



# ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE

Vol. 6 No. 2

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Muffy Mathewson

International Women's Day

# Eighteen Hours At A Glance

## FRIDAY NIGHT

Our discussion topic was abortion. We've seen the need to get back to basics on this issue and re-define it on our own terms. Rather than "what about abortion?", why are we not asking "why unwanted pregnancy?" The discussion was taped and is on file at the ASWAC office, as are all meeting tapes.

## BUDGET

A draft budget, the work of a small committee of board members, was discussed and revised at this meeting. Since we have taken a different approach to budgetting this year, according to a new understanding of Sec. State guidelines, the discussion warranted much time and care.

## STAFF REPORTS

Individual staff and board members are involved with issues such as maintenance enforcement and sexual harassment, public education, finances, membership and regional networking. One board member has asked us to consider how ASWAC could best contribute to solidarity campaigns for other groups of people who are oppressed.

## BUILDING COLLECTIVE

The search for a building to house ASWAC, along with several other women's groups and businesses, goes on. The search is proceeding cautiously so that any move we make is a good and stable one.

## ORGANIZING AGAINST THE RIGHT

We have learned that R.E.A.L. Women have obtained approval for funding by Secretary of State, as a result of their political lobby efforts. As this group opposes funding to feminist groups, we decided to write Sec. State reaffirming the concept that any group be funded providing their projects work to improve the status of women. A strategy meeting will take place in Edmonton in mid-March organized by feminists who are interested in countering the conservative backlash. It seems that one suggested theme for this year's ASWAC assembly--"Unity Through Diversity"--may be an important thread in the coming year's activities.

## LETHBRIDGE ACTION LINE

We discussed the activities so far of the group which has formed with Flor Langeslag, to run the Lethbridge Action Line, with a view to deciding whether affiliation (as originally requested) with ASWAC was the appropriate course. A subsequent joint meeting between ASWAC board members and the new Lethbridge group decided on association rather than affiliation, so the new group can pursue its aims independent of ASWAC's agenda.

## PRACTICUM STUDENT

Kim Service, as well as investigating lenient sentencing practices related to assault on women, is doing speaking engagements, discussions and papers on the subject of violence against women. She helped start a support group of women battered by the judicial system and is preparing a brief for the Canadian Sentencing Commission hearings.

## MAINTENANCE ENFORCEMENT

The Maintenance Enforcement Action Committee is doing well. They are in the midst of a letter campaign lobbying the provincial government to implement a computerized monitoring system for maintenance payments (see article this issue). The group needs practical support from ASWAC members in the form of donations for postage and supplies.

---insert additions---

## END NOTE

Any ASWAC member is welcome to attend board meetings to observe. Phone the ASWAC office or any board member to make arrangements.

## ASWAC Board Members

Brigitte Baradoy	1203 Lismer Green NW, Ca1.T3B 2V7	282-9843
Janet Beebe	Box 1566, Camrose, T4V 1X4	679-0268
Lorna Gilchrist	Box 292, Airdrie, TOM OBO	948-6685
Marilyn Guille	Box 1941, Whitecourt, TOE 2L0	778-3669
Amanda Le Rougetel	9625-76 Ave, Ed. T6C 0K4	433-8615
Judy Moynihan	190 Highland Close, Ft.McMurray, T9H 3T5	791-4395
Suzn Morgan	6423 Laurentian Way SW, Ca1.T3E 5N2	246-8755
Julie Walker	2205 2nd Ave,NW, Ca1. T2N 0H1	283-0488
Lisa Walter	9759-66 Ave, Ed. T5K 2M5	435-8848
Marlene WhiteSun	Box 418, Hythe, TOH 2C0	356-3797
Sally Wisden	8819-102 Ave, Ed. T5H 0E1	429-4487

## Ooopps!!

We very carelessly neglected to credit the photograph on the cover of the last Newsletter - it was taken by Sima Khorrami at the Morgentaler speak in Edmonton in January. Sima can be reached at 468-4822.

# Notes From The North West

The Provincial Committee for Alberta Council on Women's Affairs and the South Peace Regional Council of Women are sponsoring a Conference on Women and Health. The dates are April 26 and 27. Briefly, the conference will begin on Apr. 26 with a panel of local doctors (women) speaking on the physical and mental aspects of women's health from the medical practitioner's perspective. A major part of this opening session will be (we hope) a lively question / answer session. On the following day, there will be a series of workshops on:

- stress management
- menopause
- premenstrual syndrome
- V.D./Sexuality/Family Planning
- Depression
- Addictions
- Women and Self Esteem

Babysitting will be provided on Apr. 27 for \$5.00. The registration fee is \$10.00 /person (lunch provided). For further information contact:

- Phyllis Beairsto 532-2958
- Tina Rogers 532-1873
- Evelyn Vardalas 532-3580
- Judith Holton 539-6692

Registration forms will be ready at ASWAC Newsletter time. If you need forms, please do call.

## Peace River Women

Addressing issues of concern to women is the mandate of the newly formed Peace River Women's Group. The group is located at the old town hall and is holding film and discussion groups. It has also opened its library to the general public. Books on a variety of topics pertaining to women and men are available. For further information please call Juse Skip at 624-1000.



## NDP Women

A women's section is organizing within the Grande Prairie constituency of the New Democratic Party. For further information, contact Olge Anderson 539-6576

## BC Women

There is to be a northeastern British Columbia women's conference sometime later in the year...probably in fall, possibly in Dawson Creek. Watch for further details as they become available.

## Art of Self Defence

The women of Grande Prairie and District were treated to a performance of the ART OF SELF-DEFENCE (a play that ends with the recognition that each woman is responsible for the quality of her own life). There was also a display of Peace Region women's art in their third annual celebration of International Women's Day. Donations at the wine and cheese reception following, were turned over to the Grande Prairie Public Library for the purchase of books of interest to women.

Thanks to all the wonderful women who contributed to a most enjoyable event.

## Business Women

The Grande Prairie Business and Professional Women's Club meets at the Grande Prairie Motor Inn for a noon luncheon on the first Wed. of each month and holds a regular evening meeting on the third Wed.. The purposes and objectives of the club include:

- to develop and train women in business, the professions and industry.

- to work towards the improvement of economic, employment and social conditions for women.

- to work for high standards of service in business, the professions, industry and public life.

- to stimulate interest in federal, provincial and municipal affairs, and to encourage women to participate in the business of government at all levels.

- to encourage and assist women and girls to acquire education and training.

For further details, please contact  
Louraine Howatte  
539-9690 (Bus.)  
532-0674 (Res.)

## South Peace Women

The South Peace Regional Council of Women meets at 7:30 pm on the first Monday of each month at St. Patrick Community School (Grande Prairie). The Council will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Mar. 16/17. Following dinner at the Trumpeter Motor Inn on the 16th Ms. Jackie Gee, superintendent of Special Education for the County of Grande Prairie Schools, will speak on the nature of learning disabilities. The business meeting will be held at the Dave Barr Arena, 1:00pm, March 17th. For further information, call Mary Silvaniuk at 766-2486.

Marty WhiteSun (HYTHE)

## Next Board Meeting

The next ASWAC Board meeting will take place in WHITECOURT on the weekend of April 13/14. If you are interested in attending, please contact either the office in Edmonton or Marilyn Guille in Whitecourt.



## Donations

Since the last Newsletter we have received \$270.00 in donations. We recognize and thank the following donors:

Doreen Pirie, C. Johnson, Julie Walker, Lorna Gilchrist, Judy Moynihan, Kim Service, Mufty Mathewson, Shelagh Parsons, Sally Wisden, Ms Stolk, Sheila Johnston, Louise Swift, Bev Browne, Diana Chown, Jean Ross, Marty WhiteSun.

# Not Leaving: Broadening The Base

Dear Friends:

My work as ASWAC organizer came to an end on February 28, as the Stoard is terminating my position.

What does this mean? There is no conflict between us: this decision was reached collectively. We've been aware for some time that the nature of the "jobs" within ASWAC has been changing as the nature of the "work" changes, as the nature of the organization changes.

Since I came back to work for ASWAC the second time around in July 1982, I've been part of two major pieces of work around structural change. In some ways I see these as my "real" work, and recognize that there hasn't been any "real" work for me to do for over a year now. I've been becoming increasingly dissatisfied with this situation, and am both relieved and excited that we've come to the decision to restructure my job out of existence.

The two pieces of work I'm referring to are, firstly, the change which started to happen after the Annual General Meeting in 1982. People who were at that meeting will remember it as a very painful time. In those days we were into hierarchical structures and parliamentary processes, and at that meeting the inherent violence in these came home to roost. Several of us, including myself, left that meeting with a firm resolve that radical change had to happen within the organization if it was to survive as an entity seeking to end violence against women rather than perpetuating it. We didn't know how this could happen, we only knew that we would have to fly by the seat of our pants and take enormous risks in order to understand the directions which were emerging.

Well, it's herstory now, and many of you will remember being confused and irritated by the board that "didn't do anything", and which

coined that strange word "stoard" which to some seems so "unprofessional". Well, it's an awkward and ugly word, maybe, but it stands for a very real concept: a collective made up of staff and board where responsibility is shared; where we aim to work on conflict in honest ways, and where we keep as an important goal the desire to remove violence, silencing and manipulation from our dealings with each other, and with the rest of the world. Not that we do all this perfectly yet, or ever will, but it pleases me greatly as an "oldtimer" to see principles of collective working being taken so much for granted by the present Stoard.

The second piece of work I'm so proud of is around our provincial perspective. Since the beginning of ASWAC nearly 10 years ago I've been doing a cracked-record act around the fact that we are a provincial organization, and that we must constantly be aware of the implications of this. When I first took this job, I felt that the responsibility for making our provincial network visible was almost entirely mine, and I sought ways in which that could be shared. It's pretty illogical to go for a decentrallized, network-type model, and then expect one person, either by design or default, to take the major responsibility for maintaining that model. Thus the Provincial Development Project came about.

For those who weren't around in 1983 this was a project which hired 10 women, all over the province, to do regional organizing. When four of those women went on the board in 1983 I had a hunch I was no longer the lone "provincial perspective" person; when the same four returned for a second term in 1984 I was convinced our model is alive and well.

So, the paradox is that I am more content with the structure of

ASWAC than I have ever been, and that therefore my particular kind of work isn't there anymore. There's lots of outreach work, field work, organizing work, to be done, but it doesn't have my particular stamp on it, and I'm needing to be in another place so that I can feel that I'm working to capacity again. Right now, that doesn't seem like it can come through a regular job, and I expect that for the first while I'll be running up a few blind alleys. Some of my ideas for future work involve some of you, so be warned; you will be hearing from me! Others of you may want to approach me with ideas for shared work; please do! I think I'm pretty good at assessing whether I want to work on something so we won't waste each others' time by lengthy discussions that go nowhere.

Also, I want to continue to do some of the things I've been doing as an ASWAC worker. Mainly I want to continue to share my prodigious knowledge of women and resources in Alberta with you. Much of this is on file at the ASWAC office, and in the heads of the people who work there, but much of it is in my head, and I want you to know you still have access to my head! Do, please, call me if you

think I may have the answer to your question, or if I've been of help in the past and you think I could be again. I'm staying put for the time being, not like last time I parted company with an ASWAC job and had to run away to Vancouver Island to learn not to be a workaholic!

You'll find me at 11227-93 Street, Edmonton, T5G 1B9; phone 479-0623. I'm available for long talks, quick information, lunch, work projects, ideas, odd jobs, workshops and fun. Make me a proposition!

Mair



The Swimmer. Northern Woman Journal.

# Practicum Project Focusses On Judges

'Sporting Crimes Net 18-month Term' the headline reads. A 29 year old Calgary man ran an illegal Grey Cup Lottery and sold stolen Calgary Flames hockey tickets. His sentence was handed down in provincial court - the same court that sentenced a 17 year old Calgary youth to 18 months in jail for sexually assaulting a 16 year old young woman; an assault which involved force and threats to "make it worse for the victim if she didn't cooperate".

In Court of Queen's Bench in Edmonton a 46 year old man pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting a little girl 2½ years old over a period of 4 years. He received a sentence of 60 days in jail and two years probation. In his statement the accused said the child often initiated the sexual advances. Peter Purdon, lawyer for the accused, told the court he would not be using the allegation as an excuse to justify his client's behaviour.

"Even if she did take the initiative, he's a male adult and he should have discouraged her", said Purdon.

Justice D.C. McDonald agreed.

"Whatever she may have done, the accused is a grown man and, with very little force, he could have turned her away."



These are just two examples of the type of judgment and nature of commentary being handed down in our judicial system in Alberta today. The situation is no better across the rest of the country.

There is an almost debilitating sense of outrage that comes from gathering this material together in order to work toward some plan of action.

My name is Kim Service, and as many of you are aware, I am ASWAC's practicum student this semester from the University of Calgary. ASWAC and I came together on this project as the result of a mutual desire to work on a project concerned with women who are the victims of violent crimes. It became evident very quickly that the judiciary is a force of considerable import in shaping the attitudes and beliefs that our society holds on this matter. And that further, the message being conveyed through the judiciary is very different that the one it pays lip service to.

The Federal government has recently established a commission to review sentencing in Canada. The mandate of the Commission includes:

a) maximum penalties and changes considered desirable with respect to the relative seriousness of offences;  
b) possible approaches to sentencing guidelines within the Canadian context;

c) the relationship between guidelines and prosecutorial discretion and plea and charge negotiation, mandatory minimum sentences and parole and remission;

d) information systems necessary for the use and updating of guidelines.

One goal of my practicum project is to submit a brief to the Canadian Sentencing Commission. Thus far my research has lead me to an examination of the guidelines used by judges for delivering commentary along with their judgments, so I believe I'll be focussing my brief on the abuses of this power by judges.

But equally important to my project is hearing from other women on this issue. I'm wondering what other women feel when they hear of court cases such as the ones mentioned earlier. Have women been through the judicial system as the victim of a violent crime? How were they treated by the presiding judge? Did they feel that they were really heard or that the accused had more rights?

I would be very interested in hearing from members about their experiences, thoughts, feelings and so on. I live in Airdrie and may be reached at 948-4556. My address is: Box 1293, AIRDRIE, Alta TOM OBO

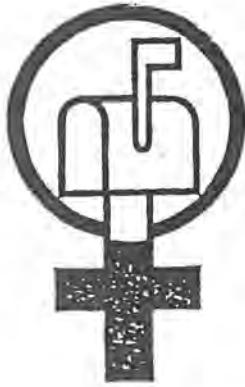
I also have 'wheels' and would love to meet with any group of women wanting to talk further.

I will keep you posted as the project progresses.

In sisterhood,  
Kim Service.



# Letters



We have long hoped that the ASWAC newsletter might become a forum for members' thoughts and opinions, and so it is very satisfying this time to be able to print the three insightful and varied letters which follow. We hope that this is a trend which will continue and increase, and that more of you will write in reply to an article in this issue which touches you, or will open up a whole new topic for discussion. Please keep them coming! The liveline for the next issue.....April 15.

## ASWAC's Pro-Choice Stand Must Remain Firm

10805 - 125 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5M 0L5  
March 6, 1985

ASWAC, P.O. BOX 1573  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear ASWAC "STOARD"

It was gratifying to see you devote so much space in your last newsletter to the abortion issue. At the same time however the newsletter left me with a terrible feeling of concern- specifically that ASWAC is waffling on abortion. Consequently I would like to explain briefly that it is essential that ASWAC retain its current position on abortion and also, I would like to respond briefly to some of the points raised by Meaghan Dean in her two articles.

It is true that in many respects the abortion issue is very complex. It is an emotional issue. Each of us has many personal feelings about it. Abortions are unpleasant. Many women have ambivalent feelings about the whole issue. Some after having abortions feel grief. All these feelings are very personal- and that makes the topic difficult.

But when stripped down to its essentials, the abortion issue is a very simple one. Believing in the right to choose means accepting that every woman has the fundamental right to make a basic decision about her life...the decision of whether or not to bear a child. Not to be pro-choice means in essence that someone else should be making that decision. Who should that someone be? Doctors, lawyers, politicians, bureaucrats- surely none of these are in a better position than the pregnant woman to judge whether or not her pregnancy should be terminated. To believe otherwise is to believe that women do not have the judgement to make fundamental decisions affecting their lives and perhaps is to believe that if women are allowed to decide for themselves, they will choose abortion

too freely and take abortion too lightly.

To be pro-choice does not mean one takes abortion lightly. Many members of our organization say they would never choose abortion for themselves. One woman, after opting to continue a pregnancy said to me "Thank goodness I felt I had a choice. Now my baby is wanted instead of imposed on me". All of us recognize that abortion is a burden on women, physically, emotionally, and often financially. It would have been preferable if the unwanted pregnancy could have been prevented in the first place.

Unfortunately unwanted pregnancies happen- although with effort they may be reduced they will always be with us. And the bottom line is that no one should have the right to sit in judgement of a woman facing an unwanted pregnancy and tell her which choice she should or should not be allowed to make.

Being pro-choice does not deny the complexities of the abortion issue as Meaghan Dean suggests. It simply identifies them as personal issues to be sorted out on a personal level- while accepting that other women feel differently and have a right to act according to their own consciences. Meaghan raises a number of questions related to abortion as follows:

1) She suggests that the feminist perspective on abortion has less mainstream support than other issues. I believe this is not the case. Statistics have consistently shown a high degree of public support for the right to choose. And I'm not sure mainstream support for other 'women's issues' is so great. Just look at what happened to the ERA in the United States. And how far have we gone towards our goal of equal pay for work of equal value, eliminating poverty among elderly women etc., etc..? Since when has there been widespread public support been a criteria for supporting an issue

anyway? The fact is that a particular religious coalition of Catholics and Fundamentalist Christian groups has made abortion their focus of attention. If these groups succeed in restricting access to abortion they will turn their attention to other items on the feminist agenda.

2) Meaghan says many people view the right to choose as "too radical" I believe this may be partly true and results from a misconception that to be pro-choice means to trivialize abortion. People need to understand that women can be trusted to make important decisions about how to handle their personal lives.

3) Meaghan says the feminist position on other issues has matured while that on abortion remained the same. True, the same commitment to choice is there, but the pro-choice movement has certainly acknowledged over the years that abortion is not something to be taken lightly.

I intended to be brief but have rambled on at length. I hope you understand from my remarks why it is essential that ASWAC retain a strong commitment to the abortion issue. A desire to analyze, to discuss personal feelings, to look for alternatives- these are positive steps to take with which I cannot disagree. However, if you are considering putting an addendum about the need for analysis in your official statement on abortion, I would urge you to think again. Such a statement could easily be interpreted as waffling on the issue. Those who would like to make this statement should face honestly whether they are in fact, waffling. If so, they should state their position honestly instead of hiding behind the need for further analysis.

Abortion is not an easy choice. But it must be a choice.

Sincerely,

Ellen Ticoll  
President,  
Abortion by Choice,  
Edmonton.

# Universal Mother Child

Dear ASWAC,

There are a few comments I would like to contribute to Carol McKenzie's article, To Be Or Not to Be? in January's newsletter.

That the English language is inherently sexist is quite true. This is, however, because of man's historical control of language and not so much because of his adoption of words such as "man", "mankind", and "humanity". In actuality, these words originally were intended to refer to both sexes.

For "man" (and other words such as "matter", "material", "animal", "mammal") are the manifestations of the root words "ma" which means "the Great Mother", "the Creator of All Things". "Man" simply means the children of the Universal Mother, whose basic word "ma" is used in nearly all languages.

For example, in archaic European she was the Moon Mother who gave birth to the race of Man; in the Eastern/Oriental world she was "mah", the moon (the name is still in use today); in Sanskrit "man" means "moon" and henceforth, "the children of the moon"--the mother.

The creation story recorded in the Bible tries to copy this universal idea by stating: He (God) named them Man when they were created. Here the writer comes close to making an actual rendition. The story of the creation of man and woman in Genesis is a reversal of an original universal myth where man was made from woman. The Old Testament tale is a perfect example of a patriarchal re-making of an obvious biological fact.

The European cultural heritage is, unfortunately, based on this primitive male-oriented myth. Male dominance has tried to educate people (and tragically, other societies), to believe that the race of man is, indeed, men only.

If I may quote Ms. McKenzie: "It is, after all, within woman that people begin their lives; and those who are learned in the act of reproduction understand clearly the dynamics of who is within whom. Therefore, female gendered words to indicate all people are not only semantically logical, but anatomically accurate."

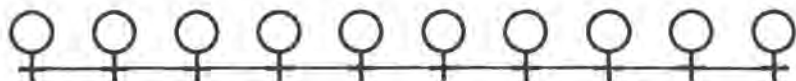
Despite the male attempts to keep the word masculine, "man" from "ma" is a semantically female gendered word, and anatomically accurate.

Our goal as women should be, I believe, not so much to change words (which, true enough, is anxiety producing), but to change attitudes. If "man" was thought of as "the creation of ma" instead of "the female only", much of our sexist typology would probably be eliminated.

Attitudes are as difficult to change as is language. The word "man" carries both sexes within as much as "woman" does. Ms. McKenzie is certainly right when she says: "That female persons' needs to be accepted and included linguistically as male persons cannot be underestimated."

We need to be accepted not only linguistically, but holistically. Promoting a universal understanding of language is an imperative step toward this ultimate goal.

Elizabeth Verhagen  
Edmonton



## Tubal Ligation: Tying Up Loose Ends

Dear ASWAC Members:

I'm doing research on the after-effects of tubal ligations. My interest is in personal experiences because so little information is available to women considering this operation.

Four years ago, I (and several close friends who were also over or close to 30 and definite in their decision to have no more children) decided on tubal ligation. We all are pretty determined to take charge of our own bodies so we gathered as much information on methods and attitudes of different doctors, but there was not a lot to compare and in the end we chose differently--and with very different results.

Since my operation I must take anaprox, an anti-prostaglandin during every period. I take triple the "normal" dosage so

that I can at least function during the three days of pain, nausea, and weakness I experience each month. My closest friend, since her operation, suffers severe PMS, with all its miseries. She gains 15 lbs. before each period and experiences bingeing, craving for alcohol, irrational mood swings, etc. She also has developed cystic ovaries. Another friend, an operating room nurse who has to take hormones since her tubal, says she sees more and more D and C's being done on women who had tubals four or five years ago.

One doctor has told us that a woman has a 30% chance of having menstrual problems--but after a tubal the odds are 70-80%. Yet many doctors simply say that they have no data on this subject, and many current magazine articles list the only after-effect as an elevated risk of ectopic pregnancy.

I would appreciate the chance to hear from other women who will share their stories. I'd like to know the following:

1. how long ago was your tubal ligation?
2. what method was used? (ie. cauterization?)
3. have you suffered any health problems which you feel are a result of your tubal? If yes, please specify

I would share any information gathered with ASWAC because I believe we have the right to know what is being done to our bodies and a responsibility to share that knowledge with our sisters.

With thanks,  
Annie Smith  
R.R. 2  
Gwynne, Alta.  
TOC 1LO

# Women Meet Michael Wilson

On Feb. 6, 1985, six national women's groups met, at his request with Michael Wilson, federal Minister of Finance, to advise him on women's economic concerns in relation to the up-coming federal budget.

The National Action Committee on the status of Women, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the National Council of Women, the National Council of Jewish Women, and two Quebec Women's Federations comprised the six groups.

We met together for five hours before we met with Mr. Wilson and during this preparatory meeting we were all thrilled with the knowledge, expertise and competence of women. Our long years of work were very much in evidence. And most amazingly of all, these six groups who had never met before, reached consensus on all the major economic issues. It was with strength that we walked over to Confederation Hall to meet with Mr. Wilson.

We spent two hours with the Minister of Finance and covered specific topics. We took the position that he was there to listen and so we introduced topic areas and put forth our united positions.

## 1. ECONOMY OF CANADA

We gave a short overview of our position on the economy, stressing that we were not at all convinced that the deficit was the overriding economic reality. We focussed on the tax system and emphasized the need to increase taxation revenues by eliminating tax exemptions for the rich, rather than accepting the need for a reduction in government spending especially in the provision of services. We made it quite clear that we opposed the Reagan model of economic management.

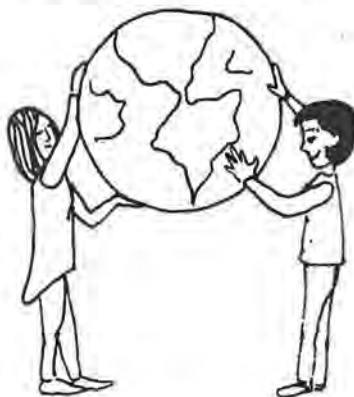
## 2. CHILD BENEFITS

The complicated area of child benefits was succinctly presented.

We support universality of benefits; we oppose any reductions in child allowances; we want the child tax exemption eliminated; and we are prepared to discuss the child tax credit with a preference that it benefit lower income families. The clear principle enunciated was that we are prepared to accept no changes which threaten the family allowance payments or which reduce them in any way. And we pointed out to Mr. Wilson that it is the only bit of direct, public economic recognition women receive for our work in child-rearing.

## 3. UIC AND MATERNITY LEAVE

While none of us liked the fact that maternity leave is connected both psychologically and administratively with unemployment - as if child-bearing is not work - we were loathe to have it tampered with eg: paid out of general tax revenues instead of through Employment and Immigration. We have worked too hard to achieve even the bit of entrenchment in CEIC to risk losing maternity leave benefits. So our position was, leave it where it is until a better plan is put forth. However, do not increase premiums, decrease payments, or increase weeks for eligibility.



## 4. JOB CREATION

On this issue we presented a demand for no reductions in public sector jobs - both because women then receive reduced and inadequate services. We also put forth a demand for training and re-training programs. Further to the whole area of job creation, we opposed Mr. Wilson's position of reducing public sector jobs in order to create jobs in the private sector. The whole issue of jobless growth was put before him, as was the need for the government to implement equal pay provisions and compliance legislation.

## 5. PENSIONS

This area is a complex one and rather than get into convoluted arguments we put forth very specific positions:

- that the federal government extend CPP/QPP to homemakers.
- that the federal government increase the CPP/QPP so that this publically-administered pension provide an increased percentage of replaceable income. This, of course, goes counter to the govern-

ment's present position of encouraging the increase of private pensions - a position we oppose because so few women actually benefit from private pension plans.

c) mandatory splitting of all pensions upon divorce and at age 65.

d) indexing of pensions to the cost of living.

e) extending the present 'widow's/widower's' pension to all people 60-64 years of age.

f) increasing OAP and GIS up to and above the poverty line.

## 6. FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL COST-SHARING AGREEMENTS

This particular issue is the key to the entire economy of Canada especially in areas of health care, social services and post-secondary education. We put forth the following positions:

a) that the government of Canada initiate a cross-country consultation process in 1986 prior to the renegotiation of the Established Programs Financing Act, and that this consultation ensure access for all women's groups to present their experience of health care and post-secondary systems and services.

b) that no cutbacks occur in post-secondary education programs, social services and health care.

c) that the federal government exercise its enforcement mechanisms eg: penalties, to the full vis a vis those provinces in violation of the Canada Health Act.

## 7. CONSULTATION PROCESS

We asked/demanded that Mr. Wilson continue his consultation with us prior to the April (now May) budget and afterwards.



Mr. Wilson's response was predictable. He reiterated his positions on budget matters and continually raised the spectre of the deficit. His commitment to reducing government expenditures as a way of creating confidence in the private sector, is less an economic theory and more of a religious belief. The logic of our positions did not dissuade him from his religious fervour about the role of the private sector in bringing in wealth and economic fulfillment to all Canadians. While giving verbal acknowledgement to women's economic

continued on next page...



# Charge From the Right—Help!!

Dear Friends,

Our new federal government needs to hear from you! The women's movement needs your immediate help.

Decisions of funding and policy regarding issues crucial to improving the status of women and our families are currently being made.

Many members of the new government have never heard from those of us interested in maintaining our progress towards women's equality in the family, the workplace, and our institutions. Instead, many messages have been received from groups and individuals requesting funds to block the way to equal pay for work of equal value, the maintenance of reproductive choice, affirmative action and day care. Even the equality clause of the Charter of Rights is being challenged.

Specifically, under threat is the integrity of the Women's Program, Secretary of State, Studio "D" of the National Film Board, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, among others.

YOU CAN HELP BY:



- a) writing your own letter explaining how federal assistance has benefited you or your organization in achieving improvements for women;
- b) organizing your own local action;
- c) make copies of what you write for members of your organization and friends - don't forget your mothers and sisters!

Don't delay! Our new federal government needs to hear from you TODAY.

Honorable Brian Mulroney  
Prime Minister  
Prime Minister's Office  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario.

Honorable Walter McLean  
Secretary of State  
Minister Responsible for  
Status of Women  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa, Ontario.

Honorable Marcel Masse  
Minister of Communications  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa, Ontario

Studio "D"  
National Film Board of Canada  
P.O. Box 6100  
Montreal, Quebec, H3C 3H5

Women's Program  
Secretary of State  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0M5

Your own member of parliament

Letters to federal Ministers do not need stamps!

## Join the National Action Committee

Join in the campaign to promote solidarity among Canadian women to advance women's rights.

NAC gives a united voice to a national network of women determined to be a stronger force in society. NAC seeks justice for women by articulating our concerns and pressing for initiatives and policies to achieve equal rights and status for all Canadian women.

There are several ways you can participate in NAC:

1. Become a Friend of NAC, \$35/yr. Subs. to Status and Memo included.
2. Subscribe to Status and Memo, \$19.95 (8 issues).
3. Give to NAC TRUST (donations) tax deductible and related to educational activities).
4. Give to NAC (any amount welcome.)

Whatever option you select, NAC welcomes and appreciates your support!

JOIN US--Become a FRIEND OF NAC (an individual, non-voting member of NAC), get the news you need to be informed about women's issues across Canada (subscribe to Status of Women News and Memo). JOIN NAC!



## Wilson Cont'd

needs, he continued on his pre-ordained course of reducing the deficit by cutting public sector spending. He also continually shirked responsibility by referring to Flora MacDonald, Jake Epp, Robert Coates, Harvey Andre, etc.

While the meeting was important, it was less for what influence we had on Mr. Wilson, and more for the united and competent front we presented.

I would appreciate feedback from Alberta women on how I may be better able to represent your concerns as your NAC regional representative- especially on all economic issues. We foresee further consultation meetings with the government and want to assure you that the myriad of issues not specifically mentioned eg: battered women's shelters, sexual assault centers, affirmative action, etc. remain important areas for our attention and concern.

You may contact me at home:  
10647 - 125 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta,  
T5N 1T7

482-2766 (h)  
425-1025 (w)

# A Day In The Life . . .

As an active committed feminist, my daily experiences are colored by the world in which I live--in this case, rural Alberta. Whitecourt, the "heart of the oil patch", to be precise. Every day things happen to me, and around me, that affect me because I am a feminist. I want to share some of those stories...

And I want you to, as well. We all experience the "crazy-making" situations, and the causes for celebration that I find myself in. Many of us face dilemmas every day as pro-woman women: not daring to speak in our homes or communities, or not daring not to speak, and then being labelled, and thus dis-credited. But not all of us are lucky enough to have somewhere in the community to talk about these things or "debrief" or get support for our perceptions...

So I am starting this regular feature in the newsletter as a place where we can tell our stories...not stories of mass actions, but of our daily lives. I have lots of stories to tell and I hope you do too. Please write!

The good...At the Women's Centre where I volunteer, we publish a newsletter every 6 weeks. In this past month, since the third issue went out, the Centre has received three donations totalling \$45 from women "out there". Wow, somebody cares!

The bad...There are three lawyers in town, all men, some of whom are dedicated to easing the lives of women. And we work with battered women who often need legal aid--which takes forever because applications are processed through Edmonton. At this writing, one of our clients has waited five

weeks for a restraining order, meanwhile bouncing between our shelter and her parents' home, with a one-year-old, everytime her "ex" comes to town. When I expressed my frustration to her lawyer the other day, he said: "Well, lots of women tell their lawyers they're scared."???

The ugly...The video store in our local shopping mall has a huge pornographic poster displayed in the window, obviously advertising an available video. I pass that window almost every day and I am saddened and sickened. I have to do something--but I can't do it alone (for all those reasons already alluded to--lack of support, not enough energy, "redneck" town, etc.)--and there's no one else who has the analysis/time/energy to do it with me. So I avert my eyes now when I walk by...

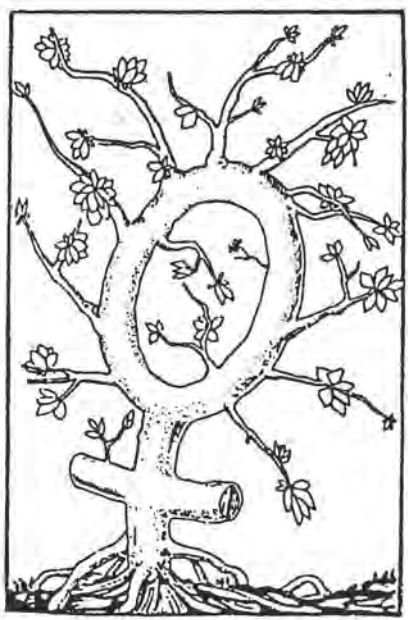
These are just some "samples" of my everyday life as a feminist in outback Alberta. What happens to you? How do you live your awareness? What are your joys and struggles?

Marilyn Guille

## CALGARY WOMEN'S HEALTH COLLECTIVE

OPEN HOUSE

*The Collective warmly invites you to our Open House Monday, March 25 1985 at 7:30pm 310, 815 14 St. S.W. 264-7977*



Graphic : KINESIS

# Feminist Entertainment in Fort McMurray

Women of the North (WON) Collective brought an evening of feminist entertainment to Fort McMurray on Jan 26, 1985. Hecate's Players and Positive Images: Women by Women both ventured north- and the Goddess was surely smiling on us as there was not even a blizzard at Mariana Lakes!

Hecate's presented a gathering of about 60 people with a thought-provoking look at a variety of women's issues. Following the performance the audience had an opportunity to discuss both the issues and the performance with the players.

We then moved on to view the display of photographs by Positive Images. This display is guaranteed to raise every woman's self-image. Such strong, free images of women are wonderful to see!

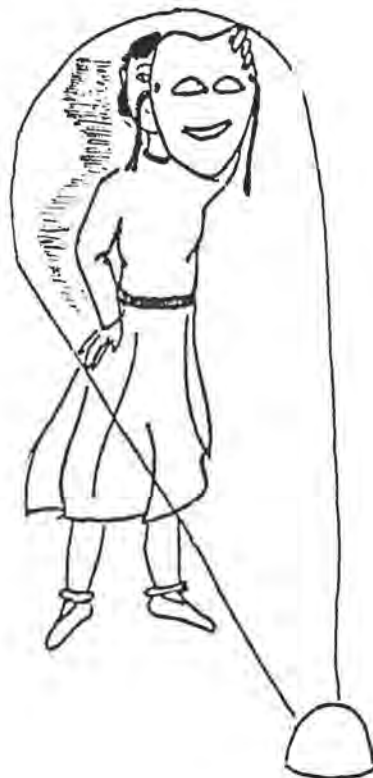
Local women, Joan Brown and Dana Stewart, had offered their catering services to provide us with a bountiful, beautiful table of wine, cheese and various delicacies.

The evening was an unqualified success. Most of our faithful supporters turned out - and many new people came to look and stayed to discuss. People also had an opportunity to pick up information and resource materials. There was lively conversation going on until close-up time.

On Sunday morning Hecate's put on another performance during the United Church service. Remarks following the service indicated that many people enjoyed the performance - and others were uncomfortable. Another sign of success!

WON thanks Hecate's Players, Positive Images and supporters for a great week-end. And we look forward to the new script on Women and Work from Hecate's.

Judy Moynihan  
for  
Women of the North



## Eaton's Boycott Continues

Ida Dale, 50, has a few words about FAIRNESS

"I've worked at Eaton's for 17 years. My husband, Dennis, has been there for 31. We're both on strike now in Ontario for lots of reasons. For one thing, we need to know we'll have decent pensions when we retire.

We know Eaton's employees don't. When my friend Vera Sumka retired after 26 years at Eaton's, her pension was \$115 a month. Clara Booth's was \$70 after 16 years. Thousands of people have the same problem. And young people don't want that to look forward to.

You can help cut into Eaton's unfair control over people's lives. We're striking for fairness. Please don't buy at Eaton's."



REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS NETWORK

## ASWAC Job

### -Part Time Employment



ASWAC needs to find a bookkeeper! Starting immediately, this woman will:

- do payroll and basic accounting for the organization.
- prepare financial statements and explanatory reports for each Board Meeting (approximately every six weeks).
- prepare annual summaries and assist in the internal audit.

Experience with a non-profit group is preferred but not essential. Similarly, experience working within a collective structure would be an asset. Attendance at Board meetings may be requested upon occasion. Good communication skills are essential. The position offers \$8.00/ hr. for up to 8 hours per month some of which must be weekdays. Please apply to the ASWAC office before April 1st, 1985.



# Candles and Celebration

"Well?" I queried enthusiastically. "Are we going to mark International Women's Day with something here in our own neighbourhood?"...

Our neighborhood - a suburban collection of houses that truly became homes because of the caring efforts of so many women; women who initially stayed home to look after their families, but later, for reasons of financial need or a desire to be back in the workforce, left their homes to go back to 'work'.

Their response to my query was less than enthusiastic. Few of the women on our street have had involvement in anything vaguely representing feminist activity. For the women who work outside of their homes, it seems that their lives are caught up in the endless rounds of job and family commitments with 'extras' of housework, meals, grocery shopping, and so on thrown in on the side. They haven't seen feminism as something that can fit with their lives. For the women who stay at home, feminist thought and activity strikes trepidation in their hearts as it challenges them to look outside of their own secure world in as much as it challenges them to look inside themselves at their very personhood. Perhaps many of these women are not ready to meet their sisters in a new found place, but I wonder, are we really so different?

Without the support of any other neighbour women, Fern, my dearest friend and I decided to commemorate our special day on our own. I purchased two tapered candles and we sat ourselves in the evening darkness of the front window. "They're going to think that we're into drugs", Fern quipped, as we lighted the tapers and shared a laugh before gathering our thoughts.

Then we spoke, slowly and hesitantly at first, about the strengths and joys that we've shared as women and friends. Remembering the tears we recalled the lessons that we learned from

the hard times and the incredible strength that we found in ourselves; the strength that we believe all women have. We talked about the relationships in our lives, the ones that have come and gone, the ones that have endured. Some took their toll on us and still more brought us great joy. We've grown from all of them, (in spite of some of them we concluded as well).

And so here we are today; both of us almost launched into our respective fields that we've been studying of for so many years now. As I graduate this spring we face the possibility of our first separation; I may have to move away.

But quickly, on to other talk of the future to dispell the aching that comes from inside if we think about my leaving.

"You know", Fern said, "we're going to need another life goal soon to work toward together. I don't want to be a teacher forever, and I can't see you as a social worker always."

I agreed and soon found myself listening to Fern's picture of a future that could hold a business partnership for us. I became as excited as she was at the possibilities that lay before us. Who knows where we'll find ourselves in the years to come?

As the candles slowly melted down we voiced a solemn pact to one another that no matter where we were, no matter how far apart, on every IWD to come we would each light our special candle and place it in the window. And if other women are on the outside looking in and see the flame we would want them to ask about it so that we could share our story with them. I think we'd find that we're not so different after all.

Fern, this story is for you, just as this day has been for us. Thank you for giving so much of yourself. Thinking of you this International Women's Day and every day, always.

Kim

## Women's Culture

### The Other Way

"Women can make a valuable contribution to science because their approach to solving problems is more context-oriented," asserted Dr. Franklin. She described research performed at Harvard University that indicates that men and women students solve problems in radically different ways. The men tend to provide black and white answers but the women looked at the context. If a context was not provided, they invented various scenarios and supplied answers to fit each scenario.

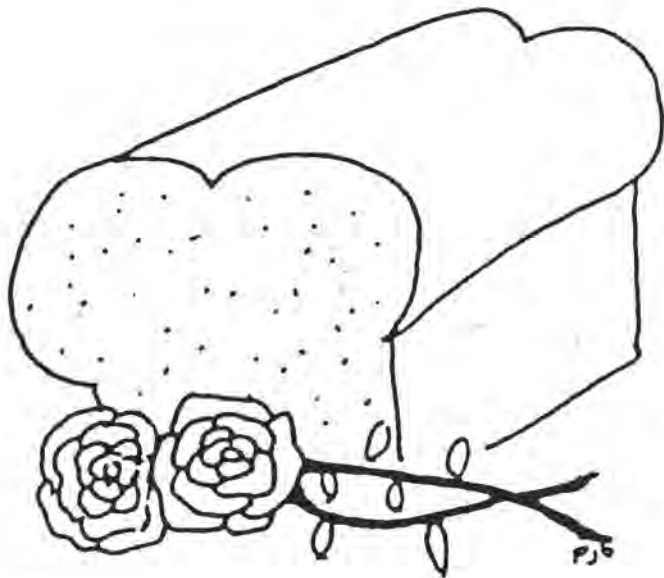
### Women Can Question Social Impact of Science

Women are representatives of a different and alternate approach to science and technology... Women can and should scrutinize and question science as an intellectual inquiry, said Dr. Franklin. Women can question the social impact of science, the lack of accountability inherent in the structure of science and the lack of interactive parameters. Women can make an impact if they are competent and confident of their values and their approach.

Dr. Franklin urged the women to be "resolutely feminist". Showing the contrast between women's culture and men's culture at this point will enable a synthesis later. "We need the harshness of the contradictions for clarity. We must resurrect the women's culture for its own sake and for the sake of showing there is another way."

(Guelph University News Bulletin)





## Poetry Is Like Bread

*Poetry is like bread  
Neruda said  
It should be shared  
by everyone*

We women are everyone  
beginning to share  
Poetry is communication  
not a game  
played with words:  
a poem is a message

Listen to the morning's birds  
signalling delight  
at noon their startled warnings  
change to song at evening  
soothing the feathers down

Regard the fir trees  
how they group  
together talk  
When enemies descend  
in catapulting swarms  
know how the trees  
change chemistry  
to banish the worms

Our poem -- everyone's --  
must be a message  
for survival  
Let it sound out clear  
signpost and banner  
plain talk:

## NO MORE WAR

Dorothy Livesay

reprinted from the collection of poems titled, Feeling the Worlds, 1984.

This collection was published to commemorate the author's 75th birthday.



## Women Share in Celebration of IWD

The level of energy experienced by the people attending IWD celebrations in Fort McMurray was truly invigorating. The theme was "Women Sharing" - and the sharing came through in strong committed voices.

The agenda for the evening included the showing of "No Life for A Woman", an NFB film. This was used as a catalyst for discussion and women sharing their experiences around the use of women's resource centres. And this, in turn, led to women talking about the criminal justice system, jury selection - why women are often left out of this process, maintenance enforcement and the attack on Planned Parenthood by groups from the New Right.

Women of the North presented a certificate of recognition of the strength, spirit and solidarity with the women of Unity House, the Women's Shelter. A wonderful woman, Joan Brown, had again offered her catering services and donated her fee to Unity House. Everyone there thoroughly enjoyed the feast Joan laid out for us.

There were also info. tables set up by several women's groups: IBPW, Big Sisters, Sororities, Unity House, ASWAC, Common Woman Books, CACSW - so women were busy collecting info. and making connections.

To the members of the collective it was a great joy to have the

evening turn out to be such a success - and just a little surprising! We suffered the last minute panic of "What if we gave a party and no one came?" Ticket sales up to the last day were dismal - and then 80-85 women showed up! And we'd had to do the dance of the whooping crane to obtain our license from the ALCB, putting up and then taking down posters, explaining to them how a collective works and why we don't have an elected executive . . . discussing at the last minute that the film was locked up in the post office -- but the Goddess was smiling on us and we overcame all the obstacles.

Overheard comments such as "This is my first IWD celebration, but it won't be my last!" and "I didn't know anything like this ever happened in Fort Mac!" were truly, gratifying.

Women of the North has spent a very growthful period of navel gazing for the past year. Belly buttons are fascinating - and remind each of us of our connections with other women. Out of this internal examination has come a groups of women who are committed to working for social change. IWD '85 has consolidated and demonstrated our strength to work in the coming year.

# Announcements



## Hecate's Players

Hecate's Players have just successfully completed an engagement in Saskatoon for International Women's Day. The most recent script, created new for the occasion, was titled NEVER DONE: WOMEN'S WORK. The performance was attended by approximately 200 women who paid a small ticket price for the live feminist theatre performance, a I.W.D. dance and a late evening meal. The Hecate's Players are Amanda Le Rougetel, Lisa Walter, Anne McGrath, Denise Burrell, and Kathy Ivany.

The group returned to Edmonton enriched by one Green Goddess, an original piece of clay sculpture won by one group member and a pair of blue, very fluffy slippers worn continually by 'Ms Eunice', recently returned from Hawaii.

A.J.LeR.

## Swac Meeting

On Thursday, May 16, SWAC is holding a public meeting on Teen Battering. Debra Carnet, a former ASWAC member who has worked locally with battered women for several years, will be showing the film "Battered Wives" and will facilitate a discussion afterwards.

## Good News at the Lethbridge S.A.C.

Spirits have risen at the Lethbridge Sexual Assault Center, as they have discovered increased funding prospects for the coming year! Terri-Ann Marco, Executive Director, says she is still getting used to the idea of working with a balanced budget (in the black). It's been a long struggle. Also, congratulations must go to Carmen Clow and Karen Sinclair for their first newsletter production.

## Yellow Pages

We are accepting submissions from skilled women who wish to offer their services to other women. This information will be compiled into a directory which will be available free of charge to women in the Edmonton area sometime this spring.

Contact Lynne Weeds or Jeanne Rioux at 433-3559 or write 9721-89 Ave., Edmonton, Alta. T6E 2S1

## Women's Peace Conference

What was your response to the film "The Killing Fields" or its source book on the Cambodian women? I found myself both wearily and in a quiet rage plugging in familiar footage from the Vietnam war - do any of you remember the napalmed child on fire running down a road with his arms outstretched? - from the Biafran war, from the wars and military coups in South America? Then the historical perspectives appear: the fighting and massacres of WW II, WW I and on and on and ...

What happened to the women?

Throughout most of history we were the victims: as targets, as booty, as the bereaved, as the starving.

The question arises: what do the victims say when they want the horror to stop?

The International Women's Peace Conference: The Urgency for True Security - Women's Alternatives for Negotiating Peace is attempting to develop answers to these questions.

Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg, a feminist and a member of the Advisory, Invitations and Program Committees of the Int'l Women's Peace Conference, will take its findings to the concluding conference of the UN Decade for Women (1975-85) in Nairobi, Kenya in July of '85.

## Lesbian Conference

CALGARY'S SECOND LESBIAN CONFERENCE

April 26/27, 1985

The conference will feature Heather Bishop as the opening entertainment act and Edmonton talent Holly Wright will also be performing.

For information on workshops etc. please call: 262-1873

265-9485

or contact the LMDF, 124 320 5th Ave, SE CALGARY, Alta T2G 0E5

In Edmonton a workshop on Women and Peace is being planned for May 4th, 1985. We need feedback and your responses are most welcome.

Final plans will be outlined in the next Newsletter. Contributions have been offered by Indian Rights for Indian Women, Women of Chile, AMPES-Association of Progressive Salvadoran Women and the Women's Disarmament Campaign is offering to show films about women.

Similar Women and Peace workshops are being organized locally right across Canada. Please contact Doris Malcolm for further info about the Edmonton workshop by calling 461-2025 (early morning or evening are best times).



Sheila MacDonald

# O.S.S.O.M.

A national support group is forming for spouses of military members.

It's called Organization of Spouses of Military Members (O.S.O.M.M.).

The organization was formed to improve the quality of life for families and the status of women in military communities.

For more information write:  
O.S.O.M.M.

Box 26  
Mynarski Park  
TOM 1N0

## Happenings

### Right Now

Seeking co-author to complete novel on a royalty-sharing basis. Women's issues explored from a totally new point of view. Approximate time element for completion, 4 to 6 months. Call Dave at 489-0855.

### March 23

Where: Between Friends Restaurant

Second in its series of financial lectures, entitled Women and Finance.

The program deals specifically with the fiscal needs of women--single, married, divorced, widowed, with or without children, financially dependent, earning own income, no definite goals for your money or wish to augment an established plan.

No hot tips on the stock market or how to balance your checkbook. Rather, creating an awareness of the choices and possibilities open to you and do so in a relaxed atmosphere. Topics discussed will be: investment, savings, taxation, life insurance, wills and estate planning.

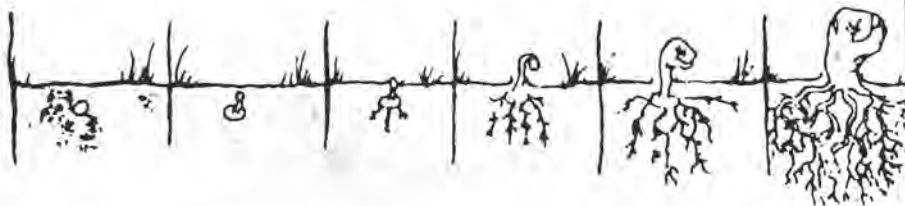
Speakers: Bonnie Kerr, stockbroker from Merrill Lynch; Rosanna Saccomani, B.A., L.L.B., of Biamonte Thurston; and John Kok of Metropolitan Life.

Tickets: \$10, includes brunch. Available at the restaurant or from Judy Crane at 468-1919.

### Sep. 27-29

Where: Calgary Convention Centre and Edmonton Four Seasons Hotel  
Internationally famous childbirth pioneer, Dr. Michael Odeht. Also, David Stewart, Sandra Botting, Elizabeth Noble and Toni Brewer.

For more information contact:  
ASAC, Box 1197, Edmonton, Alta.  
T5J 2M4 or CAPSAC, 1123-10 St.  
Calgary, Alta. T2G 3E3.



## Charter of Rights Conference September 27-29

REGISTRATION  
CHARTER OF RIGHTS conference  
APRIL 20, 1985

Earth Sciences Auditorium  
Main Level Room 162  
University of Calgary  
Calgary, Alberta

Find out what the Charter implies for you and for organizations you work with.

Section 15 of the Charter of Rights will come to force this April 17. It will have wide scale repercussions on virtually everyone and every group in Alberta. Section 2 has been in effect for nearly three years and numerous court decisions have turned against public interest. Premier Lougheed and his government may opt out of both of these Sections of the Charter. Rights that have been granted us might be taken away.

### Child Care Brief

ASWAC presented a brief to the Child Care Review Committee.

Prepared by ASWAC member Susan Craigie, the brief reaffirms ASWAC's long-held belief in the importance of universally accessible child care being crucial for women being able to even begin achieving equality in the workforce.

The brief maintains the current level of services not only be maintained but expanded immediately and permanently.

Anyone wanting a copy of this brief can send for one at the ASWAC office: Box 1573, Edmonton, Alta. T5J 2N7.



Conference is sponsored by a coalition of groups including Calgary Status of Women Action Committee, four Labour Unions, the Catholic Church and many community groups.

### CONFERENCE WILL INCLUDE:

- Section 15 with Kathleen Mahoney
- Section 2 with Sheila Greckol
- Lunch with A.G. Neil Crawford
- Strategy with Alan Borovoy
- 13 workshops, 2 on women's rights
- B.C. MLA, Rosemary Brown
- Dave Werlin, Fed. of Labour
- cocktails, dinner and social

Registration is \$15.00, this includes lunch, dinner and social. Day care is available for \$10.00 and subsidies are available. For more info call Myra Miller in Calgary, 283-3016 or write to 732-33 Street NW Calgary, T2N 2W6.

## EDMONTON WORKING WOMEN'S

NEW HOTLINE:

432-1259

CALL IF ALBERTA'S  
LABOUR LAWS

AREN'T WORKING  
FOR YOU

# NO, THAT ISN'T A GOLD STAR ON YOUR LABEL!

ASWAC's membership year runs out from conference to conference, with a grace period starting from September 1st for new memberships.

This means that if you bought or renewed your membership before September 1st, 1983, you are on our records as needing to renew your membership and you will see a star on your mailing label. Following the annual assembly in November 1984, members received a star on their labels.

We continue to send newsletters to members who are only one year in arrears. We do this generous act because we know that many people find it very hard to remember to renew and we don't want to lose contact with old friends. But it would be a great help to the ASWAC office staff person if you would either renew or let us know if you no longer wish to receive a newsletter.

We suggest \$10.00 per year for a membership but will, of course, accept less from those who cannot afford the fee. Donations are greatly welcomed and needed.



## SUPPORTIVE MEMBERSHIP/DONATION\*

Name .....

Membership

Address .....

Donation

Apt. No.

Street

City

Postal Code

Phone .....

Home

Office

Make cheque payable to Alberta Status of Women Action Committee, P.O. Box 1573, Edmonton, T5J 2N7 Telephone 424-3073

\* We suggest \$10.00 membership per year.

### ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE