

AUGUST 1969

This is the first-ever issue of the Women's Caucus newsletter – and it's rather hastily put together in order to get it in Tuesday's mail. The need for a newsletter is obvious – communication has been rather difficult over the summer and those women who have phone for meetings, but couldn't come for various reasons, haven't been able to keep up with the progress of the group. We hope that with a monthly bulletin, more people will be able to come out to meetings, and if not, will be informed of the activities of the group to a certain extent. Those people with limited time and energy will be able to watch for something that suits their interests and talents so that they can become active when they are able. And we promise that forthcoming issues will be more extensive, informative and professionally done. (A report of the last meeting, for example is a rather glaring omission.)

MEETINGS

After Sept. 4th, the regular business meeting will be held on the 4th Thursday of every month.

The next regular meeting will be held:

DATE: September 4th – Thursday

TIME: 8:00 p.m. at the Labour Temple – Office #6, 307 West Broadway St.

TOPIC: Day Care – Liz Briemberg, organizer

SPEAKERS: Mrs. Maycock – Prov. Health & Welfare

Melody Kelian – SFU Co-op Nursery

And if any of you are especially interested in working on a day-care research group, contact Liz Briemberg at 298-9639 or come to the meeting Sept. 4th!

Our new offices will be open every Thursday throughout the fall and winter for group activities, committee meetings, workshops and discussion groups, in order to make the most use of the facilities available, and diversify the activities to meet more directly the needs and interests of different women.

Reminders will go out with each newsletter of various activities, and reports from various groups for those who can't make meetings. Some of the committees now formed and sort of active, may be on in your field of interest. If so, contact:

Education	Marcy Cohen	731-5412
SFU Campus	Marcy Toms	299-6129
VCC Campus	Sue Claus	c/o Student Society, V.C.C.
Labour Comm.	Jean Rands	291-2146
Women Artists Co-op	Donna Liberson	738-7749
U.B.C. Campus	Daphne Kelgard	263-6096

DISCUSSION GROUPS

The western regional conference is going to be held here in Vancouver, Thanksgiving weekend (October 11, 12, 13) and we have invited women from California, Oregon, Washington, Alberta and Saskatchewan. We sent along some of our papers to them, and asked that they send us a report on their group and position papers so that we can be relatively familiar with each other before the conference. The theme of the conference will be "Women – Reform or Revolution?", but further details won't be sorted out until we hear from the other groups. Anyone interested in helping to organize the conference, please contact Marg Hollibaugh at 936-9728.

PIERRE TRUDEAU – THE ULTIME MALE CHAUVINIST!!!

In case some of you missed seeing us at the Armouries, we were there in full force to confront the P.M. and the Liberal government on their policies concerning women – abortion, birth control, divorce legislation. And Trudeau isn't know for a particularly just treatment of the women he sees socially, so our sister Elizabeth walked up to him wearing a sign that read "HUSTLE WHEAT – NOT WOMEN!!" which he tore off her dress just before he leaped off the speakers' truck and went in to dine at \$50 a late with the people who make the laws for us. I don't suppose ol' Pierre will forget his Vancouver visit for a long time.

PAPERS AVAILABLE – a more extensive list next issue.

Laurel Limpus – Sexuality and the Family: Two Problems of the Liberation of Women (Toronto W.C.)

Margaret Benston – The Political Economy of Women's Liberation (Vancouver)

Melody Kilian – Towards a Strategy

Jean Rands – The Problem of Priorities

Pat Hoffer & Marcy Cohen – Education as a Priority

Ellen Willis – The Feminist Position – with a reply from Toronto Women and a reply to the reply.

REPORT FROM THE WOMEN'S ARTISTS CO-OP

The Women's Artists Co-op has been established for at least the nine persons who each contributed ten dollars to pay the rent on one floor of the warehouse at 137 Water Street. The place has considerable potential. Heavy policy making has been avoided to allow this unique experiment to unfold and grow naturally. One rule is generally accepted, this will be a space for women only, or at least until the presence of men will no longer be intimidating and will no longer result in male domination. This is probably the most exciting aspect of the co-op. At least women can discover amongst themselves the same society that men, as artists, have always held so closely to themselves.

There are deep-rooted reasons why women have never made a significant mark on the art world. Women have for ages been channelled into dull, home-oriented creative endeavours. Terrific amounts of energy have been smothered in domestic "arts" – petit point, knitting, cooking and painting on make-up. It is considered immodest for a woman to be driven by the necessity to rise above the polite arts. She can dabble in paint or play with a guitar but she must not show the fire of creativity. For her to take herself seriously as an artist is just not in keeping with the generally accepted opinion that women are not capable of concise thought. "It's got something to do with hormones and emotions, you see."

Many will insist that childbirth is every woman's greatest potential as a creative being. They still seem to believe that the woman creates the child all by herself. Since we know better, it would be just as fair to say, according to that logic, that a man's greatest creative act is ejaculation. Now, it may well be argued that birth is the ultimate act of creation, but women don't deserve all the credit. The Women's Co-op proposes to wipe out the myth that a woman's creative energies are most naturally best expended in baby-making and domesticity.

A really problem that a woman involved in the arts runs face-to-face with is the undermining nature of her own socialization. Behaving according to and believing in her own capacity is not something that happens simultaneously with the realization that she is being underestimated by others and by herself, because she is still a woman. Achieving confidence is difficult at the best of times. It is impossible if one is alone. Contact with people who can offer constructive criticism and energy is absolutely a necessity in developing a mature, confident, creative sensibility. The co-op will provide just such a stimulating work area.

Until now, with the advent of the co-op, many of the women involved found very gloom prospects on the approaching the professional realms of art. She could push into the male dominated world of art and try to keep relationships on a working basis, when what is wanted is helpful and stimulated company, not the foreplay games that plague the development of a simple friendship and threaten to put women into the roles they have decided are oppressive.

The only other alternative would be a fumbling attempt to be "self-taught" and self-motivated. The dates of the hermit artists starving in garrets are long past. There is no reason why a woman should have to resort to that tactic as the only alternative to hassling through a "man's" world. Women can offer strength to each other.

Women's Artist Co-op is open to any woman who needs work space and can be excited by the implications of the movement. If you are interested or have useful suggestions (or equipment), contact Donna Liberson, 738-7749, or Laura Campbell, 684-0042.

REPORT ON EDUCATION

The scene – 100 teachers at UBC, intent and questioning ...

The topic – "WOMEN IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM – OR SOMETHING YOU CAN ALWAYS FALL BACK ON."

Action – A teacher stands up and proudly affirms her inferiority, and a kind and learned man affirms the shocking reality – the greatest drawback to women's liberation is (Surprise) Women.

The Women's Caucus Educational Action Committee presented a panel discussion at U.B.C. summer session in July, This discussion features Christine Swason [sic], Vancouver's first women principal since 1935. A good open discussion followed and, as a result, we were invited into eight classrooms to speak and lead discussion and answer questions.

In each class we related our talk to the subject, such as psychology, sociology and philosophy. We reached many women who had felt themselves isolated and wrong in their hidden unhappiness. The pattern in the classroom was regular. Men dominated the discussions, until near the end the women started speaking up and indicated surprise at the familiarity of many ideas they felt were private ones held only by themselves. Those of us who spoke, gained a lot in terms of our ability to articulate our positions – we became well practiced, were able to tighten up our arguments, and learned how to be relevant and approach the audience.

We have hoped to develop a working teacher core in the B.C.T.F. that would encourage women to take an active part in the Federation, investigate the discrimination that they suffer as women teachers, and get involved in the curriculum committees. We will not be able to estimate the effectiveness of this particular activity until September.

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