

International Women's Day

International Women's Day is 73 years strong, dating back to March 8, 1910, when it was declared an international holiday. The brainchild of turn of the century socialist leader Clara Zetkin, the holiday acknowledges the past struggles of the women's movement and present inequalities that the movement should address.

Alberta women have officially celebrated the holiday since 1977 through organizations such as the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee, Edmonton Women's Coalition, Edmonton Working Women, Every Woman's Place, and Women Against Violence Against Women.

The International Women's Week Committee successfully lobbied the Mayor of Edmonton to declare March 2-8 as International Women's Week back in 1981. And last year on March 7, the Edmonton's Women Centre (Every Women's Place) was officially opened.

But to pin down the origins of the women's movement to any particular date is a futile activity indeed. As Lorraine Mitchell of Edmonton Working Women (EWW) stated, "Women have been organized as long as Edmonton has been here."

Traditional trades training

By Susan O'Donnell
reprinted from *The Impact*
by Canadian University Press

The scene is a familiar one. Fluorescent lights, an assortment of fan belts, tail pipes and cobwebs. The walls are covered with a thin coat of grease, it's thicker on the tool benches and thickest on the floor where a maze of red air hoses lie intertwined like oversize arteries. Pinups provide the decoration.

In the corner of the garage, over the pit, is a shiny new blue Ford Mustang. A mechanic is under the car draining the oil while music belts full blast from the open car door.

Only when the mechanic straightens up from under the car does something seem out of place. Leslie Anne Thomas wipes her hands on her coveralls before signing the work order.

Thomas is one of the new breed of auto mechanics. She is one of the few women mechanics who is breaking the barrier of the traditionally male-dominated field. She's getting her hands dirty.

She is one of the women across the country who is entering the "dirty" trades, like machining, welding, sheet metal working and carpentry.

Technological changes will be creating massive unemployment in certain occupations now dominated by women. These women will be forced to look for new jobs and many are finding the relatively high wages and good benefits available in the traditional and almost exclusive male preserves of the skilled trades.

Thomas, an apprentice mechanic, sees her new career as the logical culmination of her experiences as a teenager when she spent most of her time helping her brothers and later, her boyfriends, fix their cars.

Linda Stewart is another woman who is getting her hands dirty. She says her family is still bewildered about her job. For 40 hours every week, Stewart grinds and scrapes corrosion off car bodies to prepare them for a new coat of paint. "By next year I will be able to repair and paint a damaged car so you will not be able to tell where the dent was," she says.

After working for six years as a salesclerk in a department store Stewart was laid off. The next two years were spent wandering in and out of jobs like waitressing and answering telephones, but it wasn't until she found her current job of repairing auto bodies, that she was happy. What she likes most about her job is the variety of work and also seeing a project through from start to finish.

Although both Thomas and Stewart found their jobs through "friends of friends," many more women are being guided into trade jobs by various govern-

ment department and college officials who say a woman's place is also in the shop. These administrators have established policies for funneling women into non-traditional courses.

The federal department of Employment and Immigration defines non-traditional jobs as those which have less than 35 per cent female representation. Skilled trades are in the zero to five per cent category.

The government's booklet, titled *Women in Non-Traditional Training Programs*, defines the programs goal, "to ensure that women are fully aware of the wide range of jobs to choose from and that they integrate as equitable as possible into all occupations. Free choice of occupation is not only a basic right, but one without which there is a significant waste of human resources. In addition, good jobs are an economic necessity for an increasing number of women supporting families."

Government policies that steer women into trade programs may not raise eyebrows today, but not so long ago, these types of policies would have caused public outrage.

Even though women share in the work, historically they have never done the same tasks as men. Today the vast majority of women occupy only three major categories — clerical, sales and service. Women still face limited promotional opportunities and remain in low status positions.

The stereotypes still exist.

A 1981 Ontario conference on women in non-traditional roles found some disheartening discoveries. "Despite high divorce rates, changing lifestyles and the gradual breakdown of the family system, this stereotype (male the breadwinner/female the wife and mother who stays at home) still exists and has a major influence on the employment of women in the non-traditional occupations. And that was only two years ago.

Despite legislation that ensures non-discriminatory hiring practices, women who graduate from trade courses regularly find employers who are unwilling to hire them.

The need for women to enter in non-traditional areas has been emphasized by Employment and Immigration minister Lloyd Axworthy. His new national training act does provide more non-traditional programs for women but it might be some time before all the problems facing women who want to enter these types of jobs will be erased.

Progressive reforms in education

by Susan Gartner
reprinted from *The Gauntlet*
by Canadian University Press

Imagine being told that you should not be educated because attending university would change your internal organs and make you unfit for childbearing.

Or being told that educating you is wrong, because becoming educated would make you think above your station in life.

As early as the beginning of this century these were some of the arguments put forth against the issue of allowing women to become educated said Dr. Chaviv Hosek.

Hosek, who is with the Department of English at Victoria College in Toronto, has done extensive work in Women's Studies. She has also done research on women's issues for the federal government.

Those who support the education of women would argue that a woman should be educated in order to become a better help to her husband said Hosek. She added that arguments on both sides of the question assumed that education of women has to do with their usefulness to others.

Hosek used examples from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* to illustrate the prejudices that existed against women in universities near the beginning of the twentieth century.

In the opening of the book, the fictitious female, "P" is walking around 'Oxbridge' when she suddenly strays from the gravel path making her way across a grass plot. Instantly, a man's figure rises to intercept her.

Woolf writes: "his face expressed horror and indignation. Instinct rather than reason came to my help; he was a Beadle; I was a woman. This was the turf; there was the path. Only Fellows and Scholars are allowed here; the gravel is the place for me."

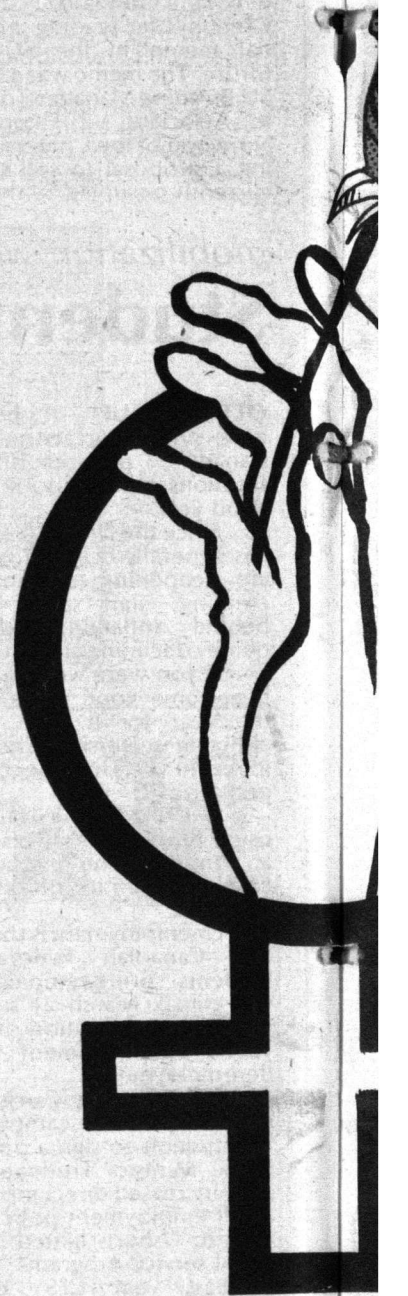
A few pages later, the woman again trespasses on male territory. She finds herself at the door of the university's famous library and opens it, "...instantly there issued, like a guardian angel barring the way with a flutter of black gown instead of white wings, a deprecating, silvery, kindly gentleman, who regretted in a low voice, as he waves me back, that ladies are only admitted to the library if accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished with a letter of introduction."

These physical barriers to education no longer exist for women said Hosek. But she added, there are many other types of barriers.

There is the problem of being taken seriously. Hosek pointed that as long as a woman has to be smarter, more serious, and more thick-skinned than a man in order to get through engineering, there won't be equality of education.

Hosek also pointed out that a degree does not necessarily put a woman on the same level as a man in the workplace. She said there are still differences, one is salary, between men and women workers with the same education. She cited the example that only a third of the women, compared with half the men with a masters degree, make more than \$30,000 a year.

She was quick to add, "university is not



a training ground for the job market, nor should it be." She said a university education takes time, whereas the job market is constantly shifting; it is difficult to predict where the demand will be in a few years time.

The process of learning should be demystified, especially with regard to new technologies. We have to learn to unplug our computers, look them square in the screen and say, 'without me, you're

A woman earns 62¢ for every man earns for eq

nothing," said Hosek. She feels this de-mystification process is something that can be applied to women and their education. She said people who are technical illiterates will be left out of significant areas of the new society. If something isn't done soon, the majority of these technical illiterates will be women, she said.

Studies on science achievement done in various countries show that in each

International Women's Week organizations in the province, Canada gains and tribulations of the women's one heart.

- Activities to celebrate the week
- Panel discussion sponsored by UWA, CUPW, and local lawyer Sheila 12530-110 ave.
- Tape of Bernadette Devlin-Mc speech, Wednesday, March 9, 8pm.
- Also on Wednesday, the Preside Women speaks at the Ukrainian Hall
- Thursday Night, March 10, Womospace, 13712-104 ave. 7:30-11
- Friday March 11 offers the Woman's Place (9926-112 st.) and a Co "Marxism and Feminism," 10563-97 st
- Capping the whole week is a f Saturday evening, March 12.

SUELECTION

Nominations Have Been Extended for These Positions only:

Faculty of Science Students' Council

(5 positions)

General Faculties Council

(7 positions)

Nominations close Thursday, Mar. 10 5:00 pm.

For further information, please contact the S.U. Returning Office (Room 271 SUB) or the Receptionist, SU Executive Office (Room 259 SUB).