



ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE

September 1987

Volume 8, Number 7

FEMINIST:



photos by Sheryl Ackerman

More Than The Label
Details inside — Brochures out soon!

ASWAC



1986/87 Board members

Sheryl Ackerman - Edmonton
Luanne Armstrong - Edmonton Office
Michele Butot - Calgary
Anne Dobbie - Edmonton
Helen Greaves - Edmonton
Sally Issenman - Edmonton
Anne McGrath - Calgary Office
Terri-Ann Marco - Lethbridge
Deborah Perret - Calgary
Shelley Scott - Lethbridge
Jane Wiley - Edmonton Office

1986/87 Regional Reps

Annette Aarbo - Edmonton
h. 437-4938 w. 432-3359

Gerry Bailey - Westeros
h. 586-2983

Joan White Calf - Camrose
h. 672-2210

Lori Crocker - Innisfail
h. 227-1141 w. 227-3881

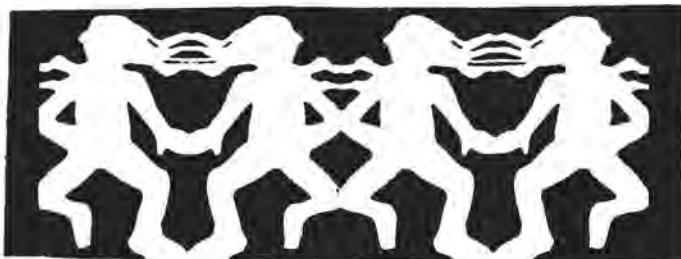
Naomi Lis - Lethbridge
h. 381-8727

Important dates to remember

All members and interested women are invited to attend any or all of our board meetings. Come to the one nearest you!! If you would like to see a meeting held in your community - contact the office or regional rep nearest you.

The next board meeting will be held in Calgary, October 3 and 4. If you are interested in attending or finding out the location contact the ASWAC Calgary office at 233-0731.

The search for new board members for our 87-88 year is on. If you are interested in collective process, hard work and lots of sisterhood, think about nominating yourself at the Assembly. We ask women who are interested in sitting on next year's board to declare their interest on or before the Saturday evening at the Assembly. We conduct our formal selection process Sunday at the Business meeting. Think about it!



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

Donations

Donations have been most gratefully received from the following sweethearts; C. Beauchamp, M. Assheton-Smith, M. Hooper, Ellen Wills, Marie Laing, Jill Konkin, Aura Rose.

Hug these women!

These women deserve hugs and support for their continued support for ASWAC numerous undertakings across the province; Joan White Calf, Phyllis Jackson, Jackie Crouter, Janet Beebe, Nancy Miller, Andrea Waywanko, Sue Sorentos, Lyn Morelli, Valda Roberts, Annette Aarbo, Frances Adams, Gerry Bailey, Addie Miron and all those incredible Lethbridge women, and many, many more.

Call for submissions

If you have any articles, comments, artwork or features you would like to see in the ASWAC newsletter, send them in! Letters should be marked, NOT FOR PRINT, if you don't want them in the newsletter. Any submissions will be screened for racist, sexist or homophobic content, and we think we are subtle enough to know satire when we see it.

The deadline for the next issue of the ASWAC newsletter is October 7.

ASWAC's mailing address is Box 1573, Edmonton Ab. T5J 2N7. The Edmonton office is located at 10826 124 St. 2 Floor, Edmonton. Phone 455-5777. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 10-4 pm.

ASWAC Lethbridge lives at the Women's Resource Centre on top of Woolworths in downtown Lethbridge - #202 325 6 St. S. Phone 329-8338.

The temporary Calgary ASWAC office is at 1338 8 Ave. S.E. Calgary, T2P 0M9. The phone number is 233-9231. The office is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday. As of October 1, the ASWAC office will be located in the Old Y Centre for Community Organizations, Room 303, 223 12 Ave. S.W.

Our board meeting minutes

Eighteen hours at a glance

The following is our record of the board meeting held in Camrose, August 22-24. Love and attention from White Calf and Phyllis Jackson made the weekend feel more like a spa than work. We all agreed to try and go to Camrose more often!

Present: Jane Wiley, Deborah Perret, Sheryl Ackerman, Terri-Ann Marco, Luanne Armstrong, Michele Butot, Shelley Scott and visitors and honorary board members; Nancy Miller, Lyn Morelli, Cecile Gregoire, Phyllis Jackson, Shelley Clarke, Dale Taylor, Sue Simatos, Janet Beebe and Joan White Calf.

Take Back The Night: Planning for the Lethbridge and Calgary marches are well underway. Lethbridge Family Services is co-sponsoring the march down south. There will be a rally in the park and the new director of the Sexual Assault Centre will speak. The board agreed to loan the Lethbridge Take Back the Night Committee money until their funding is available. They have received word of approval from the Secretary of State.

Meech Lake NDP Hearings: Because the provincial government has refused to call hearings, the New Democrats are holding hearings on the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord, in Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton. Anne McGrath will make a presentation, in Calgary, on September 22 on behalf of ASWAC. Presentations will also be made by Calgary SWAC and Women Looking Forward. The Lethbridge ASWAC women will be presenting in their community. The hearings will be held on Sept. 16 in Edmonton.

Membership Development: Although the membership development committee has not met since the last board meeting, work has been on-going on its public education campaign on feminism. Women

seem to be still afraid of using the word feminist, though they support the aims and ideals of feminism. We had a discussion about the television commercial that the Membership Development Committee and Lethbridge local, Nancy Miller, have been working on. The committee has agreed to work on a marketing strategy, a fundraising strategy along with a production plan for this campaign.

The next meeting of the membership development committee will be in Calgary on September 24. The committee will develop a plan of action then. Anne McGrath, Terri-Ann, Nancy Miller, Shelley Scott and Luanne remain as members on the committee.

Cutbacks Rally:

ASWAC Calgary is involved in helping to plan a rally against cutbacks to social and human services which will be held in Edmonton, at the opening of the Legislature, October 24. This rally is being co-sponsored by ASWAC, the Coalition Against Human Services Cutbacks, Alberta Coalition for Universal Health Care and others. There has been some discussion about hiring a co-ordinator to assist with the planning. The ASWAC office in Edmonton will assist by contacting groups in Edmonton who would be interested in participating in the rally.

Calgary

ASWAC office: The ASWAC Calgary office will be moving at the end of September into new office space in the old Y Centre for Community Organizations. This space also contains offices for groups such as the Lesbian Information Lines, The Calgary Immigrant Women's Association, and the Calgary Birth Control Association. Women Looking Forward are also considering renting space in the building. The building has an administrator, and cleaning staff, and will be an excellent, centrally located office. The address will be Room 303, 223 12 Ave. S.W.

Assembly:

We ran through the list of workshops and members of the board agreed to contact prospective workshop leaders and report back to the workshop planning committee. We will ask Debra Lewis to do a keynote speak. Each workshop leader will be asked to submit a clear and well defined description of her workshop by September 15.

The board held a major discussion on how best to include native, immigrant, and minority women's issues in the Assembly. There was discussion about whether it would be better to hold a workshop on racism with a white workshop leader, since feminists have come to believe that it is our task to educate ourselves about our own racism. One member said that she, as a woman of colour, felt that it was very important that women of colour be invited to give workshops and share their points of view. Otherwise, they (women of colour) would feel excluded. Members agreed they also believe that we have no right to discuss, for example, native women's issues without native women there. All members expressed a strong commitment to bridge building and sharing between all groups of women. It was suggested that white feminists should make a much stronger effort to educate themselves by going to as many women's groups in Alberta as possible.

We would like to include, as far as possible, the viewpoints of native women, immigrant women, and women of colour in our workshops. Potential workshop leaders will be canvassed and asked to invite, if possible, a woman of another race, class or culture, to co-lead the workshop.

Deborah and Joan agreed to organize registration and accommodation. The Edmonton office will write a contract and ask the manager of the Crystal Springs Hotel to sign it. Children under 12 have free registration. However, mothers will be asked to bring foamies and sleeping bags for them

Childcare is being organized and will be free and provided for

all times when there are activities (meals not included). Children are welcome throughout the weekend, but parents will be asked to be responsible for their children when not in the child care area.

Recommendations to be made to the business meeting at the Assembly, will be discussed at the next board meeting.

Newsletter:

It was agreed to run an ad to try and get more women to submit articles, artwork and photos to the newsletter. (Please see article in this issue.)

Finances:

The board examined and approved by consensus our 1986/87 audit.

ASWAC has received our recommended budget from the Secretary of State, Women's Program. A decision was made to maintain salaries at current levels, and to maintain our bookkeeper's salary. We will look at places where we can make cuts, such as the feasibility of working out a 20% employee paid benefits package. Branch offices will endeavour to cover, where possible, their own expenses. We will clarify our travel and expense policies to the next year's board so that board meeting expenses can be reasonable.

Childcare
Cttee:

Board members received a copy of a letter from Jocelyn Brown about the Child care committee and June 9 rally. The board also read Jane's draft of a letter in response and agreed it was a thorough and excellent letter. We discussed our assumptions that others understand collectivity, when perhaps there are differences in definition or skill/experience. The board felt that the situation has been dealt with in good faith and supported the Child care committee in its process.

The Childcare committee is drafting a policy paper on child care for ASWAC. The next meeting of the committee is September 28 at 7 pm.

Work Planning

Committee:

The first meeting of this committee was extremely useful. There will be two meetings of the committee between board meetings. Anne will attend one of these.

Women and Poverty:

Anne stated that she felt the scope of the pay equity campaign should be broadened to include other issues such as cuts to social and health services, the very low Alberta minimum wage and child care issues. The real issue is that women are poor and becoming poorer. We will discuss our recommendation to the next year's board re: the pay equity campaign at our next meeting.

Calgary

Board Mem's:

We now have only one board member in Calgary. We would very much like to have more! The next board meeting will be held in Calgary on Oct. 3,4. This will also be the opening of the new Calgary office. There will be an information session for Calgary women from 3-5 on Saturday.

Legal De-

Fense Fund:

The fundraising committee has been meeting and has planned a giant garage sale, Sept. 12 at the Women's Building. Other fundrais-

ing ideas are being discussed. The committee needs some volunteers!!! Lethbridge ASWAC is on a list to do some bingos. Concern was expressed that members do not understand why or what the legal defense fund is. We agreed to make the ad in the newsletter more clear. It is difficult because we do not want to publicize the nature of the lawsuit that ASWAC is facing.

Medicine Hat

Conference:

Women and the Family: feminist perspectives is the proposed title of a huge conference being planned for next spring in Medicine Hat. The conference will be a South Alberta feminist gathering and is currently being organized by ASWAC, NAC and some women in Medicine Hat. Details will be forth coming following a meeting on September 12. It was decided that it was important for us that the emphasis of the conference is on reaching out to grassroots women.

Final Report:

This report was read and approved by consensus. It will be forwarded along with the audit to the Secretary of State Women's Program.

THE 1987 ASWAC ASSEMBLY

FEMINIST:

More Than The Label
Crystal Springs Hotel, Camrose

Friday, November 13

Registration: 4 - 10 p.m.

Opening: 7:00 p.m.

Entertainment: 8:30 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday, November 14-15

ASWAC membership meetings and workshops on: Feminism, Women and Poverty, Creativity, Racism and Class, Farm Women, New Right, Childcare, Custody, Peace, Porn and more

Registration: \$20 includes meals and workshops

Accommodation: \$20 if registered before October 23

\$35 after October 23

Note: \$20 for accommodation is the fee for sharing a double bed. If you want a bed to yourself for the weekend, the fee is \$40. To share your room with a friend, you **must** pre-register. After October 23, accommodation will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

We want you to come to the Assembly. If you can't afford the fees, we will accept less or waive them altogether. Travel subsidies are also available. Please contact the ASWAC office, 455-5777 (Edmonton) or 233-0731 (Calgary).

On-site childcare will be provided throughout the weekend. Please pre-register. Children under 12 free.

BROCHURES AND REGISTRATION FORMS WILL BE MAILED OUT SOON.

Southern feminist boom town

by Shelley Scott

Besides our regular Discussion Evenings (held every second Tuesday) and our Business Meetings (the second Thursday of each month), ASWAC Lethbridge has been involved with a number of events over the past months.

On Friday, July 17, ASWAC-Lethbridge hosted a Pub night for members of local women's groups, social service agencies, and interested individuals. The event was intended as a follow-up to the International Women's Day Think Tank, to continue the networking and information sharing that was begun between the various women's organizations. We'd like to thank all the women who attended, and hope that our future social events will continue to attract a wide range of women interested in the women's community. And we'd especially like to thank Karen Howe, who provided the beautiful music and helped to make the evening a success.

On Monday, July 20, Dr. Mary Ayim, a visiting professor from the University of Northwestern Ontario, spoke at The Women's Centre on the topic of gender patterns and language. Her fascinating discussion outlined some of the differences in the way women and men use language,

and pointed out some of the weaknesses and many of the strengths in the way we, as women, speak. We thank Mary Ann for taking time in her brief stay in Lethbridge to visit with us. And if she returns to Lethbridge to teach her course on Philosophy of Feminism, as she has done in the past, we highly recommend it!

On July 21, we showed the film "Women for America, for the World," and Academy Award-winning look at women in the peace movement. Our speaker was Anne Williams, Chair of the Lethbridge Nuclear Disarmament Coalition, who led a lively discussion on militarism, its connections to world poverty and underdevelopment, and her recent visit to Moscow as one of the 103 Canadian representatives at the World Congress of Women. We'd like to thank Anne for her participation in this film forum, and also for her continued efforts for world peace.

ASWAC-Lethbridge was represented at a table at the South Country Fair, a folk festival held near Fort MacLeod, on July 25. We sold our F.A.K.E. Women sweatshirts and Choice t-shirts and pins, and displayed some of the literature available at the Women's Centre. A day of sunshine and good music, and hopefully some increased

visibility in our southern community.

Instead of a film forum in August, we were fortunate to have Dr. Pat Chuchryk of the Sociology Department at the U of L speak to us at the Women's Centre on August 18. Pat discussed her recent travels to Chile in a presentation entitled, "Women's Opposition to the Military Regime in Chile," and showed a video of a women's demonstration held in Chile.

Now, for some of our upcoming events: On Thursday, September 10, at 7:30 pm at the Lethbridge Public Library, our film forum will focus on the subject of sexual assault. The film is an NFB production entitled "A Matter of Choice," and our speaker will be Naomi Lis, Director of the new Lethbridge Sexual Assault Centre. This film forum is in conjunction with the first annual Lethbridge Women Take Back The Night March, which will be held on Friday, Sept. 18 beginning at 7 pm in the Galt Gardens Park. The rally will feature Naomi Lis as one speaker, a poetry reading by Carol Green, and music by Peggy Ward of Calgary. We will then march to the Women's Centre, where we will hold a celebration. We hope to have a big turn-out for the film forum and for the March, as sexual assault is an all-too-often ignored and denied reality here in Lethbridge, and public attention must be directed toward this crime and its victims.

Stay tuned for details on events in October, which is pay equity month, and November, which is officially Anti-Family Violence Month in the city of Lethbridge. Call the Women's Centre at 329-8338 or drop by on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons between 1:30 and 4:30.



**Love long meetings?
Dig travel and
consensus decision
making?**

**Join the ASWAC board or
become a regional rep.
Details: 455-5777 / 233-0731**

New ASWAC office in Calgary

by Anne McGrath

The third floor of the Old Y Centre for Community Organizations is soon to be populated by several Calgary women's groups. Calgary ASWAC, Women Looking Forward, Perspective Women's Newspaper and SWAC will be joining the women's and community organizations that are already located at the building on 223 12 Ave. S.W. The Calgary ASWAC office is in room 303. We need a desk, some chairs, a file cabinet a work table and a coffee machine. Volunteers to work in the offices would be amply bestowed with admiration and gratitude.

So, Calgary women, mark October 3 in your almanacs. That's the date of the official opening of the new office. The ASWAC board will be in attendance to welcome and celebrate. Festivities begin at 8:30 pm in the Common Room of the Old Y. Hopefully, we can also raise some money for the Legal Defense Fund. The last board meeting before the Assembly in November is here in Calgary that same weekend. The location of the meeting is yet to be confirmed but anyone interested in attending all or part of the weekend meeting should call me for the location.

Any Calgary members or potential members are invited to attend an information session on September 22 to discuss ASWAC and ASWAC activities in Calgary. If you are interested in becoming more involved please come to the office at 7:30 pm on September 22. The address for the meeting is 1338 8 Ave. S.E. and the phone number is 233-0731. We will discuss ASWAC activities in Calgary, the state of the women's movement and any other issues that may arise.

Women Looking Forward, a network of over 70 women's organizations in Calgary, held an excellent session on the World Congress of Women gathering that took place in Moscow early this summer. Sylvia Waller from Medicine Hat, who was a delegate to the Congress, gave an enthusiastic talk and slide presentation about the 2800 women-strong conference. On Thursday, September 17, Women Looking Forward will hold an information session and discussion on Racism and the Women's Movement in room 121 of the YWCA at 320 5 Ave. SE. The new staff person for the network is Deborah Hollins. Deborah can be reached at 269-1144.

The Board of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women met in Calgary on the weekend of August 28-30. At a reception on the Friday evening Calgary women had an opportunity to meet the Board and talk about some of the issues that this relatively new organization is dealing with.

Sistren is the name of a Jamaican women's popular theatre group that was in Calgary recently to hold a weekend long workshop on their philosophy and technique. They are committed to fostering a theatre form that gives expression to black, working class women's issues. A group of Calgary women have formed a group to model the Sistren example. Sisters of

Sistren, inspired by Sistren, will work on the development of popular theatre forms through workshops and productions. The debut of the Sisters of Sistren will be a reader's theatre performance on pornography at the Reclaim the Night March on September 19. The Marchers will travel along Electric Avenue to Stephen Avenue. The theme for this year's event is pornography. There will be a dance following the march at the Common Room at the Old Y. There is no charge for the social and men are welcome to attend the dance.

Women affected by the cutbacks in social services are organizing to work with other affected groups to protest the government cuts and demand that the government change its priorities. There is a groundswell of public opinion in opposition to the widespread slashing of people services that the Tory government has undertaken. The summer successes of the recently formed Alberta Coalition for Universal Helath Care, in terms of grass roots participation and activities, have made it abundantly clear that many people are prepared to take action to protect our human services. Many of these groups will be working together to hold a large protest rally in Edmonton in the Fall. Will the government be there to hear and act on our concerns or is a Fall sitting too taxing for Premier Getty?

**The NEW Calgary office needs
a desk, a worktable, a file cabinet &
a coffee maker.**

Phone Anne  at 233-0731

Human services attacked

by Anne McGrath

It's no secret that the Alberta government is intent on renegeing on its responsibility to provide high quality, accessible health, education and social services. Media reports of cutbacks and their impact on individuals and communities abound. As well, the resistance to the government's cavalier disregard for people's well being is increasing rapidly. The numbers of previously uninvolved people participating in grassroots organizing to protect our human services is remarkable and growing daily. Unions, community organizations, churches, women's groups, teachers, students, health care providers, patients, social service providers and consumer groups are finding widespread support in their campaigns to fight the cuts and restore acceptable levels of funding.

Soon after the cuts were announced in early Spring, a coalition of concerned groups in Calgary formed to organize a campaign that would involve people in changing the government's priorities. Information on the impact of the cuts was widely disseminated through the media and the public. A

petition was circulated which reads:

"We the undersigned, being eligible voters in the province of Alberta, wish to promote and preserve the dignity of life for all Albertans by opposing the erosion of government support for health, education, and social services. Therefore, we will not accept the proposed budget cutbacks in any of the aforementioned areas."

"Critics were quick to point out the strong anti-woman bias of the new announcement."

The Coalition Against Human Services Cutbacks received 19,000 signatures on the petition in a very short period of time and pressured the government for action. Predictably, the government has ignored this very clear show of public opposition and blithely continues to indiscriminately attack some of the most necessary and socially important services.

When women's shelters were faced with a critical shortage of funds, support for this service came from varied and unexpected quarters. The short-sighted and short term solution of using lottery funds to operate shelters was a hasty response to the barrage of criticism that was launched at the government.

The de-insuring of certain services previously covered by Alberta Health Care arrived in

the midst of the harsh reality of life under the inhuman policies of the Conservative government. Critics were quick to point out the strong anti-woman bias of the new announcements. Reproductive choice has few advocates in the Tory caucus despite Ministers' assertions that education and counselling are key to prevention of unwanted pregnancies. The contradictory and backward approach to health care is manifested in every government pronouncement on the dismantling of health care services.

In response to the devastating cuts in health the Alberta Coalition for Universal Health Care was formed. Initiated by the Calgary YWCA Women's Resource Centre, the Coalition quickly gained support from health care professionals, consumers of health care and others. Activities of the fledgling coalition have received widespread participation and been remarkable in the degree of success achieved during the traditionally slow paced summer months.

Examples of the organization, persistence and popularity of the resistance to these cutbacks are too numerous to recount. This is an exciting and challenging time! Many of the organizations and individuals involved in this struggle are working together to organize a large rally at the legislature in the Fall. We hope to hold a Cutbacks conference prior to the rally to educate ourselves and strategize.

Women in particular experience the burden of many of these policies and women are at the forefront of this fight for fairness. I think that the government has underestimated the commitment and strength of a unified, determined and angry population.



Deficit double talk

We need to challenge the popular myths about deficits and public sector spending in order to fight government attacks on social programs and human services.

We should make it clear from the outset that deficits are not necessarily caused by spending too much money on education, health, social service programs and the public service. We in Canada are capable of generating sufficient revenue to support these essential services.

Much of the current financial difficulties have been caused by government waste and mismanagement.

Tax loopholes for the wealthy are costing us.

In Saskatchewan, the government has siphoned off a portion of the public funds to give their friends high paying jobs, set up expensive and unnecessary trade offices abroad and so on, all on the tax payers account. The PC's have shamelessly bought votes to the tune of hundreds of dollars through gimmicks such as the Home Improvement Program and the Farm Production Loan Program.

But perhaps more importantly, the deficit is mounting because governments, both federal and provincial, are not collecting the money owed to them by rich individuals and big businesses. Tax loopholes, and tax breaks for the wealthy and tax holidays for corporations are costing us a great deal. The massive amount of taxpayer's money being spent on hand-outs to the corporate sector is rarely raised as an issue let alone challenged. Thus governments have led us to believe that the deficit has been caused exclusively by direct spending on items such as health care, education and social services.

Conservative governments are attempting to dismantle the social structures that have been built into the public sector by playing on people's fears about debts and deficits. Governments have created huge deficits through a policy of hand-outs and giveaways to the corporate sector and now are telling us we need to cut spending on social programs in order to reduce the debt. Unfortunately, this smoke and mirrors strategy has been effective.

Many people still believe that we must cut spending on social programs in order to attack the deficit. We must debunk the myth that "there is no

money" in the public coffers if we are to successfully fight the government program of cutbacks and restraint.

(This piece was lifted from the pages of Network, the magazine published by the Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women.)

Poll shows we support daycare

Close to two-thirds of Canadians support government funding of daycare, according to a poll by Angus Reid Associates.

60 per cent of men and 66 per cent of women agreed that "governments should provide funding to ensure that everyone who wishes to use quality day care can do so."

Although the poll found little difference between women and men on issues involving women and the family, it did indicate a generation gap. 79 per cent of respondents between 18 and 34 years support more public funding of child care. Among those aged 35 to 54, 60 per cent want more funding, while for those 55 and over, the figure is only 43 per cent.

(This juicy bit of news is taken from the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association publication, The Day Care ADVOCATE.)



Reclaiming our night

On September 18, 1987, women across Canada will take to the streets in protest against violence against women. This will be the sixth year that Calgary women will be marching to Reclaim the Night.

The Night March is women speaking out - about our refusal to accept the violence that makes us afraid of the night, and that makes us change our behaviour. It is also a general statement, directed at all forms of violence against women.

The theme for this year's Reclaim the Night March is pornography. Pornography is any material which presents a hostile, degrading, and false image of women, children and men and their sexuality.

FACTS ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY

-In North America, the pornography industry is a \$50 billion industry producing an estimated 540 different magazines and thousands of videos each month.

-In Canada, pornography is a \$500 million a year industry -there are more than 20,000 'adult' bookstores and movie houses in North America, 4 times as many as there are MacDonaldis.

-6 of the 10 top selling magazines in Canada are pornographic -Over the past 10-15 years there has been a marked increase in the use of violence in both 'hard' core and 'soft' core pornography. Dr. Neil Malamuth of UCLA found a 300% increase in the amount of sexual violence in Penthouse and Playboy over the past few years.

-The fastest growing part of the pornography industry is that available on video cassettes. Video retail sales are estimated to be \$1 million weekly.



-A survey of pornographic films available in New York in 1977, showed that 30% of them portrayed pornographic portrayals of children. 25% involved incest. 64% of these depicted sexual activities involving family members and or children.

BILL C-54

On May 4, 1987, the federal government reintroduced proposed legislation in the form of Bill C-54. This, in essence, is what it says:

-Erotica is defined as visual matter that is for the purpose of sexual stimulation of the viewer.

-Pornography is defined as visual matter that shows:

- 1) sexual conduct described below that involves children, or the sexual parts of a child's body for sexual purposes.
- 2) actual physical harm being done to a person in a sexual context (snuff films and the like).
- 3) sexually violent conduct (rape, physical contact)
- 4) degrading acts in a sexual context (being portrayed as animals, 'bondage, being urinated or defaced upon).
- 5) bestiality, incest or necrophilia.
- 6) masturbation, ejaculation, or vaginal, anal or oral intercourse (portrayal of actual penetration).

The written word would also be considered to be pornographic if it promoted, encouraged or endorsed the conduct referred to in 1) to 5) above. Not point 6). Possession would be an offence only in the case of child pornography, otherwise those charged would be importers, producers, publishers, distributors, and those who sell and rent the pornography. There is a defence on the grounds of artistic merit (it has to be proven) or educational, scientific or medical purpose for material other than that described in 1) and 2) (child pornography and actual physical harm)

The following aspects of Bill C-54 are seen as an excellent step towards addressing the need to change social attitudes regarding equality for women and the protection and safety of women and children:

-The control and regulation of, and a recognition of the seriousness of; violence in a sexual context, child pornography, and degrading acts in a sexual contest. There are, however, some problems with Bill C-54. The art community is concerned that it could be difficult to prove artistic merit. The definition of visual depictions of masturbation, ejaculation, vaginal/anal or oral intercourse as pornographic is unacceptable.

Bill C-54 has not been proclaimed law yet. If you have any concerns about this Bill you can write to the Prime Minister, Mr. Hnatyshyn, Minister of Justice, and/or your MP.

If you would like to obtain a copy of the Bill, or obtain more information, call the Alberta Coalition Against Pornography in Calgary at 263-1550. In Edmonton call Positive Action Against Pornography 486-3409.

Newfoundland feminism

The following article is an excerpt from an article written for the 15th anniversary of the St. John's Status of Women.

Congratulations, women!

by Fran Innes

"For years we agitated gently, by personal persuasion, interviewing prominent citizens, all politicians, past, present, and future. They one and all thought we wanted to overrun the House (of Assembly) and take away their positions." Has a familiar ring doesn't it, this account of one of our foremothers? She writes anonymously in Smallwood's Book of Newfoundland, Vol. 1, of their struggle after World War 1 to win the franchise for Newfoundland women. Their success in forcing passage of the 1925 Bill granting women the vote came after many years of hard work and frustration. Elated but tired from the struggle, the Suffragists disbanded after their victory, believing that with the right to vote, women had also won equality.

How wrong they were! It took another forty years for the tide to turn again, unleashing a second wave of Newfoundland feminism. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, followed by the Royal Commission Report on the Status of Women has liberated an energy among women which, in this male dominated culture, borders on the miraculous.

Fifteen years ago (1972) two hundred women from the St. John's region attended a seminar on the Royal Commission Report chaired by Justice Doris Ogilvie. Realizing a focus was needed for addressing feminist concerns, the

Newfoundland Status of Women Council was organized and space rented for a Women's Centre. The location of the Centre changed several times over the years and with each move we became more determined to have a permanent home. Finally, in 1977, twenty of us put up \$100 each for a downpayment on an older, three storey house at 83 Military Road. Sweat, equity, a mortgage and a lot of faith accomplished the transformation into our very own Women's Centre. Incredible as it seems, we are the longest continually operating Women's Centre in Canada.

International Women's Year did much to legitimize women's concerns. Doing something for women was very much "in" and things began to happen both provincially and federally. Locally a woman was appointed as liaison between Government and the Centre, a Day Care Act, flawed as it was, came into being, and reform of laws governing Rape and the Divorce Act was undertaken by the Federal Minister of Justice.

Various grants enabled us to promote awareness of Feminist issues in schools, organize a Women's Day of Health and hold a seminar on Married Women's Property Rights. The latter was the beginning of a four year lobby resulting in passage of the Matrimonial Property Act of 1979.

Other political successes have included the establishment of a Human Rights Commission headed by a woman, and a Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

The Centre has always tried to offer help to women whose needs are largely unmet in the community. This has led us into such diverse activities such as setting up a Rape Crisis Centre, a Transition House and producing a CBC Access program exposing the difficulties experienced by single mothers struggling to survive on social assistance. The demand for counselling continues to grow, placing heavy burdens on staff and volunteers.

Publications include a monthly Newsletter and a number of information booklets: *Our Health, This is Our Work, Women and Law, Sex Bias in Newfoundland Text Books, and Working for our Future.*

Three years ago we became the St. John's Status of Women Council. We welcome the mushrooming of Councils throughout the Island and Labrador which prompted this name change. Working together is vitalizing and Provincial lobbies are more effective because of our combined strength. Best of all, the Women's Movement is obviously alive and well in Newfoundland. Why else would our only daily newspaper, the Evening Telegram, hire Dorothy Inglis, vilified many times in editorials, as a regular feminist columnist. Will miracles never cease?

Each small step forward for womankind has meant not only hard work and anxiety but also elation and celebrations. The T.G.I.F. (Thank God It's Friday) get togethers, International Women's Day celebrations, the occasional unique bask on Halloween, the hilarious Christmas parties visited by the Christmas witch and her elf and this year our fifteenth Birthday Fete, bring us together for a few laughs guaranteed to restore sanity and keep us moving ever onwards towards our goal of Justice and Equality.

Letters to ASWAC Poor but strong

Dear Womyn,

I am sending a copy of a new womyn's newspaper - Welfare Mothers Voice. It is by, for and about Aid to Families with Dependent Children ma's. (AFDC is the American equivalent of welfare in Canada).

I am currently the only feminist in the group, but hopefully that will change. We call ourselves the Welfare Warriors because we are fighting for the lives of mothers and children. It took us 5 months to agree on names for the group and paper, and it is still fairly controversial both among our group as well as the public. Some mothers wanted to avoid using the name "welfare" because it is so stigmatizing. Others frowned on "warriors" because they oppose war; others thought it sounded like a sports team; one mother said it sounded like "man-hating amazons"! Since we use consensus decision making we had a hard time narrowing down a name out of the twelve proposed.

Many of the ma's are poor and single, raising kids alone, because they don't believe in abortion, so they are leery of feminism; others want to stay home to raise their kids so they also believe feminism is not in their interest; yet other mothers believe feminism is not for them because they are black.

I'm finding it nearly impossible to organize single mothers because of the incredible amount of family crisis and responsibilities which occur during meeting time, or demo time, or press conference time, or work time. Of course impoverished mothers are also overburdened with time-consuming obligations because of lack of money, resources, and especially lack of CARS. Out of the 15 mothers in our group, only

two of us have cars, (partially disabled) and we live all over the city.

Our first issue was delayed because two of us were at the hospital for 2 days (one mother was having a baby). Then at the next lay-out session, one mother had to stay home to control a bat-wielding brother attacking her son for 5 hours; another mother was searching for her 13 year old daughter who had run away; another mother of five was engrossed in counselling her suicidal sister; and two mothers stayed home because the mother with 4 kids lost her man to the mother of 3 kids. And so it goes.

I've raised three kids in poverty, alone, so I know all about unpredictable crisis - but it's overwhelming to see it all multiplied by 15. It's also amazing to witness the complexity of life for single, impoverished mothers who are in charge of the lives of 3, 4, or 5 people while often attending school or working part-time, as well as trying to work in this group.

Instead of feeling beaten down, as I had dreaded, by dealing with the oppressive problems of poverty, I've been inspired by the mothers' independence, tenacity and creativity. Of course, I am also sickened and enraged at every new welfare "fraud" case where mama goes to jail AND pay back money because she worked to supplement her meagre welfare check (while papa goes free even if he lived off the money). And I'm sickened to see women dragged out and exhausted with no relief. And I'm tired of hearing everyone talk about our "low self-esteem"!

The priority of most of our members is to fight to gain dignity and respect for welfare moms. The community



stigma is actually harder to survive than the poverty.

Recently, we received extensive news coverage when we equated our Governor-elect's "workfare" plans to slavery. In just one day's "Letters to the editors" in the major white men's newspapers I was called a "jerk" and "asinine" and all of us were called "parasites" and "loafers". Each day more letters arrive calling us "deadbeats, indecent and lazy".

By the way, the typing, paste-up, lay-out, etc. is the work of women who have never done anything like that before. The writing is the work of 7 women, 5 of whom have never written before and 3 of whom never graduated from high school. We hope it is a beginning. We'd like to eventually do workshops around the state or nation on impoverished mothers' issues as well as political organizing. At the moment, however, we don't even have enough money for bus tickets to make it to meetings.

Anyone who would like to donate money for paper, stamps, zeroxing, baby sitting, bus tickets, a typewriter etc. can send it to: Welfare Warriors 4505 N. 47, Milw. WI 53218.

(NB. There is a copy of their newsletter in the ASWAC office if you would like to read it).

The poet's corner

Writing for us is worth the struggle

by Luanne Armstrong

Learning to write well means learning to write with our own voice - whether we write fiction, essays or poetry. It means learning to write what is important to us, what matters, rather than imitating someone else. It means, finally, after we have learned the craft, giving up all the rules and rights and wrongs, and writing well, and simply, what we know. It is not an easy process, but perhaps, no more difficult than the life-long journey which is feminism, learning the truth about our sisters and ourselves in the place of ancient falsity.

The ASWAC newsletter has long offered itself as a place where our collective membership could meet, write, share, build bridges, and exchange opinions and

information. However, few women have taken us up on this particular offer, and I'm not sure why. Many women find writing for publication a terrifying process. Although women have told me their reasons, I still find it interesting to speculate on the basis of this fear. Many women I know have found that past the terror there is satisfaction and pride in writing. Women have a huge, rich tradition of writing, much of which we are still recovering. But, our women's culture is also strongly based in an oral tradition. It's interesting to me, that women of great intelligence, education, dedication, and commitment, can spend hours in articulate and reasoned discussion in a meeting, with friends, and yet be terrified when it comes to slowing this free floating multicoloured verbal haze



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

down long enough to immobilize it on paper.

Why write for your local feminist publication? First because it needs you. ASWAC is committed to being a collective. This means that each of its members is equally important. Some of us may have knowledge that we can share with others, but each of us knows better than anyone the truth of our lives.

Writing extends our voices outward, extends our conversation with each other, extends the ways in which we collectively build our world. As daughters with our mothers and sisters, as mothers, as friends, as grandmothers, we lay down for each other, layer upon layer, the intensities, the delights, the multicoloured complexities of our lives, and we build between us the warmth that keeps us strong. Writing for the ASWAC newsletter is not writing for teachers, or for marks, or for approval. (Every woman I know has buried in her past a disapproving and destructive English teacher, who tried to take away this part of her creativity.) It is, simply, for ourselves and each other.

I need and want to hear from you and so do the other 1200 or so women who read each edition of the newsletter, women like yourselves, women who are us. Write a letter to your friends.

September edition

More letters

Dear ASWAC,

I would like to say how appalled I am at the proposal of Marv Moore to deinsure many reproductive health services.

This regressive step discriminates blatantly against women who make up the overwhelming majority of people in need of such services. Freedom of choice in childbearing matters is central not only to the self-determination of women, but to their health. To classify such options as IUD's sterilization and birth control counselling as inessential services belies an archaic attitude that anything other than childbearing to one's full biological capacity is a luxury. If the mini-

ster is actually concerned about the health of those in his jurisdiction, he will lend some thought to the impact upon women, children and families, of uncontrolled, unchosen, childbearing.

Every child has a right to be wanted. Every woman has a right to health care for her whole body. Every couple has the right to choose from all options as they make decisions about controlling their reproductive capacity.

I hope your voice will be heard in opposition to the Minister.

Larah Hayward, R.N., B.N.Sc.

happeningshappeningshappenings



The last stand of the Lubicon Lake Cree

Friday, October 23 is the date of a concert in support of the Lubicon Lake Cree people. Buffy Sainte-Marie will be performing at the Jubilee Auditorium in Calgary at 7:30 pm. Local activist, Peggy Ward will also be featured at the concert. This event is sponsored by The Aboriginal Rights Support Group of the Committee Against Racism (Calgary) and the Alberta Northwest Conference of the United Church of Canada.

Forty seven years ago, the Government of Canada promised the Lubicon Lake Indian Band of northern Alberta a reserve which would permit their traditional hunting and trapping way of life to continue.

Due to oversight, the remoteness of the community and finally, because of revenues from oil and gas exploration, both levels of government have failed to provide this Band of Cree Indians with a land base - an important requirement for any Native society and its future generations.

An extensive flurry of seismic activity, including the building of a network of roads, have caused a major upheaval within the social structure and physical make-up of this small community, leaving in its wake the

slow destruction of a once totally self-sustaining people.

This failure to provide a long-promised reserve and the subsequent impact on the people of Lubicon Lake are concerns which have prompted the staging of a "The Last Stand of the Lubicon Lake Cree Community" concert.

Buffy Sainte-Marie, a Native, singer, poet, and social activist, knows the effects of racism and the many problems facing the Native populations. She has enthusiastically consented to contribute her immense talents and time to the struggle of the Lubicon Lake Cree. Her devastatingly honest portrayals of injustices past and present make her music a very poignant and fascinating experience.

The organizers and entertainers of this concert are proud of their support of the Lubicon people and hope that this small contribution will help in their struggle for a brighter future.

If you would like more information on this issue, please contact: Citizens Against Racism - Aboriginal Rights Support Group PO Box 3058 Station B, Calgary, AB. T2M 0J0. Phone 282-6845

**What is happening?
Tell us at 455-5777**

New way of learning

For those of you interested in new learning experiences, the Women Studies Outreach Project (Athabasca) has developed ten learning packages on the following topics: Employment law, Coping with Stress, Family Law, Self-Esteem, Body Image, Assertiveness, Dealing with Violence Against Women, Entering/re-entering the Workforce, Lobbying Skills, and Farm Women - an Uncertain Future.

These packages consist of an audio tape and print material. They were developed for individuals or small groups to use in a workshop format, taking approximately 1-2 hours to complete, depending on the length of discussions. We have also compiled a Speaker's Bureau which is available free of charge. This booklet is a listing of names of women who are willing to travel to rural Alberta communities to give presentations and workshops on topics of interest to women. This is an excellent resource for community groups.

To receive one or all of the packages or copies of the Speakers' Bureau, please write to: Florence Ellis, Project Co-ordinator, Women's Studies Outreach Project, Box 10,000 Athabasca, AB. T0G 2R0.

This project is funded by the Secretary of state, Women's Program.

Reclaim the night

In conjunction with this year's Women Reclaim the Night March, the Alberta Coalition Against Pornography is sponsoring a workshop on porn: at Syntax, 1111 Memorial Dr. N.W. (Old Firehall). Call ACAP at 263-1550, Ext.346 for more information.

Film preview

"Enemy Alien" is the featured film at the Exploring Racism Group Film Night, Friday, October 2, 7:30 pm. This film is about a people who dared to ask: "What are they going to do with us?" The Japanese-Canadians fought long and hard to be accepted as Canadians. It is important that the long story of frustration and injustice, mistrust and hate, and eventual triumph be remembered.

For more information call Lynn at 264-6328 in Calgary.

Looking Forward

The next meeting of Women Looking Forward is Thursday, September 17 at 8 pm. "Racism in the Women's Movement" is the topic of the meeting which will be held at 320 5 Ave. S.E. Room 121.

More meetings are being planned for the Women of Colour Support Group. Call 262-1873 in Calgary for more information.

Come meet Margrit

Come to a Potluck Brunch and chat with Margrit Eichler at the Women's Program and Resource Centre. Sunday, Sept. 20 from 11-2pm is the time and 11019 90 Ave. is the place.

Ms. Eichler is a feminist sociologist at the Ontario Institute of for Studies in Education. She will be speaking on Learning Opportunities for Women. Don't miss this event!!

Co-sponsored by the Women's Program and Resource Centre and the Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women. (CLOW).

Photo exhibition

Latitude 53 Society of Artists' Women's Committee is pleased to present "Looking Through the Glass;" a juried exhibition of Edmonton women photographers. The show runs from Sept. 14 to Oct. 23 at Latitude 53 Gallery, 10920 88 Ave.

"Looking Through the Glass" approaches photography from two perspectives, presenting a selection of abstract photographs as well as more traditional subject treatments - landscape, portraiture, and documentary. The exhibition demonstrates the quality of recent work produced by Edmonton women photographers. The diversity of work presented indicates the vitality of current Edmonton photography.

The five photographers in this exhibition - Sheryl Ackerman, Mufty Mathewson, Wynne Palmer, Lida Somchynska, and Jennie Wojcicki - represent an exciting cross-section of Edmonton's photography community. Palmer and Wojcicki are university graduates whose photography explores abstract design; Ackerman, Mathewson, and Somchynska are all experienced self-taught photographers. Previous exhibitions include Wojcicki's solo show at the Fine Line Photography Gallery in Edmonton and Ackerman and Mathewson's participation in the touring show, "Positive Images - Women by Women." The differing perceptions and methods of these five women provide photographs that contrast yet complement each other.

The Women's Committee's objectives include providing an open forum for discussion of women's concerns, building a network of communication, and ending isolation of women artists in Alberta, and those objectives are met with this exhibition. An official opening will be held Sept. 18 at 8 pm.

Meet in Moscow

"Forward to the Year 2000 - Without Nuclear Weapons - for Peace, Equality and Development" was the theme of the World Congress of Women held in Moscow, in June. Over 2000 women from 130 countries attended this event, including a number of Albertans. Some of the women who went will speak at a public forum about their experience, and invite discussion on issues addressed at the congress such as peace and disarmament, national independence, development and "Forward Looking Strategies".

This forum takes place, Wednesday, October 7, 7:30 pm at the Humanities Lecture Theatre 1, University of Alberta.

Childcare committee

The next meeting of the ASWAC Childcare committee will be Monday, September 28. The meeting starts at 7 pm and will be held at the Women's Building, 10826 124 ST. Phone the ASWAC office in Edmonton for details regarding child care for the meeting.

The night is ours!

There will be a Take Back the Night Walk in Edmonton this year. Friday, September 18 is the tentative date. Details will be ready soon.

Racism and us

"Racism and the Women's Movement" is the title of a public forum co-sponsored by the Women's Program, Dept. of Extension, U of A, and ASWAC. Ms. Eddie Rutherford, and Ms. Lynn Frazier will look at the issue of racism and the women's movement and how Calgarians have addressed this problem. All women are welcome to come to the Humanities Lecture Theatre 4, October 14, at 7:30 pm.

CAN YOU HELP the Legal Defence Fund?

We are facing a lawsuit. We are being sued for defamation for supporting a woman who asked for our help. The court costs are already adding up and ASWAC is facing a financial crisis.

ASWAC has set a target of \$10,000 to cover court costs in our legal battle. We also need:

- Ideas for fund-raising
- Volunteers for fund-raising projects
- Donations to the fund

ASWAC memberships run from September to September with a grace period from September to the Assembly in November. That means you only have a few months to renew your 1987 membership. So renew now and beat the rush!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ (home) / _____ (work)

Membership: \$ _____
 New Renewal

Donation: \$ _____

Legal Defence
Fund: \$ _____

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

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