

STATUS of WOMEN NEWS

AUGUST 1986

VOL. 13 # 4

HQ 1154
S954

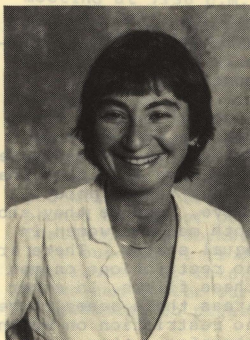
New SWAG Office Coordinator

by Jerri Lee

Debby Gregory, the new SWAG office coordinator was travelling in France with her husband and baby son when she realized how much she missed female company. This realization, coupled with being in England in the flush of the women's movement in the 70's, is what aroused her feminist sensibilities.

Debby replaces Shirley Avril whose strong feminist commitment and service is appreciated by all of us. Shirley is pursuing her artistic career.

Debby had a degree in philosophy from UCLA when she left her home in the U.S. to live in Europe. Her sense that



Debby Gregory

women were oppressed grew out of increased involvement in consciousness-raising. "Every week I got more and more taken up with it and was involved in the movement for 10 years," she said.

In 1981, Debby came to Victoria, joined SWAG, and joined the collective at Everywomans Books where she staffed the store and ordered books. "I wanted to do something that wasn't heavily emotional." At the bookstore she got to know what was being published and got the chance to "meet more feminists."

From the wealth of feminist books, Debby strongly recommends the classics because "the issues are still current" but she also believes in fiction. "There is a kind of truth you get in fiction. It sometimes deals with the biggest questions."

cont'd on Page 8

Provincial Association of Women's Centres

by Jean Kavanagh

Excitement, enthusiasm and a real sense of accomplishment sum up the proceedings of this year's Women's Centres Conference held at Naramata, May 23-26.

Accomplishment is an especially accurate description of the four day's (hard!) work. Our major task was to establish a provincial

association of women's centres.

The 85 women present representing 37 centres gave birth to the **B.C.-Yukon Association of Women's Centres** following four days of intense, all-consuming and often frustrating labours.

The commitment has now been made. The association exists

because B.C. feminists agree we must have a provincial lobbying force to deal with the demands and cuts forced upon our centres today. The government of B.C. must make a real dollar commitment to women by establishing an Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and reinstating the separate department for women's programs, it was agreed. Page 2

Letters to the Editor

SWAG Members

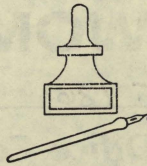
This is a challenge to all women who encounter anything offensive to have the courage to speak up and support what we believe.

The areas I send letters of complaint about are women exposing or exploiting themselves in public, ie. movies, television, magazines, advertising etc.

What I do in these cases is write mature and clear letters to the originators (ie. stores, pad and tampon companies, magazines, television and radio stations, CRTC, Advertising Advisory Boards in the U.S. and Canada, director of Film

Association cont'd

The association has an acting board for the first year's operations based here on Vancouver Island. I was appointed the group's spokeswoman, and will be working with Val Green from Port Alberni, Vilma Norris, Donna L'Hirondelle and Manon Bertrand from Courtenay and Lorrinda Allix from Campbell River. Regional reps are busy at work throughout the province as well. We do need help and support in order to have the draft constitution in place by the end of September. SWAG members can play an important lobbying role, please contact me if you would like to become involved.



Classification Board.) I also send a pat-on-the-back when I like something.

I do not support them, but the pornographic films I've watched have been more fair than what I have talked about above, because they show both men and women in equal states. There are no restrictions on men in these flicks. In other areas there seems to be no restriction on women, therefore, they expose themselves to the limit.

The association's six priorities are:

- **lobbying:** need to change the present provincial funding situation, lobby our NAC rep to bring our concerns forward at the national level and bring women's issues to the forefront in our upcoming provincial election.

- **philosophy:** drafting the constitution

- **funding:** applying for Secretary of State and provincial funding.

- **communication:** initially brief NewsFlashes will be prepared (the first issue should be out now

I got rid of my television and I have become very particular about the movies I go to. This was one of my conscious choices in removing what I will not support in my life. How about you?

Wendy Ackinclose

Letters to the Editor are welcome but should be kept short and may be edited in the interests of space.



and available at the SWAG office). Linking-networking of centres was deemed vital.

- **physical organisation:** the nuts and bolts of setting up an office, hiring staff etc. This is very much at the wish list stage now. There was consensus, however, that this must be a priority: **we won't volunteer forever.**

- **pressing issues:** four letters were written and sent to politicians, and a telegram of support went to the Pictou Women's Centre which was under attack by an anti-choice group.

What's Happening For Women



SWAG Open House

Begin autumn by coming to the SWAG Open House on Sept. 5 in the office at 620 View Street in the heart of town, near Eatons. Drop in between 3 and 6 p.m. and find out what's going on this fall and winter. We want to get you involved.

SWAG Grant Comes Through

Funding in the amount of \$25,000 has come through from the Secretary of States office. The grant is less than we asked for but the same as last year. We can pay the rent.



Thursdays At Noon - At 12 noon in the SWAG office, 620 View St.

Sept. 11 - Women In Nicaragua with Andrea Clark, Latin American Support Group.

Sept. 18 - National Action Committee: What Is It, Why Should You Know and Care?

Sept. 25 - Women and Fitness: Everything You Ever Wanted To Know.

Any women interested in volunteer staffing the **SWAG office** one morning every two weeks are invited to the first Office Collective meeting at 7:30 p.m., Monday, Sept. 15 and the third Monday of every month thereafter.

We Aim To Please

You received a questionnaire in the mail and if you did not return it, you will have been phoned by one of our Challenge '86 workers. It's our way of finding out about your interests so we can tailor our programming to please.

Freda Nobbs is the project manager and Kelly Neufeld and Joanne Marks are volunteer coordinators. You'll be hearing more about their contribution in the next newsletter.

Help Wanted For Display

Volunteer Week at UVIC will see a SWAG table on Sept. 24 and 25 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the University Centre. Debby Gregory would like help in staffing the table. Call the office.

Meeting For Feminists

A meeting for Women in Feminist Groups will be held Oct. 17 at 8 p.m. as a Dessert Potluck in the Unitarian Church. Purpose to discuss common interests and common problems.

Welcome New Members

Glad to have the following new members join the ever-widening circle:

Betty Kleiman
Josie Schofield
Bonnie Fleming

Women In Focus is

offering a Video School, a series of workshops. The next one is Sept 6 and 7 with Sara Diamond on Addressing Social Issues: Video as Theory and Practice, Part I: Community Use of Video. Sept. 27 and 28, Part II: Documentary and Video Art--The Interface. All workshops located at Women In Focus in Vancouver, call Kellie at 872-4332.

Darlene Walker is updating our community resources files.

Members who can help with contacts please call the office and talk with Darlene.



Drop In to the SWAG Office--You're Welcome

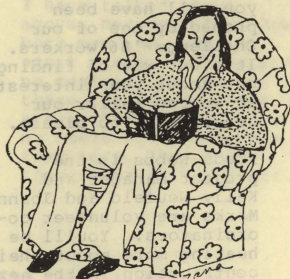
The SWAG office is open weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Located in the heart of downtown Victoria, the office is near Eatons at 620 View Street, Suite 213. Phone: 381-1012.

Political Skills Handbook

"Women are powerful, but so often we do not recognise our power: our power to face ourselves, our beliefs and our goals. We are new to the kinds of power that political work can bring. Unaware, we can fall back into manipulation. As we gain power, we must learn to use it in positive ways. And we must share it with each other," **Jan Meadows, Cowichan Rape/Assault Centre**, in *Sharing Power*,

Women in Politics--
Vancouver Island
Profiles, A Political
Skills Handbook by Dr.
Josephine Payne-O'Connor.

Josephine, Jan Kenyon and Catherine Winter are busily engaged in the production of this handbook which will be published next month. Plans for a launching party are now being made.



Prisoners See Porn In Federal Jails

Female staffers at Stony Mountain penitentiary are concerned that prisoners are watching pornographic movies beamed in from a satellite dish purchased by the prisoners.

The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada has filed a complaint on behalf of prison nursing staff.

Gord Holloway, assistant warden seems to think its OK because "these types of movies can be purchased in any video store." The theory seems to be if it's legal outside it's allowed inside the pen.

Isn't it about time, those who have broken the law were deprived of some of their rights?

Make note of the date for the book launch. It will be held Oct. 3 from 8 to 10 p.m. at Open Space. The publication of this book can mean an important step towards political action for all of us.

Mark the date on your calendar and come out for a very interesting, very political evening. And there's more-- Political Skills Workshops will be held Oct. 4 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Camosun College. Watch for more details and plan to attend.

What Is A Feminist?

The following comes from **Isabel M. Heaman**.

Definition of a feminist: someone who believes a miss is as good as a male.

More seriously, for me feminism is about freedom of choice. It is only through continual effort and positive reinforcement that the full range of options available in a society is made open to all its members. Feminism ensures that this freedom (which may exist in theory) is not limited in practice by stereotyping, early conditioning or other pressures. The aim here is not to undermine or inhibit any other individuals in their pursuit of a goal but to extend to all sections of society the privileges enjoyed manifestly by one particular section.

Why not send us your definition?



Nairobi

Tina Horne, director of Speaking of Nairobi, is a member of The New Film Group, which co-produced the film with Studio D.

Writing in the Post-Nairobi edition of **Canadian Woman Studies**, she says the film represents an enormous team effort, "and it joins together the voices of women from all over the world, women of different race, culture, and class. We hope it makes a contribution to an understanding of feminism and of the need for feminism in

our lives, whether those lives are lived in a Western metropolis or an African settlement of Nomads--because we do have something in common, as is clear in the last speech in the film, from the mouth of a Masai woman."

That message is as follows: "Wake Up! we would like to tell other women to wake up to the fact that we need to work hard and not just follow men. When men tell us to go work for them, make sure you let them know you have your own things to attend to.

In the past, we waited for instructions from men, we left our things undone to go do things for men. Let us wake up and make sure that we are able to do what men are able to do. We were cheated: told to be indoors, in the kitchen or around the home, in order to make us unable to do external things. Let us make sure that we do well what they do well: if he holds a job, then hold one. If he runs a business, be also business-minded. Let us wake up--and work harder!"

OXFAM OFFICER HERE FROM AFRICA

Susan Watkins, OXFAM's project development officer for the Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan) will tour Vancouver Island Oct. 5 to 12.

Programming in connection with her visit is being arranged.

Watkins has worked with Women For the Survival of Agriculture and is

especially interested in linking women farmers in Canada with women farmers in other countries. For information call Lynn Hunter in the OXFAM office at 381-5226.



The **Victoria Central American Support Committee** is asking for support for **SalvAide**, a Canadian grassroots, non-profit society which assists in agricultural production, health care, nutrition, sanitation and education in El Salvador.

Throughout the zones of popular control in El Salvador, **AMES**, the Women's Association, has organized and implemented nutrition centres. Within these

zones, a new society is being created through popular elected governments with broad participation from all sectors of society. New roles for men and women are forged in the struggle for liberation. Within the context of this struggle, women are organizing a better life for themselves and their children. For information on **AMS** and women's struggle in El Salvador, contact **Andrea Clark** at 592-5910.

How To Use NAC Connection

by Jean Kavanagh

Our sole voice in NAC is B.C. rep Jane Evans of Armstrong. I believe after conferring with many B.C. women that if we want NAC to work for us, we must communicate with Jan on all issues of concern to us.

We can use NAC and benefit from their expertise by asking for copies of their position papers etc. I think we should keep on top of NAC news by regularly reading Feminist Action.

Many B.C. groups:

- Assign one board member to be the NAC contact and meet with other women before the AGM.
- Communicate regularly with our NAC rep before each monthly meeting. This is vital I think and Jane said she is willing to come to the island to meet with us.

The only way B.C. will gain a greater voice in NAC is by participating --lobbying for full funding to the AGM;

getting the mid-year conference here; publishing our information in feminist action (we can do this through our rep); making individuals known through participation and nominating them for executive & member-at-large positions.

One of the most interesting meetings I had was with Quebec women who last year formed a provincial association--they now only do programming the government will fund--no dollars, no programs, thus many angry women!

NAC Annual Meeting

by Jean Kavanagh

Attending the annual general meeting of the National Action Committee NAC was a wonderful and empowering experience for a first-timer. The consensus among B.C. reps, however, is that 1986 should be a year of CONCERN FOR US.

NAC no doubt is a wonderfully powerful body--the politicians do listen, I was told, (time and time again), when NAC lobbyists go knocking on their doors. NAC is also, however, very much a southern-Ontario heavy group, and I think that only through active participation can we change this. (B.C. has the second highest number of member groups with 60, Ont. 186, Que. 40.)

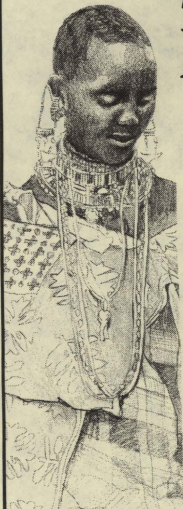
While the 1986-87 executive appears to be fairly well regionally represented, talk abounded that this executive is very much a slate almost solely representing pro-choice groups. There is concern that NAC could end up oriented towards one single issue this year.

Members of the NAC executive:

Pres. Louise Delude, Ottawa; past-pres. Chiviva Hosek, Toronto; vice-pres. Marjorie Cohen, Toronto; Jon Leah Hopkins, Whitehorse; Wendy Williams, St. John's, Nfld., sec. Trudy Richardson, Edmonton; treas. Donna Stephanie, Winnipeg. Members-at-large are from: Toronto, London, Edmonton, Regina and Montreal.



Speaking of Nairobi



New Films From Studio D

The Victoria premiere of **Speaking of Nairobi** was sponsored Aug. 12 by SWAG and the NFB. On this occasion, Dr. Mary Wynn Ashford, a member of the Physicians for Social Responsibility, who attended the UN Conference on Women, led a discussion following the showing of the Studio D film.

Other new productions from Studio D include: **No Longer Silent**, about women in India who are trying to put an end to bride burning; **The Best Time of My Life** --Portraits of Women in Midlife, an engaging set of interviews and **Spirit of the Kata**, views five Vancouver women with black belts in Karate.

Studio D Founder Gets Order of Canada

Kathleen Shannon, founder and executive producer of the NFB's Studio D, who will be remembered as keynote speaker at last year's SWAG conference, has been named a member of the Order of Canada. The award is the highest in Canada and made for service to the country and humanity at large.

"It is very gratifying to receive this award which I consider less a recognition of my individual achievement than recognition of the collective work of the many women who make up Studio D," said Kathleen.

Stepping down after 12 years as executive producer at Studio D, Kathleen plans to remain as a filmmaker.

She recently told a Canadian Press reporter that while the media gives the impression that women have made great strides toward equality in the past decade, she sees few fundamental changes.

"Basically the issues are still the same--the majority of poor people in this country are still women, just as they were in 1974 (the year Studio D was formed). Intolerably large percentages of single parents that are women are poor. I think the wage gap has increased," she said.

SWAG Volunteers Make It Work

Our volunteer staff keeps the office open providing information and service to women. Others, interested in special areas, can be involved in lobbying, education and programming. Call the office at 381-1012.

Volunteer office staff includes: Jan Boutilier, Anne Barlow, Andrea Clark, Barbara Smith, Liz Philipose. Darlene Walker is coming in to expand and update community resource files.

Thanks to Connie MacDonald and Therese Despina for their help. Both are now working but lets hope they continue to be involved.

Chaviva Hosek and NAC

Debby, cont'd.

Relevant to the article on the annual general meeting of NAC in this issue is the following excerpt from a profile in **Herizons** on **Chaviva Hosek**, past president of NAC.

Daycare Increases Productivity on the Job

Hildi Adelheim, head of Alouette Search Service, a title search and land and court registry service in Vancouver, says that establishing a nursery for staff babies and toddlers has increased loyalty and morale and made the project worthwhile.

"We have to have people who are concentrating on their work... attention to detail is an absolute requirement. One thing that having a daycare has accomplished is easing the mothers' minds so they give full attention to the job."

First, for the information of readers unfamiliar with NAC, it is an umbrella organization for over 400 groups of which the Victoria Status of Women is one. It speaks for about three million women and lobbies the government on women's issues.

"I don't think we are going to dismantle patriarchy by lobbying, but I think we can make life better for many women than it currently is," said Hosek.

She rates economic issues are the most important for Canadian women right now. Access to jobs, to training and to equal pay for work of equal value are key issues in the changing economy. Access to affordable child care and services for victims of violence are essential.

Hosek, a former professor of English at the University of Toronto is now a pension analyst.

In her half-time job at SWAG, Debby would like to attract many more women who are not now involved politically. "I would like to make it more attractive to a wider variety of women."

Debby has an education degree from the University of London, took a fitness instructors course, teaches weight-training and aerobics at Henderson Rec Centre, and more recently has ventured into publishing. She publishes this year for the second time the Earthsong Calendar featuring the photographs of Judy Heron.



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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

\$10 Membership Fee includes Newsletter

Enclosed \$ _____

Send to:

Status of Women Action Group

P.O. Box 6296, Stn. C

Victoria, B.C. V8P 5L5

(604) 381-1012

Donation \$ _____

