

[Apr. 1975]

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HQ 1460
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DEAR SISTERS

**After a hard week at the
sinkstovedeskcounteroffice;
on the street; on your feet;
behind the wheel**

**FEEL REAL
at the**

**WOMEN'S CENTRE
FRIDAY NIGHT FLING
every friday at 9:00 p.m.**

FOR WOMEN ♀ BY WOMEN

keep sending in title suggestions,
as you can see, we remain nameless!

Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday

APRIL

		1	2 Women's Studies 7:30	3	4 Pregnancy Self help 1 p.m.	5
6	7	8	9 Women's Studies 7:30	10 Single Mothers Rap Group 1-3pm films 8 p.m.	11 Pregnancy Self help 1pm	12 Dr. Morgentaller Protest
13	14	15	16 Women's Studies 7:30	17	18 Pregnancy Self help 1pm	19
20	21	22	23 Women's Studies 7:30	24 films 8 pm	25 Pregnancy Self help 1pm	26
27	28	29	30 Women's Studies			

Margaret Atwood

Margaret Atwood came to Open Space on March 16, to read a chapter of her novel-in-progress. The content of the reading was intricately integrated with Atwood as a performer, as a presence. Her voice was quiet and wry providing a contrast to the general hilarity of her subject matter. Her face, a cameo amongst that wild, frizzy hair; and that papier-machee daffodil pinned onto her collar, a bit of dramatization of the bouquet of daffodils that the flasher held in front of himself before he exposed his piece of flesh to the three little gnomes on the way home from their Brownie meeting.

The chapter is about Brownies ostensibly. It accurately and mercilessly depicts the ridiculous ritual of Brownies, the initiation of the young into a fairy-tale morality of good deed and great big Brownie smiles. The little protagonist is entirely hip to the duplicity and phoniness of it, but goes along so as not to disappoint the adults who somehow still seem to believe. She goes along too, out of her essential loneliness and need for approval. She is a vulnerable little girl, imprisoned even at age eight by the stereotype of sugar and spice beauty which she (unlucky child) does not possess, being fat, red-haired and freckled.

I was a Brownie too, and ugly and freckled. But I had forgotten those silly ceremonies (which Atwood carefully researched and which are to my rusty memory entirely authentic) until I attended this reading. For myself, I am uncertain what influence the Brownie experience had on my total awareness, but I think it contributed to my later radicalization and ultimate cynicism.

The episode recounted in this chapter is somehow important to the development of Atwood's grown protagonist too. But we must wait about a year for the publication of Atwood's novel to see why. This reading not only left me laughin' but also left me wonderin'.

Jardine

Women in Politics

Quotes from Rosemary Brown, MLA Vancouver - Burrard
Candidate for National Leader of N.D.P.

"The fact that a number of people and groups have suggested that I accept the nomination for leader of the Federal New Democratic Party, and the fact that I have indicated a willingness to consider this suggestion, raises questions concerning the suitability not of a woman, but of a feminist being leader of a socialist party".

"Indeed to suggest that to be a feminist is a liability to a leadership candidate surely is to fail to understand, as Marcuse stated, that 'Feminism is a revolt against decaying capitalism', surely is to lack the vision to see that feminism like socialism calls for a new human community based on the creative and co-operative use of power to create new economic, social and political forms, - that ensure tender regard and respect for the life of the planet on which we live, the liberation of women, of workers, of other minority groups - indeed of all humankind - to fulfill our potential as intelligent human beings".

"...the system in which the oppression of women, minority groups and workers is rooted and on whose oppression its very survival is dependent is the system perpetuated by the two major political parties in this country at this time, and the system to which the N.D.P. must present a clear alternative - an alternative based not on reforming or patching up their old-line structures - but on structuring and designing a new system.."

"I believe that feminism with its attendant goals of true personhood for people is essential to the building of a socialist society."

ROSEMARY BROWN

Rosemary Brown has her work cut out for her. She has accepted the nomination for federal leader of the New Democratic Party. She has started her campaign. She needs to. There is a massive job of education and consciousness-raising to be done within her own party before it can accept and endorse her. It is possible that debate over her nomination will polarize the party. Won't it be interesting to see who goes where?

Ms Brown is concerned that some will react to her as a 'token' woman. This will be a real loss if we do, for she is a serious candidate, and should be recognized and respected for the skilled, experienced, and dedicated person that she is. She has the disadvantage of being only recently known to the public outside of the N.D.P. The work she has done within the party and with the Voice of Women are not generally known. However, this may be part of her strength, for she is not readily identified with one locality or issue. Human rights is her area of concern is strong and fundamental. She is a strong person, and can give strong leadership.

If you want to help this become a reality, there are some things you can do. Support Ms Brown's campaign with letters, and contribute to her campaign fund. Contributions - large or small or miniscule-- are being received by Ms Marnie Darnel, 20-129 Croft Street, Victoria. Make cheques payable to the 'Rosemary Brown Campaign Fund'. The N.D.P. are holding some social fundraising activities, and you can get that information from Ms Darnel also. If you still don't feel that's doing enough to help, become a member of the N.D.P. Add your voice and hands to the grass-roots work being done.

Sharon Anderson

MORGANTALER

A Brief History of the Morgantaler Story

(Please read Priorities October '74 for greater detail.)

- born a Polish Jew, captured in Germany, five years in Aushwitz and Dachau. Studied medicine after the war in Europe. Set up family practice in Montreal.
- in 1967 as a representative of the Humanist Association of Canada he presented a brief to the Commons Health Committee for reform of the abortion law.
- this stand resulted in mail and requests from women needing abortions.
- he then decided to open his abortion clinic.
- in March 1973 he issued a public statement that he was operating this clinic.
- in August 1973 his clinic was raided, files siezed, personel arrested and hassled. Thirteen charges of illegal abortion laid.
- in November 1973 he came to trail on one charge and was acquitted by a jury of mostly men.
- shortly thereafter the Quebec Court of Appeals overturned this acquittal on a highly unusual move.
- Dr. Morgantaler himself appealed his case to the Supreme Court of Canada - using the Bill of Rights as defense.
- in March 1975, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld an Appeal Court decision - to jail him for performing an illegal abortion. Dr. Morgantaler was sentenced to eighteen months in Montreal's Bordeaux jail.

April 12, 1975, has been set aside as a day for the defense of Dr. Morgantaler. Call the Women's Centre for information about what you can do.

What ever happened to Women's Liberation?

"The goal of Women's Liberation is to end the oppression of women," wrote the editorial committee in the April, 1974 issue of the Saskatoon Women's Liberation Newsletter. "Women are oppressed by male chauvinism and by capitalism". Before one can identify the sources of women's oppression, it is necessary to identify where oppression occurs.

The areas of women's oppression are many, but this comprehensive oppression can be grouped in four major areas: production, reproduction, sexuality and socialization.

In Canada a woman is exploited in production as is demonstrated by her relatively minor participation in the labour force, the disproportionately lower wages paid to women for working, and the overconcentration of women in the service industry ghettos of female employment.

Woman is exploited in reproduction by the expectations put on her role as child rearer which ask her to remain in the home until her children have left the home. She is exploited by the limited availability of birth control and abortions and the myth that child birth is the most productive role a woman can play in society and which necessarily excludes others.

Woman is exploited sexually. The media uses her as a sex object to sell products for which a demand must be created for the sake of profit and she is sexually exploited in her daily interaction with men.

A woman is oppressed in her socialization. Society teaches a woman to be passive by destroying any sense of initiative which might enable her to question her role in that society.

All these areas of women's oppression are institutionalized in our society. The family is the first institution which molds little girls into submission; school and church then take over; and when a woman is mature all forms of media, government and industry act as a reinforcement to define and restrict her role. Men are in control of all these institutions.

All areas of women's oppression are interrelated and reinforcing to one another. A woman is brought up to not question the validity of her role in society, the belief being so strong in her that she is incapable of active participation equal to men. This leaves her very vulnerable to manipulation from our system whose main interest is profit not the well-being of people.

Women are recognized as the most significant group of consumers in Canada. Through the use of the media, which exploits women's sexuality, corporations play on a woman's expectation of herself to sell the products. They sell her happiness. A woman is taught to be a martyr and is punished when she is selfish. She is vulnerable to advertising because she is encouraged to buy products not because they are necessary but because they are supposed to help her serve her family and men better, and women are open to this suggestion. Women are evaluated on their ability to maintain (create) a 'good family'. Even outside the home woman is required to please others. This attitude makes women well suited to the service industry or for that matter any occupation that demands negation of one's needs.

The majority of women are economically dependent on fathers or husbands. They are a pool of surplus labour which can be tapped in times of need. This was demonstrated during the World Wars when women were essential to industry. 'Surplus' labour means 'cheap' labour, employers can offer minimal wages and so not have to provide good working conditions because there will always be women who will need the employment. Women, who are able to move in and out of the work force, are very advantageous to the employers. Also a woman is not in a position to bargain for higher wages and better working conditions because of her view of herself and of her role in society. A woman's work in the home is not rewarded economically, it is merely expected or demanded of her.

Capitalism uses women as consumers and cheap labour to maintain high profits.

The majority of Women's Liberation groups across Canada believes that male chauvinism and capitalism are the source of women's oppression.

Other points of view do exist: There is the Radical Feminist who identifies man as the sole oppressor, who structured systems to maintain women's oppression. And there is the view of the Liberal Feminist, who sees the system as needing reform and men needing education. This article is dealing only with the view held by the majority, sometimes referred to as 'middle-of-the-road' feminists. A term used by Shulamith Firestone in her book The Dialectics of Sex.

It is very difficult to find information on exactly when the Women's Liberation Movement began in Canada. The movement is very young and very little has been written on it yet. It seems to have become a nationwide movement in 1969. The various groups which sprang up across Canada were initiated by women who were involved in left-wing politics. They were feeling dissatisfaction from the lack of analysis on the women's problems from the various left-wing groups and dissatisfaction with their role within those groups. It was felt that women's groups had to be established in order to develop an analysis of women's oppression. They saw that socialist revolutions such as the Russian and Cuban revolutions did not fundamentally alter the role of women. Women served the revolution, the revolution did not serve them. As Juliet Mitchell said in Women's Estate: "Once it (the Women's Liberation Movement) had arisen...it saw that its tasks were greater than its origins: that women's oppression manifests itself in economic and cultural deprivation, that oppressed women are found in all exploited minorities, in all social classes, in all radical movements. That on the issue of the position of women, friends are foes." The original purpose of the movement had to change; those women found that communication with their fellow members in left-wing politics was impossible. They also came to the understanding that unless as individuals they learn to overcome a feeling of inferiority as women they would not be able to bring about change. It became necessary for the women involved to come to grips with their own oppression.

The method employed by Women's Liberation Movement to come to grips with their oppression is 'Consciousness Raising'. Consciousness Raising is a re-interpretation of a revolutionary practice in China.

It was called 'Speaking Bitterness' and it follows the concept that the first symptom of oppression is the repression of words; the state of suffering is so total and so assumed that it is not known to be there. Consciousness Raising is the bringing to consciousness of the virtually unconscious.

Through the process of consciousness raising, a woman realizes that fears and doubts about herself and her position are common to other women and are created by society; she learns that other women have the same problems as herself; she learns to trust and love other women. This is the first step in destroying oppression. Women have always been pitted against one another, taught not to trust one another and to compete with other women, never men. Isolation is the best means to keep people alienated. Through her faith in other women she gets support in her struggle to cope with her situation. She learns to recognize her true feelings from those imposed on her from her socialization. She learns through Consciousness Raising the process of her socialization and is able then to change it to a certain extent. She learns to recognize society's reinforcement for a passive role, therefore is able to stop its influence. Through Consciousness Raising, a woman acquires self-confidence and a feeling of support and sisterhood with other women.

Juliet Mitchell in her book Woman's Estate, describes Consciousness Raising: "Women come into the movement form the unspecified frustrations of their own private lives, find that what they thought was an individual dilemma is a social predicament and hence a political problem." This was the original purpose of consciousness raising; through the process of discovering one's oppression, one would become politicized. Instead, a different phenomenon is happening in women's centres across Canada.

In some centres a conscious decision was made not to mention capitalism as a source of oppression. Women already involved in the movement anticipated that intense political discussions would result in disagreements and could cause division within the movement. This would jeopardize the concept of Sisterhood.

Sisterhood is the concept that all women regardless of social and economic classes are oppressed by men. Therefore, women can be united in a common struggle to end this oppression. A political division between women is threatening to this concept.

This decision not to mention capitalism was also made out of fear of alienating women making use of the centres. It was felt that because of her feeling of inferiority a woman would feel incapable of understanding the politics behind her own oppression.

The result of this approach is that the Women's Movement has become service oriented. Centres are offering a series of services to meet very particular needs of individual women. The services offered are becoming an end in themselves instead of a method of progressing towards a goal.

Medical Self-Help, for example, began out of a feeling of frustration and oppression by the medical profession. It does not analyse why the medical profession is authoritarian and does not confront the problem from its source. It teaches a woman to feel comfortable with her body and to understand and positively accept her sexuality. It teaches her how her body functions so that she can demand better service from her doctor.

This service is very valuable and this is demonstrated by its great demand, but an overall analysis is lacking. This is needed if Medical Self-Help is ever to bring about change in the medical profession. Also all services offered are approached singly. An understanding of how closely related they are is lacking.

An editorial in the Saskatoon Women's Liberation Newsletter pointed out that the Movement is in danger of being co-opted "unless it adopts an overall perspective which directs women's consciousness of their oppression towards a strategy to end that oppression. The 'single issue' campaign such as child care, abortion law repeal, and self help are susceptible to co-optation by government.

Isolated demands can become diluted government programs that do not alter the status and role of women. For example, day care is presently being made more accessible to poor women, but the Saskatchewan government still maintains that women's place is in the home caring for children."

The Women's Liberation Movement is in danger of becoming the "Women's Service Club" unless it takes a good objective view of itself.

The concept of Sisterhood does not allow room for growth because women's energies are spent in trying to avoid sources of disagreement. The fear of alienating women is not a valid reason to refuse to develop a feminist analysis. A political analysis will not eliminate the need for the services offered by the Movement. But with an analysis, the services will become a tool towards the liberation of women instead of a means of coping with one's oppression.

by Lucie de Blois
Saskatonian
August 8, 1974

films

The next film in the film series is "Citizens Medicine". In Montreal the St. Jacques Citizens Committee primarily women set up a Community Health Clinic. The Film shows the discussion, planning and clinic in operation. The committee participated in the making of the film-planning, filming and editing.

Medical Report

Physicians are still telling women that they do not know how the IUD works. They maintain this position to women consumers years after scientists have shown that the action of the IUD's is to set up a low grade infection or inflammation of the uterine wall, thereby preventing implantation of the fertile ovum.

If a woman takes aspirin or antibiotics (i.e. penicillin) she is likely to counter this inflammation and risk pregnancy. Doctors should warn women who take antibiotics or large doses of aspirin while depending on the IUD to protect themselves with another form of birth control.

I have also been informed and experienced the fact that the copper 7 is rejected more quickly and easily by the uterus than the copper T.

Aleita

ATTENTION!

The BCFW Conference scheduled for this month has been cancelled indefinitely due to the current labour dispute.

The Wild Things are restless.
The Cloud Eaters
Mountain Movers
Water Walkers and
Other Coloured Beasts.

Celeste

Who can live inside
When they're all screaming?

TRANSITION HOUSE

The House is undergoing some physical changes at the hands of the Public Works Department. There is now a fire escape, copper piping and new heating ducts in the basement, and the furnace is enclosed. The bathrooms and dining room have been re-painted and the new upstairs office has a door!

In spite of the disruption to the children's area in the basement mothers have commented on the help the children's programme has given their children. Not only is the time spent at Transition House important in helping mothers to adjust and to cope with new realities, but their children need new interests and a sense of security to help them through the changes in their lives. We all appreciate Shirley's leadership and commitment to bringing about such results.

Dryme's talk to us about her conference experiences last week was like a "shot of adrenalin" (as one of us put it). Keeping communications open between the Women's Centre and Transition House is important to us. When any activities, such as films, talks etc. might be suitable for residents or staff of the House, we'd appreciate having such information made available to post.

Judy is trying to establish a morning "one-year-old" programme and would appreciate assistance.

Is anyone can round-up the following items, we would be most pleased.

one good, big, sturdy baby carriage
one play-pen in good condition
tires and ropes for swings
sand box and sand
tricycles and go-carts
toys, lamps, vacuum cleaner
two wood chests of drawers
blankets and quilts, in good condition

THIS ISSUE HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO YOU BY

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WE WELCOME FEEDBACK AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF ARTICLES
GRAPHICS AND IDEAS FROM OUR READERS

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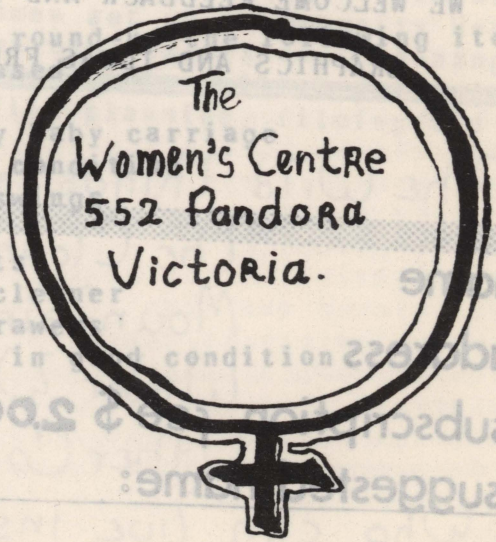
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Judy is trying to establish a "one-to-one" programme to appreciate and contribute to the well-being of our readers.



The
Women's Centre
552 Pandora
Victoria.