

STATUS of WOMEN NEWS

April 1986 Vol. 13, No. 2

Abella Calls For Daycare

by Jerri Lee

The cost of the wage gap between the sexes is staggering to women, Judge Rosalie Abella told a capacity audience March 26 at UVIC's Distinguished Lectures series.

"Economies have deemed women as the shock absorbers," she told her listeners who gave her a standing ovation.

"Equal pay legislation has been of little help because the concept of equal pay fails to deal with the fundamental problem of undervaluing of work done by women," she said.

Sixty-two per cent of working women are in three occupational categories--clerical, sales, and service jobs. She said systematic discrimination in the workplace demands systematic remedies.

"Remedial means employment equity and affirmative action. Intervention is required to adjust the system, open the competition and remove the barriers. If we do not act to remove the barriers, we have to be prepared to tolerate prejudice and discrimination. We have an



obligation as a society to remedy inequity," Abella said.

Women, she said, have an equal right to work even if it means they have to have childcare in order to maximize their economic potential.

"Childcare is a parental responsibility rather than a maternal responsibility. It is time to confront the issue and give the same rights to women as to men. Childcare provides equal access to work for mothers. The beneficiaries are the children."

She asked how "we can intervene on tariffs and subsidies but we can't intervene on childcare? When we're talking sports nobody says how much will it cost? Without a childcare system the cost to women and the cost of not looking after those children is never taken into consideration."

cont'd p. 9

Women's Spirituality cont'd p. 2

by Lynette Halldorson

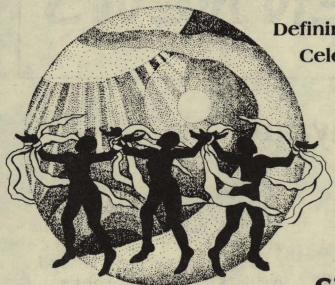
"Woman is woman's natural ally"--
Euripides

On the weekend of March 14 to 16, over 600 natural allies gathered at the Seattle Centre to participate in Women and Spirituality, a women-only conference sponsored by the Community Education program, Antioch University Seattle.

The conference theme--"defining our commonality, celebrating our diversity"--provided the focus for a rich variety of

WOMEN and SPIRITUALITY

Defining Our Commonality
Celebrating Our Diversity



Starhawk will be in Victoria June 15 and 16. Feminist and peace activist, she teaches at several San Francisco Bay area colleges. She is author of **The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess and Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics.**

Sister Earth

workshops, panel discussions and group ritual celebrations. A brief sampling:

Author and Jungian analyst Jean Shinoda Bolen affirmed the need for feminine spirituality based on archetypes that honour the authenticity of our experience. She explored two of these archetypes--our inherent connectedness with the natural world, and the inner harmony created by women who bring order to their surroundings--in her workshop **Spirituality in the Wilderness: The Gift of Artemis/Spirituality of the Hearth: The Gift of Hestia.**

Poet, novelist, playwright and therapist Deena Metzger led a workshop on **The Holy Prostitute: Heretical Archetype for Healing the Nuclear Age**, proposing a way in which women and men can be empowered to confront some of the root causes of violence and war, by readmitting into conscious awareness the true function of this ancient priestess.

Christine Downing, the first woman president of the American Academy of Religion, challenged us to move beyond the image of Mother Earth as the unending and indestructible source, and to recognize the earth and all its inhabitants as our sisters, in great need of reciprocal nurturing and support. In her workshop **The Mysteries of Sisterhood**, Downing illustrated how the experience of sisterhood can create a freer, more responsible model for relating to our planet in a manner than acknowledges its vulnerability and need for healing care.

In her workshop **Reclaiming Our Power: Magic, Sex and Politics**, peace activist and feminist author Starhawk described the resurgence of a feminine power principle based on "an awareness of all things alive, inherently valuable, sacred, and interrelated, with which to replace the domination and exploitation of our current "power-over" political systems.

At a closing panel discussion entitled **The Power and Politics of Women's Spirituality: From Spiritual Centre to Social Change**, each panelist was asked to describe how she maintains her hope in these dark times. From the depths of their responses arose a common message that I can apply to my own life: Hope is a discipline and a consciously chosen strategy. Take time to notice and respect the changes taking place within myself. Practice personal disarmament. Think seven generations ahead. Create support networks in our own communities, where together we can take direct action. Action is the foundation upon which hope renews itself.

Participating in this conference with so many diverse women, and affirming our common commitment to save our planet from destruction, was an inspiring and empowering experience. It has strengthened my personal quest to live my life as an authentic and vibrant expression of feminine spirituality.

Write Mulroney To Tell Him You Care

by Judy Liefschultz

For the first time in years of uncertain funding, Women's Centres, Status of Women offices and even the National Action Committee in Ottawa may be forced to close their doors. Annual operating funds through Secretary of State Women's Program have been delayed to the point where Victoria SWAG will lay off staff person Shirley Avril April 15. It is not known if or when annual funding applied for in December of 1985 will be confirmed. This funding delay, no longer attributable to the "freeze" affecting all federal funds until April 1 of this year, is part of the federal governments continuing cutbacks to women's programs. In spite of promises by the Prime Minister to improve the status of women in Canada, the established women's centres that provide ongoing educational, cultural and development programming for women are being hardest hit. Other groups funded by Secretary of State, including native bands and others doing cultural and citizenship work with new Canadians are also being threatened.

Six centres

The Women's Program funding cuts affect six women's centres on Vancouver Island: SWAG in Victoria, the Comox

Valley Women's Resource Centre, Port Alberni Women's Centre, Campbell River Area Women's Resource Society, Port McNeill Women's Centre and Cowichan WAWAW. The B.C. Women's Centre conference may also have to be cancelled as a result of funding cuts. Women's Centres all across the country are in a similar situation.

The Prime Minister's Office is counting letters, waiting to see if women will politely wait for their "delays" to be addressed. Please write to **Prime Minister Mulroney** and tell him you know what these cutbacks mean. Let him know women's centre funding is vital to delivering women's educational and cultural programs and improving the status of the women he talked so much about during the election. Also, please call or write or visit your local MP. Allan McKinnon, constituency office 1070 Douglas, 382-0221. Pat Crofton, Saanich, 101-1020 McKenzie Ave., 479-3200. Jim Manly, Cowichan Malahat, The Islands; Ted Schellenberg, Nanaimo-Alberni; Ray Skelley, Comox-Powell River at their constituency offices or c/o House of Commons, Ottawa, Ont. No postage necessary.

A Letter from Secretary of State

In response to a letter written by SWAG office coordinator **Shirley Avril, Benoit Bouchard**, Secretary of State sent the following reassuring message.

"Please be assured that there are no plans

whatsoever to reduce or eliminate the Women's Program. Its support to women's, and other voluntary groups which promote equality, and increased participation and independence of women in all aspects of Canadian society has been a critical element in the growth and strength of the Canadian women's movement. I believe it also represents an important aspect of the federal government's commitment to improve the conditions and status of women.

"I do appreciate being made aware of your concerns, and as always, if I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me at any time."

Write to the Secretary of State, Benoit Bouchard and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney care of the Parliament Bldgs, Ottawa, Ont. No postage necessary.

SWAG Programs In Jeopardy

Take A Walk For Peace

Don't forget to take part in the 5th Annual Walk For Peace sponsored by the **Greater Victoria Disarmament Group** on Sat., April 26. The walk will begin at 12 noon and will proceed down Douglas to the Legislature Grounds. SWAG heartily endorses the walk. If you want to be a volunteer peacekeeper and help organize call 384-2445.

Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age is the name of a workshop to be facilitated by **Shannon Turner of Interhelp**. The event will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sat., May 31, location to be announced. "Of all the dangers that threaten our planet--be they dangers of nuclear holocaust, environmental destruction or human oppression, none is so great as our collective paralysis in the face of them."

At the workshop, people will explore their personal response to nuclear and other planetary threats, moving beyond feelings of powerlessness and numbness toward effective action. Workshop format will depend on the needs of the participants. It's for women only. For background reading see **Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age** by Joanna Macy. Macy is a founder of Interhelp in the U.S. and is active in integrating Buddhist teachings with her peace and develop-

ment work. To register mail a cheque for \$10 to Status of Women Action Group, Box 6296, Station C, Victoria, V8P 5L5. For info call 381-1012. Want to organize other workshops? Call **Lezlie Wagman** in Vancouver at 255-4871.

Workshops

The Role of Minority Women in the Women's Movement will be the subject of a symposium on Sat., May 10 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Camosun College, Fisher Bldg, Room 100. **Isabel Kelly**, Deputy Minister, Women's Programs will be the speaker. The morning panel will feature **Indiana Matters** on Historical Perspective of Minority Women in B.C., **Dr. Christine St. Peter** on The Presence of Minority Women in Women's Studies and **Pamela Whitaker** on the History of the Women's Movement. The afternoon panel will feature **Paula Dillon, Ruth Harding** and **Dr. Fong Woon**, women of various cultures discussing their roles within the culture and the women's movement. \$5, symposium only, \$10 includes lunch. Call SWAG for registration at 381-1012.

Taking Charge: Lifestyles for Single Women offers ideas, skills and support on Sat., April 26, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Room 217, Yong Bldg, Camosun College. Resource women will be

Brenda McBain, Stages of Separation; **Pat Tait**, Assertiveness Training and **Beverly Davis**, Friendship Networking. Pre-register by calling 381-1012.



THURSDAY NOONERS

Bring lunch each Thursday to 213-620 View St.

April 17, Midwifery: **Barbara Ray & Caroline Meggison**.

April 24, Feminist Therapy: Empowering Ourselves, **Rowena Hunnisett**.

May 1, Body Image, **Susan Slatkoff**.

May 8, Women In Politics: The Vancouver Island Experience, video.

May 15, Women and Credit, **Mary Eckursley**.

May 22, Financial Planning, **Nancy Foote**.

May 29, Women in Music, **Lauri Nerman**.

Feminist Discussion Group begins Monday, April 21, 7:30 p.m., facilitator, **Pam Whitaker**. At the SWAG Office, 620 View.

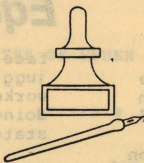
The following article from **Kinesis**, the excellent feminist publication of the Vancouver Status of Women is of interest to Victoria feminists. The Victoria Status of Women is also awaiting the pleasure of the Secretary of State for renewed funding. We urge you to write in support of SWAG.

Target: Kinesis

Throughout the past year Realwomen's most concrete political goal has been to either acquire funding from the Secretary of State's Women's Program or, if they are not funded, to force the government to cut the Program entirely. Realwomen applied for Women's Program funding in 1985 and were refused because it did not meet the Women's Program criteria which calls for the full equality of women.

As part of the assault on the Women's Program Realwomen has consistently attacked women's groups which receive funding from the Program. The Vancouver Status of Women, and in particular Kinesis both of which receive funding from the Program, are a favourite target of Realwomen.

VSW's application for renewed funding is presently before the Minister for the Secretary of State, Benoit Bouchard, for consideration and approval.



"I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat...." **Rebecca West** 1913, *The Clarion*

Douglas Roche, Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament at the United Nations will speak at a public forum at 8 p.m. April 28 at the Newcombe Auditorium. Disarmament and Development will be his topic. Call 383-4635.

We urge you, our readers and supporters, to write the Secretary of State and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, as well as your local M.P.s to urge that:

1. The Women's Program remain fully funded to continue its work on behalf of full equality for Canadian women

AND

2. The Vancouver Status of Women, a vital resource for women in British Columbia, be fully funded. Let your elected representatives know you will accept no more cuts on women.

Summary from the
Commons Debates on
March 11, 1986

Margaret Mitchell, MP for Vancouver East asked Deputy Prime Minister why a team of male consultants was used to recommend \$9 million in cuts from Secretary of State Women's Programs.

Replied Erik Nielsen: "It will be going to committee where it will have full input...I can assure the Hon. Member there was the broadest possible consultation.

Mitchell asked about the earlier study which stated any cuts to Women's Programs would be inconsistent with commitment to action for women.

An appeal from the **St. Vincent de Paul Society**, please help if you can.

"Women in need not only require the basic items supplied by organizations like ourselves, but have more specific needs. Because they are without adequate funds, they can't always keep up with the need for feminine hygiene products. If your membership, as individuals, or as a group, could make donations of these items it would be very much appreciated."

Donations will be picked up by calling the **St. Vincent de Paul Store** at 382-3213 or you can drop them off at 844 View Street.

NO CHOICE BUT TO RESIST OPPRESSION

by Lynn Hunter

A link between the women's struggle here and the one occurring in South Africa was provided by the visit of **Jessie Duarte** to Vancouver Island. Jessie, a journalist and information secretary of the Federation of Transvaal Women was here on an **OXFAM** sponsored tour of Western Canada. While on the Island she visited Victoria, Nanaimo and Port Alberni.

The time I spent with Jessie has left me with powerful memories. Her presence provided a face to the struggle that is now going on in South Africa. From now on, it will be Jessie I will see when I watch the newscasts.

She is a woman of outstanding personal qualities. Her warmth and humour are equalled by her intelligence and determination. She is struggling with the same contradictions many of us

Equality

face in our lives: the incessant juggling of the roles of mother, wife, worker and activist. But, she is doing so in an environment of brutal state oppression.

She has been detained without trial. She has been kept in solitary confinement for weeks on end, she has been tear-gassed and struck by police whips. When I commended her for her courage for those experiences, she stopped me. She said: "It may be courage if I had a choice, but I have **no choice** but to resist the oppression. I have an 11-year-old son and an eight-year-old daughter. I will not have them endure what I have endured. If I don't act to end the oppression they will have to." She is right. Whatever conditions we endure without struggling will be left up to our children to change. It is women like Jessie who remind us of that. It was a privilege to meet her.

Health

A Women's Health Consumer Action Group met for the first time April 8 in the SWAG office. A total of 22 women including four physicians met to discuss concerns ranging from health education to the need for a woman gynaecologist in Victoria.

The next meeting will be held at 7 p.m., April 29 at the **NFB** office on Wharf where the group will see the **Studio D** film **D.E.S.: An Uncertain Legacy**. The film focuses on the medical consequences of this drug (reproductive and genital abnormalities, possible infertility, and cancer among the daughters and sons of

women who took the drug in good faith). The film also tells the story of the formation of an action group.

NFB TRAINS WOMEN

NFB's Studio D has, since October, 1985 been providing comprehensive training for young Canadian women filmmakers.

The project is funded by the NFB and the International Youth Year Secretariat. A total of 26 women aged 17 to 25 have been trained during the past year.

Three Women's Studies courses offered at **Simon Fraser** are Perspectives on Women, a 100-level

course by **Anita Clair Fellman**; Women, Science & Technology (also a Peace Institute Course) by **Margaret Benston** and Sexual Difference in Cinematic Representation by **Kaja Silverman**.

Applying for CPP Credit Split?

Any woman applying for CPP Credit split or who has applied and been turned down, please contact Pat White at 598-7547. The right to split used to be automatic regardless of agreements made upon separation. The Conservative government has reversed this policy and women are now forced into a lengthy and expensive appeal process.

Notice of Motion - Proposed Constitutional Amendments

There will be a General Meeting May 27, 1988 to discuss the following proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

by Jean Kavanagh

presents

VICTORIA STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION GROUP

Sunday Brunch

with

JILL McCALLA VICKERS

Political Scientist and Feminist Scholar

speaking on

FEMINISTS AND THE NEW RIGHT

Jill Vickers is a professor of political science at Carleton University, Ottawa. She is acting director of the Institute for Canadian Studies at Carleton and Chair of the Interfaculty Committee on Women's Studies. She received her Ph.D. from the London School of Economics, she is a past president of the Canadian Association of University Teachers. She ran as a federal candidate for the NDP.

Ms Vickers is president of the Canadian Institute for the Advancement of Women. She is an arbitrator and negotiator with a special interest in such issues as equal pay, sexual harassment and maternity leave. She is a contributing author to the book **Feminism in Canada**, co-author of **Canadian Women in Politics: An Overview**, author of **But Can You Type?** co-author of **Canadian Universities and the Status of Women** and editor of **Taking Sex Into Account: The Policy Consequences of Sexist Research**.

SUNDAY, APRIL 20 10:30 A.M.

Room 310, Young Bldg., Camosun College

Everyone Welcome Admission \$5 includes Brunch

**For Tickets Call Lynn Hunter at 381-5226 days, 721-5330 evenings
or Jean Kavanagh, 385-4969 evenings**



Notice of Motion - Proposed Constitutional Amendments

There will be a General Meeting May 6, 1986 to deal with the following proposed constitutional amendments. This serves as Notice of Motion. The Constitutional Amendments follow:

Bylaws

1. Para.2 Active membership shall be open to any one who supports the object of the Society as outlined in #2 above upon payment...

2. Para.1 Change "directors" to "Coordinating Committee"

3. Para.1 Change "January" to "May"
"directors" to "Coordinating Committee"

Para.2 Change "directors" to "Coordinating Committee"

Para.4 All active members...

Para.10 Notice of the annual general meeting shall be sent to every member of the Society not less than 14 days before the annual general meeting. The blank of the para. is deleted.

4. Para.1 A minimum of seven officers, to be known as the Coordinating Committee, shall be elected at the annual general meeting by the majority present on a show of hands.

Para.2 The Coordinating Committee shall elect from within a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor and Chairs of Functioning Committees will usually be members of the Coordinating Committee.

Para.3 If the number of members on the Coordinating Committee falls below seven, the remaining members may appoint new members to the Committee for the unexpired term.

Para.4 A quorum for the Coordinating Committee shall be four and the Committee shall normally meet once in every calendar month but not less frequently than once in two calendar months.

Para.5 The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Society or the Coordinating Committee. In the Chair's absence, the duties of the chair shall be performed by a member of the Coordinating Committee nominated by the Chair.

Para.6 1st sentence - change "director" to "member of the coordinating committee". 2nd sentence - change "director" to "member of the coordinating committee" and "he" to "she".

Para.7 1st sentence - change "Recording Secretary" to "Secretary". 2nd sentence - change "Recording Secretary" to "Secretary" and "directors" to "coordinating committee".

Para.9 1st sentence - change "President" to "Chair of the Coordinating Committee". 2nd sentence - change "Recording Secretary" to "Secretary" and "Vice-President" to "another member of the Coordinating Committee designated by the Coordinating Committee."

4. Para.9 Last sentence - change Dec. 31 to March 31. The books of the Society shall be audited annually, by an auditor appointed by the officers, as soon after the end of the fiscal year as is possible. The audited financial report shall be submitted to the Coordinating Committee who shall, if there are significant changes in procedure recommended or significant differences from the Treasurer's annual financial statement, publish the audited statement in full as a special issue of the Society's Newsletter.

7. Delete as we have no seal.

8. Delete.

10. Change "directors" to "Coordinating Committee".

Commentary

by Jean Kavanagh

A recent report in the Times-Colonist and the Vancouver Sun chronicled an in-court testimony in a precedent-setting maintenance case involving two lesbian women.

The newspaper story explained action taken by a woman who bore two children through artificial insemination and her efforts to seek financial support from her ex-lover, who had assumed the role of family supporter. The report itself was newsworthy in that such cases are establishing new legal policy regarding separation agreements and maintenance for homosexual couples.

Abella

Abella said that society must inspire in young girls and women the notion that they are responsible for themselves, but they should know that in their options they must face no greater economic liability than men. It is crucial that they not be deemed "economic satellites of their partners, or that they have this negative perception of dependency."

Abella does not accept the recession as an excuse for continued discrimination against

However, when naming the women, divergence from regular news style showed a solid example of stereotypical type-casting that was not part of the "news".

The woman who went to work everyday was described as "a strong-featured woman with short, salt-and-pepper hair." The woman who bore the children was described as "a slim woman."

These types of descriptions should never accompany a regular news story where the person's appearance has really no bearing on the news. Men who may be the subject of such

women. "If we are awaiting better times it may be an economic millenium.

She said the "hidden agenda" on the job market is that potential childbearers won't be hired. "That's psychological contraception." Now is the time to change the culture of the workplace.

Abella is a director of both the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice and the International Commission of Jurists.

heterosexual cases are often described as "father of one" or "well-known community figure", their physical characteristics almost never come into play.

The report stereotyped the working woman as "butch", something many people continue to associate with the word "lesbian". I believe when women see this kind of reporting in local papers, a letter to the editor is in order as a way to discourage such biased news.

Federal Grant

An unofficial report indicates that Realwomen have received a \$100,000 grant over three years from Health and Welfare Canada.

Boston Globe columnist Ellen Goodman said recently that "one childcare centre is worth a thousand studies." She says North American women have been the subject of "more research than the entire species of white rats."

Repeated studies are an excuse for not taking action. Or maybe there is the fond hope on the part of the government that another study might just turn up the kind of recommendations they want to hear.

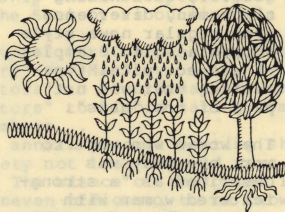
What Is A Feminist?

Feminism is the analysis of women's experience which lays bare the systematic and systemic sexism of the patriarchy. It provides the framework for women to name the misogyny that binds, maims, rapes and kills us.

It is far more than women's rights, a concept that, for me, means there is an authoritarian body (in this case the patriarchal rulers) who have the power to grant rights and by the same token take them away when we do not "behave".

Feminism fights for the ultimate demise of the patriarchy, an end to systems that give power to a few and for the empowerment of each individual. It also presupposes that no one willingly gives up power. It must be seized and then held from a position of equal strength.--by Shirley Avril, SWAG office coordinator.

Let's hear from you.
What is a feminist?



SWAG VOLUNTEERS

SWAG needs volunteers to staff the office. We are pleased to have volunteer librarian Margaret McCrory who has updated our resource library and continues to maintain it by working every Thursday afternoon. If you can volunteer some time, call the office. Be sure to leave a message on the tape if you don't get a reply.

SWAG number is 381-1012. The office is located in the Central building at 620 View, near Eatons.

A Bouquet to Catherine Winter who subscribes to HERIZONS and National Association of Women and the Law Journal for the office.

The Human Rights Institute of Canada is asking for financial support for a reference by the federal government to the Supreme Court to test whether the government must now appoint women to the Senate on an equal basis with men.

The Senate, says the Institute, is not as powerless as we might think. It can amend laws passed by The Commons, and it can initiate laws that the House will then have to consider.

Individual memberships in the Human Rights Institute are \$25. For more info write: P.O. Box 1010 Stn. B, Ottawa, Ont. K1P 9Z9.

The Status of Women News is published six times a year by the Victoria Status of Women Action Group.

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Victoria, B.C. V8P 5L5

(604) 381-1012



\$10 Membership Fee includes Newsletter

Enclosed \$ _____ membership

Donation \$ _____