

editorial

diversity of action with a single goal

A Casserole is a collection of available ingredients meant to be consumed together. Our combination is varied indeed.

We found that many women wanted to participate. Some represented Women's Liberation groups. Articles were sent on behalf of MOVE and the Women's Shelter. We received copy from the Dean of Women's office, from sorority women, and professional women. Contributions came from the Alberta Women's Bureau and from some who subsist on welfare. Materials came from academic women, from students and from married women who are currently at home.

Some women choose to inform. Many write through their tears. Some smile at themselves. Or share their courage here. Some hope to inflame. (We wanted to bring this meal to your table. But never felt that if you are sensitive, you should be spared the ingredients that could bring indigestion.)

In raiding Edmonton's cupboards, we found many things worth sampling, and even borrowed from the pantry of Rural Alberta. The only commonality you'll find among the authors is that they're unique, involved, participating people. Since we chanced upon material worthy of inclusion that was written by un-women, our authors aren't even all females!

In reaction to the growing interest in the women's movement many people hurl a label. "Bra-burning." "Radical." "Ugly." "Leftist." "Girls who wish they were men." "Girls who can't make it with a man." "Girls who screw around like men." "Dikes." Apparently there are widespread sociological factors causing the upsurge in present day feminism to such an extent, that many people see their own life style quite threatened.

In this situation, two alternatives are open. The first is to dismiss the entire movement by labelling its proponents. The second choice is more difficult and demands two-way communication. Even though a woman could be slotted "Bitter Loser", she deserves to be heard. If we, as listeners are open to her feelings we risk finding ourselves in the position of unexpected empathizer. Then in view of altered perceptions we will probably have to adjust our behavior - no easy task! In either case, we can use more knowledge of the controversial Women's Issue.

There is not one "Feminist," "Women Rights" or "Women's Lib" dogma. Germaine Greer, Gloria Steinham and Betty Friedan are not card carrying members of any organization putting out a weekly news sheet. These are three women who share independently acquired common reactions to the current status quo. A woman, who has no paid employment, bakes her own bread and nurses her babies may consider herself quite "liberated". Alternatively, a professional woman who travels extensively and is financially independent of the man she lives with may feel she epitomizes the new feminist. Neither woman need be wrong!

There are rap sessions, political action coalitions, encounter groups, abortion counselling services, and day care committees. All may rightly

assume the label of Women's Liberation Organizations. There is no charter. No set of rules. No reason why the validity of one group should negate that of the others.

In fact, this very diversity shows much of the essence of the women's movement. Should the New Feminism rigidly define a better way, which all liberated chicks would automatically adhere to, wherein would lie more freedom? Liberation does not imply abandonment of husband, home and all male children. It can bring a woman to the realization that wife, homemaker and mother are possibilities which she can choose to incorporate into her life. These roles are not a life long sentence, the predetermined reasons for her creation. Some women will not elect to assume all of these responsibilities; having other strong priorities.

It is hoped that women's liberation will be recognized as a catalyst to foster growth towards full individual potentiality. Uniqueness can not be nurtured in a mould. We will not condone the imposition of any ideology (be it political, religious, socio-economic or educational) upon the spirit of a growing child.

Traditional sex-role expectations in our culture are inculcated from day one. By the time the child enters our schools, (s)he has internalized much of what is "normal" and "right" for both sexes. One of the authors experienced receiving her two day old son wrapped in a hospital towel, rather than the standard terrycloth blanket. When the nurse was questioned, her answer was adamant. "We had to use bathtowels, there's only pink blankets clean."

If we do not dare contaminate a newborn's masculinity with pink, are we then surprised when children fight and fuss about the style of their clothes? Since a four year old boy's honest tears are met with "Big boys never cry", while Daddies humour little girls who gain rewards with pouts and whining tears; are we really shocked when men, our lovers, cannot share the tender feelings women need to hear? Can we recognize ourselves manipulating indirectly for their favors with out tears? Can we seriously say we think the difference innate?

When men and women learn to share their feeling selves, we'll leave encounter groups. When sex becomes communication placed within the framework of real intimacy (and virginity has ceased to be the bartering coin with which a girl attempts to buy lifelong security) and the picture's hung upon the nail of mutually-shared, and medical responsibility, we may not need abortion.

When each child that we choose to bear can have its needs - the physical, cognitive, social and emotional - met by people who are best prepared to do

so (be they parents or parents combined with professional pre-school educators) we can cease to push for day care.

Till then, you may dislike some feminist women, and object to many of their actions (we sometimes disagree with one another!). But before you put the movement down, stop and think. What are you opposing? Women? or Liberation?

by Lyme Vander Voet
and Vera Radio

night dreams
of kitchen shavings
hands chopped
open by the cleaver
close to the knuckles

it comes from nowhere
as i make your lunch
to make you
finger sandwiches

my knuckles move
incoherently
trying to prove
they once held
an opposable thumb

They're gutting
the houses
at the bottom
of the street
small men pick
them apart on Sunday nights
in the cold
brick by brick
after the major
wrecking is done

bomb pits like this
all over the land
maybe this is really
Warsaw 1947
they're remembering
the dangers of
ignoring politics

but no
Edmonton '71
high rises fruit
that comes out of the
torn land
breaking the sky
into fragments
the cranes leaving
no space for panic

these buildings done
¾ full and profitable
with no kids
no pets
and walls that inhibit
the begetting
of such

then the next street

you come home
always tired
Friday night
look at burnt kid produced
dinner
won der when your husband
will arive
then start the wash

It goes on for days
the kids pull the
wet sheets from the wringer
washer (cheap 20 years gone)
wrap themselves up
you gasp as you
return to the basement
at the rows of small white mummies

they decide to buy
you an automatic
at least that's
a problem that
has boundaries
you can't get lost in it
like a sheet
wet with soap

and you smile
before going outside
Sunday midnight
to hang it all up

sharon stevenson poems

you think me your own
curling eyelash
that follows every crisp
of thought
every turn of body

I, in turn, see
you as my toenail
useful/necessary
but to be clipped
if painful

night
and I stay with you
for your joyous back
the left shoulder blade
as it tries to pierce
through to air

morning
and we separate
quarreling over
the number of grams of protein
eaten
going off to different
compartments

