

the *Manitoba Women's* newspaper

Volume 1, Number 6, October 1st, 1980

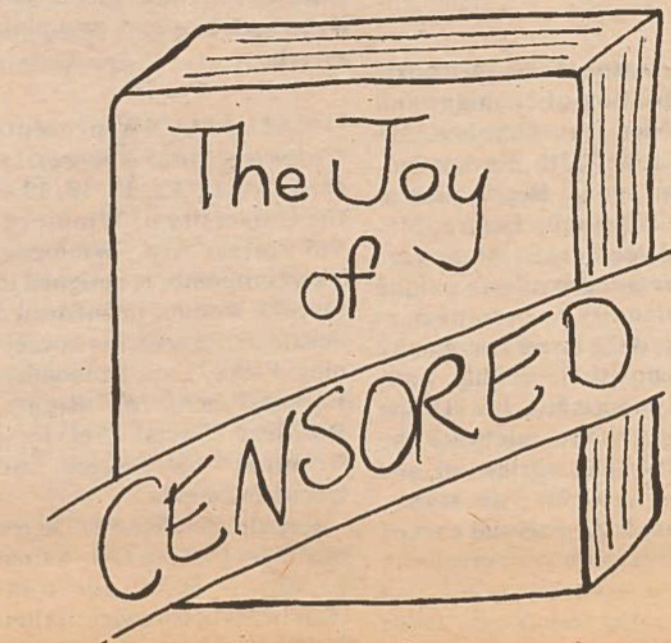
Protest planned on censorship

By Sharon Reilly

On the 25th of October 1980 a public demonstration is planned to protest Attorney General Gerry Mercier's prohibition of *The Joy of Gay Sex* and *The Joy of Lesbian Sex*. Sponsored by the Anti-Censorship Committee of Winnipeg's Liberation Books, it is hoped this action will result in the government lifting the threat of prosecution made against local booksellers.

The censorship issue developed at the end of April of this year when a woman entered Classic's bookstore in downtown Winnipeg with the intention of buying a copy of *The Joy of Cooking*. Instead, she mistakenly picked up *The Joy of Gay Sex*. This woman then laid a complaint charging that obscene literature was being sold at the store.

As a result, the Department of the Attorney General, Province of Manitoba, requested under threat of prosecution, that both *The Joy of Gay Sex* and *The Joy of Lesbian Sex* be removed from the shelves of both Classic's and Cole's bookstores. Nothing was done to prevent the sale of the heterosexual manual, *The Joy of Sex*. Both stores complied with the request and other Winnipeg stores later removed the books as well.



On May 2nd 1980, Winnipeg Gays for Equality and a University of Winnipeg professor Walt Stein publicly declared that they would challenge the police threats of prosecution made under the auspices of the Attorney General. At the same time, N.D.P.-M.L.A. for St. John's, Saul Cherniak, and criminal lawyer Jay Prober, publicly questioned Mr. Mercier's policy on censorship.

The following day Walt Stein attempted to instigate a court test of the obscenity

charge by purchasing under-the-counter copies of both books, and then inviting police prosecution. No charges were laid, however, because the Attorney General informed the Legislature that Stein's action was contrived to bring about a prosecution.

These events resulted in a public outcry against such arbitrary censorship in numerous articles in both Winnipeg newspapers and in letters-to-the-editor. In an editorial of May 13th 1980, the *Winnipeg Tribune* commented:

All this is the result of one complaint to the police about *The Joy of Gay Sex*. It seems incredible that books can be censored in this way, and equally incredible that Mr. Mercier would claim that the Crown was not attempting to act as a censor for publications for the building of a coalition to focus continued public attention on the issue and to force sale. What was it trying to do then?

The *Free Press* of May 12th 1980 warned of the dangers of permitting the banning of the books to go uncontested:

Whatever the legalities of the act, the effect of the warning has been to exert a form of prior censorship which could be dangerously extended into other areas. Worse it has contributed to an atmosphere in Manitoba in which it becomes more and more unlikely that homosexuals can find even-handed justice.

Despite continued public pressure against the Attorney General's Department, *The Joy of Gay/Lesbian Sex* remained (and still remains) off the shelves of Winnipeg stores. In mid-May, Walt Stein and Chris Vogel of Gays for Equality approached Liberation Books, an independent Socialist Winnipeg bookstore, and asked that the store sell the books in order to bring

about a test case in court. This request and other courses of action were considered by bookstore members, who then formed an Anti-Censorship Committee. Since that time the committee has undertaken a campaign, which has included the circulation of an anti-censorship petition and government action.

The Anti-Censorship Committee has articulated its concerns as follows: firstly, if these books are successfully banned, the possibility of a further extension of censorship exists; secondly, if allowed to proceed, such censorship would create a precedent for later attacks on the rights of the lesbian and gay communities as well as other minority groups; and finally the arbitrary manner in which this prohibition was carried out suggests that threats and intimidation can be substituted for due process of law.

Across Canada, newspapers such as Toronto's *Globe and Mail* and *Body Politic* have taken up Winnipeg's Anti-censorship issue and have called for a reversal of the Attorney General's decision. Additional provincial organizations including the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties, and the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, have now taken up the issue.

University Women's Centre Opens

By Barb Bettazoni

The University of Winnipeg has opened a new Women's Centre - a victory after a two year quest for space.

Liz Povoledo, the only elected woman representative on the University of Winnipeg Students Association, takes credit for obtaining a room allocated to the Women's Centre. Povoledo hopes to see the centre become more politically involved both within and outside of the University.

The centre will also house a

resource library open to both sexes. "The centre should provide a support system for women in the university," said Povoledo. "It's a place where women can come to talk about problems they face as women and as students".

The centre presently has plans to sponsor Clinic workshops, various speakers and a Wendo presentation. Tentatively scheduled to appear is Canadian novelist Margaret Laurence.

The centre is staffed by volunteers and response has been enthusiastic. A few male

students have also expressed an interest. A collective of five women will be elected to run the centre. Policy will be determined by open general meetings.

In response to generating a more political consciousness amongst women, the centre is pledging support to the *Women into Rail* campaign and the *Winnipeg Clinic strike*. The boycott of Nestle products is endorsed and any other products with sexist advertising (Pulse Jeans for example) or exploitive practices.

We've uncovered:

- *strikers with stamina* p. 3
- *"solid buck, solid asset and solid ice"* p. 3
- *some facts about menopause* p. 3
- *birth-control control* p. 5
- *the "plane" truth* p. 4 & 5
- *women: "they come, they call and they're carried in"* p. 7
- *Chiclet Gomez and public housing* p. 8

and more . . .

Editorial Eliminate hazard — Not worker

By Gail Marchessault

Health hazards in the workplace have long been concern to workers, trade unionists and others. More recently the question of occupational reproductive health hazards has been raised by feminists.

While all workers' health should be protected, corporations such as American Cyanamid, General Motors, Du Pont, B.F. Goodrich and others are currently promoting the attitude that this is solely a women's issue.

In January 1978 the American Cyanamid chemical plant in Willows Island, West Virginia told women workers in the lead pigments department that lead posed a health hazard to the human fetus. Women capable of bearing children were banned from handling lead. The company's non-sacrificial altruism forced two women to transfer to lower paying jobs and five women to opt for voluntary sterilization in order to keep their jobs.

Ostensibly, exclusionary practices are adopted to protect the vulnerable human fetus. But there are some important discrepancies that make this policy discriminatory towards women.

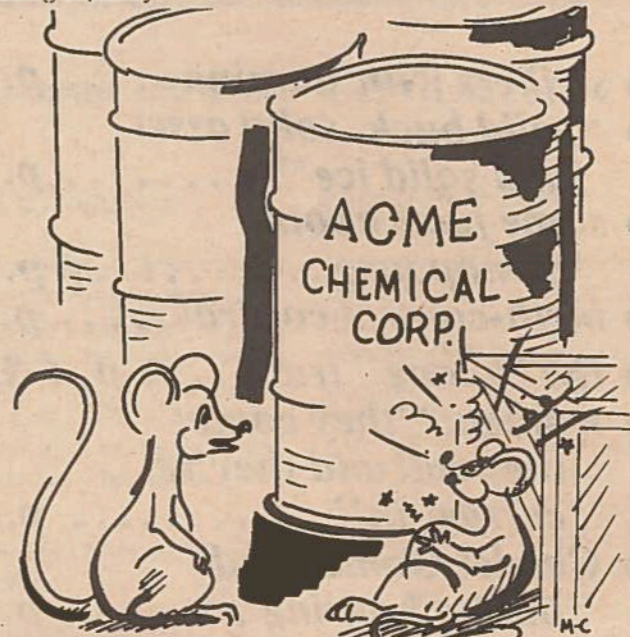
Little research exists documenting work hazards to human health, and much less to pregnant women. If a workplace is not safe for fertile women, the question arises as to whether it is safe for anyone.

Reproductive hazards do not affect only women. Harm to the fetus can occur in two basic ways. Teratogenic (toxic) substances in question cause damage to the fetus not only as it develops in the woman's womb. Mutagenic substances can alter the genes of both men and women resulting in harmful mutations.

Studies have shown that the offspring of male anaesthetists have a higher than normal rate of birth defects. Women married to dentists have a higher rate of miscarriage. Carbon disulphide is known to affect the male reproductive system. Men are not excluded from these professions or other potentially dangerous workplaces to protect the unborn.

It is notable that exclusionary employment practices affecting women occur only in high-wage, traditionally male industries. Hazards of a similar nature in traditionally female jobs do not arouse the same degree of concern. Dental nurses, assistants and technical hygienists are exposed to mercury and radiation. Both work environments are teratogenic. Radiation is also mutagenic. X-ray technicians and operating-room nurses face reproductive hazards. The chemicals and solvents used by launderers and dry cleaners may be dangerous during pregnancy. Lab workers have to deal with viruses, many of which can cross the placenta. Yet women are not banned from working in these situations.

Reproductive hazards are not only a women's issue. By presenting reproductive hazards as a women's issue, corporations divide the work force and avoid the real issue. Reproductive hazards are a serious problem for all workers. The solution lies in the elimination of the hazard, not the workers. The International Labour Organization favours similar protective standards for both sexes. Laws are needed to prevent discrimination in hiring on the basis of pregnancy or child-bearing capacity.



'DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD HAVE MOVED BEFORE YOU GOT IN A FAMILY WAY?'

Bulletins

Junior League of Winnipeg announces a presentation: *Report From Copenhagen* on October 8th, 1980, at 7:00 p.m. U of Winnipeg Cafeteria (North End), 515 Portage Avenue. Speakers will be Mona Brown, National Women and the Law, and Lila Goodspeed, who was a Canadian delegate to the United Nations Mid-Decade Conference for Women: Non-government organization Forum.

Metamorphosis: A Prairie Celebration of Lesbians and Gay Men from October 10th to October 13th, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Registration at Gay Community Centre, 245-3rd Ave. South. *Metamorphosis* will provide an unique opportunity to present ourselves to the larger community in a positive, visible way. More importantly, it will bring us together to celebrate the richness and variety of ourselves and our life styles. Culture is an essential part of our lives — let your creativity run free — show your arts and crafts, sing your songs, dance and enjoy.

The first *National Farm Women's Conference* will be held in Ottawa December 2-4. The idea for this meeting was initiated by the Cattelbelles of B.C. and the Women for the Survival of Agriculture in On-



By Brigitte Sutherland

tario. A planning committee made up of representatives from all provinces met recently to set objectives and plan agenda.

NAC/MACSW presents *Constitutional Correction Conference: Oct. 17, 18, 19* at the University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg. This conference is designed to involve women in informed debate and discussion concerning: Family Law, Economics, Entrenchment of Rights, Politics, Social Services, Criminal Law/Justice, and Communications.

Registration Fees: \$2.50 for members (before Oct. 6 then \$3.50) — \$4.00 for non-members (before Oct. 6 then \$5.00).

Send to: *Constitutional Corrections MACSW*, Box 1916, Norwood P.O., Winnipeg, Man., R2H 2A1.

Registration kits containing papers on each issue will be forwarded two weeks prior to conference.

Volunteers for the above

Bulletins

NAC/MASCW Conference are urgently needed. Call Joanne Di Cosimo at 247-3255.

Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women Fourth Annual Meeting: *Women And Power During The Eighties*, November 14-16, 1980. Register by Oct. 17 with Marguerite Maxwell, 100 Maitland Street, Apt. 302, Toronto, Ont., M4Y 1E2.

Registration Fee: Members \$35.00, Daily Fee \$10.00, Banquet Fee \$5.00.

Non-members \$40.00, Daily Fee \$10.00, Banquet Fee \$5.00.

For more information on conference write to: Dr. Norma V. Bowen, Conference Coordinator, Dept. of Psychology, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ont. N1G 2W1.

The Education Connection Conference on Oct. 17-19 1980, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia is sponsored by the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women and The Centre for Continuing Education.

Registration fee is \$40.00. Write to: *The Centre for Continuing Education*, Mount Saint Vincent University, 166 Bedford Highway, Halifax, N.S., B3M 2J6.



Apology

We would like to apologize to Scatt (who in the meantime have changed their name to Bloody Mary, a women's punk band) for reporting their name as Scad in our September issue.

Get your Manitoba Women's Newspaper in Winnipeg at:

Brigit's Books-Women's Bldg., Crazy Ox-RRCC, Dominion News, Harvest Food Co-op, I.D.E.A., Centre, Liberation Books, Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women-Office-Y.W.C.A., Mary Scorer Books, Red River Bookstore, The Folklore Center, Union Centre-CUPE Office, University of Manitoba-U. of M. Bookstore, The Info Desk, Medusa Hairstylists, Women's Resource Center-Y.W.C.A., The Other Bookstore, and drugstores in Winnipeg and Brandon.

In Thompson at The Northlander, in Traverse Bay at Traverse Bay Corner; in Steinbach at Son-Lite Book Mart; in Beasejour at Western Drug Mart and in other areas across the province.

If you would like to distribute the paper or know someone who would be willing to distribute the paper, especially in Brandon, the north, or rural Manitoba, please contact us by writing to Box 551, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 2J3.

The aim of this newspaper is to provide an alternative means of communications 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.



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The Manitoba Women's Newspaper is currently operating out of Box 551, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G 2J3. For further information call Debbie Holmberg at 772-8170. Views expressed in this publication are those of the writer and does not necessarily reflect The Manitoba Women's Newspaper policy. Submissions are welcome. Editing rights are reserved and submission does not guarantee publication. A self-addressed stamped envelope will ensure that submissions will be returned to the writer. We have applied for a 2nd class mailing permit. Published ten times a year. Price: \$5.00 per year, 60 cents per issue.

Women's Building a solid asset

By Brigette Sutherland

Solid Brick, Solid Asset is how the Winnipeg Women's Building was billed by the Edmonton-based women's publication *Branching Out* shortly after its opening two years ago. Now entering its third year of operations the recently elected executive of the Winnipeg Women's Cultural & Education Centre Inc. will have a challenging year ahead of them, mainly due to a monthly deficit of approximately \$800.00.

The three-storey building at 730 Alexander Avenue was bought for \$30,000 from the United Church of Canada by W.W.C.E.C., a non-profit organization. An eight year mortgage remains. The idea of a woman-owned centre had been around for some time and is also being pursued in other cities in Canada and the U.S. W.W.C.E.C.'s Board of Directors maintains and administers the facility and operates an Outreach office, a free clothing depot (donations

of winter clothes are desperately needed 783-7889), and a women's bookstore from the premises.

The Volunteer/Outreach program of W.W.C.E.C. is set up to coordinate women who are interested in volunteering their time/skills to The Women's Building and want to take part in such fall activities as fund-raising concerts, social evenings, Monday night games' nites, winter sports extravaganzas, etc., etc. Brigit's Books carries new and used women-authored books, women's music, newspapers & periodicals, crafts and MAGIC products. The store is open Tue., Thurs., and Saturday from 2 - 8 p.m.

The building has office space, meeting and conference rooms, a stage and two halls, and a physical education space. The Women's Building is available for use by any women's groups concerned with women's cultural, economic, and social needs. The facilities are rented on an ability-to-pay basis and the Board of Directors have made the needs of low-income women a priority.

Presently a number of groups are located in the building:

- Women In Trades is an association of women assisting other women in training or employment in the so called 'non-traditional' areas.

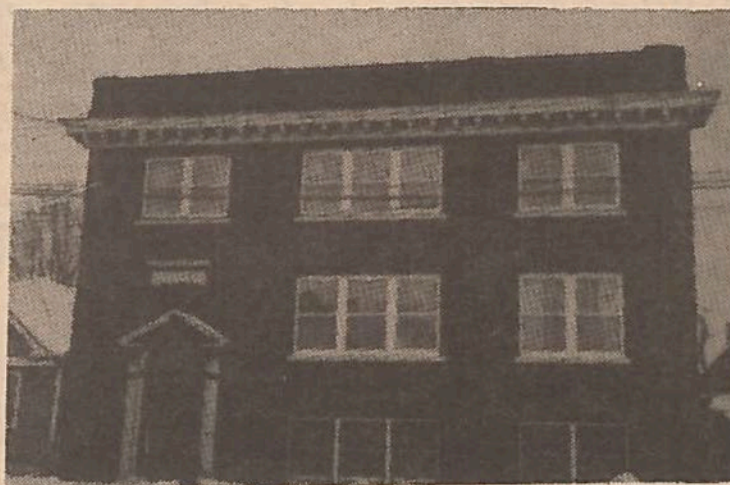
- The Native Women's Transition Centre is a group who are working towards securing a house for native women and their children in need of temporary housing/assistance.

- The Native Women's Advocacy Group is just being set up to help Native women with employment counselling.

- M.A.G.I.C. (Media, Arts, Graphics, Ideas Co.) is a women's enterprise designing and marketing woman-made products such as jewellery, T-shirts, buttons, calendars.

- A printing company, Artemis Reproductions, should be operating before Christmas.

The Women's Building publication *Harpies* is published somewhat irregularly by one of the various groups in the building who take turns



The Women's Building, 730 Alexander Avenue, Winnipeg

depending largely on their financial fortunes of the day.

- Wen-Do Prairie teaches the womanly art of self-defence at the building regularly, and the Committee Against Violence Towards Women is a group of women concerned with halting all types of violence towards women by organizing speakers and educationalists.

- The Painted Ladies Theatre Co. is a feminist theatre group whose members write, direct, and act in women's theatre presentations. They will do take-out theatre for organizations, and also do main stage productions at the Women's Building.

Karen White, the president of W.W.C.E.C. says, "because we wish to make the building a women's space, supported by and supporting the women's community, we have no long term government funding. Women have less access to money and we rent on an ability to pay basis so it's a struggle to meet our operating costs, i.e. pay the heating bill. You could say the Women's Building will soon be composed of solid brick, solid asset, and solid ice."

Brigette Sutherland is a founding member of W.W.C.E.C. and a past president.

Winnipeg Clinic strike continues

By Barb Bettazoni

There seems to be no immediate resolution in sight to the 18 week old Winnipeg Clinic Strike.

About fifty health workers left their jobs to protest poor working conditions, lack of standard benefits and wage parity.

The Clinic has to date ignored recent efforts at conciliation and has remained uncommitted to re-instating

workers after the strike. Many of the positions left vacant have been filled.

Strikers are now saying that they will settle for a basic contract with a re-instatement clause.

According to the strikers, Minister of Labour and Manpower, Ken McMaster is not willing to intercede.

cont'd to page 8

Facts on menopause

By Lorri Harris

Many women still look frightened or puzzled when someone mentions menopause. We may have come a long way, but not far enough to say, "I may no longer be capable of bearing children, but I'm still a total woman."

Society has conditioned us to believe that woman's main function is to have and raise children. When we are no longer able to bear children, we may begin to feel inadequate.

However, menopause should be the start of a new freedom. A time when the risk of pregnancy and the monthly curse will no longer be a set

back. It can be said that at no other time in a woman's life is there such an interplay between the physical and psychological factors as during the

menopausal years. In order for women to feel better concerning menopause it is important that they know more about it.

The average age for the onset of menopause is around age 50, yet there have been cases of women starting as early as their late 20's. About 5% of women can still bear children at age 55.

Other factors that may contribute to early or late menopause are economic status. It has been noted that poor women may start earlier than wealthy women. Also non-childbearing, late puberty, over-weight, and women who have had their ovaries removed are likely to have an early menopause.

There are no apparent reasons why this happens.

During menopause there are a wide range of symptoms.

The most common of these are the cessation of menstrual cycles and "Hot Flashes" Hot flashes are described as being heat waves from the waist up and they may last only a few seconds or up to half an hour. They may happen once or several times a day.

Some of the less common complaints are insomnia, headaches, heart palpitations, dizziness, abdominal pains, constipation, diarrhea, nausea, gas, vomiting, tiredness, loss of appetite, weight gain, and vaginal itching.

The list of symptoms is rather staggering, but you will be relieved to know that you will experience one or two only.

Menopause is caused by the drop of estrogen in your body. Therefore if you have severe

cont'd to page 8

Wanted

Volunteers for The Manitoba Women's Newspaper

We still need writers and contacts from areas in Northern Manitoba, rural Manitoba and Winnipeg. Input from these areas will establish us as a true Manitoba voice on feminist issues.

Also needed are volunteers interested in fund-raising, advertising, distribution, photography and production.

For more information please contact:

Debbie Holmberg at 772-8170

Profile on Rosella Bjornson

"When I told my high school counsellor, he acted very surprised and drew my attention to the fact that there were no women in the commercial aviation business".

By Debbie Holmberg

As a small child living in Champion, Alberta, Rosella Bjornson's love for flying was as obvious as her confidence that she would some day become a pilot.

Rosella's father owned a small aircraft in which she accompanied him on many flights. Her interest in aviation was more than a child's curiosity and having constant exposure to flying, she decided at that early age she would make it her livelihood.

"When I told my high school counsellor, he acted very surprised and drew my attention to the fact that there were no women in the commercial aviation business". Already a competent and confident young woman, she remained unmoved by this typical comment and continued in her plans.

After graduating from high school, she enrolled in Sciences at the University of Calgary because "I heard that

Flying Club.

At this point, Rosella had already accumulated 500 hours of flying time, well above the 150 required hours. While working as an instructor, she received her Instrument Rating and wrote her exams for Air Transport Rating.

At a stage where she was both qualified to fly commercially and bored with teaching, Rosella began making application to the airlines.

Clearly at this time in Rosella's career, the status of women in aviation was exposed. Although Rosella does not seem particularly upset with the progression of events, it is quite questionable as to whether she received fair treatment from the commercial airlines.

Young male students she had taught were being hired while she received letters regretting that they could not employ her at this time. Finally, on April 16, 1973, Rosella's determination paid off when she was hired by TransAir Ltd.

Rosella relates, "I heard from a friend that TransAir was hiring pilots that day and cancelled all my appointments so that I could be there". Obviously, Rosella's impressive qualifications and flying hours combined with being at the right place at the right time made it impossible for the airlines to overlook her any further.

She became the first woman airline pilot in Canada and the first woman jet qualified airline First Officer in North America. She was also the first woman member of CALPA (Canadian Airline Pilots Association).

Undoubtedly, problems Rosella has had to deal with relate directly to her being the first woman to enter the male dominated field in Canada. She is hesitant to discuss the topic of sexism, but agrees that she felt "a great pressure to be not only good but better than the men in order to prove myself".

Work relations with the male pilots have been surprisingly good but from time to time a competition between Rosella and a few male pilots is felt, although unspoken. Rosella does not have a problem dealing with this because she is self-assured and therefore does not have to par-



Photo by Ron Schwartz

The Ministry of Transport includes in its regulations for commercial pilots that once a woman is presumed pregnant, she is no longer fit to fly.

By the time she was 17 years of age, she was well versed in aviation knowledge and began her flying lessons at Lethbridge Flying Club. As she says, "Young women at this age can be easily distracted and end up following paths away from serious aspirations". She believes "you must start young and be serious".

When Rosella told friends and family of her career choice, she was both supported and encouraged by them. Some others were discouraging.

airlines gave preference to university graduates".

She spent four years in the Bachelor of Science program majoring in Geography and Geology. During this time she studied for her commercial licence and received it in 1967.

Rosella says, "one of the biggest problems in obtaining your private and commercial licences is the expense". The approximate cost of a private licence is \$1500 and commercial, \$3600. In 1969, she received her Instructor's Rating and a year later began instructing at The Winnipeg

participate in this game playing.

Difficulties did arise when Rosella became pregnant. The Ministry of Transport includes in its regulations for commercial pilots that once a woman is presumed pregnant she is no longer fit to fly. The implications of this poorly worded and discriminatory regulation are horrendous; for Rosella it meant quitting her

job with no maternity or sick benefits.

Her union, CALPA, comprised of mostly men, had no provision for maternity leave, having never had to deal with the problem before. Rosella did not qualify for sick benefits because although it is assumed that a woman is unfit to fly during pregnancy she is not in a state of illness.

CALPA is dealing with this problem and the women pilots

ingly more difficult. At present, Rosella is at home with her baby son awaiting enrollment in her re-training in September.

More support from male pilots and women's groups are needed to improve this situation. Chauvinistic attitudes are still present, being directed especially toward the stewardesses.

Rosella does get chided periodically about the fact that she retained her maiden name.

Resentment arose in the minds of some of Rosella's co-workers, when she took a leave of absence and kept her seniority. This resentment was unwarranted since this practise is not unusual among the male pilots.

In a field where competition is fierce and stereotypes are still present, Rosella Bjorn-

She became the first woman Airline pilot in Canada and the first woman jet qualified airline First Officer in North America.

hope a fair regulation concerning pregnancy is instituted quickly.

Rosella now has to face the problems of a working mother. Often pilots are away from home for a stretch of five days. Poor daycare plus social pressures and judgements on working mothers are making Rosella's situation increas-

ing. Rosella's skill and conviction are qualities to be reckoned with. Rosella feels a strong and necessary obligation toward all the new women entering into this field.

She offers her help and encouragement as often as possible.

Rosella Bjornson is a woman we can all be proud of.



BUT ALICE, WHEN I SAID YOU OUGHTA TAKE FLYING LESSONS, I MEANT A PIPER CUB !!

Our name is so boring.

How boring is it? Webster's uses it as its definition for dull. You can end this atrocity! Send your suggestions to

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... And The 99's

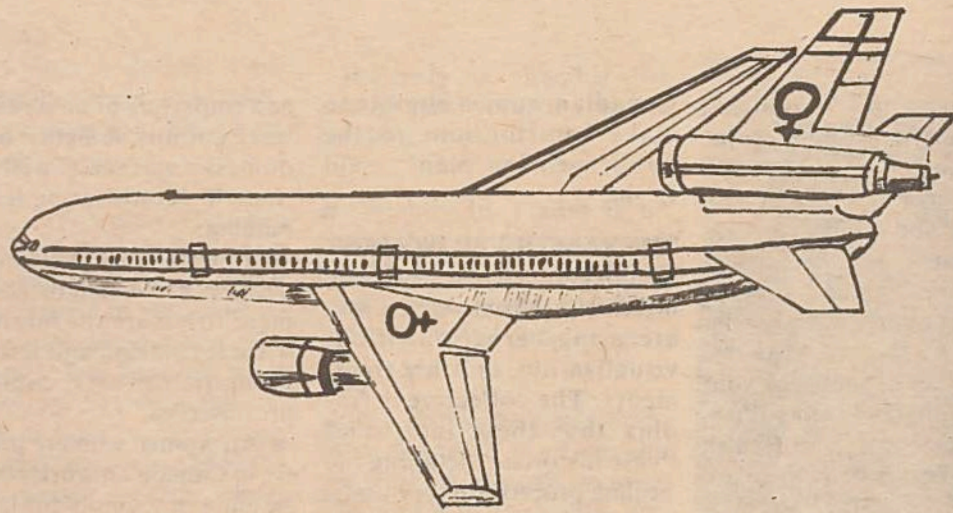
By Debbie Holmberg

Organized in 1935 by the famous American pilot, Amelia Earhart, the 99's Inc., the International Organization of Women Pilots, has a heritage to be proud of. Founded with an initial membership of 99 women the organization exists to provide communication between women in a male dominated field.

Today there are sections and chapters of The 99's in 35 countries and a growing membership of over 5500 women. Oklahoma is the site of the international headquarters.

Winnipeg has its own chapter of approximately 15 women. Judy Saxby, Secretary of the Greater Winnipeg Chapter, tells us that this figure is an all time low. Ms. Saxby, who has a keen interest in women's aviation and an impressive flying record, is convinced the 99's is an important organization for women.

Both Rosella Bjornson (Governor of Western Canadian Section) and Judy Saxby encourage women pilots to join the 99's since it serves as an excellent forum for discussion of problems encountered by women as well as a place for women together for companionship.



Contributions women have made to aviation over the years have virtually gone unrecognized.

Meetings are held monthly during the winter months. During the summer, meetings are held at pre-determined locations, where the women fly to.

99 activities include safety seminars and flying companion seminars. Every Christ-

mas the 99's do their part in spreading Christmas cheer by taking disadvantaged children on night flights around the city.

An annual poker derby is also held. Members fly to approximately eight different airports with the terminus at

St. Andrews.

Perhaps the most important service the 99's provide is in educating and supporting women with their careers. Contributions women have made to aviation over the years have virtually gone unrecognized. Saxby points out that "it is not a new thing

for women to be flying, they have been doing so for many years and with great competence".

Only licensed pilots can become members of the 99's, but the women are always available to share information and advice. Members are anxious to see the number of women pilots grow and offered a scholarship in 1980 for advancement of training.

Although it is obvious that women pilots still need more support and recognition for their careers, it appears that some men still treat this organization with scepticism. Saxby says "some men feel threatened by the existence of such an organization. Their attitude seems to be that men don't have such a club; why do women?"

However, aviation in general has been a male club. There is a good reason for the 99's to exist and we must applaud their successful attempts to higher the status of women in this field.

There is a display of early Canadian women's aviation at the western Canadian Aviation Museum, located on Lily Street. Rosella Bjornson is featured in this display.

Health plan excludes birth control pills

By Shelley Kowalchuk

While at one Winnipeg university a woman's center is flourishing, women in another university in the city are losing ground — the student union there has decided the coverage of birth control pills are not "financially feasible"

At the University of Manitoba, the student union is embarking on a new health plan for students, a plan that was under the auspices of the Manitoba Blue Cross for the past three years.

Yet UMSU's new health plan is already sparking controversy over a lack of coverage of birth control pills.

Student Services director Kris Anderson explained that UMSU's new policy will differ slightly from Blue Cross, on two points in particular.

One new benefit concerns graduate students, who stay on campus the full year as opposed to undergraduate students who are here for only eight months.

Another, more controversial benefit centers around the

coverage of 80 per cent of all prescription drugs, curative and preventative, bought at the University Centre pharmacy, within the limits of \$25 to \$75.

This benefit excludes birth control pills.

Anderson defended UMSU's decision of omitting birth control pills from coverage, saying this particular coverage "wasn't financially feasible".

He added the executive was aware of possible complaints of discrimination and had considered not including the benefit at all, but eventually decided it was "better to offer something" than none at all.

When asked what formal type of guides or statistics were used to determine the effect the coverage of birth control

pills would have on the health plan, Anderson said the executive had used "no concrete figures", but did use an approximate figure, three dollars per month, provided by Mike Crutch, UMSU Director of Administration.

Anderson explained that the three dollar per month figure, over eight months, would approach the limit set up by UMSU and ensuing claims could "cripple the system".

However, Stew Wilcox, manager of the University Pharmacy thought UMSU "doesn't have a leg to stand on" in regard to their birth control pill policy.

He explained since 100 per cent of the student body is covered, "people who don't get prescriptions subsidize those students who do". Though 18 per cent of all new prescriptions are for birth control pills, Wilcox said there are many students who will never take a prescription out of the pharmacy.

Anderson said though birth control pills weren't in the plan, "if a reasonable case can be made for (the use of birth control pills)", such as pre-

venting sickness, he thought exceptions could perhaps be made.

Anderson explained the history of UMSU's relationship with Manitoba Blue Cross began three years ago when UMSU was searching for a good, inexpensive health in-

surance plan, to replace the UMSU insurance then in operation; Blue Cross was chosen.

Last year, however, Blue Cross' bid, along with those of other insurance companies, was considered too high by the Executive.



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Nelliegrams

By Brigitte Sutherland

MEMBERS OF THE CANADIAN Library Association considered the many aspects of power at their 35th Annual Convention June 1980. The following resolution, sponsored by CLA'S Gay Interest Group and approved at the Annual General Meeting and by the Association's Council, addressed one specific area in which lack of information has resulted in powerlessness: "Be it resolved that the Canadian Library Association, recognizing the need for information pertinent to the understanding of human sexuality, urge that libraries provide materials which promote this understanding, including more information which will improve the understanding of homosexuality, and that the Association publicly support the need for such information"

"**REPRODUCTIVE HAZARDS in the Workplace**" is a new position paper by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The paper gives an overview of the issues and makes extensive recommendations for improving workplace conditions to combat reproductive hazards. The paper is available on request from CACSW, 600-269 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba (949-3140).

A FEMINIST RESOURCE group in Vancouver has begun to collect information on occupational hazards, legal

procedures and organizing ideas around women's occupational health issues. They are also undertaking research on pesticides and clerical work, as well as public worries on issues of concern to women workers. They plan to produce a regular bulletin on women workers' health issues — they seek your input. Contact Women's Action on Occupational Health at 1501 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. (604) 736-6696.

STARTING OCTOBER 1, more than 1,500 widows of war veterans will finally begin receiving pensions of about \$185 a month. The new Law, given royal assent in the Senate July 17, extends benefits to more widows and dependent children. Under the old legislation, widows of injured veterans were entitled to

a pension only if their husbands had been disabled by 48% or more. Now, to qualify, your husband has to have been impaired by only 5%. Long-time campaigner for better pension provisions, New Democrat Stanley Knowles, says that abandoning the 48% rule is a step in the right direction.

In other pension news, Federal Health Minister Monique Begin says that the Canada Pension Plan will be amended to allow the incomes of spouses employed in family business to be considered pensionable earning. "This could make as many as half a million

Canadian women eligible to make contributions to the public pension plan", said Begin.

THE VANCOUVER WOMEN'S Health Collective is gathering information from women who are using herbs, nutrition, visualization, or other treatments. The collective is finding that these individual "case histories" detailing the healing process are very useful to consult in making choices about treatment. Please send information to Vancouver Women's Health Collective, 1501 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1W6.

INTERCEDE: INTERNATIONAL Coalition to End Domestic's Exploitation is a coalition of 35 groups whose purpose is to organize support at the provincial, national and international level for the struggle to achieve domestic workers' rights; to pressure the Ontario and federal governments to amend their legislation affecting domestic workers — whether landed immigrants, on temporary work permits or Canadian citizens. The organization and individuals of INTERCEDE endorse the following resolutions/objectives:

- The government of Ontario immediately reintroduce and pass a bill that would include domestic work under all minimum wage legislation.
- The contract currently designed by the Ministry of Employment and Immigration

and employers of domestics on work permits be signed by the domestic worker as well, and that this contract be legally binding.

- Independent community agencies be funded by government to ensure the minimum wage legislation and terms of domestic workers' contracts are observed.
- All women who are presently in Canada on work permits be allowed to apply for landed immigrant status immediately.
- Welfare rates be raised immediately to a living wage, and that immigrant women be allowed to apply for welfare with no threat of deportation.

INTERCEDE can be contacted at 348 College Street, 2nd floor, Toronto, Ont. M5T 1S4.

IN SEPTEMBER A HEARING on a class action suit by Denver mothers against the Colorado Department of Social Services is taking place. All persons who are now or will be receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children are included in the class action. Lorraine Irish is the named plaintiff who is charging that the Dept. of Social Services has been conducting their Monthly Reporting Experiment in violation of Federal and State laws. The experiment meant that each AFDC parent has had to fill out a monthly status report in order to get their next month's welfare cheque.

The plaintiffs charge that as a result people were cut off

welfare that needed it; that cheques were late or did not come; notice of cutoffs was not given soon enough; and that the whole experiment was conducted without legal authority. The Welfare system hopes to get women off welfare by driving them through a hopeless tangle of red tape. If this class action is won, it will directly affect AFDC mothers' lives in lessening the hassles and worry about their monthly cheques.

AN ALTERNATIVE TO giving birth on hard operating tables, a birthing chair, is now being distributed in Canada. The Birth EZ Birthing Chair is modelled on chairs used in medieval times. It allows women to sit upright and provides support for their legs and back. Research shows that the sitting position has many physiological advantages over the lithotomy position currently favoured by doctors. These include shorter labours with less pain, fewer episiotomies, and enlarged pelvic measurements. This position allows the force of gravity to assist in labour and delivery. The price? A mere \$6,285. No midwife should be without one.



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Medical Return of cervical cap

By Sue Wood, M.D.

Two months ago I quit taking birth control pills. Having turned 30 in April and still being a smoker (that's the next thing that has to go) I decided that I just wasn't willing to take the risks associated with the combination of age, smoking and pill taking. Having a stroke or a heart attack in your 30's or 40's is something I think I'd rather avoid.

I had an ulterior motive though. During the last few years some of the women's health centers in the United States unearthed from the birth control museums the predecessor of the diaphragm — the cervical cap — and began trying it out. Their reports have been enthusiastic enough that several of us at Klinik wanted to experiment with it ourselves. Through one of the women's groups we were able to find a supplier in England and imported some sample caps. I've now used one since abandoning the pill — long enough I think to offer some personal observations in addition to some of the American research.

First of all, what is a cervical cap? It's a thimble shaped rubber cup which fits over the cervix and like a diaphragm is a type of "barrier" birth control method. It was originally developed in the 1800's and was very popular in Europe and Great Britain, less so in the United States. Much of its popularity declined when the diaphragm was developed and when, in the 1960's the pill and the IUD became so universally successful, the cap faded into obscurity, becoming, at least in this country, quite literally a museum piece.

During the last few years as women (and doctors) realized that pills just are not the ideal answer that they were once thought to be, interest in the old traditional barrier methods has been reawakened. Primarily this meant condoms and diaphragms. The old cervical cap has never quite made it. It's hard to figure out why. Other than the fact that it is slightly more difficult to insert than the diaphragm and consequently many doctors believe that it is too complicated for "the average woman", there are few clues to why it is not being used.

The cap is smaller than the diaphragm and it doesn't cover up the vaginal walls since it was designed to fit over just the cervix. It clamps on by suction and if properly fitted is difficult to dislodge, a distinct advantage over the diaphragm. When it was originally developed it was left on throughout the intermenstrual period and was removed to allow for menstruation then reinserted. The problem with this is that it tends to cause a discharge and odour if left in too long, but it can be safely left in for days at a time without problem thus getting around the often heard complaint that "fiddling with the diaphragm" interferes with sexual spontaneity.

Conclusive research on the effectiveness of the cap particularly when used for extended periods is lacking. The manufacturer is still recommending that for maximal efficacy it should be used much like a diaphragm — putting it in 2 hours before sex and taken out 6 to 8 hours later — but the study that the women's centers have done suggests that the effectiveness is not appreciably decreased if it is left in for 3 days at a time.

Spermicide (that awful tasting jelly) is also thought to be not as essential with the cap since the research that is available indicates that it primarily works as an actual sperm barrier. The diaphragm does not fit tightly enough to entirely prevent the passage of sperm around the rim, and thus, has to be used with a spermicide. It's action is primarily that of a container to hold the spermicide in place, and secondarily, that of a mechanical barrier.

The cap is first of all a mechanical barrier and secondly a container for spermicide. What the Women's Centre has recommended, which makes sense to me, is that spermicide be used with it mid-cycle when chances of ovulating are the greatest, and eliminating it the rest of the time. Also, I found that since the cup of the cervical cap is deeper than the diaphragm when you do use jelly with it, it tends to stay in the cap rather than getting smeared all over the place.

There are other advantages: . . . Many women, because of anatomical problems i.e. vaginal prolapse, cystocele, retroverted uterus, to name a few, can't use diaphragms. Caps can be used in all these situations.

The disadvantages? Well, they are harder to put in — if you have a very long vagina and short fingers, you are going to find it difficult. After some practice I've now got it down to about six seconds and I think most women can manage this. Also, if the cervix is unusually long or short then proper suction doesn't develop and the cap won't stay on.

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Osborne House supports women and children

By Yvette Parr

Osborne House, Winnipeg's crisis center for battered women and children, was founded July 1974. Funded by grants from the City of Winnipeg, the Y.W.C.A. and other sources. The centre is equipped to provide counselling and short term housing for up to 30 women and children.

The women who come to Osborne House are from all walks of life and from all over Manitoba. They vary in age from seventeen to seventy-four years of age. Even older women have telephoned the centre to simply ask for advice.

Contrary to what is often thought, wife-beating and other related male-inflicted abuses are not a 'welfare' problem. Only about 25% of the women who use the centre are on welfare. Nor is it a problem particular to the Native Community. All classes, colours and nationalities of women suffer from this kind of abuse. Several years ago one of the staff members surveyed the occupational backgrounds of some of the males abusers encountered through Osborne House and discovered that the most frequent offenders tended to be truck drivers, doctors and policemen.

Instances of mental, emotional and physical violence against women appears to be increasing on an international scale at an alarming rate. One woman was brought into Osborne House with two broken legs. Others are threatened with abuse and even death. As the co-ordinator says: 'they come, they call and they're carried in.'

Despite the obvious emotional strain of dealing with such problems, staff members share a strong sense of commitment and satisfaction. Although women and children are often moving into and out of the building the atmosphere is one of a home and not a hotel.

And despite the daily pain that exists within it's walls, Osborne House is not a depressing environment.

The women are able to discuss their problems and futures with others who understand, while their children play together nearby.

The children who come to the center are often in need of help as much as their mothers. Some are victims of physical abuse or incest, others have volumes of anger hidden within, ready to be unleashed

on the nearest toy or playmate.

Since children who grow up witnessing abuse or being abused themselves often tend to fall into the same pattern as adults, it is crucial to teach both male and female children more constructive ways of dealing with anger.

While a great deal of important work is being carried out at the center, increased funding is needed to improve the present client/staff ratio, to develop daycare facilities, to make it possible for the women to stay at the house longer than the present limit of ten days, and to allow for follow up activities when the women leave the centre.



While there is 'no excuse for abuse,' states the co-ordinator, the act is not fully understood, and it is clear numerous social problems such as unemployment, alcoholism and drug related problems along with the traditional attitudes of male dominance all contribute and sometimes result in violence against women.

At Osborne House they fight from a grassroots, gut level. The staff is truly an inspiration and the fight to free women from oppressive situations is going on quietly and constantly. As the co-

ordinator says, 'we sometimes tend to become complacent when we feel loved and secure.' At Osborne house they don't forget. They see women suffering every day. Often they handle more than they're equipped for and it is not unusual to see four to a single bed; a woman with children and a babe in arms. If they cannot handle the caseload, or large families, welfare will provide motel accomodation.

The co-ordinator said in all her twenty years of social work she has never felt so rewarded. She told of going to the University of Manitoba to give a talk to first year Bachelor of Education students, studying community resources. As she looked into the room of twenty-one students, six of them had been at Osborne House, five of them were native and one was South American. These women were straightening out their lives and going forward to accomplish their true potential. Also there's probably never a day that goes by without thank-you cards in the mail, or previous clients dropping by to say their thanks, talk a bit or just have a cup of coffee.

It is crucial that we work together to oppose openly any form of mental, physical or emotional abuse of women. Osborne House exists for this reason. The center offers assistance in obtaining welfare, referrals to legal advice, psychiatric referrals, aid in obtaining housing and babysitting services for visiting women among its services.

Meanwhile there is a great support system amongst the staff to keep their own mental health together in such an emotionally charged situation. They all possess a very special commodity, 'a sense of humour'. This support system is important, as there have been cases of crisis centre workers cracking up under the pressure. As a result the workers support each other as much as they support the women in the house.

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Chiclet Gomez: Welfare women not seen as victims

Reviewed by Brigitte Sutherland

Chiclet Gomez, by Dorothy O'Connell, pp. 150, published in Canada by Deneau & Greenberg, Ottawa, 1977. Price \$4.95.

After first dedicating her book, *Chiclet Gomez*, to Aline, Carol, Diana, Gaye, Irene, Lila, Mary, Ruth and for all the other tough ladies who live in public housing, Canadian author Dorothy O'Connell finally says, "Hell, this book is for everybody".

The women we meet in this book dispel the widespread misconceptions in this country about the majority of welfare recipients, most of whom are women — women with dependent children and aged women.

The main character, *Chiclet Gomez*, is a woman of courage and wily tenaciousness living in a public housing project. Her sidekick, Tillie, the narrator of the madcap escapades the women get into, discovers that they have at least "two things in common — a desire to make some money, and a distinct disinclination to attain this goal by making other people's bath-

rooms sparkle".

This is the first book I have read that describes welfare women not as victims, but as politically aware human beings who have had to make certain choices in their lives. As one character, Linda Cunningham, explains, "after my husband choked me, I left. I went to see a psychiatrist, and he told me everything would be fine if I would just do what my husband told me. I had a choice — poverty or a bad marriage, and I chose poverty."

In short, snappy, self-contained stories, the author describes the 'every-day' occurrences in the lives of women in a public housing unit. To make some extra money Tillie and Chiclet start a fat farm in their project. The farm relies on starvation, exercise, Chiclet's flattering scale, and unsweetened grapefruit juice laced with laxative twice a day — all of this for the price of one dollar. The whole thing comes to a hilarious finish when one of the men spikes the grapefruit punch.

Tillie is quick to point out

that they are not manhaters. On the other hand, the institution of marriage does not escape their wrath. They suggest that any other custom that turns a young girl into a 'worn-out drudge' in such a short time would be called slavery.

Slowly we meet other characters. There is Edna, who always thinks Chiclet's ideas are lousy and won't work. Tillie thinks that that is why Edna never takes the curlers out of her hair, she's so sure they won't have worked. Getting tied up with Tillie and Chicklet helps Mrs. Grocholski to initiate her one act of rebellion against her husband who regularly beats her. Poison Ivy goes along because she hopes for catastrophe; Linda tags along because of trust; and Georgia comes in case there might be men involved. Tillie knows going along with Chiclet's escapades is the only excitement she is likely to get.

With humor, respect and love, Dorothy O'Connell arti-

culates the lives of these women: women much like other women who make up the majority of public housing tenants.

The influences of the 'powers that be' are examined and confronted in episodes such as "The Long March" where the project women take on the Housing Authority which threatens a rent increase. In "Agonizing and Organizing" they try to communicate with middle-class feminists who seem to be speaking a different language.

In "The Dumb Look", we, as readers, are given the philosophy of a facial expression used in dealing with any officials from the Housing Authority minion to the Public Health Nurse. This 'dumb look', they say, can be used as self-defense by public housing tenants, blacks, Indians, French-Canadian and children at different times. Even though Chiclet and Tillie hate 'the dumb look', they know that at times it's a necessary strategy.

What comes through loud and clear in this book are the everyday struggles these women experience. But it is not a story of hopelessness and despair; instead it is one of humor, clarity, perseverance and resultant feelings of self-worth and community spirit.

Along with many belly-laughs, this book left me with the feeling that perhaps the best thing the government had inadvertently done is sticking all of these tough survivors, women, together into housing developments all over this country.

I love these women and Dorothy O'Connell for giving them to me and I hope the author lets us in on more of their capers soon.

Dorothy O'Connell is president of the Ottawa Tenants Council and has recently published "Cockeyed Optimists" which continues the adventures of Chiclet & Co.

Strikers

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Although the situation appears deadlocked, picketers are determined to continue their strike effort. One of the strikers commented, "it's the principle of the thing; we won't give up."

The number of women walking has dwindled and morale is sometimes sagging. The women urge your support to the picket line for a Mass Picket, Tuesday and Thursday mornings, between 8 - 9 a.m. Donations are also welcome.

Menopause

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symptoms they can be treated by estrogen replacement therapy.

Contrary to what some women believe estrogen does not slow down or stop the aging process. It will, however, alleviate some of the symptoms and be useful in controlling "Hot Flashes".

Emotional symptoms should not be overlooked; there are a lot of myths asso-

ciated with the psychological aspects of menopause. You may hearing things like, you lose your sanity, or you may have a nervous breakdown.

Menopause is only one part of a normal biological process that spans many years, and once you understand what exactly is happening, and why, the word menopause should hold no mysterious, taboo quality.

Osborne House

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All women in need, whether being emotionally, mentally or physically abused are urged to telephone the center nearest them. The centers are there to help and staffed by understanding caring staff. Manitoba centers include:

- Winnipeg, Osborne House 775-8197
- Thompson Crisis Centre 778-7273
- Brandon Westman Women's Shelter . 727-3644

Cervical cap

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All things considered, I think they are a viable alternative. The side effects are nil and the effectiveness rate acceptable. If used in the traditional diaphragm way and used all the time very conscientiously the effectiveness rate is 97 - 98%. The 3-day no spermicide method is still at this point experimental but is likely 90% plus effective.

I have a file of articles on the cap and for anyone wanting more information these can be photocopied if you get

in touch with me through Klinik. There is also an article in this month's edition of Ms. magazine which gives more of the history and research than I have room for.

We are also interested in finding some women who would like to try using a cap, realizing that we still consider it experimental at this time and are unable to give any absolutes on its use and effectiveness.

So, if you're tired of The PILL and the thought of an IUD doesn't make it, and you're interested in giving the cap a try, contact me at Klinik.

Sue Wood is a General Practitioner at the Klinik in Winnipeg.

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