

# THE GRAPEVINE

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ORGANIZED WORKING WOMEN



OTTAWA

## Announcements!

### Union Sisters Dinner

The next Union Sisters Dinner will be held on Tuesday, September 13 at 7:00 p.m. The locale is Houseworks, a non-smoking, women's café at 371 Lisgar Street. We hear the food is great! As we have to guarantee 20 diners, please RSVP as soon as possible with Marie Campbell at 594-8179.

### In-Door Air Workshop

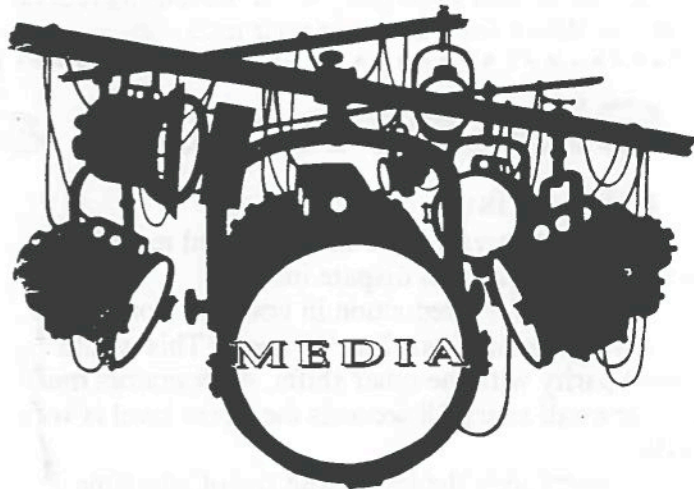
A workshop for organized and unorganized workers who are experiencing in-door air problems in their workplace will offer assistance through skills-building sessions and networking with others experiencing the same problem. This fully bilingual workshop is planned for late September or early October.

As a working conference, it will include an overview of the issue as a union issue, technical information about ventilation systems and a discussion of workers' rights in collective agreements, health and safety regulations and laws, and Workers' Compensation. Ample time is also included for networking. It is sponsored by the Eastern Ontario Workers' Clinic Organizing Committee, the Ottawa and District Labour Council and the Workers' Health and Safety Centre. For more information contact the ODLC, 233-7820 or Patty Deline, 238-1077.

**Don't forget to renew your OWW membership for 1988. And if you want to join OWW, simply send your name, address, union local and a cheque for \$20 to:**

**Organized Working women  
c/o ODLC  
288 Dalhousie Street  
Ottawa  
K1N 7E6**

**If you do not belong to a union, it is OK. You can join as a "friend".**



### Caring With Computers

If you're looking for a video to show at a union meeting that addresses issues important to women, get a copy of "Caring With Computers". This recent Canadian video explores how new technologies affect the "caring" professions' ability to care. Not only are office clerks and secretaries being affected by computers, but nurses and social workers are also beginning to feel the impact.

The video, which runs approximately 15 minutes, lets the workers using the computers tell us themselves how these machines could assist them in their work. Very quickly, however, it becomes clear that the workers' goal of improved care is quite different from management's goal of cost efficiency. Sound familiar?

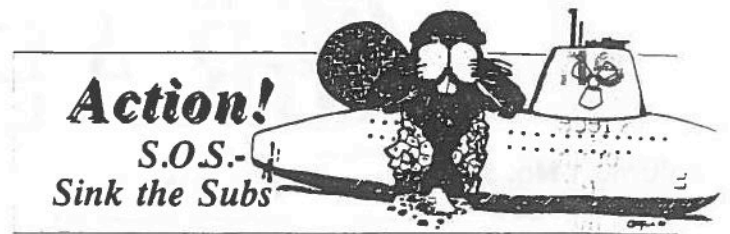
Several workers in the video stress the need to get in on the early stages of implementation so that programs are designed to help with care rather than simply lower costs. Beyond this, the importance of workers and their unions developing their own agenda for computer use is also highlighted.

The video is well worth seeing and would fit nicely into a lunch-time discussion group or evening meeting context. It costs under \$30 and is available through Working Alternatives, 27 First Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 2G1 or call 594-8179.

## Upcoming Federal Election

**Free trade, childcare, peace.** These are all issues important to women unionists. And the Mulroney government has failed to resolve the problems involved. In fact, it has created new problems. OWW will be holding a get-together soon to discuss issues and strategies for the upcoming federal election. Watch for a notice in your mail.

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# Sisterhood and Solidarity

## CWC Strike

As you are aware, Bell operators and technicians are on strike. Issues in dispute include:

- the need for a reduction in hours of work for the dayshift operators from 7 to 6.5 hours. This would ensure parity with the other shifts. As operators must answer a call every 18 seconds the stress level is *very* high.

- concern over the increasing use of part-time rather than full-time workers
- concern over the continuing pay gap between operators and technicians.

As this could be a long strike, expressions of solidarity are essential. Please be ready for a call from OWW to participate in support picketing if necessary. You may also wish to raise the need for support in your own local.

## Voyageur Strike

Yes, they're still out. As these workers are fighting concessions their line is important for all of us. Support picketing takes place at noon on weekdays. Please take some time. **Further info: 233-7820.**

## International Women's Week Committee

The IWW committee (Ottawa) is experiencing a deficit from its 1988 activities and requires our help. Both funding applications to the Secretary of State and to the City of Ottawa only brought in half of the requested amounts. Since IWW asked for the exact amount it needed, the amount received has resulted in a short fall in the thousands of dollars. OWW has been requested to ask our members to go to your locals and unions for donations. If you require further information or have a donation to send in, the address is: **IWW, Box 76, Station "B", Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6C3.**

## Bonita Clark Appeal

**Sister Bonita Clark** has worked at Stelco since 1979 after she successfully filed human rights complaints about Stelco's hiring practices.

Unfortunately, Stelco didn't get the point. Since that time, Sister Clark has been subjected to abusive and humiliating treatment including:

- . sexual molestation
- . denied access to an in-plant washroom and change facilities
- . and on-going reprisals for raising safety issues on behalf of co-workers and complaining of her sexual harassment.

As a result of this situation, Sister Clark now has a complaint before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, attempting to establish that the emotional stress and ill health effects she has suffered from the sexual harassment deserves recognition and protection as an occupational health hazard. As a ruling in Sister Clark's favour would place increased liability on the employer to provide a sexual harassment-free workplace, Stelco is fighting back and seems to be sparing no expense to defeat this complaint. But costs for Stelco mean costs for Sister Clark.

This is a case of importance to all Canadian women and requires our support. While both Sister Clark's local and the Ontario Federation of Labour are providing financial assistance, more is needed.

OWW Ottawa has donated \$50 to the fund, but we ask all our members to donate whatever they can and to take this to their locals and unions for further donations. Donations can be sent to or more information acquired from:

**The Bonita Clark Defence Fund**  
1292 Barton Street East  
Hamilton, Ontario  
L8H 2W1

**New Book Alert!**

# "Feminizing Unions"

This recent American anthology concerns issues that affect unionized female workers in North America. It includes six articles by trade union activists, including an article by OWW's own Jane Stinson, who wrote on major developments for women and unions in Canada. Other articles include the situation in Mexico and issues affecting women coal miners in the United States.

As a number of OWW members are interested in purchasing the publication, we will be ordering in bulk. If you're interested and would like to get in on the low, low price of \$7, please send your order, including a cheque, to Jane Stinson, 398 Lyon Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 5X1, by July 30th, 1988.



**EARNING POWER**

# OWW Round-Up

## Elections

As Sisters Ruth Scher and Anne Bullock have now left us for the bright lights of Toronto, two executive positions had to be filled at our June meeting. Marie Campbell is now one of our two Provincial Representatives and Janice Manchee is an Executive Member-at-large responsible for education.

Thanks are due to Sisters Scher and Bullock for their work on our behalf and best wishes in their work with the OWW Toronto Chapter!

## Task Force on OWW Activities

Sister Betty MacGregor has developed a questionnaire that should help determine what type of role OWW can play in the Ottawa region. Questions address types of activities that might be useful and general interest in and awareness of OWW. The questionnaire has been distributed to women in five different unions, representing a variety of traditional and non-traditional occupations. Both OWW members and non-members have been approached. In-depth interviews are also being conducted with several women. To date, the rate of response has been quite good. A report of the findings will be available this fall.

## Peace

The OWW passed the following resolution at its June meeting. Why not present it to your next local meeting?

### **Whereas**

- Nuclear attack submarines can neither prevent nuclear war nor protect Canada in the event of one; and
- Canadian nuclear attack submarines could be seen as destabilizing or provocative, especially if used as part of the US strategy of challenging Soviet vessels in their home waters; and
- Acquiring nuclear submarines calls into question Canada's adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; and that
- The cost of acquiring nuclear submarines competes directly with federal government funding for municipalities and other needed programs;

**Therefore be it resolved** that the OWW Ottawa Chapter calls upon Canada's federal government to cancel the nuclear submarine acquisition program and examine more cost-effective and safe methods of assuring Canadian and international security.

# Ontario Hospital Workers

Among those workers denied the right to strike are many hospital workers in Ontario. As a substitute for free collective bargaining, they are offered binding arbitration, a process where one or more arbitrators decide the outcome of issues upon which management and the union cannot agree.

The arbitration hearing for 15,000 CUPE Ontario hospital workers in 71 hospitals was held June 21. Three-quarters of these workers are women. Among the outstanding issues are:

- . an improvement in supplementary maternity benefits ( from 75% to 95% of wages )
- . paid benefits during maternity leave
- . equivalent rights to maternity leave for workers adopting a child
- . a freeze on the use of part-time workers ( again, being used to replace full-timers )
- . more provisions ( administrative and benefits ) to apply to part-timers
- . improved vacations, holidays and insured benefits
- . an across-the-board pay increase.

These workers' agreement expired on September 29, 1987 and it is unlikely an award will be issued by the Arbitration Board before the fall. ( The last award took six months. ) Meanwhile, babies are being born and adopted, part-timers hired and vacations taken. As none of the improved provisions ( if awarded ) apply before the date of the award, it is not surprising that many of our sisters working in hospitals feel frustrated by this procedure.

More fundamentally, the process of arbitration gives workers no control over what happens in their workplace. It is clearly time that binding arbitration in the hospital sector goes the way of the dodo bird and that these workers gain their full collective bargaining rights.

