

NEWSLETTER

News and Views Compiled By The Central Alberta
Group, Alberta Status of Women Action
Committee

February 1996

IMAGINE AND ACHIEVE

Imagine the power of all Alberta women working together to understand our commonalities and differences. We are standing under a weight of patriarchal power that some of us are afraid to examine. Afraid, because becoming conscious could involve an obligation to change the social structures that many lean on. These structures are made up of other people and our taught belief systems of dependency and compliance with phallographic directives----the male entitlement to decide for and define women's lives.

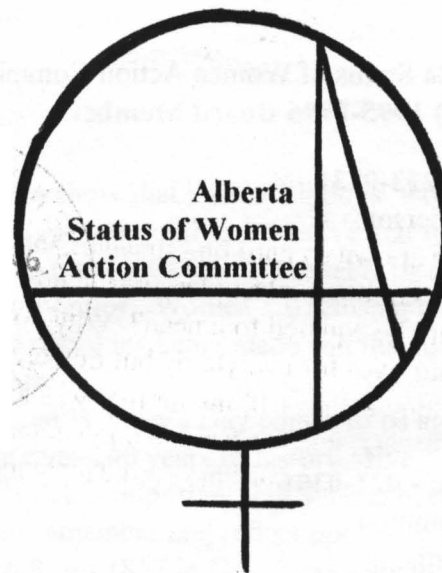
Imagine the power of men and women working together to transform our relationships from dominate/subordinate to those of mutual choices.

As feminist women, ASWAC works for understanding and change of gender inequities. We are joined by men who realize that women's liberation transforms their provider/enforcer role to one of shared responsibilities and pleasures.

Imagine the joy of claiming our own personhood and self direction. Women who borrow status from their husbands, power through their sons and validation through their daughters, oppress others and negate their own being. Free to be free, to be, is for all without regard to sex, race, class or age; is what human rights is.

The NGO forum and fourth UN conference in China last fall, generated a groundswell of courage and determination to replace war with peace, discrimination with equality and the greed of monetary control of other people and their life needs, with bio-regional development for a just now and a common future.

Imagine the changes needed in Alberta. The power of mutuality is neither limited or hoarded. Commitment and honour engender mutuality. To become part of the change attend International



Women's Day events, renew or begin ASWAC membership, participate in post-Beijing Platform for Action activities. The final newsletter of the Canadian Beijing Facilitating Committee, *Onward from Beijing*, contains information and contacts for action to reverse the decline of social/economic justice in Alberta. A just status for women and gender equity are required for each of us to be whole.



ASWAC!

I support Women's Rights in Alberta

Enclosed is my membership - \$20. (1 year)

Enclosed is my membership - \$40. (2 years)

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____

I am unable to pay the entire fee at this time,
enclosed is \$ _____

Name:

Address:

City/Town:

Postal Code:

Tel: Day:

Evening:

Fax:

Membership fees are an important source of ASWAC revenue, but more importantly, your membership means a vote in support of promoting the status of women in Alberta. Whether or not you can afford our suggested fee of \$20, it is important to keep your membership up to date (check your address label for renewal month). Renew early. Don't wait for the membership renewal invoice to send in your fee. All mail, and now our business reply mail, costs ASWAC one dollar which can be put towards programming, lobbying and advocacy work. Currently ASWAC does not operate for the full year due to continuing cutbacks in federal funds. If we can double or triple our membership, we could operate all year. Please sign up new members, buy memberships for your friends and make donations if you can. ASWAC's membership base is our most important resource. Send in your membership to ASWAC, Box 1573, Edmonton T5J 2N7

**The Alberta Status of Women Action Committee
(ASWAC) 1995-1996 Board Members**

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Editorial Policy

The ASWAC Newsletter is published by The Alberta Status of Women Action Committee, a non-profit organization. The newsletter is produced by, for, and about women in Alberta. The newsletter was created to share information with our members and women's organizations, as well as interested women. The views expressed and the events publicized are not necessarily supported by ASWAC. We neither endorse nor recommend; we seek to inform.

ASWAC news is produced on a collective, consensus, volunteer basis by Board Members and staff around the province.

In order to have the newsletter better reflect the faces of Alberta women, ASWAC is circulating newsletter production to different centres around the province. We hope in this way to include wider variety of articles and photos. Should you wish to participate in the newsletter preparation in your area, contact either the Calgary or Edmonton office.

We welcome submissions written or photographic. All submissions may not be included; we reserve the right to edit to ensure that the content is not in opposition to our mission statement. We encourage women to tell us when we do not meet our own standards.

ADVERTISING POLICY

The ASWAC newsletter seeks advertising that is women positive to help defer publication costs. ASWAC does not necessarily endorse products or services offered. We reserve the right to refuse ads. Rates and sizes can be requested through the Edmonton office, please call for more information.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the **Alberta Status of Women Action Committee** is to advance the status of women in Alberta by providing a forum for women's voices, raising awareness and sharing resources to effect change

ASWAC receives a portion of its funding from The Federal Women's Program and gratefully acknowledges the financial support from its members. ASWAC also thanks the Wild Rose Foundation for project funding.

**ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION
COMMITTEE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

We will be having our spring Annual General Meeting and Conference in conjunction with fabulous 20th Anniversary celebrations! Details are still being confirmed at this time but a separate mail-out will go to all of our members as soon as possible. For more information, call either the Edmonton or Calgary office.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY! WHAT A DAY!

by Sharon Reiner
(special thanks to the ASWAC Edmonton 1982 Committee
for information on IWD history)

Every year, March 8 brings on many mixed feelings. It is a time to celebrate and share long hard struggles women have made, many of which have resulted in major gains for women around the world. At the same time one cannot help but notice how much still needs to be done and in some cases recognizing that some gains have even been lost or are in danger of being lost.

Here in North America women have many freedoms which are often taken for granted. In other parts of the world, as was so clear from the reports of the NGO forum in Beijing, many of our sisters on this planet are still fighting for basic human rights. As the feminization of poverty increases here, it is growing massively elsewhere. On the surface, in the mainstream media and in the corporate Boardrooms the Beijing experience may not appear to have much impact, but from hearing what women in attendance have said, and by reading the papers prepared there and articles written in magazines such as *Herizons* or *MS*, it has obviously made an impact on the world. This year, we have the opportunity to feel truly international on our common day of celebration.

The jury is still out on how effective the internet and the world wide web can be for women and activists organizing globally, but from what is out there already, the potential exists. Months before the Beijing conference several newsgroups on the internet were set up for women to discuss plans and inform each other of the conference's events. Because of the limited access many women have to computers and modems, this was initially seen by many as yet one more way that women were excluded from participation. Surprisingly however, the participation electronically before, during and after the conference has been tremendous even in areas of the world where incredible poverty exists. It was not the primary source of communication, but it did enable women to be directly involved in the world's affairs as they relate to our day-to-day lives. Yes, the internet is having an effect on the world's communication and more importantly, women are having an impact on those communications. This

just goes to show that against all odds, women are consistently resourceful and creative and will continue to insist on a seat at the table or at the computer monitor. Women are refusing to be left out of the decisions being made and this, is a reason to celebrate.

International Women's Day comes to us again this year with over 140 years of history. Every minute of that history is important, but several events are notable to remember and reflect upon as we gather on March 8. In 1857 in New York City in the United States, women textile workers stopped working and marched through the streets to protest 12 hour workdays, incredibly low salaries and unsafe working conditions. In addition, they demanded an end to child labour and that the right to vote must be given to women. The police reacted swiftly and brutally. Women were beaten and trampled. This strike and the struggles did not go unnoticed by the rest of the world. While women textile workers returned to work in the same conditions, uprisings continued. Between 1900 to 1908, women textile workers in Montreal held more than 40 strikes. In certain instances, women were forced back to work under fear of retaliation by the army. By 1908 conditions scarcely improved, but some changes had been made and International Women's Day was proclaimed in the United States to be on March 8 in remembrance of the eventful strike in New York. In 1910 Copenhagen, Denmark International Women's Day was also proclaimed.

Even with the proclamation and international recognition, lots of work was still needed to improve working conditions for women. Women in the textile industry, pulp and paper industries, and health care industries worked mostly within the labour movement to improve working conditions for women. In 1934 in Montreal needletrade workers were successful in closing down 125 boutiques. Many were arrested in these monumental actions for change. Over time countless strikes occurred, many marked with violence and tragedy. Ultimately, however substantial changes occurred within unionized shops and many of the gains made by women in the labour movement spilled over into fair and responsible labour practices, and most importantly the right to demand fairness.

Although in these days of high unemployment and cutbacks which are disproportionately affecting women where it seems like fairness is no longer the standard, we can thank those who have gone before us who fought hard for the principles which are still with us today. The world is a long way off from valuing women's work (waged or unwaged) for what it is truly worth, but it is comforting to know that substantial movement has been made and that the challenges of today are here for us to face because of the successes of the past. Let's celebrate the victories and concentrate on the opportunities for change.

Bread and Roses (An Anthem for Solidarity and Celebration)

As we go marching, marching in the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray,
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing, "Bread and Roses! Bread and
Roses!"

As we go marching, marching we battle too for men,
For they are women's children and we stand as one with
them.

Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes;
Hearts starve as well as bodies; give us bread, but give us
roses!

As we go marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing, their ancient cry for bread.
Small art and love and beauty, their drudging spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread we fight for -- but we fight for roses too!

As we go marching, marching, we bring the greater days.
The rising of the women means the rising of us all.
No more the drudge and idler -- ten who toil where one
reposes,

But a sharing of life's glories; Bread and Roses! Bread and
Roses!

Celebrate with Women Around the World on the Internet:
<http://women.com/> Women's Wire
<http://www.igc.apc.org/womensnet/> Women's
Activism Network
<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/women.html>
<http://www.undp.org/fwcw/dawl.htm> Information on
the United Nations Conference and the NGO forum in
Beijing <http://feminist.com/> Feminist Actions Around
the World
<http://www.feminist.org> Feminist organizations
<http://www.igc.apc.org/gfw/> Global Fund for Women

Announcements from Calgary Status of Women Action Committee

International Women's Day: Women Looking Forward will have more information about events taking place throughout the week. Call WLF at 269-1144 for details.

International Women's Day

Celebration evening, Friday, March 8. Come celebrate the strength, persistence, and creativity of women. Bask in the talent of local singers, dancers, poets, and drummers and then be prepared to take to the dance floor yourself! Location: Calgary Multicultural Centre, 712 - 5 St. S.E. Doors open 7:30 to midnight. Please bring a small donation if you can. Everyone welcome.

"There are alternatives: Come share your vision"

The International Women's Day Collective and the Calgary Common Front invite all concerned Albertans to a **rally** on Saturday, March 9. We will be meeting, talking, and singing outside the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta's annual convention. We want the Tories and the world to know about our vision of Alberta. The global economic agenda, which the Alberta government promotes, is managing the "debt crisis" on the backs of the most vulnerable communities. The Tory convention gives us a great opportunity to demonstrate a strong, united, inclusive resistance movement with an alternative vision for our families and communities. Please meet at 12 noon on Saturday, March 9, at the entrance to the Calgary Convention Centre on Stephen Avenue Mall (Macleod Trail and 8th Ave., S.W.) Bring signs, noise makers, your children, your neighbours, your family. Come celebrate International Women's Day in a manner that goes to the roots of this hundred-year-old event; women on the streets, surrounded by each other and our allies, demanding an economic system that puts people first. As the rally finishes, everyone is welcome to the Calgary Common Front's alternate convention - the Uncovention. Share ideas with other activists and concerned citizens about the society we really want to build.

Beijing Follow-Up: A group of women in Calgary have been meeting to discuss follow-up to the Beijing conference. They are developing a project

that would distribute a popularized form of the Platform for Action to interested groups throughout the province, and perhaps offer/sponsor workshops on what the Platform means and how groups can use it. For information about this possible project, contact Calgary Status of Women Action Committee at (403) 262-1873.

News from the Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society

" An expectant mom who has 2 small children and is separated from her alcoholic husband. She used to make \$28,000 a year---now she is 1 1/2 months behind in rent, has an irate landlord and has a can of soup left for supper."

" A Native woman new to Red Deer needs help finding affordable, safe housing for herself and her son. They have no furniture and are sleeping at a friends small apartment. The last time she ate was yesterday."

The faces we see at the Central Alberta Women's Outreach change often, but the stories have an all too familiar similarity. Women are struggling - economically, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Our monthly statistics reflect the rising community need for assistance.

We average 400-500 walk-in contacts and 300-400 phone inquiries per month. Crisis counseling interactions average 30-40 women per month.

Current Programs offer a wide variety of opportunities to women and their families in times of crisis including: Collective Kitchen, Self Esteem and Assertiveness Group, Battered Women Support Group, "Warm Fuzzies" Social Support Group (for women in need of **positive** social supports), Clothing Donation Room, Furniture Program, Craft mornings and Health Matters information sessions.

Support Services include: crisis counseling, legal information and court accompaniment, assistance with Alberta Family and Social Services departments, housing options, Follow-up support to women leaving the Women's Shelter, advocacy and community referrals.

Women who utilize the Women's Outreach become involved in activities that educate, develop skills and encourage independence and self-sufficiency.

In the 1994-95 fiscal year (July 1 - June 30) programs and services were accessed by women **12,529** times. Approximately, 41% of women supported through transitional crisis were Native women and their families.

Collaborative efforts with community agencies are imperative. The Outreach employs 2.5 staff members who actively strive to increase community awareness of issues our clients experience on a daily basis. Current efforts to generate solutions regarding various concerns include:

*****Red Deer Housing Committee and Transitional Housing Task Group* -- A community group focused on creating safe, affordable, accessible housing options for people in need.

*****Legal Roundtable*-- Individuals involved in the legal system (Judges, lawyers, RCMP, mediators and community agencies) have come together to identify the unique difficulties women experience when they require legal interventions. This group is in the initial stages of identifying issues and developing solutions.

*****Health Matters*--An exciting partnership between our office and the Nursing department at Red Deer College. Nursing students will provide health information to women on things the women have identified as being important to them.

We receive tremendous community support to provide meaningful assistance to women in need. If you are interested in volunteering, donating clothing or household items or hearing more about what we do, please call for more information. We are located at #120, 4818 Gaetz Avenue. Please call 347-2480.

POSTER COMPETITION

Theme: Proud Alberta Feminist

Open to all women living in Alberta in 1996. A prize of \$200. for the selected poster. Poster must be laser reproducible for ASWAC fundraising project. Mail poster entry to: Liz Wetheral, 5111-52 Avenue, Ponoka, Alberta T4J 1H6

Closing date: April 10, 1996

Winner will be announced in May.

Faces of Resistance...

The December edition of the ASWAC newsletter was dedicated to all those who continue the struggle for social, economic and political justice. **We are the faces of resistance.** Thanks from the Political Action Committee to those of you who sent in your comments and gave us an update of the political action you are taking in your communities! We can only share a few of the many responses but will try to provide you with others in upcoming newsletters. Keep your comments and stories rolling in!

Political Action in Ponoka:

- We heard from a member in Ponoka who walked blocks for Health Care in solidarity with health care workers. The mutual goal was to preserve the medicare system for equal access for all citizens. This member expressed her concerns about unfair government policies impacting nurses and the need to find other ways to economize. This Ponoka resident has also taken political action by providing transportation for single mothers trying to provide for their families who are living in isolated locations. She questioned the inequities which mean that single mothers cannot get access to services in their communities yet politicians have expense accounts which pay for their meals and spirits. She said that single mothers need justice! Further, she said that she had participated in the Human Rights review process when hearings were held in her community. She hoped to help support efforts to increase protection for women and others in Alberta.

Political Action from Members in Vernon:

- Annette, the Projects Coordinator of The Vernon and District Women's Centre wrote to tell us that they have formed a Political Action Committee, made up of staff members, board members, and interested volunteers. The Committee will focus on protecting the rights of people who are currently surviving on income assistance. They are concerned about the recent cuts to social assistance programs as well as the media's "poor-bashing" slant when reporting on this issue.

The Committee's first action was to write a press release on the realities of living on income assistance; the high levels of unemployment which force people onto income assistance; and the

relatively low rates of fraud in this system as compared to rates of fraud in the private sector. The Committee plans to follow their press release with a community meeting with the aim of forming a coalition with other groups, and to continue to protest the dismantling of Canada's social programs!

Political Action in Edmonton:

- Thank you for your comments, Gloria, about personal choice and personal responsibility. While feminists do not always agree with each other, indeed often strongly disagree, it is important that we continue to listen to each other's views.
- Martha let us know that she frequently writes letters on social justice, women's issues and the environment to her local papers. She is currently writing a column for Edmonton, and has written to Ralph Klein and a number of other politicians. She has recently written an article on Religion and Women, and has conducted a workshop at a Teacher Assistant Conference on "Girls and Self-Esteem".

Political Action in Camrose:

- Margo is boycotting French wine because of nuclear testing by France!

Political Action in Calgary:

- Sharon wrote to let us know that various campaigns encouraged her to contact her MLA regarding the cuts to education and health and with regard to video lottery terminal. She attended the December 6th memorial event at the University of Calgary and participates in local Take Back the Night marches to protest violence against women. As Sharon reminds us, "We need to continue to do whatever we can, wherever we are".
- Rumours are circulating that, at the upcoming progressive conservative convention in March, a motion will be put forward to have the de-insuring of abortion services put to a plebiscite. Further, the "bubble law", which relates to the safe area around abortion clinics, and around women entering abortion clinics, within which demonstrators and harassment are not permitted, may be challenged. The bubble law has been struck down in British Columbia and attempts are underway to do the same thing in Alberta. Alberta women are urged to contact their local MLA's immediately to voice their concern over these two issues.

*****Women Against Poverty Report*****

In 1991, the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee published the first Women Against Poverty report. This report contained statistical information and personal accounts of poverty in Alberta and in Canada. In March 1996, the second edition of this report will be released. It contains recent facts on poverty and reflects the current situation of women living in poverty.

The information in the 2nd edition reveals the precariousness of women's financial security. We learn that women employed full-time, full-year are now earning 70% compared to their male counterparts (compared to 72% in 1993). We see that women's part-time employment is on the rise, while their full-time employment is falling. The report also points to the differential effect that areas being hit hardest by the provincial government's deficit reduction are all women-dominated occupations: health care, education, social programs. The (previously) paid work done by women is being thrust into the home, becoming the unpaid work of women who are in the home due largely to layoffs and privatization, not to choice. Further, the unions in these three areas have been weakened, and the workloads of those still employed substantially increased.

Those women who find that they are unable to provide support for themselves and/or their families face an inadequate social welfare system. Eligibility requirements are becoming more stringent while many of the benefits are being reduced. As a result, food banks and community kitchens are being stretched to the limit.

Women living in poverty face many other obstacles as well. Housing costs are high with few subsidized housing units available. Child care is inadequate; there are too few spaces and subsidies are too low. Education costs are on the rise while education funding is dropping. Emergency housing for abused women is overcrowded and underfunded. Women living in poverty generally have more health concerns than the general population, yet they are forced to deal with a health care system that is eliminating many services which were previously considered necessary and are now being seen as "unnecessary". These "unnecessary" services include such basic needs as yearly examinations for children.

Though the picture appears bleak, the WAP report also reveals the spirit and perseverance of women living in Alberta. The personal accounts given by women living with poverty demonstrate the willingness to speak out against poverty; women in this province will not be silenced. Most importantly, the report shows a growing intolerance for the discriminatory practices which serve to keep women in poverty. To order a copy of Women Against Poverty 2nd edition, contact the Edmonton ASWAC office at 421-0306

Looking at the World Through the Eyes of Women

Join your friends - Bring your daughter or mom!
The Red Deer Women's Dinner in celebration of International Women's Day
Thursday, March 7
Red Deer Lodge
Mix and mingle: 6 p.m. (no host bar) Dinner: 7 p.m.
Presentation by participants at The Fourth U.N. Conference on Women, Beijing, China
Cost: \$25. per person
Tickets available at: Women's Outreach Society
#120 (2nd floor) 4818 Gaetz Avenue, Red Deer
Tel: (403) 347-2480
This dinner hosted by The Women's Outreach Society "Helping women help themselves"

Rally

The Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta is holding their Policy Convention at the Calgary Convention Centre on March 8th to 10th. Their agenda includes many issues of critical concern to women in Alberta.

Join us in a rally at noon on Saturday, March 9th at the entrance to the Calgary Convention Centre on Stephen Avenue Mall (MacLeod Trail and 8th Avenue). The rally will focus on how the Klein cuts are affecting women! Let's take this opportunity to demonstrate a strong, united, inclusive resistance effort. This action coincides with International Women's Day, with its long history of celebrating the struggle for equality and justice. Phone the Calgary Common Front at (403)-262-2422 for more information.

Ethical Treatment of Humans (specifically Women)

I received a letter in the mail the other day from an animal rights activist group. The organization was sending me (and no doubt countless others), an urgent plea to help them stop the unethical treatment of animals. A harmless mass mailing sent to evoke my sympathies and loosen my already shredded purse strings. The only thing this letter evoked in me was anger. Now, I am all for treating animals with a certain degree of dignity and believe animals play an integral part in our human world, but what really riles me; what really makes me want to scream and stomp and take an all-out tantrum, is that our society has not yet evolved to the point where over half of the human race has achieved "ethical treatment"!! It is a well-known fact that in most parts of the world, including North America, our male-dominated justice system hands out tougher sentences to those committing atrocities to animals, than to those who commit crimes against women. Not so long ago, a Montana newspaper reported two stories: one was about a man who was sentenced to nine months in jail for beating his dog; the other article was about a man who was given 3 months probation for beating his wife. I feel saddened and ashamed to live in a society that does not even treat women with the same respect as we treat our animals.

If you need further confirmation of my point, other than living your life as a female every day, go ahead! Pick up a newspaper and read the horror stories. In a recent edition of *The Edmonton Journal* (February 03, 1996), it is reported that Jerry Montgomery was found guilty of manslaughter in the strangulation death of his wife, Lorraine. "Montgomery was charged with first-degree murder, a planned and deliberate killing" but the jury decided that Jerry Montgomery was provoked into the killing. "The defense's lawyer argued that his client was provoked into an uncontrollable rage by his wife, who told him that fatal day she wanted a divorce, half his assets and to live in separate houses." Good luck, I say to anyone who may be thinking of asking for a separation from a partner!!

The next page of the paper shows us another disgusting example of the sickening, discriminatory, totally unjust and unfair world in which we live. A Florida man who was convicted of fatally shooting

his first wife in 1974 has recently been awarded "custody of his 11 year old daughter because his former wife is a lesbian and he can give the girl a better home". Gay and lesbian rights are pretty much non-existent as it is but to take away the right to parent because of sexual orientation is the most in-human act that our society could impose upon those who need human rights most.

I wish I could stop here, but no, there is more. Another little story that caught my eye in the same edition of this newspaper is about a Hobbema man who was serving a 90 day sentence in Calgary for breaching his bail and was "inadvertently" released. This was the second time this man was set free. The fact that he first made bail after being charged with second-degree murder and aggravated assault after his wife was found dead, is a blatant example of our judicial system rewarding those who commit heinous crimes, especially against women, and sadly confirms to me that misogyny is alive and well.

Marriage Breakdown Workshops

Legal Rights and responsibilities in separation, divorce and common-law breakdown.

Subjects to be covered: Separation, divorce, and division of matrimonial property, custody, access and child support, common-law relationship breakdown, mediation, minimizing the impact on children

For Women Only

Saturday, March 2, 1996 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Deadline for registration: Monday, Feb. 26

Please note: There will be sessions on separation and divorce specifically addressing the needs of immigrant women.

For Men Only

Saturday, March 9, 1996

Deadline for registration: Monday, March 4

Registration fees: pay what you can from \$1 to \$20. Fee includes lunch. A child care subsidy is available for those in need. Call 234-7567 for information and registration. These workshops are organized by Calgary Legal Guidance in cooperation with the Calgary Status of Women Action Committee.

Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. To keep our faces toward change and behave like free spirits in the presence of fate is strength undefeatable.

- Helen Keller

Calling all present, former and future ASWAC members!

1996 is the year ASWAC celebrates 20 years of hard work and achievements and we renew our determination to continue the struggle for women.

Our first major event of the year will be the spring conference and we will be looking for all the women who have ever been involved and others who have never even heard of ASWAC to become involved.

We need your help in the planning, the fundraising, the publicity, we need your help in finding old members and recruiting new ones and we need women from all over the province to be there and participate.

This year also, our carefully preserved records will be protected while being more accessible. The University of Alberta Extension department will be housing our old and not so old resource materials and library in a special reading room. The Northern Alberta Women's Archives Association wants to help us preserve our archives. Volunteers are needed to sort out the resource materials from the archives. This is interesting, important work.


There will be an auction of art work, vintage T-shirts and other memorabilia at the spring conference. If you have any interesting artifacts from ASWAC's past (or your own present or past) to donate to the auction please do so. Jennifer Berezan is donating a collection of her music for the auction.

The Edmonton office is being staffed part time until mid-April. After that and until our next grant money arrives volunteers will be looking after things. Call early and get the volunteer job you want.

**To volunteer time, money or items for sale
please call 421-0306**

Jennifer Berezan

IN CONCERT



... a beguiling voice ...
... one of today's most
talented songwriters and
expressive singers.
LARRY KELP . THE OAKLAND TRIBUNE

... like fine porcelain,
delicate but durable.
DAVE DEVERSO . DETOUR MAGAZINE

... heartfelt, intelligent lyrics.
JEFF MORRIS . PLAYERS

Photo by Irene Young

Jennifer Berezan With Chris Webster

THE CITY MEDIA CLUB

6005 103 St. Edmonton

FRIDAY MARCH 22 8:30 PM

With guests *Third From the Truth*

Tickets: \$10.00 advance \$12 door Info. 403-433-5183

Tickets Available at: City Media Club, Orlando Books,
The Bagel Tree and Blackbird Myoosik

ASWAC Board Meeting Saturday March 9

11:00am at Old Y Centre

223 - 12 Avenue SW Calgary

12:00 Attend Common Front Rally

2:00pm back at Old Y until 5:00

Sunday March 10

9:00am (sharp - to be let in)

Calgary Birth Control Centre

#301 - 1220 Kensington Rd. Calgary

Edmonton Highlights

International Women's Day

March 8, 1996

Meet 4:30 at YWCA, 10305 - 100 Avenue

- to prepare placards and begin march at:

5:30 to City Hall

6:30 Speakers and entertainment

Changing Together will provide snacks

8:00 windup

Display table set up at City Hall begins

4:00pm and take down until 9:00pm.

The Great Leap Forward Concert!

March 1 - City Media Club

Sticks & Stones

with Irish Stew

Doors: 8:00 - \$5.00 - Music: 9:00

Information: 433-5183

*Proceeds to: Edmonton Working Women &
Alberta Worker's Health Centre*

Womonspace presents:

Comedian

SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER

at

PRINCESS THEATRE

March 17

Doors 7:00pm - Performance 8:00

Tickets - \$15.00 at: Jazzberry's,
Orlando Books, Cook & Gardener

AN UNFULFILLED DREAM....

I was recently given the opportunity to deliver a eulogy to someone who was very dear to me. In preparing this memorial for Betty, my mother-in-law, I spoke to several people who were close to this extraordinary woman, including her friends and family. The recurring remembrance that people had of Betty was that "she always put others before herself". This may seem like a harmless statement but it bothered me. It bothered me because I knew it to be true. Betty was always there for anyone who "needed". She went above and beyond the call (financially, emotionally, physically, spiritually, etc., for friends, family and even strangers. It was as if she made it her calling to meet the needs of everyone, with the exception of herself. Not that she even left her own needs to be fulfilled lastly, such as we do when we have others who are dependent on us such as children, spouses, parents, etc. In the six plus years that I was fortunate to be a part of Betty's life, she never expressed nor visibly fulfilled her needs for her own self. And why not? I suspect she truly felt that this would be selfish. I base had plans to attend a weekend retreat out of town, which meant my husband would have to look after our two children, then 3 years, and 9 months of age. She greatly disapproved of my decision to go away and "abandon" my family despite my rationale and pleas that "I **needed** this", and with a tear in her eye and shaking her head in disappointment, she commented that she "never **needed** to leave her family to go away for a weekend". I found it difficult enough to leave my children, if only for a few days, but truly felt it was time to find my identity again without being somebody's wife or mother. Oh, the thoughts were still floating around that maybe I was inadequate as a mother if I needed to get away and rejuvenate. A part of me felt selfish for doing something for myself. Even though my family would no doubt benefit in many ways from my time away, I was doing this for **me**. I felt that I deserved it. Didn't I?

So, why are we so hard on ourselves and deny ourselves even the simplest pleasures in life, even if that pleasure be equated to a need? Why do we go on living our lives for everybody but ourselves? Well, speaking for myself, my mother was an excellent teacher, and her lessons on maintaining a non-existent status in our home are deeply ingrained

into my own psyche. As a youngster, I remember thinking I wanted to grow up to be like my dad instead of my mother because dad had all the power and definitely had royal status in our home. And not that he deserved any privileged treatment, according to his behaviour in our home, but this was his birthright for being born a man. My dad appeared to try very hard to beat this antiquated, ignorant doctrine into my head, literally and figuratively, as some of his more repeated, malicious remarks can attest, such as "You are as useless as teats on a boar pig!", "By the time you are 16 you will be pregnant, barefoot and in the kitchen" (such was my poor mother's and sister's fate!), and on his refusal to help me out in any way when I decided to attend university and "escape" after spending 2 1/2 years living with an abusive alcoholic, "You are just going there (university) to meet a husband". Yes, it is very clear to me why looking after my own needs causes the swells of guilt to rise; at times the ebb and flow washes over me with ferocious highs and lows. I do not believe that the denial of self-fulfilling acts is an innate trait that is peculiar to females and that unfortunately, I must admit, that society has through the ages, imposingly perpetuated this belief, that as females, the giving, dependable nurturer, must give all of herself away to others, specifically men and any children living at home, regardless of their age, so that she neither has the energy or conscience to give anything to herself. We need to destroy the connotation that looking after our own needs, putting ourselves first, is indeed not selfish, but is an admirable quality, that proves in fact, how unselfish we are and care for others, because we took the time to care for and give to ourselves.

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