

swag STATUS OF WOMEN NEWS

from

The Royal Commission of Family and Children's Law

(Berger Commission 1975)

Statement of Children's Rights

1. The right to food, clothing and housing in order to ensure good health and personal development.
2. The right to an environment free from physical abuse, exploitation and degrading treatment.
3. The right to health care necessary to promote physical and mental health and to remedy illness.
4. The right to reside with parents and siblings except where it is in the best interests of the child and family members for the child to reside elsewhere.
5. The right to parental and adult support, guidance and continuity in the child's life.
6. The right to an education which will ensure every child the opportunity to reach and exercise his or her full potential.
7. The right to play and recreation.
8. The right to be consulted in decisions related to guardianship, custody and a determination of status.



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 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.

Address: P.O. Box 6296, Stn. C, or 1045 Linden Avenue
Victoria, B.C. V8P 5L5 Victoria, B.C.
381-1012

Working Groups

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.

Contact Women

B.C.F.W.	Sylvia Watson 382-3914
	Stella Lord 595-2542
Family Law	Gwen Bavin 383-2502
Education	Elizabeth Azmier-Stewart 642-3678
Human Rights	Norrie Preston 598-1390
Health	Susan Moger 592-4215
Labour	Stella Lord 595-2542
Feminist Study Group	Alice Albert 382-1536
Social Services	Elizabeth Hamlet 595-2569
Newsletter Editorial Board	Stella Lord - Editor 595-2542
	Alice Albert - Layout
	Avis Rasmussen - Cover 598-3188

Co-ordinators

February	— Laurie Lawson - 595-1564
March	— Diana Butler - 598-6964
April	— Josephine Payne-O'Conner - 389-0745
May	— Catherine Winter - 389-2959
June	— Alice Albert - 382-1536
July	— Gwen Bavin - 383-2502
August	— Alice Albert - 382-1536
September	— Avis Rasmussen - 598-3188
October	— Stella Lord - 598-9659
November	— Stella Lord
December-	
January	— Lois Vickery - 384-9134

Media Co-ordinator

Josephine Payne-O'Conner
#1 - 1205 Bay St.,
Victoria, B.C.
389-0745

Conference Co-ordinator

Judith Barrett-Lennard
#109 - 575 Marifield Ave.,
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1N3
382-5930

Recorder

Laurie Lawson
#2440 Foul Bay Rd.,
Victoria, B.C. V8R 5A9
595-1564

NAC Contact

Shirley Avril
386-4467

Membership Co-ordinator

Catherine Winter
389-2959

Treasurer

Diana Butler
2149 Granite
Victoria, B.C.
598-6964

Correspondent

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?

March 26, Saturday

SWAG Retreat at Women's Centre, Salt Spring Island. Please contact office for further details.

April 19, Tuesday

Norma Mickelson, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria will speak on "Women in Math and Science: debunking some myths" in The Boardroom, Greater Victoria Public Library, Main Branch, at 7.15 p.m.

May 1, Sunday, 11.00 a.m.

Feminist History/Study Group meet at Alice's (453 Moss St) at 11.00 a.m. New format--informal discussion of current feminist/woman's research ongoing; discussion of any topic that demands current attention. (See below)

Saturday, April 16, 8.00 p.m.

SWAG/SAC/Women's Building joint fundraising event with Connie Kaldor, Newcombe Auditorium, \$8.50

April 9th, Saturday, 1.00 p.m.

Rally and march to legislature starting from Centennial Square by B.C. Coalition of the Unemployed.

After much discussion the Feminist History Study Group decided on a relatively new format. We will attempt to outreach to other women in the community currently engaged in research on women's issues, etc. We would also attempt to meet on a more informal basis to discuss topics that come up that demand our attention; for example, after SWAG's next speakout.

All women are encouraged to participate; we want to reach out to non-academic women who probably feel more isolated than their academic (employed) counterparts.

U.Vic Extension Courses of interest to women: Info: 721-8451

The 1980s: A New Decade of Feminism

What shape will feminism take in the 1980s? How do we define new goals based on what we have already accomplished? To answer these questions, this course focuses on economic independence for women. Instructors: Josephine Payne-O'Connor and Stella Lord. Wednesdays, March 30-May 4. \$30.

Ten Years of Research on Women's Issues

In 1971, the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women was published. Since then, a large number of studies on women's issues has been produced. Here is an opportunity for you to review a selected number of them. Selected topics to be reviewed are: Women in the professions, Women in the Labour Force; Homemakers, Single Mothers; Women in the Art and Literature.

Friday April 29 7.00-9.00 and Saturday April 30, 9.00-4.00. Fee \$25.

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Attention Researchers, graduate students academics and all women working for a new world!

CRIAW will be holding its annual conference in Vancouver from November 11-13, 1983 and has issued a call for papers. For more information call the office or contact Dr. June I. Gow, CRIAW Conference Coordinator, Dept. of History, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W5

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Orders are now being accepted for the Directory of Women's Organizations in Greater Victoria which is being prepared by members of the Women's Network under a grant from the federal government. Cost is \$5.50 plus 6% sales tax. Available from #215, 1012 Douglas.

Letters



Dear Sisters,

This is a copy of a letter I sent to my my MP in Ottawa as well as Judy Erola and various media outlets both locally and nationally.

This is an issue which potentially affects all women and one which I feel you should support. By taking this on as an individual I fear that the bureaucratic shuffle will take its endless time and that my energy for this will dwindle on the way. With support I will be able to see this thru. Please feel free to contact me. Thank you.

Jennifer Beett.

January 17, 1983.

Dear Mr. Manley,

I have recently been involved with the Unemployment Insurance Commission in a situation where I have been determined non-eligible for maternity benefits through legislation which I feel discriminates against women. I am writing to you because as my MP I felt that you could present this to Parliament with the goal of having sections of the Unemployment Insurance Act changed so that it is no longer discriminatory. I will elaborate.

To be eligible for maternity benefits a woman must meet three criteria. They are: 1) that your pay has dropped to less than 60% of your normal weekly insurable earnings; 2) that you have worked 20 weeks in the last 52; and 3) that 10 of those weeks were worked in the period between the 31st and 50th week before your baby is due.

The first two criteria I have no objection to and they are requirements made of anyone applying for any U.I. benefits. What I do object to is the criterion which states that in order to get maternity benefits a woman has to have worked those 20 required weeks during two different specified periods of the year prior to her child's birth. As far as I have been able to find out, with the exception of seasonal fishermen, no other U.I. program requires that the claimant have worked at designated times throughout the year to qualify for benefits. Stated another way, to be eligible for regular U.I. benefits you must have worked for 20 of the last 52 weeks, and it doesn't matter if it was the first 20, the last 20 or any other

combination. I feel that this designated times criterion is discriminatory since women are the only ones affected by it (and what pregnant women and seasonal fishermen have in common, I don't know).

I contend further that a woman's eligibility for maternity benefits is largely determined before she herself knows she is pregnant. I am referring specifically to this period of the 31st to 50th week before due date. During the 41st to 50th week the woman is not pregnant. The 40th week is the last mens. It takes approximately another week, the 39th before ovulation and conception can occur. It takes 6 weeks for accurate pregnancy tests to be done, which takes us to the 33rd week. There are, therefore 2 weeks left in this 31st to 50th week period for a woman to ensure that she has obtained the first 10 weeks of insurable employment which she will need to be eligible for maternity benefits.

I was curious about the reason why legislation such as this would exist and asked a counsellor at UIC about it. She stated that she wasn't sure but she thought it was probably there so that UIC would be protected against women getting themselves pregnant in order to get maternity benefits! Imagine, 9 months of pregnancy and 20 years of supporting a child just to get 15 weeks of maternity benefits!

You have to really credit UIC for having all the angles covered though. Now I meet all the requirements for regular UI benefits but I would be ineligible because I am in my "maternity period" and, I cannot apply for these benefits until 6 weeks after my baby is born! This seemed to me an inordinately long amount of time and I asked the UI counsellor the reason for this wait. She said it was for health reasons--so the mother would have a chance to recuperate. It seems to me that the stress of having no money for the period immediately prior to and following the birth of your child is not conducive to recuperation, as the intentions of UIC would imply.

I am sure that you will agree with me that the Unemployment Insurance Act is indeed discriminatory towards women and you will find it necessary to take action on this issue. I have also presented this information to the media on both the local and national level because I feel that the more public attention this gets the sooner some changes may take place.

Please feel free to contact me. My phone number is 642-6452.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bazett

February 8, 1983.

Memo To Women's Groups,
Canada

From: Donna Phillips,
President,
Ontario Native Women's Ass.

Re: Request for Political Support

We, the Ontario Native Women's Ass. are respectfully requesting your utmost political support to have an equality clause for Aboriginal people to be inserted under Part II- Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada into the Canadian Constitution Act 1982.

As you are aware, the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premiers of the provincial legislatures will be having a conference on March 15-16 1983, to discuss the identification of and definition of Aboriginal and Treaty rights as specified under the Section 37- Part IV of the Canadian Constitution Act.

The Canadian Charter of Rights, in its present form, fails to secure a sufficient guarantee of equal rights for Aboriginal women: Indian, Metis and Inuit. In some cases, it provides no protection for the Non-Status Indian who has lost rights because of Federal legislation applied to them. We have provided a summary of our positions on equality rights. This document will explain our reasons why we require constitutional protection.

On January 19, 1983, the Hon. William Davis, Premier of Ontario has pledged public support and affirmed the equality clause as part of the Ontario position on Aboriginal and Treaty rights. On January 31, 1983, the Ontario government was successful in placing "women's rights" as an agenda item for the First Ministers' Conference on March 15-16, 1983.

To obtain constitutional protection for Native women's rights, in Section 35-Part II- Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, we must begin to lobby to obtain the support of six other provinces before it is law in Canada.

To have equality rights in Part II- Aboriginal and Treaty Rights is of paramount importance. Equally valid the Ontario Native Women's Association must ensure that there is an effective enforcement section similar to Section 24 of the present Canadian Constitution Act 1982 inserted into Section 35 - Part II of the Canadian Constitution Act

1982. This enforcement section will provide Native women and their children an effective means to access courts, in cases where injustices have been done.

We urge you to support our cause by writing your Provincial Premiers and M.P.P.s in your constituencies. Should you know of any group who can assist us in our lobby efforts, kindly pass on the information or contact us directly at 807-345-9821 in Thunder Bay.

I thank you for your time and cooperation. In Unity: Meegwetich!

Yours truly,

Donna Phillips,
President.

(The above mentioned document is re-printed in the Report Section)

Minister of State
Social Development

February 25, 1983.

SWAG.

On behalf of Senator Austin, I wish to thank you etc.....

As you may be aware, the Prime Minister has established a special Cabinet Committee on Broadcasting and Culture with Senator Austin as Chairman. The purpose of the committee is to examine the recommendations of the Applebaum/Hébert report and take into account opinions from Canadians whose cultural, educational or employment interests are affected by the way in which decisions may be taken.

A further part of the process of discussion includes the establishment of a committee of the House of Commons represented by all parties to receive and discuss the Applebaum/Hébert report and to hear witnesses from amongst those interested in these matters, including particularly established and recognized associations of Canadians. The House of Commons committee will also, from time to time, receive statements of government policy on aspects of these matters which it will take into account during its deliberations. A number of groups are writing about the A/H Report and culture in general. Perhaps it would be possible for you to be in touch with groups similar to yours with a view to bringing your concerns to the House of Commons Committee which will commence its hearings in a few weeks.

ANNUAL REPORT

OFFICE UPDATE

You may address your correspondence to Mr. Robert Gourd, Chairman, Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, House of Commons, Ottawa K1A 0A6.

Again many thanks for forwarding your views to the Minister. You can be assured that he has noted them.

Yours sincerely,

Pauline Sauvé
Executive Assistant

SWAG
March 2, 1983.

The Right Honourable Bob McLelland:

The Victoria Status of Women Action Group supports the concept of equal pay for equal work and for work of equal value. We urge you to consider the complaint registered by Beverly Maworski against Army and Navy Department Stores and immediately appoint a Board of Inquiry to deal with her allegations.

We are pleased that the B.C. Human Rights Commission has tabled a report that reflects the concerns and wishes of the people of British Columbia. The Commission members are to be commended for their thorough and honest work. The responsibility now lies with you, Mr. McLelland, to implement their recommendations as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Shirley Avril,
for SWAG Coordinating Committee

cc. Hilarie McMurray, Vancouver Status of Women.

Charles Paris, Chair, B.C. Human Rights Commission

The office has been open for nearly a year (as of April 1st). Much has been accomplished in this time. The archives are now well-organized, by subject, and resource files have been set up, although much material remains to be filed. We now have a volunteer working on the filing system. Another project on the back-burner is for someone to properly catalogue the archives. (Any takers?)

Our half-time staff person has been kept hopping, between establishing the resource files; doing fund raising; doing research; writing briefs, letters and telegrams; and handling telephone calls and visitors to the office.

We have produced a comprehensive brief on women and employment, as well as a conference planning booklet, which will be available shortly. A more thorough version of this update will be available in the office next month, for anyone interested.

Much activity has been co-ordinated through the office, including the development of a successful grant proposal to hire three women to develop a visual project, "Issues for Young Women"; and the beginnings of a feminist fund-raising group. (This group represents three groups - SWAG, Sexual Assault Centre, and Women's Building Society, and meets weekly.) Our first project is a Connie Kaldor concert, scheduled for April. The proceeds will be split between the three groups.

Judy Erola's proposed elimination of the spousal tax exemption created quite a public reaction, and a number of calls were received in the office in this regard - all from women, and all very angry. The other "hot issue", of course, has been pornography, and many calls have come in on this subject. Prostitution is another issue of concern at present, and SWAG members are presently preparing a brief on this subject.

We have prepared a statistical breakdown of the types of calls which we have received in the office in the last year, and the results are revealing. They are analyzed in detail in an evaluation report, which will be available at the office in March.



But, briefly, the calls break down as follows:

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|--|-------|
| 1) Media - calls from all media: | 9.1% |
| 2) "Directory" requests - simple requests for names, addresses, etc.: | 20.3% |
| 3) Counselling: | 4.6% |
| 4) Information requests - requests which require a little research - statistics, etc.: | 10.5% |
| 5) Referral - requests for name of women doctors, lawyers, therapists: | 2.1% |
| 6) Miscellaneous - mainly liaison with other women's groups, networking, information sharing, announcements, etc.: | 23.5% |
| 7) Internal - communication between SWAG members, coordination of events, etc.: | 29.8% |

A complete discussion of what these figures mean in terms of SWAG's impact on the community, will soon be available in the office.

Prepared by Pam Blackstone

Feminist History/Study Group:

The first half of 1982 followed the format of previous years. We held approximately 5 meetings between Jan and June on topics ranging from Scottish Women's history to Radical Feminism in London, England and the Toronto Women's movement to the Bank-Note Company Strike in Ottawa some 5 or so years ago. The topics were very interesting and the few women who attended derived much satisfaction.

But our numbers have dwindled. We decided to try a new tactic in the autumn and broaden into a study group examining feminist philosophy/politics. Meetings have been poorly attended. We felt a change of name would better reflect our broader interests.

We need your contributions if we are to become a more positive group. Do you have anything to contribute to our re-birth?

Issues for Young Women

SWAG is currently sponsoring Issues for Young Women and Youth.

1982 CONFERENCE:

The SWAG sponsored, Uvic Women's Centre Collective hosted, 10th Annual Conference took place in October 1982, while not our most successful, in terms of the total number of participants, it seems to have been successful in fostering a greater spirit of sisterhood. Groups of women could be seen conversing in the confined 'open' areas; some women finding it difficult to return to work-shops!

This year we were pleased to offer the film 'Right Out of History' which highlighted the years that went into the making of the Dinner Party - a Judy Chicago initiated project. It was well attended and perhaps the main feature of our conference. Our celebration afterwards did not have the appeal that we had anticipated - the next conference may learn from our experience. Saturday's lunch time feature, 'Not A Love Story' was quite well attended and evoked a mixed response from those who attended. The workshop following went some way to come to terms with the feelings provoked by the film.

Most of the Saturday workshops were well attended and thought-provoking - one way or another! (See the Conference Summary following.) Breaks and lunch went well. The Exhibits were well received.

The success of any conference depends upon the participants, the workshop leaders and the team of women who spend the necessary months putting it all together. The continued support of SWAG members and the Uvic Women's Centre Collective as well as financial assistance from the Secretary of State make our conference the highlight of the year.

Thank you for helping us make each successive conference better. This year's conference committee looks forward to your support and assistance.

CONFERENCE EVALUATION SUMMARY

Total Respondants: 16

1. One-half the respondents

- found out about the conference through the Newsletter. The next largest group, by word of mouth.
2. Over half felt that the registration poster was not acceptable - it needs more information about workshops and/or a clearer layout.
 3. All but 2 out of the 16 had no problem getting registered.
 4. With respect to the arrangements for lunch; location, etc.: of the 16, 9-10 thought lunch, location and arrangements were satisfactory; 4 were dissatisfied with the quality of the lunch.
 5. Babysitting: not one of the respondents used the facility.
 6. Format: the majority found it acceptable.
 7. Workshop Choice/leaders/etc: Slightly over half of the respondents were not totally happy about the workshop arrangements for two main reasons:

- 1) more discussion time was needed
- 2) lack of focus re: no unifying theme with related workshops or lack of focus of individual workshops.

One possibility is to hold workshops of a 1 1/2 hour duration, two in the morning and one in the afternoon.

8. Displays: 15 of the 16 respondents viewed the displays of these 14 thought them worthwhile.
It was suggested that the Peace Tax Group be invited to display next year.
9. Just over half of the respondents were members of SWAG (9) and of these 6 had been to previous conferences.
Two women offered themselves for next year's conference.
10. Half of the respondents who made comments were positive.

IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING FURTHER TO ADD PLEASE LEAVE YOUR COMMENTS WITH JUDY BARRET-LENNARD, NEXT YEAR'S CONFERENCE COORDINATOR AT THE OFFICE.

Reports by Alice Albert

***** Announcements *****

The Human Rights Commission of British Columbia today expressed its strong support of the long awaited police action in regard to a number of pornographic film outlets. Dr. Charles Paris, Chairperson, expressed the Commission's hope that in future the system could respond in a more timely fashion and that the legislation will prove to be adequate and provide a remedy.

Dr. Paris also expressed the Commission's concern that too many levels of society turn a blind eye to the public exploitation of violence against women and children under the guise of freedom of expression. Such visual and written material portrays and describes women and children as sexual objects to be violently exploited at will. It is derogatory and demeaning of certain classes of people and therefore clearly contrary to the spirit (if not the letter) of the Human Rights Code of British Columbia.

(Human Rights Commission Press Release)

Statement from BCFW to support rally for the 5 accused in the Red Hot Video bombing:

The B.C. Federation of Women is here today to join with other groups and organizations to condemn the unjust treatment of the 5 accused at the hands of the courts and the media.

B.C. Federation of Women want to remind the courts and the media of the maxim of presumed innocence until guilt is proven. We object to the media portrayal of the 5 accused, Ann Hansen, Julie Belmas, Brent Taylor, Gerry Hannah and Doug Stewart, as crazed terrorists bent on creating chaos in this country. We object to the trial of these 5 people being conducted in the media before even a plea has been entered in court.

We object to the media's equation of the word "anarchist" with terrorism. Anarchists throughout the world have a proud tradition of promoting liberty for workers, self-governing communities, and opposing both violence against women and children, and nuclear destruction.

We are appalled at how quickly the police act to protect the interests of corporations and businesses, while the demands of ordinary people for a humane existence are largely ignored. For example, industrial wastes and pollution threaten to make our countryside uninhabitable. In the face of massive popular opposition to nuclear arms and technology, our government has signed an agreement to participate in the testing and proliferation of nuclear weapons. Violence against women is steadily increasing. Recently, the pornography industry has been mushrooming with more and more violent and abusive depictions of women. These are real crimes that affect all of our lives.

In B.C. and throughout the western hemisphere, women have spoken out against pornography. The objection to nuclear energy and armaments is world wide and cannot be diffused by charging a few individuals.

B.C. Federation of Women will continue to organize to stop Red Hot Video, to stop the abuse of women and children by pornography, to preserve and protect the environment, and to free B.C.'s air, waters and lands of all nuclear wastes and weaponry.

We will not be intimidated or divided by police or media harassment. That arrest of 5 individuals cannot be used to dismiss the protests of thousands of people.

Issues for Young Women

SWAG is currently sponsoring Issues for Young Women, a five month Canada Employment grant. The purpose of this grant is to produce an information package about issues of importance to young women ages 17-20.

Using the topics of work, health and violence against women, we have formulated a questionnaire and hope to get responses from 100 young women. We will be attempting to reach those in schools, Camosun, U.Vic as well as those who are not in school. The information gleaned from the questionnaire will enable us to have a clearer idea of just what kind of information on the three above topics young women want/need. We are planning to produce a video tape and a written fact sheet that will be available for use by the community as well as SWAG.

If you have any ideas for us, or if any of you fall into our age groups and would like to answer a questionnaire, or if you know of anyone in our age group who would like to fill out a questionnaire, please let us know. We usually inhabit the SWAG office two mornings a week. There is an envelope there (in a wife basket marked Filing) where you may leave messages. Or you may call Susan Moger 592-4215. She, Mylo Riley and Anna Moniz Cabecinha are the staff of the project. We will keep you informed as we progress and look forward to having a Grand Opening of our film:

STATUS OF WOMEN NEWS

This month's Newsletter focuses on children and the difficulties of raising children in a violent-free non-sexist environment. We welcome comments and further information.

Victoria had a jam-packed week of events for IWD. The March 6 event at U. Vic in which SWAG participated was well attended and the IWD committee hopes to continue this event next year. Other events such as the readings at Open Space Gallery were also well attended and an opportunity for women to meet on their own ground. U.Vic Women's Centre planned a whole week of events which put the women's community outside of the university in closer touch with many women students.

SWAG's retreat which was cancelled last month due to the fire at the Pacific Centre has been rescheduled for Saturday March 26 at the Women's Centre on Saltspring Island. As of going to press, we are not sure where or whether we will stay over the Friday evening of the 25th. Please check with the office for full details.

This will be a good opportunity to rap with other women in SWAG and to help plan our year's program and direction, so please plan to come if you can. An added bonus this year is the opportunity to meet with women from the Saltspring Centre.

Pam Blackstone has resigned as the SWAG office coordinator to take up another (almost full-time) position. The Coordinating Committee would like to thank Pam for all the enthusiasm and dedication she brought to the job and for placing the office on a firm footing in terms of public visibility and internal organization. Thank you for a job well done, Pam.

Shirley Avril, who is to take Pam's place as office coordinator has worked for SWAG as an active member for a number of years and is well-known in the women's community in Victoria. We would like to welcome Shirley into her new position and we hope that she will receive all the support she needs (and deserves) from SWAG members. Choosing one candidate from those who applied was a difficult task for the Hiring Committee and they would like to thank all the excellent women who applied for the job.

ARTICLES

On The Home Front...Children First.

Massive propaganda, lack of jobs for women and day-care for our children; all conspire to keep women in the home. But it certainly isn't keeping us out of the political struggle for women's rights and children's rights. The home is increasingly identified as a crucial arena for feminist transformation.

The Home-Birth Movement. The Midwifery Task Force is continuing its work to legalize the profession of midwifery in our Province. At present midwives are not recognized as independent professionals; they must train elsewhere and can only function, in B.C., as part of an in-hospital obstetric team. The mandate of the new profession will be to provide services to mothers during pregnancy, labour, delivery and post-partum. With a suitable emergency back-up provision this will offer the legal option of home birth to local mothers. As a mother who delivered (illegally?) at home with one of Victoria's mid-wives, I highly recommend this option. The team-work of mother, baby and midwife is sisterhood at its finest! The Task Force is planning a rally, possibly for Mother's Day, and this will give us all an opportunity to assist in the labour of a new (and very ancient) women's profession.

The Home-School Movement. Many mothers across North America are choosing to teach their children at home. While our valiant fore-mothers fought to establish an education system for our children, the profession, here at home, is becoming increasingly male-dominated: from the power-crazed Minister for Education at one end, to the sobering reality that 66% of new teacher appointments were men, and most of the lay-offs have been women. Mothers concerned with sex-bias in school, as well as authoritarianism, boredom and competition, are exploring the possibilities of our homes as learning environments. They have the advantage of providing cross-age relationships, individual pacing, variety and stimulation. Home schooling has had its successes: two of the top three eleven-year-old maths geniuses in Britain, this year, were girls taught at home by their mothers. Handicapped children thrive at home in a structured environment. Clearly mothers who teach at home should be paid teacher's salaries; and teachers (especially the women laid-off in current cut-backs) could serve as free-lance professionals to the movement. We can re-claim the profession for women, and also make needed fundamental changes to the system. David Nordstrom has argued that the (historically) recent connection between age and competency (another piece of patriarchy which supports the supremacy of older men over younger ones) has severely limited the development of children's potential. The school

system rejects methods children can understand better than teachers:..... "Pitman's initial teaching alphabet, the Cuisinaire system of mathematics, metric conversion and micro-computer technology have all demonstrated that learning and communications systems more congruent with the true developmental needs and capacities of...four children)...produce levels of competence with which our authoritarian structure is ill-prepared to cope." Paying mothers at home to work with these systems could really give our children a head start.

Domestic Violence: Cleaning Up The Home.

While women are working to develop and strengthen mother-child relations in a positive way, to give our children life-affirming experiences, we are also working to end violence against child and mother. Violence in the home, epidemic and indiscriminate, is coming out of the closet of silence and changing our views of home life. The sexual assault of children by respected male adult relatives, and the battery of women by common-law and legal husbands leaves deep and painful scars for mothers and children. We can all help in the long fight back.

Incest Prevention and Detection:

Authorities Roland Summit and Linda Halliday suggest: (a) as many boys as girls are victims (boys are more strongly socialized not to tell); (b) victims only lie to minimize or down-play the assault; (c) mothers do not know what is going on (they, and the mother-child relationship is the unseen victim of incest). Incest, typically continuing pattern, undermines normal development of the child, and often leads to suicide, prostitution and drug abuse in girls, and violence in boys.

Key Strategies: (call S.A.V.A. for more information)

1. Let your children know (age three is not too young) that no-one has the right to touch her/his body. This goes for any adult; or any older child. Repeat this and role-play it. Let your child practise saying "No!" as many times as necessary.
2. Let your child know she/he has the right to keep clothed, especially her/his 'private parts'. Use any language they understand.
3. Don't encourage your child to hug, kiss or play or be alone with any adult unless she/he chooses. Notice any adults who make your children feel uncomfortable. Talk about it. Listen.
4. Let your children know she/he can always tell you when anyone bothers her/him and why.
5. Be prepared for some shocks;

hearing from your child about sexual assault in your family can stop you dead in your tracks. Be prepared for shock, guilt, amazement, anger. Be clear with your child that you believe her/him, and your emotions are directed at the offender.

6. Call S.A.V.A. They offer help, support and legal information. They are there for mothers and for victims.

7. Share all this information with mothers and children you know. T.B. was once shameful and hidden; and it spread like wild-fire. To end incest we must reach out to powerless and frightened children and mothers. We also need to shake up the whole legal system!!

Battery: One in ten Canadian wives is the victim of regular physical battery at the hands of their husbands. The battery syndrome (violence, remorse, forgiveness, honeymoon, mounting tension, battery) sucks mother and children into a spiralling vortex of confusion, fear, powerlessness and dependency. And death: in 25% of B.C. homicides last year, wives were murdered by battering husbands. It is overwhelmingly difficult for the battered wife to leave her situation. Batterer husbands chose their wives' vulnerabilities: when the family re-locates and she is financially dependent; when she is ill; when there is a pregnancy or a new-born child to consider; when the marriage is 'established'. The battered wife often stays 'for the children'; recognizing the problems for them on welfare, looking hopelessly for rental accommodation, with custody issues and with the batterers' endless threats of murder. But Transition House counselors understand all of this and are there with support, refuge, legal information etc. A call or visit to them (and to meet other women in the same situation) can be a first step in breaking the cycle. We can all break the silence around battery by empowering women to take that first step. The children of battery are scarred, too. In terror and isolation the children witness the fusion of the violence with love and the deep confusion of divided loyalties. 75% of women seeking refuge in Canadian Transition Houses were beaten in the abdomen while pregnant; and children see this. As with incest, patterns of violence and victimhood are passed on to the next generation.

Very clearly, vast numbers of violent men are not ready for family life and constitute a lethal threat to the well-being of mothers and children. Our prisons could not cope with them; nor could the welfare rolls, should justice ever be done. So the solution we must look to is that sketched by Frank McGowan. We need to develop alternatives to the home for men; and we need to stop, immediately, the traditional and current practices of driving or removing children and mothers

from our homes. Homes are surely for raising families. McGowan proposes convictions (swift ones) for offenders and commitment to Transition Houses for men, where they may continue to work and financially support their (?) families, but their release will depend on the decision of the victim. These changes are needed urgently.

Home Viewing.

A 1974 study of American T.V. established that children and women were a large majority of the victims portrayed by T.V. violence; and it established, too, that children and women learn the fear and powerlessness of victims from our viewing. T.V. violence supports male violence against children and women. To combat this propaganda, N.A.C. has established "Media Watch" to monitor T.V. from a feminist perspective. Help us get violence as entertainment out of our homes: add your criticisms! The development of pornography, including 'kiddie porn', for home viewing clearly supports the increase of sexual assault against women and children. We can help stop this propaganda at source by supporting the activities of Women Against Pornography.

Changes in the home involve creating new forms of child raising while ending the violence we experience there. There are many, many ways to get involved. Children are our future. So let us all, mothers and child-free, join this movement. And now, back to the chores.

Josephine Payne-O'Connor

Contacts

Midwifery Task Force; via Luba: 595-6594.
Home School Movement; via B.C.C.F.:

387-5766.

S.A.V.A. Sexual Assault Victims Anonymous:

381-4551.

Parents in Crisis: 656-4006.

Transition House: 385-6611.

Media Watch (SWAG): 381-1012.

Women Against Pornography: Box 6296, Station C



review

Right from the Start by Selma Greenberg,
Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston 1979

Right from the Start could be viewed as a "breath of fresh air" by a feminist or a hurricane by a traditionalist. Greenberg has integrated her mothering experience with the analysis/research of an academic and the insight/awareness of the feminist movement. She views sex-role stereotyping as limiting the development of both sexes and offers practical advice on raising children free from these stereotypes. Her focus is on issues central to family life.

Greenberg attacks sexist child rearing and traditional theorists as inequitable, dividing men and women and leading to many difficulties. Her perspective is based on democratic principles and has as its theme:

1. redesign the parent role so that it liberates rather than oppresses women;
2. ways to allow children to develop vigorous and sound bodies, spirits, intellects, emotions and broadest possible life options
3. a positive adult-child relationship of mutual affection, respect and pride

"Mothers will decide what kinds of assistant, education and support are necessary to the mothering experience." "Mothering" is not a natural innate ability. In a simpler society role models were available and help in the form of knowledge, information and skills, but following World War II we have the small nuclear family form. Research shows that mothers who engage in child rearing suffer a loss of self-esteem. Greenberg feels that many difficulties mothers have in dealing with children are derived from their second-class status.

She covers the area of fathers involvement with physical care right at the beginning, equity in financial management, the insensitivity of establishment structures and some "experts" to the needs of mothers and children, mothers programming into the combination of housekeeping and child care and many mothers thinking housekeeping is child rearing. She also covers ego needs, political implications of language, power plays, effect of commercials and advertising, the effects of a bletting environment, clear communication and offers advice in coping with the issues.

With her focus on raising girls and boys as free and equal beings, she challenges societies views. 1) the theory of "appropriate" female/male behavior limits individual lives and narrows growth/potential; 2) "appropriate" behavior assigned to female and male is not equal-the behavior and role of female are viewed as inferior to male.

Sex labeling and discrimination are constantly, consistently and dramatically demonstrated to a child from birth in a barely conscious series of actions-expectations, attitudes, events and objects. Nothing is easier to learn than a simple two-group discrimination i.e.: racism, sexism. The difficulty is teaching more complex, truer notions about people. By three the child has already learned to inhibit curiosity and exploration when presented with material and activities linked to the other sex.

From this sexist conditioning the female merges as sympathetic to men's needs and demands. She accepts that the male role includes access to money, power and sex while her own consists of subservience and service.

Strengths of Text

The strength of the text evolves from her courage, intellectual integrity and ability to integrate child rearing, research and feminism. She does this with humor in pithy chapters with issues that are relevant.

Her experience in raising three children gives her a credibility oftentimes lacking in other theorists who spend time in observing rather than actually doing the child rearing. We have a preponderance of "experts" who possess little first-hand information.

Her analysis is based on research. Studies which she conducted are mentioned throughout the book along with numerous other studies relating to the issues i.e., Marina Horner's "fear of success". These are indexed in her notes.

Her feminist concepts, while outrageous to some people, have common acceptance in the women's movement. Numerous books and articles would support her stand on the issues. Here she has focused the analysis of women's lack of power in patriarchy on the area of child rearing.

There are numerous examples of humor throughout the text. In discussing fathers forming their own strong bond of affection with their young children, lessening the need for mother to package and sell daddy, she comments: "Public relations must have been invented by women left alone to raise children."

Her observations and analysis indicate a caring about the family structure. Her suggestions on dealing with the issues around child rearing are clearly outlined and pragmatic for middleclass couples.

Two other books (in this area) delivering a similar perspective on child rearing: Ourselves and our Children, Boston, Women's Health Collective; Growing Up Free, Letty Catin Pograbin

Criticism of Approach

While her recommendations could be implemented by a variety of families, her material is directed primarily at the middle-class woman at home with a husband employed outside the home. This does not reflect the position of the majority of women today. She does clarify at the beginning that she is writing from her particular situation, but suggesting a neighbourhood supportive to parents and children is rather hallow if parents are unable to afford the rent and accommodations for single parents with children are limited. Although she touches on the additional problems of the single mother, she does not address the issues of the wife/mother working outside the home, blended families, single fathers, role reversal, the unemployed breadwinner, physically handicapped mother or problems of minority parents.

Her perspective is dependent on the development of insights into the effects of sex-role stereotyping. A person developing skills to cope with a new baby may not be able to develop both areas simultaneously.

The oppression of women and children in the home is viewed by some as a substitute for the lack of power of some men in the work force. This, coupled with some men feeling that they are already "doing their share", would not motivate some to household chores and more active participation in child rearing.

My ultimate frustration with her recommendations to the problems is that once again the responsibility of society in rearing our young is left primarily with women who must individually negotiate care taking tasks with individual family members. Other, more creative solutions have been recommended, i.e., raising the status of child care workers and having all adults in the community concerned and involved in the rearing of our young children. This would be a more cooperative, non-isolating approach.

Her references to "they" instead of "we" in referring to women, adds a note of alienation to the text.

Lois Vickery

PRINCIPLE ARTICULATED BY ONTARIO NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

No one individual of Aboriginal ancestry will be divested of his/her Aboriginal or Treaty rights, no matter where he/she chooses to live, nor to lose the benefits of these rights.

THE ISSUE:

The Canadian Constitution Act - Charter of Rights and Freedoms - Part I fails to secure a sufficient guarantee of equal rights for Aboriginal women.

The guarantee that rights of Aboriginal peoples must apply equally to men and women should be entrenched in the Constitution of Canada, under Part II - "Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada."

THE PROPOSAL:

Only a provision in the Constitution will secure the necessary degree of security that the principle of equal protection and treatment demands. This specific provision of an equality clause must be inserted to give constitutional protection on behalf of Aboriginal peoples and it be inserted in the Canadian Constitution Act 1982 - except under Part II Section 35, and this equality clause becomes sub-section (111).

SUPPORTIVE STATEMENTS:

1. Native women must have a strong legal constitutional guarantee of equality to prevent potential practices of discrimination.

2. Such rights must not be capable of being easily modified or eroded.

3. In its present form, Section 15 of the C.C.A. 1982 - Part I guarantees equality of rights to every individual and prohibits discrimination, among other things, sex and race. Other grounds of special significance to the Aboriginal women such as marital status are not spelled out.

4. In its present form, section 28 of the C.C.A. 1982 - Part I, was designed to protect against legislative encroachment by asserting the primacy of equal rights for men and women. This is accomplished by the opening words of Section 28, "Notwithstanding anything in this Charter...."

5. In its present form, section 33 of the C.C.A. 1982 - Part I attempts to dilute this clause. When an override provision was inserted, Section 33 became subject to the power of legislatures to exempt a law or statute from certain sections of the Charter, including fundamental, legal and equality rights. This declaration may last for five years, when it will automatically expire and the Charter takes precedence. It is unclear how Section 33 will affect federal legislation which applies to Native women in Ontario or vice versa.

6. In its present form, Section 25 of the C.C.A. 1982 - Part I provides the guarantee that this Charter of Rights and Freedoms shall not be construed as to abrogate or derogate from any Aboriginal, Treaty or other rights and freedoms that pertain to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Section 28 specifies the rights and freedoms referred to in the Charter. Clearly, Section 25 is one of the sections referred to in the charter, so the equal rights clause of Section 28 would apply. This, it is claimed, should be read, as guaranteeing equality on the basis of sex, but only for those rights created by the Charter. Section 25 is designed to protect Aboriginal, Treaty and other rights and freedoms from unintentional abrogation from the Charter. It is uncertain whether the equality rights clause of Section 28 will apply to Section 25 in future years.

7. In its present form, Part II-Section 35(1) recognizes and affirms "existing" Aboriginal and Treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. This means that if you can prove that those rights exist, then those rights are superior to anything in Canadian law or civil law. Canada and the provinces have the power to define which Aboriginal and Treaty rights are to be constitutionally protected through Section 37. Section 35 deems Aboriginal to include Indian, Metis and Inuit.

Will Section 35 provide the constitutional protection for Native women who were discriminated against by Federal legislation applied against them? Is the Indian Act a fair expression of Aboriginal and Treaty rights? Or does it restrict itself to the current definition of Indian as specified in the Indian Act? Obviously, the constitutional protection of Native women rights in the C.C.A. 1982 is open to legal interpretation and it currently remains unresolved.

8. The Indian Nations are maintaining that the right to determine its membership as an Aboriginal right. A problem would arise if the power to determine membership is transferred without restriction or control to bands or tribes. It would become necessary to determine whether the Charter would apply to band governments on reserves. It is not certain whether the equality clause of Section 28 applies to Section 25. If it does, then the rights gained by the Aboriginal peoples, either through constitutional process or through revisions of the Indian Act regarding Indian government would be subject to it because of the word "notwithstanding". If it does not, then the Charter of Rights and Freedoms would not apply to Indian governments on reserves unless the guarantees are built into the Indian band or tribal constitutions-but those rights would only be legislative not constitutional protected. The right to determine membership must be subject to the equality principle.

9. There is no mechanism outside the Constitution to safeguard the rights of Native women. Rights provided in Indian constitutions may be inadequately entrenched and easily eroded.

10. The political and legal rights of Native women are continually eroded; discrimination is continually practised daily against Native women; it is this unequal position of Native women which has forced women to suffer as a collective body. The laws have prevented freedom of choice to marry without dire consequences. These disadvantages include loss of Aboriginal birthright, and cultural attachment to their homeland. Native women in Ontario believe that mobility of rights itself, must become an Aboriginal right recognized under Part II of the Constitution. The protection of mobility of rights must be constitutionally protected in the C.C.A. 1982. Mobility of rights means that Native women, do not want to be discriminated against because they choose to live in another community, another province, another country. Their Aboriginal and Treaty rights as guaranteed in the Constitution must be retained and remain accessible in their homeland, if they returned, and when they returned, and that Native women not be deprived thereof.

REMINDER

SWAG Business meetingApril 5, 7.30.p.m.

SWAG General meetingApril 19, 7.15.p.m.
(Board Room, Main Public Library)

RETREAT.....March 26
(Saltspring Island)

Fundraiser for SWAG/SAC/Women's Building, April 16, 8.00
(Newcombe Auditorium)

Tickets at: Everywoman's Books
Richards Records
Macpherson Playhouse
Hillside Shopping Mall
Folklore Centre

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Renewal: ☐ New: ☐ Gift: ☐

Membership is \$10⁰⁰ per year due March 8.
(Reduced rates available if needed).

Send to: SWAG
Post Office Box 6295 Stn. C,
Victoria, B.C. V8P 5L5

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the present form. Part of the
present form of the
Treaty rights of the
Indian people is that
that if you prove that these
rights, that those rights are
superior to anything in Canadian law
or to law, Canada and the provinces
have no power to take away the
Treaty rights of the Indian people
nationally protected by the
Treaty. That is the point.

Learning Resources Centre
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