridge
Rita Kolpak - c/o Lethbridge Office

1988/89 Regional Representatives

Elaine Peters - Calgary
285-1214

Addie Miron - Lethbridge
327-4396

Lois Soderstrom - Westeros
586-2091

Gerry Bailey - Westeros
586-2938.

Joan White Calf - Camrose
672-6687

Kathleen Davies - Edmonton
438-5480

Lori Crocker - Innisfail
227-1141

Elin Harley Barlem - Innisfail
227-2927

*All numbers are home phone numbers.

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

ASWAC's mailing address is: Box 1573, Edmonton, T5J 2N7. The Edmonton office is located at 9930 - 106 Street, on the lower floor with the rest of the Edmonton Women's Building. Phone 421-0306. Office hours are Monday to Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ASWAC Lethbridge is located in the Women's Resource Centre on top of Woolworths, at #202, 325 - 6 Street South, T1J 2C7. Phone 329-8338.

The Calgary ASWAC office is located in the Old Y Centre for Community Organizations, #303, 223 - 12 Avenue S.W., T2R 0G9. Phone 233-0731 for recorded information and to leave messages.

Since February, ASWAC has gratefully received donations from the following wonderful people: John Lunn, Marg Koep, Kathryn Buchanan, Mary Moore, Jay Norton, Jean Pettifor, Brenda Mann, Donna Hamar, Janina Vanderpost, Kay Wilson, Jean Mucha, Brian Moir, Olga Shklanka, Deb Plummer, Sharon Montgomery, Merle Piska and Patricia Browne. Thank-you!

The ASWAC Newsletter is produced in Edmonton by the Newsletter Collective, with contributions from across the province. Feedback, input and suggestions in the form of ideas for articles, graphics, and especially notices of events that are happening in your area would be very much appreciated.

Here are the deadlines for upcoming newsletters:

June Newsletter - Deadline: Monday, *June 5*
July/August Newsletter - Deadline: Monday, *July 24*
September/October Newsletter - Deadline: Wednesday, *September 13*

The deadline means that the item must be in the Edmonton ASWAC office on that day; if items can be sent in earlier, it would be appreciated.

Thanks to all contributors, and to the *Newsmagazine by Alberta Women* collective and Nola Erhardt for typesetting and layout, and to Central Web for printing.

Cover illustration by Wendy Thomas

ASWAC BOARD MEETS IN EDMONTON

Please note: Members are reminded they are welcome to attend board meetings in their area. Upcoming meetings are: May 27-28 in Lethbridge, July 8-9 in Pigeon Lake and September 9-10 in Edmonton. Don't forget the ASWAC Annual Assembly, October 14-15 in Lethbridge.

In attendance: Board - Annette, Jane, Noreen, Helen, Shelley, Phyllis, Nancy, Jackle, Maria, Marilyn, Jean, Debbie, Rita. Missing: Anne. Regional Representatives - Kathy, Elaine, Joan, Eln, Gerry, Lois. Missing: Lori, Addie. Members - Mair, Cathy Bray, Marg Johnson, Deborah Dillon. Hearings Co-ordinator: Diane Wazny.

April 1

1) UNIONIZATION AND COLLECTIVE PROCESS -

The morning was spent in a discussion of this topic, facilitated by Cathy Bray. Please see article page 6 for further details.

2) WOMEN AGAINST POVERTY HEARINGS - Diane reported she has divided the province into eight regions and has begun making contacts in all of them. They are: Lethbridge/Medicine Hat; Calgary area including Pincher Creek and Canmore; Calgary; Red Deer; Westlock/Barrhead/Athabasca/Whitecourt; Edmonton; Fort MacMurray; and Grande Prairie/Peace River/Fairview.

She reported that Grande Prairie had suggested a travelling, high-profile panel to come into the community to hear presentations. Smaller communities preferred a guest speaker arrangement, with questions from the audience and a panel.

As well, she said more connections from the board and regional representatives are needed in the communities, and that more media coverage is needed.

(The Women Against Poverty (WAP) Provincial Committee met again on Sunday afternoon, after the board meeting.)

3) ASWAC-LETHBRIDGE - At this point, we had a fairly thorough discussion of the relationship of ASWAC-Lethbridge to the rest of ASWAC. The reason they are "ASWAC-Lethbridge" is primarily because they receive separate funding, but they are also autonomous in some ways.

The Lethbridge group runs the Women's Resource Centre, and Rita was hired by and works for both.

Questions included: Should Lethbridge receive more funding from the provincial budget? Should Rita also be unionized? (She is presently on contract and receives no benefits.)

The Lethbridge group will meet and decide under what sort of model they want to work and will bring this to the next board meeting. Other means of support for the

Lethbridge group will also be pursued, including contact between the offices and involvement of Lethbridge women in the provincial organization (i.e., membership, involvement in the WAP campaign and annual general meeting planning).

It was also recognized at this point that different board members do different kinds of work on the board.

4) ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE - Committee members are: Debbie, Helen, Jackle, Maria, Rita and Shelley. Some committee members met on the Friday night before the board meeting.

Rita will begin looking into accommodations.

Suggested theme is something to do with coalition building, especially with native, immigrant and rural women with whom the Lethbridge group has already had contact in southern Alberta. This will involve a high degree



Nancy Miller & Debbie Foster at Meeting (Photo by Helen Greaves)

of participation by these groups; Gerry pointed out this will also necessitate ongoing coalition work with these groups.

The week before the ASWAC Assembly there is an Indigenous Peoples conference in Lethbridge; these two could work together.

5) POLICY PORTFOLIO - Shelley will provide copies of ASWAC briefs to Phyllis -- she plans to summarize ASWAC's positions into an information pamphlet or sheets.

Jane will assist Phyllis and Annette in this policy and procedures work.

Diane will also be identifying the questions that members are asking her.

6) MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE - Jane has almost finished putting the membership list on the computer.

The Edmonton phone tree is doing OK. Karen Calkins is working on a group phone tree.

We need to phone groups on our mailing list to see if

they want to be a member or affiliate, and to have them also pay fees.

We will take out a membership in Syntax, an arts society in Calgary that does printing for us.

7) MORE THAN A LABEL CAMPAIGN - The TV commercial is being aired in Lethbridge (channels 2 and 7). There are VHS copies for Calgary and Edmonton, a copy for Frances at Secretary of State and a master copy with the Edmonton ASWAC phone number on it.

Nancy will try to get the commercial aired in Calgary, and Maria will do the same in Edmonton. The regional representatives will look into airing a third copy in other communities.

Other groups can also buy copies from ASWAC and put their own number on it.

8) BYLAW COMMITTEE - All changes to bylaws will have to be passed at the annual general meeting, but will be discussed at the next board meeting. One proposed change is that board members serve two-year terms, with half the board being elected each year, to improve continuity.

Jane will look into putting the proposed bylaw changes in the newsletter before the annual general meeting, along with rationales for them.

9) HIRING COMMITTEES - Two Summer Employment/Experience Development (SEED) positions (one each in Calgary and Edmonton) must be filled by May 1. For the Edmonton position, the Hiring Committee is: Shelley, Annette and Kathy. For the Calgary position, the Hiring Committee is: Anne, Marilyn and Elaine.

Shelley will be leaving at the end of July to attend graduate school. Advertisements for the administrative co-ordinator position will go in the newsletter and other media. Deadline for applications is May 31.

Interviews for the position will be conducted in June. The board will approve the person and she will be notified during the July 8-9 board meeting. The new person will begin work on July 24, giving her a one-week orientation with Shelley.

The Hiring Committee is: Shelley, Jean and Jane, plus

an Edmonton member. Board members and regional representatives may apply, but they cannot be present during discussions regarding hiring and they do not receive any special consideration.

April 2

1) LET'S STOP KIDDING AROUND - Catherine Reiningger attended this conference on teen parenting, sponsored by the Department of the Family, on behalf of ASWAC. There were about 365 in attendance, and speakers included Minister of Social Services Connie Osterman and Minister of Culture Greg Stevens (on behalf of Minister Responsible for the Department of the Family Jim Dinning). A copy of Catherine's report will be sent to board members.

2) PAY EQUITY - Andrea Waywanko gave a workshop on pay equity, explaining its historical development, various methods of implementation, mechanism schemes and monitoring.

3) CONFERENCES - *Unlearning Racism*, April 28-30 in Edmonton: Several board members and regional representatives will attend on their own behalf, and Jackie will attend on behalf of ASWAC. Jackie will have her expenses reimbursed. *Women and Mental Health*, May 11-14 in Banff: Phyllis Jackson will attend on behalf of ASWAC. *National Action Committee on the Status of Women Annual General Meeting*, May 12-15 in Ottawa: Helen Greaves will attend as ASWAC's voting delegate. ASWAC-Lethbridge will also send one or two delegates with their own funds.

We now have spent the leftover money from the Shop-talk Weekend that was designated for board education.

4) BUDGET - We will be audited within the next three weeks. We will hopefully receive our next Secretary of State grant by the end of May; we have money to last till then.

We have received \$10,000 we applied for out of last year's Secretary of State budget for the WAP hearings co-ordinator position.

EDMONTON WORKING WOMEN is accepting resumes for several staff positions. We are awaiting word on our applications for funding that will make these jobs possible.

The work will involve:

- * giving information, assistance and support to women who are being treated unfairly in the workplace;
- * keeping statistics on these cases, and presenting them to government, the media and the public;
- * working with the media and other agencies to distribute our handbook of labour laws, and to educate people about the problems women face in the labour force;

- * dealing with things as they arise and organizing time accordingly;
- * organizing public forums, meetings and our participation in other events;
- * maintaining files of issues of concern to women and updating resources; and
- * working within a feminist collective structure and tapping the resources of our volunteer membership.

Send resumes to:
Edmonton Working Women
30, 9930 - 106 St.
Edmonton, AB, T5K 1C7

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

ADMINISTRATIVE CO-ORDINATOR/EDMONTON

THE ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE has an employment opportunity for an administrative co-ordinator in the Edmonton office.

The woman who can fill this position will be self-motivated, have knowledge of and experience with women's organizations and issues affecting women, have experience with volunteer boards, have good oral presentation and writing skills, feel comfortable dealing with the media, and have knowledge of government structures and the legislative process.

She will have some general background and knowledge of publications.

She should also have some experience with financial management, and be familiar with computer technology (Mackintosh).

She should have a commitment to feminism and the collective process.

Her principle areas of responsibility will be:

1. Administration

- Includes filing, phoning, reception, correspondence, responding to requests for information and updating membership records.

2. Co-ordination

- Includes working with board and volunteers to assist in co-ordinating the organization of ASWAC activities: board meetings, issue committee meetings, membership meetings and ASWAC-sponsored events.

- ensures a smooth flow of information to and from board members and regional representatives.

- handles media calls when appropriate or refers them to the designated ASWAC spokesperson.

3. Finances

- participates on the finance committee; on the preparation of the annual budget; and in the preparation of Secretary of State and other grant applications.

- works with the bookkeeper to ensure efficient financial management.

- handles paying bills, doing bank deposits, processing expense claims and taking care of membership and sale monies.

4. Publications

- participates in the recruiting and training of members of the Newsletter Collective.

- facilitates meetings of the Newsletter Collective.

- ensures that written materials for the newsletter

content are submitted by deadline.

- co-ordinates the newsletter production contracts.

It would be helpful for the candidate to possess a car. Knowledge of French and/or Spanish would be useful but not necessary.

The salary is \$24,000 a year, plus benefits.

The deadline for applications is May 31, 1989. Please send resumes and a covering letter to the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee (ASWAC) at Box 1573, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2N7. Phone 421-0306 to ensure we have received your resume (call collect, if necessary).

The starting date for the administrative co-ordinator position will be July 24, 1989.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

OFFICE ASSISTANT - EDMONTON OFFICE

The assistant will be responsible for creating a master inventory of the resource files, both historical and educational, existing in the Edmonton ASWAC office.

This will involve a survey of present individual inventories and file contents, cross-referencing, and inputting this information into the computer.

Supervision and assistance will be provided by ASWAC staff.

OFFICE ASSISTANT - CALGARY

The assistant will staff the Calgary ASWAC office, with complete supervision and training from current staff.

Answering the phone and mail, responding to requests for information, and setting up a schedule of volunteers to staff the office will comprise the main duties.

Some orientation of new volunteers, in co-operation with current staff, will also be involved.

These positions will be available, pending funding through the Employment & Immigration Summer Employment/Experience Development (SEED) program.

The positions begin May 1, 1989, through August 31, 1989 and are for 35 hours per week at \$8.00 per hour.

Applicants must be university students with some background in Women's Studies.

Please phone 421-0306 for further information. Call collect if necessary.

FROM A VOLUNTEER BOARD MEMBER:

Unionization Process Proves Challenging

by Jane Haslett

At first, it was a shock! At the February board meeting, when the surprise announcement of the staff unionization was made, volunteer board members had some serious misgivings. Many discussions followed, both then and later. Most volunteer board members appeared to be willing and even committed to support the staff joining a union, but all had major concerns about how it was done.

By the time of the April board meeting, both staff and volunteer board members had decided the first agenda item should be a discussion of unionization and the collective process.

The discussion was facilitated by Cathy Bray, and took the form of a round, followed by questions arising from points brought out in the round, and finally by responses to these points and/or questions. The round took quite some time, and many points of view were expressed.

Cathy did an excellent job, and very pertinent and helpful comments were also made by Mair Smith and Marg Johnson. All three of these women attended the Saturday morning portion of the board meeting.

After other board business items in the afternoon, discussion was resumed.

I will attempt to summarize the discussion, BUT if there are ANY concerns and points of view that you do not see here, and you wish them addressed, PLEASE call the office and they will be put on the agenda for the next board meeting, which will be May 27-28 in Lethbridge. All ASWAC members are reminded they are welcome at board meetings.

Questions focused: on staff reasons for unionizing; how collectivity fits into this process; whether staff (full or part-time) subsequently hired

would automatically be in the union or only if they wished to be; and how ASWAC as an organization will be affected by close ties with a non-feminist organization such as a union.

Major concerns were: avoiding a split on the board; defining potential areas of conflict; sorting out working arrangements; and implementing decision-making processes.

Many questions were asked regarding the nature and role of unions and in particular the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE -- the union ASWAC staff has joined), and how CUPE personnel will be relating to ASWAC personnel.

Concerns arose around the future, and staff intentions of working with either the union or collective process and which would take precedence in ASWAC work. The dual role of staff was discussed, and the possibility that unionizing is a formal recognition of an elite. The fact that staff members and volunteer members work quite differently on the board, and that unionizing recognized this difference instead of rendering it invisible, was also discussed.

Some wondered: how the staff were "equal" or "not equal" to the rest of the board members; if the entire board could join the union; how policies might need to be reconsidered and possibly rewritten to reflect all the changes; and how the ASWAC-Lethbridge staff person fits into this scenario. Most importantly, how is the board accountable to the ASWAC membership during all this discussion and decision-making, and how does all this relate to the annual general assembly?

As you can see, it was a very far-reaching and wide-ranging discussion, and its implications go farther still. These issues will no doubt be discussed at the assembly next fall. In the meantime, the board feels that as

your elected, or self-elected, representatives we will continue to try to sort out the issues and make the appropriate decisions as best we can, and to keep you informed as clearly as possible.

Current proposed actions are as follows:

1. A committee has been established to look into the ASWAC by-laws, to see if any need changing. Any PROPOSED changes will be put into the newsletter and discussed at the assembly. Any input on these proposed changes is welcome. Anyone wishing to work on the committee is also welcome -- please call the office and tell Shelley.

2. Shelley has already obtained LOTS of information from CUPE and is distributing it to board members and regional representatives. Anyone else wishing access to this information, please call the office.

3. Communication and openness are a focus on the board between all members, both volunteer and staff. Providing information to the general membership and receiving input are part of this focus, as is the maintenance of some continuity on the board from year to year.

4. Decisions must be made regarding: ASWAC staff and ASWAC-Lethbridge staff who at present are not in the union; how and/or if unionized staff can or should be involved in funding decisions; whether or not there is still a need for a work planning committee; and how staff evaluations are to be done.

The personnel policy, which will be the collective agreement between ASWAC and the unionized staff, must be rewritten. On a broader scale, we need to discuss what our

collective will look like in the future, and what our goals objectives and strategies are for this year. WHEW!

Well, you can see we will not be an idle bunch! We did decide that staff should remain on the ASWAC board, and that we want to try to work through these issues collectively. We want to keep working as a collective because the collective process was instituted on the board some years ago, and has been a very significant aspect of ASWAC work ever since.

It has also proven to be a valid and empowering way of working for many years, both in ASWAC and in the women's movement in general. Until this board perceives strong reasons why working as a collective during board meetings is no longer appro-

priate, we shall continue to work this way.

We do realize that we cannot work as a collective between board meetings, since we are a provincial board, but we can still use the operative principles of collectivity, such as sharing information, consultative decision-making and responsible uses of power to do our work.

Some volunteer board members have concerns regarding their lack of information about unions, and wish to reserve decisions about possible situations in which it would be inappropriate for staff members to be working as part of the collective. These decisions will be made at later board meetings, when further information is available.

The Personnel Committee is:

Anne McGrath, Jean Munn, Annette Aarbo, Phyllis Jackson and Jane Haslett. We do welcome all member input. Please wish us well and call any of us with suggestions, questions and concerns.

Because of the nature of these changes to the ASWAC board, the unionizing issues are bound to be addressed at the annual general assembly this fall. It would be very helpful and indeed healthy for ASWAC members to be debating them in the mean.

This is a very interesting and challenging time for ASWAC, and we have a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate leadership to other feminist organizations around the province and indeed the country. Let's do it!



For some time now, ASWAC has been working on a new challenge: how to go through a productive process of staff unionization without losing sight of feminist principles, while achieving an outcome which is enabling rather than debilitating.

I want to contribute a few thoughts and comments. From one ASWAC member to another, I invite members to become involved in the discussion of this aspect of the future of our organization.

Staff unionization in feminist organizations is a fairly recent phenomenon. Not surprisingly, we are short on effective models and long on idealism. We are ill-prepared for the sudden intervention of traditional adversarial pressures on our at-

Clarity Definitely Necessary For Productive Unionization

tempts to work collaboratively.

The lack of a well-analyzed basis and strategy for matching unionization to feminist principles and working methods accounts for the common experience of, to name a few, a poor exchange of information between staff and board, a tug-of-war between traditional and progressive approaches to unionization, and development of mutual suspicion between staff and board. I believe these dynamics have already been set in motion in ASWAC. However, they don't have to be allowed to develop to their full-scale, ugly potential.

I would suggest that the loose term of "feminist principles" plays a strong part in the creation of confusion and suspicion. It seems to me that an analysis and strategy firmly rooted in socialist feminism offers the only hope for conflict resolution. No other feminist ideology is capable of addressing the inherent conflict between unionizing and feminism.

For example, liberal feminism would lead to denial of conflict. Radical feminism, with its tendency to

dump all responsibility for the world's ills on the doorstep of the patriarchy, would be incapable of conflict resolution, seeing conflict only. And with the new stream of "cultural feminism", it's anyone's guess where things may go, because its politics are rooted in the "personal".

Clarity of intent and purpose, clarity about the terms of each party to unionization, is, in my opinion, the vital prerequisite to feminist unionization. This clarity can only be achieved when one works from a sound ideological basis. Once each party has established its own terms, these terms then become negotiable, ultimately at the bargaining table. Unless a reasonable degree of commonality of intent and purpose exists between staff and board, negotiation is destined to remain stuck in the traditional adversarial trap.

Speaking of the bargaining table, the most blatant lack of clarity currently exists in the surprising fact that staff members are still members of the board. On the humorous side, I have difficulty imaging staff members

crawling under and scurrying across the bargaining table to sit on either side, speaking for both. On the serious side, I fail to see how this situation can be an asset in arriving at clarity.

Simply consider these discussions in board meetings: staff salaries, working conditions and evaluations. A staff member would be in conflict addressing such issues from both points of view. Then consider the fact that board members are volunteers for ASWAC in their non-paid time. Could staff members who continue to sit on the board be expected to do ASWAC volunteer work as well? Could a board, which includes staff members as equal participants, resist sliding into divisions which are inappropriate for the organization as a whole, simply because elected members want to be seen as "nice"?

I have never been in favor of the decision taken some years ago that staff also be board members. There was, then, a separation of interests, as there is now. Unionization has sharpened the distinctions, which, by the way, need not be divisive. As a socialist feminist, I cannot support a situation which, born out of idealism, ignores the realities of trying to match unionization to the processes and goals of a feminist organization.

The sane option, in my opinion, is for staff to resign from the board immediately. Once this systematic obstacle to clarity is removed, it will become more possible to build structures, policies and working relationships which recognize the inherent differences between staff and board, so they can be faced instead of being obscured by rhetorical use of terms such as "sisterhood" and "collective".

With the courage to face differences, even conflict, board and staff members will have an easier time of it in the long-term. ASWAC, as an ongoing organization regardless of who is on staff or board, will benefit by being more able to pursue its work of creating progressive feminist social change.

*Julie Anne Le Gras
Edmonton*

FROM A STAFF MEMBER:

Benefits Likely For ASWAC As A Result Of Unionization

by Anne McGrath

Why would workers in a feminist organization want to unionize? There are several important reasons for the ASWAC staff's decision to join the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3249:

1. To provide greater job security.

2. To create an awareness of the different roles of paid staff within an organization comprised mainly of committed volunteers.

3. To provide a stronger link with working women and solidarity with unions and other organizations working together for social change.

Staff burn-out in organizations like ASWAC is a major waste of human resources and occurs all too often. Partly this is due to overly-flexible job descriptions, the expectation that staff be willing to perform above and beyond the call of duty, and fragmented direction from what could be defined as the employer. This has been an ongoing problem in ASWAC and has led not only to a high staff turnover but also to the inability and unwillingness of resigning staff

members to participate actively in the feminist movement for some time following their departure from ASWAC.

The topic of unionization is not new among ASWAC staff. Both within the present staff and in previous staffs there were several discussions about the benefits and drawbacks of unionizing. Following discussions with women on the staff of feminist organizations, some unionized and some not, we agreed there were significant benefits to us as a staff and to ASWAC as an organization in applying for certification.

ASWAC staff remain committed to the principles of working in a non-hierarchical collective and to sorting out any changes that may develop as a result of this action. As feminists and workers we are interested in developing new ways of working together to meet the needs of the organization and to looking after ourselves and recognizing the different roles we play in ASWAC.

This is a very new step for all of us. We are confident that with goodwill, hard work and humor we will all benefit from a closer examination of our working relationships and greater clarity in the definition of those relationships.

Society For Assisting Women Inventors Is Looking For Members And Donations

Women Inventors Networking Group Society (WINGS) was formed in 1988 for women working at any stage on an invention, to come together for assistance, pooling of knowledge and help overcoming problems women have in this field. New members are welcome.

The society is currently organizing a conference in Kananaskis Park,

November 16-19 and would appreciate donations from any organization or individual who would like to see a successful conference, as extra funds are required for speakers and other essentials.

Inquiries about membership or donations can be mailed to Pat Fraser, 732 Mapleton Dr. S.E., Calgary, T2P 1J2, or call her at 271-1983.

Handbook Details Rights

by Mary Anne King
Edmonton Working Women

Are you unsure of your legal rights in the workplace? Are you being treated unfairly by your employer? Get your copy of *Women: Know Your Rights! A Handbook for Women in the Alberta Workforce*. Topics in the handbook include: employment standards, discrimination, sexual harassment and remedies for workplace problems.

Mail \$1 (for postage) to Edmonton Working Women at 30, 9930 - 106 St., Edmonton, T5K 1C7 or phone the Working Women's Hotline at 429-3370.

The following is excerpted from the handbook:

Large numbers of women in Alberta are employed in sectors which are still primarily non-unionized. There have been a few successes in recent years in organizing in the retail sector but, on the whole, women in these jobs, as well as in the service sector, remain outside the union movement.

Through unionization, women can use the collective bargaining process to gain some control over their wages, benefits, job security and other working conditions. Membership in a union can offer women some protection in the labor force.

For example, the wage gap between men and women is narrower among unionized workers, and collective agreements may provide longer maternity leave or higher maternity benefits than those established by labor laws. Statistics show that unionized women earn, on average, approximately \$5 an hour more than non-unionized women (a difference of more than \$800 per month).

Collective agreements provide a grievance procedure for employer misconduct, which is faster, cheaper and often more effective than remedies through the legal system. Together women can fight more effectively for their rights, and important gains can be won to the benefit of all workers.

Recent amendments to Alberta labor laws have made it much more difficult to unionize workplaces. Now, a vote must be held for every application for certification, even if 99 per cent of employees are members of a

given trade union. Previously, as long as more than 50 per cent of the employees were members, a vote did not have to be held unless extenuating circumstances existed.

Under the old legislation, the organizing drive could be kept a secret, minimizing employer interference and intimidation in the process. Now, employers have the opportunity to interfere with the organizing process between the date of the application and the vote.

Although it is illegal to interfere with unionization, by the time the employer is found guilty, the damage

has already been done in the workplace, and employees may fear for their jobs and resist unionization.

Under the old legislation, if an employer's activities were so bad that the true wishes of the employees could not be determined, the Labour Relations Board could automatically certify a trade union. This power has been taken away from the Labour Board under the new Code, even though this power had only been used sparingly in the past (for example, in the Mariposa stores).

Without automatic certification as a remedy, employers will likely be able to ward off more unionization drives than they have in the past.

Edmonton Working Women firmly opposes these regressive changes to our labor laws.

If you wish to find out information about existing unions, phone the Alberta Federation of Labour or the Edmonton and District Labour Council. It might be helpful to talk to members of the women's committees of different unions. You can check the phone directory yellow pages under Labour Organizations.

GALA Gears Up For Twelve Days Of Activities

This is the list of Gay and Lesbian Awareness (GALA) '89 events in Edmonton as of April 14. Some venues and times have not yet been set. For information about events, call Barb Lauber at 435-4966 (h) or 425-9600 (w) or Matt Kuefler at 429-0983.

After June 1, the Womospace answering machine will carry up-to-date information. A poster and program will be available May 15.

June 16 - Concert with Lynn Lavner, David Sereda and special guest Svend Robinson. Proceeds to Edmonton's entry in the Gay Games. Provincial Museum Theatre. Tickets \$12.50 at Common Woman Books, Fritz That's It Cafe, The Roost, May 20th Womospace Dance.

June 17 - Fundraising Barbecue with Svend Robinson. Sponsored by GALA Civil Rights.

June 18 - Workshop on racism.

June 19 - Forum on legal issues.

June 20 - Public lecture on gay literature by Dr. Phillip Knight at Common Woman Books, followed by a wine and cheese. 7:30 p.m.

June 21 - Variety night sponsored by Gay and Lesbian Youth Group.

June 22 - Public lecture on gay art. Wine and cheese sponsored by Womospace at the Women's Building (9930 - 106 St.)

June 23 - Film night.

June 24 - Wellness workshop and dance at Bonnie Doon Community League Hall, sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre.

June 25 - Picnic, croquet match and scavenger hunt in Victoria Park.

June 26 - Public lecture on Edmonton's gay history.

June 27 - Barbecue and dance at The Roost.

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Unions Have Fought For All Workers

Unions are groups of working people who join together to talk to employers about wages and conditions of work instead of workers talking to employers on an individual basis.

Because they speak for everybody, unions can get a better deal for each worker than one employee could by negotiating with the employer. This is because an employer will play off individual workers and groups of workers against each other.

In Canada, the union concept of strength in unity came into existence in the early 1800s. Through collective action, workers formed unions so they could have a voice in deciding wages, hours, working conditions and dealing with many problems that arise in the workplace.

But, just as the formation of unions in themselves did not solve all workers' problems then, unions today continue to fight to achieve better contracts and improved legislation.

First Labor Laws

In 1872, Toronto Printers mounted a vigorous campaign for the nine-hour day and 54-hour week. In the same year, Prime Minister Sir John A. MacDonald finally introduced a law in Parliament, and from that time on, Canadian workers had the legal right to form unions and to act through them to achieve better wages and conditions.

More than 100 years have passed. Workers have achieved many of the early goals by collective bargaining and by political action. Unions have won legislation to end the exploitation of child labor, regulate daily and weekly hours of work, guarantee paid vacations, provide worker's compensation for the injured, insurance for the unemployed and pensions for the

elderly.

This is an important record of "non-contract" achievements and an inheritance which unions jealously guard and fight for today.

Great Sacrifices

The union movement's efforts to gain recognition in the past 100 years are little remembered or known but remain a very important part of history, involving great sacrifice and bitter struggle before the principle of collective bargaining was accepted in major industries and as a part of Canadian society.

Historically, the owners of industry held the view that since they owned the workplace, they therefore had the sole right to determine the conditions of employment. Even in the 1980s, workers have continued to witness that kind of anti-union/anti-worker attitude which was manifested in such national disputes as the Eaton's, Visa and Gainers strikes over basic union rights.

In these and most situations across Canada, prior to a union entering the workplace, the "open door" policy of management often existed. Workers were encouraged to bring their problems to the boss.

Those who trusted this procedure usually went out -- not only the same door, but the workplace as well.

The Right to "Talk Back"

The establishment of a contract and an effective steward system by a union means the workers have the right to talk back through their organization via the grievance procedure if they feel they have been treated unfairly.

Collective agreements between unions and employers contain many provisions that many people don't

know about.

For instance, they cover the grievance procedure you've just read about. They also regulate the number of hours employees may work each day and each week, and other provisions such as notice of any overtime to be worked and how much pay will be received for overtime.

Issues such as wages and holidays, job security, benefits and paid leave need more than simple discussion. They have to be bargained about.

This is because for any employer, higher wages mean higher costs. For employees, however, low wages means they can't afford to buy things they want. Eventually compromise is reached which both sides accept.

Unions are not just organizations trying to get more dollars and cents or better working conditions for people who hold union cards. People who don't enjoy the benefits of union protection get benefits too.

In the Forefront

If you look back at Canada's history, you'll observe that many of the rights and benefits we all enjoy were initially fought for and won by unions. The labor movement was in the forefront of the struggles for public health care, public education, minimum wages, holidays and employment conditions.

We all work 40 hours a week or less instead of 60 or more because unions periodically went on strike for a shorter work week, despite the warnings of employers that they'd never be able to afford it.

Many of us will receive pensions from our employers when we retire because the unions went on strike for that benefit too.

And paid maternity leave has recently been added to many workers'

benefits, largely because their unions fought for it.

Today it is more important to recognize that, when anyone works without a collective agreement, management has the right to treat its workers in any way it wants.

Workers would have no protection from a management that could alter any work process or pick favorites and play off worker against worker. Without a union acting as a form of insurance, workers are like sitting ducks in a shooting gallery.

Dangerous Divisions

In spite of these advances, two-thirds of Canada's labor force still does not belong to unions. This creates a perpetual and dangerous division among working people.

Many non-union workers are desperately poor and unemployment is high. Government and business leaders are well-satisfied to keep it that way, with minimum labor standards and restrictive collective bargaining legislation.

Time and again the organized and unorganized are played off against each other in the political arena.

These "confrontations", together with the introduction of new labor-saving techniques, layoffs, plant closures and public sector cutbacks, all pose an unprecedented challenge to the ability of unions to protect the security of their membership and to effectively represent their interests.

Reprinted from The Canadian Labour Congress

U.N. Convention Protects Women's Rights

The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* is essentially an international bill of rights for women and a framework for women's participation in the development process. The most concise and usable document adopted during the United Nations Decade for Women, it is the result of several decades of work by the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women and international women's organizations.

Now an international treaty ratified by more than 90 countries, the *Convention* spells out internationally accepted principles and standards for achieving equality between women and men.

The *Convention* was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on December 19, 1979, and came into force as a treaty on December 13, 1981, 30 days after the 20th member nation ratified it.

As of early 1988, 94 countries had ratified or acceded to this *Convention*, and additional countries had signed it. Ratification or accession obligates governments to pursue a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and to report on progress in that effort to the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Reports from national governments are due within one year after

ratification and every four years thereafter. Signing the *Convention* obligates governments to do nothing that contravenes the principles set forth in its specific articles.

Under the terms of the *Convention*, a 23-member CEDAW is nominated and elected by States Parties - the governments that have ratified the *Convention*. The purpose of CEDAW is to review reports from rati-



fyng countries on implementation of the *Convention*.

CEDAW meets annually in New York or Vienna, with its members serving for a term of four years. Members may be re-elected. They serve in their private capacity, not as government representatives. In addition to analyzing the government reports, CEDAW members question government representatives who appear before the committee and then report back with responses to the questions.

CEDAW issues an annual report on its reviews and may make recommendations to the U.N. based on its review and analysis of the country reports.

Text of the *Convention* can be obtained from the United Nations information office in New York or from the Branch for the Advancement of Women in Vienna. Address for the latter is: Room E-1277, Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria.

Additional material on the *Convention* and CEDAW can be obtained from the International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP), a group which facilitates and monitors compliance efforts under the *Convention*. Their address is: Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, 301 - 19 Ave. South, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, 55455.

IWRAP is a collaborative project that grew out of a series of workshops on the *Convention* held at the 1985 Nairobi world conference on women.

It is a focal point for an international network of activists and scholars. IWRAP is managed jointly by the Women, Public Policy and Development Project of the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, the University of Minnesota and the Development Law and Policy Program in the Centre for Population and Family Health at Columbia University.

IWRAP publishes a quarterly newsletter titled *Women's Watch*, and appreciates receiving copies of any status of women reports or information on law and policy changes that affect women in any country.

Poverty Hearings Move Into Second Phase

by Diane Shaver Wazny
(Women Against Poverty hearings co-ordinator)

March was a busy month spent initiating contact with various individuals and organizations across the province, and in gathering resources.

By Easter, I was then ready to get in my car and meet with some of you face to face. By early April, I had travelled from the northwest to the south-east regions of the province.

A number of women have offered valuable time and ideas to the process of the hearings in these initial meetings. It has been a constant challenge for me to keep abreast of

the diversity of ideas and variant responses to the project.

The project is now moving into its second phase. Serious consideration has been given to the differing realities of city and small town/rural lifestyles in Alberta. The Women Against Poverty co-ordinating committee has based its decisions for the hearings format on this fact.

The first series of hearings are being planned for June in a number of smaller Alberta communities. We envision these particular hearings will include a keynote speaker and presentations on feminization of poverty issues of the region. A calendar of

events and a call to submit presentation briefs will be available in early May.

A second group of hearings is intended to take place in the city centres of Alberta in the fall. A task force will be formed, in order to facilitate a strong impact on feminization of poverty issues.

By the June newsletter, I will have more detailed information to report on upcoming June events.

One last thing. I want to offer a special thanks to all of you who have extended your hospitality to me when I have visited in your community. It has been a pleasure to meet with you!

Mediawatch Is Seeking An Alberta Rep

Mediawatch is a national women's organization dedicated to improving the portrayal and status of women in the mass media. It is guided by a national volunteer advisory board and is represented in each province and territory by volunteer representatives and their networks.

The mandate of Mediawatch includes:

- public education in decoding media imagery;
- development of educational materials;
- advocacy on behalf of the public concerned with the images of women and girls in the mass media;
- lobbying for legislative and regulatory change to improve the status of women in the mass media;
- research in the field of sex role stereotyping and mass communications.

Mediawatch is seeking a volunteer representative for Alberta. The position provides an exciting opportunity to effectively voice concerns about the image of women in the media and to educate others on the issue. A one year commitment is requested, with a review to occur after six months and renewal subse-

quently done on an annual basis (April to April).

This is a volunteer position and Mediawatch provides \$100 per month to cover such expenses as photocopying, postage and car travel. Supplementary funds may be applied for, to develop small scale projects (i.e., media monitoring, production of a resource guide, development of a speakers' bureau, regional workshops, sex role stereotyping seminars with local industry members, etc.)

Representatives from across the country meet for a two-day conference once a year and are also expected to attend the Mediawatch Annual General Meeting, held in Vancouver (scheduled for June 9 through June 11 this year). All meeting expenses are paid by Mediawatch.

The skills a representative would need to have or be willing to acquire are: good verbal and written communication skills; organizational skills; ability to work independently and cooperatively; and ability to deal with the media industries and to work with groups and individuals with divergent ideologies.

A primary goal for the Mediawatch representative is to establish a core group of activists to facilitate education of both the public and the media in the area of sex role stereotyping. Duties include familiarizing oneself with the issues surrounding sex role stereotyping, developing an overall strategy for community outreach and for generating comments/complaints about media images of women and girls.

Each regional representative provides regular bi-monthly reports for *The Inside Story* (a Mediawatch Internal newsletter).

Regional representatives play a crucial role in Mediawatch, educating and lobbying around the issue of sex role stereotyping at the local level -- with necessary support and resources from the national office in Vancouver. A training manual for representatives and background information is provided and supplemented with regular contacts with the national volunteer co-ordinator.

Information can be obtained from and resumes sent to: Suzanne Strutt, Executive Director, Mediawatch, 1820 Fir St., Suite 250, Vancouver, B.C., V6J 3B1 or call (604) 731-0457.

LEAF Backs Wen-Do In Discrimination Fight

The Wen-Do Women's Self-Defence Corporation is fighting a complaint of sex discrimination before the Ontario Human Rights Commission. It was brought by Michael Celik, who was told he could not observe, or participate in, a Wen-Do class as it was only open to women.

Celik filed the complaint as a representative of the men's rights group In Search of Justice. He has acknowledged he has a black belt in judo.



The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) has agreed to assist the Wen-Do Corporation in its response to this complaint. LEAF believes that Wen-Do's "women only" policies are specifically designed to promote women's equality and therefore do not violate human rights legislation.

"We view this complaint as a form of harassment and have urged the

Assault Survivors Planning Anthology

A group of Calgary women who are survivors of sexual assault are interested in putting together an anthology of women's writings.

If you are a sexual assault survivor and would like to share your poetry, stories, thoughts or any other form of writing that reflects your experience as a survivor, please send your writings to: The Grapevine Newsletter at 4026, 918 - 16 Ave. N.W., Calgary, T2M 0K3 or call Shannon at 284-0922 for more information.

Human Rights Commission to dismiss it," says LEAF Executive Director Christie Jefferson.

"Wen-Do's program was designed with women's common socialization and physiology in mind," says Marilyn Walsh, a Wen-Do instructor. "Wen-Do provides strong women role models and a safe space where women can talk about fears and experiences related to sexual violence. This has helped many women overcome the social, psychological and physical constraints that prevent women from believing they can defend themselves and from learning techniques to do so."

The Supreme Court of Canada, in its recent *Andrews* decision, recognized that equality guarantees in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, designed to alleviate disadvantages, may require different treatment of protected groups like women. Counsel for Wen-Do will argue, accordingly, that Wen-Do's "women only" program addresses the disadvantage experienced by women as targets of violence and is thus protected by the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

"Excluding Celik from participating in Wen-Do on the basis of his sex creates no inherent disadvantage for him," says Jefferson. "He has unlimited access to a number of gender-neutral self-defence programs (and has advanced skills in judo) and has no need for training which is specifically geared to women's needs."

"It is important," says Jefferson, "to secure a decisive ruling in this case that women's groups which are designed to overcome historical disadvantage are consistent with equality provisions in human rights legislation. Otherwise, many valuable services offered to women -- including Wen-Do, women's shelters, rape crisis centres and women's self-help groups -- will be in jeopardy."

For more information, call Jefferson or LEAF Litigation Director Helena Orton at (416) 963-9654. Letters

of support can be sent to the Wen-Do Women's Self-Defence Corporation at 2 Carlton St., Suite 817, Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1J3.



Lloydminster Interval Home

Full-Time Position

Director

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the incumbent will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of a 15-bed shelter for abused women and their children.

Experience in program development, training and supervision of staff, public relations, financial planning, as well as in-depth knowledge in the area of family violence is essential.

QUALIFICATIONS INCLUDE: BSW or equivalent, with several years experience working in a community helping agency or agencies. Computer literacy is an asset.

Closing date: May 15, 1989

Please send resumes to:

Personnel Committee
Box 2485
Lloydminster, Saskatchewan
S9V 1W5
Attention: Lynne Politeski

Midwifery: A Healthy Birthing Alternative

by Sue Matus

Midwifery is a very controversial topic which has received some attention throughout the years. The dominant issue in the debate seems to be the effectiveness and safeness of midwifery care as compared to the care given by physicians in hospitals.

My main objective in writing this article is to hopefully inform the reader about midwifery and to dispel widely-held, misconceived views regarding the special, individual and continual care provided by midwives to informed pregnant women who desire an alternative to the usual hospital birth.

Many people seem to believe that midwives are unsafe practitioners of maternal care and delivery, and that hospitals are the only logical and safe choice. Those choosing midwives are thought to be inconsiderate and irresponsible regarding their own, and their child's health and life, simply for not wanting to provide the best medical technology available. Supposedly, a catastrophic emergency will necessitate medical back-up, and a midwife is in no way capable of handling even the simplest complications should they occur.

I don't think the fact that something could go wrong necessarily means it will go wrong. Misguided security in medical knowledge regarding a healthy, normal occurrence that needs no diagnoses, treatment or interference of its natural course, is leading women to believe themselves incapable of trusting their bodies' natural instincts and normal functions. A profession which is based on

pathology is leading us to believe that women and children alike are being saved from themselves and that medical technology is an improvement of ourselves!

The argument of unsafe midwifery care is not statistically proven. Therefore, a generalization should not and cannot be made on its effectiveness. The compassionate care provided by midwives is certainly comparable to the care given in hospitals.

As Professor G. J. Kloosterman, chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Amsterdam Hospital so aptly said, "Throughout the world there exists a group of women who feel mightily drawn to giving care to women in childbirth. At the same time maternal and independent, responsive to a mother's needs, yet accepting full responsibility as her attendant, such women are natural midwives. Without the presence and acceptance of the midwife, obstetrics becomes aggressive, technological and inhuman."

It is not uncommon in hospitals for the outcome of the most compassionate life-giving experience to be dependent on a stranger whom the pregnant woman has never met in her life and has no relationship with of trust and caring. The woman may be subjected to the convenience of the obstetrician's schedule, whereas a midwife is responsive to the woman's needs.

The emotional benefits a woman receives from a midwife are numerous, not to mention the practicality and effectiveness of avoiding medical intervention and unnecessary drug use. This can reduce the need for additional costly medical care in the immediate or long-term future for mother and/or child.

The birth of my daughter at home is true testimony to all the arguments I have presented. When born, my daughter Vanessa had a complication called *mecconium aspiration*, which is the term used when a fetus has a bowel movement which clogs the breathing passage while still in the uterus. I panicked with the worst fear of my life as I saw my daughter laying there blue from lack of air. Yet I still didn't doubt or regret my choice of having the birth at home.

I looked at the face of my midwife, Noreen, and I saw concern but not panic, which



W. Thomas

relieved my anxiety enormously. Her calmness and immediate, remarkable actions convinced me this would turn out alright, even though she was silent. She was wonderfully efficient and did exactly what was needed for the baby, while remembering I was there too.

She encouraged me to make contact with my baby and continued giving attention to us both. I talked to my daughter, telling her she could do it. "Come on Vanessa, you can do it, you can breathe, I know you can."

Finally a cough, a sputter, and the most wonderful cry I have ever heard in my life. Vanessa was fine, breathing and crying along with everyone else. I had experienced the worst fear in my life and now I had the best feeling possible, listening to my baby cry. I never once lost total contact with her. The emotional needs I had were important.

Vanessa's survival was attributed to the fact she was getting air from the umbilical cord still attached to us both. Perhaps in a hospital she would have been under the care of modern technology and all its wonders, but to me that cannot improve on all the love, support and help from everyone I had with me wishing and working for the best. Competence, calmness and caring made this experience a warm success. I shudder at the thought of a baby of mine being handled by a stranger.

We all enjoyed a toast of champagne and the beauty of Vanessa's pink color. As I laid down for a rest with her on my chest and my arms gently around her, I knew I had

made the right choice for us and we fell asleep. Perhaps some would say credit should be given to luck or other such reasons, but the fact remains that if not for the actions of Noreen, along with everyone else, Vanessa's fate would have been different. Some might also say that things inevitably go wrong at home, but the *meconium aspiration* easily could have happened at the hospital as well.

The benefits of emotional needs being met, and of a competent midwife caring enough to save a life, certainly provide an argument in favor of the alternative of midwifery. As consumers we should be able to choose what we want, and we most certainly should not in any way be deprived of our own choice. Legalization is very important, but more important is that it be based on what we want, not what the medical professional does not want to give up!

Currently, the Association for Safe Alternatives in Childbirth (ASAC) and the Alberta Midwifery Task Force (AMTF) are hard at work to inform the public about midwifery and to promote its numerous benefits.

Anyone interested in attaining midwifery care or simply in finding out more about it can contact ASAC in Edmonton at 476-7332. AMTF can be contacted in the Edmonton area by calling Margo Carpenter at 463-0403 or by calling AMTF Chairperson Diane Rach at 286-5256 or writing her at 35 Silvergrove Court N.W., Calgary, T3D 5A3.

Teen Parenting Is A Learning Experience

by Korrie Bokalo and Violet Benwell

When I was pregnant, I felt that being a teenage mother meant there would be a lot of growing up to do, more responsibility and hard times as well as enjoyable times.

When I found I was pregnant, I was upset. I felt scared and confused. I wanted the best for my child and therefore I had to figure out the pros and cons about keeping or placing the baby for adoption. It was a very hard time for my family and I had to get used to the fact that I was carrying a baby. It was a very emotional time, especially for me.

After looking at the pros and cons I decided to keep my baby, and then I realized all the responsibilities I had in the future ahead. I always thought of how I would be financially -- how I would finish my education to provide a good life for my baby and also be financially stable.

I never, ever wanted to be on welfare, but I knew I had to so I could finish school. At first I had a hard time receiving it because I was under age; after a lot of fighting I finally received Social Assistance.

I had my baby and I started facing more responsibilities than I ever imagined. The first few months were hard; I had to adjust to being a single mother and not having the

freedom I used to have.

I had bitter feelings towards my baby's father because his life was still the same and he could go out whenever he pleased. After accepting all the things I had to give up, including the rest of my teenage years, I began enjoying my child and my love for him grew everyday; Mother Nature took over. Being a mother is a great learning experience and I enjoy watching my son grow everyday.

There are hard times and there is a lot of stress involved, especially when the baby is teething. The baby is in pain and cries a lot, and the mother has to have patience to try to calm the baby down and somehow soothe the pain -- it can get pretty frustrating.

There is so much a mother has to know about the development of her child, such as the child's growth, learning development, and also nutrition. For some people, being a young mother is too much for them to handle and they feel that placing their baby for adoption is best.

I find it very enjoyable and a wonderful learning experience being a teenage mother. I found faults in myself that I wouldn't have if I had never had a child.

It is hard at times, but the hard times bring my child and I closer together.

Demand For Midwifery Services Returns

by Diane Rach

The history of midwifery in Alberta does not vary much from its history in the rest of Canada. In the early 1900s, most births in Alberta still took place at home with a midwife in attendance.

During the 1940s, hospitals found that to become effective teaching centres they needed to attract a larger number of maternity patients. Free layettes were offered to encourage mothers to go into hospitals for births. In addition, the medical profession was successful in gaining legislation which placed midwifery under the jurisdiction of licensed medical practitioners.

During this time there was a decrease in the mortality rate that was generally attributed to the moving of births into hospitals. What was not noted at the time was the fact that the mortality rate of home births, where midwives continued to attend, was even lower than that in hospitals.

It has now been shown that the improved mortality rates were actually a result of improved sanitation, nutrition, housing and other public health factors.

Midwives were also faced with the trend towards urbanization, the organization of upper-class physicians, and legislation that prohibited their practising midwifery.

Isolated from each other, midwives had little means of retaining their place in the structure of society and the practice of midwifery virtually died out.

A resurgence of midwifery began in the early 1960s in Ontario and British Columbia, as a result of consumer demands and the women's movement. By the early 1970s, a few dedicated individuals were practising in Alberta, outside the hospitals and outside the law.

Beginning in the early 1970s, professional midwifery organizations were formed to provide a network for the sharing of information among midwives, many of whom were

trained outside Canada.

Consumer groups began to spring up to campaign for less medical intervention in childbirth and more control by parents over the childbirth experience.

Today, in Alberta, midwifery organizations have evolved and formed the Alberta Association of Midwives. This association provides midwives of Alberta with a professional organization, working to set standards for practice within Alberta, press the government for legalization and fulfill the functions of a professional body.

Parallel with the rise of the Midwifery Association has been the proliferation of consumer groups, who have among their goals the legalization of midwifery. These include the Alberta Midwifery Task Force, and the Alberta, Calgary and Central Alberta Associations of Parents and Professionals for Safe Alternatives in Childbirth.

Where does this leave us today?

The *Alberta Medical Act* of 1980 restricts the practice of midwifery to those persons on the register of the Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons -- that is, doctors.

There is one exception. In areas having no medical practitioner, a midwife may practise. This allows the Alberta government to permit midwives to practise in isolated areas, such as the far north, where doctors do not wish to go.

Consumer groups, led by the Alberta Midwifery Task Force, have been actively lobbying the government of Alberta for supportive midwifery legislation during this past year. The government has not taken a formal stand on the issue to date. However, several groups with an interest in midwifery have released position statements.

The Alberta Medical Association has stated that midwifery could be of benefit to Albertans. The statement goes on to say that "It is possible to

integrate the profession of midwifery into the existing health care system" and further recommends that midwifery be regulated by the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses.

The Alberta Perinatal Advisory Council, an advisory body to the government concerning reproductive care, issued a statement supporting the introduction of midwifery, but only if practised under constant medical supervision.

The Alberta Association of Midwives has called for legislation to support the autonomous practice of midwifery, in the belief that midwifery is a profession equal to, but separate from, both medicine and nursing.

The midwife should care for the patients under her own responsibility, seeking consultation with a physician in the event a complication arises. This is the way midwifery is practised in most other countries in the world.

The Alberta Midwifery Task Force supports the position of the Alberta Association of Midwives, believing that in order for midwives to maintain their focus on pregnancy and childbirth as a normal process, they must be allowed to regulate their own practice.

In support of this position, the Task Force is planning a province-wide lobbying campaign aimed at convincing members of the legislative assembly that midwifery has an important contribution to make to the childbearing families of Alberta, and that Albertans want to have this option included in their health care system.

If you are interested in becoming part of an exciting movement aimed at making midwifery care a viable option for all women of Alberta, you are invited to join the Alberta Midwifery Task Force.

For more information, write Diane Rach at 35 Silvergrove Court N.W., Calgary, T3B 5A3, or call her at 283-5266.

Maintenance Program A Growing Problem

by Elin Barlem
with Gall Prestash and Lori Crocker

Mona: "My husband left in 1982. My three girls were four, seven and ten. I had no money. I had education as a nurse. I was working at the time. It took every nickel I made to make basic ends meet.

The children's father was to pay \$405 per month. From the divorce to this day, he's paid a total of approximately \$1,500.

I tried everything. I thought the Maintenance Enforcement Program would solve my problem. At present, my ex-husband is taking me to court -- mainly for the judge to drop arrears of approximately \$27,000. Also, he wants a reduction in monthly payments from \$405 to \$250 per month.

Now I will have to go back to court. That's expensive. And I've been told that judges wipe out huge sums of arrears.

So now I've raised my children for six years, alone. I'll probably never see any money. I've spent lots of energy trying."

Legally, parents are required to contribute money to support their children, if they are able. Court orders for support are now enforced by the government department called the Maintenance Enforcement Program (MEP).

Many women collected little or nothing from court orders in the past. For many women, it is too much work and money to try to collect under the law. There were estimates that up to 30 per cent of the money owed was not paid. Women's groups across the country pushed for years for a government collection agency.

In February of 1986, the Alberta MEP was established. They claim they collect on approximately 45 per cent of the orders registered with them. That's an improvement. We thank our government and those workers. *But we still have a serious*

problem.

MEP needs to collect more. The courts need to be more sensitive to the realities of women's lives. Women need money to raise children. Men need to be equal -- equally responsible for parenting.

The MEP is a growing problem. We must make sure that it grows in ways we need. We must watch it.

Have you had trouble or good results from MEP? Tell them. Tell your member of the legislative assembly (MLA). Write MEP about exactly what your problem or praise is and send a copy to your MLA.

Council Questionnaire On Midwifery In Alberta Elicits Variety Of Opinions, Mainly From Women

A Midwifery In Alberta questionnaire prepared by the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues elicited a wide variety of opinions concerning maternal health care in Alberta.

Approximately 300 responses were received. The majority of respondents felt:

1. *Midwives, physicians and hospitals should work in collaboration with each other (56 per cent).*

2. *The actual delivery should take place in a hospital under the supervision of a Direct Entry Midwife/Registered Nurse (89.5 per cent).*

3. *The midwife should be the primary care-giver throughout the entire pregnancy, delivery and post-partum (40 per cent);*

4. *Services should be covered by Alberta Health Care (95.8 per cent).*

The questionnaire was distributed throughout the province of Alberta to women's groups and organizations, individual women, medical professionals, lawyers, social work-

The address for MEP is: P.O. Box 2404, Edmonton, T5J 3Z7. Toll-free you can call 1-800-642-3803 and in Edmonton you can call 422-3803. To find the addresses of MLAs, dial the government RITE number (in Red Deer, 340-5111; in Edmonton, 427-2711; in Calgary, 297-6161; in Lethbridge, 381-5151) and ask for your MLA's office.

The program was set up because creditors, mostly women, needed help. Now we have to make sure we get the help we need. It takes energy from each of us. At least we have a program with which to work.

ers and teachers.

Ninety-eight per cent of the respondents were women.

Seventy per cent would prefer the services of a midwife for the personal attention and empathy offered. As well, these respondents favored the "control" they were given in how their pregnancy and delivery proceeded.

The underlying concern of many respondents appeared to be the different training given to midwives and physicians. These respondents felt there was a tendency on the physicians' part to treat pregnancy as a sickness, while midwives tend to treat pregnancy as a natural occurrence.

Respondents also expressed concern over the lack of bonding between the obstetrician and themselves. They did feel, though, that this lack of bonding is due to the intervals between visits and length of visits rather than to a lack of confidence in the obstetrician.

Many respondents felt the implementation of birthing centres within all hospitals would enhance the birthing experience. They expressed approval of those hospitals which currently implement this procedure.

Seventy per cent of respondents stated they would use a midwife.

Swift Actions Necessary To Protect Rights

by Julie Anne Le Gras

Sometimes, political situations develop so quickly that special action is in order to make a swift statement. There may not be time to do a long-term piece of organizing. Under these conditions, ASWAC relies on a small core of informed members to design appropriate strategy and methods on very short notice.

Depending on the kind of action, ASWAC may also have to call on its membership to participate in the action, on equally short notice.

Here, I want to describe one such action, as an example of what we can run into and what this implies for a feminist, action-oriented organization.

The not-so-hidden purpose of this exercise is to issue a call on ASWAC members and other concerned groups to be prepared for sudden demands on your time.

Of course, ASWAC will take care not to overdo these demands. But we are, as is well known, not in control of

Stories And Books Shared By Feminists At Isolation Brunch

by Lois Soderstrom

In December, six women attended an Isolation Brunch in Innisfail. On April 8, nine of us met for lunch at The Highwayman Restaurant, again in Innisfail, for a second. Lori Crocker was the "hostess" and initiator.

Coming from Lacombe, Leduc, Red Deer and Westrose, we enjoyed our lunch together, listening to each other's stories and sharing books.

Afterwards, five of us went back to Lori's for tea and more talk. The whole experience was so delightful that we definitely want to hold a Brunch #3!

We recommend this method of counteracting the isolation blues!

the increasingly right-wing arrogance of our elected leaders. Therefore, we must occasionally go out of our habitual way to protect our rights.

Scene: The Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues

I will assume that readers have a basic familiarity with the long-standing problems surrounding the Advisory Council. If not, ask for a digest in the next newsletter. The latest episode in government manipulation of the council is what gave rise to the actions described here.

Margaret Leahey, former chair of the Council, called Elaine McCoy, minister responsible for women's issues, in January of this year. She wanted a meeting to discuss her future, since her three-year term would expire at the end of March. McCoy's secretary advised Leahey that the minister would meet with her in the late afternoon of March 23.

ASWAC members of the Advisory Council Action Project, unaware of these arrangements, were enjoying Easter weekend when word got out about the meeting. It had been a disaster, and as of April 1, there would be no chair until a new appointment was made. In addition, six council positions had been vacant since November.

The ministerial choice of March 23 for a meeting had been shrewd. Knowing that an election was being planned, delaying tactics would protect McCoy from flak during an election. And little protest could be organized over a long weekend, with only four work-days to spare before the end of March.

Some of us met on the Tuesday after Easter. Agreeing that a statement had to be made but hampered by time, we decided on a rally on Thursday, the one-but-last-day of a

filled council chair. The timing was short, but manageable. Thursday was chosen to allow for good media coverage on the last day of the work week.

The location became the Advisory Council building. We decided against the legislature building. Given the outcome and aftermath of the election, nothing much was happening there that would work in our interest, and a downtown rally would be much more visible.

The concerted organizing effort consisted of calling Edmonton-based media, informing the Opposition parties, setting the ASWAC phone tree in motion, calling other groups, twisting the arms of friends, and preparing picket signs.

We realized it would be difficult to ensure mass mobilization on short notice, but hoped for a turnout large enough to be seen as a respectable protest group.

As it was, the media were there in large numbers. The New Democrat and Liberal women's issues critics were present. Our number gradually grew to no more than two dozen.

Our action received an enormous amount of publicity, in print, on radio, and on television. ASWAC made a sizable contribution to bringing to light the callous treatment by government of the council so generously offered to women three years ago.

De-Briefing Highlights

Despite some misgivings, the action was manageable between the few of us working on it, even if there was much to be done. Having a solid action plan was helpful. Similar action will be more manageable when the phone tree is fully operational. Keeping an action manageable is a crucial factor in achieving a measure of success and burnout prevention.

Circumstances helped to get the amount of publicity we got -- Premier Don Getty in Calgary announcing he would run in a by-election. This freed up Edmonton reporters. Also, the topic was part of very current news, and somewhat controversial. But we can't always count on such interest by the media.

The turnout was low, even on short notice. The location was very accessible, and the lunch hour timing reasonably convenient for many. I think one important reason for the low turnout is that ASWAC members are not used to being called out on short notice.

Membership Involvement

First, in the specific case of the Advisory Council, I encourage each member to become involved. This government has to learn that it is accountable to the public. You can do any or all of the following:

Write to the minister responsible for women's issues, whoever that may be once a cabinet is appointed. State your concerns and demands.

Send a copy to the Premier, who should be informed. Ask for a response from both.

Write or telephone your member of the legislative assembly (MLA). If you can, arrange for a personal meeting. If you meet, make sure you don't go alone: two of you should hear what the MLA has to say.

Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

Speak with others about what has happened to the council.

Send copies of any relevant written materials to ASWAC so there is some centralized knowledge of what is said and done. We cannot afford to let this government off the hook.

And, do your very best to respond to calls for action, be that for letter-writing or telephone campaigns, personal meetings or rallies. You can't plan in advance for rallies on short notice, but if such a call goes out, try to be there, and bring others.

A show of numbers still counts!

REAL Women Get Funding

by Merrill Cooper
Women looking Forward

Well, it seems the worst has finally happened. The federal government has approved a grant of more than \$20,000 to REAL Women. I am both outraged and mystified.

Let's face it -- REAL Women has been in the news since members served pink-iced cupcakes to members of Parliament on Parliament Hill in 1985, lobbying against equal pay for work of equal value, no-fault divorce, affirmative action programs, universal day care, abortion, and rights for lesbians and homosexuals.

They stridently opposed the inclusion of equality provisions in the *Charter of Rights*, and include among their aims to "promote, secure and defend legislation which upholds the Judeo-Christian view of traditional marriage and family". They oppose sex education in the schools. In short, they oppose the mandate of the Secretary of State Women's Program.

Women In Canada Specializing In Global Issues To Be Listed In Directory Of Resource Persons

The Canadian Council for International Co-operation is preparing a directory of women in Canada specializing in global issues such as development, the environment and peace, as well as related social justice and economic issues. The council is asking for input to get the word out and to reach women who should be listed in the directory.

The directory will meet the needs of those requiring speakers, workshop leaders, consultants, etc., for conferences, seminars, workshops, the media, government and other activities.

"Women in Canada have tremendous contributions to make on these issues. Yet women with expertise in these areas have largely been missing from conferences, negotiations and government deliberations," explains the group. "Partly, this is be-

So what is going on here? REAL Women's past requests for funds were rejected on the grounds they did not fall within the mandate of the Women's Program. What has changed? In order to receive Secretary of State monies a group must, at minimum, agree "to respect and apply the spirit and provisions of existing human rights legislation". There is no evidence to suggest that REAL Women has suddenly become a *Charter* supporter; if anything, the group has moved farther to the right.

If you have problems with this, you must write the government. It costs nothing and it gets results. (REAL Women writes a lot of letters. This is probably how they got money.)

Suggested targets are: Prime Minister Brian Mulroney; John Turner, leader of the Opposition; and Ed Broadbent, leader of the New Democrats. The address is: House of Commons, Ottawa, K0A 0A6. No postage is required.

cause they are not well known to the people who choose conference speakers, consultants and researchers. The directory will help fill this gap, by providing background on women to be resource people for local, national and international conferences, workshops, media and other events and groups."

To assist the council send names, addresses and telephone numbers of Canadian women you know who have expertise in global survival issues -- peace, development, the environment, and related social justice and economic concerns. Write to Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg, Directory of Canadian Women Specializing in Global Issues, c/o the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, 1 Nicholas, Suite 300, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 7B7 or call her at (613) 236-4547.

Women Must Reclaim The Economy

by Anne McGrath

The booklet *Understanding Economics: Starting With Our Lives* provides a set of tools for women to better understand how economics connects to our daily lives. It is an issue of *The Moment*, intended as an educational resource for community educators and social activists. The popular format is designed for group discussion, analysis and action.

The booklet looks at the contribution that Farida, a single mother, makes to our economic system. It suggests a much broader definition of economics than is currently in use and it concentrates on demystifying economics.

The writers argue that when we talk about how we see the world we live in and what kind of world we want, we are talking economics. As women, we understand a great deal more about economics than we think we do.

But those who are in power in our society promote a very narrow definition of economics. Only those things which can be measured in dollars have any value or meaning. The labor of working people is undervalued; the domestic labor of women isn't valued at all. It's time to bring the economy home!

Renaming and reclaiming the

economy is the theme of this easy-to-read booklet. It includes sections that deal with the media, popular education techniques, analysis of the invisible work of women, contacts and resources and a proposed campaign for popular economic literacy.

The authors point out very clearly that "we are up against an unjust economic system controlled by the wealthy and powerful". They draw hope and inspiration from the formation of new coalitions such as those opposing free trade and believe that struggle challenged us to understand more about economics from our own perspective.

The proposal for a Campaign for Economic Literacy has as its goals:

1. *To raise the issue of economic literacy and education as a national need and basic human right.*
2. *To promote a more holistic understanding of economics, building an analysis based on people's daily experience.*
3. *To combat the jargon used by those who control the economy.*
4. *To popularize economic analysis through multi-media projects in schools and community groups,*

making sense of concepts such as inflation and debt, while showing the value of concepts such as oppression, class, sexism, racism.

5. *To link economics education to grass roots economic development projects, so that it both grows out of and leads to collective action.*

This booklet makes it very clear that most women do not benefit from the economic system as it is now structured. And among women, it is native women, women of color, disabled women, lesbians, poor and working class women who are particularly oppressed. We have seen that women are challenging the economic language that hides our real experiences and fighting for a redefinition that recognizes women's role.

The Moment is published three times a year. Previous issues dealt with "free" trade, refugees, the Central America Peace Plan, health and the environment. An annual subscription is \$8 and single issues can be bought for \$3 each or ten copies for \$2 each. If you are interested in subscribing or ordering any issues of *Understanding Economics: Starting With Our Lives*, please write and send your fee to *The Moment*, at 947 Queen St. East, Toronto, Ontario, M4M 1J9.

Peace Group Wants NATO Out Of Labrador

Deep strike testing and training activities taking place in Nitassinan in Labrador are rehearsals for war, says a Canadian peace group campaigning for the removal of NATO forces from the area.

"Canada is playing host to NATO fighting practices that increase the likelihood of nuclear confrontations and will destroy the Innu people and the environment on which they de-

pend," say representatives of the NATO Out Of Nitassinan Campaign.

The group is planning a non-violent civil disobedience action should the militarization continue beyond July 1.

The plan is to establish a Solidarity Camp on federal property (Parliament Hill) from August 6 to 9 -- the anniversaries of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The group is asking for public support in the way of letters to decision-makers and financial contributions to the effort.

Their address is: c/o The Canadian Peace Alliance, 555 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1Y6.

As well, letters of support can be sent to the Innu Campaign Against the Militarization of Nitassinan, Sheshashit, Labrador, A0P 1M0.

ONE WOMAN'S OPINION:

Being A Feminist Is Cause For Pride

by Liane Zimmerman

"A feminist is what they call a woman when she's not behaving like a prostitute or a doormat."

Rebecca West
British suffragette, circa 1920

I love that quote. I think of it every time I hear someone like Deborah Grey playing fast and loose with the word "feminist".

Grey, you'll remember, won the recent byelection in the southern Alberta riding of Beaver River. She's a member of the Reform Party, a 36-year-old school teacher.

"I'm not a feminist at all," Grey said after her landslide victory. "I'm a woman, but I guess I'm old fashioned."

Isn't that sweet. I would like to remind Grey that without the efforts of old fashioned feminists like Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy...she wouldn't be voting, never mind taking a seat in the House of Commons.

I am consistently offended by women like Grey, who, in effect, deny the work done on their behalf by feminists, past and present. I think all women should be proud to carry the flag of feminism, proud to follow in the footsteps of the McClungs, the Murphys, the Gloria Steinems.

But lots aren't. Deborah Grey isn't the only woman in the province who would deny being a feminist.

I see three main reasons for this attitude.

FEAR OF ALIENATION OR PERSECUTION

In many circles, there is a nasty stereotype associated with the word "feminist".

Say you're a feminist, and many people will think you shrill, strident, militant, pushy. Advocate a woman's

position and people assume you hate men and children.

Some people like to stick women with these stereotypes so they can dismiss their concerns. And many women would prefer not to have to deal with these stereotypes, so they avoid the word feminist.

Some women avoid calling themselves feminists because they lack the security, in their jobs or personal lives, to state their views. When you don't have power, you don't rock the boat.

A single mother who operates a sewing machine in a garment factory may keep her feminism a secret because she can't afford to take risks.

A lone female executive in a boardroom full of grey-haired men may find the word "feminist" just kind of sticks in her throat. I know the feeling.

LACK OF AWARENESS

Some women deny being feminists because they honestly aren't aware of what feminism stands for. I understand that too, because sometimes it isn't easy to pin down the goals of the women's movement.

There are splits in the movement itself. There are "liberal" feminists, who see problems with the way women are treated in society, but think that with "education" and "co-operation" change can happen.

Then there are so-called "radical" feminists, who believe the system and its structures must be fundamentally altered to include a female perspective.

Some women are feminists, but are anti-choice. Some feminists support pay equity and universal daycare...and some do not.

"There are many kinds of feminism, but all feminists reject Freud's idea that anatomy is destiny for

women...a feminist believes women have not had an equal say in their own self-definition," says Dr. Randi Warne, an Edmonton feminist and assistant professor of social ethics at St. Stephen's College, University of Alberta.

Warne says feminists can have a range of opinions on some issues. "But for me the key is this. A feminist says there is a structural bias in the way our whole society is set up to benefit men over women."

DENIAL OF THE PROBLEM

Some women deny being feminists because they don't recognize the obstacles women face in seeking a position of equality. These people really bug me. I suspect Deborah Grey falls into this category. So does Margaret Thatcher.

The non-feminist buys the system. He or she may pay lip service to the groundwork of people like Nellie McClung, but in essence, they don't think women are really discriminated against anymore.

Non-feminists believe a woman can do the same as any man if she works hard enough. If she complains about "structural barriers" she's a whiner.

"Deborah Grey is like Margaret Thatcher in that there's nothing about her position that challenges the system," says Warne. "She isn't a feminist. She thinks the system works. And it has worked for her. Every system has its tokens."

But for most women, the system doesn't work. Most women need their feminism, whether they know it or not. And if we acknowledge that, and use the word, it becomes part of our lives, and not just a label.

Reprinted from the Edmonton Journal, April 2, 1989

Regional Reps Discuss Activities, Morale

by Lois Soderstrom

Six regional representatives, from Calgary, Edmonton, Camrose, Innisfall and Westeros met April 1 in Edmonton. As this was our first meeting, we had a good deal of sharing to do: what we had been doing for outreach, special activities we had planned or were planning, and other matters of morale.

We set up a schedule of meetings for the remainder of the term: June 17 at Innisfall and August 17 at Westeros. The August meeting will give us a chance to formulate policies and procedures for the annual general meeting, and make recommendations for the new board. (Please confirm with Elin Barlem by June 3, and Gerry Bailey by August 3, if you can attend these meetings.)

We discussed the new budget

guidelines, agreeing to leave the total amount in the central account and to use most of it for our monthly expenses. A portion will be used for group events or conferences. Several upcoming conferences and our preferences were discussed.

We then shared in detail the activities and goals for our regions.

Elin Barlem, who shares the Innisfall region with Lori Crocker (who was unable to attend) told of their International Women's Day activities on the subject of maintenance enforcement, and the follow-up on the legal aspects. She is strengthening liaisons with the Outreach Society for Red Deer Women, and the United Church Feminist Women. Lori hosted a second Isolation Brunch on April 8, to counter some of the isolation felt by rural feminists.

Elaine Peters in Calgary has been working on the Women Against Poverty Campaign, held an election forum, and is focusing on membership. We discussed ways we could all cooperate on this aspect of our work.

Kathy Davies is the regional representative for Edmonton and also the convener of our meetings. She told of her liaison work with many women's groups through the Edmonton Women's Building Collective and of her telephoning ASWAC members through the telephone tree. She worked on the fundraiser for the Women's Building, is in touch with the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues, and is giving counselling to young women offenders. Gerry and Lois expressed interest in helping with this project.

Joan White Calf has a new address and phone number (see page 2). She is working away at her mandate in Camrose, gradually building a group by one-on-one connections, not at the moment in touch with any formal organizational structure.

Lois Soderstrom and Gerry Bailey share the Westeros-Ponoka region. Lois attended the New Democrat Health Conference, helped Lori organize the first Isolation Brunch in December, and is in touch with several traditional women's groups, concentrating on issues rather than ideology.

Gerry spent her winter in Asia, working on a Canadian International Development Agency funded Change for Children project in the Phillipines and setting up women's health centres and family planning instruction in Manila.

Diane Shaver Wazny spoke about poverty hearings she is setting up province-wide, and made plans to visit our regions for meetings.

Some of us joined the board for the rest of their Saturday meeting. All felt ours had been a good meeting and our greatest need is for more support amongst ourselves!

Is DAWN Rising?

Outreach Effort By Disabled Women's Group May Result In Formation Of Chapter In Alberta

by Tanis Doe

The Disabled Women's Network (DAWN) is a national organization of and for women with disabilities. It has provincial and local affiliates but up till now there has been no DAWN in Alberta.

A recent outreach effort by the national DAWN staff has shown that there is interest in Alberta to begin a group for women with disabilities.

DAWN is a creative force that brings women with disabilities and women without disabilities together to address the real issues of daily life. Disabled women are often concerned with daily independence and income security but also with accessibility to the general women's movement and women's services. For example, shelters and counselling for battered women and their children are often inaccessible or inappropriate.

DAWN is not only for women us-

ing wheelchairs or with obvious physical disabilities. It is an organization that tries to include women of all different disabilities -- deafness, blindness, mental retardation and mental illness, and invisible disabilities like diabetes and epilepsy.

DAWN is trying to break down the barriers that often prevent rural or institutionalized women from participating in activities by reaching out and networking.

Although there is no DAWN in Alberta yet, there is a glow of energy around women who know about it and it is possible that DAWN is rising here. The form it takes, the name or the goals it sets will depend on women involved and their priorities.

If you are interested in issues affecting women with disabilities, please contact Tanis Doe at 432-4291 TDD or Voice or write to 25B Brown St., Stony Plain, Alberta, T0E 2G0.

happeningshappeningshappenings

April 28-30 - A workshop titled **Un-learning Racism and Alliance Building - Leadership Training** is being held for people of color and allies at St. Stephen's College on the U of A campus in Edmonton. Workshop leader is Celeste George from the Alliance of Women Against Racism in Vancouver. The workshop will last about 12 hours, spread over three days, and the fee is \$20. Contact Don Smith at 424-2475 or Dale Taylor at 482-7942.

April 29 - There will be a **Provincial Conference on Tenant Issues** in Edmonton. Call 492-5732.

April 29 - May Day Festival '89 will take place at the Edmonton Convention Centre. Theme is *Our Struggle Continues*. There will be free afternoon events. Evening program begins at 6:30 and includes a concert, dance, bar and late supper. Tickets are \$15 (\$10 for seniors and students), available at BASS outlets. Call the Alberta Federation of Labour at 483-3021.

April 30 - A **Sale and Exhibition of Pottery and Weaving** will be held at Riverdale Community Hall in Edmonton (9231 - 100 Ave.), 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

May 2-6 - The Citadel Theatre in Edmonton is sponsoring a **Teen Festival of the Arts**. Volunteers wanted. Call 426-4811 (Ext. 262).

May 6 - Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science and Technology (WISEST) are presenting a conference titled **Science, Engineering and Technology: They Are For Women Too**. Contact WISEST through the U of A Department of Chemistry at 492-5566 for details.

May 10 - The 1989 **YWCA Tribute to Women Awards Dinner** will take place at 6 p.m. at the Westin Hotel Ballroom, Edmonton. Tickets can be

arranged by calling 423-9922.

May 11-14 - A conference titled **Women and Mental Health: A Social, Economic and Political Perspective** is being held at the Banff Springs Hotel. The conference will deal with the issue of women and mental health from a variety of perspectives. Keynote speakers are: Dr. Susan Penfold, Dr. Paula J. Caplan, Dr. Phyllis Chesler, Freda Paltiel and Dr. Jeffrey Moussaleff Masson. There will be approximately 35 workshops as well as six study groups. Contact the Canadian Mental Health Association, Attention: Karen McFarlane, 9th floor, 10050 - 112 St., Edmonton, T5K 2J1 or call 482-6091.

May 12-15 - The National Action Committee on the Status of Women is holding its **Annual General Meeting** in Ottawa. Theme is *Social Solidarity*. Call (416) 922-3246 for information.

May 23-31 - The Citadel Theatre in Edmonton is holding a **Children's Festival**. Volunteers wanted. Call 426-4811 (Ext. 262).

May 26-28 - **Working Women: Preparing for the '90s** is the title of a conference being sponsored by the Calgary Business and Professional Women's Club. Call 289-2822.

May 29 - The Edmonton Women's Shelter is holding its **Annual General Meeting** at 7:30 p.m. at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind auditorium (12010 Jasper Ave.), Edmonton.

June 2-4 - The **Third Women's Centres Conference** will be held at the Pass Powderkeg Ski Lodge in the Crowsnest Pass. The Crowsnest Pass Women's Resource Centre is planning a weekend of workshops, entertainment and a chance to get together with other women from Alberta, the Northwest Territories and the Kootenays. Objectives are: to

clarify the role of women's centres in the community, to discuss their relationship with the women's movement and to affirm our belief in ourselves. Call Linda (collect) at 562-8000.

June 10 - **Women, Relationships and the Law: Legal Rights and Responsibilities in Marriage, Common Law, Divorce and Rebuilding** is a workshop being held in Calgary. It is sponsored by Women Looking Forward and the Calgary Association of Women and the Law. Cost is \$15 (\$7.50 low income) and includes lunch and child care. Call Merrill at 269-1144 for information.

June 10 - The Edmonton Women's Music Collective is holding a **Spring Solstice Women's Dance** at Riverdale Community Hall (9231 - 100 Ave.), 8:30 p.m. Admission is \$7 (with a sliding scale). All women welcome.

June 11-July 1 - Maenad Productions Theatre Society presents **13th God by Rose Scollard**, at the Pumphouse Theatre in Calgary. Maenad promotes the orgiastic and visionary concerns of women through exciting and original theatre. Long-range plans include a Goddess Festival for the summer of 1990; Maenad is seeking goddess experts, dancers, mask workers, writers, etc. Call 245-2491.

June 15-18 - A conference titled **Mental Wellness: Making it a Reality** will be held at the Palliser Hotel, Calgary. Fee is \$150, with a sliding scale. Call Barb Ferguson at 283-7591 for more information.

June 17 - **Lynn Lavner and David Sereda in Concert**. SAIT Orpheus Theatre, Calgary. Tickets at A Woman's Place Bookstore (1412 Centre St. S), Holomagie (917 - 17 Ave. S.W.) and through members of Project Pride. Produced in conjunction with Project Pride as a fundraiser for the Gay Olympics.

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



Those people who had not renewed their membership since 1987 or earlier were taken off the membership list as of March 1, 1989. They have since been sent a letter, asking them to renew their membership. If someone you know has not received their usual copy of this newsletter, please have them phone the Edmonton office -- it may be due to the fact that their membership has expired.

For those of you with an "88" on your mailing label, it is past time to renew for 1989. Please remember that your membership fees and donations are an important part of ASWAC's income.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ (home) _____ (work)

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