

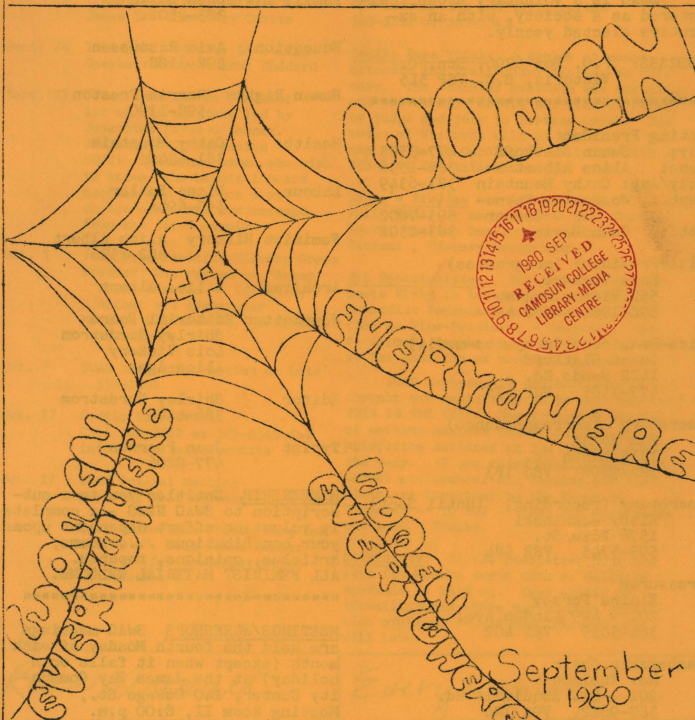
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SWAG

STATUS OF WOMEN NEWS

HQ 1154

5954



The Victoria Status of Women Action Group was formed in 1971 in order to work for the implementation of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women; to foster public knowledge of the rights and status of women and to promote full participation of women in social, economic and political life.

SWAG is a voluntary group, registered as a society, with an executive elected yearly.

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 6296, Stn. C.
Victoria, B.C. V8P 5L5

Acting President:

May: Susan Slatkoff 477-3585
June: Alice Albert 382-1536
July/Aug: Cathy Mountain 381-6349
Sept.: Josephine Payne-
O'Connor 595-7802
Oct.: Gwen Bavin 383-2502

Vice-President (programmes)

Lois Vickery
552 Victoria Ave.
598-1704 V8S 4M6

Vice-President (projects-media)

Susan Slatkoff
1422 Wende Rd.
477-3585 V8P 3T5

Secretary (correspondence)

Pam Hogan
1315 Minto St.
382-9896 V8S 1P3

Secretary (recording) (until Sept)

Elzby Jaswinski
1576 Yale St.
595-5745 V8R 5N4

Treasurer

Elaine Forsey
201 - 429 Linden Ave.
384-5019 V0V 4G2

Membership Chair

Rea Knelson
202 - 804 Esquimalt Rd.
388-9682 V9A 3M4

COMMITTEES

Members are encouraged to focus their energies on one or more committees. This is where the real work of SWAG goes on. You need not be an expert. Call one of the chair-people and offer your services.

CHAIRPEOPLE

Family Law Gwen Bavin
383-2502

Education Avis Rasmussen
598-3188

Human Rights Norrie Preston
598-1390

Health Cathy Mountain
381-6349

Labour Diana Butler
598-6964

Feminist History Alice Albert
382-1536

Archives Alice Albert

Newsletter Editorial Board
Shirley Nordstrom
Lois Vickery
Alice Ages

Editor Shirley Nordstrom
386-4467

Typist Joan Pearson
477-8206

MEMBERSHIP Entitles you to a subscription to SWAG NEWS - a completely volunteer effort dependent upon your contributions poems, articles, opinions, reports.
ALL FEMINIST MATERIAL WELCOME.

MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS SWAG meetings are held the fourth Monday of each month (except when it falls on a holiday) at the James Bay Community Center, 140 Oswego St., Meeting Room II, 8:00 p.m.

Calendar Announcements

Sept. 22 8:00 p.m. SWAG General Meeting
Speaker: Alice Ages --
"Emotional Self Defence"
James Bay Community Centre

Sept. 24 7:30 p.m. Divorce Life Line
Speaker: Lawyer Carol Huddard

Sept. 25 "From Feminine to Feminist"
1st of six sessions led by
Josephine Payne-O'Conner.
Register UVIC Extension
NOTE: Concerned women who wish
to attend the hospital board
meeting and vote for a pro-
choice candidate are excused
from the first session

Oct. 1 7:30 p.m. Feminist History Group
Speaker: Rob Pazdro -- "Agnes
Deans Cameron -- Educator,
Author and Adventurer"
Meet at 453 Moss St. (A. Albert,
382-1536

Oct. 7 SWAG Executive Meeting at Lois'
598-1704

Oct. 27 Cecile Rape Trial
Call 383-3232 or 383-5545 for
info. See Announcements

Oct. 27 SWAG General Meeting
Physical Self Defence

Nov. 1 Fall Conference "Networking for
the 80's" Call Diana Butler
598-6964 for preregistration
information

Rape-Assault Volunteer Training continues
through October and November. Call NOV
for information and registration
383-3232 or 383-5545

Cecile Rape Trial: A number of women
attended the preliminary hearing on this
case. The feminist presence was exciting
and provoking. Cecile has elected trial
by judge and jury in Supreme Court. The
women of Victoria will be there. If you
can sit in on October 27 call 383-3232 or
383-5545 for information and time.

Women's Studies are available at UVIC.
Full credit or non-credit. Call Connie
Rooke, English Department or Paddi
Tsurami, History Department.

Job Opportunities: Due to other commit-
ments Elzby is leaving her position as
Recording Secretary and Susan her posi-
tion as Vice-President - Projects. Due
to illness Rae has been forced to give
up her position as membership chair.

SWAG Members, if you have always
thought you would like to be more involved
THIS IS THE TIME. The remaining handful
of working members cannot fulfill the
priorities outlined at the beginning of
the year. If you think monthly meetings,
annual conferences and regular publica-
tions are important to the Women of
Victoria -- TO YOU -- then you must share
the load. Thanks.

Newsletter: If the Newsletter over the
next few months seems thin or delivery
sporadic -- hold on. Your editor is
travelling and there may be some produc-
tion problems -- but what you get you
will love.

Rape/Assault
Center
383-3232

Everywomens
Books
641 Johnson St.

LOOK AT THE LINEUP

for the 8th annual

FALL CONFERENCE

WOMEN AS PARENTS

REVAMPING THE HOME

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

AGAINST MIND BINDING

WOMEN & SANITY

DAUGHTERS OF THE EARTH (RELIGION)

SAVING THE EARTH (ECOLOGY & CONSERVATION)

FEMINIST PARTY OF CANADA

POVERTY & POWER

FEMINIZING UNIONS

BUILDING UNIONS

RADICAL FEMINISM

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 1, 1980

See you there



LETTERS



Dear Sisters:

Due to time pressures caused by other commitments I find that I have been doing very little in my position as Vice President of SWAG. Rather than continue on with minimal input, and after a great deal of soul-searching, I have decided to resign my post.

I intend to remain an active member of SWAG and will continue working in the Women's Movement in Victoria. I hope to see many of you at the next general meeting.

Respectfully,
Susan Slatkoff

Dear Women:

Please find the enclosed cheque for one subscription for SWAG Magazine for one year.

Thank you for all the complimentary issues I've read at various places and especially thank you for all the hard work and heart you put into your publication.

In Sisterhood
Lou Holland

Dear Shirley Nordstrom:

I was horrified to hear on CBC Radio this morning that Supreme Court Judge Bora Laskin has ruled that a rape victim must still attest to her former sexual conduct in camera "so as to protect the rights of the accused." This treatment of women as chattel property takes us right back to the Middle Ages. I suggest that any women so treated should emulate her sisters of the Women's Suffrage Movement at the turn of the century, and risk contempt of court charges and jail rather than put up with it. (Perhaps this might allow rapists to be let off:

it is however a crime growing in magnitude and it makes it all too damnably obvious which sex is running this country.)

I enclose a cheque for \$5.00 for your bulletin, and hope that this is adequate. I intend also to write to my M.P., who has in the past expressed concern over a woman's right to walk to the corner mailbox unmolested.

Yours,
Alison McAdam

An Open Letter for Circulation to the
Feminist Community of Victoria

On July 26, 1980, the women's community of Victoria staged a march to "take back the night." While there, I asked for support for a similar demonstration in Nanaimo that was to take place on August 2, 1980. Support was assured should it be possible to change the date from the 2nd to the 9th as that weekend was the same as the Vancouver Island Women's Festival. The change was made in anticipation of a good turnout of women from Victoria. We needed your support. My question is a simple one. WHERE WERE YOU?

Nanaimo has an extraordinarily high number of assaults on women but the consciousness of the issue is very low in this city. In addition, Nanaimo has never before had a women's march around any issue. It took a great deal of courage for the small number of women who appeared on August 9 to be there at all. We did receive a telegram of support from Vancouver Rape Relief and that had a very uplifting effect. But there was nothing from Island communities.

We, as feminists, surely have some obligation to be there for women who are not in our space to help and to encourage.

If we, as feminists, continue to isolate ourselves in some kind of elitism, changes will never happen. All we seem to be doing is meeting with feminists, talking with feminists, encouraging our own feminists about feminism. Preaching to the converted doesn't do anything.

I am fundamentally disappointed -- both personally and politically.

Yours sincerely,
Ruth Lea Taylor,
Nanaimo

Dear concerned citizens and friends:

The outcome of the trial of MARGARET MARSH in September 1980 will have a major bearing on the future of parents' freedom to choose their birth attendant and place of birth. MARGARET MARSH is charged by the College of Physicians and Surgeons with practicing Midwifery without a medical licence. The B.C. Medical Act presently empowers the College to govern the practice of Midwifery.

In the Province of B. C. preference for home births is a growing alternative to hospital births and must be recognized as a credible choice for parents, for women who are choosing their place of birth and birth attendants for physical, spiritual and emotional reasons.

MARGARET MARSH was responding to a need which the College refuses to allow doctors and midwives to meet. There is a basic contradiction in a situation where doctors insist they are the only ones who can deliver babies and yet they refuse to go to home births. Canada is the only industrialized nation of the western world that has no provision for specialists in healthy childbirth.

MARGARET's trial is set for September 22 - 26, 1980 in Victoria and will be the first time the issue of Midwifery has come before a Canadian Court. A comprehensive defence is planned with Vancouver Lawyer Peter Leask. The cost of the Court case defence is projected at over five thousand dollars.

We need your moral, spiritual and importantly your practical financial support to challenge the view of the College of Physicians and Surgeons that

only physicians should assist in normal childbirth. A ruling in favour of MARGARET MARSH would be an important victory for midwives and mothers who are fighting for the right to have the kind of births they want.

Please send your donations to:
Margaret Marsh Defence Fund Trust
Account #608331
Vancouver City Savings Credit Union
1030 West Broadway
Vancouver, B. C. V6H 1E6

Please call 526-1493 or 734-3938 or write #8, 1937 West 2nd Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1J2 for more information. Your concern is needed.

Yours sincerely,
Carol Street
Coordinator
Friends of Margaret Marsh

Dear Cathy Mountain:

Further to our conversation of Tuesday August 19th, I am enclosing a short summary of the exchange sitter idea. I do not pretend to have all the answers, but then I haven't heard all the questions yet!

People are thoughtful (P.A.T.) will be an exchange sitter service, providing parents with a suitable mature sitter, free of charge. Everyone has a need for "time out," an hour or more, with no questions asked. P.A.T. will give parents time out and will enable replacement of that valuable time, by helping someone else.

Some of us are in the position that sitter's fees are beyond our budgets. By simply sitting for someone else in P.A.T., members will be accumulating hours for credit to their own time account, and it will not have cost any money.

The following questionnaire is a sample of what I propose to ask in a survey. I would encourage everyone to fill it out whether a parent or not, for anyone can sit.

If after the survey, the response indicates that SWAG members are interested, I would be willing to serve in any capacity of the service.

Example of Survey:

1. Name _____
2. Address _____
3. Telephone No. _____
4. Children: names, gender, age _____
5. Own transportation or other _____
6. Single parent or other _____
7. Are you willing or able to replace the hours by sitting for another member? _____
8. How often would you require this service per week _____ hours
per month _____ hours
9. Would you sit in your home _____
or other home _____
10. What hours would you require the service _____ a.m.
_____ p.m.
11. What day would you prefer to have the service _____
12. What days are you available? _____
13. What district is most suitable for you? _____
14. Do you prefer a male or female sitter? _____
15. If unable to replace hours, what service could you provide as an exchange? (i.e. typing for sitter, sewing, etc.) _____
16. If you are willing to sit, but do not require the service, what would you consider a fair exchange for your time? _____

Even as I reread what I have written I see room for improvement, but as I mentioned earlier, I haven't heard all the questions yet.

I also realize that my writing does not keep up with my racing mind, but I think there is very little need to go on to explanations as to why this type of service is needed.

Please take this proposal into serious consideration, and please phone me at 386-4326 anything.

Thank you
Beverley Anne Kruithof

Hon. Jean Cretien
Minister of Justice

Dear Mr. Chretien:

We are appalled at the recent Supreme Court ruling which will require victims of rape to, once again, be interrogated about their past sexual conduct at in-camera

court hearings. This is a regressive and discriminatory move that will, once again, see the victim "put on trial."

The manipulation, by the defense, of this tactic, to impugn the credibility of the victim and arouse sympathy for the accused, is common knowledge, and constitutes a blatant and contemptible mockery of justice.

Furthermore, a woman's past sexual conduct is entirely irrelevant to the issue of the violent sexual assault against her will for which she is seeking "justice." The fact that a woman may have willingly at some time in the past had a number of sexual partners does not excuse her attacker from violating her forcefully.

This, together with the recent ruling on "reasonable doubt re consent" (i.e. the rapist sincerely believed she was consenting), suggests to us that the judicial system is leaning over backwards for the rights of the accused; and in the process, trampling the rights of women.

Must women have to display cuts and bruises in order to have "credibility" in the court room? This attitude is regressive and misogynistic, and will not be tolerated by the women of Canada.

Yours truly,
Pamela L. Hogan
Corresponding Secretary

cc: Hon. Lloyd Axworthy
Minister Responsible for Status of Women

Allan McKinnon, NP

Mr. Robert A. Marchand
Managing Editor
Victoria Leisure News

Dear Mr. Marchand:

I am writing with regard to an offensive and tasteless photograph which appeared in the most recent issue of your paper.

I am referring to the full-colour, half-page "crotch-shot" of a bikini woman on your lower front page. This

photograph is demeaning to the women of Victoria and in extremely poor taste. It conveys the not-so-subtle message that women are leisure activities. We find this offensive and insulting. You would do well to remember, Mr. Marchand, that women are not mindless sex objects.

The kind of fragmentation and objectification utilized in the offending photo is identical to methods commonly used by pornographers to demean women. Whether or not your intention was to portray women as mere sex objects, we trust you will put more thought into your selection of material in the future.

Yours truly,
Pamela L. Hogan
Corresponding Secretary

Dear Ms. Hogan:

Thank you for your letter advising of the protest by the "Knights of Columbus" against the expenditure of tax money for abortions.

We forwarded your letter last week to Lorene Clark, Chair of the MAC Justice Committee, for her comments and suggestions. If you require any further information, please contact Lorene At:

Sandy Cove Post Office
Sandy Cove, Nova Scotia BCV 1E0

Sincerely,
E. Wright Pelrine
Vice-President
National Action Committee

Dear Pamela Hogan:

On behalf of the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, thank you for the copy of your letter to Mr. Bennett concerning divorce jurisdiction.

Mr. Axworthy is equally concerned about the results of such a transfer of jurisdiction. He has discussed the issue with his colleague, the Honourable Jean Chretien. Please be assured that Mr. Axworthy will take a very active role in these discussions.

Yours sincerely,
Nancy Connolly
Special Assistant

Dear Ms. Hogan:

This will acknowledge the copy of a letter you sent to the Postmaster of Victoria concerning material you received through the Post Office from Victoria Pro-Life.

I would be most appreciative if you would advise me of the reply you receive from the Postmaster.

Thank you for bringing this to my attention.

Yours sincerely,
Allan McKinnon

Honourable Jean Chretien

We urge you to take no position with respect to allowing those provinces which wish a transfer of jurisdiction over family law to provinces until such times as the national meeting on women and the constitution in September 1980 shall have been concluded. Status Women Action Group is against any transfer of jurisdiction over family law from federal government to provincial government.

Status of Women Action Group
Victoria, B.C.

Status of Women Action Group:

On behalf of the Honourable Jean Chretien I acknowledge receipt of your telegram on the transfer of jurisdiction over family law to the provinces. Be assured that your views will be brought to the Minister's attention.

Jacques Demers
Special Advisor

To the Executive:

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has just appointed me its first national television reporter on social issues.

I'll be dealing with everything from discrimination, to family life, to social welfare programs, and from ethics and morality to prisons and prostitution. As you can see, it's a very broad field.

Does your organization or agency have a person who can act as a spokesman for you? Do you have a person who handles inquiries from reporters?

Have you any suggestions about social questions, issues, events, problems or solutions to problems that you feel the public should be told about -- or that people would find interesting? If you do, I would appreciate hearing from you -- either by letter or by phone call (Please feel free to call collect).

I you have a mailing list, would you add my name to it?

Does your organization publish magazines, pamphlets, books or newsletters? If they are free, would you send me a copy? If there is a charge for subscription, could you send me a sample copy to help me decide whether it would be useful to subscribe?

Are there conferences, conventions, or meetings in your field that might provide information or ideas?

Are there other people in your field, or related fields that you think might have ideas or information on social issues?

I'd appreciate any ideas you may be able to contribute. Thank you very much.

Marguerite McDonald
Social Affairs Reporter
National Television News
C.B.C.

Phone (416) 925-3311
Local 3391

Dear Marguerite McDonald:

Thank you for your form letter, postmarked dated 20 July, 1980.

On behalf of SWAG, I wish to inform you that we cannot deal with your queries until our next executive meeting in early September. As Acting President, however, I welcome this move by the C.B.C. -- the appointment of a woman as full-time "social issues" reporter.

Please find enclosed one copy of our last newsletter, for June, 1980. Subscription is \$7.50 per year. We hold annually a conference, in the autumn.

This year it will be held on Saturday, November 1, 1980, comprising a plenary session, workshops and an evening of social activities. Information can be forwarded as soon as we have our advertising literature available. We also hold monthly meetings, bar the summer months. SWAG acts as an umbrella group inasmuch as we have various committees dealing with such areas as: education, labour, health, human rights, family law and a feminist history group.

We look forward to further correspondence with you. Someone will contact you early in September.

In Sisterhood,
Alice J. Albert
Acting President, SWAG

Dear Ms. Hogan:

This will acknowledge and thank you for the receipt of a copy of the letter addressed by you to the Minister of Justice on July 7th, regarding a recent ruling by the Supreme Court in the matter of victims of rape being subjected to interrogation concerning their past sexual conduct.

Please be assured that I share the concern which you expressed with regard to the repressive nature of such a decision, and the manner in which it can be manipulated by a clever defence lawyer to the detriment of the appellant's reputation. I agree that forceful violation is the issue at stake, regardless of the victim's sexual experience or lack thereof.

Yours sincerely,
Allan McKinnon

Dear Ms. Hogan:

Re: Proposal to amend the Constitution respecting divorce

I appreciated receiving your views on this matter and would like to take this opportunity to explain the proposed amendments to the Constitution which a majority of Governments in Canada, including the Government of British Columbia, favour.

The proposed amendments to the British North America Act would give both the

provincial legislatures and federal Parliament authority to make laws in relation to the grounds for a divorce. In the event that a province wishes to have different divorce grounds than those set out by the Canadian Parliament -- it may do so -- at the same time any province which does not wish to would leave the Federal Law applicable.

The proposed amendments go on to provide that the Federal Parliament would have exclusive authority in relation to the rules governing recognition of divorces and would allow one unified family court to deal with the whole range of family relations matters, so that citizens would not have to go from one level of court to another due to the present split in jurisdiction under the present Constitution.

• Yours very truly,
Allan Williams
Attorney-General.

ABORTION COUNSELLING AND REFERRALS

Victoria Planned Parenthood 385-7412

Seattle Planned Parenthood 206-477-2350

Victoria Counselling and Referral:
Margaret -- 595-3512

If you can't wait 2 weeks and you have \$150.00, you can go to Washington State -- tomorrow!



'ALL WOMEN'S SISTERS' FIGHTING FOR INDIANS

Calling themselves sisters of all women in Canada, the 23 female MPs and senators in Parliament announced Thursday they had formed a coalition to fight for equality for Indian women.

It is the first time in Canadian history that Parliament's female politicians have joined this way, dropping their party affiliations for a feminist battle.

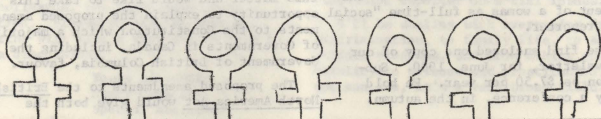
Their specific target is Section 12 (1) (b) of the Indian Act which strips Indian women of their native status and accompanying benefits -- federal funds, housing, land, burial rights -- if they marry white men. The act contains no penalty for Indian men if they marry non-Indians. The white wives of Indians, on the contrary, gain full Indian status, and so do their children.

The parliamentary women called for an immediate moratorium on application of the discriminatory section of the Indian Act. They said such a moratorium should have the approval of Indian bands across the country.

Secondly, they said the Indian Act should be amended next fall to exshrine the moratorium in law. Thus, no more Indian women would lose their status when they marry non-Indians.

Indian Affairs Minister John Munro agreed Thursday to impose the moratorium, but said it would be up to each of the 500 bands across the country to ask him to introduce it.

From Daily Colonist, July 18, 1980



SOME WOMEN'S BUILDINGS IN NORTH AMERICA

(That we Know of)

Sunshine Goldstream has researched Women's Buildings past and present for the Women's Centre Working Group and presented this information at the meeting of June 21 at the Fairfield United Church.

History of Victoria's Women's Buildings:
Alexandra Club (courtesy of Alice Albert, May 1980)

At the 13th annual meeting of the Local Council of Women, Victoria, in 1907 the Alexandra Club proposed to erect a Women's Building in Victoria. They failed to win much support.

The Alexandra Club was formed either in 1896 or in 1900, depending upon one's source of reference. I have not been able to determine which of the two is the more accurate. By 1903, the Alexandra Club had some 150 members. Their facilities -- whose whereabouts I have not as yet found -- included a library with 400 titles; a drawing room; a tea and reading room; and offices. (Norrie Preston noted that it is the Windermere Building now a Government building). Luncheons and teas were served between 10:00 and 6:00 p. m. So successful was their tea room that Margaret Townsend Jenkins, then overseeing its operation, reported a profit at the annual meeting of the Alexandra Club in 1910.

Finally, in 1909, Mrs. Croft, sister to the Hon. Jas. Dunsmuir, and a past president of the Alexandra Club, proposed that the Club build their own "structure;" create the Alexandra House Company (incorporate) and sell shares.

This they did and Jas. Dunsmuir provided \$51,200 for the building. I have not ascertained whether he bought all the shares or what. Property was purchased on Rae Street, now Courtney and construction began in the late summer/early autumn of 1910.

On May 9, 1911, the Alexandra Club held its inaugural ball. The structure consisted of the first swimming pool in Victoria! tea rooms, lounge; etc. all apparently sumptuously furnished. It was teetotal! The opening membership consisted of 300 women; membership would be closed at 500 women. Furthermore, guests were accommodated at the club.

During the first World War, it provided facilities for wounded soldiers. And at the end of the war when donations, etc. had fallen off, the women moved out to other quarters while the Alexandra Club building became a guest house. In 1929 it became the Windermere Hotel and finally sold to the RCMP E Division H.Q. in 1950. Today it is part of the new complex at Blanshard, Courtney.

Vancouver Women's Building (past)

In 1911 they occupied a house and from 1926-1940 they had a banquet hall, an auditorium, day care and meeting rooms in a three story building. It was for all women.

They had the status of a company with limited liability (societies and individuals) and sold common shares. Other funding included a special edition of the Vancouver Sun, a Women's Director, souvenirs and books.

Whitehorse -- Victoria Faulkner Centre

This is a society for all women in an old house with a staff of two people, one native and one white. They act as a transition house and offer crisis counselling, information and courses.

They are leasing with an option to buy the Heritage House they are in (taxes waived) and get grants, sponsor bike-athons for funding.

Women's Building -- Winnipeg

All women are welcome in the three story brick building which was purchased from the United Church and opened in 1978. It has office space, meeting rooms, hall, stores, a theatre. They put out a newsletter and offer physical education.

They are a non-profit corporation and got their money from government grants, from eight women who made a down payment of \$30,000, from donations, loans (interest free) fund-raising events, and rental fees.

Women's Building -- Vancouver (projected)

Vancouver Women have put in an application for an old fire hall owned by the municipality and have formed a non-profit society. They want information-referral services, a theatre, a gallery, book-store, restaurant, child-care, offices, meeting rooms. Funding is acquired from BCRIC shares, private donations and sponsoring of cultural events.

21 McGill, Toronto

This three story brick, downtown building (old YWCA) opened in the late 1970's with women paying \$1,000 a year membership to use the gym, pool, lounge and meeting rooms.

Pauline McGibbon Cultural Centre, Toronto

This is a non-profit, no-share corporation and charitable organization for women and men. The Centre is downtown, is a three story 7500 square foot building which cost \$250,000 to renovate and opened in 1979, named "Pauline McGibbon," Ontario's lieutenant-governor, and Canada's first woman in that office. They lease the building from the municipality (\$1 a sq ft) and fund it from "buy a brick" subscriptions, grants (lottery, provincial arts, federal) and have a cafe, lounge, store library, theatre, art gallery and studios in it.

Women's Building -- Los Angeles

This is a women's cultural centre in a three story brick building in Chinatown which opened in 1973. It has gallery, offices, library, studios, workshops, a theatre and puts out a newsletter funded from grants, memberships of various kinds, (United Way) course fees, rentals and newsletter subscriptions.

It is a charitable organization.

Women's Building -- San Francisco

This building for all women is in an old community centre in the Spanish speaking neighbourhood opened in 1979. Fund-raising event (auction,) donations, (60,000) grants (\$60,000) & \$40,000 totalled the \$160,000 required for the building and renovations. There is a theatre, restaurant, meeting rooms, and offices are rented. They are a charitable organization.

PRESS RELEASE

Vancouver, B.C. 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.

Patrons exert your power. Access to information is your basic human right. Insist on it!!

FALL
CONFERENCE
PRE-REGISTRATION

Call:

Diana Butler

598-6964

In the summer of 1979, a group of seven women friends got together to discuss their growing concern regarding the incidence of domestic violence in Port Alberni, and to determine what could be done to alleviate the situation many women find themselves in. The women began to collect all the literature they ^{could} find on the subject, and regular meetings were set up and held in various living rooms and kitchens. Soon, contact was made with other groups who were interested and working in the same area, and approximately six months later (with financial aid from the Secretary of State) Port Alberni Women's Resources came into being.

To learn more about wife abuse at a local level and to assess the resources available to these women, contact was made with the various community and social services. Later, questionnaires were sent to both the service agencies and local doctors in an effort to gain factual information and statistics from the areas a woman in crisis would turn to for help. As well, a great deal of information and support has been received from the existing transition houses in B.C., and workshops have been held with representatives from various local groups such as the R.C.M.P., lawyers, and lay counsellors who work directly with battered women.

It soon became apparent, however, that the mere assessment of needs was not helping the battered women and their children; as the Women's Resources gained more visibility within the community, battered women began calling for assistance. Efforts were made to house women who wanted to leave the battering situation, at the Friendship Lodge here in town, and to arrange for emergency shelter at transition houses in Vancouver and Victoria for those women who could not remain in Port Alberni.

Now, a little over a year later, the membership is over 30 and steadily growing, and an office (currently staffed by two summer students working on another grant from the Secretary of State) has been set up. Efforts are being made to maintain at least one office worker for the fall, but if funding is not available the organization will endeavour to run the office on a volunteer basis. As well as running the office, members now assist battered women with practical needs such as searching for accommodation, and obtaining legal and financial advice.

REPORT ON THE 'ALTERNATIVE' COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE

July 1980

Rumour has it that there were to conferences on women, organized by the United Nations, in Copenhagen, in July, on the theme of Equality, Development and Peace. I can only vouch for the existence of one, however, the 'unofficial' one, known as Forum 80. I did spend over a year trying to find out who went to the official conference (and how they got to go if they weren't "Press.") but I never did get a response to my many letters. I found out when I got to Copenhagen that the official government delegates were nominated by governments, and as governments tend to be male dominated they didn't seem keen on nominating women who are committed to ending male domination; so there was an absence of feminists at the government conference. Again, I can't actually vouch for this; I have to go on press reports (there was a daily conference newspaper) because the "secrecy" remained, and I couldn't even get to see "let alone meet) any one of the official delegates.

From what I can gather, it was pretty much of a straight split, with most of the feminists at Forum 80 and most of the women who displayed allegiance to male ideas (and most of the men; some of the government delegations were exclusively male and the US delegation was led by a man) at the official conference. The conference was to mark the middle of the decade on women, begun at Mexico in 1975 and theoretically its aim was a "progress" report; in practice, most of the reports indicated, among other things, that women were "slipping behind." There are not many positive things that I can say about the official conference (perhaps I have been misinformed) but one thing that the UN did do was to publish some chilling statistics; for example

Women perform four fifths of the world's work

Women receive less than ten percent of the world's wages.

Women own less than 1 percent of the world's wealth.

Somehow I think these facts were lost sight of, though, in the political "games"

that went on at the government conference; a lot of women seemed to agree that the UN had done little else but provide a venue for women to air the political opinions of men on men's topics.

But there were some exceptions. I was delighted to read some of the things that Elizabeth Reid said; she stopped being politic and polite and stated that "the root cause of inequality lies deep in the cultural consciousness and it is no use applying a band aid mentality to the problem... The strategies that we adopt must begin to undermine the culture that creates the subordinate position of women... Real peace means an end to violence and conflict. Women face violations of their personality, of their personal space, their bodies, psychology and economic independence... The true concept of peace is not that we are doves of the world, keeping branches in our mouths because we have nothing to say. Peace is what happens to a woman's total environment." While this might not sound very strong stuff (and wouldn't have, at Forum), I suspect that there would have been quite a few eyebrows raised at such Australian vulgarity at the official conference ... not nice at all!

Perhaps it is symptomatic, and something that should concern us keenly that while the games were being played according to the "men's rules" at the official conference, at the unofficial conference, feminists (8,000 women and most of them feminist) were conducting their own debates. On the one hand I think attending Forum was one of the most positive experiences I have ever had, but on the other hand I'm sometimes pessimistic about the fact that patriarchal society can permit gatherings like Forum precisely because it is not the locus of political power, not even when the topic for discussion is women.

Forum was good, even if its main achievement was to bring together women from all over the world to make contact with each other, its success cannot be devalued or denied; but what will come

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from it? (And what will come from the official conference?) I know how fortunate I was to be there, but I wasn't quite as "fortunate" as quite a few other people who were "up the road" at the main centre, expenses paid, extensive facilities -- and "security" against the feminist masses.

It is hard to describe what it was like to be at Forum; to be one of 8,000 women at a women's conference. I gave up trying to read the programme and to make a rational decision about which workshop/lecture/film I'd attend. When at the same time there are at least 80 things you want to go to, there just isn't a sensible way of selecting. So I went to the Women's Studies International Sessions. They may not have been representative, of course, (not just because they were located in the Police School which was being used as an "overflow" and which was one block away from the university where the main Forum activities were scheduled) but the sessions were great. If anyone needed to learn that patriarchy knows no national boundaries (although it has national manifestations) that was a place to learn; rather than being divided by national allegiances and divisions, we were firmly united most of the time by international similarities. Women from different cultures put forward many different perspectives and outlined many different facets of the problem but it was a source of illumination and not a reason for hostility.

For example one woman from Zimbabwe said that as soon as she mentioned "feminism" at home she was condemned for "importing western ideas" and that she was in a sensitive position because the sessions were conducted on primarily "western" topics and with a western perspective. There was a long discussion about the way in which this could be overcome, the way links could be made so that she was in a stronger position and some of the rest of us were in a better informed position, and what could have been a basis for polarisation became a very fruitful and worthwhile "seminar." I think everyone felt that it was a very positive experience and a justification for international meetings.

Another problem was language; international conferences mean a meeting place

of different languages and because translation facilities were so limited we had to find a medium of communication. Because English tends to be the "dominant" language, English tends to be spoken, but this is not a solution ... indeed, it is quite a problem. As feminists we have an aversion to "dominance," a well developed analysis of it and its destructive capabilities, and we can't accept the rationale for even a dominant language. (Saying that it is sensible to speak English because English is dominant is about the same as saying that men should lead the sessions because men are dominant.) It reinforces the inequalities and some of us who only speak English (myself included) have to start trying to find a better medium for international communication.

At the Women's Studies International there was a resources centre and although I tried to carry home as much information as I could for the WRRRC, I wasn't able to bring back more than a sample. It was astonishing to find just how much material there is from all over the world. I took lots of handouts with me on the WRRRC and the WRRRC pamphlets which unfortunately had all gone by the end of the week) and many, many women were very interested. It was a bit disheartening though that so few people had heard of us, particularly if they came from Britain. I realized that we need a lot more publicity and that a few big posters (to accompany the handouts) wouldn't go astray.

From my point of view, it was exciting and stimulating to be among so many women, to have so many feminist sessions to choose from, to make so many friends from different cultures, to exchange so much information and to come home rejuvenated. But the significance of Forum 80 and the official conference? That is a different matter and one that needs a lot more thought. That women have been slipping behind since the beginning of the UN decade on women gives some indication that the UN campaign has not exactly been successful and I can't see that Copenhagen will promote a dramatic shift; but would it be better to have no conference on women and to keep them completely invisible? When comments

such as "To talk feminism to a woman who has no water, no food and no home, is to talk nonsense" become the "quote of the day" and are blazened across the newspapers, Without Anyone Seriously Asking Why It is That Women Have No Water, No Food, No Home, No freedom of Movement, No Autonomy, one wonders if there is any hope. But then, when so many women get together as they did at Forum and talk so

seriously about peace and a refusal to become involved in men's wars, I feel some grounds for optimism.

I suspect that at the next conference in 1985... I don't know where and I can't help anyone find out how to get there... will find war and peace high on its agenda. After 1984, anything can happen, I suppose.

Dale Spender

From: Women's Research and Resources Centre Newsletter, No. 5, 1980

RE: THE DISSOLUTION OF GATE VANCOUVER AND GAY TIDE

The Vancouver Gay Alliance Toward Equality (GATE) has dissolved! For 10 years the activist collective has maintained a high public profile in the struggle for the complete equality and liberation of lesbians and gays, regardless of lifestyle or age.

GATE was best known for its "no-compromise" positions, several of which are adopted as policy and for discussion by the Canadian gay movement: "No Liaison with the Police," "Self-Determination for Quebec" and "Abolishment of All Age of Consent Laws."

As vehicles for change, GATE used public protests, educational forums and open confrontation of anti-gay prejudice and discrimination wherever it appeared. Although these civil rights strategies were employed, the collective held no illusion of real freedom without a complete restructuring of society's institutions.

The lesbian and gay movement in Vancouver has advanced to the point where there are numerous and diverse organizations. Despite this growth, our goals have not been realized. The Mayor of Vancouver, City Council, federal and provincial politicians and the police are openly hostile to the philosophy "GAY IS GOOD" and themselves initiate campaigns to push gays back into the closet.

The membership of the BAY Alliance Toward Equality is convinced of the pressing need for this organization to continue. Particularly when we are beginning to experience a backlash from the right wing and Christian fundamentalists. However

several factors necessitate GATE's dissolution:

- Extreme financial pressures of maintaining the organization's activities and the publication of Gay Tide (GATE's newspaper for 7 years) without grants or subsidies of any kind;
- The shifting emphasis toward social services and lobbying .. and the illusion in the gay male community that our rights have been won;
- An overtaxed membership of a handful of individuals

We are fully aware of the void left by our dissolution. GATE has consistently developed an analysis of lesbian and gay oppression in relation to the struggle of other oppressed groups (i.e. women, workers and minorities).

To strengthen these bonds is vital to the survival of the lesbian and gay movement and the survival of other progressive movement. The gay community has to eliminate its own sexism and racism and develop a class consciousness.

As gays we must continue to demand complete equality!

In Gay Solidarity,
The GATE Membership

For more information, Contact: Rob Joyce, 689-7751; Jonas Goldstein 251-4197; GATE 683-3832

ARCHIVES

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Feminist Newsletters:

Kinesis, June 1980 and July, 1980

Upstream, "Final Issue" Vol. 4, No. 5, July, 1980

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Status of Women, Vol. 6, No. 3, Summer, 1980

Bulletin, Women's Information and Referral Centre, Vol. 6, No. 6, June, 1980

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Non-Feminist Newsletter:

Vancouver Women's Network, July, 1980

Resource Materials:

"Feminism: Yesterday's Radical Militancy is Today's Quiet Determination," Monday
Vol. 6, No. 24 (x2), June 13-19, 1980

Legal Resource Book for Farm and Domestic Workers, Labour Advocacy and Research
Association, March, 1977

Students Guidebook on Farm and Domestic Workers, Labour Advocacy and Research
Association, 1979.

Teacher's guide on Farm and Domestic Workers, Labour Advocacy and Research
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Human Rights Commission of British Columbia, Newsletter: Vol. 1, No. 3 (x3) April, 1980
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Homemakers' Magazine (includes: Women Who Talk About Men), July/August, 1980

Western Living, July, 1980

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Don Munro's Report from Parliament, June, 1980

Committee Resource Literature:

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Lifeline Magazine, Vancouver General Hospital, Vol. 2, No. 2, April, 1980

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I SAW A WOMAN SLEEPING

— by Olive Schreiner

I saw a woman sleeping. In her sleep she dreamt Life stood before her, and held in each hand a gift — in the one Love, in the other Freedom. And she said to the woman, "Choose!" And the woman waited long; and she said "Freedom!" and Life said, "Thou hast chosen well. If thou hadst said "Love", I would have given thee what thou didst ask for; and I would have gone from thee, and returned to thee no more. Now, the day will come when I shall return. In that day I shall bear both gifts in one hand." I heard the woman laugh in her sleep.

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