

# THE GRAPEVINE

Vol. 2 No. 1  
January, 1989

ORGANIZED WORKING WOMEN



OTTAWA

## OWW-Ottawa General Meeting

February 16, 1989  
7:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
ODLC Boardroom  
5th Floor  
280 Metcalfe Street  
Ottawa

## Special Event

### Sharing Our Experiences with Equal Pay

Come and share your experiences  
with your sisters from a variety of unions. Johanne Labrie,  
PSAC, and Morna Ballantyne, CUPE, will lead the discussion.

Going to an OWW general meeting is a most rewarding way to meet other union women  
in Ottawa. Don't miss it!

## CUPW wins historic vote

January 17, 1989 is a major turning point in the history of one of the country's fiercest unions. It was the day CUPW won the vote.

### Labour Board Conducted Vote

The Canadian Labour Relations Board ordered a certification vote in November, 1988, following a failed merger attempt between the Letter Carriers' Union (LCUC) and the Postal Workers' Union (CUPW). It was a winner-take-all proposition. The unions launched an election battle to win the hearts, minds and votes of 46,000 union postal employees. Members of four unions were involved -- the CUPW, LCUC, Public Service Alliance and Brotherhood of

Electrical Workers -- but only the two major postal unions, CUPW and LCUC, were on the ballot.

After a fierce election campaign waged in communities, small and large, across the country, CUPW emerged the winner by a slim 901 vote margin.

### Good news for women

This is good news for union women. CUPW has led the way in bargaining equal pay, paid maternity leave, equality for part-time employees, across-the-board wage increases, and many other issues important to women. More battles lie ahead. CUPW's approach on broad social issues as well as bargaining issues provides positive leadership to postal workers and to the whole labour movement.

# Improved Parental Leave for Ontario Hospital Workers

By Jane Stinson

Support staff in 50 Ontario hospitals, represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) have received improvements to parental leave contract provisions as a result of an interest arbitration award issued on January 10, 1989.

## No right to strike

Hospital workers in Ontario are denied the right to strike and, as a result, all outstanding issues in bargaining are referred to an arbitration board for final resolution.

The arbitration board, chaired by Mr. R. McLaren, awarded two significant improvements to parental leave. One change eliminates the discriminatory treatment of adoptive parents. Employees on adoption leave will now receive the same level of benefits as provided to those on maternity leave, including an employer-paid top-up of UI benefits for 15 weeks. Hospital workers, however, still receive an inferior level of 75% pay during maternity or adoption leave compared to the norm of 93% or 95% provided to provincial and federal public sector workers respectively.

## Employer-paid benefits improved

A second area of improvement is an extension of employer-paid benefits ( medical, dental and so on ) to the entire 6 months of maternity or adoption leave. Together, these improvements help to minimize the loss of income experienced by women when they have children.

Other contract improvements contained in the award include better vacation leave ( 5 weeks after 15 years ( was 17 years ) and the establishment of 6 week vacation entitlement after 25 years ), 100% employer-paid group life ( was 90% ) and wage increases of 55 cents effective October 10, 1987 and 60 cents effective October 10, 1988 ( equal to about 5% each year on the average wage ). The Board, however, failed to address many of the Union's proposals.

Support staff in 77 other Ontario hospitals, represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees, are still awaiting the outcome of their arbitration award. CUPE and SEIU had tabled the same proposals on maternity and adoption leave.

## OWW Round-Up

Did you order a copy of *Feminizing Unions* from OWW last fall? The copies are now. Please contact Jane to get your copy. 234-6933.

The OWW Executive will be recommending changes to our general membership meetings at the up-coming one on February 16th in order to provide more time for discussion of common problems and strategies

You may recall from an earlier *Grapevine* that the Toronto chapter of OWW had received funding from Ontario to design and print fabric representing women and unions. The fabric is ready and, in fact, has been made into comfortable shirts.

OWW Ottawa sent a letter of congratulations to Jean-Claude Parrot, National President of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), expressing our hope that the new CUPW will continue to bring women's demands to the bargaining table.

The OWW Ottawa executive met with a representative of the OWW Provincial, Sister Ruth Scher, in December to discuss the structure of OWW as a whole. There are now three bodies, the provincial body and the two chapters. It is expected that this will be reviewed at the up-coming provincial meeting, to be held on Saturday, April 15, 1:00 p.m. in Toronto. This meeting is open to all members in good standing. Call Marie for details: 594-8179.

About 15 OWW sisters attended our December Union Sisters Dinner. It was a catered affair. The consensus was that this type of dinner allowed for more socializing and mingling. We'll be holding another Union sister Dinner in late February ( see back page ). Hope to see you there!

## OWW Executive Members

### President

Rosemary Warskett  
233-8264

### Vice-President

Jane Stinson 237-1590

### Treasurer

Nancy Porter 995-5009

### Corresponding Secretary

Linda McLaren 995-1385

### Recording Secretary

Vacant

### Provincial Delegates

Marie Campbell 594-8179

### Executive Board Members

Faye Ball 236-1040

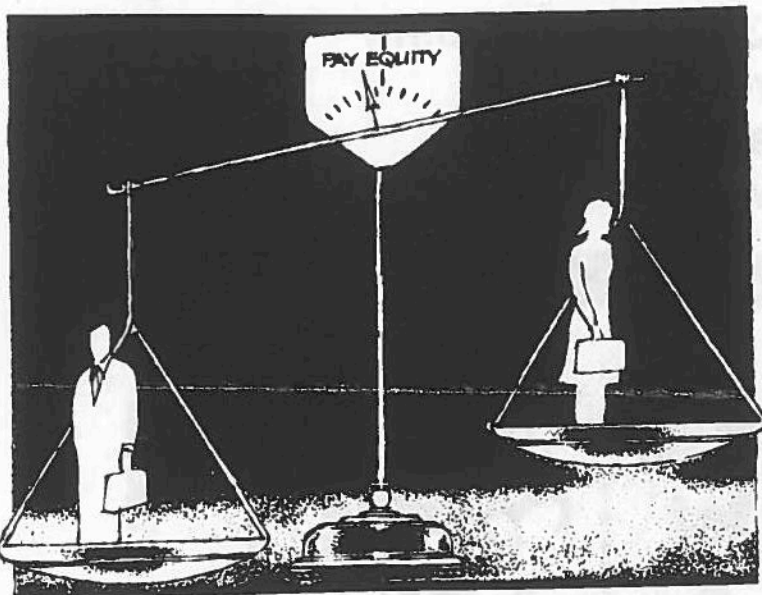
Monique Dorgan 237-1590

Carole Coplea 236-7238

Janice Manchec 234-5275

# Sisterhood and Solidarity

by Janice Manchee



## Workers and Communities Conference

The next Workers and their communities conference will be held May 26 - 28 at York University in Toronto. The conference brings together researchers and activists in informal, participatory workshops to discuss a variety of issues. A number of workshops will focus on the interests of women workers. For further information, contact the Labour Studies Program, Division of Social Sciences, York University, 4700 Keele St., North York, Ontario. M3J 1P3.

## Pay Equity Workshop

The Ottawa-Carleton CUPE Council is sponsoring a workshop to be held on the Ontario Pay Equity legislation on February 16-18, 1989. Jane Adams, from the Ontario Pay Equity Commission, will conduct the workshop. For further information, contact Jamie Kass, 234-6933.

## Pay Equity Book

The Women's Research Centre has published a book entitled *Just Give Us the Money: A discussion of wage discrimination and pay equity*. The cost is \$9.00 with discounts for women's groups and orders over \$5. Rosemary (233-8264) has a copy and says it is worth reading.

## Pay Equity Law Limited

Did you know? More than half of the 1.7 million women covered by Ontario's pay equity legislation will not benefit from the law because of its limited nature!

## Survey of Disabled Women's Needs

The Disabled Women's Network Canada (DAWN) is conducting a survey to determine the needs and priorities of Canadian women with disabilities. To obtain a questionnaire or find out more about the project, contact Jillian Ridington, DAWN-Canada, 3464 W 27th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6S 1P6

## Italian Working Women

A group of women members of an Italian trade union has proposed setting up a "women's union". It would be open to women unionists as well as housewives and women job seekers. For further information, contact Coordinamento Femminile CGIL-CISL-UIC, via Appia Km 28000, 300 Ariccia, I-00198, Roma.

## All Women Labour Council

In a recent vote, the district labour council in Saint John, New Brunswick elected an all-woman executive.

## CUPW Staff Get First Collective Agreement

Closer to home, the six employees at the CUPW National Office, Ottawa, who do research, communications and translation, formed a bargaining unit with the Ottawa Newspaper Guild. They were certified in early January. Their first collective agreement was signed shortly thereafter.

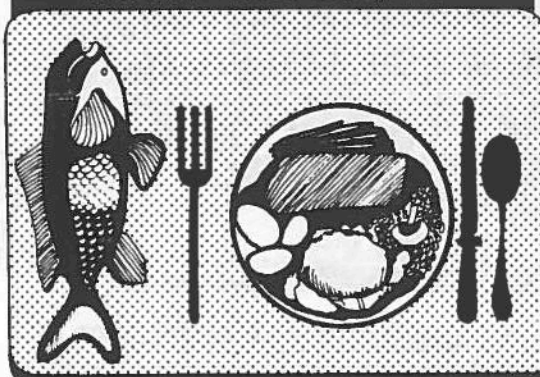
Their ranks will grow by one when the translator from the Letter Carriers Union of Canada joins the CUPW staff, following the results of the certification vote in CUPW's favour.

**Union Sisters Dinner**  
**Thursday, February 23, 1989, 7:30 p.m.**  
**ODLC Boardroom**  
**5th Floor, 280 Metcalfe Street**  
**Ottawa**

**Further information  
contact Rosemary at  
233-8264.**

**Please confirm your  
attendance by February  
20th so organizers will  
know how much food to  
order!**

**Cost: about \$10**



## **Sisters in Solidarity**

An exciting OWW project with an international flavour is continuing to give some Ottawa OWW members the opportunity to deepen their friendship with women from Ethiopia.

On February 26, Canadian women participating in **Sisters in Solidarity (SIS)** are introducing their Ethiopian sisters to ice skating by throwing a skating party. There are five new Ethiopian sisters who are interested in being matched with a Canadian friend. Anyone interested in the SIS project is welcome to attend this party.

SIS was launched in July 1987 at a picnic lunch. Five Ethiopian women who have made their homes in Ottawa were "matched" with five OWW members.

One of the project's aims is to provide a Canadian friend for an Ethiopian woman who may require assistance in knowing her rights as a worker, as an immigrant or as a woman new to Canada. Another aim is to share and broaden the sisters' understanding of Canadian and Ethiopian cultures, particularly in relation to women's issues, food, family and friendship.

For the most part, the individual friendships develop according to the needs of the women involved.

In May, 1988, the whole group got together for a party which featured food prepared by the Ethiopian sisters. For some OWW sisters, the feast was a delicious introduction to Ethiopian cuisine. Others had already sampled delectable Ethiopian dishes at their sister's home. The meal was followed by dancing to Canadian and Ethiopian music.

**If you're interested in becoming an SIS participant, please contact Debra Isabel Huron at 230-2394 or Sandi Howell at 737-0414 for more information.**

## **Women's Books from the Women's Bookstore 380 Elgin Street**



**Canadian Women  
History, by Alison  
Prentice and many  
more authors, \$24.95**

**Feminist Organizing for Change**  
( The contemporary women's  
movement in Canada ), by Nancy  
Adamson, Linda Briskin, Margaret  
McPhail, \$19.95

**No Way To Live ( Poor women speak  
out; interviews with poor women in  
B.C. ), by Shelia Baxter**

**Agir contral la violence, by Ginette  
Larouche**

**Femmes contre-pouvois, by Yolande  
Cohen, \$19.95**