

# the *Manitoba Women's* newspaper

60¢



## Candidates cringe, feminists fume

by Tanya Lester

Less than a week before the recent federal election, Manitoba women were given the opportunity to measure the weaknesses and strengths of the three major political parties' policies concerning rights for 51% of the country's population.

At least, it has to be assumed the three men — Jake Epp, Stanley Knowles, and Lloyd Axworthy — who participated in the debate, sponsored by the Action Committee on the Status of Women (MACSW) and held February 12, were representative of their respective parties. With the possible exception of Epp from the Conservatives, these members of parliament are often supported for their personal popularity rather than their party affiliation. Their constituents tend to vote for Stanley or Lloyd, not for the NDP or Liberals.

But according to Sally Shrofel, Political Action Committee chairperson and the evening's moderator, the politicians were not picked to be "roasted". "These are powerful men within their parties," Shrofel said. "Hopefully, they will become our allies in Ottawa. We can go to them afterwards and say remember when you said this."

As a result, the debate turned into more of an "ask the candidates" night. However, the format did not matter so much as the responses MACSW and the three feminist panelists were able to solicit from the men. And considering they are all politicians, the MPs were coaxed into saying quite a bit.

Judging from the answers Epp was giving concerning the six women's issues addressed during the debate, he was definitely the most unsympathetic of the three men concerning rights for women. He refused to answer a question

pertaining to the establishment of uniform divorce laws across the country because of "personal" reasons. It can only be assumed that, influenced by his religious background, he is opposed to divorce entirely. In parliament, it would be absurd to assume Epp would even discuss making divorce laws equal throughout the provinces.

When asked his views on making therapeutic abortions equally accessible to women in all parts of Canada, Epp admitted to being a Pro-Life member, which is an organization passionately against permitting abortion for any reason. Nor did he relent after having his arguments refuted by feminist Leslie Campbell. But he did say his party "would leave abortion up to the conscience of the individual." However, if the "individual" should choose to have an abortion, men at the time explain where she would, "We get it if facilities were not available in her area. The provincial wing of his party refuses to finance a reproductive center for Manitoba."

Epp skirted the issue of women receiving equal pay for work of equal value to that done by their male co-workers. He said his department (until the election he was Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs) had re-examined the positions female employers occupied in it. He felt the government could "use the power of example" to influence other employers into advancing women to higher positions with bigger paycheques. Although Clark's government has to be commended for giving women better positions in the civil service, Epp made a false assumption. Without laws,

continued page 7

*Women at work, women against violence*

## Winnipeg celebrates Women's Day

by Martina Freitag

Winnipeg women's groups shook off the winter doldrums in good time for plenty of International Women's Day celebrations this year.

The Women's Building started its first birthday celebrations with a premiere performance of the Painted Ladies rendition of "Women at Work" and a fundraising dinner on March 7th. Workshops from the Women In Trades, a social Sunday brunch and open house rounded out their presentations.

Perhaps the most exciting event for those of us who remember last year's march (and those who note with horror the increasing attacks on women in their areas) was the reclaim the night

march.

"Women unite and take back the night" the poster called out, and the coalition of Women Against Violence certainly were successful during the march along Portage Avenue on March 8. The Winnipeg Committee Against Violence Towards Women (as it's formally known) and the University of Winnipeg Women's Awareness Centre co-sponsored that event.

The violence against women theme was also played out in the Webb Place YWCA panel discussion on different aspects of violence against women. Sexual harassment, rape and battering, racism, war and facism, poverty and

discrimination were all touched upon.

The Nelly McLung Theatre Group and musician Barb Dennett kept the University of Manitoba campus hopping with not one but two recitals there apiece, as the U of M Women in the Law committee and the U of M Women's Centre sponsored these and other activities. CJUM radio, also situated on campus, had a very successful day of women's music March 7th. Earlier in the week the Painted Ladies featured the Manitoba premiere of *The Late Snow*, Manitoba's first all lesbian play.

And just wait until next year! Or, to say it more rhetorically, "the struggle continues."



*The women chanted,  
Yes means yes,  
No means no,  
However we dress,  
Wherever we go!*

# Nelligrams

**ONE OUT OF TEN** Canadian women — an estimated 50,000 women are beaten by husbands or housemates, a recently released report shows. The advisory Council on the Status of Women report says women have few alternatives in leaving these situations — police are hesitant to interfere in family disputes, and Canadian law states that a woman cannot prosecute her husband for rape. The report suggested directing more money to transition houses and distributing more information pamphlets as two short term solutions.

**WOMEN TODAY** must continue to fight for equality in the workplace but the added responsibility of battling the public sector's layoffs and cutbacks have hurt women more than men. This was the message received by 75 delegates who attended a Portage La Prairie conference sponsored by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Equal Rights and Opportunities committee last December. Women in the future would be pressured even more to stay at home and out of the job market, as the predicted economic depression

draws upon us. Union lobbying would put some pressure on the federal government over these points, the conference decided.

**DOMESTICS WORKERS** have formed a full-scale joint lobbying group to force the federal government to ensure immigrant women basic rights such as minimum wages, set hours of work and overtime pay.

"The most obvious example of exploitation in the paid workforce is domestics," Francis Gregory, a spokesperson for a Toronto group told a recent Ottawa organizing meeting.

**CANADIAN ADVERTISORS** are gearing up to fight the sexism "censors", a January issue of a trade magazine reports. "Advertising is facing a new and serious threat — this time from those women who seem to believe that advertising should be forced to help women in their fight for equality," the January 28 issue of *Marketing* reads. The Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commissions' task force on sex stereotyping in the broad cast media found 32 out of 35 current

commercials viewed objectional, the journal points out.

**WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS** have estimated that Ontario employers gain well over 3 million extra profits every year by paying less than men for work of equal value, according to *Union Women*. Present legislation guarantees equal pay for equal work, not work of equal value. In landmark case in the Maritimes, 6 registered nurses for the first time won equal pay from the federal government for doing essentially the same work as male health technicians. Hopefully this trend will continue in other cases...

compiled by Martina Freitag



The Manitoba Women's Newspaper thanks the people whose generosity made this issue possible. They are: Brian Dewalt, Linda Gouriluk, Maude Lelond, Michael McEvoy, Claris Nicholson, and The Uiter election poll.



# Bulletins

Gays for Equality Counselling Unit is sponsoring a lecture tour on the topic of "Homosexuality in the Family".

Tuesday, March 18, 11:40 a.m., University of Manitoba, Rooms 543-544, University Centre.

Thursday, March 20, 8:00 p.m., Brandon University.

Speaker: Betty Fairchild, founder of the Parents of Gays Organizations.

The Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women is sponsoring three to four evening sessions on: "Feminism: what that means for me and how it affects my life".

**First session:** Wednesday, March 26th, 7:30 p.m., YWCA, 447 Webb Place, Winnipeg.

**Facilitator:** Brenda Elliott  
**Registration:** Call 943-0381 (ext. 44). No fee.

Success Seminar for Women in Business: Wednesday, April 9, 8:15 a.m. — 4:30 p.m., Winnipeg Convention Centre. **Seminar Leader:** Dru Scott, Ph.D.

**Registration fee:** \$60. Call 943-6461 for further information.

Women's Employment Counselling Service and the Women's Bureau are cosponsoring an 8 week exploration course on "Pre-Trades Training for Women" in April or May. Call 943-0473 or 944-3476 for further information.

The Caesarean Birth Support Group is surveying parents' attitudes toward their Caesarean birth in Manitoba hospitals. If you have had a child by caesarean section and are willing to complete a questionnaire or simply require further information, call Lois at 284-5428 after 5 (outside of Winnipeg call collect) or write: P.O. Box 164, Postal Station A, Winnipeg, R3K 2A1.

The Winnipeg Committee Against Violence towards Women is sponsoring a seminar on

**VIOLENCE TOWARDS WOMEN**

AT  
The Women's Building  
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MEMBERSHIP OPEN TO ANYONE CONCERNED ABOUT THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN MANITOBA.



Shelly Greschuk has found little support for the U of W Women's Centre.

## Women centres get nowhere

by Linda Wilson

Following the lead established at many other Canadian universities students at the Universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba have recently attempted to organize women's centres. Prompted by many factors, this organization has been made more urgent by incidents of sexual harassment at the University of Winnipeg and the declining enrollment of women at the University of Manitoba.

The respective projects were begun roughly two years ago. Advocates at each institution wanted a Women's Centre to serve as a nucleus. A centre would be a permanent allotted space and would house a library/information service, and drop-in centre. At present, the University of Manitoba Women's Centre has succeeded in obtaining a small room which they have made into a functional office.

The University of Winnipeg Centre has not as yet been given the office for which it has been appealing for nearly two years. The administration has repeatedly pleaded a shortage of space, although individual members have often given more specific reasons pertaining to their lack of enthusiasm for the project. Shelly Greschuk, a student council executive, said that one administrator told her of his fear that the centre would "become a place for girls to get together and discuss their dates."

Greschuk has been unable to get anywhere in her efforts to find a home for the U of W Centre. When the normal channels failed she took the request to the Board of Regents, the highest governing body in the University. In the succeeding months, it has been through nearly every level of the bureaucratic structure.

Its handling has prompted criticism from one of the Board's own members. "They think it's a nuisance thing," according to Dr. Beth Candlish, also head of the Board's Review Committee on the Status of Women; Candlish said that it is typical of any large bureaucratic institution to bury continuous issues "hoping they will go away."

Greschuk also contends that she had been told by another member, of the Board's

concern with the Centre's potential political stance. Although there are many advocates of the proposed Women's Centre, the present situation is not encouraging. Shelly Greschuk is leaving next year and so the Centre will lose her energy and knowledge of the institution. Others are already tiring of being defeated before they have a chance.

The University of Manitoba Women's Centre has had limited success in becoming established. The women's

which we received some donations of hard-cover books; we now have twenty. We took out five subscriptions. All our literature was categorized and filed properly. We designed and produced posters and a pamphlet. Our existence was announced in the social services manual and we had contacted over one hundred women's organizations, such as the Women's Bureau, the centre prepared itself to handle complaints, crisis calls and to begin holding meetings," she

*An administrator said centre might "become a place for girls to discuss their dates."*

intentions were initially rewarded with a grant from their Student's Union. The grant was given one year ago and before the end of the term the organizers had accomplished what they felt was excellent progress.

However they met an unforeseen setback in the fall of last year when the Student's Union refused to give them the \$1,600 requested by the Centre and cut the grant back to \$350, about half the amount received last year for two months.

"They questioned every item on our budget including \$30 for office supplies and coffee. But what they were really asking was "why do you need a women's centre and why do you need to be organized?" said U of M Centre spokesperson Linda Gouriluk.

Gouriluk feels that the Council decision was flawed and based on the faulty concept that the Women's Centre should and can be a money making enterprise. The women were told they had to be established in order to get so much money and that a little skill and motivation would solve the problem. Gouriluk feels that they overlooked the fact that they did do tremendous amount of volunteer staff. (The Centre has been unable to convince Council of the need for a paid coordinator, the most important item on their budget).

"We did a mail out from

said.

Gouriluk described Council's unsympathetic attitude toward the Women's Centre as "perceptual — they don't see the need for the centre. You begin to think maybe that's the way it has to be. You think you're wrong."

"To get established this way would take years. It's hard enough now, but in the coming years the population of women in universities will decrease, because of the decline in arts (in which most women enroll)." Gouriluk said Council's lack of support in terms of a paid coordinator

*Council thought the Women's Centre should and can be a money making enterprise.*

had serious implications for the Centre in light of declining enrollment and rising fees. "Students can't stay in school a long time since prolongment of programs with volunteer work is so expensive. A worse position on the job market is the result of finishing a degree a year or two later."

It may be that the Student Council's failure to perceive the need for a Women's Centre is itself an indication of that need. "In the first year of cutbacks, the hundreds long waiting list of U of M daycare facilities disappeared. There

## The Law Column

by Alice Steinbart

Much has been said about family law and most often this subject has been seen as a woman's issue. But it is really of as much importance to men as to women, and men's views on the subject can range from appallingly sexist to funny.

Of the appallingly sexist views there are an enormous number of examples. There was the male legislator who said during the family law lobbying "I'm not going to share my bank account with my wife." Or the judge who, in deciding one case dealing with the division of assets acquired during the marriage, said he wasn't going to take away the husband's business because the husband so loved money it would be a hardship on him.

And then there are the funny comments. "She left me with the car payments", one man said, while relating to me the hardships he suffered before his separation. I enquired if she had left him the car too, and he replied "yes".

He also believed he had grounds for divorce due to cruelty because his wife was workaholic. When asked how that affected their lives, he replied, "When I come home I have to make all the meals, wash my clothes and even her clothes."

Many men, however, are surprised and deeply hurt when a separation takes place. They have, they believe, met all their responsibilities by sharing their income. They cannot understand why this hasn't been enough.

With the pressures and demands they have had to meet daily to acquire this income their own lives have been difficult. Their wives appear to have ignored these difficulties. Very few husbands view marriage from the wife's perspective. Her unhappiness with life is interpreted as an expression of selfishness or coldness.

Although women are perhaps more likely to understand how their husbands view life, they too form many false impressions. They see, in many cases correctly, that he is very much concerned with matters of money and assets. They do not see the insecurity and fear, the hurt and the vulnerability that accompany those other concerns.

Perhaps he fears being pushed around by her. Perhaps he fears losing control of his life. Whatever the reasons for his behaviour they view his attempts to protect himself as evidence that he's being his usual mean self.

To a woman, success in the world can be achieved through her children, in her role as a mother. If the children choose to live with her and, if she obtains custody of them, her success is assured. But to a man, most often success is equated to money and assets — an equation too often unrecognized by wives.

Marriage breakdown is emotionally destructive. To many people, it's an indication of failure. To prove he is not a failure, a man may look to his assets — the more valuable they are, the stronger his notions of self-worth, the greater his feelings of success. He doesn't want to lose any of this "success" to his wife.

Men's views of marriage breakdown are very complex. Often there is more underneath than they are prepared to show the world. Unfortunately, as a result, men have often been stereotyped wrongly.

Alice Steinbart is a Winnipeg lawyer

was a large drop in enrollment. Now who were those people who dropped out?" Gouriluk does not have proof but she feels this to be a prime example of the urgent need for a Women's Centre — to articulate the overlooked problems of a very large

Generally, there are twice as many women as men going to school part-time. Also according to general figures, there are now just as many women attending university full time.

With the enrollment of women up to 50 per cent, the reluctance of University institutions to aid campus Women's Centres is striking. It can only be interpreted as another instance in the eternal exclusion of women from significant routes to power. Women have always been allowed to organize for the benefit of community and church, but when it comes to addressing the social injustice and inequity levelled specifically against them they are denied a dignity of political power taken by all men as a right.

The attitude exhibited by universities toward female students is critical not only because of their role as exemplary institutions in society but primarily because they supposedly teach us what we are as people. The need for social change must be recognized here or it won't be recognized at all.

segment of the university. She fears that the squeeze precipitated on campus by worsening economic condition affects women more than men, especially in their ability to organize.

The University of Winnipeg Women's Centre points out the financial inequity women face. Female students consistently earn less than men, yet they must pay as much tuition. There is no student aid for part-time students of whom there are far more women than men.

## Editorial

# Rape boring?

by Tanya Lester

It almost seems women have become bored with the whole issue of rape.

True, it has suffered overexposure as a topic of discussion at countless women's seminars and conferences. Every pro-feminist magazine and newspaper has featured articles on the subject. With the re-emergence of the women's movement, in the early 1970's, came talk about rape prevention.

Women, in between stifling yawns, have begun to ask if there are not other more worthwhile, "new" causes on which we should be concentrating.

But if women shelve the issue of rape away in the backs of their minds, who will do anything about it?

Without public lobbying, politicians are certainly not going to do anything to help prevent the crime. Elected right wing government officials won't answer their phones if they think the caller will be talking about rape. Left wing elected representatives get philosophical about the whole subject. Society has to change, they say.

Of course, society has to change. But that's a long range plan. Meanwhile, women should not have to live in fear of being assaulted each time they venture out onto city sidewalks.

To be fair, there have been candidates, of all political stripes, who have advocated immediate change to help prevent rape. They have suggested increased police foot patrol. But to date, few of these politicians have been elected to office.

However, women can work to alter this. We can vote for politicians who see things our way or we can lobby to persuade elected politicians that changes must be made.

Certainly Margaret Burnett from Carman, Manitoba would agree. A while ago, a letter she had written appeared in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Burnett wrote, "The stabbing and rape of women in Winnipeg going about their own business during the past few months is nothing less than horrifying."

She went on to discuss a form of positive action which could be taken. Her conclusion read: "It would seem high time every woman in Winnipeg, Manitoba and Canada, should deluge their MLAs, MPs, city councils, attorneys-general of their provinces and the solicitor general at Ottawa, with letters expressing concern and calling for action to be taken immediately."

If women grouped together and systematically took turns phoning and writing their elected members, we could not go without notice for very long. Added to this, women could hound government representatives at town hall meetings, public debates, and anytime they appear on open line talk shows.

There are a variety of questions to ask each one of them. For example, what does the politician feel about increased police foot patrol? What is his or her view of the existing sex education programs in high schools? Should governments crack down on pornography? Should rapists be given parole without undergoing intensive psychiatric treatment? Do rape crisis centres need increased funds to operate more efficiently? Under the law, should rape be made an assault rather than a sex crime?

Most politicians will answer the questions in a vaguely positive manner. So, of course, the follow-up question has to be whether they will work to implement changes that will help reduce rape. Even if they say "yes", knowing the nature of politicians, women should not hold their breath until the governments do something about conditions.

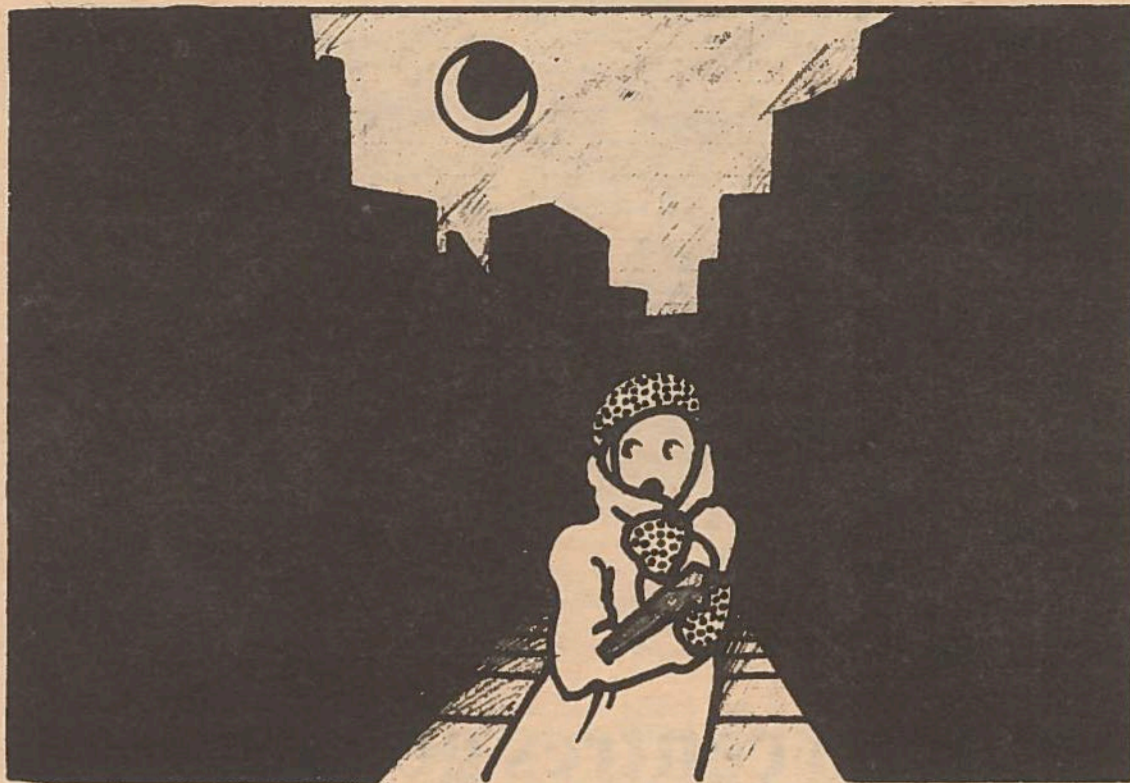
If politicians refuse to act fast enough, women have to start looking at doing something about rape themselves. The "Women Unite, to Take Back the Night" march, held on March 8 as part of this year's International Women's Day celebrations, represents a start. The march is a step in the right direction because each woman who participated in or watched the event will be made to realize she is not alone in her beliefs. Also, people, in general, will become aware there are women who seriously want to see a decrease in the violence they are confronted with on the streets.

Maybe women should look at developing a program similar to the Block Parent organization. People could exhibit signs in their windows. These would be places where women could run from an attacker and immediately phone the police. Learning Wen-do, the women's self defence course could certainly help.

Or women could start to patrol the streets themselves. In Ottawa, the Women's Centre at Carleton University started such a program after the institution's security department refused to patrol areas where women had been harassed frequently. In this way, women might be able to force the hand of Winnipeg City council into providing more money for police foot patrol.

Although no real changes have been made to help eliminate it, rape as an issue has been losing its impact. In order to decrease rapes, we have to start doing more than talking and writing about it. We have to start actually doing something about rape and other related violence against women.

The aim of this newspaper is to provide an alternative means of communication with a feminist perspective in order to stimulate, to inform, to effect change and to unify women's strengths. It also serves as a public forum of discussion for the women of Manitoba.



## Abortion issue

# Mair cracks down in B.C.

**VANCOUVER** — Rafe Mair is personally opposed to abortion. Rafe Mair is the new minister of health in British Columbia. And B.C. women are beginning to mobilize around the issue.

Mair was alarmed to see the number of legal abortions in B.C. was ten times above what he would consider a "normal" rate, and the highest rate, according to Statistics Canada, in the country (26.6 abortions for every 100 live births in 1978). Reducing the figure ten times would bring down to about 3 abortions for every 100 live births. Canada's national figure is 17.4 (compare, for interest, the national U.S. figure of 38.5).

Mair went on to say that he favours abortion only in "exceptional" circumstances, but gave no more details of what were "exceptions" and who would do the deciding.

Federal abortion law permits "therapeutic abortion" when there is "a threat to the life or health of a woman." The law does not recommend how threat to life should be interpreted, and doesn't insist that all hospitals establish therapeutic abortion committees.

B.C. women became alarmed as some of the hospital abortion committees began to reflect pressure from anti-choicers on the committees approved 15, 25% less abortions at two hospitals, with comparative or worse figures at others, as differing hospital rules and regulations tightened up.

Anti-choice strategy is this: concentrate on disrupting access to abortions at the smaller hospitals. Eventually the major hospitals will be swamped, unable to meet demand, and will cut back too.

The result of the vagaries of this law is that there are enormous disparities from region to region, and from province to province. The law, in short, does not work. Only about 20% of eligible hospitals in Canada perform abortions.

About 1,000 Canadian women, almost all of them from B.C., are going to Washington state each year for a same day abortion. It costs \$130 and no parental consent is needed for teenage women. (In the Maritimes, where access to abortion is appallingly difficult, it's always been New York or bust).

Pro-choice women posted public service announcements at busstops and on telephone poles, which outlined the issues and featured a pregnant man posing the question: is this exceptional?

### This month's staff:

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## the newspaper

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## Rural job ghettos worse

By Nancy Copeland and Gail Friesen

Women living in rural Manitoba have more difficulty finding work than men in those areas and receive lower wages than their female counterparts in the cities, according to Canada Employment Centre sources in Morden.

The sources say, while employers are starting to change, sex-role stereotyping still influences the kind of jobs for which women are hired. This results in most women being employed at clerical or service jobs while making wages generally lower than those in the city. A rate of \$3.50 an hour, even for experienced woman workers, is average, the sources say.

Low wages, especially among women, in the country is attributed to the lack of unionization. Employers tend to pay less because, since a large pool of potential labour is always available in many rural areas, they are pressured to pay high salaries. As a result, most women tend to hang on to jobs from fear of competition which is heightened due to the fact that most jobs require unskilled labour.

Opportunities for professional jobs, scarce even

for men in rural areas, are much more infrequent for women. Government and education positions are among the few professional outlets for women outside major centres. Often married women with responsible positions, when their husbands are transferred to rural areas, find few opportunities or, as in the case of bank workers, experience loss of seniority.

Manitoba Department of Labour and Manpower statistics show about half the women in Manitoba over 15 years old participate in the provincial labour force. However, participation rates for women remain fairly steady throughout the year while rates for men drop in the winter. The difference, according to some sources,

suggests, while far fewer women are employed than men, a greater proportion of men may be employed in seasonal areas such as agriculture and construction.

Department figures show in July 1979, 82.3 percent of the 367,000 Manitoba men, over 15, participated in the labour force as compared to 49.5 percent of the 384,000 women in the same age bracket. In December 1979, the figure for men was 77.8 percent while women stood at 49.4 percent. But unemployment rates are higher for women in the summer than in the winter. Last July 6.7 percent of the women in the province who wanted jobs were unemployed as compared to 4.6 percent in December.

## Money

### Wife's credit not worthy

by Wendy Craig

Many people pay lip service to "equality of the sexes", but fail to honour their so-called beliefs in practice.

As an example: A working woman recently separated from her husband, applies to her bank for a personal loan — and is turned down flat. The reason? She had no credit record in her own name. The fact that she had borrowed money on previous occasions, and from the same bank, made no difference. She and her husband had always borrowed jointly, and ironically the credit record had been maintained in her husband's name only — not hers.

The sad fact is that it is usually much more difficult for a woman to get a personal loan, or obtain credit, than it is for a man. This can be the case even though a woman may be earning just as much as her husband or her male contemporary, and even though she may be every bit as responsible. The determining factor as far as the bank, or any other lender, is concerned, is "credit worthiness." And credit worthiness — logically enough — is largely based on the borrower's credit record.

While most banks claim that their policy is equal credit opportunity for all, some individual loan officers still believe the old theory about women borrowers not being as reliable as men.

These loan officers sometimes request a man — usually the husband or father — to co-sign a woman's loan application. Sometimes they may even ask irrelevant personal questions such as: "Are you planning on starting a family?" or "How long do you expect to continue working?"

Most women are perfectly capable of handling their own financial affairs, although they may be a little out of practice. So it makes sense for any woman, married or single, to take charge of her own monetary matters; to budget, plan, save and establish a sound credit record. But how can a woman ensure that financial services (such as bank loans) will be available to her when she needs them?

When a woman marries she usually loses her independent credit history to her husband — unless she takes positive steps to prevent this. Keep in mind that any loan a husband and wife jointly repay, or any credit account they jointly maintain, will reflect only on the credit record of the husband, even if the wife makes all the payments. So how does a woman correct this situation?

The first thing a married woman should do when the couple is applying for a joint loan is to request that a credit record be maintained in both names — not just the husband's. She should insist on this, as it is a good initial safeguard against possible problems in the future.

Then after a couple has taken out, and repaid, several loans, this will be recorded in the credit files of both the wife and the husband. Of course if the loan payments are late, or missed, or if the bank has to send out repeated reminders this will reflect adversely on the credit records. So it is advisable to make loan payments promptly on or before the due date, thus establishing a reputation for reliability or credit worthiness.

If you do not have a credit rating at the moment, and you wish to establish one, then here is what you should do: Apply for one of the major credit cards (Visa or Mastercharge). When used properly credit cards provide a good method of credit establishment (as well as interest free financing for up to 45 days). Alternatively take out a small loan with your bank, even if you don't need to borrow.

Suppose you want to buy a car, or make another major investment, and you have enough cash in your savings account or in savings bonds to pay for the particular item, do not pay cash. Borrow the money instead, using your cash or bonds as collateral. Repay the loan promptly in accordance with the terms. Then once that loan has been repaid, take out another one when circumstances warrant it. This way you will be establishing a good credit record in your own name.

Remember that when you apply for a loan you are not asking for a favour. Borrowing money is a business transaction, so you should not feel intimidated by a loan officer. If you have a good credit rating, then you can insist that this alone be the basis for the bank's decision to lend. And if a loan officer is reluctant to lend you money, or if the interest rate seems out of line with the credit risk, don't hesitate to go over his head and talk to the bank manager, or take your business to another bank.

If you apply for a loan and are refused, don't meekly accept "No" for an answer. Ask if you were refused because of your credit record, and if so, go to your local credit bureau and ask to see your file.

Remember that any person may review his or her credit file on request. The credit bureau can not refuse to show it to you.

It could be that incorrect information has crept into your file through an error such as, for example, another borrower having the same name as yours, or simply through some clerical mistake. If there is an error in your file, point it out and have it corrected. And because errors can happen, it's a good idea to check your credit record at least once a year.

## More rural feminists

**BRANDON** — Rural women are becoming more interested and more aware of women's issues, says a past Outreach worker, Daniela Evenson. "Trends that occurred in an urban area ten years ago — divorces, family break-ups — are beginning to hit rural areas," Evenson said.

"That's supported by the statistics from the Westman Woman's Shelter on wife battering, and separation. A lot of the women showing up at the Shelter are from rural areas."

Evenson ought to know. As Outreach worker for the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, she kept in contact with and provided services to about 40 listed MACSW members, and initiated further contact with more than a hundred more people. The job involves liaison work with women's

groups already in the area as well.

"We're finding," said Evenson, "that there is an increasing awareness in rural areas, by women, of status of women issues."

"The women's movement started about ten years ago in urban areas, then spread to rural areas", she said.

"In particular family law is an issue that a lot of rural women are interested in. They want to know what their status is under new family law. As a result there's more interest in lobbying."

"There are very limited resources in a rural environment to deal with this, and access to information about existing resources is limited. This is what we are concerned about."

Funding was granted for a part-time Outreach Worker from the Secretary of State

from December to June last year. On the basis of the considerable work accomplished at that time further funding was made available for a similar project this year.

Carol Potter has taken over the position until the end of June.

*Do you agree or disagree with Daniela's statement? Write and let us know what women's groups in your part of Manitoba are doing. We would like to hear from you.*

# Simple methods eliminate irritations

by Sandra Smith  
Thompson, Manitoba

Many women today suffer from urinary and kidney problems, as well as vaginal infections. These problems can range from slight discomfort when urinating to recurring discharges. Besides being very annoying, many can develop into more serious problems. Many women can help in preventing or aggravating these problems by being more aware of certain products to avoid using or simple steps to follow in personal hygiene.

Cross off coloured toilet paper. The ingredients in the colouring will aggravate conditions in all of these

women. If worried about smell, the best thing to do is to shower often and change napkins regularly.

There are also a few tricks to bathing. A shower is the best to have if suffering from any of these problems, but if you really prefer a bath, there are a few simple steps to follow to insure your protection against irritation.

First, make sure the tub is clean and rinsed out well. Be careful with most bubble baths and bath oils. If you need something, use a squirt of baby oil in the tub or better yet, after your bath rub yourself down with a moisturizer or oil.

When soaking be sure to soak first. Immediately after

movement and are breathing grounds for germs.

Teenagers should be made aware of the fact that wearing too tight a jean with a bulky seam that means constant rubbing on the genital area will cause many problems which if left unattended will require a visit to the gynecologist.

Following these simple procedures will help eliminate some problems and lessen others. With persistent problems, seek out a doctor's advice. Try several doctors, if need be, until you get satisfactory attention and care. People should be responsible for their own bodies, and for teaching their children preventative health care methods.

However, doctors are responsible for providing health care past the

doctor should be familiar with these products or other effective medications. If he or she isn't up on these common

so-called "intimate" problems, urge the good doctor to do some homework. Reprinted from *Why Women*

## Money questions

**Q:** A very close friend became separated from her husband after thirty-six years of marriage. Besides losing her support, she has lost financial security along with her husband. At her age, she can no longer start to build for the future, therefore faces poverty in her old age. This is not an isolated case, how can women at home avoid this financial pitfall?

**A:** In addition to ensuring that one has some marketable skills, the woman at home could provide for her future by investing extra household money and cash gifts in her own name.

As well, an argument can be made for a husband's contributing to a Registered Retirement Savings Plan in his wife's name as well as his own. This has attractive tax advantages in the present and in the future. A tax deduction is available now for the RRSP contribution, and the money and interest earned is sheltered from tax until withdrawn from the Plan. Ideally, one would make withdrawals in the form of income

payments over several years when one's income is low (upon retirement for the husband, for example). The effect is splitting income over the wife and reducing taxes paid by the

husband. Women around the country are working hard to get home to contribute voluntarily to the recognition of their productive efforts. If this legislation is amended, it would also help secure the financial

of the Minister of Commerce (hons) and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Standard Auto Spring Works Ltd. and Company, a chartered

firm specializing in financial matters.

## Coloured toilet paper will aggravate vaginal problems

instances in women, and sometimes in similar male problems as well. Also, looking at the environmental angle, coloured toilet paper will not decompose, and so is a great pollutant.

"Feminine" deodorant sprays (vaginal sprays) or scented napkins are other products to avoid. They do more damage than good for

washing with soap, rinse off well and out of the tub right away. Don't sit in a tub filled with soap suds as this will aggravate any problem.

Another preventative hint lies in buying underwear. Only buy panties that have a cotton crotch. Cotton helps absorb moisture and allows air movement. Nylon and other synthetic materials prohibi

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# Women fed-up with government studies

*continued from page 1*

corporations, concerned mostly with profit margins, will not advance women to higher paying jobs if women are willing to do the work for lower wages than men would.

The only promise Epp made concerned the section of the Indian Act which allows native men to marry white women and maintain their treaty status while Indian women lose their treaty rights when marrying white men. He said this particular section would be amended in 1980. But when congratulated by feminist panelist Alice Steinbart, Epp backed up a bit and said that the Conservatives would merely ensure the question was presented to the House in 1980. He refused to reply to Steinbart's question on whether the amendment if passed, would be considered retroactive.

## Axworthy would not give a date

Axworthy said the section of the act should not be changed until the new government has had a chance to meet with Indian leaders to discuss amendment of the whole act. He neglected to put a date on this meeting, so hopefully the Liberals will not wait for over another decade before making improvements in the act. Nor did he mention that, like most of the country's "leaders", the majority of Indian leaders are men who might not consider that particular section of the Act to be overly important.

For the most part, though, Axworthy seemed supportive of women's rights while using daycare

as his "baby" for the evening. He stated that abortion laws would not be such a concern if adoption agencies and daycare facilities were improved in the province. Although failing to directly address the equal pay for work of equal value issue, Axworthy said if the federal government could "unlock the freeze" on daycare in the province, women could participate more freely in the work force outside the home. If Axworthy is committed to doing anything for women while toting his status of women portfolio, it is to work for improved daycare in the province.

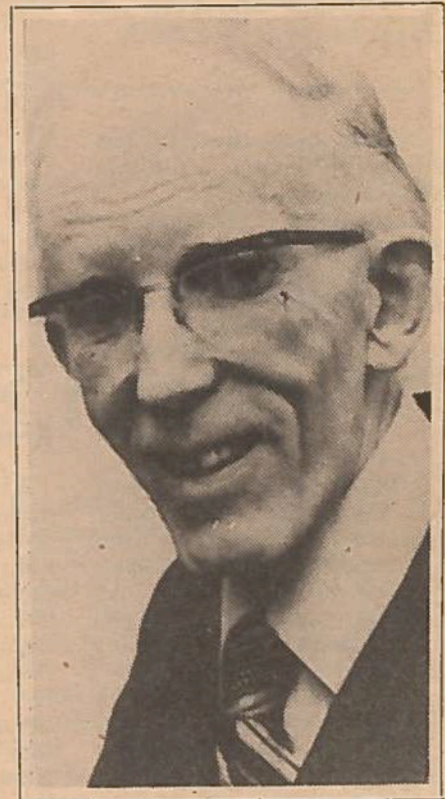
Axworthy, also, admitted he had not supported his own party's bill that now makes unemployment insurance more difficult to obtain and hits women the hardest because many work on a part time basis or are able to work for only short periods of time. But, concerning pensions for retired women, Axworthy accused Knowles of being monetarily irresponsible when the NDP MP said he felt widowed women should receive pensions equal to those of retired men. After making the accusation, he went on to say that, with the increasing number of old age pensioners, the whole subject should be approached on a non-partisan basis. If only he had extended his argument to include all issues concerning Canadian women's equality to the country's men.

Of the three politicians, Knowles was definitely the most agreeable. "We think equality should be effective right across the board," Knowles replied to the question concerning Indian women's rights. When answering the other questions, he seemed to continually echo this statement until he became almost embarrassed that his ideas corresponded so closely with MACSW.

However, the NDP have always been, in principle anyway, very supportive of women's rights. In practice, as Axworthy was quick to point out, the provincial party has not fared so well. Axworthy alleged the NDP reneged on their policy concerning improved daycare when they finally gained power in the province.

When questioned on making the accessibility of receiving therapeutic abortions equal throughout Canada, Knowles was strongest in his support. "I am appalled at the idea of abortions but I don't think women should have to go to back rooms to get them," Knowles said. Apparently, he disagrees with Manitoba's NDP who supported the building of a reproductive centre at its last convention only after the resolution was watered down to mean the support was only in principle and would not necessarily have to be supported practically.

Much of what the three politicians said frustrated, and angered the audience but each man promised at least one move he would make to help bring about women's equality in Manitoba Canada. Epp, though in opposition now, can still work to get a bill in front of the House which can amend the Indian Act to erase the prejudice it presently contains towards native women. Axworthy must be reminded, before the Liberal Party rests too easily on its majority, that he might appease Manitoba voters by increasing and improving daycare facilities in the province, through changing the nature of block funding, as he promised. Knowles should have his memory jogged into remembering his promise that women's issues would be on the top of the NDP's list after the election with "equal pay for work of equal value on the top of



that list." He could certainly coax the NDP's friends in the Canadian Labour Congress to help him with this.

But if these politicians are going to do anything for the women's movement, they have to be constantly reminded about the promises they made on February 12. Ruth Brown, feminist panelist, put it best when she warned the three men at the end of the evening. She said, "Women are fed-up with studies, plans, and research projects. You gentlemen have promised us action and we expect action — no studies, no plans, no research projects."

# Birth control pill causes the "blues"

by Dr. Sue Wood

This month I'd like to pass along some stuff that has come out recently on depression as a side effect of birth control pills. I'm not a terrific fan of the pill — I think it is still in its experimental stages and many of the effects that all those added hormones have on the body are as yet unknown.

There is no doubt, however, that it works better than anything else currently available for preventing pregnancy and it's also definitely true that many women take them for many years with no side effects at all and no known complications.

(This is especially true since the low-dose pills came out about five years ago. Low doses means less than 50 mg. of estrogen in each pill — usually 30 or 35 mg. Check your pills to see how much estrogen is in them — if you're not on a low-dose pill, ask your doctor why. Occasionally the low-dose pills are not suitable for individual women. But all too often women are on unnecessarily high doses of estrogen for no reason at all or simply because that's what their doctor is used to prescribing).

Other women just never do well on the pill. One of the most frequently expressed reasons I hear for stopping the pill is that they felt "lousy" or irritable or moody or depressed.

I think there is a tendency in the medical profession to pass this off as neurosis or hypochondriasis. There are some people who opt for the simpler solution of blaming their woes on some external force, such as the pill, rather than facing up to the problems in their lives (we all cop out this one on occasion).

But perhaps as many as one in four women taking the pill get feelings of increased irritability or depression and I don't have any doubts that most of the time, the feelings are real and related to the pill. The symptoms have a tendency to continue, sometimes getting progressively worse. And in some women these symptoms may begin so gradually that they don't think of the pill as a possible cause of their "blues".

There are two things that I can suggest you try, short of going off the pill altogether. The first is to switch to a pill with a lower progesterone content — this sometimes works and until recently was really the only other suggestion.

Lately though, researchers have shown that taking the pill tends to cause deficiencies of several key vitamins. Several British and American studies have found that body stores of both vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) and folic acid (folate) decrease while on the pill and some of those studies link lower than normal values of these vitamins to the development of depression.

There is a group of nutritionists at the University of Toronto that are now nearing completion of a pilot project counselling women about avoiding side effects of the pill through nutrition. They found that at three Toronto medical clinics, 62 of 145 pill users said they experienced an increase in depression, tiredness or irritability since starting the pill and are treating this by advising increasing intake of B6 and folate.

There's no concrete data on this but the initial stuff looks promising. There's enough anecdotal evidence from individuals who have tried it and swear that it works that I think it's definitely worth a try.

In terms of a dietary source, folate is found in liver, kidney, carrots, asparagus, mushrooms, broccoli, potatoes, cheese, bananas and spinach; and B6 is found in beef, sweet potatoes, bananas, lentils, green vegetables, wheat germ, soya products and fish.

I have no definite information on how much is enough. If you're taking the pill, but not having these symptoms I would suggest making an effort to eat well from the list of foods that these vitamins are in.

If you're feeling really "blah", I suggest you get multivite tablets from the drugstore which contain a variety of B complex vitamins (especially B6) as well as a folate supplement, and take these in addition to trying to eat well. Five mg. of folate and five-ten mg. of B6 should be enough.



# Kinnear successfully cracked the field

by Heather Marshall and Tanya Lester

Almost every feminist has dreamed of landing a job in a male-dominated field.

But take it from someone who has successfully cracked the field; such a job may often fall short of the dream.

Marilyn Kinnear, the first licenced auto mechanic in Manitoba, thinks a woman should not choose these careers just to prove something to men.

"Many women drop out of the auto mechanics course because they don't know what to expect," Kinnear said. "Work with someone or take evening courses. Be sure you know what you're getting into."

Although Kinnear has her Journeyman's papers, she feels lucky to be making a little over five dollars an hour on straight time. (This means she is paid for an eight hour day regardless of how many cars she works on).

The average mechanic's wage in Brandon is \$7.25 an hour, but most are employed on a flat rate basis. On this wage scale, the mechanic is paid only for the number of cars he or she fixes each day. If business is slow, the mechanic's pay cheque is

affected.

"People think auto mechanics really rake in the bucks," Kinnear said, "but nothing could be further from the truth. No one tells you about the hidden costs. For example, you have to buy all your own tools and they aren't tax deductible." A good set of tools can cost up to \$5,000. Now even established mechanics need to buy new sets of tools, to match metric requirements.

## Kinnear advises

Kinnear advises that a person with mechanical aptitude should consider heavy duty mechanics or factory machine repair if he or she wants to make a decent living. At the present time, there are many job openings for such mechanics. The demand is presently so great, that often companies in these fields have to fly in experienced people from other countries at considerable cost.

Kinnear thinks, although other mechanics may disagree, that there is an oversupply of auto mechanics in Manitoba. She suggests that a mechanic consider relocation to Alberta or British Columbia, where there is a higher demand. If the mechanics graduate wants to stay in Manitoba, he or she should take any job available.

"Don't expect to go out and get that bench job right away. Wash cars, change tires, start at the bottom. It's the only way to get in," Kinnear said.

"When I first started, I was offered a job on the grease rack," Kinnear said. "It wasn't a very good job, but I didn't want to face my mother unemployed, so I took it." Kinnear spent only three weeks doing grease jobs at Binkley Motors in Brandon before she was promoted to a bench job.

Kinnear decided she wanted to be an auto mechanic when she was in grade nine. "I had always wanted to be an airline stewardess, but I knew I didn't fit the weight and height requirements. Then when I was in grade nine I took an aptitude test which suggested that I was best suited for auto mechanics. That test always stayed in the back of my mind," she said.

## Mother skeptical

Kinnear maintains that her parents did not discourage her from enrolling in the ten month auto mechanics course at Red River College. Though Kinnear's mother has always viewed her daughter's career choice with skepticism, her real support came from her father. "Great," he said, "now I can get lots of help."

Neither was she discriminated against by her classmates. "Sure, there was some teasing," she said. "They'd ask me, 'Hey, are you sure you're in the right class.' And of course, they pulled the 'muffler bearing' joke on me. But they do it to the younger guys, too. I wasn't the only one running around looking for non-existent muffler bearings."

The real discrimination began when she started looking for a job. "Most places wanted me to work in the office. Some car dealerships didn't even take my application," she said. "I was beginning to feel discouraged when Binkley Motors phoned me and offered me the grease rack job."

## No discrimination

Now that Kinnear has a job as a mechanic, she does not feel discrimination in the workplace.

But Jocelyn Quigley, an apprentice at a foreign car dealership, disagrees with her. Quigley says the discrimination is there but it's subtle. She thinks people expect her to make mistakes because she is a woman. "They'll ask me to change the oil and act surprised when I actually do it," Quigley said.

However, Kinnear does admit that women in mechanics could be prone to more health problems than men. Because of the heavy lifting involved, people with slighter frames can develop back problems more frequently than larger people do. "Lifting heavy transmissions for instance can be hard on a person if she's slight," Kinnear said. "A good place for a woman could be in a place like tune-up. It's the light end of the job."

There are also health hazards common to both men and women. "In winter when the shop doors are open, I find my hands stiffening. I'm afraid of developing arthritis like some of the others have," Kinnear said. "When you've got to get under a car, the cold wet cement can be hard on your knees, too. But when the shop doors are closed, there's a real danger of exhaust fume inhalation."

For these and other reasons, Kinnear does not think she will work in an auto mechanics shop for the rest of her life. Eventually, she would like to teach auto mechanics at a technical high school or a community college. "Too many people don't see the versatility in auto mechanics," she said. "Really it's the kind of job that could take you anywhere."

# Conference asks why farms go to sons

by Sandi McKnight of Selkirk

One hundred rural women was the optimistic prediction for the seminar, and 100 rural women came. The seminar provided a unique opportunity for women to share and discuss their needs, questions, and ideas about the challenges they and their family-run operations will have to face in the 1980's.

Facilities were provided by the Agricultural Extension Centre in Brandon — operated by the Manitoba Department of Agriculture (MDA) — with centre principal Keith Smith responsible for the agenda which had been drawn up after questionnaires were circulated among farm women. Preliminary results of the life using the 1979 Canadian Rural Development Council (CRDC) study on the present nature and extend of work done by women in rural communities across Canada.

Rogers pointed out that rural women approached life in a bold and vigorous manner but quoted the study as saying that more than any other single group, they continue to be "occupied in forms of labour that are receiving no direct financial recognition and which continues to be socially undervalued." Work generally means the activities of those who are active members in the paid labour force. This implies that anyone not paid for their labour does not work, she said.

Census figures from 1976

survey indicated concern with energy conservation and the law as it affects farm women.

To answer the concerns expressed, MDA scheduled talks by Lenore Rogers of the Saskatchewan labor department's women's division; Fay Lowes, a farm wife and lawyer with the firm of Hirschfield, Hunt in Brandon; Nadya Kostyshyn Bailey, a multi-cultural coordinator with the Manitoba Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs; and Pat Graham who farms with her husband at Newdale.

## *farm women must still provide household work as well*

The program opened with Lenore Rogers talking about the rapid changes which have occurred in rural during the past 20 years. Rogers looked at the difference between the myth and the reality of rural women in Canada participating in the labour force, including those working at paid labour as well as those who 20 hours per week unpaid in a family enterprise, Rogers told her audience. As well the CRDC study found that rural women spent 53 hours weekly on house work, and if they worked in the family business, the hours totalled 81. Women with full time jobs in the paid labour force and work in the family enterprise and housework, worked 101 hours per week, she said. If the job was part-time, the work week totalled 88 hours.

In spite of long hours, studies show farm women are "still bound by (their) traditional social pressures to provide a full range of household service too," Rogers said. "The limitations imposed by this double workload is significant for rural women. Their heavy workload inhibits the freedom of many women to pursue other interests which may give them personal satisfaction and benefit their community," she said. Other concerns raised by Rogers included limited occupational opportunities

and support structures such as day care, the physical distance from larger communities which have employment and where education centres are located, and the dominance of the traditional attitude towards the role of wife and mother which can inhibit the exploration of alternative solutions to these problems.

Minimal training allowances for dependent spouses discourage many women from seeking re-training, she said. The implication is that a women's work doesn't need to be compensated, leading to women feeling that their work is not important. Rogers concluded her talk with a call for society's recognition of the value of women's work and greater representation for women in the decision-making processes that shape the economic and political future

of rural communities. Fay Lowes discussed three areas which could have the greatest impact on the individual farm wife — the Family Maintenance Act, the Marital Property Act, and wills and estates. Lowes' topic drew such a large response during the question period that she and Tonia Rushall, comptroller of B and B Steel Ltd. of Brandon were scheduled to conduct an expanded three-day two weekend workshop on legal and financial knowledge for women at the University of Brandon. The workshop, organized with the co-operation of the Women's Bureau of the department of labour, ran February 22 and 23 and March 7 and 8.

Pat Graham discussed the partnership between a farm couple as well as providing ideas for making record keeping easier. She briefly outlined how women become involved as full partners in a farming operation, what responsibilities are involved and how women can convince their families that they are serious about participating fully.

Nadya Kostyshyn Bailey talked about cultural activities available to rural residents. She said what a person does as a cultural or recreational activity depends on where they live and what they consider important. Women have to set priorities — look at what they want to achieve, Bailey said. She said the biggest problem is not knowing when to say "no". This leads to problems

with people becoming spread so thin in various activities that they become totally ineffective, and as well no one else has the opportunity to learn.

Following presentations by all four speakers, separate areas were set up where participants could ask questions and discuss their legal, cultural, social, or record keeping problems with the speakers. Concerns and questions raised by the participants included:

- not being able to receive a salary from the family farm or business unless it was incorporated
- the lack of reliable help leading to extra burdens for farm wives and children
- a likely gas shortage which could have a drastic effect on farmers with large or widely scattered land holdings as well as the activities farm families participate in
- changing the attitude that work as housewives is not important
- how to adopt a new creative role and drop the traditional role without a feeling of guilt
- why farms go to "sons"
- isolation and making an effort to get involved in the community
- changing parental attitudes about women and their roles
- developing a better understanding between rural and urban residents
- changing the image of homemaking so that women could provide these skills for other women, for pay, and not consider it demeaning, but rather a profession.