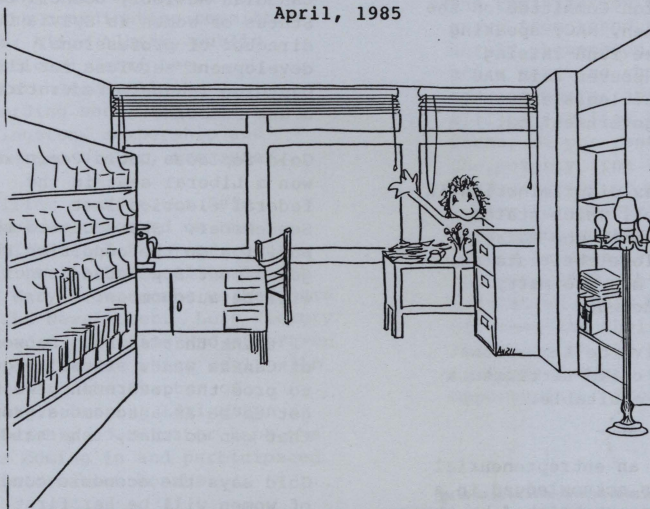


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April, 1985

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NEW OFFICE OPENS

The Status of Women Action Group threw open the doors of its new downtown office at an Open House March 8 to welcome all those interested in becoming more involved in issues affecting women.

The Open House was a happy and busy affair with an influx of women--some members of other women's organizations in the Victoria area, regular members and friends and passersby. All came to celebrate the opening of SWAG's new location at 620 View Street.

Drawing by Shirley Avril
Story by Pam Whitaker

Contributing to the success of the Open House was the positive interchange among all those who attended. New members were initiated and all memberships renewed--leading to a positive network of contacts. The success of this event has set an optimistic trend for the role of the SWAG office in the future of Victoria women.

NEWS

Chaviva Hosek, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, NAC, speaking at a committee fund-raising brunch in Vancouver said NAC expects to see legislation by the federal government put forward to:

-Eliminate sex discrimination in the Indian Act, which states that native women who marry non-natives lose their status, while native men who marry non-natives do not.

-Amend the Divorce Act so that property and child settlements will be more equitable.

The value of an entrepreneurial role model is acknowledged in a pilot program established by the Women's Programs, Ministry of Labour.

The Women's Mentorship Program to encourage young women to embark on business and professional careers has been established in co-operation with the Victoria branch of Zonta International, the Ministry of Education and Camosun College.

Young women interested in a specific occupation will be matched with a mentor working in the field. By this means high school students will gain practical experience and knowledge about the professions.

The new president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women is Sylvia Gold, director of professional development services for the Canadian Teachers Federation and a New Democrat.

Gold replaces Lucie Pepin who won a Liberal seat in the federal election last Septemeber. She accepted the position on the condition the government-appointed council will be autonomous.

"I think that's what the women of Canada want. If we're going to prod the government, we've got to be an autonomous group that can do that," she said.

Gold says the economic condition of women will be her first concern. She hopes the government will buy the need for long-term job training programs and education that give women the opportunities they need to cope with technological change.

The Canadian Institute for Women's Culture has proclaimed Studio D (the women's unit) of the National Film Board and the Women's Program, Secretary of State, national treasures. This in recognition of their vast contribution to the women's movement.

Rich get rich, women poorer

Josephine Adams was elected SWAG coordinator at the annual meeting Feb. 5. Others elected to the coordinating committee were: Alice Albert, public relations; Jerri Lee, conference; Stella Lord, recording secretary; Dorothy Livingston, membership and Catherine Winter, treasurer.

Retiring coordinator Avis Rasmussen reported on the highlights of the year, noting that Stella Lord, Alice Albert and Mary Brownscombe worked hard on the Newsletter. Lois Vickery expended much time and effort on the conference which dealt with Women and the Charter of Rights. Dorothy Livingston as membership coordinator kept the dues coming in and participated in information booths.

Two briefs were submitted, one on pornography to the Fraser Commission prepared by Lois Vickery and Josephine, another prepared and delivered by Stella Lord to the Solidarity Coalition. Susan Moger made a video on Issues for Young Women which was presented at Spectrum Community School.

Catherine Winter reported that SWAG has cash amounting to \$3572 in the bank. Last year's conference generated \$2,762 in revenue, which after expenditures left a net profit of \$635.

The feminization of poverty has grown from trend status to an unruly phenomenon. The numbers are a haunting chorus for women growing poorer and older: 9.9 million families headed by women, 36 per cent living below the poverty line (as opposed to 12.3 per cent of all families living in poverty). And if the phenomenon continues to climb as it did between 1967 and 1977, by the year 2000, the poverty population would be made up only of women and their children, according to the National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity. from Ms Magazine.

"STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION GROUP"

is happy to announce a
relocation to:

213-620 View Street

office hours:

12 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
weekdays

phone: 381-1012

Our resource library is
open to the public and we have
feminist journals from across the
country. Watch our bulletin board
for up-coming events for women.

PLEASE DROP IN

office coordinator: Shirley Avril

Reading and Writing

The most powerful thrust of the women's movement has been and continues to be writing. This column provides a forum for comments on reading and writing--old and new. Short contributions are welcome and should be sent to the Newsletter editor, in care of the SWAG office.

"What does it mean to a woman to write? For the real person Anais Nin and the fictional character Anna Wulf, writing represented the only viable possibility for freedom. Most woman writers, in fact and in fiction, neglect to specify the significance of their literary activity, whether vocation or avocation. One may guess, though, that the equation between writing and freedom holds for more than those who have articulated it. The cliché that women, more consistently than men, turn inward for sustenance seems to mean, in practice, that women have richly defined the ways in which imagination creates possibility: possibility that society denies."

The above quotation from The Female Imagination by Patricia Meyer Spacks of Yale University illustrates why writing has been so important. Spacks was keynote speaker at a recent English Department Colloquium on "The Politics of Sex and the British

Novel" at the University of Victoria. Jerri Lee

The Next Canadian Economy by Dian Cohen and Kristin Shannon, Eden Press, Montreal, 1984 (\$9.95).

"Canadians have decided how to get to the next economy--they are walking there by themselves." The authors look at why the old answers to recession; war, deflation and breeding like rabbits, will no longer work. If Canada is to be a "have" country in the next economy we must begin to discuss the question publicly. Interviews with businessmen, labour leaders, economists and mandarins provide some excellent insights and a certainty that the next economy is not something Canadians can drift into. This is not a doom and gloom book, it is an excellent synthesis of where we have been, where we are and where we must go by authors who take seriously the "conservative" economic questions but who believe that women and ethnic minorities are a permanent and important part of the work force. For your own sake--read it!

Catherine Winter

Intertidal Life by Audrey Thomas, Stoddart Publishing, \$19.95.

On Galiano Island there is a catwalk around the cliff off Coon Bay which leads to the

lighthouse. It has probably always been there in some form or other, and it probably always will be there--just like the tide flats of the bay below, just like mothers and daughters going on camping trips or exploring beaches, and just like the happy times of marriages that end in divorce. Audrey Thomas not only knows all of these things but chooses to write about them in Intertidal Life.

Something secretive, almost seductive, is inherent in the soundless defiance of the pendulum of all tides, and Thomas lures us into Alice's marriage by using intertidal metaphors. This is the story of the breakup of a modern hippy's marriage. In the end she is responsible to no one but herself and so she writes her story, wishing she didn't want any more. Jan Kenyon

Kerry Mason Dodd, manager of the Emily Carr Gallery in Victoria has collaborated with photographer Michael Breuer to produce a new book Sunlight in the Shadows: The Landscape of Emily Carr (Oxford University Press, \$14.95).

Drawing on Emily Carr's unpublished writings, Dodd assembled a text to match the photographic images of Breuer captured during a two-year search

for the scenes that inspired the artist.

Women's Studies: A number of women's studies are scheduled for publishing in Canada among them Newsworthy: The Lives of Media Women by Susan Crean, Neglected Majority, the evolution of women's roles in Canadian society from a feminist perspective, by Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenhoff; Women of Influence by Penny Kome, a look at women in politics and The Big Evasion, a book on abortion by Anne Collins.

Workshops: The West Coast Women and Words Society is sponsoring a series of spring workshops at the Canadian Book Information Centre, Vancouver. "Doing Feminist Research" conducted by Jillian Ridington will be held May 4. Cost is \$15 per workshop for members and \$20 for non-members. Contact West Coast Women and Words Society, #210-640 West Broadway, Vancouver, V5Z 1G4.

New arrivals at Everywoman's Books include: Murder in the Collective-A Feminist Mystery, Thin Ice and Other Stories and Walking on the Moon, six stories and a novella--all by Barbara Wilson. New works of poetry include: Open is Broken by Betsy Warland, Collected Poems by Miriam Mandel and Lying in Bed by Mary Howes. On childbirth--Birth Over Thirty by Sheila Kitzinger.

Announcements

A Walk for Peace, sponsored by the Greater Victoria Disarmament Group, will be held Saturday, April 27, 12 noon, Centennial Square.

Women from Canada and the United States are planning a peace camp for women and children on April 26-27 to coincide with the annual Vancouver Peace Walk.

On Mother's Day Weekend, May 10 to 12, there will be a conference held on Women's Alternatives for Negotiating Peace. For info call Gillian Brewin, 384-3262.

Office Coordinator's Report by Shirley Avril

Since the move to 620 View Street, the number of drop-in visitors has increased considerably and recent publicity has brought SWAG new and eager volunteers.

A letter-writing committee coordinated by Gillian Brewin will lobby the Secretary of State in support of Women's Programs which is under attack by Real Women. Briefs will be presented on other issues including: Equality in Federal Law, Maternity and Child Benefits and Universality of Child and Elderly Benefits. Carol Nelson of Interact Consultants is putting the mailing list into a computer.

Noon Programs



A series of noon-hour programs is being arranged by Catherine Winter in co-operation with other members of the SWAG coordinating committee. Subject areas being covered include family issues, work, sex and violence, social services, physical and mental health and education.

All programs will be held at 12 noon in the downtown SWAG office, 620 View Street. On May 2, Dr. Margarie Fee will present a program on Feminist Themes in Canadian Literature; May 23, Video Display Terminals: Health and Safety; June 27, Betty Collis, University of Victoria will present Gender and Computers.

GARAGE SALE MAKES MONEY

Those who helped out on the SWAG garage sale held March 23 at Alice Albert's home were singing in the rain. Why not, a net profit of \$128 was realized.

SWAG NEWSLETTER

The SWAG Newsletter is published every second month. Contributions from feminists are welcome and should be dropped off at the SWAG office. Please keep all reports, commentaries and letters brief. Let's hear from you.

Commentary

Abella Report

The federal government has promised to improve equality in the workforce for women, natives, the handicapped and the visible minorities. The promise is in response to the findings of the Royal Commission on Employment Equality led by Judge Rosalie Abella.

The government's move involves a commitment to job equality by Crown corporations, some federally regulated business and major government contractors. They are to report their progress to a woman, Employment Minister Flora MacDonald. How hopeful can those of us who are discriminated against be about equality in employment?

Broadside carried the following editorial by Sarah Elliot.

Let us be practical. A government comprised almost exclusively of white males commissions a report which finds that 60 per cent of the population is discriminated against in favour of white males. The report concludes by urging this privileged sector to legislate and enforce employment equity. The report also notes, over and over, that the four groups have wearied of begging, they are tired of being the supplicants at the feet of privilege. Yet the report proposes an enforcement agency (modeled on the Human Rights

Commission) which would stand as another external structure to which these groups would go--to ask for equity. The theoretical advantage is that such an agency would be one of eventual self-destructing paternalism unlike the self-perpetuating paternalism now operative in society. But in either event, the perceived powerlessness of the groups themselves persists. The government is asked to institute an agency to bring about change, the government is requested to mandate legislation to revolutionize societal, educational and cultural inequities. The white, male government will bring about systemic change to destroy its own long standing system of privilege for the purpose of integrating visible minorities, the disabled, native persons and women equally into all strata of society. Does anyone believe this?

Thanks for your support
SWAG acknowledges with
appreciation donations from:
Maxine Cowley
Pat Carfra
Ness Wozny
Etta Conner

Report

by Catherine Winter

This year's SWAG retreat held Feb. 23 and 24 at the Malahat Bungalows was an especially productive planning session. After a wonderful supper before the open fire on the Friday evening, the nine women present agreed that we would do the following:

- .Have a garage sale March 23
- .Have a series of noon-hour discussions on Thursdays with each person responsible for organizing one program every two months. Topics and a calendar will appear in the next newsletter.

To produce and sell articles with the SWAG logo (Suggested items included scarves, letterhead and pins. Any ideas?)

To have four levels of membership to encourage donations: Regular \$10, Supporting \$25, Sustaining \$50 and Building over \$50.

To reapply for a tax number. On Saturday, after a relaxed breakfast which included Shirley Avril's outstanding biscuits, we had a fruitful discussion about the upcoming conference. The theme is Changing: Women in the New Age. We brainstormed workshop topics and agreed on format and possible keynote speakers.

Both days provided a relaxed, friendly and invigorating experience. Why don't you come next year?

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Membership and Newsletter Subscription: \$10.00

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