

the **manitoba women's** newspaper

A P R I L — M A Y 1 9 8 1
L. 2 N O. 1

special edition RURAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

On Saturday, April 25 women from several rural and urban Manitoba communities attended a conference at the University of Winnipeg hosted by the Manitoba Women's Newspaper, to share their concerns about the issues affecting rural women. Speakers included representatives from the National Farmers' Union and Brandon Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women. Manitoba Women's Newspaper members conducted workshops in journalism and the organization of support groups in the hope that future issues of the newspaper will serve as a forum for the discussion of issues concerning rural as well as urban women.

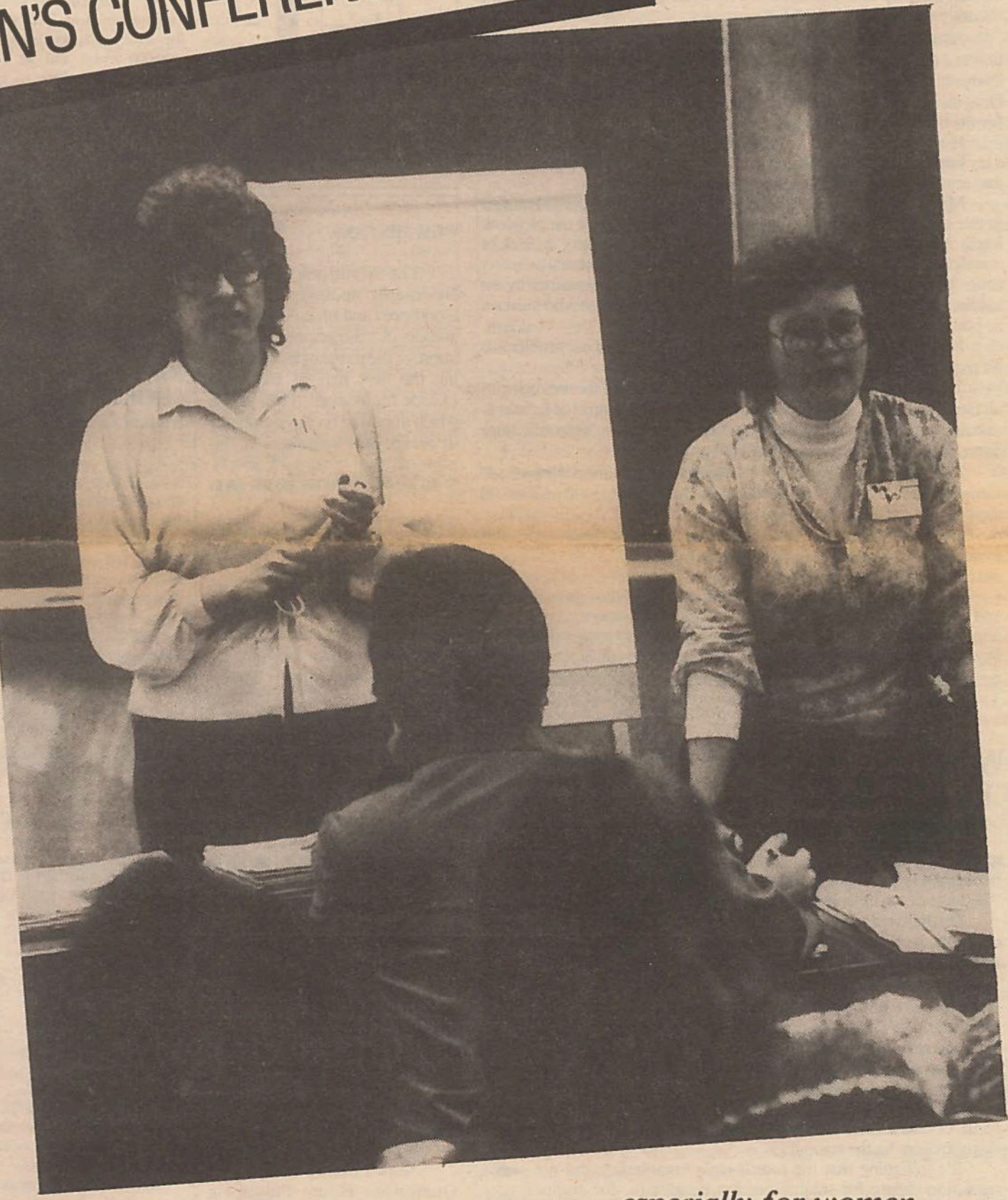
Funded by a Secretary of State grant through their Manitoba officer, Shirley Smith, the conference opened with a workshop on the image of rural women in the media. Bev Peters, outreach worker for the Brandon office of the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, and Sally Cunningham, Rural Archives Administrator of the Rural Community Research Centre at Brandon University, conducted a group examination of several rural newspapers.

This revealed to the delegates a highly traditional and inadequate portrayal of rural women. References to women rarely strayed beyond the confines of the society or home-making columns. Speakers and delegates agreed on the obvious lack of visibility of women in news stories and their absence as writers other than in traditional women's columns.

Heather Frayne of the Canadian Press and Manitoba Women's Newspaper editorial committee, followed with a journalism workshop in which she discussed the basic guidelines for information gathering and writing. Frayne disregarded the elitist view that one must be a professional to become involved in journalism.

"Persistence" she stressed, "is a key factor in an interview. You ask questions until you get answers which make sense to you". Frayne also stressed the need for more women in journalism as a means to rectify their inadequate portrayal in the media.

The afternoon session opened with Jacie Skelton and Darlene Henderson, both of Sinclair and with the National Farmer's Union. In this discussion of issues concerning rural women, Henderson emphasized the interconnection between economic and social issues and added: "there are no such things as women's issues; there are issues for which women must take responsibility". She also emphasized the economic instability which she continued on page 8



Farming no picnic *especially for women*
Gene Jamieson — page 7

New fields to work *Dorothy Liporenko*
— page 6

Matching needs & resources — page 4
Women's building needs support — page 4
Women's clinic opens on Broadway — page 11

EDITORIALS

SPECIAL ISSUE FEATURES RURAL WOMEN

by Sharon Reilly

This month's issue of the Manitoba Women's Newspaper features articles by and about rural women in Manitoba. Many of these stories were generated by a conference on Rural Women funded by the Secretary of State and sponsored by the MWN in late April.

Over the past year, the MWN has had some input from rural women, but now feels it is time to build a truly province-wide newspaper. This means we must solicit articles and criticism from rural women and distribute the paper more widely to rural areas on a continuing basis.

It is rural women themselves who can best identify the issues critical to their own lives. By sharing their concerns through the MWN these women can help to break down the isolation that separates them from one another and from city dwellers.

As a feminist publication, our goal is not only to provide information and analysis important to Manitoba women, but to offer a political interpretation of the so called personal problems shared by many of us. Only through such an understanding will long term solutions be found for the difficulties women face as a group.

How we differentiate among ourselves as "feminists" is of secondary importance to establishing common goals of improving the social and economic well being of all women.

Many of the problems special to rural women have been identified in this issue by delegates to our conference. These include the physical, intellectual and emotional isolation separating rural women, the lack of social and educational services, the limitations of matrimonial property laws, the inaccurate and demeaning stereotyping of rural women by the media, and the burden of the "triple day" faced by women who must act as housewives, farm workers and waged labourers.

It is clear that the common element linking all of these problems is an economic one.

The viability of the family farm in Manitoba, and the well being of all family members, is jeopardized by the increasing control of food production, processing and retailing by "agribusiness" — especially huge corporations like McCains and Loblaws.

This means food production is organized not to meet the needs of farmers and consumers, but to make ever greater corporate profits. All aspects of rural life suffer as a result.

This issue of MWN recognizes, but does not dwell upon, this underlying problem. Instead rural women themselves talk about and analyze their lives and problems.

We hope that other women will respond to the ideas presented here and help us to make this a Manitoba Women's newspaper. Anyone interested in writing for or distributing the MWN is urged to write to us at Box 551, Winnipeg, Manitoba. R3C. Letters to the editor are welcome.

WOMEN'S POVERTY ENSURES 'FAIR SHAKE' FOR MEN

On the same Sunday afternoon the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce elected its first woman president, it let rip with this volley against her sex: a resolution calling for smaller pensions for women. The reason? "Because of the inherent discrimination that would be caused."

On the average women live longer and thus, if pension entitlements are equal, receive more from pension plans than men, explained Gerry Reimer, president of the Winnipeg Chamber.

Rita Roland, the 35-year-old underwriter with Imperial Life Assurance Co. of Canada who had just been lifted from her position as the Chambers' first vice-president, said she opposed the resolution although as president she had no vote on the matter. After all, she said, the cost of living for a retired woman is less than it is for a man.

That being the case, Roland might have added that pension plans such as the one Chambers endorsed represent one of the more blatant forms of discrimination in pensions against women, despite the groups' rhetoric claiming the opposite.

It's intriguing that the mostly-male organization did not pass a resolution calling for smaller pension benefits to, for instance, non-smokers despite the fact they generally live longer than smokers. Better still, why not proportionately smaller benefits to executives and other bosses? Medical studies consistently indicate longer lives for them than for many working-class people!

The fact is pension plans in Canada ill fit the special contributions women make to society, and are largely responsible for the poverty in which most elderly women live.

For a start, the work of wives and mothers is unpaid labour. If women choose (or can afford) to make this their chief or only work, they contribute to no pension plan and reap no pension benefits. If they step out of the work force periodically to care for children, their contributions to pension schemes are lost to them as pension portability remains only a good idea.

Finally, if women work throughout their adult lives, they work for an average of just over half the salaries of men. Accordingly, if indeed their employer offers a pension plan, women's pension entitlements are smaller.

So the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce is concerned about "inherent discrimination"? We don't believe it.

BULLETINS & NOTES

OUR MISTAKE . . .

The Manitoba Women's Newspaper apologizes to Lila Goodspeed and Mona Brown, co-authors of "Suggestions" to help improve the status of women during the next half of the U.N. Decade for Women. Their article which appeared on the front page of our last issue was mistakenly attributed to one of our staff writers.

MEN ARE "FEMINISTS" TOO! MWN WELCOMES MALE CONTRIBUTORS

This month's MWN includes our first article by a male writer. Men have contributed to MWN in many ways in the past — typesetting, proofreading, assisting in layout and distribution, and giving financial support and so on. While MWN is, and will continue to be, produced primarily by women, we believe that many men are "feminists" to, and welcome their participation!

YWCA'S WOMEN OF THE Year. Congratulations to the YMCA's Women of the Year. Winners were:

Mary Richard, former executive director of the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre, for community service.

Dr. June James, an allergist at the Winnipeg Clinic and assistant professor in the University of Manitoba pediatrics department, for the professions.

Joan Parr, head of Queenstone House Publishing Co. Ltd., for the arts.

Norma McCormick, director of the Health Sciences Centre day nursery and unsuccessful Liberal candidate for Wolseley riding in the 1977 provincial election, for public affairs.

Liisa Nichol, president of Pirjo-Liisa Fashions Ltd., for business.

manitoba women's

MANITOBA NOVELIST COMPETITION

closes December 31, 1981

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Historical Resources announces its Search-for-a-New-Manitoba-Novelist Competition. Designed to encourage and promote fiction writing in the literary community, the Search will gain writers a needed boost, credibility, and the impetus to carry through the lengthy commitment of time, talent and discipline every book-length manuscript demands. The Department is confident that this competition will result in many new works of fiction being published.

The competition is open to Manitoba residents only and novels in the adult category between 60,000 - 100,000 words will be considered. The winning author is assured of \$4,000 and publication of the work. Three additional prizes of \$500 may be awarded to other finalists chosen for publication.

The closing date of the competition is December 31, 1981. This is final. No manuscript shall be submitted prior to September 30, 1981. Entries should be addressed to: Department of Cultural Affairs and Historical Resources, Cultural Development Branch, 3rd Floor — 200 Vaughan Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8.

MATCH INTERNATIONAL CENTRE:

Annual General Meeting 1981

Canadian Women in the World: Rights and Responsibilities is the theme of the annual general meeting of MATCH international Centre, a Canadian agency for international co-operation amongst women. The meeting will be held at the University of Ottawa on June 20th. Ms. Juanita Westmoreland, attorney, member of the Quebec Bar, and member of the Executive of the Congress of Black Women of Canada will be the key note speaker at the closing banquet.

The workshops will focus on the rights and responsibilities of Canadian women and the constitution, the law and labour relations. Throughout these workshops resource persons will be drawing a parallel with women in the Third World.

All interested persons are welcome! For more information and for registration forms, please contact Murielle Vachon, 401 - 171 Nepean Street, Ottawa, K2P 0B4, (613) 238-1312.

BUILD A SHED WEEKEND

May 23 & 24

On May 23 & 24 a "Build a Shed" weekend sponsored by the Women in Trades Association Inc., and the Brandon Outreach office of the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, will be held in the Brandon area.

The weekend will feature learning how to build a shed, working in teams, homecooked food, camping, participation with women who are active in trades, and entertainment with Heather Bishop and Karen Howe. Daycare will be available on request at a minimal cost.

For further information, contact: Denise Needham, Box 492, Brandon, 728-9827, or call the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women at 725-2955.

OPEN HOUSE

May 25: 4 to 9 p.m.

The Women's Health Centre's first open house is on Monday, May 25 from 4 til 9 p.m. All Manitoba Women's Newspaper readers are invited.

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.

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 do 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. For institution or business: \$12.00



The completion of the cause is found under fingernails at three in the morning beside stale coffee dead donuts and the old sawnank that races incessantly about the office on a bicycle screaming
The time is almost here!!

manitoba women's NEWS

Minaker blocks 24-hour child care at health sciences

by Heather Frayne

Plans for a pioneer 24-hour day care program at the Health Sciences Centre are in limbo — tied up tight in red tape that Manitoba Community Services Minister George Minaker refuses to snip. "I'm so angry I could spit," said Norma McCormick, director of the hospital's day nursery. "It's been nothing but frustration."

HSC proposed to add 25 to 30 evening and overnight places to its day nursery, currently licenced for 160 children, in an effort to attract nurses who can't work evening or weekend shifts because of inadequate care facilities for their children.

The hospital — Winnipeg's largest — is currently short about 75 nurses. Forty per cent of those now accommodated in the regular day care program are nurses' children.

"We have a long list of children needing care," McCormick said. "We have a long list of nurses ready to come to the hospital if we can provide the service . . . I've got probably 25 or 30 nurses now waiting."

The 24-hour program, which McCormick said would be the first of its kind in Canada, was set for a March opening until the city decided it hasn't the legal authority to waive a bylaw stipulating day care centres' hours of operation must fall between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

That decision made it necessary to involve the province, which normally licenses child care facilities outside Winnipeg. McCormick wrote to Minaker Feb. 26 requesting the licence. "But

bless his little heart, he hasn't even written me back."

Neither has the minister acknowledged a similar letter dated April 9 from hospital president Peter Swerhone.

"So it seems to me their choice of action is inaction," McCormick said.

Meanwhile, R.D. Johnstone, deputy minister of community services, said the province doubts whether 24-hour day care is a sound idea.

The HSC request for a 24-hour licence takes day care "into the area of night care . . . and well beyond the realm of a program that we have ever envisioned."

Women not qualified for supreme court?

When Prime Minister Trudeau said he would like to have appointed a woman to the Supreme Court but couldn't find one who was qualified, Manitoba feminists scoffed and booed.

"Why doesn't he contact groups such as ours?" asked Jennifer Cooper, a Winnipeg lawyer and member of the Manitoba Association of Women and the Law. "Instead of saying from time to time 'no women were available,' why doesn't he get better information?"

Cooper said women should be guaranteed representation on the Supreme Court in the same way that Quebec is. She said the next judicial appointment to the court will be made February of next year.

"We believe the government has adequate time to get into gear and to get names and resumes."

Roberta Ellis, spokesperson for the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, said more women must be appointed to the benches of lower courts.

"Then there would be a large pool of women, I imagine, who would be quite competent to sit in Supreme Court."

Trudeau said before the government made its last Supreme Court appointment — Mr. Justice Antonio Lamer — he had sought the names of qualified women.

"We failed as you know," he told reporters. "I'm not saying we were right or there weren't women who would have done it. But our judgment was we made the best possible appointment at the time."

St. Adolphe strike ends

Forty-five support workers at the nursing home in St. Adolphe — all of them women — are waiting to hear the terms of their first contract.

Representatives of the home and the Service Employees International Union met earlier this month with arbitrator Jack Chapman. The Winnipeg lawyer was appointed to set terms of an agreement following a 2½-week strike and lockout which began March 10.

Union business agent Anne Klassen said Chapman's decision is expected before the end of May.

The support workers walked off the job in what was to have been the first in a series of rotating strikes; but after just one day management refused to allow them to return.

"I guess it raises a lot of questions in our minds," he said. "When we talk about 24-hour care, we're talking about care for children whose mothers may be on eight or 12-hour shifts. When the mother finishes work she has to go to sleep, so where does the child go then?"

McCormick said her hands are tied until the province refuses the hospital's request.

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Pro-Lifers aborted at Seven Oaks

An 11-10 decision by Seven Oaks Hospital board to establish a therapeutic abortion committee has survived a challenge by three former board members. Barring a similar successful challenge, Seven Oaks should be providing the medical service by fall.

Hospital board chairman Joe Zuken announced the results of the vote following a three-hour, closed-door meeting March 16. Earlier in the evening about 200 demonstrators, roughly equally divided into "pro-choice" and "pro-life" factions, marched quietly in separate circles at the hospital entrance.

"The board had a lengthy discussion and the motion was passed," said Zuken, a city councillor. "As was expected on a very

controversial issue, the vote was very close . . . It's the correct decision in my opinion."

Three board members abstained from the vote. On March 19, board member Harry Lazarenko challenged its legality, objecting to the fact board member Charles Ferrier left the meeting early but left his vote behind in a sealed envelope.

A month later, Lazarenko, Olga Fuga and Joe Cropro announced their resignations from the Board, citing the vote by secret ballot as evidence the board had become undemocratic. As their terms on the board were expiring, this was hollow amunition.

While anti-abortion demonstrators dispersed "to mourn" following Zuken's announcement, pro-choice representatives, increasingly alarmed at the rising numbers of Manitoba women forced to leave the province to secure an abortion, expressed relief.

Echoing comments by demonstrators, Ellen Kruger of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League said pro-life crusaders falsely portray a hospital's decision to establish a therapeutic abortion committee as a moral choice.

"It's not a moral decision. That decision was made by the Canadian government in 1969," she said.

Kruger addressed the board meeting prior to the vote, saying establishment of a therapeutic abortion committee was supported by the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, the YWCA, the National Council of Jewish

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Vancouver — Eaton's is at it again

EATON'S/FIRST

As part of a policy to have "the most intriguing displays in town", sexual violence is being used as advertising appeal. Two recent displays have particularly angered Vancouver women.

In one display for hospital-style jogging togs — stuffed dolls stand in an operating room. A male doctor stands between the splayed legs of a woman on an operating table holding an oversized model of an electric drill pointed at her abdomen. To one side, a nurse dressed in only frilly pink underwear holds a stethoscope.

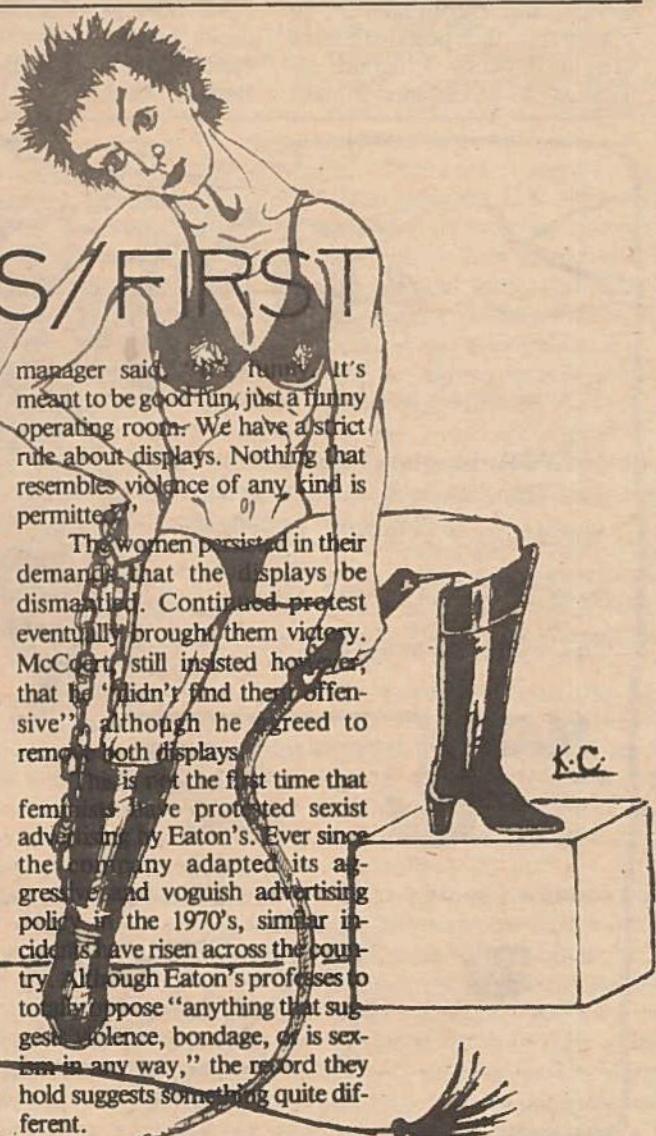
The second display showed two female mannequins with an assortment of women's belts wrapped around their necks, waists, ankles, and thighs. Both mannequins are pinned to the wall behind them.

When challenged by a group of protesters, Bill McCoert, Eaton's general merchandising

manager said the displays were meant to be good fun, just a funny operating room. We have a strict rule about displays. Nothing that resembles violence of any kind is permitted.

The women persisted in their demands that the displays be dismantled. Continued protest eventually brought them victory. McCoert still insisted, however, that he "didn't find them offensive", although he agreed to remove both displays.

This is the first time that feminists have protested sexist advertising by Eaton's. Ever since the company adapted its aggressive and voguish advertising policies in the 1970's, similar incidents have risen across the country. Although Eaton's professes to totally oppose "anything that suggests violence, bondage, or is sexist in any way," the record they hold suggests something quite different.



Women's Building needs support

by Val Innes

Winnipeg is the only Canadian city to have a woman-owned and operated building to serve women's needs. It came into existence three years ago on the dreams, energy and money of several women who believed that women need a place of their own, a place to work in, relax in, have fun in, be safe in — a women's centre. The Winnipeg Women's Cultural and Educational Centre, a non-profit organization, bought the building from the United Church in the fall of 1978. After extensive renovations by the women's community, it opened in early 1979 to intense excitement here and across the country. (Telegrams and phone calls came from Vancouver, Toronto, New

York — even as far away as Australia.)

The potential was enormous: a three-storey brick building, with a kitchen, hall and storage, offices and a sitting room with fireplace, a mezzanine and another large room ideal for physical education.

We could have women's businesses to support the building: a book store, theatre company, a restaurant where a woman could eat without being hassled. We could provide office space for women's groups, charging means — adjustable rent. We could have dances, concerts, film nights — those Katherine Hepburn classics that everyone loves — and game nights. We could have a coffee house with homey atmosphere, with lots of good woman's music,

food and the company of other women. And we could have a place to have meetings, self-defense courses, consciousness-raising groups, women against violence groups, a woman's phone line, a lesbian information service. The potential is vast.

In part, this has happened. There is a book store — Brigitte's Books. There are Wen-do (women's self defense) courses offered frequently. Women's groups like Women in Trades, the Native Women's Transition Group, Women Against Violence, International Women's Day Committee, the Painted Ladies Theatre Company, Media, Art, Graphics, Ideas, Company (M.A.G.I.C.) either are or have been operating out of the building. There have been many successful socials and concerts (Carole Street, Karen Howe, Heather Bishop, to name a few). There will be a Women's Phone Line starting soon. Rape Crisis has, on occasion, used the building for its training. There is a free clothing depot run for the women in the surrounding community. A coffee house will start soon and film nights are planned to start in September. This summer several women in the building will work on a study of the needs of women in the surrounding area.

However, the dream is faltering.

There are many women's groups in the city which do not utilize the building or even frequent it because of its location (close to the Health Sciences Centre), lack of information, inertia, politics. There is no support (surprise!) from government sources and a great deal of energy has and must go towards fundraising.

The building is badly in debt. There are mortgage payments, maintenance costs and taxes due in June which the building can't meet. Each month the debt increases and there is now a desperate need for women who want this building to survive. We need your energy, your commitment, your business, your financial generosity (now tax deductible!).

Time, energy, ideas, involvement and money are very welcome. Contact the Women's Building, 730 Alexander Avenue, Winnipeg, 786-7889, to see how you can help. Come to the public Open Meeting at 6 p.m. on Thursday, June 11, at the building.

BULLETINS

BAZAAR — JUNE 6

CLOTHING DEPOT — THURSDAY, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Free clothes. Bring yours too.

BOOK STORE — TUESDAY & THURSDAY 2:00 to 8:00 p.m., SATURDAY, 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

OPEN MEETING — JUNE 11, 6:00 p.m. All women welcome.

WENDO, PHONE 786-7889 — Assertiveness Training for date.



Created by the failure of established funding bodies in Canada to support projects organized by Third World and Canadian women, MATCH is working to abolish the inequities found in funding networks.

Women Resource Centre for South Winnipeg

For the past seven months, a steering committee of several women has been meeting to develop a formal proposal for The South Winnipeg Resource Centre to plan the stages of its development and to seek support and funding. The concept has been met with both interest and enthusiasm.

The centre would be a place where women could meet in a friendly, supportive environment to share ideas, concerns and abilities and to participate in program presentations. It would provide information of interest to women, referrals to specialized services and encouragement to women from their peers in times of stress or difficulty. Programs offered would be designed to meet

the specific needs of women in the south end of the city. In addition, the centre would offer opportunities for volunteer work which develop leadership skills and promote personal development for those who become involved.

An informational meeting, held on April 15, was attended by representatives of various women's organizations who agreed there is a need for such a facility in the south end of Winnipeg. Members of the steering committee are optimistic these plans will one day become reality. For further information or to indicate support, please telephone Nora Crichton, 269-7011 or Ann Birdsall, 269-2583.

It's a small world...

MATCH is about women who care and who wish to share with women in developing countries.

Won't you join us?

For more information:

MATCH INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
401 — 171 Nepean
Ottawa

or Phone (613) 238-1312

Matching needs and resources

by Gail Marchessault

MATCH International Centre is an Ottawa-based fundraising and co-ordinating body that "matches women's needs and resources in Canada and the Third World".

Its goal is to make women sensitive to the urgent need to establish worldwide co-operation among them.

Seeds for the organization were sown at the 1975 International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City. Canadians expressed confidence in their established funding bodies, but women from the developing nations reported failure after failure in finding funds for good projects organized by women. They naively assumed the problem was one of distance and communication difficulties. Yet the Canadian women too failed to find funding sources even for the small-scale realistic projects they were promoting.

The result was the formation of MATCH in 1976. It began with the assistance of funds from 92 founding members, a seed grant from the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, other donations and in-kind services and a matching grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). It is not an incorporated organization with a network throughout Canada and at least 120 other countries. More than 60 projects are completed or underway.

Anomalies exist in the world of funding. For example, 50% of the agricultural production and virtually all of the food processing in developing countries is the responsibility of women. Yet nearly all of the training in agricultural technology is given to men. The major routes to improved health are preventative — the improvement of nutrition, water supply, sanitation, immunization and health education — traditionally the responsibility of women. The

World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in July 1980, reported that "80 per cent of health budgets are used to cure illnesses of a minority through the training and equipping of doctors who are usually men".

The needs of women include such basics as nutrition, health care, clean water, shelter, education and training. The projects MATCH assists try to address these needs.

One crucial aspect is that each project must originate in the country concerned and must be proposed and implemented by women in that country for the benefit of their own local community. Each project aims to build self-confidence and self-reliance, a better understanding of the functioning of the community and international co-operation.

MATCH works as a clearing house for projects. It accepts proposals and sets a fundraising target that is 25% of the total project requirement. Once a group or several groups raise this sum MATCH will apply to CIDA for the remaining portion of the budget. The entire sum is sent to the project in the name of the group that initiated funding.

The sample project proposal currently in need of funding has a fund-raising target of \$2,750. The Council of Voluntary Social Service requires this funding to provide training in non-traditional areas for young women in the lower income areas of Belize City, Belize, where 51% of the population is 15 years or younger. The program hopes to expand to rural areas with training in basic business and financial management to encourage graduates to form cooperatives and small businesses.

To learn more about MATCH or to receive the MATCH newsletter, write to 401-171 Nepean, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0B4.

feature section



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ZIMMERMAN FAMILY

MARIA EWANYSHYN ZIMMERMAN: 1885-1973
A GLIMPSE INTO IMMIGRANT LIFE IN MANITOBA

“I REMEMBER MAMA”

Editor's Note
“I Remember Mama” is a new feature of MWN which presents historical sketches of Manitoba women. Our readers are invited to submit stories and photos of their own “mamas”, grandmothers, aunts, or other favourite women for publishing in this space.

This month's column is by Claire Zimmerman, who works at the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature.

IT IS DIFFICULT to imagine the hardships which Polish and Ukrainian immigrants to Western Canada encountered in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With little capital, language difficulties and limited experience many settled on marginal land where conditions were harsh. Maria (nee Ewanyshyn) and Martin Zimmerman were one such couple.

They came to Canada as children in 1900 from Galicia, Austria (better known as the Western Ukraine). Maria's father was Ukrainian and her mother, Polish. Martin's parents were Polish. Life in the old country had not been easy. Faced with dwindling land resources, burdensome taxes and compulsory military service in the Austrian army, their parents were attracted to Canada by agents' reports of free land, better employment conditions and no compulsory military service.

Both families came on the same boat to Canada. Upon arrival in Halifax Maria's father Wasyl sat down and cried, related granddaughter Rose Zimmerman of Shoal Lake, Manitoba. In order to disembark, possession of money was demanded as proof of

solvency. Wasyl's funds had dwindled to a mere 13¢ — hardly enough to begin a life in Canada with a wife and five children. Upon hearing of their predicament, Martin's father lent money to the Ewanyshyn's, joking that some day his son might marry Maria in return.

Both families travelled by train to Winnipeg, the crowded immigrant center. After a brief stay they travelled by train to the Shoal Lake district. Maria's family settled in a tent at Marco, north of Oakburn, in the fall of 1900.

Soon after their arrival Margaret Ewanyshyn died leaving Maria, at the age of fifteen, to care for four young children and their father. Maria's mother was buried a few miles from Olha near the site of a mass grave for two women and 42 children who died of scarlet fever in the spring of 1889.

Wasyl remarried twice after Margaret's death. His second wife brought four children to the marriage, and with Wasyl had five sets of twins and two other children. She died shortly after bearing her 16th child, when she fell on her way to milk the cows.

With her father's second marriage Maria worked as a hired girl for two dollars a month, sending money home to support the

family. She married Martin Zimmerman January 11, 1930. Their first child, Katie, was born in November of that same year.

Without funds, implements or domesticated animals, rural life was hard for the young couple. Martin was forced to work for other farmers to save money to build his own farm. Any travelling was done on foot. Occasionally he walked 20 miles to bring back flour and yeast from Shoal Lake.

Maria's and Martin's first home was constructed of logs with a thatched willow roof and door. Dry grass covered the damp dirt floor and served as a mattress at night. Chopped straw mixed with clay and water was used to plaster the inner and outer walls. The outdoor oven, constructed of willows bent in a half-moon shape, also was covered with the clay mixture.

With no refrigeration they subsisted on potatoes, dilled lettuce and cabbages, and the occasional chicken.

Altogether the couple had 11 children; nine girls and two boys. Charles Zimmerman, their youngest, relates that most of the children were born in the fall and winter months, conveniently after the harvest. All were born at home, sometimes with the aid of a midwife and sometimes with Mar-

tin attending. Maria's fifth child was born in 1909 while Martin was working for another farmer. He did not see his new-born daughter until two weeks later, when he brought home his first team of horses.

Maria and the couple's older children helped with work on the farm. They stacked hay, stooked grain, harrowed the ploughed fields, milked cows and chopped wood. The younger children shared household responsibilities. Only the babies were immune from work.

Through hard work and determination the family prospered and moved to better land near Shoal Lake, Manitoba. They farmed there for 25 years. Upon retirement Maria and Martin moved to the town of Shoal Lake to live with their daughter Rose. Martin passed away March 26, 1955 at the age of 76. Maria lived to be 88, dying November 24, 1973.

With thanks for their assistance to: Rose Zimmerman, Shoal Lake, Manitoba; Charles Zimmerman, Mikado, Saskatchewan; Steve Prystupa, Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature.

RURAL I M A G E: R U R A

1

*"The farmer takes a wife,
the wife takes a child ..."*

Farming, being the sophisticated and highly mechanized business it is, has changed the traditional role of the farm wife and her self-image.

After a day of shovelling manure, getting the hogs to market and cooking platters of food for hired hands, the farmer's wife also takes courses in law and economics at the local community college, is a political activist and an entrepreneur.

Although still involved in many daily farm chores, expensive machinery has lifted much of the physical burden of labor from the rural woman. As she spends fewer hours in the fields, she spends more time managing the financial and personnel aspects of her family's enterprise.

Many husbands need extra salary

If she is not negotiating with the feed supplier or bent over the kitchen table updating the company records, she likely has taken a job off the farm to supplement her husband's income. And as farms become increasingly costly to operate, many husbands want that extra salary to pay cash for their costly equipment and avoid high interest rates that can bankrupt them.

To a lesser extent, the woman's movement is responsible for the change although its influence has spread more slowly and quietly among rural women than among women in cities. Aside from geographic barriers, it had to penetrate a mentality that was rooted in, and happily comfortable with, quilting bees and raising a brood of youngsters. Many women continue to enjoy these activities but their greater participation in the business decision-making has created a need for more knowledge of politics, economics and laws that could affect their cattle and crops and finally, themselves as women.

The response to that need has been nothing short of enthusiastic. The greatest and most visible impact is the establishment of an educational network among women living in rural and farm communities. The network is providing them with a range of learning opportunities to which they never before had access, and giving them the support of other women with similar backgrounds.

Local agricultural and community colleges have become the scene of extension courses and weekend seminars in family law, farm safety, politics, business, health and stress management. Last December in Ottawa, hun-

dreds of farm women gathered at their first national conference and heard some tough talk about the obstacles to getting farm credit at the bank, lobbying and increasing their representation on national farm organizations.

Women in country aware of rights

The size of farm families is shrinking, as younger wives work and have fewer children. For the first time, many country women are learning their poverty rights

**"IF IT'S A CHOICE
BETWEEN THE
WOMAN AND HER
HUSBAND SHE'LL
TAKE THE BACKSEAT"**

and ensuring their financial protection is on paper in the event that their marriage breaks down or their husbands dies. And inspired by municipal and provincial politicians who have addressed their informal groups, an increasing number of women are running for township offices and getting elected or taking a more active role in local issues.

At the heart of these developments — which started to take root in the mid-70s — is a cluster of women best described as movers and shakers in their communities. Either born and raised on the land or transplanted from the city, they are single-handedly responsible for making other women aware that their concerns don't end at the barn door.

Louise Myner is a chemist by profession and mother of three who moved from the city to a farm in St. Eugene, about 100 km (65 miles) outside Ottawa. President of the L'Association des Fermieres de l'Ontario (the Ontario Association of Farmers' Wives), she has given fresh direction to a group founded in 1937 to exchange kitchen handicrafts and recipes. Mrs. Myner has organized courses in municipal politics, law and business and used a practical approach to seek neighboring women's participation.

Although women are increasingly active in farm organizations, only a handful sit on their boards and shape policies. Only

two women sit on the 30-member board of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and their seats are automatic appointments.

Marie Hendricken of Mt. Stewart, P.E.I. is a member of the women's advisory committee (Maritime region) of the National Farmers Union, one of the most powerful grassroots farm groups in the country. Recently, she joined a group of fellow P.E.I. farmers who marched to the provincial Legislature to protest the proposed sale of 6,000 acres of farmland to a conglomerate.

Since her election in 1971, she has worked tirelessly to convince her peers to become involved in the union. "A lot of women work closely with their husbands on the farm but if it's a choice between the woman and her husband, she'll take the backseat," Mrs. Hendricken said. "Until I became active in the NFU, I didn't understand why farmers got the prices they did (for their goods) or why farmers were leaving the land."

Since founding Women for the Survival of Agriculture in 1975, it has taken Dianne Harkin almost that much time to establish the organization's credibility. Describing herself good-naturedly as "the Erma Bombeck of the rural circuit," the 46-year-old Winchester, Ont. farmer and mother of four established WSA as a support group for rural women and it has grown to 400 members across Canada.

"I felt there were many farm organizations but every time I went to a meeting I was the only woman there," she said. "I couldn't understand why women who work shoulder to shoulder with their husbands should be excluded . . . because the women often have a better understanding of what goes on financially on the farm than the men."



Realizing that a fear of speaking up rather than ignorance about farm issues hindered women from joining the decision-makers, Mrs. Harkin founded WSA as a training ground for farm wives.

Mrs. Harkin, a recently appointed member of the federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women has raised financial protection as an issue among her WSA members.

"Many wives think they are equal partners. They say, 'Oh, the accountant told me I get half (of the farm),' but I remind them to get their names on the deeds, to make sure their husbands have made wills, to get the bank account changed to a joint one."

continued on page 10

2

How do newspapers portray agricultural women? What aspects of women's involvement in rural life do newspapers report? How

often are these activities mentioned? In what context and in what section of the paper?

To help participants of the M.W.N. conference discover answers to these questions, Sally Cunningham and I distributed a huge box of newspapers — dailies, rural weeklies, agricultural newspapers and magazines. Focusing on the above questions the women discovered for

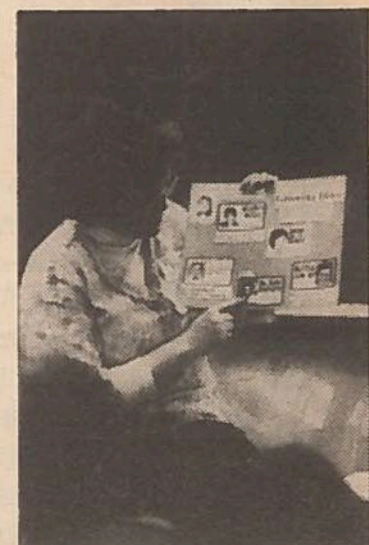


PHOTO BY BRIAN BOLEN

1. Dorothy Lipovenko is a writer for *The Globe and Mail*. *Farm Wives Find New Fields to Work* was re-printed from *The Globe and Mail's* May 7, 1981 issue.

2. Bev Peters is a part-time Outreach worker for the M.A.C.S.W.

3. Gene Jamieson is a free lance writer associated with Canadian University Press. He is a former Winnipegger who now lives in Victoria, B.C.



L W O M E N

1. New Fields to Work

2. Women and the Rural Media

3. Farming No Picnic

magazines, television and advertising coverage. Canada's agricultural newspapers have a better record — and so they should. Out of 246 stories about women in these papers during 1979, slightly over half were concerned with agricultural women.

For the most part farm women are portrayed as members of women's organizations and leaders of farm groups. Other popular topics include the changing role of the farm wife and the lack of social services in rural areas. Women's work as actual farmers or farm partners and their role in farm management and food production is seldom mentioned.

The paper concludes with the summary "the Canadian media is guilty of misrepresenting farm women to the public by failing to acknowledge their valuable agricultural labor and knowledge."

To change the situation women must become more vocal in our communities. We read the newspaper and our opinions are valid. We must remind editors and other readers that farm women deserve a representative amount of space.

Sound advice may be to start slowly — talk to other women about your concerns. Form a support group if you can. Write a letter to the editor on an issue important to your community. Submit an article on an event that might not be covered otherwise. Talk to the editor about his/her policies. Ask why we need a "woman's page". Write letters of complaint to advertisers who don't acknowledge farm women's contributions or portray them unrealistically.

Some of these actions may seem difficult at first but with practice and perseverance we may well be able to effect some change in the way the media portrays us.

3 It is a harsh reality, but the family farm in Manitoba has been replaced by the large corporate farm and the break-up of the traditional rural community is the result.

Those most adversely affected are rural women who are now being forced into wage labour in the processing plants. Here

women fill the low skilled, labour-intensive jobs, while men dominate supervisory and skilled positions.

Out in the field the situation is no better. Although men and women receive equal pay for equal work, women have few opportunities to advance into better paying skilled and supervisory positions. Most farmworkers are native Indians. In the Portage la Prairie area, for instance, about 75 per cent of the workers are natives and 60 per cent of these are women. However in the native Manitoba Farm Workers' Association (MFWA) there are no women on the executive, according to representatives of the MFWA and the Portage Farm Labour Project.

This is the result of the transformation of the family farm into agri-business over the past three decades. The process has forced farm people into low wage, farm related industry and created a substantial increase in rural unemployment. This damage to the health of rural Manitoba is permanent.

Between 1966 and 1975 almost 500,000, or 25 per cent of Canadians on farms left after being caught in the squeeze between low income and fast rising costs. Farmers found that more and more land was needed to keep up with farm costs. For those few farmers with easy access to investment capital (usually from food processing companies interested in vertical integration of their businesses) the going was easy as other farmers had to sell or else face bankruptcy. But most farmers who bought out their neighbors did so by throwing themselves deeply into debt. As if this was not problem enough, the drive by individual family operators to increase farm size

resulted in more work than the family could handle.

According to a 1975 National Farmers Union (NFU) report this over-extension by family farms caused farmers to abandon some of the older farm practices which, although time consuming, helped preserve the land's productivity. It also meant that rural unemployment increased because the number of jobs lost with the decline of the family farm has dramatically outstripped the number created by the food pro-

THE OUTWARD SIGNS OF THIS LACK OF INTERPERSONAL SUPPORT ARE INCREASING DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE, AND MENTAL BREAKDOWNS.

cessing industry.

The concentration of farm land into fewer and fewer hands has struck a blow to the rural social fabric, particularly the position of women. As the farm work increased, more and more of the burden falls on the farm life. She, as recent legal cases have shown, has limited legal access to the farmstead she has worked to create. The salaried farm wife has little access to daycare facilities and other supports working women require.

From a wider perspective, the rural community has lost much of its traditional cooperative nature, said the NFU report. Because of the increased size of farms, rural people do not spend as much time socializing, discussing issues and helping each other as they once did. There seems to be an absence of social and emotional support

among rural people. This can be traced directly to the current economic realities of competition — the drive to be the biggest and most successful farmer in the area.

"The outward signs of this lack of interpersonal support are increasing drug and alcohol abuse, and mental breakdowns. As evidence of this, one has only to look at the incidence of breakdowns and attempted suicides treated at a small rural hospital like the one in Erikson," the NFU report said.

Life on the farm has not become any more promising since that 1975 report. Railway branch line abandonment by the railway companies, in conjunction with the federal and provincial governments, has forced farmers to invest in expensive trucks to send their produce to market. Increasing expenses for farmers continually reinforce the trend away from the family farm to domestic and foreign dominated agrifarms. Those who have stayed on their farms face staggering difficulties trying to compete with the heavily capitalized agribusiness farm operations.

Trends indicate a further move away from the family farm and the continued breakdown of the rural community. Farmers, the NFU report states, have not organized themselves to fight these trends. Instead, while some farmers have tied themselves to multi-national produce companies and have become farm managers. Others have either been forced into early retirement or else into moving to rural and urban centres. From these centres many farm family members have returned to the farm industry only as employees, of either the farm managers or the food industry's processing plants.

In their new position as employees, union organizing among farmworkers has become more accepted, particularly on the west coast where the use of farmworkers has had a longer history. In Manitoba, farmworker union organizing has also begun to take off as the work continues to become more factory-like. But even in these unions, women members, who dominate the lower-skilled farm work positions, have been similarly relegated to non-leadership positions.

While family farms in Manitoba have been dealt a fatal blow over the past three decades, women members of those families have come out with an even shorter end of the proverbial stick.

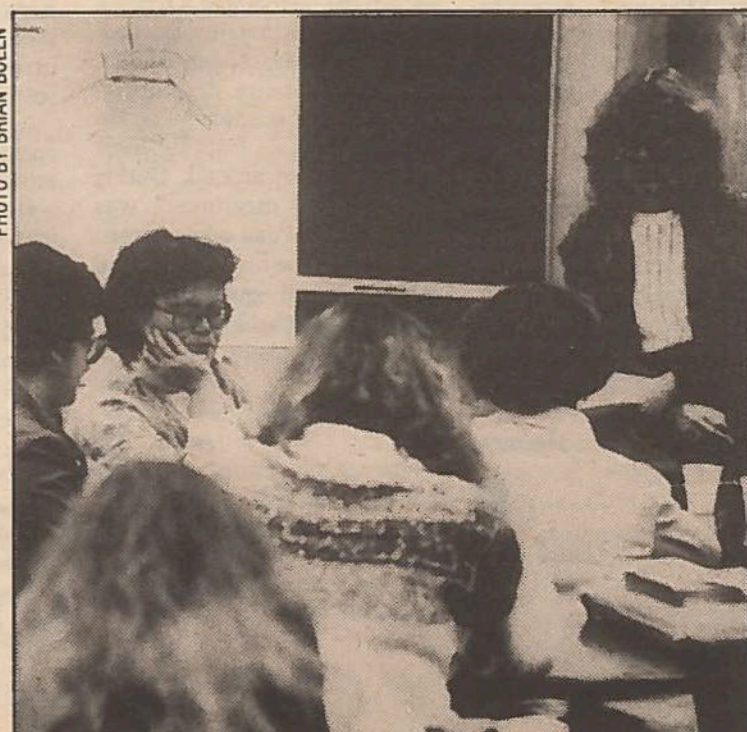


PHOTO BY BRIAN BOLEN

Conference

feels effects both men and women trying to make their living in rural communities.

A prime concern for the farm woman, according to Henderson, is that "Society has said her labour has no value. Her labour is free and therefore she has little value to society". Henderson added that without her own sense of value the farm woman is less likely to become involved at farmers' meetings or to increase her political awareness.

The significance of the supposedly enlightened Matrimonial Law for farm women, said Henderson, is that "She is valueless until divorced — only in divorce does she own anything." She added that for the farm women to gain her share of assets in the event of a divorce, the sale of the farm and therefore destruction of the economic unit to which she has devoted much of her life is necessary.

Skelton emphasized the need for strong support groups in rural areas as a means of eliminating competition between women and increasing communication and political awareness. She added that "Women today are organized to the hilt and rarely have time to communicate beyond the gossip level."

The importance of support among women having been stressed, the next session outlined the basic steps involved in organizing effective support groups. The workshop was conducted by Val Innes and Roz Golfman, both former teachers who are now working on their masters in Psychology and specializing in counselling.

"The most important things in establishing and maintaining a woman's support group" said Innes, "... are ... to establish a warm, comfortable, sharing, safe place for women to talk to each other without fear of rejection or judgement, to meet the needs of the women involved as much as is possible, to keep confidentiality, to give support to each other, and to have every woman feel equal and important in the group."

The conference concluded with a discussion led by content editor, Sharon Reilly, on the need for increased rural input to the newspaper as well as broader rural distribution. The delegates chose partners and agreed to write profiles on each other as an exercise in information gathering and writing. These are included in this issue. To broaden rural distribution, each delegate was asked to help make the newspaper available in her own community. Reilly encouraged delegates and speakers to contribute articles so the Manitoba Women's Newspaper could serve the needs of rural women as well as the women of Winnipeg.

PHOTO BY BRIAN BOLEN



PHOTO BY BRIAN BOLEN

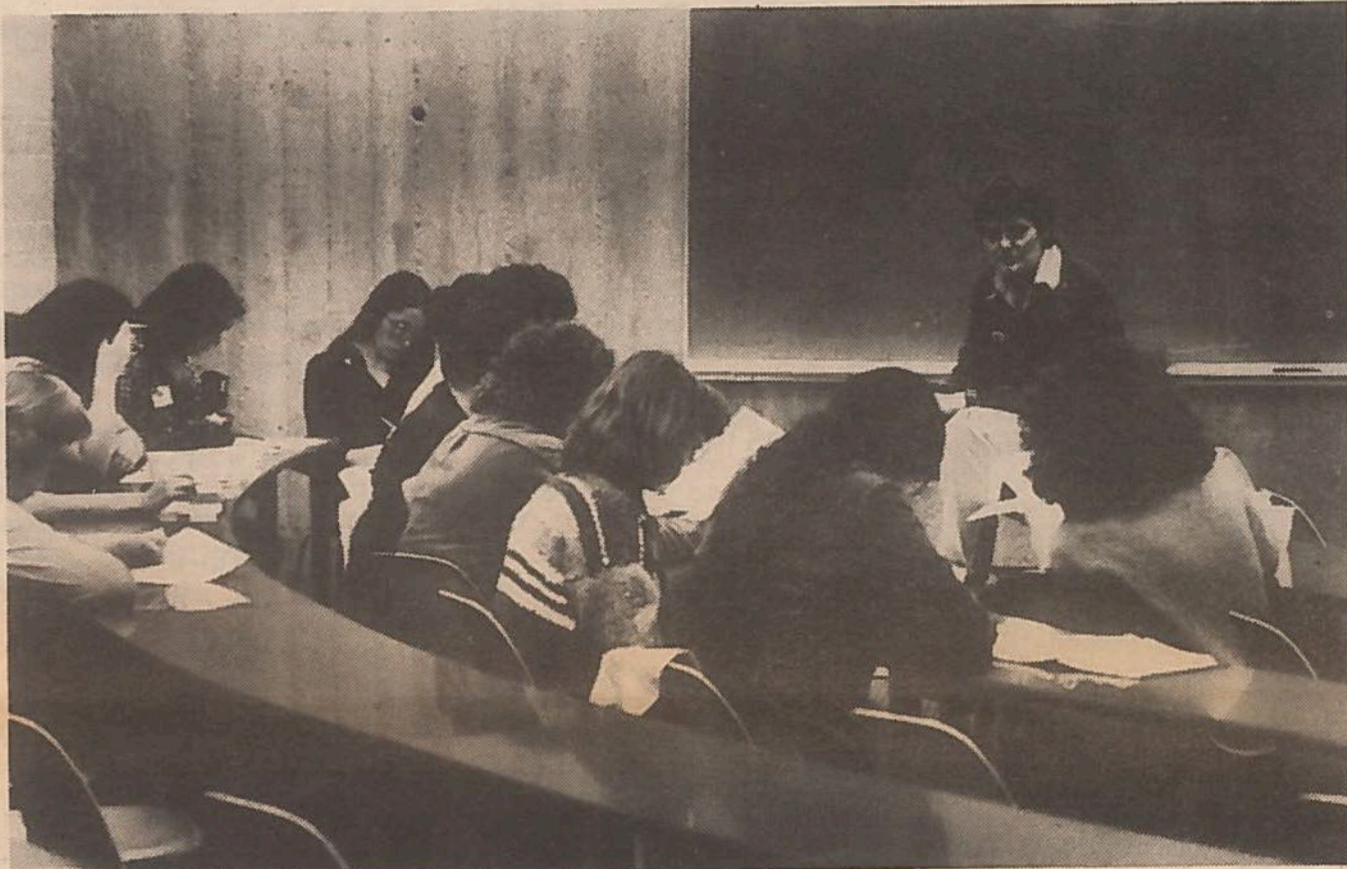


PHOTO BY RON SCHWARTZ



Coming from her farm home in Miami, Manitoba, is **Myrt Lenton**. Amidst the bustle of family and farm workers, horses, buffalo, peacocks, bantams, guinea hens, Arcana, and who knows what else, Myrt writes plays for radio, articles for newspapers, children's stories, and a titillating weekly column for *The Valley Leader*.

Specialties of Myrt's freelance career are profiles drawn from interview with interesting persons in the area. Myrt champions people's individualities and rights and heartily supports our struggles to achieve them. She welcomes newspaper to express and promote our awareness of and support for each other.

Irene Heaman

Marian Isitt attended the Rural Women's Conference "to see what was happening and to say just what I felt. I have not been involved in women's issues, because I'm tired of "talk". Talking has reached the stage where it serves a "nagging" function, just like nagging a drunk who refuses to listen.

"Women are despairing. What we need is action — action and leadership — from the most militant women around. During the weekend meetings I was cheered to find that other women are aware of the need for political changes, if real equality between the sexes is to be achieved. I'm glad I went."

Bev Peters

Sally Cunningham, a farm partner near Nesbitt, works part-time at Brandon University's Rural Community Resource Centre. Having recently established archives for Manitoba Pool Elevators, she is now coordinating an oral history project involving 120 interviewees in southwest Manitoba.

Cunningham is active in a community women's fitness and information group, a 4-H leader, a softball player and enthusiastic reader. She says women can only gain the recognition they deserve by becoming more visible in non-traditional roles.

The Rural Women's Conference attracted delegates from across the province. Delegate profiles were written for The Manitoba Women's Newspaper by women who attended the conference.

manitoba women's

CONFERENCE REPORT:

More delegates

Hetty Vanderput came to the Rural Women's Conference because she's interested in learning more about feminism and "broaden her horizons". She hopes that finding new interests may be her way of avoiding the empty nest syndrome. The oldest of her five children will leave home in a few months.

Vanderput's interests are varied. She and her husband are partners in a honey farm. She is very active in one of the refugee sponsorship groups in Carman and has worked closely with two families from Vietnam. She will be the liaison for government sponsored families. She sings in a women's choir and is a compulsive reader.

Gustine Wilton

Darlene Henderson of Sinclair, Manitoba, has been active in the National Farmers Union for the past five years. As NFU Womens President she has learned how one must constantly set the example of how a woman can change to be a leader.

Henderson feels women must recognize the problems they face, and then become politically active in their communities if they wish to bring about such change.

"Women cannot blame others for problems they themselves do not understand, nor are willing to propose changes for," she said. "It is our responsibility to create change where change is needed."

"Women must bring about the change of how they are portrayed by rural media and other women must provide the necessary support for each other so that can happen," says **Jacie Skelton** of Sinclair, now in her fourth term as Region 5 Coordinator of the National Farmers Union.

Rural women particularly, have to determine whether they want to change and what that change is going to be, because no one else is going to do it for them." Skelton said that from her experience of dealing with rural people and rural issues "just as farmers must organize for social change, so must women."

Irene Heaman lives on a farm in the Carman district. She says she is not a farm partner as her interests are mostly non-farm. Heaman says that to be a farm wife and not to have farm interests is a very lonely position to be in. She seeks support of other farm women in her situation.

Heaman, who taught school before she was married, is taking a creative writing course at the University of Manitoba. She excels at poetry.

She attended the Rural Women's Conference because she would like to see the MWN develop and be used as a communication to develop better understanding amongst women, both rural and urban.

Heaman has agreed to act as a contact person for the newspaper in the Morden, Carman area.

Bev Peters

"I work for MACSW and have a feminist perspective. It is as a feminist that I feel we must be focal, be willing to work towards our objectives and to make sure that the public is aware of us.

"It seems to me that the Manitoba Women's Newspaper can be an effective means by which we can achieve this, since the continued on page 10



PHOTO BY DAVE BUSTON

A place for everything

After winning third place in Wednesday's bull show, Nancy Biglieni had no pocket to hold her ribbon — so she tucked it under her lot-number vest as bull Klondike Banner stared with 'udder' approval.

Recent controversy in Brandon surrounding The Brandon Sun's use of a sexist cutline became resource material for 'The Images of Rural Women in Rural Publications' seminar on April 25th during the Rural Women's Conference. The Sun's photograph, cutline and Ms. Peters' letter are re-printed from the Brandon Sun. The photo and cutline appeared in The Sun's April 2nd issue and Ms. Peters' letter was run in that paper's issue of April 12th.

"After winning third place in Wednesday's Bull Show, Nancy Biglieni had no pocket to hold her ribbon — so she tucked it under her lot number vest as bull Klondike Banner stared with "udder approval." So states the caption under a picture of a young woman and her prize winning bull in last week's Brandon Sun.

It was Winter Fair time here. A big deal with lots of media coverage — of agriculture and related activities. My impression from wandering through barns, visiting the displays, and watching the evening program was that a lot of women participate. At any rate, they were to be found everywhere — grooming and exercising animals, putting animals through their paces in the showing, and winning ribbons for their efforts, and, occasionally, receiving

coverage in the Brandon Sun.

My complaint is simple enough. Isn't it possible to report on women's achievements without using innuendos about our bodies? Reading the caption, one wonders:

- 1.) would the photographer have taken a picture of a third place if it had been a man?
- 2.) is the paper interested in Nancy's third place ribbon, in her bull, or in making reference to a woman's breasts?
- 3.) am I mistaken all these years in believing that bulls don't have udders?
- 4.) would a man be offended if he were portrayed in a similar way?

Imagine a man tucking his ribbon into the waist of his pants while the bull looks on to say "pretty cocky fellow."

Rural media fail women: a delegate responds.

by Mary Catherine Figurel

Beginning their workshop on The Image of Rural Women in Rural Publications — the first of the day at the Manitoba Women's Newspaper's Rural Women's Conference — Brandon feminists Bev Peters and Sally Cunningham asked us to close our eyes and envision "the rural woman". They then asked us to verbalize our images. These ranged from facetious to serious, and included a grandmotherly sort baking bread, a woman driving a tractor at haying time, a bookkeeper, the proverbial woman barefoot and pregnant, or making shirts from flour sacks, a gardener, or go-fer gal, a farm labourer, and women making huge meals at harvest time and working in the milking parlour.

After this discussion, Peters and Cunningham distributed copies of various rural publications and we began to search for images of rural women. What aspects of what we had just discussed would these publications reflect?

Most were small-town Manitoba newspapers but there were also some, such as *Grain News* and *Country Journal*, which are more widely distributed. To anyone interested in seeing women represented accurately in their actual role in rural society they were disastrous. Many dated back as far as five years but the material for and about women published over that time had barely changed.

Peters and Cunningham asked questions such as, "How often do articles about women appear on the front page?" "Where can articles for and about women be found? What subjects are covered? Who writes the articles? What images of farm women do these articles contain?"

As a group we found the portrayal of rural women by the rural media demeaning. Articles for women were usually written by women and seldom stray from recipes, garden and household tips, sewing patterns and women's club notes. These items were generally relegated to the last few pages.

One paper I looked through contained an article about the importance of learning to drive, but dealt mainly with the adventures of the writer, a woman, as she

learned to drive. It reinforced all the stereotypes of the "woman driver" and suggested an incompatibility between all women and anything mechanical. I felt sick!

Any mention of women outside the Women's Section is limited almost exclusively to a photo snapped as Mrs. So-and-so "looks on" while hubby is named "Manitoba Barley Farmer of the Year" or given some similar distinction.

I cannot help thinking the farmer's wife does a whole lot more than "look on" in everyday life and deserves recognition for her role in "making it all possible". After all, who cooks the five-course breakfasts during seeding and harvest, then has to leave household chores, which are generally her responsibility, to pick up necessary equipment at the farm supply store? Who balances the books while balancing a couple of future farmers on her knee? It seems sad that this kind of contribution, which women have made for generations, goes virtually unrecognized, especially in rural publications.

Peters and Cunningham then asked delegates how they would like to see themselves portrayed. This time the answers included doing essential farm work such as fencing or driving a combine, making and appreciating art, acting as farm managers, and participating in discussions at farmers' meetings. They also thought articles about men's involvement with child care would be timely.

Peters and Cunningham threw one last question to us. What can rural women do to change their image in the printed media?

Several suggestions were made. Women can write letters to the editor, either to point out the lack of newsworthy articles about women or to comment on an article which has appeared in the publication.

It was noted that many small-town newspapers would like to print more local material, but do not have enough staff to handle all news stories. Women can volunteer to write such articles. Writing inexperience is a stumbling block, but not insurmountable as many editors are helpful.

BEV/ from page 9

Establishment media don't focus on women's issues and achievements.

"It does seem important to me that women get together, and that city and rural women become aware of their community of interest.

"I was, however, rather disappointed that there was not a larger turnout of rural women at the meeting."

Marian Isitt

CHILDCARE/ from page 3

"Then I can undertake a process of going to the City of Winnipeg for an amendment (of city legislation) which is a long and arduous process."

In any case, she said, HSC is dependent on the province for a maintenance grant for the evening and overnight places in the centre.

"We can't finance it unless the province is supportive," said McCormick. "I've got to get it going. I'm going to keep at it until I reach the final stone wall or I succeed."

SEVEN OAKS/ from page 3

Women and others.

Ninety-three per cent of therapeutic abortions are performed at Health Sciences Centre and the Victoria General Hospital in Winnipeg, Kruger said, "because most hospitals in Manitoba have neglected their responsibility to provide facilities for therapeutic abortions."

In 1978, the latest year for which statistics are available, 1,600 Manitoba women had abortions in the province. But nearly as many, 1,554, had to go elsewhere. Since then, Health Sciences has reduced the number of first-trimester abortions it performs, while second-trimester abortions are almost never performed in Manitoba.

"These women and their families pay taxes for their medical services in Canada, yet are denied access to this particular medical service," said Kruger. "Travelling 150 miles to Grand Forks, (N.D.), or worse still, if in the second trimester, to Minneapolis, (Minn.), and being forced to pay \$250 to \$800 U.S. is often an insurmountable hurdle."

FARM WIFE/ from page 6

Although similar studies in other provinces confirm most wives contribute equally to the farm's management — even when raising children — that contribution is taken for granted and undervalued. Few women are paid for their labors or made legal partners.

Tax law changes cover wife's wages

However, changes in federal laws effective for the 1980 taxation year will allow a farm operator who puts his wife on the payroll to deduct her wages as a business expense. But critics argue it will leave a woman no better off. Likely, she will plow her earnings back into the business rather than spend it on herself and she will be less motivated to demand a registered partnership with her husband — an arrangement that assures her greater financial protection than being a salaried employee should the marriage break up or her husband die without leaving a will.

A recent Statistics Canada study noted a considerable rise since 1960 in the proportion of women operating farms or whose main activity is related to the farm.

"Even where wives play a larger role in the farm operation," the report cautioned, "there are indications that they are taking the place of hired labor (which is no longer required on a full-time basis) or are freeing their husbands for off-farm work."

It found that earnings of the 4,500 women who said they operated a farm averaged 75 per cent less than the incomes of men who ran farms.

Bread and butter issues are not the rural woman's only concern. Wife battering, child abuse, alcoholism and teenage drug use are losing their taboo status as misfortunes to be tolerated silently and alone.

Financial pressures main source of stress

The image of a healthy, tranquil country life is also being eroded as more rural women admit to stress.

Women of Uniform, an offshoot of an Alberta farmers' organization, recently began conducting stress workshops for its members. More than 500 rural women it surveyed identified financial pressures as their main source of stress, followed by family-related stress caused by fatigue from long working hours of unpaid labor and a lack of recognition and respect for the woman's role on the farm.

the newspaper

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COMMENT

Every act a 'political' act

by Darlene Henderson and Jacie Skelton

Women have made a lot of progress, but there remains much to be gained if they are willing to take control of their own political destiny. In order for women to do this they must develop a political awareness, that allows them to recognize and analyse problems and to plan actions for change.

People often fear being involved in political action because taking a stand can make them unpopular. What people must realize is that any act is political. If you vote in an election, you have performed a political act, if you don't vote you have performed an even greater political act.

There is no such thing as a "women's" issue. Every issue is related to other issues and affects people besides women. There are issues, however, in which women must take responsibility for motivating change.

The primary issue facing rural women in Manitoba today is economic instability caused, in part, by a cheap-food policy in Canada under which farmers have no guarantees that they will get their full cost of production or a fair return for their labour.

Women in rural communities are constantly faced with the problems created by this economic instability. Whether they are farmers, farm wives or live in rural towns they are faced with depopulating and disintegrating communities.

Women who have to work to subsidize the farm or who want a career are faced with poor job choices and often low paying service jobs. They are faced with inadequate day care facilities and high travel costs commuting to work. The farm wife who doesn't go from the farm to work finds herself considered economically valueless.

As economic instability forces families off the land, medicare, educational and recreational facilities diminish.

Today's world constantly challenges traditionalism. Some couples choose to live together instead of marrying. Others make a conscious choice not to enter into long-term relationships. Some wish to be married while others in unhappy relationships choose to divorce because it is now more acceptable.

In some cases, women have succeeded in instigating discussions and analysis of issues that have led to positive change. A good example is Manitoba's Matrimonial Property Law.

These more liberalized laws have made divorce much fairer to women than previously. But still a woman's labour is only measured in economic terms in the event of marriage breakdown. And dissolving the marriage of a farm couple almost inevitably means the dismantling of the farm unit and the removal of a family from

the community.

Do we want change? Do we want economic stability? Do women want economic and social equality?

Nothing will change until women develop an understanding that life in the rural community is not what it should be. Several roadblocks must be overcome in order for change to take place.

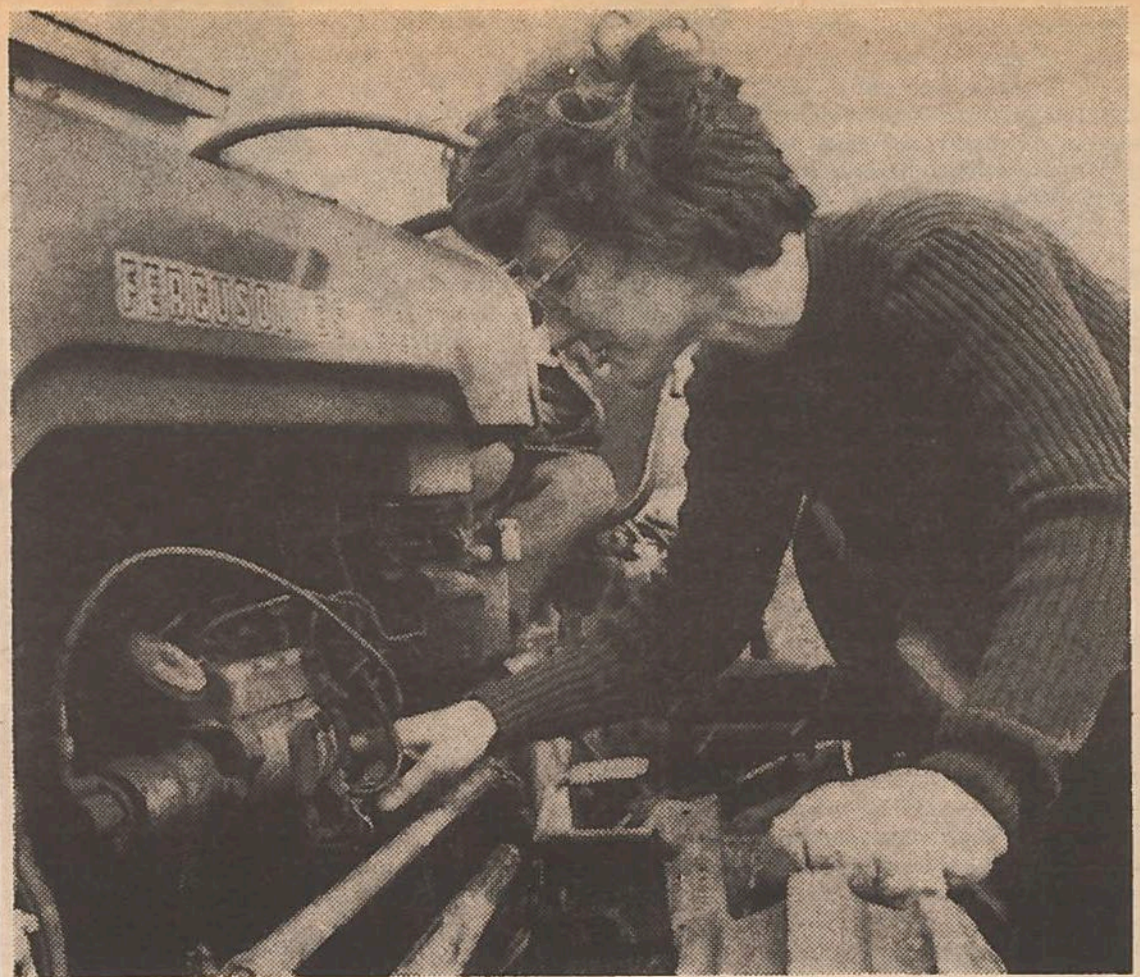
Rural women are isolated. In the pioneer days this was easy to see. Women lived ten miles apart and had to walk to see one another. Now women are isolated because of lack of time, fear of getting involved with other women and a lack of confidence to speak out in front of men.

Women must begin to cooperate instead of competing against one another for the cleanest house, smartest children or the prettiest dress. Women must begin listening to one another's problems and offering support to one another.

In order for women to gain respect in the community they must present themselves as responsible people with rational ideas and workable solutions.

Only when women begin writing issue-oriented articles, will editors of rural newspapers publish them.

Women can only strengthen their position by caring for, cooperating with and supporting one another.



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manitoba women's

Medical Column

Women's clinic opens on Broadway, May 25

by Sue Wood

If you've driven down Broadway during the last month you may have discovered that two doors down from Klinik is a little storefront with an oversized blue sign that says, "Women's Health Center, Inc." WHC, Inc. is the new headquarters and the new name of what used to be PIS — the unfortunate abbreviation of the Pregnancy Information Service.

PIS originally came into being in 1973 when two Winnipeg women, Brenda Brand and Jan Ellis, approached Klinik over the need for a counselling service dealing with birth control and unwanted pregnancies.

Prior to 1973 the original Winnipeg Women's Liberation Movement ran such a service out of the old McIntyre building. As early as '69, when abortions were illegal in both Canada and the U.S., and women who wanted to terminate a pregnancy had to either go to England or Sweden or risk a "back-alley" illegal abortion, Women's Liberation provided pregnancy counselling. They also publicized the issue of abortion on demand through tactics such as demonstrations down Portage Ave. and a now legendary guerilla theatre attack on a convention of the Canadian Medical Association.

When that group moved on to other issues, there was an obvious need for a new service, and thus PIS began. Klinik agreed to provide the space, PIS started to train counsellors and from there grew to the point that last year PIS counsellors saw an estimated 500 clients.

Many of these 500 needed referrals to a medical service and the Klinik medical staff ended up picking up much of the load, thus overtaxing their service which, since Klinik is a community clinic, was primarily intended to serve the residents of the area.

It became clear about a year ago that in order to really give the best service, and to ease the load on Klinik, PIS had to get into the business of providing medical services itself. It began by hiring one physician, Craig Hildahl, who worked part-time out of Klinik for PIS last year. When this worked out well, PIS finally took the plunge and rented and renovated a building, applied for and received a grant from Manpower and Immigration, and hired a staff; two physicians, myself and Craig, a clinic director, Dawn Masters, who used to be the medical counsellor at Klinik, and two receptionists. We opened May 4th and have now finished a pretty successful first week and a half of operation.

So far we're doing primarily what PIS has been doing all along — birth control and unwanted pregnancies. We see a lot of adolescents who have only a few other places in the city where they feel comfortable going. We also see many older women who prefer our style of practice to the assembly line of some of the big clinics or the strike breaking tactics of the Winnipeg Clinic.

Besides doing reproductive health, we're happy to see any women for any medical problem that a family doctor would normally handle, and for those problems we can't deal with ourselves, we're developing referral list of specialists with whom we've had good experience and that we trust to treat women well.

There is also a list of possibilities for the future of other, less traditional things we'd like to get into. Among other ideas we've had:

- Classes in: — self breast examinations
- self gynecological examinations
- natural methods of birth control
- home remedies
- menstrual extraction

- Discussion groups on: — post TA problems
- post partum depression

Obstetrical care (which we're just not doing yet)

We're lucky to have an active committed Board of Directors and about 20 volunteer counsellors. We always need more people who are interested in training to become counsellors, so I'll take this opportunity to urge you to call us if you'd like to join.

We are also at the moment operating on a shoestring and need donations of money if you have any.

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LETTERS



Dear MWN:

THE BOTTOM LINE IS whether we can turn away from the arms race and dismantle weapons before an accident occurs.

For the Voice of Women, a Canadian organization, funded only by its members, the work of lobbying for peace has gone on for twenty years. In 1961, women decided to protest the atmospheric testing of nuclear "devices". The Strontium 90 fall-out from these tests was concentrating in calcium; mothers' milk and babies' teeth. In the States and USSR, the tests stopped.

Voice of Women, with branches in every province, has carried on campaigns against the sale of war toys to children at Christmas time. They have alerted government representatives and the public to the realities of such military practices as chemical and biological warfare research, carried on in Suffield, Alberta. In the early 70's VoW told government caucus M.L.A.s of the potential disaster for Manitobans in the event that nuclear missiles in Langdon and Walhalla, North Dakota were ever launched. We stood in silent vigils and protested the participation of the Canadian Government and Canadian industry in producing components for computerized weapons systems used in the twelve year war against the Vietnamese.

Voice of Women led the protest against the development of nuclear power long before the Three Mile Island eruption. Staunch conservationists and conscious of our connection with the environment, V.O.W. has seen the potential for developing our energy resources in balance with the eco-system using new, "soft" technology.

For further information, write: Voice of Women, c/o 111 Lanark St., Winnipeg, Man. R3N 1K9.

Terri Gray
Co-ordinator
Manitoba Voice of Women

RURAL RAMBLINGS

Dear MWN:

Delighted to be part of the Rural Women's Conference sponsored by the Manitoba Women's newspaper.

Yes, we rural women agree, that if, the paper is to be a Manitoba paper, rural input is a must.

However, one pitfall I foresee in it being accepted by rural women is the reference to it being a feminist paper.

Why you ask? Because feminist is an image that is foreign to rural women. They cannot afford it.

Much of the rural community is created by the family farm. And a family farm in order to survive must rely on family input. That is, all members must contribute at the level of their ability. Mum must pitch in and drive the tractor, grain truck, whatever. Dad in turn must help with the dishes, meal preparation or child care, Junior pitches in wherever she is able.

Family labour is one of the remaining survival tools left to the family farm. Without it many would have succumbed long ago.

For rural women to take a stand as a feminist on a rural issue would make her feel like a traitor to those she struggles with, namely other family members and community members. Issues must be attacked like her work as a combined effort.

Currently the most pertinent farm issues are of an economic nature. There is much instability in farm economics; especially as it relates to the family farm. All family farm members are fighting to maintain their existence.

What the farmer is currently

seeking is an equitable marketing system. A system that would allow the farmer a reasonable return on his investment.

Also, farmers feel that Canada can no longer support its cheap food policy. All segments of society must come to accept this if farmers are to remain viable.

There is a great need for more understanding between the consumer and the producer. They are continually being pitted against one another.

Farmers are not to blame for the rising cost of food. They are not, as many of their city cousins believe, becoming rich at their expense.

On and on it goes. Now if the MWN could be used as a medium for rural women to present the rural condition, I then believe rural women would submit material and feel part of it. But if it is to project only a feminist view point with demands for more rights for just women, then I do not see it as a medium that rural women will utilize.

I believe that when we label issues as female issues we become part of what we fight. Isn't equality what the women's movement is all about? How can segregation create equality?

One more thing, we women are schooled in being assertive. I agree with that but how assertive can one be with the weatherman? This spring he is the threatening, and controlling, force that has all us rural people in a flap.

See what I mean? Rural problems are very complex. To surmount them we need all our combined strengths.

We can't afford any type of segregation and thus we cannot indulge in the term feminist.

Myrt Lenton,
Miami



REVIEWS

Good Times, Bad Times Mummy and Me, by Priscilla Galloway, illustrations by Lisa Calvert, 30 pages, published in Canada by The Women's Press, Toronto 1980

by Debby Schwartz

What working mother doesn't suffer guilt as she rushes off to work each day to earn money for her family? Combined with society's condemnation of the working mum, our children's angry words become more than enough to send us in search of a manual that will have a magical solution to our dilemma.

I must admit that it was this search for the elusive solution to the working mother syndrome that led me to Priscilla Galloway's "Good Times — Bad Times — Mummy and Me". Galloway's book discusses, from a child's point of view, the feelings and problems she and her working mother experience. It does not offer any magical solutions but does realistically portray the anger children express when "their mummy" doesn't seem to measure up to those of their friends, or to their own ideal.

Nor does Galloway's book try to "sell" the working mother to the child. It is a common fault among children's books to try to sugar-coat what a child dislikes, obviously Galloway knows we cannot fool our children.

"Good Times, Bad Times, Mummy and Me" starts off with the child telling us she hates her mother. The reader is then told this is so, with comparisons being made to other mothers. More positive aspects of the mother/daughter relationship also are mentioned.

I found the use of the word "hate" a little harsh at first, but observed that my four year old daughter was not the least offended. I suppose (reluctantly) that she felt the word quite appropriate.

Although the book is aimed at the children of working moms, it applies to all children as it provokes discussion of grievances for whatever reasons. After reading the book to my daughter she made me very much aware of my faults — none of which included me working outside the home.

Good Times — Bad Times also provides the opportunity for mother and child to tell one another what is pleasant about their relationship. I would recom-

mend the book for 5-7 year olds, not only because the main character is that age, but also because the illustrations are detailed black and white sketches and tend not to hold the attention of preschoolers very long.

I recommend Priscilla Galloway's book — not only because it makes children think — but because it makes parents think as well.

*When i grow old
i want to be
what i was told
when i was three
now i'm young
i read alot
i hold my tongue
and yet the thought
of slimy snails
and puppies' tails
that wag in the dark
make me remark
that red is red
and blue is blue
and a rose
is a rose
is a rose.*

by Tess

P. S.



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REALLY, EMILY! "ROSIE" IS A CLEAN, WELL BEHAVED, LOVING PET. AND I HAVEN'T HAD MY PURSE SNATCHED FOR OVER SIX MONTHS EITHER!

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No, you don't need to rush down to your local pet shop and buy one of the little stinkers. We can suggest a product that gives the same results—without the problems of feed and litter—or complaints from the neighbours.

We're talking about *Buck Stop's Skunk Scent*. As the label says "It's the scent you need for those close-up situations"!

Buck Stop's has everything to recommend it. It's cheap, accessible, legal—and most important of all—it's effective!

The 100% natural solution comes ready to use in a special odourless glass bottle with a leak-proof cap. It is available locally through sportspersons' shops such as Sidney I. Robinson's Mail Order house on Burrows Avenue. Neutralizer is also available. For most convenient use the scent should be carefully transferred to a squeeze bottle with snap off cap that can be easily carried in purse or pocket.

So remember—the next time an unsavory male hassles you—just tell him to "skunk off"!

Bookstore wants retraction

Liberation Books is pressing for a public retraction from Brian Corrin (NDP-Wellington) of statements he made in the legislature April 29 urging prosecution of the bookstore for selling *The Joy of Lesbian Sex* and *The Joy of Gay Sex*.

The store has continued to sell the homosexual sex manuals despite threats from Att.-Gen. Gerry Mercier that it could be successfully prosecuted on grounds they were obscene.

Bookstore spokesman Siegfried Laser says Corrin misrepresented the bookstore and its censorship committee.

"He stated it was the bookstore's and the censorship committee's position to force a court case and to force charges, which was never our position," said Laser. "Our position was always that the books were entirely legal as evidenced by the fact that they were sold across the country, that they're sold in the commercial bookstores to this very day."

He said they are sold in at least three commercial bookstores in Winnipeg and one in Portage la Prairie.

Laser said the issue was "lay fallow" since October when the store organized a demonstration at the legislature and presented the government with a petition condemning the attempted censorship.

"We feel we won this issue politically last year and Corrin just nattered and nagged and forced Mercier into a corner," said Laser. "The issue lay fallow and it lay fallow for a reason."

Anyone wanting to sign a letter addressed to Mercier indicating support for the sale of the books should contact the bookstore.

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JANICE R. FOLEY, B.Comm., FLMI

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In The Pas, at Deter's Confectionary and in other areas across the province.

If you'd 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.

Manitoba Communists elect first woman leader

The Communist Party of Canada (Manitoba) has elected its first woman leader, 29-year-old Paula Fletcher.

"People who know me know that I fight for equality for women in all spheres—quite adamantly," said the former garment factory organizer.

She said her election at a recent party convention "means that the women's question . . . will not be neglected in any way as tends to happen in a number of parties in Manitoba."

Women must fight for their right "to be a leader or a spokesperson or whatever in whatever movement," she said.

"The number of women in political life in Manitoba is very small. There's only two in the legislature and not one woman for Manitoba sits in the federal house."

Fletcher, a member of the

Nellie McClung theatre group, said her party stands for "full social, political and economic equality of women," emphasizing equal pay for work of equal value, adequate day care, the right to abortion, the right of farm women to legal recognition of their contribution to the family farm, "and the necessity to organize the unorganized which is primarily women in female job ghettos that are not being organized right now."



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