

Knights of Illusion



FREE

**Friday - April 6 - Noon
Dinwoodie Lounge**

Music, Magic, Mime, Illusion

No abortion; no choice

by Barbara Eyles

"Abortion is not a popular topic to talk about. It is not even a popular topic to think about. Ultimately, it is a very private subject," were the opening remarks of Ellen Ticoll, who was speaking at the last lecture for the campus pro-choice group.

Ticoll is a founding member of Edmonton's Abortion by Choice, and spoke Wednesday on the status of abortion in Canada today.

Ticoll dealt with some of the emotions involving an abortion. She said women do not like to have abortions, it is not a casual decision.

"There is always fear in a surgical procedure that something may go wrong. There is also the guilt from the knowledge there is a large segment of the population that does not approve of what you are doing, including perhaps your family, friends, or neighbours.

Ticoll stated that "having an abortion is a clear cut admission that you had sex for reasons other than procreation."

Most Canadians have shown they accept the idea of abortion and believe it should be allowed under certain circumstances. This has been shown consistently in poll surveys. A majority of doctors also recognize the need for safe, reliable abortions.

Ticoll says "the needs of those already walking on the face of the earth must take precedence over our concern for the potential of the might-be-born."

Ticoll feels abortion is the bottom-line issue of the feminist movement.

She says she does not understand how any woman who tries to force other women to live by her code of ethics - to force other women into compulsory motherhood - can call herself a feminist.

"Being barefoot, pregnant and in the kitchen may not be such a bad place if that happens to be where a woman wants to be at that time and place in a woman's life. If women are to gain education, economic power, and political clout, they must be given the choice to decide whether or not to be in that position," she says.

"It is important to stress that women who have abortions, do not do so to gain political or economic power."

Ticoll cites the reasons for an abortion as primarily that they do not have the financial, emotional or physical resources to raise a healthy child. The women involved are most often young and unmarried, they may already have as many children as they can cope with, they may be the victim of incest, rape, or marriage-break-up.

In 1969 the federal abortion laws were changed so that abortions were available on a number of conditions. The decision on whether to allow abortions has been passed down to the provinces who control hospitals and from there down to the level of individual hospital boards.

The political make-up and personal viewpoints of the members of the particular board determine the restrictions on abortion at that hospital.

In some parts of the country, particularly rural areas, abortions are virtually unattainable.

Those hospitals which do provide abortions are under great pressure to perform them.

Ticoll states, "We have reached a situation where the legally available facilities are unable to keep up with the demand for the procedures. In Edmonton, women who go to Planned Parenthood for abortion referrals discover it will take up to three weeks to go through the red tape before they get to a hospital bed."

"Half of the women approaching Planned Parenthood for help in arranging an abortion must travel to the US because no physician can be found who will help them locally," says Ticoll.

"Another problem facing Alberta residents is extra-billing. Doctors demand between \$250-\$300 for an abortion, and in most cases half of that must be upfront before the procedure."

Ticoll emphasized that abortion is not a matter that should be dealt with through a bureaucratic committee. She said it is absolutely inappropriate for making personal decisions about the lives of women and their families.

"The decision whether or not to have an abortion must be between a woman and her conscience, in consultation with her physician."

Ticoll urged concerned people to join their local Pro-choice organizations and to speak out publicly on "choice".

Lobbying through every level of government and a general effort to raise the public's awareness and support of the issue of abortion is essential, she said.

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**Staff Meeting
Thursday
3:00 PM
Room 282
SUB**