

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 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 annually.

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- March — Diana Butler
- April — Josephine Payne-O'Conner
- May — Catherine Winter
- June — Alice Albert
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Contact Women

Each of the Contact Persons has a particular area of interest in women's issues. Members who share that interest or, have a concern or problem in that area are encouraged to make contact.

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MEMBERSHIP Entitles you to a subscription to SWAG NEWS (\$10.00 per year) — a completely volunteer effort dependent upon your contributions... poems, articles, opinions, reports. **All feminist material welcome.**

Meetings/Workshops SWAG meetings are held the first & fourth Tuesday of each month (except when it falls on a holiday) at 1045 Linden Ave., 7:30 p.m.

WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?

swag

Sunday, January 23

Feminist History Group Discussion:
Does the Women's Liberation Movement
Have (or Need?) A Political Philosophy/
Position. Possible reading source:
Lydia Sargent's Introduction to Women
and Revolution. Further information:
Phone Alice Albert, 382-1536

Tuesday, January 26

Elections, SWAG AGM. Discussion on
Fundraising event and other plans for
1983. 7.30.p.m. 1045 Linden

Friday, February 18-Saturday 19

SWAG Retreat at the Pacific Centre.
Phone the office for details. This will
be an informal planning session for 1983
a chance to get to know each other better
and do some sharing of ideas, experiences,
etc.

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Friday, January 21

Multicultural Women's Association.
1012 Douglas Street, Noon.
"Women and the Trades"
Speaker: Pam Campbell, Training Consult-
ant, Employment Opportunities Program,
Ministry of Labour.

Wednesday, January 27

IWD Committee. 7.30.p.m. #3 1116 Collinson.
Groups who wish to participate in IWD
at the University on Sunday March 6 are
invited to send a representative to discuss
arrangements and planning for the event.
Phone Stella, 595-2542.

Friday, February 18-Saturday 19

Menopause Workshop. Open to women of all
ages. Friday 7.30.-9.30; Saturday 10.00-
4.00. Registration information call
Susan Mosher 592-4215. Fee \$40.

Saturday February 19

Wimmins Dance to celebrate St. Valenti-
ne's Day. All wimmin are invited to
attend. White Eagle Hall, 90 Dock St.,
8.00-1.00; \$3.00 donation accepted at
the door.

Wednesday, February 23-Saturday, 26

Women in the Workforce, Empress Hotel
Fifth Biennial National Conference of
National Association of Women and the Law
Contact University of Victoria,
Extension Division for further infor-
mation and registration form.

Saturday, February 26-Sunday, 27

Women's Emotional Release and Healing
Workshop 9.00-5.00, 1165 Fairfield Rd.
Sliding scale fees.
Information: Sara Joy David 385-2954

Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 4, 5, 6

International Women's Day Events.
Please see next Newsletter for details.

GENERAL

Your Response is Needed

NAC NEWS

The Federal Provincial Relations Funding Committee is preparing a lobby kit for member groups to use in the area. In the meantime, NAC wants to alert those who are concerned with the funding of Health, Post-Secondary Education, Sexual Assault Centres, Services to Battered Women, Day Care, Maternal and Child Health, Home Births and Midwifery, that:

"One of the designated topics of the Royal Commission on the Economy is--- Fiscal Federalism, that is, the area of financial arrangements between the federal government and the provinces. This has great impact on the funding of all the services listed above. We urge you to prepare a submission to the Royal Commission on the Economy, to Get our Concerns on their Agenda."

Also,

"We hear that the speech from the throne in January will announce the formation of a Task Force on the financial relations between the voluntary sector and the government. They will be looking at the tax system and its relation to charities, the definition of a charity, and also at the role of government in relation to the infrastructure of voluntary services. We urge you to prepare submissions to this task force. It is said to be under the aegis of the Secretary of State. Concerns of women's groups should be significantly represented, since women have had such a crucial role in the development and maintenance of the voluntary sector in Canada."

MEDIA WATCH

NAC reports that Media Watch complaints are coming in thick and fast. A new run of the complaint form, with a slightly altered format, has been received, and are available from Box 46699, Postal Station G, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 4K8. Media Watch will be supporting CRIAW's campaign to have the name of the Museum of Man changed and will request that it be renamed the Museum of Human History.

Studio D is the only publicly-funded, woman-run centre for women filmmakers in Canada--and indeed the world!

It's staff filmmakers have made such films as Patricia's Moving Picture, I'll find a way, Not a Love Story..... It has employed free lance women filmmakers to produce films like The Lady from Grey County, If you Love this Planet..... Through a program of assistance, Studio D has contributed to the majority of films made by independent women filmmakers in this country, including A Wife's Tale, Moving Mountains, P4W (Kingston Prison for Women)....

Studio D is threatened: The Applebaum/Hébert Report on culture has recommended that our base--the National Film Board--cease producing films and be reduced to a centre for training and experiment. It recommends that the bulk of government assistance for film be transferred to the private commercial film industry, and administered by the CFDC. Nowhere is there any recognition of the abysmal record of the CFDC or the commercial feature film industry vis-à-vis the image of women or the role of women as filmmakers. Nowhere in the recommendations on film is there any provision for the kind of films that we as women need as audiences; that we as women filmmakers need to make to express our perceptions and perspectives.

We ask you to let the Government know how you feel about the future of the National Film Board and Studio D. Include your suggestions for improvements: Do you think we should have more money to produce more films? to enable us to support more independents? that prints of women's films should be available in greater numbers so they are more easily accessible? do you feel that women's films should receive more exposure on CBC?

It is important that the Government of Canada be aware of women's concerns; send your views on the N.F.B. and Studio D to:

Honorable Francis Fox,
Dept. of Communications,
Journal Tower North Building,
300 Slater Street,
Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 0C8

Send copies to your M.P. and to
the Rt. Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau,
Prime Minister's Office, Ottawa, Ontario
and to The Hon. Judy Erola, Minister
Responsible for the Status of Women,
Room 707, Confederation Building,
House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

(Editor's Note: SWAG has been debating
its continued membership in BCFW and
had agreed to reserve a decision until
our membership was actually due in
March. Since the debate, BCFW has
made a large impact on the pornography
issue in this province and the feelings
of many of our members are now much more
positive to continuing our membership.
The following article, however, does
indicate there are problems within BCFW
and the concept (or the way it is
organized) may need to be reviewed.
Do any of our members have views/
suggestions/recommendations to make?)

BCFW: meeting our needs...or just so
much navel gazing?

by Pat Feindel (reprinted from Kinesis)

B.C. Federation of Women held its 9th
annual convention at Naramata in mid-
November. An extremely tight agenda
included two time slots for educational
workshops, four plenary sessions, no less
than three workshops devoted to examining
various aspects of BCFW structure and
process, regional and committee meetings,
various ad hoc meetings, and three social
evenings for anyone who had energy to
spare.

Perhaps the most significant feature of
this year's convention was its record
low turnout. Of the 35 (more or less
up-to-date) member groups, fewer than 20
were represented by 36 registered delegates.
(Three years ago, membership stood at
approximately 50 groups)

Participants in a workshop on BCFW membership
speculated on the causes of the
clearly dwindling interest and participation
in BCFW, although with very little
feedback from the groups who have left.
The workshop listed several of the organization's
successes and problems and certainly the
successes were impressive. Why then, are
groups leaving? Some possible or partial
explanations included the failure of BCFW
to do effective outreach, dwindling finances,
and philosophical differences among member
groups as to what BCFW's role should be in
the women's movement.

Considerable time was devoted to clarifying
what this philosophical difference
amounted to. Two positions emerged: the
desire to have a loosely-based coalition
with a broad basis of unity for communication,
information exchange, education and
support for actions; in contrast to a
desire to have BCFW become a more
closely-knit "working group" of members
who share a tighter basis of unity and
more extensive commitment to specific
actions. This led to some discussion of
how tightly members were expected to
adhere to policy, membership requirements,
and the role of BCFW as an organization
introducing women to the women's movement.
The question of which goals are appropriate
for BCFW, was of course, not answered and
the discussion was not resolved. Plans are
afoot to organize continuing discussions by
region.

Certainly, basic philosophical differences
lay at the root of several internal issues
that ended up taking a disproportionate
amount of time at this year's convention:
whether to have plenary sessions open or
closed to non-delegates; whether or not
to accept individual members to BCFW and on
what basis; voting structure of the
coordinating collective; and even whether
one woman at the convention would be
permitted to attend plenary sessions.

While all this internal examination takes
place, alternative networks for communication
have sprung up. In northern B.C., a
northern women's network is publishing
a newsletter Aspen. In the lower
mainland recent events around Red Hot
Video have spawned an ad hoc coalition
of groups working against pornography
(only half of which are BCFW members).

One begins to wonder at what point all
this internal examination and restructuring
becomes just so much navel-gazing. Has
the extensive amount of time devoted to
this examination, even at the convention,
really moved the women's movement forward?
If so much examination and re-examination
is required, are we flogging a dead horse

Are we keeping BCFW alive simply because
it is there or because it is meeting our
needs as a movement? And, finally, has
BCFW become so unwieldy as a bureaucratic
structure that it can no longer meet our
needs?



NEWS

U.VIC WOMEN'S STUDIES BAILED OUT

A proposed new introductory course in Women's Studies due to start in September was in danger of being cut by the University due to budget restraints. At the last moment the Vancouver Foundation came up with one-quarter of a million dollars for U.Vic (along with the same for Simon Fraser and a half a million dollars for UBC) specifically for courses in the Humanities.

The course will be offered by Christine St. Peter of the English Department starting next September. It is also possible the course could run as a credit or non-credit course in a down-town location, in the evening. Interested women should contact Connie Rooke or Christine St. Peter in the English Department for further information.

The Service Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada (SORWUC) has started a poster and leafletting campaign in an attempt to organize non-union employees in the food service industry. The union is concentrating on fast-food outlets and bars, which are the least organized industries in the province, in particular the small units with rapid turnovers and highly exploitative conditions.

(Editor's Note: SORWUC is a union which concentrates its efforts on organizing unorganized working women)

There's still hope for the older 'trade' unions, too, apparently. The 40th annual convention of the B.C. Provincial Council of Carpenters, held in late October, resolved to "give the fullest possible support to achieving equal rights for women" and urged all locals to "initiate an active campaign to encourage women entering the trades and to support women already in the trade".

Letters



Ministry of Attorney
General, Province of
British Columbia.

December 7, 1982

Ms. Catherin Winter,
SWAG. etc.

Dear Ms. Winter,

I have for acknowledgment your November 23rd letter concerning the current level of funding for the Legal Services Society and for family court legal services generally.

The current recession has reduced the anticipated revenues of the Provincial Government for the 1982/83 fiscal year and this, in turn, has required that all programs of anticipated Government expenditure be reviewed. This review was carried out by Cabinet in August and the resulting Expenditure Restraint Program is intended to ensure that funding for no one program is disproportionately reduced.

We were particularly concerned that economically dependent spouses and children not suffer a loss of necessary services and that cuts be made in the funding of other programs rather than have unreasonable cuts in programs that are designed to protect such economically dependent persons.

I share your concern that cost reduction be carried out in a responsible manner.

Yours very truly,
Allan Williams,
Attorney General.

Victoria Women's
Network.
December 15, 1982.

Dear SWAG Members:

Further to our recent letter we have now been advised that we will receive a CEIC grant to produce a Directory of Women's Organizations in Greater Victoria.

The project will commence January 10, 1983 and will employ three women. The office will be located at 1012 Douglas St., Victoria, and the telephone number will be 382-5032.

We would appreciate it if you would advise the women's organizations with which you network to write or phone us to ensure that they are included in the Directory. A project worker will follow up with personal contact.

In the meantime, if any of your members can donate or lend any kind of office equipment such as desks, chairs, typing tables, or smaller items for a period of 20 weeks we would be most appreciative.

Yours truly,
Lyn Gough,
Project Manager.

SWAG
December 22, 1982.

Mr. Allan Williams,
Attorney General of B.C.

Dear Mr. Williams,

SWAG members wish to add our voice to the growing list of women's groups in this province who are outraged by the rapid proliferation of violent hard-core pornography in B.C. and the refusal of your government to prosecute under present obscenity statutes.

In strengthening guidelines, we suggest they be broadened to include:

- 1) incest, where there is tacit endorsement of the incestuous act;
- 2) sexual violence directed toward another human being;
- 3) and further, that the government ensure that prosecutions are undertaken when the guidelines governing pornography are violated.

We further recommend that the quality of the film or the standard of acting not be used to justify lack of prosecution when the content of porn films is explicitly violent.

Moreover, while we have your attention, we want to see women and sexual orientation included in the terms of reference of the Civil Rights Protection Act. This legislation was, after all, implemented to protect vulnerable groups from hate propaganda. As women are the primary targets of the hate message of pornography, and as we are vulnerable to the violence which porn incites, we certainly have the right to be included in this legislation.

Yours truly,
Lois Vickery,
for SWAG Coordinating Committee.

cc. Rosemary Brown, MLA; B.C. Federation of Women; NAC; Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

210-3240 Quadra St.,
Victoria, B.C.

December 23, 1982.

Dr. Karl Friedmann,
Ombudsman.

Dear Sir:

I am uncertain as to whether I should be writing to you about this, but feel sure that you would know how to pass it on to. Thank you.

I am wondering if there was ruling a few years back about keeping sex and nude magazines sold in stores out of the way, behind the counter etc. I don't care where they store them, but I am offended when the covers of these magazines display women in sleazy poses with and/or without clothing. I do not want to be subject to this, but unfortunately there is an overwhelming amount of female sexual exposure which is unfair and unnecessary. The nude male magazines do not portray them in this contemptible way.

Mainly the stores which demonstrate this are chinese, indian and some drug stores.* Quonley and Tommy's, Government and Piggard; Browns Low Cost, 230A Menzies, Lee's Food Market, Douglas and Cloverdale; Chinese Store, Queens and Quadra; Adjeet Market, Quadra and Tolmie are some that I have been in. These stores are convenient because of their open hours. Also the drugstore in the Menzies Simcoe mall displays the same.

I would like to commend Shoppers Drug Mart; they keep these magazines behind their counters and also Mac's Convenience Store, Menzies and Michigan James Bay. I was very impressed when I entered this store and told the manager so. They have the magazines up high behind the counter on shelves with a wide board in front of them so all that is showing are the names of the magazines. No one is offended and all one has to do is ask for the one they want.

Thank you so much for your consideration and I hope that something can be done.

Sincerely,
Wendy Ackinlose (Miss)

cc. Status of Women Action Group
NAWL, Greater Victoria School Board.

(*Editors note: ethic origin of the store owners should not be linked to the propensity to sell porn. Corner convenience stores in most cities across Canada are guilty of displaying them--Mac's Milk are particularly bad in Toronto--it just so happens that these stores are often owned and operated by certain ethnic groups in Victoria. In other cities it is likely to be people of different ethnic origins--WASPS included!)

REVIEWS

Professionalism...The Century's Greatest Con? By Catherine Winter

"One trouble: to be professional anything in the United States is to think of oneself as an expert and one's ideas as semi-sacred, and to treat others in a certain way - professionally." (Marge Piercy, "The Grand Coolie Damn", Sisterhood is Powerful)

After reading For Her Own Good I understand just how damning a statement this is for all of us who purport to be professionals. At Library School I endured an ongoing debate about whether librarianship is a profession. A debate in which I invested little - until someone called a clerk a librarian, someone assumed I was cheap help...one of the 'girls' who helped out. While I have never believed that librarians are professionals, I have believed that our education and expertise are important. Now I must question even more closely my assumptions. Our education is most probably a screening process that maintains a salary scale which is tenuous at best.

While I realize that the rest of you are probably less than riveted by the professionalism of librarians, the basic debate of professionalism is relevant to all of us today. We give doctors, lawyers, accountants, university professors and many others respect because they are professionals. We also pay these people high salaries for their expertise. There is an underlying assumption that special skills and knowledge are required, ones that are expensive to obtain and limited to the exclusive few. Also there is an assumption that if anything is called professional it is more important (the fishing profession - heard recently on the CBC - the teaching profession, professional engineers).

This whole trend is the basis of the analysis of For Her Own Good. Ehrenreich and English explore the medical, domestic science, and psychology professions and how each has taken over work done by women, leaving women feeling incompetent to carry out tasks formerly done as a natural part of their role.

The authors did extensive research on the history of the professions.

This borders on being an exposé, particularly of the medical profession. While I recommend this for all women, I particularly recommend it for women who aspire to be, or who are, professionals.

Barbara Ehrenreich & Deirda English,
For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the
Experts Advice to Women. Garden City:
Anchor Press, 1978.

Women Working: Prostitution Now, by Eileen McLeod

Reviewed by Eva Gamarnikow [Reprinted
from the Women's Research and Resources
Centre Newsletter, No. 7, 1982]

At some time or another all non-prostitute feminists have thought and talked about prostitution. And most of us probably felt, or still feel, a gut ambivalence, conveyed in the slogan "For prostitutes, against prostitution." We argue that women under patriarchy are treated as sexual objects for men, and demand the right to define our own sexuality. But our analysis faces difficulties when confronted with a seeming contradiction - prostitutes are women who have chosen (to the extent that women can be said to have a choice in a male-defined society) to sell their sexuality to men: have chosen to become, for part of the day, sexual objects for men.

What about marriage? Frequently we claim that marriage is a form of prostitution, the difference between the two lying in the fact that in marriage we "freely" give our bodies for life, whereas in prostitution we sell our bodies for piece rates. Men own and control our sexuality in both cases. And yet, I feel uncomfortable with this analysis, since I know that wives don't get harassed by the police, don't end up in prison, don't have their kids taken away, and so on, for being married. Prostitutes have to put up with this sort of treatment and worse because they are prostitutes. I think that we implicitly accept this difference. While we may talk of marriage as a relationship in which women's labour is exploited and sexuality owned by the husband, we don't have a parallel slogan "For wives, against marriage." Do we, perhaps, still view the division between non-prostitutes and prostitutes through patriarchal spectacles? Don't we still, in spite of our understanding of compulsory heterosexuality, regard prostitution as somehow different from and worse than marriage? Prostitutes argue that we do.

In McLeod's book prostitutes talk about their lives, their relationships with each other, with ponces and with clients, their work and its hazards, from both clients and the state. McLeod wanted to write a book for, instead of on, prostitutes, to give prostitute women the space to talk about themselves to straight women. As far as I am concerned, she has succeeded.

Women become prostitutes because they need money, and because they refuse to live on the pittance doled out to women by social security and in employment. Prostitution is a well-paid job: men are richer than women and want to spend their money on services provided by prostitutes. Male clients, who also speak in this book, demand and buy a wide variety of services - not just straight or kinky sex, but conversation, the "freedom to be themselves" and even the "privilege" of doing housework! Prostitutes feel that it is their job to supply this never-ending male demand for paid sexual services, and get a sense of professional satisfaction from their job. They also like the autonomy of being able to choose clients, some of whom are regulars, and to adjust the performance of their services to how they feel about particular clients. Prostitutes clearly prefer street walking to employment in massage parlours.

They feel angry about the hypocrisy of male society which demands and pays for their services and then labels them "common prostitute", fines and imprisons them, that is, creates and perpetuates the division between good and bad women.

For them prostitution is a valuable service - "If it weren't for pros there'd be a lot more rape and attacks on kids." (p. 66)

Many feminists feel uneasy about this argument for prostitution since it seems to let men off the hook by accepting their definition of male sexuality as an irrepressible urge. But if we are serious about the feminist proposition that women's experience of their own situation is valid, then we cannot deny this to prostitutes.

In a feminist society men will not have the power to reduce women's options to marriage and prostitution, or to divide them into good and bad on the basis of their so-called choice. But we still live in a patriarchal society. And since our pro-woman perspective allows us to make a distinction between marriage as a patriarchal institution and marriage as a valid option for women, so too we must distinguish between prostitution as a form of compulsory heterosexuality and prostitution as a positive choice for women. Just as lesbian feminists challenge the normality of heterosexuality, so the prostitutes in this book challenge our stated and implicit assumptions about feminism and prostitution. I would strongly urge all women to read it.

--- REPORT ---

THERE'LL COME A TIME....Report of the Public Commission on Social and Community Service Cutbacks.... A Summary

More than six months have passed since the Premier made his dramatic television announcement of the restraint program. Based on the submissions to the Commission and on the evidence from the media since the Commission concluded hearings, we can only describe these months as ones of great insecurity, confusion and demoralization for the many thousands of British Columbians who are either involved in the delivery of health, education and social services or are concerned users of those services.

This would seem to be unnecessary distress caused to a great many people. As pointed out in this report, beginning with the initial announcement, there has been an endless series of statements and written directives, often contradictory, sometimes accusatory and occasionally almost heartless. This approach to a very serious matter is puzzling, to say the least. Surely, if major policy changes were intended, a more sensible and logical approach would have been to meet with representatives of each of these major sectors, explain the problems the Government perceived and its proposals to deal with them, receive feedback, suggestions and criticisms, and then finalize policies.

Apart from any evaluation of the policies themselves, the methods and procedures surrounding their introduction must be criticized, as must the complete lack of consultation with the organizations of people directly involved in the provision of services.

With respect to the effect of cutbacks in the area of health services, as has been pointed out, they are very serious, particularly for the elderly, the disabled, the children requiring long-term care and the people requiring elective surgery. The negative impact on the level of health care provided to British Columbians represents a regression from the province's attempts to reach the standards enunciated by Mr. Justice Emmett Hall.

The impact on those working in the health field is almost as bad. Professional and lay health workers alike are being demoralized to the point where we may lose skilled and experienced health workers permanently, if the situation persists.

Repeated attempts have been made to justify hospital and health service cutbacks by alleging and implying that the institutions and services are being operated inefficiently and that the Government's program will simply force greater efficiency. The Commission has seen no evidence to support such allegations. The Government appears to have made no genuine effort to determine whether, in fact, the allegations are true. The method used for forcing cutbacks actually contradicts the allegations. If there were any evidence of serious inefficiency, the obvious approach would be to impose cutbacks on those institutions or services believed to be inefficient. This, of course, is not what was done. With the stroke of a pen, across the board cuts were imposed on all hospitals and similar cuts on other health care agencies with no attempt to evaluate the job they were doing or the importance of the service they were providing.

Not only are the cutbacks harmful and unjustified, but the approach taken is, in fact, a disincentive to efficiency. If the degree of efficiency of an operation is ignored and cutbacks arbitrarily imposed, as has been the case in this instance, what possible encouragement is given to administrations to attempt to maximize their efficiency or the care which they take with their financial management.

Finally, as pointed out previously, some of the effects of the cutbacks are likely to prove to be uneconomic, leading to higher future costs. Delaying diag-

nostic treatment and cutting Homemaker services which enable elderly and disabled people to function in their own homes are just two examples of cuts which will probably just add to long term costs. In addition, reduction in maintenance, repairs and updating of equipment and facilities are also likely to increase long-term costs.

The impact of cutbacks in the education system appear to be far-reaching, with very grave long-term implications. The greatest danger may be to the province's economic future. Repeatedly in recent years, not only educators but also industrialists have stressed that more highly skilled, better educated, better trained people are necessary if the province is to compete successfully. Yet the education cutbacks will, in all likelihood, have just the opposite effect, causing British Columbia to be less equipped in terms of human skills to meet the demands of the future.

Our concern over the damaging effects on our young people is even greater. Certainly, many can survive in spite of the harm done to the system. For those children with special needs, however, the effects may be disastrous. Children with learning difficulties, emotional problems, physical or mental disabilities, Native Indian children, immigrant children and others suffering economic and social deprivation - all of these children require special assistance if they are to have a chance to maximize their potential. Yet, in spite of Government denials, the Commission is convinced that programs to provide special assistance will suffer in many, if not all, School districts. As has been pointed out, relatively costly programs are likely to be the first to go when irrational budget cuts are forced on School Boards.

This is totally unacceptable. On both humane grounds and practical grounds, the children with special needs are the last ones whose needs should be ignored. These are the children who will most readily drop out, most often be unemployable and most easily become economic and social casualties. On humane grounds, cutbacks are senseless and illogical, since investment in meeting special needs now will be repaid by every child with problems who is able to become a productive, tax-paying member of the community.

The effect of cutbacks on our post-secondary institutions is similarly regressive. The slight progress which has been made in recent years in equalizing access to higher education appears to be totally undermined as a result of very large tuition increases in the universities and cutbacks in the programs offered by the community colleges.

Again, this can not only deprive many British Columbians of the opportunity to obtain education and training which they desire, it can also lead to this province having a further shortage of the educated and skilled people it will need in the future.

As in the case of the cutbacks in funding for hospitals and health services, the irrational and arbitrary nature of the cutbacks in education funding leads to great inequities and acts as a disincentive to efficient financial management. When the most fiscally conservative School Board is confronted with an enforced budgetary cut, it can only sacrifice very basic and essential services and, in addition, can hardly be expected to place future value in careful financial management. Most important of all, the Government has, as in the case of health service cutbacks, made no effort to determine whether there is any overspending or whether there are cuts which can be made without adversely affecting services. In short, the approach has not been a responsible one by any criteria. This, in turn, should cause great concern, in light of the changes in financial control and authority which have transferred an unprecedented degree of control over the education system to the Ministry in Victoria.

The cutbacks in municipal services which will result from reduction of municipal financial resources are a source of real concern. Potential threats to health and safety, deterioration of the urban environment, a reduction in the quality of life - all appear likely possibilities as a result of municipal cutbacks. Again, no effort has been made to determine the long-term implications, no effort has been made to estimate the long term costs resulting from reduction in maintenance and repairs of building, grounds, equipment and recreational areas. It is hard to understand how a Government could decide to pursue a course of action without at least asking those questions, obvious questions such as what the long term effects may be.

It is evident that the cutbacks will significantly increase unemployment in the province. Several thousand jobs have been, or will be, eliminated. This will, through the multiplier or spin-off effect of diminished purchasing power, contribute to further reductions in jobs. At the same time the total demand on unemployment insurance will increase; Social Assistance payments will increase; the number of taxpayers will decrease. For those who become unemployed as a result of the cutbacks, it will be a personal

disaster. For those British Columbians who do manage to continue employment, the additional tax burdens will more than offset any alleged savings which the cutbacks are supposed to achieve.

Finally, one of the most disturbing conclusions is that the greatest negative impacts of the cutbacks will be felt by those already least able to protect themselves. Women, particularly single parents, children in disturbed situations the elderly, particularly those dependent on inadequate pensions, the disabled, the Native Indians, immigrants, low income families - these are the very people who will be hardest hit by the cutbacks. Our meetings throughout the Province convinced us that this is unacceptable to many British Columbians. It is certainly unacceptable to this Commission. In place of the present program of cutbacks, policies to deal with the Province's economic problems must be found which will not impose further burdens on those already unable to bear existing burdens.

IF WE CAN NOT DO BETTER THAN MAKE THE DISADVANTAGED SUFFER, THEN WE ARE FAILING AS A SOCIETY.



**Judy Chicago's
Dinner Party**

IN RESPONSE

Dear Catherine Winter,

I loved your article in last month's newsletter questioning the effects of government funding on feminist groups. I do agree with your conclusions, that "our [SWAG's] relationship to the government has a moderating and conservatizing effect on us...[and that] the interaction between ourselves and government officials changes us more than it changes them." I also liked the way your article opened up possibilities for debate rather than simply stated a closed position. I want to add something to the debate.

It seems to me that there is a clear need for somebody to write briefs and to try and influence government legislation, and SWAG is the only group around doing that sort of work in a systematic way. However, it also seems to me that there is a clear need for something far more than this. Victoria has a wonderful feminist bookstore. Victoria has quite a number of feminist cultural events and establishments (not enough, never enough, but impressive for our size). Victoria has a number of high-powered professional women of varying feminist persuasions and commitment. Victoria has a Women's Network. We have women's studies, a UVIC women's centre, we have a women's community. What we do not have, and what we desperately need, is an organised, ongoing expression of Women's Liberation.

It seems absurd to the point of madness to me to ask the State to fund the feminist revolution. The State is the embodiment of the Patriarchy. The fate of the Rape Crisis Centres demonstrates starkly the relationship of State money and radical feminist aspirations. That seems beyond argument.

So what bothers me is that nobody seems to be pushing for women's liberation. I doubt that the same group that pursues legal reforms can simultaneously pursue feminist revolution. I wish there were somebody who wanted to explore the connections between reformist campaigns and radical feminist ideology. I wish there were groups meeting to analyse the issues facing women with a view to producing feminist theory. I wish groups were meeting to clarify differences between women in terms of race, class, sexuality, etc, with a view to figuring out a way to subvert those differences. I wish there were groups meeting to discuss the relations between feminist theory and our

lives, and why there always seems to be such a painful gap between them. I wish more of us were paying more attention to how we function within our women's community, how our groups are structured in such a way as automatically, if unwittingly, to exclude the majority of women.

I think it would be great if women in SWAG wanted to move beyond feminism into women's liberation. I think it would be great if SWAG were structured in such a way as to permit more women to be included, and so that its members felt less as though they were trying to make changes on behalf of other, more oppressed women, and more as though they were fighting for the elimination of their own oppression. I wish SWAG were organised in such a way that more members would look at their own oppression, see it as real and worth challenging. Currently, it seems to offer only service to others, in the best middle class ladies' tradition. Or the best male left tradition.

I don't mean to sound negative, as I feel very positive that there is scope to make our groups fit our needs. There is room for all the different varieties and levels of feminist commitment that we can come up with and some we've never yet dreamed of.

I, too, hope to stimulate thought and action, and would like to hear from women with similar interests. Thank you again, Catherine, for opening up the possibilities.

In Sisterhood,
Debbie Gregory



STATUS OF WOMEN NEWS

Judy Erola's 'trial balloon' announcement that she would like to eliminate the spouse tax deduction has aroused a lot of criticism and discussion both within and outside the women's movement. Some of that criticism has come from women who work in the home raising children. In response, Erola's press conference last weekend her interview with Barbara Frum on the Journal seemed to make clear what was not clear in the initial announcement, that she is not intending to do away with the notion of compensating women who have dependent children at home. It seems clear that she wants to remove the spousal dependent deduction and put it somewhere else-- either in deductions for child-care, family allowances, or tax credits. Her main intent, however, seems to be the growing need to recompense women for the cost of child care outside the home. SWAG wishes to respond to Erola's initiative, either by supporting her position or by offering some constructive criticism of the proposals. If you have views one way or the other, or want more information, please contact the office or come to the next meeting when the issue, most likely, will be discussed.

The growing protest on the sale of porn by video store operations in B.C. is beginning to have some results. Last month, a video store operator in the lower mainland admitted these tapes were damaging to women and was persuaded to hand over all his porn tapes to the BCFW for them to be destroyed. And this month, two days after a brief was presented to the Ombudsman (sic) requesting an investigation into the A-G's department's handling of women's complaints, the police seized approximately 40 tapes from stores in the lower mainland, Victoria and Nanaimo. While this move has successfully delayed the investigation the women had asked for, and the government is again off the hook, the action must surely discourage operators from carrying these tapes. We await the next move...

One (is there more than one??) prominent male supporter of women's rights in the NDP, Sven Robinson, is being removed from the NDP shadow cabinet (caucus), according to the Times-Colonist. Robinson has been an outspoken pro-choice advocate, an advocate of human rights, particularly on sexual orientation, and has worked hard as NDP critic making sure women's views

were represented on the new sexual assault laws. If there are any active NDPers out there, perhaps you might try to find out what lies behind this move.

We should also congratulate Bishop de Roo of Victoria for sparking a debate, not only inside the Catholic church but nationally, on a proposal aimed at restructuring our economic order to favour the working people and the underprivileged. While we must congratulate the Bishop for raising the issue, it is unfortunate that little, if anything, was said specifically about the position of women in the Report. This may be a good time, however, for women inside and outside the church to add our voices to the debate. Any takers?

In this context, members may also be interested in an excerpt from the Report of the Public Commission on Social and Community Service Cutbacks in this issue* which raises similar concerns and a call from NAC that women's organizations take a closer look at the implications of federal and provincial funding cutbacks.

As far as SWAG itself is concerned, there is an emerging debate on the relationship between government funding and the women's movement as a result of Catherine Winter's letter last month. Debby Gregory has responded with another though-provoking article carrying the debate even further. It would be good to continue this debate and to hear from as many members as possible on the issues Catherine and Debby have raised. Another good opportunity to air your views, to get to know each other a little better and rap about issues, is the SWAG Retreat on February 18 and 19 at the Pacific Centre. If you are interested in coming phone the office 381-1012 after 1.30 p.m.

* pp 7-9

ARCHIVES

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

RESOURCES BY AND FOR WOMEN:

SWAG newsletter

Jan 1981
Feb 1981
Jun 1982

KINESIS

Nov 1982
Dec 1982/Jan 1983

Big Mama Rag

v. 10 #5 May 1982
v. 11 #6 Jun 1982
v. 10 #7 Jul 1982
v. 10 #8 Aug 1982

Communiqu'elles

v. 8 #9 Nov/Dec 1982

the Radical Reviewer

issue 7/8 1982

WOMAN TODAY

Vol. XVII Oct 1982

Caral Newsletter

Fall 1982

Broadside

v. 4 #2 Nov 1982

Women's Building of Victoria Society

Nov 1982

B.C.-El Salvador Women's Support Group

Nov 1, 1982

Canadian Women's Studies Association

v. 1 #1 autumn 1982

The Ontario Committee on the Status of Women

Nov 1982

the U of T \downarrow newsmagazine (x2)

v. 3 #2 Nov/Dec 1982

Multicultural Womens' Association Newsletter

Issue #3 1982

Victoria Women's Network

#6 Dec 29 1982

NAC MEMO

Dec 1982

NAC--Status of Women News

v. 7 #4 Nov 1982

NON-FEMINIST RESOURCES:

LABOUR RESEARCH BULLETIN B.C. Min. of Labour

v. 10 #9 Sept 1982

WOMEN SPEAKING (British publication)

Jul/Sept 1982

Response to family violence and sexual assault

v. 5 #5 Sept/Oct 1982

Human Rights Commission of B.C. (x3)

v. 4 #2 Fall 1982

The PUBLIC COMMISSION on Social and Community Service Cutbacks:

COMMISSION INTERIM REPORT

July 1982

'There'll Come A Time.....' Report

1982

Canadian Ecumenical NEWS

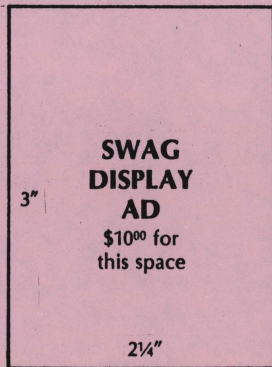
v. 7 #5 Nov-Dec 1982

COMMERCIAL DIRECTORY B.C.

4th edition 1982/83

ADS WANTED

SWAG Newsletter will take ads from members beginning in the April issue.
We will have two formats: 1) Display ad — \$10⁰⁰ each. 2) Classifieds — \$2⁰⁰
for 15 words or less.



Deadline for ads: To be received by
the first Tuesday of the month.

Return to:
 Status of Women Action Group,
 P.O. Box 6296, Stn C,
 Victoria, B.C. V8P 5L5

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