



ALBERTA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE

January edition

Volume 9, Number 1



Graphic, / Ching Meditations, Adele Aldridge

**Inside: Conference accounts
and questions and issues about
reproductive technologies.**



ASWAC

1987/88 Board members

Luanne Armstrong c/o Edmonton office
Donna Baines - Calgary
Nancy Cullen - Calgary
Jane Haslett - Edmonton
Deborah Hollins - Calgary
Joanna Johnson - St. Paul
Margaret Johnson - Edmonton
Julie Anne LeGras - Edmonton
Terri Ann Marco - Lethbridge
Anne McGrath c/o Calgary office
Lyn Morelli - Lethbridge
Deborah Perret - Ponoka
Valda Roberts - Edmonton
Marilyn Seelye - Calgary
Lisa Walter - Edmonton
Jane Wiley c/o Edmonton office

1987/88 Regional reps

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

Gerry Bailey - Westeros
h. 586-2983

Elin Harlev Barlem - Innisfail
h. 227-2927

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

Naomi Ehren Lis - Lethbridge
h. 381-8727

Lois Soderstrom - Westeros
h. 586-3535

Elaine Spencer - Ponoka
h. 783-7704 work 424-2254

Linda Stoddard - Lethbridge
h. 328-6206

Denise Wood - Fort MacMurray
h. 791-4634

Joan White Calf - Camrose
h. 672-2210

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

Donations

Many, many women donated money at the Assembly, and because of this, our Legal Defence Fund is fuller than it has ever been. Since the Assembly more donations have been received from; Bernice Healy, Mary Potrebenko, Ruth Whaley, Inga Jesswein, Corinne Eisenbraun, Mary-Ann Warinkiw, Nola Erhardt, Muriel Stanley Venne, Barbara Prescott, Marlene D. Rankel, Glenda Molgat, Linda Lee Turner, A. LeRougetel, James McKay, M.A. Smith, Sylvia Dubrule, Dee Rankin, O. Belcourt, Kathleen Davies, V. Ruth Wilson and Jane Wiebe. Thank you!!!

Hug these women!

These women (and many more) deserve hugs and appreciation for the work that they have done for ASWAC in recent weeks; Loretta, Anne Gallant, White Calf, Valda Roberts, Ruth Miller, June, Leslie Stewart, Mary T. Hughes, Michele Kelly, Therese Despina, and Lyn Morelli.

Important dates to remember

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

This year's board meetings are as follows;
January 23/24 in Calgary,
March 5/6 in Edmonton
April 9/10 in Lethbridge
May 28/29 in St. Paul
July 9/10 location to be decided
August 27/28 in Ponoka
September 24/25 location to be decided
Annual General Assembly - October 28/29/30

ASWAC's mailing address is Box 1573, Edmonton Alberta. T5J 2N7. The Edmonton office is currently located at 10826 - 124 St. on the second floor. Phone 455-5777. Office hours are Monday-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 and leave a message if no one answers.

The Calgary ASWAC office is located in the Old Y Centre for Community Organizations, Room 303, 223 12 Ave. S.W. T2R 0G9. The office will be open Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The phone number is 233-0731.

Our board meeting minutes

Eighteen hours at a glance

The following is our record of this year's first board meeting that was held in Edmonton December 11-13. Thank to the Edmonton Sexual Assault Centre for the use of their meeting room!

Present: Luanne Armstrong, Donna Baines, Nancy Cullen, Jane Haslett, Deborah Hollins, Joanna Johnson, Margaret Johnson, Julie Anne LeGras, Terri-Ann Marco, Lyn Morelli, Deborah Perret, Jane Wiley, Valda Roberts. Honourary board member, Anna Pellatt. We missed Anne McGrath who was down east visiting her family. We look forward to her being at the next meeting.

Orientation: Saturday was spent orienting new members to the process of collective work. Jane, Luanne and Deborah P. and Terri-Ann, previous board members, facilitated some very helpful discussions around the terms procedures, and issues connected with working as a collective in general, and as the board of ASWAC in particular.

Meeting Policy: It was clarified that any ASWAC member is welcome to attend and board meeting and is considered an honorary board member for the duration of the meeting.

Work Management: There was considerable discussion involving the structuring of work groups, the relation of staff, board members and members to each other and to these work groups, whether the groups consisted of board members, staff, or any combination of the above.

Also discussed were liaisons of board members with regional reps and caucuses, both here in Edmonton and in Calgary, Lethbridge and other areas, office connection between Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge, financial resources, job descriptions, decision-making between meetings, membership development and staff needs.

As a result of these discussions we decided that;
-Deborah P and Jane Haslett will



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

Regional reps line up to share a laugh

be liaisons with the regional reps, Jane W. will be liaison with the childcare committee, a work planning committee will be set up at the January board meeting.

We also agreed that board members would stay connected with all the work groups and committees that may spring up from future work.

Shop-Talk Weekend:

Status of Women Action committee staff from Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Yukon, Manitoba etc. will be invited to Edmonton for a weekend of shop talk sometime this spring. Items to be discussed include staff/board relations, work, publications, funding issues and topical issues facing women. Luanne is doing the work to find funding for the event.

Personnel:

Personnel policies drawn up by Helen Greaves were distributed. One completed staff evaluation and future evaluations are to be discussed at the next board meeting when all staff will be present.

Lawsuit:

Discussion resulted in a committee being formed to continue working on the lawsuit. Deborah P, Luanne Anna Pellatt, Joanna, Deborah H, Lyn and Valda agreed to be members of this committee. Lyn and Valda will focus their efforts on fundraising.

Women's Building:

Various options were discussed regarding the future directions of

Carrying on in Camrose

by Luanne Armstrong

Well, it's been a while. Two months, give or take a few days. It was hectic preparing for it, and exhausting coming down after the intense high of those three days. How then, to write a "report" on it, which will give both the flavour of an experience that I was enmeshed in, and some kind of objective viewpoint so that folks who weren't there will understand what I'm talking about... overall, by Sunday night, "it" felt wonderful, successful, well organized, no major glitches, smiles of the faces of the women around me. The 1987 ASWAC Annual General Assembly, of which the theme was "Feminist, More than the Label" was a hit.

A conference, for me, is three days of living in a high intensity high density high voltage high speed zone. Sometimes I wonder if I'm not as hooked on adrenaline as any mountain climber; only I get my rushes from talking, listening, sharing ideas, and watching women meet and grow and blossom when they realize new possibilities for their lives. For me, the Assembly began Thursday night, when we arrived in Camrose to set up and get ready for the rest of the weekend. The motel lobby seemed to be full of men in blue jeans and cowboy hats lounging around, drinking coffee, smoking, and going in and out of the bar. They watched us. We ignored them. I worried. But by Friday, afternoon, lots of women had begun to appear and the men had disappeared. By the end of Friday night, I knew we had a great conference going. This year, we tried something new by scheduling two workshops on Friday night,



Karen Howe performed Friday evening

one an introduction to ASWAC, and another called Visioning. Both were well attended and perhaps this is a good way of introducing new women to the Assembly. Karen Howe of Lethbridge sang wonderfully, and the food, of which I had privately had my doubts, was lavish and tasty.

Saturday proved equally interesting, but in a different way. Collectively run business meetings which are open to input from the membership are often wonderful, but can also be chaotic as compared to the terse rules of a meeting run according to Robert's Rules. This year was no exception. For new women, unfamiliar with collectivity, much of what went on was bewildering. I know this because several women spoke to me about it. There is always too much to do and too little time.

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the Women's Building in Edmonton, (the home of the ASWAC office). Valda and Annette Aarbo are going to continue their ongoing work on this project.

Finances: The financial statements for the past fiscal year were distributed. A committee consisting of Luanne, Lisa, Marg, Julie Anne, Terri-Ann and Nancy will look into the statements with ASWAC's new bookkeeper and report at the January board meeting.

Board Meeting Dates: January 23/24 in Calgary, March 5/6 in Edmonton, April 9/10 in Lethbridge, May 28/29 in St. Paul, July 9/10, August 27/28 in Ponoka, September 24/25 and

the Assembly October 28-30. As previously stated, all ASWAC members are welcome to attend board meetings and to participate as honorary board members. Focus for January meeting agenda - the campaign on Women and Poverty.

Camrose: Media publicity in Camrose following the Annual General Assembly was discussed and it was decided to support ASWAC members in Camrose in ways that seem appropriate.

Other: Legislative reform/pressure groups ideas were discussed and Julie Anne, Marg and Joanna will look into organizing a work group to pursue this project.



Gerry receives her lifetime membership



Michele with her fund-raising thermometer

**photos by
Sheryl Ackerman**

However, we did manage to accomplish a great deal, including, as usual, selecting a new ASWAC board to carry out the ongoing business throughout the year. A workshop was also set up for Saturday evening to discuss the perennial and important question of directions and priorities for the organization.

I tried to speak to as many women as possible about the Saturday workshops, and most women said they found them interesting and well done. I particularly enjoyed the honest and down to earth input of the women who sat on the panel for the Women and Poverty workshop. Of course, there is never quite enough time for the workshops either. A conference is an endless balancing of needs and wants against the practicalities of time and money. So many issues! So little time! For me the most valuable workshop in terms of information was held Sunday afternoon, with Marie Marule and



White Calf bows to her well-deserved applause



DJ Dale and helper Joan get people rockin'

Kay Anderson, discussing Bill C-31, the federal government's bill to reinstate the indian status of native women who had lost their status by marrying non-native men, and the effects of the Bill on the native community.

For many of us, the highlight of our conference was keynote speaker, Pam Colorado, from Lethbridge. Her speech was a gentle vision of both struggle and peace, of finding loving ways to work and live together, tribal ways.

Saturday night was time for laughter, partying, and celebration, and especially for the organizers, relaxation. Sisters of Sistren, a new women's theatre group from Calgary, had us all rocking and roaring with laughter, and the dance that followed continued until three o'clock in the morning. (I know, I was there).

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Way more than any label!



photo by Donna Anthony

Past board members clown around!



photo by Donna Anthony

Shirley, Mary and Linda strike a pose

Sunday, was again, a day for business and workshops. For many women, it was also a day to take time out, meet with old and new friends, relax, and enjoy the energizing atmosphere created by about two hundred and fifty feminists as they planned new activities for the year. The business meeting overwhelmingly endorsed the idea that ASWAC's priority campaign for this year should be "Women and Poverty".

The closing for me, was another emotional high, a moment of love and sisterhood, as we sang and hugged and ended yet another conference on the long journey towards freedom and equality. And still, even this much later, moments come back like the flash of pure glee I had on seeing our commercial for "Feminist: More than the Label," in the lobby of the Crystal Springs Motor Hotel.

The Camrose Canadian weekly newspaper added an ironic twist to the story of the Assembly by publishing, a week later, an (in our opinion) misleading and mistaken editorial about the conference. However, several clear and articulate letters from our members to the newspaper were also published. Many thanks to those who wrote, as well as to every one else who contributed so much to the success of our 1987 Assembly.



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

Anna gives Pam Colorado a gift



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

Closing the Assembly with a song



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

Sisters of Sistrern: a laugh a second



photo by Donna Anthony

Doris' and Frances' happy faces



photo by Sheryl Ackerman

Gerry giving Jennifer the scoop

Hearing about free trade

by Deborah Hollins

On December 3, ASWAC sponsored Alternate Free Trade hearings in Calgary. This was in response to the closed door hearings held by the parliamentary committee which spent only 2 weeks travelling across Canada and never came to Calgary. We believed that some key groups that the government needs to hear from were excluded from this process, namely women's organizations, labour groups, peace activists, and economists opposed to the so called "free" trade agreement.

The panel consisted of representatives from organizations in the community with differing views on the free trade issue. Lynn Arling, Consumers Association; Donna Graham, Women in Support of Agriculture; Bill Paterson, Calgary Labour Council; and Marilyn Seelye, Coalition for Support of Persons on Welfare made up the panel. Many members of the press were also present and conducted interviews.

Beginning the hearings was Ray Martin, MLA and Leader of the Official Opposition. In his presentation Mr. Martin stressed that the Mulroney trade deal fails to give key Alberta export industries secure access to the US market, makes unwarranted concessions to American demands, undermines policies which aim to diversify our agriculture and resource industries and gives the US guaranteed access to our resources at market price. This will leave Albertans even more vulnerable to economic forces over which we have no control and will take away the tools we need to build a more stable and diversified economy.

ASWAC Newsletter

Economist Jim Stanford spoke about the implications of free trade for employment in Alberta. His presentation surveyed the impact of the proposed free trade agreement on Alberta's major industry, oil and gas production. It became evident that employment benefits of free trade in the energy will be minimal, and that jobs could be lost in the petrochemical and oilfield services industries. Mr. Stanford stated that, "there is absolutely no proof that this free trade agreement will result in any kind of an economic boom in this province or any other province in Canada."

Peace groups raised the fact that closer alignment of economic policy will mean closer ties to US foreign policy.

Anne McGrath presented on behalf of ASWAC. She focussed on the crucial point that the free trade deal will cause huge job losses in the service sector of our economy. Over 80% of women workers are employed in the service sector of our economy. The point was also stressed that free trade will speed up and intensify moves towards privatization and deregulation. This will produce cutbacks in services such as health, education and social service care. Anne also stressed that it is only a matter of time before Canadian social programs such as medicare and unemployment

insurance are eroded, privatized or even eliminated by free trade.

Peace groups such as the Calgary Peace Council and the Voice of Women raised the fact that closer alignment with the US economic policy will result in pressure for closer alignment of foreign policy. This will severely curtail Canada's independent role in promoting peace and development in the world.

Don Aitken, on behalf of the Alberta Federation of Labour, urged that the Mulroney/Reagan deal be "scrapped" or at the very least, no deal without an election. He continued to state that this government has no mandate to negotiate or sign this pact. "It (the government) has not consulted the Canadian people, and it has made the fundamental and dangerous error of equating the wishes of multinational corporations and certain sectors of Canadian big business with the approval and wishes of the Canadian people."

Among the other groups that presented were; The Council of Canadians, The Communist Party of Canada, and independent citizens. Brevity does not allow me to cover all the important points that were raised. The hearings received good coverage from local TV, radio, and newspaper media.

As an organization, we must, in our opposition to free trade, offer some alternatives. The following have been generated:

- explore and develop multi-lateral trade strategies with a number of trading nations on a mutually beneficial basis,
- institute freer trade between provinces through the

Lethbridge women busy

by Lyn Morelli

ASWAC Lethbridge has done numerous things since the Annual General Assembly, the first of which was the wonderful champagne breakfast on Saturday, November 28. Approximately 25 members attended. Terri Ann, Master Chef, created "A La Cuisine" with the assistance of several other members. Womyn drank champagne, caught up on the news, renewed old friendships and made new ones. Later, after everyone was feasted and happy, we had a round of courtesies. Each woman in turn talked of pain and joy bonding the circle of friends.

Lyn introduced a mug which will be passed around from member to member throughout the year, each member upon receiving the mug from a



Our new Lethbridge board member, Lynn Morelli, flashes a grin at the Assembly.

friend will then call another member and meet her for coffee and leave the mug for her to do in return. The meeting was closed with many tearful faces, hugging and caring.

Terri Ann and Lyn have been working madly on grant proposals to get staff womyn in the Lethbridge Women's Resource centre. Many hours of dedicated work brings this project a promising future.

Lyn has been meeting with the Immigrant women's association and has learned that a little coffee and a little friendship goes a long way. The rapport between the two groups is much improved. We are looking forward to working with this group in 1988.

Our Christmas party was held December 19. All women were welcome. There was a business meeting before the party, if women attended the meeting admission to the party was free.

On December 10 we had a booth for Amnesty International at the World Citizen's Centre to write letters to try to save people from being tortured and killed in third world countries.

If you have time in your busy schedules, I would like to do some work for the Lubicon people. Ask yourself why these people are boycotting the Olympics. What is happening to the Lubicon womyn?

PS. Joyce Green, one of our stalwart members is back in town. She has just been elected president of the New Democrats Lethbridge East constituency association. We hope that she will have some time for a visit to ASWAC now and then.

January edition

free trade continued

dismantling of provincial trade barriers,

- encourage the Federal government to call a general election and put free trade before the electorate
- form a broad coalition of community groups and individuals to ensure productive economic and trade agreements are put in place,

- reduce foreign ownership in Canada to a more globally average level for industrialized Western nations.

Free trade is an issue that affects us all as Canadians and as women. Write letters to your governmental representatives and let your views be known. We can make a difference.



Sensing our own power

by Jane Wiley

Edmonton was the lucky host of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women's (NAC) mid-year meeting and conference this November. NAC meetings are often far-away gatherings that demand a lot of time and money from women, but having the conference in our backyard meant more Alberta women could breathe in some of the national perspective that is in the air when feminists from all across Canada gather. Sensing myself as a part of a national network was one of the most exciting aspects of the November 21-22 meeting.

A Newfoundland theatre group brought a one-woman play about Agnes McPhail to the Friday opening of the conference. Agnes McPhail was the first woman elected to the House of Commons: a peace activist and a socialist. Hearing her words about politics and women, peace and justice was a marvelous beginning to a discussion of the conference's theme, which was, "Using Our Power - Women and the Next Federal Election".

Privatization

Saturday I attended a fantastic workshop on Privatization presented by Joan Gannett. Joan, who has written a paper for NAC on Privatization and Women, helped us pull together a comprehensive and frightening picture of the right wing (Tory) economic and political agenda for our economy and country. Our conservative government(s) plans are almost carbon copies of Thatcher's and Reagan's strategy. Yet, it seems that Canadians can look across the border and see the monsters while ignoring the wolves sneaking around our very backs.

Privatization means the selling of our crown corporations, abolishing or reducing regulations (tariffs, labour legislation, environmental protection guidelines), and the commercialization of services. The latter is accomplished by government contracting out to the private sector - paying profit making corporations to provide services previously produced by government departments.

The scary news is the extent to which privatization has already occurred in Canada. 11 crown corporations have been sold, and the new National Transportation Act Act brings deregulation to the airline, and transport industries. Transportation, municipal services, telecommunications, health care and social services are the areas that are being hit the hardest. These also happen to be the most labour intensive - job providing areas in our economy.

What does this trend mean? For those of us who work for a living, privatization brings lower wages, reduced benefits, more dangerous working conditions and the end of job security. Since 1978, when the US government de-regulated the airline industry, 40,000 jobs have disappeared. In Canada, Joan said, 35,000 jobs will be lost in the next three years due to the National Transportation Act.

As the workshop was drawing to a close, a participant added this twist. She said that as government makes cutbacks to funding for government services (such as health care) people grow dissatisfied with the seemingly inefficient and poorly run government service. Privatization begins to look like the answer. The latest double talk is that privatization is "public participation". I must stretch my imagination pretty far to see Dow Chemical or Upjohn as "members of the public".

Of course, this right wing agenda is served very well by the proposed free trade agreement. Free trade paves the way for privatization, de-regulation and "public participation" by giant American-based multinational corporations.

Meech Lake

The national characteristic of NAC was most apparent to me at the panel I attended on the Meech Lake Constitutional Amendment. Women from BC, the NWT and Quebec each spoke and each brought their own, very different and region-specific viewpoints. The Meech Lake Accord seems to mean very different things for different women. Although all three seemed to agree that the Accord could have been improved, the Quebec voice spoke strongly in favour of the granting of "distinct society" status to Quebec and she undermined the affects that the Meech Lake Accord may have on the Charter of Rights and its equality principles that women worked so hard to have included in the Charter.

The woman representing the NWT was in very strong opposition to both the way the Accord was written, and its content. Aboriginal land claims for northern people, and provincehood for the territories are greatly endangered by the Accord. And because the Territories are not official provinces they were not allowed into the room where the Accord was written, nor will they be invited to the regular first ministers' conferences in the future. The people who were here first feel colonized yet again by the "two founding nations" of the white south. The NWT's speaker's anger and hurt and frustration were quite visible during her presentation.

The free trade debate

When I first learned that Marjorie Cohen, past NAC executive member and feminist economist was to debate free trade with Murray Dorin, P.C. Member of Parliament for Edmonton West, I let out a HOOT!. Marjorie Cohen is the only economist I have heard who makes sense of the free trade issue to me and I was very surprised to hear that Mr. Dorin had the nerve to meet face to face with my economist-heroine.

Mr. Dorin was nervous as he presented government "study" after study that claimed Canadian consumers would benefit enormously from lower prices, and that no jobs would be lost after the free trade agreement comes into affect. He did mention that there would be some "industrial adjustment" but said that in the long run, we - especially women would have new and better job opportunities open to us. He also tried to lend support to this free trade agreement with the threat that there were no alternatives, and that without this free trade agreement American protectionism would destroy our entire economy.

Marjorie Cohen spoke a mile a minute as she discredited Mr. Dorin's studies and presented some of her own, original material. Women will be hard hit by the "industrial adjustment" that free trade will bring. She explained that in the manufacturing industries where women are employed jobs will be lost and wages will be forced downwards. She also mentioned that the women who work in the manufacturing sector are often older and/or immigrant women who will not be able to go out and find a better job, or any other job.

There is also no hard evidence that consumers will benefit from lower prices in the market-

place. One woman in the audience stood and asked Mr. Dorin how much longer he thinks women are going to buy such an empty and cheap argument.

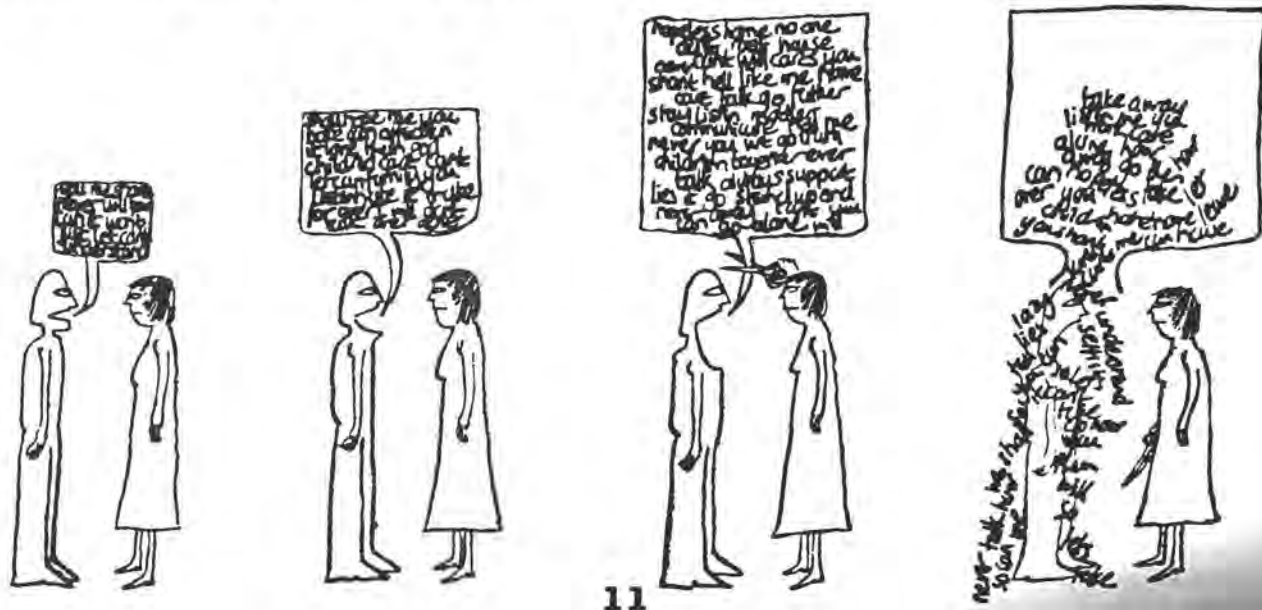
Marjorie could only briefly mention how our health and social services may be negatively affected by free trade before we broke into a boisterous, often angry question period. Mr. Dorin appeared somewhat shaken by the high quality and speed of the discussion, but I was thrilled to hear so many women speaking out with tough arguments and demanding that Canadians be given the opportunity to voice their concerns in a federal election.

Finally

The NAC conference fell a week after the ASWAC Assembly and many of us couldn't help but compare the two events. I helped to organize the Assembly so for me it was an exhausting, yet rewarding project. The NAC conference was a shot in the arm. I was stimulated and encouraged by the information I gained at the mid-year meeting.

Poor, non-academic women were not to be seen in large numbers at the NAC event, nor was there a huge turn-out of grass roots Alberta feminists. NAC meetings are expensive and intimidating for women without letters behind their name. However, attempting to co-ordinate national feminist lobbying and political action in a country as large and as characterized by diversity as Canada is, is no party.

After it was all over, I told my friends that I was becoming a NAC groupie and that I would do anything to find a way to the next NAC meeting. I have calmed down a bit now, but come May, I am sure I will be looking for some way to scrape up the bucks for a trip to Ottawa.



We deserve wellness

/ Nancy Leavitt

In mid October, the Alberta Hospital Association sponsored a conference on women's health issues at the Edmonton Convention Centre. The featured speaker was Dr. Cynthia Carver who writes the "Ask a Doctor" column in Chatelaine Magazine, and has just released a book, *Patient Beware: Dealing with Doctors and Other Medical Dilemmas*, published by Prentice-Hall.

Dr. Carver said that historically, women have received poor health care. Often doctors do not take the time to consider the whole picture of the health of their patient.



There are many misdiagnoses made in women because of this. Doctors do not listen to their patients. For example, in not listening to their patients, doctors often regard them as a medical phenomenon and not an actual person with a health problem: "The gall bladder in room three", etc. Women (and men) cease to be human in the doctor's care.

Doctors often diagnose by category. One category is age grouping: "Is she young and in good health?", "Is she in her middle years --

menopause and all its myths?", "Is she old and full of complaints?"

Many doctors mistreat by using the "quick fix" method. Too many drugs and too much medication is used. There is far too much surgery used: e.g. gall bladders and hysterectomies. There are too many technical procedures used and far too many biases against talking and educating. There is not enough communication between doctors and their patients. Doctors do not feel that it is their role. There is too much undertreatment of patients. Doctors do not investigate their history. A doctor rarely forms a partnership with his patients in regards to their whole health.

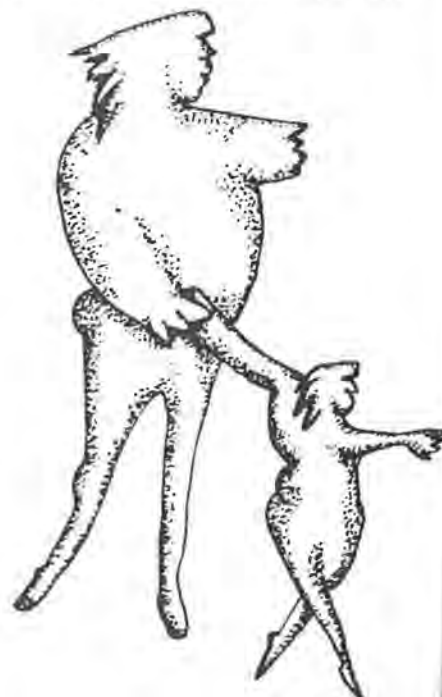
Dr. Carver gave some good points on how to shop for a doctor. "You don't go shopping for a car with diarrhea. You shouldn't go shopping for a doctor with it either." She said to establish yourself as an individual. Your doctor is your consultant and ombudsman.

Take a list of questions with you and get your answers. Ask questions about what is being prescribed for you. Are there any side effects? Do not allow yourself to be a testing ground for student doctors if you don't want to be. Dr. Carver told of the time she had a breast lump and she had to go to a breast clinic for an examination. The attending physician came into the examining room with a student and he casually asked if the intern could examine her breasts, too. Dr. Carver knew her rights but she didn't say "No!" She admitted to the audience that she was a chicken in this area. She said that women are exploited in the medical "learning" field more than men are.

Two of the other speakers at the conference were Dr. Frances Wren, and Dr. Christine Overall. Dr. Wren led a workshop titled *Mid-Life issues*. She stated that menopause has become a major medical problem in the last 50 years. Dr. Wren read a gross exaggeration of the menopausal woman from a gynecologist's text. According to the text, menopausal women suffer from genital atrophy (to atrophy is to waste away) resulting in dry vaginas, the lining of their vaginas becomes thinner, and they are apt to suffer prolapse with their organs protruding. "I hope you all aren't too uncomfortable sitting their on your protruding organs," she said.

According to Dr. Wren, we are sexual, sensual and decision makers. We are good organizers, career women and intelligent. We have a phenomenal wealth of experience, and when we reach menopause, we are at our mentor stage. Menopause simply means a cessation of menstruation and fertility.

Hot flashes may last 2 years or more (some up to 5 years).



They eventually go away if left alone. The greatest inconveniences caused by the hot flashes are night wetness and insomnia. Genital atrophy generally does not happen until 10 to 20 years after menopause. The skin becomes thinner, the vagina narrows and is dryer.

Dr. Wren explained that the psychological manifestations of menopause are fatigue, inability to concentrate like before, mood swings, feeling of being out of control, anxiety, anger and depression. "The reality is that there is good reason for anxiety and depression given the state of affairs for women today," she said. "Anger is motivational. Keep it up. Use it for positive forces. Focus it and the energy it produces on good constructs for your life."

Dr. Wren assured the women that menopause is a major part of a woman's life. It is not a disease and it is not a major health problem.

Dr. Christine Overall, Assoc-Associate Professor at Queen's University in Philosophy of Religion conducted a workshop on Ethics Issues: Modern Reproductive Technology. She stressed the feminist perspective, focussed on women's own experience, the awareness of the history of oppression of women and the need not to perpetuate that oppression.

Dr. Overall stated that the popular press is superficial on these issues. It has a tendency to take the success cases and blow them out of proportion.

Christine Overall's position is that there is a tendency to overlook what happens to the woman in surrogate pregnancies. The focus is on the fetus and the woman is seen as only the carrier. The rights of the fetus override the rights of the woman.

The protection of the fetus is a desirable goal but not at the expense of the rights

of the mother. When it comes to the subject of abortion, reproductive technology puts the issue on a collision course because the primary focus is protecting the fetus, not the rights of the pregnant woman.

There are two types of surrogate mother: the surrogate mother who is artificially injected with the sperm of the father of the couple who want a child. She becomes pregnant through the natural process of using her own egg for the birthing; the surrogate mother who is implanted with a fertilized egg from the sperm and the egg of the couple who want her to bear their child.

Two questions need to be discussed when it comes to surrogate motherhood: are they really buying a baby?; are they buying the reproductive services of the surrogate?

Dr. Overall takes the position that they are, in fact, buying a baby. \$25,000 is the going rate. The contract sets up the conditions that no abortion be allowed if the baby appears to be perfect, and that an abortion be performed if anything is wrong. What if the baby is born with a defect anyway? The people who contracted the surrogate mother do not want to pay for damaged

goods. Babies are born that no one wants. What if twins are born? What if the baby is born dead?

In the court rooms, the contract has been taking priority, making the surrogate baby a commodity to be bought and sold and argued over in a court of law. At least in the instance of adoption, there is a period of grace for the mother to decide. The surrogate baby often becomes "the child in the middle": both sets of

the going rate for a baby is \$25,000

parents either want the child or both sets of parents do not want the child.

In surrogate motherhood, there is an option of sex pre-selection by sperm filtering, etc. We must look at the reality of statistics. Since couples in China can have only one child, there is a preference for male children with the suspicion of widespread female genocide because there are so many male children. There is a world wide preference for male offspring. Surveys have shown that couples more frequently want the first born to be a male child, if they have only one child, they want it to be a boy, and if an odd number of children are desired, they want more boys than girls.

A look at the status of women who apply to be surrogate mothers. 40% of the women applying are on welfare or unemployed. They become surrogate mothers for the wealthy who can afford to "buy" a baby. Surrogate motherhood is "rent-a-womb" service for the elite.

The Wellness for Women... We Deserve It conference was well attended. It was well worth my time and I hope that the Alberta Hospital Association makes it a yearly event.





From our wombs... to their laboratories

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

The Canadian Coalition on New Reproductive Technologies, headed by Dr. Margrit Eichler, is calling for the establishment of a Royal Commission as soon as possible to investigate the impact of these technologies. They believe the following material is just some of the evidence that these issues are significant enough to warrant such a commission.

1. Fact: It is now possible to buy and sell reproductive materials and services.

Questions and Issues: Most people deplore the idea of "baby selling". In surrogate motherhood, however, a woman is reimbursed financially for bearing a child. What impact does this have on women's status? Does it mean that some women who need money will breed, for a fee, for others who have money? Eggs, sperm, and embryos can now be bought and sold. Who will put the price on eggs? Sperm? Embryos? How will the children feel about having been produced through a commercial transaction? How will the people feel years later who have sold their eggs, their sperm, or their children?

ASWAC Newsletter



Ching Meditations, Adèle Aldrige

2. Fact: Once a technology becomes available, it tends to be used. Prenatal diagnostic techniques such as amniocentesis, ultrasound, and chorionic villi sampling can determine some genetic characteristics, abnormalities, and in some cases the sex of a fetus before birth. Routine use of certain pre-

natal diagnostic techniques is now becoming the norm.

Questions and Issues: To what extent does the use of these technologies remain optional?

Can a pregnant woman decline treatment and refuse information without being labelled irresponsible? Will there be subtle coercion or pressure by technicians or physicians to, for example, abort a fetus with Down's Syndrome?

3. Fact: A child conceived through a variety of artificial reproduction technologies can have as many as five different "parents." These include a sperm donor, egg donor, gestational (or uterine) mother, and the parents who will rear him or her.

Questions and Issues: What are the relationships of all these individuals to the child? How will the child feel about a woman who provided the uterine environment but is not genetically related. A man who donated, (or was paid for) his sperm? How will all these people feel about the child? About each other? What do purely biological links or lineage mean in our culture? Does the child have a right to know his or her genetic parents? What are the appropriate legal responses?



4. Fact: In vitro fertilization is an experimental procedure. A growing number of clinics are operating in Canada, and all have long waiting lists. We are experimenting with human life.

Questions and Issues: The majority of women who undergo IVF procedures do not achieve a pregnancy, even fewer give birth to a child, and this may be after several attempts. How well informed are IVF patients about the actual success rate of the procedure? It is also an extremely costly procedure. Should medical insurance plans cover the

costs of this technology? Is this an appropriate use of scarce health resources? What are the short and long term consequences of such drugs as Clomid, which has a similar chemical structure to DES? We are still learning about the long term effects of these drugs on women and children.

5. Fact: Fertile people can have children when and how they choose to. Physicians, by deciding who will have access to these new reproductive technologies are in fact deciding who will and will not become parents.

Questions and Issues: Does the medical profession have the right or expertise to make these decisions? Should all people have a right to technologies that are now available?

6. Fact: Research is now underway to allow scientists to manipulate the genetic make-up of human beings. The new techniques can be used for eugenic purposes.

Questions and Issues: Who will make the decisions about genetic manipulation, or about which embryos to implant, abort, or discard? Should limits be set on research on embryos? If so, what are the acceptable limits? There is no way of knowing for many years what the long-term consequences are of this (and other) types of intervention.

7. Fact: Sperm, eggs, and embryos can now be frozen and stored.

Questions and Issues: What right does a gamete (egg or sperm) donor have over their genetic materials? Do they still own them when they are stored and frozen? Can they be used for research? Do they have a right to indicate how their genetic materials be used, and for whom?

The Coalition is looking for new members to join in calling for a Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies. ASWAC has joined the Coalition. However, individuals should write to Canadian Coalition on New Reproductive Technologies c/o Dr. Margrit Eichler, Dept. of Sociology, 6th Floor, 252 Bloor St. West, Toronto, ON. M5S 1V6. The Coalition is also looking for donations to assist with mailing and printing costs.

Disabled women write

In 1985, a group of women with disabilities, mothers of children and other interested women met at the UN Decade of Women Conference in Nairobi, Kenya and founded Disabled Women's International. (DWI) Their purpose was to network internationally by publishing and circulating two issues to members, and now the task has been passed on to women in the US. Women with Disabilities United (WWDU) and Disabled in Action in Metropolitan New York (DIA) have agreed to assume this responsibility for the next two years. There are currently about 300 members internationally and the group would like to increase its numbers. Members are entitled to receive the Newsletter as well as contribute articles, express feelings, and exchange information in the publication.

Submissions are requested to be in English, and the Editors reserve the right to edit or not accept pieces. Any relevant article such as original fiction, non-fiction, letters, pieces about the political struggle for equality and/or independence are welcome. Articles must be submitted by the end of April.

Please indicate if you are sight disabled and require a taped version of the newsletter.

Contributions are needed to defray costs. Membership is \$10 to \$25, or whatever you can afford. (Please send US dollars or postal order.) Money, or articles can be sent to: DIA - WWDU, PO Box 323 - Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009, USA.

Once more unto the Bench

by Lois Taylor

Word was received last November that The Single and Divorced Speak Out Association had been awarded funding by the Canadian Council on Social Development in Ottawa, to conduct a court challenge to challenge the constitutional validity of a certain section of the Old Age Security Act, namely, the spouses' allowance. The source of the funding is the Secretary of State Department.

The Spouses' Allowance has provided allowance to legally married or common law spouses between the ages of 60 to 65 whose partners were already receiving Old Age Security/ Guaranteed Income Supplement benefits. In October, 1985, an amendment to the Act was made which extends coverage to widows and widowers in the same age group who have the same needs. Nothing has been done for the single and divorced who have the same needs. We feel that this is discriminatory action on the basis of marital status.

In the 1970's, the late Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Bora Laskin, expressed his desire to make the Court a more interpretive social instrument instead of simply the place where last ditch appeals were brought. The use of the Charter is one approach to meet social objectives and should encourage those who, like the late Justice Laskin, tend to view the law as a force for social change.

On September 19, 1985, Hon. Benoit Bouchard announced that the federal government was expanding its court challenge program and funding that expansion with over nine million dollars over the next five years to enable people to challenge the laws in light of the Charter of Rights.

The qualifications to be eligible for funding are:

- 1) That the case deals with equality rights under the Charter;
- 2) The case is an important test case that will affect a

significant number of people'
3) The case is one that comes under federal jurisdiction.

Hon. Benoit Bouchard insisted that all women's groups seeking funds through his department be required to show how their work will change the status of women from one of financial dependence to that of economic and social equality.

Section 15 of the Charter says: "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on; race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. "This list of grounds is not all-inclusive. In addition, discrimination on other grounds to those listed can be challenged under the Charter with the help of this program, such as discrimination on basis of sexual orientation or marital status, for example.

It used to be that if a person wanted change, s/he would lobby politicians but since the enactment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, the trend is now to make a change through the courts.

Groups and individuals who feel that they are being discriminated against should contact the, Equality Rights Panel, c/o Richard Goreham co-ordinator, C.C.S.D. 55 Parkdale Ave., Ottawa, ON. K1Y 4G1. phone 613-728-1865.

The court challenge of the Single and Divorced Speak Out will be held in the Alberta Supreme Court. Anyone interested in more information from our group may contact us by writing to: SDSO c/o P.O. Box 9524, Edmonton, AB. T6E 5X2

A call to celebrate

Plans for activities to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8, and International Women's Week, from March 5-12, are off and running in both Calgary and Edmonton, as well as other centers around Alberta.

In Edmonton, many groups are planning activities centred around this week. Don't forget about the event called "Pieces by Women" sponsored by the Women's Resource Centre. Come and show others pieces by women.. a piece of poetry, a piece of news, a piece of cake, a piece of photography, a piece of music, a piece of your grandmother's quilt, a piece of prose, a piece of child's art, a piece of a letter, a piece of the puzzle, a piece of sculpture, a dramatic piece, a piece of pie, a piece

of peace...the evening will be an informal, unrehearsed opportunity to share pieces by women.

It will be held in KIVA, Education North, 2-103, from 7-10, on March 8.

A march is also being planned in Edmonton, on March 12, culminating in a potluck dinner. (Location TBA). A committee of women is meeting to coordinate this event. For more information, phone ASWAC, at 455-5777, and start planning your participation or event for International Women's Day NOW!



ASWAC Newsletter

Learning our rights

Edmonton Working Women (EWW) has released a handbook for women in the workplace detailing the minimum standards the government has legislated. Topics include the Worker's Compensation Board, unions, childcare and sexual harassment. The book also contains possible remedies for employees for the occasions when employers fail to meet these standards. However, often the government agencies designed to help workers don't help at all. Employees may end up suing in small claims court.

EWW suggests the Employment Standards Branch of the Alberta Government should have the power to determine and award damages, thereby

avoiding legal costs and delays.

Monica Walker, co-ordinator for EWW says, "From the Working Women's Hotline we operate, we know that 80 per cent of our calls end up with no recourse for women. That's why an important aspect of our service is support. We hope this handbook will reach a broad spectrum of women and assist them in enforcing what few rights they do have in the workplace."

You can call the hotline at 453-7957 for free, confidential advice and support. To order a copy of the handbook, send \$1, to cover postage, to EWW, 2 fl. 10826-124 St. Edmonton. T5M 0H3

WOMEN:

**Know
Your
Rights!**



— a Handbook for Women
in the Alberta Workforce

Alberta midwives demand status

The Alberta Association of Midwives continues its active campaign for the legalization of midwifery in Alberta. The licensing of midwifery in Alberta is the first of many steps toward enabling qualified midwives to deliver the quality of maternity care desired by the Association.

The Association has adopted the International Definition of the Midwife used by the International Confederation of Midwives and the World Health Organization.

"A midwife is a person who, having been regularly admitted to a midwifery educational programme, duly recognized in the country in which it is located, has successfully completed the prescribed course of studies in midwifery and has acquired the requisite qualifications to be registered and/or legally licensed to practise midwifery.

The midwife must be able to give the necessary supervision, care and advice to women during pregnancy, labour, and the post-



Karen Schaeffer-Women

partum period, to conduct deliveries on her own responsibility and to care for the newborn and infant. This care includes preventative measures, the detection of abnormal conditions in mother and child, the procurement of medical assistance and the execution of emergency measures in the absence of medical help.

The midwife has an important task in health counselling and education not only for patients but also within the family and community. The work should

involve prenatal education and preparation for parenthood and extends to certain areas of gynaecology, family planning and child care.

The midwife may practice in hospitals, health units or domiciliary (home birth) services. In any of these situations the midwife has an important task in health education within the family and community."

To fulfill the criteria of the International Definition of Midwifery, midwifery needs its own Professional Act, separate from either medicine or nursing within Alberta.

(This piece was taken from BIRTH ISSUES, the publication of The Association for Safe Alternatives in Childbirth in Edmonton and the Calgary Association of Parents and Professionals for Safe Alternatives in Childbirth. For more information about either of these groups contact ASWAC at 476-7332 or CAPSAC 263-1550.

January edition

Creating our own world

by Mufty Mathewson

The creativity workshop at the ASWAC Assembly was the drawing card which made me decide to attend. I was not disappointed.

It was led by Luanne Armstrong, author and poet. Luanne began with outlining some of the difficulties women have being recognized and published. She spoke about the patriarchal control of publishing, galleries and theatre which tends not to recognize women's experience as a valid, important component of society's art. Having our creative work recognized is part of our struggle. It is important simply because we choose to do it. Luanne spoke about exorcising that inner censor, that destructive critic within ourselves who demeans our own creations. Uncover, discover

and reclaim what we already know. Use our own symbols, our own myths and our own experience to create. Then know that these works are significant.

Comments flooded into the circle of participants. Each of us in turn contributed where in our lives we feel we are the most creative. Slowly out of the large circle of femininity came a telling of our creations.

I create each minute of my day.
I create how I look and present myself.
I create a home, a space where people live.
I create songs of my life.
I create ways for children to learn.
I create beauty in my shoemaking.
I create ways in my job as a waitress to avoid being

harrassed.
I create in the healing work of massage, of reiki, of nursing, of child care.
I create connections between people.
I create tiny poems.
I create wonderful food to nourish those around me.
and last but not least, because it is probably true of all of us,
I create my own problems and hardships.

And so, as we recognized in each our own deep and irrepressible creativeness, we were enriched. However, now as I reread what I have written of our creativity, I realize how much of ourselves we give away. No wonder we are under-represented in the "ARTS" as seen by the world in libraries, art galleries and symphony halls, as reviewed in the New York Times, and the Edmonton Journal. We don't demand time, money and tools for our creations but rather fit them into our already overcrowded, task oriented lives. Part of our oppression is our own creation.

So my sisters, thank you for so much renewal that weekend. Be strong in knowing that what you create has worth and much value. Make things better for our daughters by feeling marvelous about what you create. If you can, if you possibly can, bring into being a great big price tag on it and stand taller in the knowledge of your great worth as a creator in our world.

New publication gives expression to women's art

A new publication on Women's Art is calling for entries. Artists may present their work with photos and a short written text.

Gallerie is a new women's publication devoted to Women's Art, and women artists. The first issue of Gallerie is the 1988 Annual, due to appear in June, 1988.

This will be a book length publication of over 140 pages. It will feature the work of over forty women artists in various media. Most of the publication will be filled with photographs of their work, alongside their own descriptions of their art and their philosophy. Gallerie also wants to include articles addressing issues of women's culture, and announcements and advertisements of concern to women artists.

Gallerie is created by women, for women, speaking in their own words of their experiences and concerns. Early subscriptions are available until March 15, at \$8.00 for the first issue, or \$14.00 for a one year subscription, beginning with the June issue, or \$36.00 for six copies of the 1988 Annual, or \$50.00 for a Friend of Gallerie six year subscription to the publication.

The publication also welcomes announcements of interest to women artists; they suggest a donation of \$25.00 for twenty five words.

Cheques should be made payable to Gallerie Publications. For subscriptions and inquiries, write to Gallerie Publications, Box 2901, Panorama Drive, North Vancouver B.C., V7G 2A4.



Health care activists busy

The Alberta Coalition for Universal Health Care continues to busily organize in the fight for better health care and has just recently installed a phone (262-0041) so that people can call and voice their concerns about the Alberta Health Care system. The Coalition is documenting these concerns and will use the information to make a case to the government that access to health services is presently inadequate and needs to be improved. Another encouraging piece of news is that the existence of our access line was brought up in the legislature by the official opposition. It is satisfying to know that as a coalition we are having an impact.

During the last week of November and the first week of December the Coalition organized a phone blitz. The focus of this campaign was to

indicate to the government that health care is not a dead issue. People were encouraged to phone their MLA, Marv Moore, Jim Dinning, Don Getty and Elaine McCoy. Evidently, our message has been heard as there is an indication that sterilization and contraceptive counselling may be re-insured.

The Coalition prepared a presentation based on a package of information prepared by Maureen Osis, that gives facts and figures about health care as well as projections in regard to the health care direction in Alberta. If any group would be interested in hearing this presentation, please contact the Coalition.

The Coalition wants to continue its work, and volunteers are quickly becoming crucially need-

ed. All the work done by the Coalition to date has been done by volunteers and more help is needed. Some jobs that have already been defined are; updating the mailing list, compiling a monthly bulletin, compiling a speakers bureau, sorting postal codes, co-ordinating volunteers, help with mailouts. If you have the time, skill or energy for helping please let the Coalition know at:

Alberta Coalition for Universal Health Care, Box 503 8 St. S.W. Calgary, AB. T2P 1B2. Phone 262-0041 for more information.

New journal launches

Other Voices, an exciting new literary journal, has scheduled its first issue for May of '88. The editorial collective is looking for quality writing and original work that addresses a wide audience.

This new little magazine based in Edmonton, Alberta, hopes to publish biannually, if enough well written material is received. Other Voices is run by a collective that is feminist, largely composed by women but not restricted to women. The editors welcome short fiction, poetry, reviews, essays, and experimental forms of literature.

Efforts will be made to connect with and solicit contributions from cultural and racial minorities. Women from these communities are especially encouraged to submit material.

Those interested in joining the Other Voices Collective, volunteering time or expertise, or becoming a matron or sponsor should phone 432-2525, or 424-6949, or write to Other Voices, 10504 16th Ave, Edmonton, AB T6S 5H9.

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Aid for Nicaragua

Women in Nicaragua have achieved much since the revolution in 1979, but further extension of these social advances depends on material aid from the developed world, such as provided by Tools For Peace.

The democratic government of Nicaragua is controlled by the Sandinista political party, in which 56% of its leadership positions are held by women. This government has improved the lot of women with the following: advertising which exploits women has been prohibited; all adult family members are now legally responsible for helping to support the family unit; day care units - publicly funded and run by trained, unionized staff have been established in urban and rural areas.

These advances are continuing, despite the hardships caused

by the Contra war (supported by the American government) and the American trade embargo. But there are some things the women of Nicaragua cannot provide for themselves.

Women agricultural workers need rubber boots, while those becoming literate need notebooks and pencils. These and other practical items in short supply there, are available relatively cheaply in Canada.

Tools for Peace collects these types of goods and sends a shipment to Nicaragua every year. Donations of practical items, as well as money to purchase corrugated roofing for those displaced by the war, are gladly accepted.

For more information contact Tools for Peace in Calgary 270-8565, or Edmonton 421-1495, or Lethbridge 328-5725.

The Poet's Corner

What's in a name?

by Luanne Armstrong

Sometimes the very simplest and most obvious things can cause a resounding feminist click in one's head. Take names. It was and is, for many of us a revolutionary act to keep our "own names" or "birth name" or "maiden name" to give it all its politically varied labels, when we get married or unmarried or whatever. For some of us, that's not enough because even our birth names are, of course, our father's names, and some of us have renamed ourselves in various ways. Names have power. What we are named, or name ourselves, indicates many things about us.

Calling oneself and one's children whatever we choose works fairly well, incidentally, until one comes in contact with the actual legal system of this country, vis a vis getting driver's licenses, jobs, bank accounts, etc.

I have lived with this situation in varying degrees of amused irony, bemusement, exasperation, since I first managed to produce children. Being rather hard headed and stubborn even at a fairly early age, I decided, when I was a single parent, to call them by my chosen name which is

also my birthname. They liked it; the school didn't care, Welfare didn't care. All was hunky-dory, but no longer. Now they are no longer small children: they are becoming adults. Now they are suddenly forced legally to use a name which they have barely heard of, dislike, and don't want.

Well, why not change it then? Well, it's complicated in a myriad of little ways. First of all, you cannot change your child's name without the permission of its (absent) father. Secondly, one my sons was un-luckily and rather stupidly on my part born in the USA, the child of an American father and a Canadian mother. This means even though he has lived his whole life in Canada with me, he is not technically a Canadian citizen, because up until 1975, only the father could confer citizenship.

I had a call the other day from a woman in a similar situation, also a single parent with four children. These children hadn't seen their father for eleven years. They also went to school and were known in their community by their mother's name. But their names also couldn't be changed because the father would not give



permission. Of course not. Why should he? Regardless of whether he loves his children, or cares about them, or pays child support, or abuses them, they must still carry "his" name, his patrilineage. How many of us are there in this particular closet I wonder, and in how many varying ways? How many of us, having married and then left some man, still carry around "his" name for the rest of our lives. How many of our children carry on the names of absent fathers? And why does it require his permission to change the situation?

There is a huge and growing number of single parent families headed by women in this country. What are we named? What are we calling ourselves? We still do not have equal rights to our children because we still live with a legal system that in its essence, still considers children their father's property. The rights we do have are being eroded in many ways, by new reproductive technology, by courts which are insisting on giving men access to our children, regardless of their ability to father, and often giving them custody as well. And the name is exactly that, the stamp, the seal, the brand of being the property of the father.

Tired of too much TV?

Come to an ASWAC meeting and join the real show.

Watch for upcoming meetings in:

Lethbridge 329-8338 Calgary 233-0731

Edmonton 455-5777



Wisdom written

Dear Sisters,

As one of the first established Women's Centres in Canada we have had our share of problems and conflicts. Like many of you, we stumbled through each crisis and swore that it would never happen again, or that next time we would do things differently! Unfortunately, when the next crisis came we stumbled - again.

Three years ago we got smart. A small group of us went through years of minutes, picked the brains of founding members, and

put down IN WRITING, all the different functions of our Centre and our most successful ways of handling difficulties within the membership. Our original intention was that the resulting document would be for our own use, but, in talking to other Centres, we found a great deal of support for making the manual available to other groups.

With the generous help of the Secretary of State, we have had printed, several hundred copies of our Policy and Procedure Manual, which are now available to our sister groups across the country. The cost is \$5 plus \$3 for postage and handling.

We hope that you will find this manual useful to your groups.

Karen Phillips, for the Policy and Procedure Committee of the Port Coquitlam Area Women's Centre, Box 220 Port Coquitlam, BC. V2C 3V7. Phone 941-6311.

A piece of mind

Dear ASWAC members,

I have just recently been introduced to your controversial women's group. It pleases me immensely that such groups are finally getting together to deal with the quality of women's lives. It is not easy to do anything productively feminist in this male dominated society.

I am a single mom with two children ages 4, 6. I know what it is like to confront social services, employers, manpower, etc. I was in a managerial position at work and was infuriated to learn that once I had quit working to further my education a man took over my position at four times the amount that I was making, because he had a "family" to support. I will never accept this kind of insanity. I am now in my second year of schooling and let me tell you that it is not the easiest thing to do. Schooling not only requires a very disciplined commitment, but nerves of steel to be able to cope with low funds, no support from the children's father, the list can go on and on. But I am not ever going to give up my right to an education

so I may support my family independently and with dignity.

I want so badly to jump into the political sides of ASWAC, but I know that I can't properly help others until I can properly educate and help myself. Then - watch - out. Within the support group that I'm finding myself in are vast areas of knowledge and experience which is exactly what is needed to even approach these subjects logically, systematically, physically and psychologically. I strongly believe that "where there's a will there's a way", as long as it's realistic. Only with our own education, will we be collectively successful! The importance of our unity can't be stressed enough. By banding together we can do anything: there is strength in numbers. We must believe in ourselves; we must be determined; we must not give up now! Our very lives and those that we care for depends on it!

(This letter was unsigned, but we decided to print it. It has been edited for length.)

Thanks!

Dear ASWAC Sisters,

Thank you so much for acknowledging my work with ASWAC at our Annual Meeting and for honouring me with a copy of the delightful 1988 Everywoman's Almanac. The many profound quotes and herstories in the almanac will give me a lot to think about as I use my appointment book throughout 1988. And it will be a cherished keepsake.

I always enjoy our Annual Meetings, the excitement of being with so many dedicated feminists. Meeting old friends, making new ones, the work, the celebration, I enjoy it all! And it is always a learning experience. I feel grateful to be a participant.

In sisterhood,
Addie Miron (Lethbridge)

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National conference

The Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association will be hosting a major national conference addressing the issue of Childcare in Canada. Where is it going? Where do we want it to go? How can we ensure that Canadian Children will receive the kind of quality care that they need?

Childcare: Meet the Challenge will feature major speakers and workshops on the expected new federal childcare initiatives, service delivery developments in the provinces and territories, and recent childcare research. Skill-building and strategy sessions will help conference participants to take an active role in shaping future public policy.

The CDCAA has made tremendous progress in increasing the awareness of this issue across Canada. It has been successful in bringing childcare to the top of the national agenda, and all levels of government are now prepared to act to improve childcare. Never has it been so important to have an informed and involved community.

The CDCAA is well into the planning of this conference, and right now they need financial support. Any donation would be greatly appreciated. The conference will be held April 21-24, 1988 at the Skyline, Ottawa, ON.

No more secrets

NO MORE SECRETS: A Conference on Child Abuse will be held in Toronto, May 24-27. This national conference is designed for professionals who work in the area of child abuse and adult survivors of child abuse.

Conference presenters include dynamic therapists, researchers and activists such as: Lucy Berliner, Sandra Butler, Diana Russell and Lucie Blue Tremblay. For registration information contact: Community Resources and Initiatives, 150A Winona Drive, Toronto, ON. M6G 3S9. Or phone (416) 658-1752.

Midlife workshop

The Women's Program, Faculty of Extension, U of A is sponsoring, "Midlife: Challenges and Changes" a workshop for women. It will feature discussion on fitness and lifestyle, health care and nutrition, aging, sexuality, and re-joining the workforce.

The workshop runs Saturday, January 30, 9 am - 5 pm, and the fee is \$30. The workshop will be held in Humanities, Lecture Theatre 1 on the U of A campus.

For more information call 432-3093.

NAC year-end

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) is holding its annual general meeting in Ottawa, May 13-15. If you belong to a group that belongs to NAC you may be eligible for some travel subsidy.

If you are an ASWAC member and are interested in attending the conference on behalf of ASWAC, contact the office nearest to you. If there are a number of women who would like to represent ASWAC, we will have to come up with some form of a selection procedure.

For more information about the NAC meeting you could write - 344 Bloor St. West, Toronto, ON. M5S 1W9.

Film night

"Change of Heart" an NFB film directed by Anne Wheeler and written by Sharon Riis will be shown January 21, at 7:30 in the Tory Theatre, U of A.

The film focusses on the decision of a farm woman to leave her marriage of 30 years. This film showing is sponsored by the U of A Coordinating Committee on Women's Studies. Admission is free. Call 432-3093.

Know your town

DECCA, The Development Education Co-ordinating Council of Alberta is sponsoring a workshop called "Analyzing Your Community" for development educators and social change activists. This workshop will be facilitated by Lily Mah-Sen January 23, 24 in Calgary. Co-sponsored by CUSO (Canadian University Students Overseas), call 269-4744 for more information.

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Stompa Contra

Come along for fun at the First Annual Contra Stompa Benefit Dance. You can help to stomp the contras or just stomp your feet, but in any case you will be lending your support to the Edmonton Learner Centre.

This mid-season revelry and energizer will feature music with International Themes by D.J. Dale Taylor.

The dance will be held at McKernan Community League at 11341-78 Ave. Starting at 8 pm tickets are \$6 or \$5 for Learner Centre members. A limited number of tickets are available at the Centre. For childcare information, call 424-4371.

Lubicon Lake Cree

The Lubicon Lake Cree people need your help. They are struggling to obtain land for a reserve and maintain their identity as a people.

Some of the action the band is taking to draw public attention to their land claim involves the 1988 Calgary Olympics.

They have asked museums to boycott a display of native artifacts at the Glenbow Museum. As well, the band is asking people to join in a peaceful protest at the time of the Olympic Torch Run.

The torch will pass through Edmonton on February 10. For more information call 424-4371.

Healthy collective

The Edmonton Women's Health Collective is rejuvenating! They are looking for new women with new ideas for projects. If you are interested in health issues and would like to get involved with an old-new group, call Val Gervais 426-1042 after five o'clock.

What's happening? Tell us: 486-5777

Women in the church

"Behind the Veil: Nuns", another NFB film that records the history of women in the Christian and Catholic Churches will be shown March 3, at 7:30. The location is to be announced. Admission is free. This film is also sponsored by the U of A Coordinating Committee on Women's Studies. Call 432-3093 for details.

Working together

Working Together: Women in the Non-Profit Sector is the title of this third annual conference April 8-9, 1988 in Toronto.

This regional conference is designed for women who work in the non-profit sector. The focus of the conference is to provide concrete strategies for developing healthy and productive organizations from a feminist perspective. Charlotte Bunch the internationally renowned feminist activist will be the feature keynote speaker and one of the workshop leaders. For information contact: Community Resources and Initiatives, 150A Winona Drive, Toronto, ON. M6G 3S9. Or phone (416) 658-1752.

Marie Gordon

wants to represent the New Democrats in the federal riding of Edmonton Northwest. She needs your help.

Marie is committed to:

- opposition to the free trade deal
- preservation of universal medicare
- a fair tax system
- affordable, accessible child care
- real equality for women

Marie is:

- a lawyer whose practise includes family law
- a committed feminist and pro-choice activist



Join the Marie Gordon Election Team.
10406 - 134 Street, Edmonton, Alberta
Phone: 454-2314 or 469-9472

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

YOU! You can make the difference!
Your five dollar, ten dollar, fifty
dollar donation can give the legal
defense fund the boost it so badly
needs.

**We are still facing enormous bills
from our lawsuit. See the next
newsletter for an update on the
defamation suit facing ASWAC.**

**Please send donations to the ASWAC office.
Clearly label cheques "for Legal Defense Fund".**



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

Name: _____

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