

May Meeting of the Trail Status of Women

The final meeting of the season for the Trail Status of Women was held Tuesday, 7 May, at Tricia Rasku's home. In a party atmosphere to celebrate the successful conclusion of the year's work, the final bits of business were tidied up and plans for the next year unveiled.

There were several announcements: Arlene Burwash's nomination to the Board of Inquiry under the Human Rights Act; the naming of the new executive-- President: Diane Edmondson, Vice-President: Arlene Burwash, Treasurer: Frankie Powell, Secretary: Madeline Rock, and Historian: Lorraine Baines; the appointment of a part-time coordinator of the Women's Centre at Selkirk; the organization of car pools and food for the Women's Festival at Pass Creek on the first weekend in June; the presentation of the TSW brief to the Berger Commission by Susan Charlton, Virginia Clover, and Nora Ewart; and the Action for Women Conference to be convened at Capilano College on Saturday, 25 May. Organized by the Vancouver Status of Women, Child Care Federation, Women in Teaching, and the NDP Women's Committee, the conference is to feature a presentation on "Strategy, Past, Present, and Future" in the morning; and in the afternoon, workshops on Education, Political Action, Day Care, and Women in Teaching.

Also, Virginia Clover announced a \$6000 grant to the Kootenay council for a study of the educational needs of women in this area. The surveyors would be paid for their work which would involve the interviewing of selected women by appointment. The information sought includes the amount and kind of education the women now have, what further education they might like, and what job training they need. The survey will start in June and continue into the summer. Hopefully, some students will be employed. Virginia Clover is coordinating the Trail-Rossland area. Pauline Waugh of Selkirk is the overall coordinator.

There were calls for contributions to the Irene Murdock Defense Fund, and for volunteers for the Day Care Centre to clean toys and to provide cars for summer outings to farms and such.

Three topics came in for considerable discussion.

The subject of education and sexism in the schools are the special concerns of Tricia Rasku and Madeline Rock. They both addressed a recent District 11 conference, Tricia as the parent of students in the District's schools, and Madeline on the sexual bias of teaching materials. Virginia Clover commended them for the excellence of their presentations; Madeline's speech is to be submitted to this news-letter. Madeline urged members of the Trail Status of Women to look at the books their children are given and to approach the teachers with their comments. There was fear expressed that the majority of teachers could care less about ~~the~~ sexism and were making no effort to counteract the effect of the bias in assigned material.

The subject of educational meetings and commissions was introduced by Virginia Clover as she announced that the Task Force on Community Colleges would be in Trail on Tuesday, 14 May. Together with Diane Edmondson, she deplored the lack of publicity for these public meetings. Such a lack means that these meetings are often poorly attended, with members of the community missing valuable opportunities to become politically aware and confident in the public eye. Virginia pointed out that attendance at meetings, even meetings dealing with matters not of immediate or direct concern, would familiarize people with the manner in which such meetings were conducted. Then, when a meeting such as Berger Commission hearings, was called, people making presentations would be more confident and more at ease.

The subject of allowing men into meetings brought about much spirited debate. Some members felt that writing into the constitution that men may attend certain meetings by invitation of the executive only would make the TSW no better than the men's business clubs and lodges that bar women. Other members felt that if there were nothing in the constitution about men, the TSW could not turn men away from meetings and that having men present would make some women feel threatened, and that an SW meeting is the one place that women should never feel threatened; for some women, it would be the only place, and they deserve the right to keep it that way. All members present agreed that the

The plans for the next year were unveiled by Diane Edmondson. Having spent the first year getting organized and the second year moving out and building skills, it was considered time for the TSW to form some concrete objectives and act on them. Accordingly, the TSW will have two meetings a month -- the first Tuesday of every month, a general business meeting, and the third Tuesday, a committee meeting. These committees are new. There will be five of them: Education (chaired by Marian Hurd); Law (Susan Charlton); Human Rights and Labour (Arlene Burwash); Psychology and the Role of Women (Tricia Rasku); and Consumerism and Economics (Jan Micklethwaite). Everyone will be on one committee. This situation should enable members to focus their efforts more efficiently on something that concerns them. Committees will maintain files on their subject to keep up to date on what's happening elsewhere, and also present programs at the general meetings.

The evening closed with a consciousness raising exercise -- written answers to two questions -- "why did you come out to SW this year?" and "what was lacking?". These two seemingly simple questions elicited some very eloquent and poignant replies. They have been submitted to this newsletter so that they could be shared.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Mackenzie
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LOVE POEM.

It's been six years now---fancy that
You are still cherished
Funny thing that
You were a here when I met you
And six years haven't washed that out

You know what the trouble is
We women know how special
How essential our love is
You men--you never know
the value of it all
It's a hard lesson to learn
We are so easily dismissed.

What is it you women want anyway
I offer the grail
And all you want is a good meal
Here in my heart is God and the Universe
and you settle for the body
Here in my hand is wonder
You reach around me for a clean shirt
I want it all
But I'll settle, I'll settle

What do these women want anyway?

Anonymous

WHY DID YOU COME OUT TO THE TRAIL STATUS OF WOMEN THIS YEAR,
and, WHAT WAS LACKING?

1. Why come? -for sharing of experiences in a man's world.
-to gain support and give support.
-to understand why we think as we do and in gaining the understanding, to learn how to retain that quality that makes us women.
-for friendship, closeness, sisterhood.

Lacking? -in the quality of the experience--nothing. The quantity of the experience can never be enough.

2. Why come? the feeling of togetherness--not being alone in caring about the future of women. Wanting to do a "little", even if my "little" won't move mountains. the feeling that between us all, we will. Being known as a libber--now they all know they can't walk all over me--not easily anyhow!

Lacking? More of Us! Time! Time! Time! Confidence! Knowledge! Specific goals! Complete honesty among ourselves!

3. Why come? I felt fairly certain in my own mind that women were being treated unfairly in many ways, but I lacked definite information and statistics to support my feeling. I wanted to be able to argue down a "pig" effectively and to make any listeners become involved. I hoped that the group would be able to help me gain the confidence to argue and convince people who are wavering that they should rethink their positions. I enjoyed the meetings because I felt we were able to really let down our hair, especially in the pubs afterward---

Lacking? We seemed to need a focal point or project of some kind to maintain energy. Once a hurdle was accomplished, we seemed to slump for a while. This is probably more of a human problem than that of a women's group.

4. Why come? I became very interested in the "feminist movement"(if I can use that very broad phrase) and I hoped to learn at the Status of Women meeting: a) facts and figures to back up my strong feeling about changes urgently needed in the behalf of women. b) information on how other women in my community felt. I thought a wide scope of women would be within this group. c) and what is being done about the recommendations set forward by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women within this country, province, and right here at home. This I felt would be an action group to get involved and see what I could do personally. d) meet a lot of women that I probably would never have otherwise met, and lots more I could say but paper is limited. I have really received a great deal from this year and my only hope is to contribute more next year.

5. Why come? I'm really interested and concerned about how myself and other women deal with the kinds of hassles that every woman has to deal with; e. g. jobs, interpersonal relationships, the law, etc. I also really enjoy the company of all the other women that come out to the meetings.

Lacking? A greater variety of women from different situations, e. g. age difference(teenagers, young women).
A meeting room that's more conducive to a relaxed conversation.

6. Why come? I have never been associated with women or really spoken to them since becoming an adult. There was always the feeling of competition. I had many confused feelings about life and marriage and felt very isolated. By coming to the meetings, I have met and become very close to women and they have reinforced my beliefs and