

Women's Day! International Women's Day! International

Childbirth and the midwife

by Tom Wilson

"Information" and "alternative" were the key words in the first of a week long, noon hour lecture series sponsored by the Campus Pro-Choice groups as part of Women's Awareness Week.

Geraldine Matus was the guest speaker for Wednesday's lecture concerning "Childbirth and Midwifery".

Matus presented a slide show, depicting the emotional involvement of family members before, during and after a birth.

"In our culture, women don't necessarily find birth a gratifying

experience. These slides show that it can be," said Matus.

In the discussion following the slides, Matus stressed the individual experience of birth.

"It's an individual decision and we have to have self-awareness, in other words, how are your attitudes going to affect you as a mother?"

When Matus asked how many of the women present wanted to have a baby in the next few years, five of the 30 women present raised their hands.

Five of the women present already had at least one child, leaving 20 women who were still mulling the question over.

More information on home birth and on the availability of midwives or other birth attendants who were less restrictive than doctors was the predominant desire among these women.

Other concerns included a better atmosphere for childbirth than the "sterile hospital atmosphere."

Among the most often voiced concerns was the lack of freedom that the mother has with current hospital techniques. The freedom to have anybody present during the birth that the mother wishes, is a freedom that does not exist today in Edmonton. In most

hospitals, the father, or else one other person is allowed in the delivery room during birth.

Having control of their pregnancy, having knowledgeable people present during labour (not just at the instant the baby appears as is often the case with obstetricians), and having people who are close to the mother, were the major concerns of the group.

Matus suggested that the mother should choose her own birth attendants, whether they be obstetricians, general practitioners or midwives, who are in a space somewhere between legal and illegal.

"You are a consumer and the choice is yours," says Matus. The person chosen to be present at birth is an intuitive decision, says Matus.

"If you sit down with your list, and he suddenly goes white, then you know he may not be the best person for the job."

"I'm not going to tell you what I think. There are lots of books on the subject and lots of lectures. You have to educate yourself and that can't be done properly in one hour."

Next Wednesday's lecture will feature Dr. D. Kieran's discussion on the present state of sex education.

Bread and Roses

Peace groups were not over-demanding in asking International Women's Day (IWD) organizers for permission to march on city streets on Saturday.

IWD organizers had planned a "Bread and Roses" parade for this Saturday. Only one parade permit per day is allowed by the City of Edmonton.

"They (the peace groups) had been planning a march for a Saturday after the first testing of the cruise," said Kris Farkas, of the IWD committee.

She said peace groups have

been invited to join the IWD parade.

There were even some women who were glad to hear about the dual-purpose parade, said Farkas. Many women are also involved with the disarmament movement, she said.

Saturday's march starts at 11:30 AM at the Legislative Building. The parade then leads downtown with peace activists holding a demonstration in front of City Hall and IWD paraders gathering for a Women's Fair at the Public Library. Men and women can take part in the march.

Laws unfair

analysis By Dina O'Meara

Laws concerning the accessibility of abortion to women are not as liberal as they are believed to be.

Abortions are obtainable in Canada only under certain limiting conditions, and many women who choose to have an abortion are unable to obtain one.

Under the existing law, a pregnant woman can undergo an abortion if "...the continuation of the pregnancy... would or would be likely to endanger her life or health."

The interpretation of health can vary from a strictly physical sense, or as defined by the World Health Organization: "...a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

As stated in the Code, a therapeutic abortion (T.A.) committee, composed of no less than three staff physicians in an approved hospital, decide upon a woman's future without confronting her. In Alberta, not only does the committee decide what is best, spousal consent is required, even in some cases where the couple has been separated.

This is also true in the case of a woman wanting to undergo a sterilization procedure.

In cities where there are T.A. committees, a woman may have to wait up to eight weeks between the time she consults a doctor about a suspect pregnancy and the time the abortion is performed.

After a study that included a Federal Government-appointed Committee on the Operation of the Abortion Law (The Badgley Report, 1977), the Canadian Medical Association recommended the elimination of T.A. committees because they lead to delays causing risk to a woman's health.

In many cases, facilities required by the present legislation simply do not exist. The Code states that the doctor performing the abortion cannot be on the

therapeutic abortion committee, thus eliminating the smaller hospitals that have a staff of less than four doctors. The Badgley report quotes that "...24.6 per cent of Canadian hospitals did not have a medical staff that was large enough to establish a T.A. committee and to perform the abortion procedure." Furthermore, a hospital must be accredited by the Canadian Council on Hospital Accreditation (or provincially approved) to be eligible for a T.A. committee.

Two-thirds of Maritimer's do not have an eligible hospital where they live, forcing many women to go the US to have their abortion.

Statistics on abortions performed on Canadian women are deficient because many are forced to seek abortions outside of Canada, or through illegal methods.

Statistics on mortality due to abortions are more reliable. In 1968-72 there were 2.1 deaths per million, of which 0.3 were due to legal abortions. By 1973-77, the figures were 0.4 per million, of which fewer than 0.05 were due to legally induced abortion.

Abortion is a reality that will not disappear through legislation, that forces some women to procure unsafe and dangerous methods of abortion, rather than face an unwanted pregnancy.

To continue to have the laws concerning abortion under the Criminal Code in their existing form is to continue denying women in Canada the right to control their own fertility and the ability to make an informed decision with their doctor.

Legal abortions are essential as back-ups for contraceptive failure and human error. Free-standing clinics, such as those that exist in the US and what Dr. Henry Morgentaler tried to maintain in Winnipeg and Toronto are realistic and necessary alternatives to the current situation of legal abortions in Canada.

CABARETS

Tickets are available from the SUB Box Office (2nd Floor SUB) and various club members.

NOTE: These events are open only to U of A students, staff, and guests.

DINWOODIE
2nd Floor SUB.

Proof of age required.

Recreation Students' Society presents

Darkroom

with guests:
Eyes Only

Friday, March 9



Education Students' Assoc. presents

Beach Party '84

featuring
Sweet Leilani's
Dancers

Minutes
F R O M

and

DOWNTOWN

Saturday, March 10



U of A
Common Times
Society

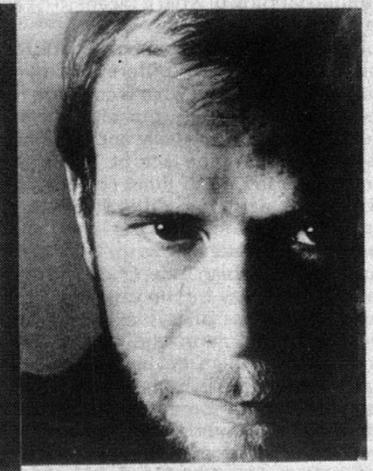
presents

Fri. March 16

featuring

Kathi McDonald
& Roy Young

LONG
JOHN
BALDRY



UP & COMING:

• David Wilcox
March 24

• New Riders of
the Purple Sage
March 30

• Slash
March 31